ANTHROPOLOGY OF ETHIOPIAN SOCIETIES AND CULTURE

Anth 1012

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introducing Anthropology and its Subject Matter

1.1. Concepts in Anthropology

- Anthropology is a combination of two Greek words
  - '*Anthropos*' - human being/mankind
  - '*Logos*' - study/science'
- Man has two characteristics: biological and cultural
- Anthropology is the study of people - their origins, their development, and contemporary variations, wherever and whenever they have been found.
- Anthropology is a broad scientific discipline dedicated to the comparative study of humans as a group, from its first appearance on earth to its present stage of development.

- Anthropology is a science which:
  - Investigates the strategies for living
  - Examines the characteristics of human beings
  - Analyses the material and non-material products of social groups
- Anthropology is an understanding of culture, society and humanity through detailed studies of community life, supplemented by comparison.
- Anthropology offers **two kinds of insight**.
  - **First**, *knowledge about the biological and cultural variations*
  - **Second**, *methods and theoretical perspectives*

1.2. The Historical Development of Anthropology

- Anthropology has its roots in the **works** and **ideas** of the great **ancient and medieval Greek**, **Roman**, and **Hebrew** philosophers & social thinkers - *who were interested in the **nature**, **origin** and **destiny** of man.*

- To trace its roots;
  - Anthropology as an academic discipline was born during the 19th century, out of the **Enlightenment -** the eighteenth century social and philosophical movement that emphasized **human progress** and based on the **Darwinian theory of Evolution**.
  - Anthropology did not arise as a science until the 1850s,
  - Anthropological research in its present-day sense only commenced after the First World War.
- Anthropology was beginning as a profession by **the late 1870s** – due to **the expansion of western colonial powers**
- During the 1870s and 1880s **anthropology became a profession primarily in museums.**
- Early anthropologists studied small communities named as,

- **Ethnography** – ***a detail description of the social and cultural features of a certain group of people or society***.
- **Ethnography** provides a comprehensive account of a particular community, society or culture.
- It describes the features of specific cultures in as much detail as possible including local behavior, beliefs, customs, social life, economic activities, politics, and religion.
- Ethnographies are the result of **extensive field studies** by anthropologists.
- During ethnographic fieldwork - anthropologists **gathers, organizes, describes, analyzes, and interprets data** to build and present an account in the form of a **book, article, or film**.
- **Ethnology** - ***the comparative understanding and analysis of different ethnic groups across time and space.***

- It *examines, interprets, analyzes, and compares* the results of ethnographic accounts of different societies.
- Ethnologists use ethnographic data to compare and contrast and to make generalizations about society and culture.
- The primary objective of ethnology is to **uncover general cultural principles**, the “rules” that govern human behavior.
- In Ethiopia, professional anthropologists studying culture and society on an intensive level since the late 1950s.

1.3. Scope and Subject Matter of Anthropology

- Anthropology is a broad discipline in terms of;
  - Area Coverage - from Arctic to Desert, from Megapolis to hunting gathering areas
  - Time Coverage - covers the past, the present and even the future
  - Issues coverage - covers all aspects of human ways of life experiences and existence

- It touches all aspect of human conditions as far as there is a relation between human beings and natural environment
- Anthropologists strive to understand the biological and cultural origins and evolutionary development of humans.
- All humans, past and present, as well as their behavior patterns, thought systems, and material possessions.

1.4. Sub-fields of Anthropology

1.4.1. Physical/Biological Anthropology

- Study how culture and environment influenced *biological evolution* and *contemporary variations*.
- **Human biology** affects some aspects of human behavior and culture like *marriage patterns, sexual division of labor, gender ideology* etc.
- Culture in turn have biological effects like *the standards of attractiveness, food preferences, and human sexuality.*

- **The major sources of biological variations** are derived from the interrelated effects of **natural selection, geographical isolation and genetic mutations**.
- Physical anthropology concerned with two broad areas of investigation: ***human evolution*** and ***genetics*.**
- Human evolution is *the study of the gradual processes of simple forms into more differentiated structures*
- Human evolution further divided into three special sub-fields:
- ***Paleoanthropology:* the study of human evolution** through the **analysis of fossil remains**.
- ***Primatology**:* the study of the biology and behavior of **primates.**
- ***Anthropometry***: the study of human variations within and among different populations in time and space - in terms of skin colors, skull shape, facial shape, hair texture, and the like.
- Evolution, key concept in Physical Anthropology, with comparative approach allows to address fundamental questions regarding our distant origin, current stage of growth, forms of adaptation, and predict future direction of development.

- **Human genetics** concerns to investigate *how and why the physical traits of contemporary human populations vary* throughout the world.
- It focuses to examine the genetic materials of an organism such as DNA and RNA.
- Human biology and culture have evolved over millions of years and they will continue to evolve together.
- Human biology affects human culture and vice versa.
- Anthropologists use the term bio-cultural to describe the dual nature of human evolution: biological and cultural dimensions

The Bio-cultural Animal

- Humanity evolves as a result of biological and cultural factors - **bio-cultural evolution.**
- *For example, the earliest use of stone tools corresponds with increased consumption of animal protein and more animal protein in turn changes the human diet and anatomy.*
- *The use of clothing allows human bodies to survive in environments they wouldn't normally survive in.*
- Paleo-anthropologists are concerned with *how bio-cultural evolutionary factors shaped humanity* through time.

- Humanity stands for human species and has the following characteristics:
  - **Bipedalism** (walking on two legs);
  - Relatively **small teeth** for primates of our size;
  - Relatively **large brains** for primates of our size;
  - Using modern **language** to communicate ideas; and
  - Using complex sets of ideas called **culture** to survive.

Origin of the Modern Human Species: Homo Sapiens Sapiens

- One of the major questions anthropologists grapple with is **the origins of humankind.**
- Theories concerning the evolution of life date back to the ancient Greeks, but it was only during the 19th century that the first comprehensive theories of evolution were developed.
- The most profound questions are; Where did we come from? Why are we here? What is our place in the universe?
- Explanations that provide answers to these fundamental questions include;

Cosmologies and Human Origins

- ***Cosmologies*** **-** *supernatural beings or forces formed human beings and the planet we live on*.

- These beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation through **ritual, education, laws, art,** and **language**.

Western Traditions of Origins

- In Western cultural traditions, the ancient Greeks had various mythological explanations for human origins.
- **Prometheus:** humans are created out of water and earth.
- **Thales of Miletus (c.636–546BC):** argued that life originated in the sea and that humans initially were fishlike, eventually moving onto dry land and evolving in to mammals.
- The most important cosmological tradition affecting Western views of creation is - **the Biblical Book of Genesis**
- This Judaic tradition describes how God created the cosmos.
- It begins with "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*" and describes how creation took six days during which light, heaven, earth, vegetation, sun, moon, stars, birds, fish, animals, and humans originated.
- In Europe, before the Renaissance – it was the only framework for understanding humanity's position in the universe.

Evolutionary Perspectives on Human Origin

- As opposed to cosmological explanations, today anthropologists rely on scientific views of evolution to explain human origins.
- **Evolution** refers to *a process and gradual change in species over time.*
- It is used to describe the **cumulative effects** of three independent facts and these attributes can be observed in nature every day.
- They are:
  - **Replication:** *life forms have offspring*;
  - **Variation:** *each offspring is slightly different from its parents, and its siblings*; and
  - **Selection:** *not all offspring survive, only the ones best suited to their environment*.
- The prominent person to this development is Charles Darwin (1809-1882) - known for his theory of **natural selection** in the evolution of species and the idea of **survival of the fittest**.
- Darwin's ideas set the foundation for a new study: *the study of humans as living, evolving creatures in many ways no different from the rest of animal life.*

- Anthropologists study humanity as a biological phenomenon by raising questions like:
  - ✓ What species are we most and least like?
  - ✓ Where and when did we fist appear?
  - ✓ What were our ancestors like?
  - ✓ Can we learn about human behavior from the behavior of our nearest relatives, the chimpanzees and gorillas?
  - ✓ Is our species still evolving?
- The answers to the above and many other questions – will found **in the study of *evolution***, the change through time of the properties of a living species.

1.4.2. Archaeological Anthropology

- The ways of lives of past peoples by excavating and analyzing the material culture/physical remains (*artifacts, features* and *eco -facts*) they left behind.
- **Artifacts** are *material remains made and used by the past peoples* - tools, ornaments, arrowheads, coins, and fragments of pottery

- **Features** are *like artifacts made or modified by past people, but they cannot be readily carried away from the site*.
- **Archaeological features include** such things as *house foundations, ancient buildings, fireplaces, steles,* and *postholes.*
- **Eco-facts** are *organic and environmental remains* such as soil, animal bones, and plant remains that were not made or altered by humans; but were used by them.
- Eco-facts provide important data concerning the environment and how people used natural resources in the past.
- **Archaeology has two major areas of specialties** or sub-fields
- **Prehistoric archaeology:** investigates human prehistory and prehistoric cultures.
- It focuses on the period between 6,000 years ago and the time of the first stone tools (the first artifacts), around 2.5 million years ago - *prehistory*.
- **Historic archaeology:** reconstruct the cultures of people who used writing and about whom historical documents have been written.

