

American Culture vs Ethiopian Culture

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American and Ethiopian Culture as Contrasting Social Systems

Although American culture is very diverse regarding practice and application, still comparing it with that of Ethiopia is like contrasting black with white. As much as we'd like to merge them both, the 'overlapping' grey area is minimal and, in some aspects, opposite to one another.

There are some reasons for this sharp contrast. One can assume the principal reason is that America—itself is not limited to a single race or tradition. It is an amalgamation of different races, colors, and ethnic backgrounds. It comprises people of Africans, some Asians, and Native Americans. The rest are of Polynesian and Latin American descent. So the end product of its culture is a mixture of all these heritages and traditions. Ethiopia is also a merger of different civilizations like Northeast Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, India, Italy, and Malaysia. These diverse ethnical backgrounds are often the sources that provide for a unique cultural mix of a particular society, and with time the people of a particular continent or country start to associate and converge these cultural diversities and link them with the idea of nativism. By localizing the culture, each country depicts a wholesome view of its particular culture (although it may vary when divided and disintegrated into parts).

Music, Tradition, and the Cultural Role of the Horn of Africa

For an actual contrasting image of both these cultures, we'll have to disintegrate both these cultures into different categories. Regarding folk music, the use of the Horn of Africa (mainly Somalia) is deemed popular. More frequent use of Chordophones, Aerophones, Idiophones, and Membranophones is involved in Ethiopian folk music. Moreover, hints of ancient Christian elements converge in Ethiopian musical waves. Whereas America, as mentioned earlier has a more diverse application and is not limited to America regarding its influence. American Jazz, Rock n' Roll, Pop, and techno have not only influenced the rest of the world but it is also considered to be a part of many cultures. The Hip-hop blues in American culture depicts an African American descent in the late 20th century.

Regarding clothing, Ethiopians tend to wear loose garments that are somewhat in conformity with their climate as well. For example, the traditional dress of women in Ethiopia is a cloth called "Shema." The concept of shawls (commonly known as Netala) is also ubiquitous among Ethiopian men and women and is available in different styles and colors (depending upon the occasion).

Whereas, American folk costumes are very diverse and have largely evolved over time. For example, Native Indian men (mostly chiefs) in America wore warbonnets, whereas in southwest Texas and other associated rural areas, the traditional cowboy hats, cowboy boots, jeans, and prairie skirts were common. Then over time, it later evolved, and the inclusion of shirts, ties, and suits was incorporated into their traditional wear. Moreover, after the 20th century, African Americans have also largely contributed to clothing like long T-shirts and sneakers, etc. More or less, the concept of clothing and traditional wear is largely “evolutionary” in nature. It has [evolved over the years](#) and is bound to develop in the future as well.

Concerning cuisine, the Ethiopian food stack consists of various vegetables and meat dishes and entrees, more commonly served as “what” (a thick stew). This thick stew is served on a piece of injera (flatbread). Most Ethiopians do not prefer pork as most of the Ethiopians have adhered to Islam (which does not allow the eating of pork). Whereas, American cuisine is again very diverse and not limited to one type of traditional dish. Whether it’s a Thanksgiving Turkey or chowder, a steak, or a Californian pizza, it has a wide variety. Moreover, the concept of hotdogs, sausages, and burgers is also very widely known as American food. Again, the influence of American cuisine is much more extensive in the world than that of Ethiopia. The rest of the world seems to be very much familiar with their foodstuff.

Language Diversity and Communication in the United States and Ethiopia

Regarding language, In the U.S. Census that occurred in 2000, around 97% of Americans speak English. While Spanish is the second most spoken language (mainly in New Mexico). English is the official language of America (according to legislation passed by 28 states). Whereas in Ethiopia, according to the Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia 2007 NINE individual languages are being spoken. Most significant of them are Afro-Asiatic languages, Cushitic or Semitic branches, Omoriffa (spoken of Oromo people), Amharic (spoken by Amhara people), and Tigray (spoken by Tigrinya people). All these four groups comprise 3 quarters of Ethiopia’s total population. Additionally, according to the 1995 Constitution of Ethiopia, Amharic is their working language, and English is the most widely spoken foreign language and is also taught in schools.

According to statistics, about 62% of Ethiopians are Christians, while 30-35% adhere to Islam and other minorities include 4-5% of people ((Eide, Oeyvind 58). Whereas in America, according to a famous study by the 2002 Pew Global Attitudes Project, the U.S seemed to be the only developed nation in the world where religion played an important role in the usual course of lives of its citizens. A more recent survey finds a growing number of “secular” ideas that demand separation of the church and the state. But the major adhering religion in America is Christianity, and the slogan “In God, We Trust” is still associated with its cultural output, both at the governmental and citizen (individual) level. (Gallup, George 162).

Given the above discussion, one can assume that there exists a vast difference in the cultural diversity of Ethiopia and America. One cannot fathom all its points in a short report, but major tints of its visible contrasts are vivid. Culture—itself is evolutionary and is not limited to a country or a set of people. It has a tendency to evolve and may differ from time to time. A good, socially acceptable culture is its own reward, and adherence to popular culture is what makes a nation/country unique from the rest of the world. It is the beauty of human diversity that different trends are not only incorporated and evolved into our society but also give a glimpse of different backgrounds. The only way forward and to avoid a clash of civilizations is to alter ourselves with it, and go with the flow. (Mitchell, James 3).

Works Cited

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