- It takes advantage of the fact that about 6,000 years ago, some human groups invented language and began to write down things.
- Ethiopian have very glorious past.
- Archaeological findings showed that our county belonged to those countries which have old civilization.

1.4.3. Linguistic Anthropology

- **It studies human language as a cultural resource** and **speaking as a cultural practice in its social and cultural context,** across space and time.
- *Language* is a system of information transmission and reception.
- Humans communicate messages by;
  - Sound (speech),
  - Gesture (body language), and
  - Visual ways such as writing.
- **Structural/Descriptive Linguistics:-** studies the structure of

- It examines sound systems, grammatical systems, and the meanings attached to words in specific languages to understand the structure and set of rules
- Every culture has a distinctive language with its own structure and set of rules for putting words and sounds together for the purpose of communicating.
- For them even if there are thousands of languages, structurally all are similar and making it possible for everyone to grasp and learn languages other than our ‘mother tongue’.
- **Ethno-linguistics (cultural linguistics):** examines the relationship between language and culture.
- In any language, certain cultural aspects that are emphasized are reflected in the vocabulary.
- Cultural linguists explore how different linguistic categories can affect how people categorize their experiences, how they think, and how they perceive the world around them.
- **Historical linguistics:-** the emergence of language and how specific languages have diverged over time.

- It focuses on the comparison and classifications of different languages to differentiate the historical links between them.
- **Socio-linguistics:-** *linguistic variation within a given language*.
- No language is a homogeneous system in which everyone speaks just like everyone else – due to geography, as in regional dialects and accents.
- **Linguistic anthropology** focuses on *the evolution of languages* and *it tries to understand languages variation in their structures, units, and grammatical formations*.
- Language is a key to explore and transmit culture.

1.4.4. Socio-Cultural Anthropology

- It is the largest sub-fields of anthropology
- It deals with human society and culture
- **Society** is the group of people who have similar ways of life, but **culture** is a way of life of a group of people.

- **Socio-cultural anthropology** describes, analyzes, interprets, and explains social, cultural and material life of contemporary human societies.
- It studies the social (human relations), symbolic or nonmaterial (religious, language, and any other symbols) and material (all man-made objects) lives of living peoples.
- Socio-cultural anthropologists engage in two aspects of study: *Ethnography* (based on field work) and *Ethnology* (based on cross-cultural comparison)

Ethnography	Ethnology
Field work to collect data	Uses data collected by other researchers
Often descriptive	Usually synthetic
Group/community specific	Comparative/cross-cultural

- Socio-cultural anthropology uses ethnographical and ethnological approaches to study culture and human societies.

- It is sub-divided into many other specialized fields like: Medical Anthropology, Urban Anthropology, Economic Anthropology, Political Anthropology, Development Anthropology, Anthropology of Religion, Ecological Anthropology and others

1.5. Unique Features of Anthropology

- Several distinguishing characteristics identify anthropology from other discipline.
  - **Broad Scope**
    - Interested in all human beings contemporary or past, ''primitive'' or '' civilized''
    - Interested in different aspects of humans including family lives, marriages, political systems, economic lives, technology, belief, health care systems, personality types, and languages.
  - **Unique Approach**
    - **Holistic** - looks any phenomena from different vantage points.
    - **Comparative -** understand differences and similarities across time and place
    - **Relativistic** - does not make value judgment

- **Insiders' views - Emic Perspective**
  - How people perceive themselves and understand their world
- **Micro-focus :** focuses on ***small-scale society or community***
- **Method of Research:** qualitative research methods such as extended fieldwork, focus group discussion, participant observation, in-depth and key informant interviews.

1.6. Misconceptions about Anthropology

- Due to *lack of appropriate awareness about the nature, scope and subject matter of Anthropology* , the following misconceptions are held by other social scientists.
  - Anthropology is *limited to the study of "primitive" societies*
  - Anthropologists *only study the rural people and rural areas*.
  - Anthropologists are *only interested in the study of far away, remote exotic communities living in isolated areas*
  - Anthropology is to study in order *to keep and preserve communities far from development* and obsolete cultural practices in museums.

1.7. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANTHROPOLOGY AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

- Anthropology is similar with other social sciences such as sociology, psychology, political sciences, economics, history, etc in terms of *their emphasis on human society*.
- But, anthropology differs from other social sciences by its *broad scope, approach, perspective, unit of analysis* and *methods*

1.8. The Contributions of Anthropology

- ✓ Helps us to *understand others culture and our own ways of life*.
- ✓ Gives us *an insight into different ways and modes of life of human society*
- ✓ Helps us to be more sensitive and ***appreciative of cultural diversity and variability***
- ✓ Helps us to fight against ***ethnocentrism and Prejudice***
- ✓ Used as a tool for ***development***

UNIT TWO
HUMAN CULTURE AND TIES THAT CONNECT

2.1. Conceptualizing Culture

- Anthropologists and sociologists define culture in different ways.
  - ✓ Edward Tylor - culture as "*a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society*".
  - ✓ B. Malinowski - culture "*as cumulative creation of man*".
  - ✓ Robert Bierstedt - "*Culture is the complex whole that consists of everything we think and do and have as members of society*."
- **Culture** is a **moral, intellectual and spiritual discipline** for advancement, in accordance with the norms and values based on accumulated heritage.
- **Culture** is a **system of learned behavior** shared and transmitted among the members of the group.
- **Culture** is a **collective heritage** learned by individuals and **passed from one generation to another.**

2.2. CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF CULTURE

Culture is Learned

- It is not transmitted genetically rather; it is acquired through the process of learning or interacting with one's environment
- This process of acquiring culture after we born is called **enculturation** - the process by which an individual learns the rules and values of one's culture.

Culture is Shared

- It is *a quality or attribute of a group* rather than an individual.
- But not all shared attributes are culture; beyond its shared nature it must be learned.

Culture is Symbolic

- A symbol is something **verbal or nonverbal**, within a particular language or culture that comes to stand for something else.
- There need be no obvious, natural, or necessary connection between the symbol and what it symbolizes.

Culture is All-Encompassing

- It comprises ***material and non-material aspects of human lives.***
- It is the sum total of human creation: **intellectual, technical, artistic, physical and moral elements**

Culture is Integrated

- *The parts of culture are interconnected* with one another.
- Particular culture traits fit into the whole system and they tend to make sense within that context.
- Change in one aspect will likely generate changes in other aspects.

Culture Can be Adaptive and Maladaptive

- People adapt themselves to the environment using culture
- The ability to adapt themselves to practically any ecological condition makes humans unique

Culture is Dynamic

- **Culture is changing constantly** as new ideas and techniques are added as time passes modifying or changing the old ways.

2.3. ASPECTS/ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

- Two of the most basic aspects of culture are **material and nonmaterial culture**

2.3.1. Material Culture

- It consists of man-made objects like tools, implements, furniture, automobiles, buildings, dams, roads, bridges, and in fact, the physical substance which has been changed and used by man.

2.3.2. Non – Material Culture

- It consists of the words the people use or the language they speak, the beliefs they hold, values and virtues they cherish, habits they follow, rituals and practices that they do and the ceremonies they observe.
- It also includes our customs and tastes, attitudes and outlook, in brief, our ways of acting, feeling and thinking
- Some of the aspects of non-material culture include:
- **Values -** are **the standards** by which member of a society define what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly.

- **Beliefs -** are **cultural conventions** that concern true or false assumptions, specific descriptions of the nature of the universe and humanity's place in it.
- **Norms** - are **shared rules or guidelines** that define how people "ought" to behave under certain circumstances.
- Norms vary in terms of their importance to a culture. These are:
  - ✓ **Folkways** - are norms that are not strictly enforced, such as not leaving your seat for an elderly people inside a bus/taxi.
  - ✓ **Mores** - are norms that are believed to be essential to core values and we insist on conformity.
  - ✓ A person who steals, rapes, and kills has violated some of society's most important mores.
- People who violate mores usually severely punished, but level of punishment varies from society to society.

2.4. Cultural Unity and Variations: Universality, Generality and Particularity

- Certain biological, psychological, social, and cultural features are;
  - Universal (found in every culture),

- General (common to several but not all human groups),
- Particular (unique to certain cultural traditions).

Universality

- Cultural traits that span across all cultures
- Murdock has listed 73 elements known to all cultures - include cooking, division of labor, greetings, music, language, law etc.

Generality

- Cultural traits that occur in many societies but not all of them.

Particularity

- Cultural traits that occur in specific forms in each society

2.5. Evaluating Cultural Differences: Ethnocentrism, Cultural Relativism and Human Rights

A. Ethnocentrism

- It is the tendency to see the behaviors, beliefs, values, and norms of one's own group as the only right way of living and to judge others by those standards.

- The belief that our own society's ways are the correct, normal, better ways, for acting, thinking, feeling and behaving.
- It prevent us from understanding and appreciating another culture, prevent open communication and result in misunderstanding and mistrust.

B. Cultural Relativism

- It suspends value judgment and views about the behavior of people from the perspective of their own culture.
- Every culture contains its own unique pattern of behavior which seem alien to people from other cultural backgrounds.
- A culture should be studied in terms of its own meanings and values
- Respect for cultural differences involve:
  - Appreciating cultural diversity;
  - Accepting and respecting other cultures;
  - Trying to understand every culture and its elements in terms of its own context and logic;
  - Accepting that each body of custom has inherent dignity and meaning;

- Knowing that a person's own culture is only one among many; and
- Recognizing that what is moral, ethical, acceptable, in one culture may not be so in another

C. Human Rights

- It challenges cultural relativism by invoking a realm of justice and morality beyond and superior to the laws and customs of particular countries, cultures, and religions.
- Human rights include the right to speak freely, to hold religious beliefs without persecution, and to not be murdered, injured, or enslaved or imprisoned without charge.
- Ethnographers try to be **objective**, **accurate**, and **sensitive** in their accounts of other cultures.

2.6. Culture Change

- Culture change occur as a result of the following Mechanisms:

➢ **Diffusion** - *the process by which cultural elements are borrowed from another society and incorporated into the culture of the recipient group.*

✓ It is ***direct*** when two cultures trade, intermarry, war

- It is ***forced*** when one culture subjugates another and imposes its customs
- It is ***indirect*** when items or traits move from one group to another via other group without any firsthand contact

- **Acculturation -** *the adoption of new traits or patterns as a result of continuous contact with another culture*.
  - The cultures of either or both groups may be changed by this contact.
  - This usually happens in situations of trade or colonialism.
- **Invention** - *the process by which humans innovate and creatively finding solutions to problems*
  - Faced with comparable problems and challenges, people in different societies have innovated and changed
- **Globalization -** encompasses *a series of processes working to promote change in a world in which nations and people are increasingly interlinked and mutually dependent*.
- Economic and political forces promote linkages, as well as modem systems of transportation and communication.

- Long-distance communication is easier, faster, and cheaper than ever, and extends to remote areas.

2.7. Other concepts of Culture

- **Cultural Alternatives**: refer to *the activities which the member of society may freely choose to follow or not to follow*.
  - Several alternatives are associated with a particular cultural universal thus allowing personal choice.
  - Choice is limited by the number of roles & the number of people available to perform them.
- **Cultural Specialties**: refer to *the special skills or abilities and behavior associated with the cultural alternative*.
  - The alternatives are limited by the scope of the division of labor in society.
- **Culture Shock**: refers to *the psychological maladjustment individuals experience when they came across the society different from their own culture*.
- It is *a feeling of confusion and anxiety* caused by contacts with another culture.

- The disorientation and frustration of those who find themselves among people who do not share their basic values and beliefs.

2.8. Culture Area and Cultural Contact in Ethiopia

- It refer to a cluster of related cultures occupying a certain geographical region.
- In the context of Ethiopia, we may come up with different culture are in relation to subsistence. These are;

A. Plough culture area

- It represents those parts of the country where agriculture is predominantly the means of subsistence.
- Most of highland and central parts of the country serves as the backbone of the economy is considered a plough culture.
- A subject of anthropological inquires over the past seven decades starting from the 1950s.
- Some of the ethnographers who studied the area are Donald Levine, Allen Hobben, Fredrick Gamst and Jack Bauer.

B. Enset Culture Area

- It covers a vast region in the southern part of the country.
- *Enset* cultivating regions of the present day SNNPRS such as the Guraghe, Sidama and Gedeo areas
- *Enset* serves as a staple diet to the people who make use the plant in a wide variety of forms for a living.

C. Pastoral Culture Area

- Found in the low land areas covering a large section of Afar in the Northwest, Somali in the Southeast and Borena in Southern Ethiopia.
- Inhabitants rely significantly on their herds and cattle for a living.
- Mobility of people and herds is a major characteristic feature of the people occupying the pastoral culture area.

2.9 TIES THAT CONNECT: MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND KINSHIP

2.9.1. Marriage

- Marriage is defined as *a sexual union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are considered the legitimate offspring of both parents*.
- It is a permanent legal union between a man and a woman.
- Its main purpose is to create new social relationships, rights and obligations between the spouses and their kin, and to establish the rights and status of children when they are born.
- The ritual of marriage marks a change in status for a man and a woman and the acceptance by society as new legal family.

2.9.1.1 .Rules of Marriage

- Societies have rules that state whom one can and cannot marry
- The most common form of prohibition is, mating with certain type of kins or relatives that are defined by the society as being inappropriate sexual partners - **incest taboos**.
- The most **universal form of incest taboo** involves mating between members of the immediate family: mother-sons, father-daughters, and brother-sisters.

2.9.1.2. Mate Selection: Whom Should You Marry?

A. Exogamy

- This is *the rule by which a man is not allowed to marry someone from his own social group.*
- Reasons for the practice of exogamy got approval in most societies include:
  - Marriage within the group-members is considered as a marriage between a brother and sister
  - Attraction between a male and female gets lost due to close relationship in a small group.
  - Great increase of energy and vigor is possible in the progeny if marriage binds two extremely distant persons
  - Adaptive value as it links people into a wider social network that nurtures, helps, and protects them in times of need

B. Endogamy

- It requires people marry within their own social group (e.g. their own tribe, nationality, religion, race, community, social class etc).
- Religious groups such as the Amish, Mormons, Catholics, and Jews and castes in India and Nepal are also endogamous.

C. Preferential Cousin Marriage

- Two different types of preferential cousins marriages are:
- **Cross Cousins**: are children of siblings of the opposite sex- that is one's mother's brothers' children and one's father's sisters' children.
- It is the most common form of preferential cousin marriage
- **Parallel Cousins**: when marriage takes place between the children of the siblings of the same sex
- Children of siblings of the same sex, namely the children of one's mother's sister and one's father brother.
- The mate may come either from one's father's brother's children or mother's sister's children.

D. Levirate and Sororate Marriage

- **The levirate -** is *the custom whereby a widow is expected to marry the brother or close relative of her dead husband*.
  - ✓ Children belong legally to the dead brother rather than to the actual genitor.
  - ✓ Serves as a form of social security for the widow and her children and preserved the rights of her husband's family to her sexuality and future children.

- **The Sororate**, when a wife dies the husband marry the sister or close relative of his deceased wife.
  - ✓ If the deceased spouse has no sibling, the family of the deceased is obliged to supply some equivalent relative as a substitute.

2.9.1.3. Type of Marriage

- **Monogamy:** the marriage of one man to one woman at a time
- **Polygamy:** is a marriage of a man or woman with two or more mates
- Polygamy can be of two types:
  - ❖ **Polygyny**: the marriage of a man to two or more women at a time
  - ❖ **Polyandy:** the marriage of a woman to two or more men at a time
- **Sororal polygyny -** a man marry two or more sisters at a time
- **Non-sororal polygyny** - when the co-wives are not sisters

Advantages & Disadvantages of Polygamous Marriage

Advantages

- ✓ A means of protection of wealth, power & status
- ✓ Seen as a sign of prestige
- ✓ More children - valuable for future economic and political assets.

Disadvantages

- ✓ Jealousy among the co-wives
- ✓ Psychological and social problems

2.9.1.4 Economic Consideration of Marriage

- **Marriage has a contract** includes **the transfer of certain rights between the parties** involved:
  - ✓ *Rights of sexual access,*
  - ✓ *Legal rights to children,*
  - ✓ *Rights of the spouses to each other's economic goods and services.*
- **Bride Price/ Bride Wealth -** is the compensation given upon marriage by the family of the groom to the family of the bride.
- Bride price has been seen as;
  - ✓ *Security or insurance for the good treatment of the wife*
  - ✓ *Stabilize marriage by reducing the possibility of divorce*
  - ✓ *Compensation to the bride's lineage for the loss of her economic potential and her childbearing capacity*
  - ✓ *A symbol of the union between two large groups of kin.*

- **Bride Service** - is *the labor service provided for the parents of the bride (wife) by the bridegroom (husband).*
- **Dowry -** involves *a transfer of goods or money in the opposite direction, from the bride's family to the groom's family*.

2.9.1.5 Post-Marital Residence

- **Patrilocal Residence**: the married couple lives with or near the relatives of the husband's father.
- **Matrilocal Residence**: the married couple lives with or near the relatives of the wife.
- **Avunculocal Residence**: the married couple lives with or near the husband's mother's brother.
- **Ambilocal/Bilocal Residence:** the married couple has a choice of living with relatives of the wife or relatives of the husband.
- **Neolocal Residence**: the Married couple forms an independent place of residence away from the relatives of either spouse.

2.9.2. FAMILY

- An intimate kin based group that consists of at least a parent-child nucleus.
- *It is a minimal social unit that cooperated economically and assumes responsibilities for rearing children.*
- It is the most important primary group in society.
- It is the most permanent and pervasive of all social institutions.

Types of Family Structure

- **Nuclear Family**: consisting of a husband and wife and their children
- It is common in modern societies
- **Extended Family:** a family in small- scale, traditional societies .
- It may constitute a husband, his wife/wives, his wife's/ wives' children and/or the wives and children of his sons
- It *consist of two or more families* that are linked by blood ties.

2.9.2.1 FUNCTIONS MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

- Biological Function**:** *regulate sexual relations and reproductive function.*
- Economic Function: *economic co-operation between men and women and ensure survival of individuals in a society*
- Social Function**:** *creation and perpetuation of the society*
- Educational and Socialization Function: *personality, emotional, social and intellectual development of children*

2.9.3. Kinship

- *The network in which people are related to one another through blood, marriage and other ties.*
- ***It is a kind of social relationship that ties people***.
- In any society every individual belongs to two different nuclear families.
- The family in which he was born and reared - **'family of orientation'**.
- The family to which he establishes relation through marriage - **'family of procreation'**.

- Kinship can be created through three ways:
  - ✓ *Through blood: the principle of consanguinity.*
  - ✓ *Through marriage: the principle of affinity.*
  - ✓ *Through adoption:* the principle of fictitious kinship.

2.9.4. Descent

- It refers *the social recognition of the biological relationship that exists between the individuals*.
- The **rule of descent** refers *a set of principles by which an individual traces his descent*.
  - ❖ **Patrilineal descent - descent traced solely through the male line**
    - ✓ Succession and inheritance pass through the male line
  - ❖ **Matrilineal descent - descent traced solely through the female line**
    - ✓ Only females acquire the succession and inheritance
  - ❖ **Cognatic Descent - individuals are free to show their genealogical links either through men or women.**
    - ✓ no fixed rule to trace the succession and inheritance

UNIT THREE
3. MARGINALIZED, MINORITIES, AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

3.1. Definition of Concepts

- It is defined as *a treatment of a person or social group as minor, insignificant or peripheral*.
- It involves the exclusion of certain groups from social interactions, marriage relations, sharing food and drinks, and working and living together.
- There are marginalized social groups in every society and culture.
- *Women, children, older people,* and *people with disabilities* are among marginalized groups across the world.
- *Religious, ethnic,* and *racial minorities* are also among social groups marginalized in different societies and cultures.
- *Crafts workers such as tanners, potters, and ironsmiths* are marginalized in many parts of Ethiopia.

- **Vulnerability** refers to ***the state of being exposed to physical or emotional injuries.***
- **Vulnerable groups** are **people exposed to possibilities of attack, harms or mistreatment.**
- **Minority groups** refers to **a small group of people within a community, region, or country**.
- Minority groups are different from the majority population in terms of race, religion, ethnicity, and language
- They can be ethnic minorities, religious minorities, or racial minorities in a given community, region of country.

3.2. Gender-based Marginalization

- **Gender inequality** involves **discrimination on a group of people based on their gender.**
- Women are exposed to social and economic inequalities involving unfair distribution of wealth, income and job opportunities.
- Women and girls are vulnerable to gender-based violence such as *rape, early marriage, abduction/forced marriage, domestic violence and female genital cutting/mutilation.*

3.3. Marginalized Occupational Groups

- These include: tanners, potters, weavers and ironsmiths.
- Craft-workers such as **potters and tanners** are considered as impure and excluded from *social interactions, ownership of economic resources , and participation in associations and celebrations.*

3.4. Type of Marginalization

- **Spatial Marginalization -** *live on the outskirts of villages, near to forests, on poor land, around steep slopes*.
- They are segregated at market places and they sell their goods at the outskirts of markets.
- When they walk, they are expected to give way for others and walk on the lower side of the road.
- **Economic Marginalization -** excluded from certain economic activities including production and exchanges.
  - ✓ In some cultures they are not allowed to cultivate crops.
  - ✓ They have a limited access to land and land ownership

- **Social Marginalization -** excluded from intermarriage, share burial places with others and membership of associations like iddirs.
  - ✓ When marginalized groups are allowed to participate in social events, they must sit on the floor separately-sometimes outside the house or near the door.
- **Cultural Marginalization -** manifested in negative stereotyping like:
  - ✓ Occupational minorities are labelled as impure and polluting;
  - ✓ They are accused of eating animals that have died without being slaughtered;
  - ✓ Occupational minorities are also considered as unreliable, lacking morality, respect and shame.

3.4. Age-based vulnerability

- It is **susceptibility of people, especially children and older people, to different forms of attack, physical injuries and emotional harms.**

3.4.1 Children: Discrimination/vulnerability

- They are among **vulnerable groups exposed to harm due to their age**.
- Both boys and girls are exposed to some harm and abuse

- Girls are exposed to double marginalization and discrimination because of the gender.
- Girls are exposed to HTPs like female genital cutting and early/ child marriage, in many parts of Ethiopia.
- **Factors encouraging early marriage:** social norms and **economic factors** are the two major drivers of the practice.

3.4.2. Marginalization of older persons

- Age-based marginalization also affects older people with the age of 60 and above.
- People's attitude towards older persons is changing over time
- Older persons have been considered as custodians of tradition, culture, and history they are crucial in mentoring younger people, resolving disputes, and restoring peace across Ethiopian cultures.
- Rural-urban migration, changes in values and life style, education and new employment opportunities lead to so many changes.

- **Ageism** refers to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people based on their age. They are excluded from social, cultural, political and economic interactions in their communities.
- They are marginalized because - social burden rather than social assets.

3.5. Religious and Ethnic Minorities

- There are several examples of marginalization and discrimination targeting religious and ethnic minorities in the world.
- Jewish and Muslim Rohingyas suffered discrimination and persecution in different parts of the world.

UNIT FOUR
IDENTITY, INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS AND MULTICULTURALISM IN ETHIOPIA

4.1. Identity, Ethnicity and Race

4.1.1. Ethnicity: *What's in a name?*

- After the end of WWII words like "ethnicity", "ethnic groups" "ethnic conflict" and "nationalism" becomes common.
- During the 1980s and early 1990s, there is an explosion in the growth of attention on **ethnicity, ethnic phenomenon and nationalism** across different disciplines, within social sciences.
- In the early twentieth century, many social theorists believe that ethnicity and nationalism decrease in importance and vanish as a result of modernization, industrialization and individualism.
- But, ethnicity and nationalism grown in political importance in the world, particularly since the ***Second World War***.
- 35 of the 37 armed conflicts in the world in 1991 were internal conflicts, and most of them are ethnic conflicts.

- In many parts of the world, **nation building** - *the creation of political cohesion and national identity in former colonies* - **is high on the political agenda.**
- Ethnic and national identities become pertinent following the continuous influx of labor migrants and refugees to Europe and North America, which leads the establishment of new, permanent ethnic minorities in these areas.
- At the time indigenous populations have organized themselves politically, and demand that their ethnic identities and territorial entitlements should be recognized by the State.
- But nowadays, *ethnicity and nationalism is a very contesting issue* in different parts of the world.
- *The disappearance of the strong socialist state in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe* and
- *Closer economic, political and cultural integration in western*

4.1.2. Conceptualizing Ethnicity

- It derived from the Greek term '***ethnos'*** which means "*a group of people bound together by the same manners, customs or other distinctive features*"
- The word ethnicity is the most difficult concept to define.
- Most of the founding fathers of anthropology and sociology didn't granted attention for the concept ethnicity.
- **Max Weber** was *the first influential sociologist who tried to define the concepts of ethnicity and ethnic group* in his work entitled "***Economy and Society", in 1922***.
- According to Weber, an "**ethnic group**" is based on the belief in common descent shared by its members, extending beyond kinship, political solidarity vis-a-vis other groups, and common customs, language, religion, values, morality, and etiquette.
- In other words, ethnic groups are those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities or physical type or of customs.
- It also refers a collectivity of humans lived and acted together - a group of people with shared communality.

- Weber's argument is that: "*ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere*.
- *On the other hand, it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized that inspires the belief in common ethnicity*"
- Any cultural trait in common can provide a basis for and resources for ethnic closure: *language, ritual, economic way of life, lifestyle more generally, and the division of labor.*
- Shared language and ritual are implicated in ethnicity: mutual intelligibility of the behavior of others is a fundamental pre-requisite for any group.
- The next contribution comes from the influential works of the Norwegian anthropologist, named Frederik Barth in his work entitled "*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*"(1969).
- Barth began with what actors believe or think: ***ascriptions and self-ascriptions***.
- A ***categorical ascription*** is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, determined by his origin and background.

- To the extent that ***actors use ethnic identities*** to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction, ***they form ethnic groups*** in this organizational sense.
- His emphasis was not the *substance* or *content* of ethnicity, rather upon the social processes, which produce and reproduce boundaries of identification and differentiation between ethnic collectivities.
- *The features that are taken into account are not the sum of 'objective' differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant*
- *Not only ecological variations mark and exaggerate differences; some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored*
- **The cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies have two orders:**

- (i) **Overt signals or signs** - the diacritical features that people look

- Since belonging to an ethnic category implies being a certain kind of person, having that identity helps to be judged and to judge oneself, by those standards that are relevant to that identity.
- Before Barth, cultural difference was explained from the ***inside out*** – social groups possess different cultural characteristics, which make them unique and distinct (common language, lifestyle, descent, religion, physical markers, history, eating habits, etc.).
- Culture was perceived as a relatively or firmly stable, persistent and intact and it was understood in terms of a group's property
- Nonetheless, Barth defined and explained ethnicity from the ***outside in.***
- It is not the '***possession'*** of cultural characteristics that makes social groups distinct but rather it is the ***social interaction*** with other groups that makes that difference possible, visible and socially meaningful.

- The difference is created, developed and maintained only through interaction with others (i.e., Ethiopianess is created and becomes culturally and politically meaningful only through the encounter with Kenyaness, Sudanness, Somalianess, etc.).
- Hence, Barth's work has transformed and shifted the study of ethnic difference from the study of ***cultural contents*** (language, religion, and customs) to the study of the ***interaction processes.***
- Cultural differences do not create ethnic collectivities: the social contact with others leads to the definition and categorization of an "us" and "them".
- In spite of the difference in scholarly views, the 'basic Anthropological model of ethnicity' can be summarized as:

✓ *Ethnicity is a matter of cultural differentiation - identification always involves a dialectical interplay between similarity and difference.*

✓ *Ethnicity is a matter of shared meanings - but it is also produced and reproduced during interaction.*

- *Ethnicity is collective and individual, externalized in social interaction and the categorization of others, and internalized in personal self-identification.*

4.3. Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity

4.3.1. Ethnic Group

- Different scholars tried to conceptualize the term 'ethnic group' from different perspectives.
  - **Anderson (1983)**, described ethnic groups as "*an imagined community*" that possesses a "*character and quality*".
  - **Schermerhorn (1996),** conceptualize ethnic group as *a unit of population having unique characteristics in relation with others, binding with common language, myth of origin, and history of ethnic allegiance.*
  - **Eriksen (2002),** states that *ethnic categories created out of the very contact between groups* and dealing with ethnic groups in total isolation is as absurd as one hand clapping.

- **Barth (1969),** define ethnic groups as *a self-defined group based on subjective factors and fundamental cultural values chosen by members from their past history or present existing conditions* in which members are in contact with other ethnic groups.
- By considering the various definitions *Hutchinson and Smith's (1996) identified six main features* that define an ethnic group. This includes;

✓ ***A common proper name,*** *to identify and express the "essence" of the community;*

✓ ***A myth of common ancestry*** *that includes the idea of common origin in time and place and that gives an ethnic group a sense of fictive kinship;*

✓ ***Shared historical memories,*** *shared memories of a common pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration;*

✓ ***Elements of common culture*** *which include religion, customs, and language;*

✓ ***A link with a homeland,*** *not necessarily its physical occupation by the ethnic group, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land and*

✓ ***A sense of solidarity*** *on the part of the ethnic's population.*

4.3.2. Ethnic Identity

- There is no widely agreed upon definition of ethnic identity.
- **Ethnic identity** is *an affiliative construct, where an individual is viewed by themselves and by others as belonging to a particular ethnic or cultural group.*
- Affiliation can be influenced by racial, natal, symbolic and cultural factors.
- Racial factors: *the use of physiognomic and physical characteristics*;
- Natal factors: include *origins of individuals, their parents and kin*;
- Symbolic factors: include those factors that *typify or exemplify an ethnic group (e.g., holidays, foods, clothing, artifacts, etc.).*
- On the individual level **ethnicity** is ***a social-psychological process***, which gives an individual a sense of belonging and identity.
- Individuals place themselves in one or another community *internally by states of mind and feelings, like self-definitions or feelings of closeness*, and *externally by behavior appropriate to these feelings.*

- Locating oneself in relation to a community and society is not only a ***psychological phenomenon***, but also ***a social phenomenon.***
- We can distinguish **external** and **internal aspects of ethnic identity**.
- **External aspects** refer to *observable behaviors both cultural and social*. These are;
  - ✓ Speaking an ethnic language and practicing ethnic traditions,
  - ✓ Participation in ethnic personal networks, such as family and friendships,
  - ✓ Participation in ethnic institutional organizations, such as churches, schools, enterprises and media
  - ✓ Participation in ethnic voluntary associations, such as clubs, 'societies,' youth organizations and
  - ✓ Participation in functions sponsored by ethnic organizations such as picnics, concerts, public lectures, rallies, dances, etc.

- **The internal aspects** refer to images, ideas, attitudes, and feelings.
- These are interconnected with the external behavior.
- We can distinguish at least three types of internal aspects of identity: cognitive, moral and affective.

4.4. Race : The Social Construction of Racial Identity

- Race is an elusive concept like ethnicity.
- Ethnicity/ethnic identity was used in synonym with race or racial identity, which complicated their relation.

Racial Types - Anthropological Perspectives

- Biologically, **race** is *a group of organisms of the same species that share similar physical and genetic attributes and specific geographic regions*.
- Human beings adapt to their environments through an evolutionary process.
- Human species adapts mainly through **cultural means**; we survive our environments *not because we've adapted to them biologically, but with artifacts and complex behavior.*

- **Adaptation** is *a process (behavioral and biological) that increases the likelihood of survival for an organism.*
- In humans *adaptation include complex behavior like making tools.*
- These behaviors aren't passed on genetically but rather culturally.
- Some of bodily adaptations are pretty easily visible, and some are only visible when you look very closely at the genes.
- **Skin color,** one of the most visible human characteristics, is a good example of adaptation to a particular environment.
- The darkest skin appears in populations originating in tropical zones, such as Africa and Asia.
- The lightest skin is traditionally found in northern Europe because over time, natural selection favored darker skins in areas that received extensive and more intensive sunlight.
- *Biological adaptations aren't* ***instantaneous.***
- *They take place over the span of generations*, so an African moving to Europe won't evolve lighter skin, nor will an European travelling to Africa evolve darker skin.

- Another biological adaptation in human beings is ***the difference of stature*** between arctic and East African people.
- In colder regions warm-blooded animals will have stockier bodies than their counterparts from warmer regions, because stockier bodies are more efficient at retaining body heat.
- *Generally, homo sapiens sapiens* does feature geographically based differences within the species. But there are two very important points;
- First, these *genetic differences don't mean a lot, biologically*.
  - ✓ The *genes shows no significant species-level differences*, only very minor visible ones like skin color, shape of nose, or hair texture.
  - ✓ Biologically speaking, *these differences aren't important*.
  - ✓ For most physical anthropologists race is nearly meaningless when applied to humanity.
  - ✓ Rather than races, physical anthropologists more focus on ancestry - the reality of some geographically specific human adaptations

- Second - *cultural behavior isn't genetically linked to those geographical differences*.
- *Most of human behavior isn't biologically determined or filtered in through the natural environment* - **most of it is culturally learned.**
- Like any human can acquire any language, any infant can acquire any culture.
- It's culture that really drives behavior, not the genes.
- The ancient belief that human races have innate behavioral traits is **wrong.**
- One of the main reasons that the race concept really doesn't apply to humans is that *defining human races is almost impossible*:
  - ✓ To what race do you assign a person born from a Native American and a native African marriage?
  - ✓ Do you create a new race in this case?
  - ✓ what's "black" or "white"? Is a Greek person black or white?

THE HISTORY OF HUMAN RACIAL TYPING

- Humans classify their neighbors in various ways for a long time.
- Some of the first records of humans classifying come from ancient Egypt in 1350 BC by skin color:
  - ✓Red-skinned: Egyptians
  - ✓Black-skinned: people south of Egypt,
  - ✓White-skinned those living north of the Mediterranean Sea, and
  - ✓Yellow-skinned people to the east.
- By the 16th century, during the age of discovery, Europeans voyaging around the world were encountering many previously unknown peoples and developing racial classifications of their own.
- *Because skin color was so noticeable, many racial classifications were based only on that factor.*

- Many racial supremacists still believe that cultural behavior correlates with skin color, nose shape, hair texture or what you have.
- By the mid-1800s, naturalists began using a method of describing the shape of the head called the ***cephalic index***, a ratio measurement of the length and width of the head to classify races.
  - ***Dolichocephalic*** peoples had long and narrow heads, like most northern Europeans, and
  - ***Brachycephalic*** peoples tended to have broad heads, like many southern Europeans.
- The root cause of all this problem is the identification of human types based on ***biological determinism***: *the idea that physical*

- This wrong idea, is derived from the application of Darwin's principles of biological evolution to societies - *Social Darwinism*
- *Social Darwinism* is the idea that as ***societies and nations evolved and competed***, ***the morally superior societies would prevail as the less-moral, "savage" societies were weeded out***.
- With behavioral characteristics "linked" to genetic characteristics, in the minds of many in the 19th and early 20th centuries even advocated for state regulation of marriages, family size and whether to allow an individual to reproduce.
- This practice became known as ***eugenics***, and the Nazis took it to a terrible extreme during World War II.

The Grand Illusion: Race, turns out, is arbitrary

- Over the years, various anthropologists have attempted to classify the human species into various races, such as **Caucasian, Black African, Asian**, and so on.
- The problem is that the physical traits used to identify aren't binary opposites like black or white with no middle ground.

- They're *continuous* traits, meaning that a whole spectrum exists between "black" and "white" skin designations.
- Any attempt to classify human races raises a number of questions.
- Although Asians look pretty clearly different from Europeans in some respects, what do you do with people who look partly Asian and partly European?
- A Study by Harvard Anthropologist named **Lewontin in 1972** concluded that "*Human racial classification is of no social value and is positively destructive of social and human relations*."
- For most professional anthropologists today, human "race" is an outdated concept.

Why is everyone Different? Human Cultural Diversity/Variation

- Although all humans are of the same species, they don't all act the same; human behavior varies tremendously worldwide.

- If race doesn't control a person's characteristics, *what does account for human behavioral variation*? **The answer is culture**.
- Cultures differ because people live in different ecological, economic, social or other conditions.
- For example, **the culture of the Amazonian foragers** have certain characteristics, and they value certain things because they have evolved in a particular ecological env't **different from highland Scots,** whose own culture is an adaptation to their unique env't.

Racial Classification: A Short Historical Overview

- For sometime, it was common to divide ***humanity into four main races*.**
- In this regard, **race** was used both as a *system of human classification and social stratification* as follows:

✓ ***Europeaeus***: White; muscular; hair – long, flowing; eyes blue – Acute, inventive, gentle, and governed by laws.

✓ ***Americanus***: Reddish; erect; hair – black, straight, thick; wide nostrils, merry, free, and regulated by custom.

- ***Asiaticus***: Sallow (yellow); hair black; eyes dark – Haughty, avaricious, severe, and ruled by opinions.
- ***Africanus***: Black; hair – black, frizzled; skin silky; nose flat; lips tumid, negligent, and governed by the will of their masters.

- ***Modern genetics abandon race*** and tends not to speak of it **due to two main reasons:**
  - *There has been so much interbreeding between human populations. So it would be meaningless to talk of fixed boundaries between races*
  - *The distribution of hereditary physical traits does not follow clear boundaries*
- *Genetic studies concerning human variation show that humans are more than 99% genetically alike*.
- Surprisingly, **of the 1% variation**;
  - *85% is found within any human population or group (such as town/village/tribal or ethnic group),*
  - *10% is between any two groups, even those that are geographically close and*

- ✓ *5% is between geographically distant groups such as two towns/villages from different continents*.

- Based on studies, *there is no unifying genetic essence for people of the same race when compared to people of different races*.
- As a result, ***use of race as a system of human categorization lacks scientific validity.***
- But, based on the social construction perspective '**Race**' is *human groups defined by itself or others as distinct by virtue of perceived common physical characteristics that are held to be inherent*.
- Different anthropologists and other scholars have different views on the relation between *race and ethnicity.*
- Scholars like **van den Berghe (1983)** regard "race" relations as a special case of ethnicity. He describes race as *"a special marker of ethnicity"* that uses biological characteristics as an ethnic marker.

- Contrary to this, other scholars argued that while there is much overlap between race and ethnicity, they are distinct concepts.
- In this regard, **Max Weber (1992),** differentiated between racial and ethnic identity by proposing that a *blood relationship was necessary for racial identification but not for ethnic identification*.
- **John Rex (1973)** explained that "*a far wider set of situations are based upon cultural differentiation of groups in the form ethnic groups than those which are commonly called racial groups"*.
- **Gerald Berreman (1981)** differeniated ethnicity from race in that, *racial stratification is associated with birth-ascribed status based on physical and cultural characteristics defined by outside groups.*
- *For him **Ethnicity is ascribed at birth**, but **the ethnic***

4.5. THEORIES OF ETHNICITY

- There are **three basic anthropological approaches** for understanding ethnicity and these theories broadly reflect changes of approach in anthropology over the **past 20 years.**
- These changes are related to the forces of modernity and globalization.
- Globalization has a

Perspective	Description
Primordialist Approach	*Ethnicity is fixed at birth. Ethnic identification is based on deep, 'primordial' attachments to a group or culture*
Instrumentalist Approach	*Ethnicity, based on people's "historical" and "symbolic" memory is something created and used and exploited by leaders and others in the pursuit of their own interests.*
Constructivist Approach	*Ethnic identity is not something people "possess" but something they "construct" in specific social and historical contexts to their*

4.5.1. THE PRIMORDIAL MODEL OF ETHNICITY

- It is **the oldest and popular** theory in anthropology **until the mid-1970s.**
- Primordial theorists view human society as ***a conglomeration of distinct social groups***.
- *At birth a person "becomes" a member of a particular group*.
- Ethnicity is **"fixed"** and an **unchangeable** part of one's identity.
- The roots of *Primordialist* thinking can be traced back to the German Romantic philosophers.
- Especially **Herder (1744–1803),** proclaimed *the primacy of emotions and language*, and defined *society a deep-seated, mythical community.*
- He argued that *every people had its own values, customs, language and spirit and bound one closely with one's people*.
- Primordialism is an "objectivist theory" which argues "***ultimately there is some real, tangible, foundation for ethnic***

- **Isaacs (1974)** further illustrated the concept of primordial ties as a means of explaining the power and persistence of ethnic identity, which he called '***basic group identity***'.
- Isaacs's basic group identity was linked to ethnic identity, which was argued to be assigned at birth and more fundamental and natural than other social links.
- **Anthony Smith (1986),** theorized *the defining elements of ethnic identification as psychological and emotional, emerging from a person's historical and cultural backgrounds*.
- He illustrated that *the 'core' of ethnicity resides in the myths, memories, values, symbols and the characteristic styles of particular historic configurations*
- Smith concluded that, 'primordialism' makes ***two distinct claims***.
- First, ethnicity is "***natural and innate***" never change over time, and
- Second, ethnicity is "***ancient and perennial***". It is an ascribed status and ethnic membership is fixed and permanent.

4.5.2. Instrumentalist (Situational) Theory of Ethnicity

- Instrumentalists view **ethnicity** as *depending on rational calculations of advantage and stimulated by political mobilization under the leadership of actors whose main motives are non-ethnic*.
- **Banks (1996)** explained ethnicity as ***an instrument of group mobilization for political and economic ends***.
- For him *ethnicity is something that can be changed, constructed or even manipulated to gain specific political and/or economic ends.*
- Proponents of this perspective advocate that in the contexts of modern states, leaders use and manipulate perceptions of ethnic identity to further their own ends and stay in power.
- In this regard**,** *ethnicity is created in the dynamics of elite competition within the boundaries determined by political and economic realities*"
- *Ethnic groups are seen as a product of political myths, created and manipulated by culture elites in their pursuit of advantages and power.*

- Cohen (1974), the leading advocator of this perspective, "***placed greater emphasis on the ethnic group as a collectively organized strategy for the protection of economic and political interests***".
- Ethnic groups share common interests, and in pursuit of these interests they develop "***basic organizational functions: such as distinctiveness or boundaries (ethnic identity); communication; authority structure; decision making procedure; ideology; and socialization***".
- Accordingly, Daniel Bell (1975) and Jeffrey Ross (1982) emphasize the political advantage of ethnic membership choice.
- Hence, ethnicity is "*a group option in which resources are mobilized for the purpose of pressuring the political system to allocate public goods for the benefit of the members of a self-differentiating collectivity*".

4.5.3. Social Constructivist Theory of Ethnicity

- The basic notion in this approach is that *ethnicity is something that is being negotiated and constructed in everyday living*.

- *It regards ethnicity as a process, which continues to unfold.*
- E*thnicity is constructed in the process of feeding, clothing, sending to school and conversing with children and others*.
- Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this approach is its ***subjectivist stance,*** which sees **ethnicity** as *a social-psychological reality or a matter of perception of "us" and "them"* in contradistinction to looking at it as something given, which exists objectively as it were "out there".
- By this, *ethnicity is more dependent on the socio-psychological experience of individuals, where it focuses on the interpersonal and behavioral aspects of ethnicity*.
- However, this does not mean that all “subjectivists” reject all objective aspects of ethnicity.
- **Barth** is the leading figure of this approach and he viewed **ethnic identity** as an “*individualistic strategy” in which individuals move from one identity to another to “advance their personal economic and political interests, or to minimize their losses”*.

- Following Barth, *ethnic identity forms through boundary maintenance and interaction between individuals.*
- Depending on each social interaction, a person's ethnic identity can be perceived or presented in various ways.
- Barth separated culture from the concept of ethnicity.
- For him, *ethnic boundaries were psychological boundaries; ethnic culture and its content were irrelevant*.
- In general, *constructivists conceive ethnicity as situational, flexible and variable dealing with inter-personal ethnicity without initially reifying a concept of culture*.
- Jenkins (1997) further noted that, *as far as the flow of individuals from one ethnic group to another is possible, it is possible to argue that the boundaries of ethnicity are permeable and osmotic.*
- This provoked that ***ethnicity is dynamic that changes through time and space; and ethnic identities are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed.***

UNIT FIVE
CUSTOMARY AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS AND PEACE MAKING

5.1. Indigenous and Local Governance

- The role of indigenous governance was indispensable before the advent of the modern state system.
- Anthropologists have been studying indigenous systems of governance in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa and they have been used to maintain social order across Ethiopian regions.

The Oromo Gadaa

- It is *one of the well-studied indigenous systems of governance* and scholars including Paul Baxter, Eike Haberland and Asmerom Legesse have been studying the Oromo Gaada since the 1950s.
- **Asmerom**, a famous anthropologist, is widely known for his *ethnographic studies on the Oromo political system - the Gaada system, particularly focusing on the Borena Oromo*.

- *Gadaa* system is '*an age grading institution of the Oromo that has a complex system of administration, law making and dispute settlement*'.
- It is *a highly celebrated institution of egalitarian (democratic) system of governance and dispute settlement* among the Oromos.
- Political power is transferred from one generation set (*Luuba*) to another every eight years.
- Gaada officials such as the ***Abba Gaada*** and ***Abba Seera* (father of law)** serve for eight years and leave their position to the new generation.
- The system involves a continuous process of law making and revision.
- The law making process has rooms for wider participation of the people.
- ***Gumi gaayo*,** a law making assembly of the Borana Oromo, is held every eight years to revising, adapting, making and publicizing t**he customary law (*seera*)** and **custom (*aadaa*).**
- The system of governance also include institutions of conflict resolution such as the *Jaarsa Biyyaa* (elders of the soil/land).

The Gedeo Baalle

- The Gedeo have an indigenous system of governance called *Baalle*.
- The customary law of the Gedeo is called ***Seera*.**
- **The Ya'a**, the general assembly, is the highest body of governance.
- **The Baalle** is a complex system which has three administrative hierarchies:
  - ✓ **Abba Gada**, the leader of the *Baalle*
  - ✓ **Roga**, traditional leader next to the *Abba Gada*, and
  - ✓ Two levels of council of elders, **Hulla Hayyicha** and ***Songo Hayyicha.***
- Conflicts are resolved by the ***Songo hayyicha*** at village level.
- When disputes are not settled at the village level, referred to first to the **Hulla Hayyicha** and finally to the *Abba Gada*.
- In general, **the Gedeo system of governance** has the following major institutions: the *ya'a* , the *Seera*, the Abba Gada, *and* council of elders.
- There are some similarities between the Oromo Gaada and the Gedeo Baalle system and this is a good example of cross-cultural similarities in Ethiopia.

- *Both have grading system and periodic transfer of power*
- *The role of religion is high in the two systems*.

- Similarities are also observed in the naming of indigenous institutions.
- For example several ethnic groups use a similar term with slight variations to refer to their customary law:
  - Seera (Oromo),
  - Sera (Sidama),
  - Serra (Siltie),
  - Gordena Sera (Soddo Gurage),
  - Senago sera (Mesqan Gurage), and
  - Seera (Gedeo).

Dere Woga of the Gamo

- The Gamo are among Omotic peoples of southern Ethiopia.
- They organized into several local administrations known as ***deres***.

- Based on anthropological findings, there were more than 40 *deres* across the Gamo highlands.
- Each *dere* had its own ***ka'o* (king)** and ***halaqa* (elected leader).**
- The indigenous system of governance embraces the *dere woga* (customary law) and the *dubusha* - the general assembly - *it is the highest body and responsible to make and revise customary laws and resolve major disputes that cannot be solved at the lower levels*.
- The *dubushas* has three hierarchies:
  - ✓ The *dere dubusha* (at the top),
  - ✓ Sub-*dere dubusha* (at the middle), and
  - ✓ *Guta*/neighborhood *dubusha* (at the village level).
- Minor cases and disputes are resolved by the *dere cima*, council of elders.

- The indigenous governance of the Gamo is embedded in the Gamo belief system that telling a lie and hiding the truth are considered as a taboo.

5.2 Intra and Inter-ethnic Conflict Resolution Institutions

- *Conflicts and disputes exist in every society and may arise between individuals, groups and communities* within the same or different ethnic groups.
- *There are different indigenous institutions of conflict resolution and peacemaking across regions and cultures in Ethiopia*.
- Some of them are:
  - ✓ Customary dispute resolution mechanisms;
  - ✓ Traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution;
  - ✓ Grassroots justice systems; and
  - ✓ Customary justice institutions.
- Study findings reveal **variations and similarities** among indigenous institutions of conflict resolution in Ethiopia.

- Common aspects including the following:
  - ✓ *High involvement of elders at different stages*
  - ✓ *Preference and respect for elders known for their qualities including;*
    - *Experience in dispute resolution;*
    - *Knowledge of customary laws, procedures, norms and values of the society;*
    - *Impartiality, respect for rules and people;*
    - *Ability of listening and speaking politely;*
    - *Honesty and tolerance.*
  - ✓ *Focus on restoring social relationships, harmony, and peaceful coexistence.*
- Indigenous justice systems also have differences in terms of hierarchies, procedures and level of complexities.
- *Customary justice institutions include three major components.* These are;

- For example *the Sera of the Sidama, the dere woga of the Gamo, the Seera Addaa of the Oromo; Gordena Sera of Kestane Gurage*.
- *Council of elders: highly respected and well-experienced community members who have a detail knowledge of the customary laws.*
- *Have personal qualities, truthfulness and experience in settling conflicts.*
- It has different names in various ethnic groups: *Yehager Shimagile* (Amhara), *Jaarsaa Biyyaa* (Oromo), Hayyicha (Gedeo), *Dere Cima* (Gamo), *Deira Cimma* (Wolayita), and *Cimuma* (Burji).
- *Customary courts:* are public assemblies that serve two major purposes:
  - *Hearing, discussing and settling disputes, and*
  - *Revising, adapting, and making laws.*

The Three Structures of Gamo Customary Justice System

- *The Dere Woga: a comprehensive body of rules and procedures that govern issues including inheritance, property ownership, marriage and divorce, conflict resolution and gender division of labor.*

- The *Dere Cima*: *elders of the land/country - includes notable and respected elders experienced in resolving disputes*.
- They are expected to have a sound knowledge of the customary laws, norms and values of the community.
- *Dere dubusha*: *the biggest customary court and has two major functions:*
  - *Hearing, discussing and resolving disputes, and*
  - *Revising and making laws.*
- *Dere dubusha* is a sacred place where supernatural power exists and truth prevails.
- It is a place where curses are uttered in its name; justice is delivered; and important assemblies are held.

Strengths and Limitations of Customary Justice Institutions

- ***Strengths of Customary Justice Institutions***

- Incur limited cost in terms of time and resources/money;
- Conflict resolution process are held in public spaces and different parties participate in the process;

- ✓ Decisions are easily enforced through community-based sanctions
- ✓ Restoring community cohesion, social relations, collective spirit and social solidarity
- ✓ Rely on respect for elders, the tradition of forgiveness, transferring compensations, embedded in indigenous beliefs

- ***Limitations of Customary Justice Institutions***

- ✓ They are dominated by men and **women are excluded** from participation at customary courts and assemblies with few exceptions.
- ✓ Their potential in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts and restoring long-lasting peace is very limited.

5.3. Inter-ethnic Conflict Resolution

- *Most of the time indigenous institution are weak in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts.*
- But there are some examples of inter-ethnic conflict resolution institutions in some parts of Ethiopia.
- **Abbo Gereb,** the father of the river Gerewo, *is a dispute resolution institution in Rayya and Wajirat district,* Southern Tigray that address inter-ethnic conflicts.

- **Abbo Gereb** *serves to settle disputes between individuals or groups from highland Tigray and lowland Afar.*
- In the area conflict often arises due to dispute over grazing land or water resources.
- When conflict arises between parties from two ethnic groups, notable and bilingual elders from Tigray and Afar come together to resolve the dispute and restore peaceful relations.
- Inter-ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms also exist when conflicts arise among Afar, Issa, Tigrayans and Argobba.
- The mechanisms have different names like *Xinto among the Afar, Edible among the Issa and Gereb among the Tigrayans.*

5.4. Women's Role in Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking

- Ethiopian women participate in the process of dispute settlement in exceptional cases.
- Women participate in dispute settlement processes when cases are related to marriage and women's issues.
- Some times women are participating in indigenous systems of governance, conflict resolution, and peacemaking activities.

- They are not completely excluded from conflict resolution and peacemaking activities.
- In some societies, *women use their own institutions to exercise power, protect their rights, and actively participate in peacemaking activities*. Three examples are;
- **Women's Peacemaking Sticks**
- Sidama women have two instruments of power:

✓ *The Yakka is women's association or unity group.*

✓ *The Siqqo is a stick that symbolizes peace and women honor*

- **Don Kachel: Agnuak women peacemaking institution**

✓ **Don Kachel**, 'let us all live in peace', is a peacemaking institution.

✓ The peace-making movement is initiated by **Jaye**, *a group of wise and elderly Agnuak women.*

✓ The Jaye start a peace-making movement based on information gathered through women's networking.

✓ The Jaye call the disputing parties for a meeting to settle the dispute.

✓ After examining the arguments the Jaye give their verdict.

- **Women's institution of reconciliation: Raya-Azebo, Tigray**
  - ✓ **Debarte** is *a reconciliation institution of highly respected Elderly women*
  - ✓ It is important in avoiding harms associated with the culture of revenge.
  - ✓ If a man kills another man in a fight, the incident trigger the feeling of revenge among the relatives of the murdered man.
  - ✓ In such tense situation, the wife of the killer requests the Debarte intervention.
  - ✓ The Debarte quickly start their intervention to stop the act of revenge.
  - ✓ They beg the relatives/family of the murdered man to give up revenge and consider forgiveness
  - ✓ Finally they give the way for elders to start the peace-making process

5.5. Legal Pluralism: Interrelations between Customary, Religious and State Legal Systems

- **Legal pluralism** refers to *the existence of two or more legal or justice systems in a given society or country.*

- It indicates *the co-existence of multiple legal systems working side-by-side in the same society*. It is evident in the Ethiopian context.
- *Multiple legal institutions, including customary laws and courts, state laws and courts, and religious laws and courts (e.g., the Sharia Law) work side-by-side in most parts of the country.*
- The FDRE Constitution provides ample space for religious and customary laws and courts to address personal and family cases.
- *This is because a single legal system does not have a capability to address all legal cases and maintaining peace and order.*
- Hence, different justice institutions work side-by-side in most parts of the country, especially in remote and rural areas.
- These include; state/formal justice institutions, customary justice institutions, and religious courts.

UNIT SIX
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS (IKS) AND PRACTICES

6.1. Definition of concepts

6.1.1. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

- IKS is defined as *a technical insight of wisdom gained and developed by people in a particular locality through years of careful observation and experimentation*.
- It is embodied in culture and is described as an integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs and behavior.
- It consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, artifacts, rituals, ceremonies, folklores and gender.
- This culture is passed down for generations and provides a holistic view of how to use natural resources based on traditional ethical perspectives.

- IKS refers " *a total of knowledge and practices, whether explicit or implicit, used in the management of socioeconomic, ecological and spiritual problems of life, stored in the collective memory and communicated orally among members of the community and to the future generations.*

6.1.2. Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous Peoples

- It refers to *a specific group of people occupying a certain geographic area for many generations.*
- *Indigenous people possess, practice and protect a total sum of knowledge and skills constitutive of their meaning, belief systems, livelihood constructions and expression that distinguish them from other groups.*
- However, the concept **"indigenous"** is *a social and historical construct with high political, social, and economic stakes*.
- *The World Bank's (2003) definition of indigenous peoples includes:*
  - ✓ Close attachment to ancestral territories and natural resources;

- ✓ Presence of customary social and political institutions;
- ✓ Subsistence oriented economic systems;
- ✓ Indigenous language, and
- ✓ Self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group.

- Academic definitions focus on: *living in tradition-based cultures, having political autonomy prior to colonialism, and seeking to preserve cultural integrity in the present* (Corntassel, 2003).
- In sum, despite the lack of universal definition for the concept of indigenous peoples, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) sets out distinguishing features.
- This includes the:
  - ✓ Self-identification as Indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member;
  - ✓ Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies;

- ✓ Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources;
- ✓ Distinct social, economic or political systems;
- ✓ Distinct language, culture and beliefs;
- ✓ Formation of non-dominant groups of society; and
- ✓ Maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

- There is no universally agreed single definition for indigenous knowledge.

- According to Warren, ***indigenous knowledge is the local knowledge*** – *knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. Since every population is unique in terms of its environment, resources and tools IK will also be unique.*

- IK contrasts the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms.

- It is the basis for local-level decision making in *agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities*.
- For **Kwaku and Morena (2010),** *IK is a unique local knowledge to a given culture or society*.
- IK exists in rural and urban societies as part of life that their livelihood depends on specific skills and knowledge for survival.
- **The World Bank** refers *IK as a large body of knowledge and skills which is developed outside the formal system including development planning, environmental assessment, resource management, local conservation of biological resources, and conflict resolution.*
- IK has different but closely related names such as '*folk knowledge*', '*local knowledge or wisdom*', '*non-formal knowledge*', '*culture*', '*indigenous technical knowledge*', '*traditional ecological knowledge*', '*traditional knowledge*', and others.

- All these terms have similar concepts and refer to *how members of a community perceive and understand their environment and resources, particularly the way they convert those resources through labor.*
- In sum, *IK is the knowledge that people in a given community have developed over time, and that continues to develop.*
- It is based on experience, often tested over centuries of use, adapted to local culture and environment, dynamic and changing.

6.1.3. Features of Indigenous Knowledge

- **Ellen and Harris (1996)** identified the following special features of indigenous knowledge that distinguish it broadly from other knowledge.
  - ✓ **Local,** in that it is rooted in a particular community and situated within broader cultural traditions; it is a set of experiences generated by people living in those communities.
  - ✓ **Tacit knowledge** , not easily codifiable.
  - ✓ **Transmitted orally**, or through imitation and demonstration.

- ✓ **Experiential rather than theoretical knowledge.** Experience and trial and error, tested in the rigorous laboratory of survival of local communities constantly reinforce IK.
- ✓ **Learned through repetition**, which is a defining characteristic of tradition even when new knowledge is added. Repetition aids in the retention and reinforcement of IK.
- ✓ **Constantly changing**, being produced as well as reproduced, discovered as well as lost; though it is often perceived by external observers as being somewhat static.

Significance of Indigenous Knowledge

- Until recently, the development of a community's conception of knowledge was influenced by the philosophy and methods of western science.
- Today, *scholars and public policy makers are recognizing the importance of various local or culture-based knowledge systems in addressing the pressing problems of development and the environment".*
- *The knowledge of local people is an enabling component of development.*

- IKS enable people to develop strategies for handling household and communal activities.
- In Ethiopia *Debo* and *Jige* are important uniting forces in communal activities. Members of the community unit to provide essential inputs, including direct labor to operations.
- This deployment of manpower is strongly supported by *IKS, which is composed of technologies, rules, information, approaches, and relationships that are vital to sustainable development.*
- **According to Paula Puffer (1995),** *indigenous / local knowledge helps to find best solution to a development challenges*.
- Familiarity with local knowledge can help extensionists and researchers understand and communicate better with local people.
- In general, *IK is an important part of the lives of the poor*.
- *IK is a key element of the "social capital" of the poor; their main asset to invest in the struggle for survival*.
- *IK offers local people and their development workers further options in designing new projects or addressing specific problems and wider disasters.*

- *Instead of relying on imported Western technologies, people in the developing nations can combine indigenous and Western technology.*
- However, *not all indigenous practices are beneficial to sustainable development; and provide the right solution for a given problem.*
- Hence, *before adopting IK, integrating and disseminating into development programs, practices need to be scrutinized for their appropriateness*.

6.3. Indigenous Knowledge and Development

- *IK passes from one generation to the next and enable people to survive, manage their natural resources and the ecosystems like animals, plants, rivers, environment, economic, cultural and political organization*.
- *IK is relevant to development process such as agriculture, animal husbandry, traditional medicine, saving and credit, community development, poverty alleviation, and peaceful coexistence.*
- *IK helps to identify cost-effective and sustainable mechanisms for*

- It increases and enhances livelihood options through;
  - ✓ Revitalize agriculture,
  - ✓ Increase food security,
  - ✓ Improve health and
  - ✓ Promote a sense of cultural pride within the community.
- *Efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability are key determinants of the quality of dev't work, harnessing IK has a clear dev't contribution.*
- Significant improvements in development project quality are observed when IK is combined with modern technologies.
- According to the 1998/99 World Development Report, **knowledge not capital**, is the key to sustainable social and economic development.
- Building on local knowledge is the first step to mobilize capital.
- The challenge for the development community is to find better ways to learn about indigenous institutions and practices and the necessary ways to adapt modern techniques to the local practices.

- *A study of 121 rural water projects in 49 countries found that 70 percent succeeded when the beneficiaries participated in project design, compared to 10 percent success rate among programs where they did not.*
- *In sum, indigenous knowledge with western based knowledge, helps to create culturally acceptable development solutions.*

6.4. Preservation, Challenges and Limitations of IK

- *IK, passed from generation to generation orally, is in danger of being lost unless it is formally documented and preserved.*
- *The future of IK is uncertain and the loss of IK would impoverish society because, just as the world needs genetic diversity of species, it needs diversity of knowledge systems*.
- The rapid change in the way of life of local communities has largely accounted for the loss of IK.
- *Younger generations underestimate the utility of IK systems because of the influence of modem technology and education*.

- *IK is the key to local-level development and all the expertise for third world development shouldn't come from developed nations, academic institutions, multinational corporations or NGOs*''
- Regarding the challenges and limitations of IK, Amare (2009) states:
  - ✓ *Modernization and industrialization threatens the preservation and continued development of IK systems*
  - ✓ *IK can be eroded by wider economic and social forces. The growth of national and international markets, the imposition of educational and religious systems affect indigenous beliefs, values, customs, know-how and practices.*
- *There is historical and contemporary evidence that indigenous peoples have also committed environmental sins' through over-grazing, over-hunting, or over-cultivation of the land.*
- *Like scientific knowledge, sometimes the knowledge which local people rely on is wrong or even harmful.*
- Practices based on, mistaken beliefs, faulty experimentation, or inaccurate information can be dangerous and be a barrier to improving the wellbeing of indigenous people.

- *Indigenous peoples fear that their IK will be misused and lacking the power to prevent such abuses, they choose to keep quiet.*

6.5. The Erosion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems

- The recent and current rate of loss of IK is accelerating by;
  - ✓ Rapid population growth,
  - ✓ Growth of international markets
  - ✓ Educational systems,
  - ✓ Environmental degradation
  - ✓ Rapid modernization and
  - ✓ Cultural homogenization
- *In some countries, official propaganda depicts indigenous cultures and methodologies as backward or outdated and they promote one national culture and language at the expense of minority.*
- *Local people's perceptions of local species and of their own traditional systems may need to be rebuilt.*
- *Some local people and communities have lost confidence in their ability to help themselves and have become dependent on external solutions to their local problems.*

Thank You !!!