

# Flicking Through the History of Ethiopia for Associating With the Theoretical Perspectives of Sociology: The Case of Politico-Religious Scene

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## Abstract

*Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in Africa and strong claim to being the oldest country of the world. Being studied Ethiopia history is being studied about the power relations of the people, the chaos, the conflict and the clashes of the states and the people, the mutually cooperation and consensus of the society, the ways of governance and the hierarchical administration of the state in the given time and place, which means the image of any society is a historically specific image. So, these basic premises for being studied history on the politico-religious arena are too much interlinked with the theoretical perspectives of sociology: Functionalism, Conflict theory, and Symbolical interactionism theory. Functionalism perspective on the ancient, medieval, and modern time of Ethiopia stated the existence of social structure, the diplomatic relation for making the state to be perpetuating, the*

*forms of religious institution and its function on the society and on and on. The conflict perspective on those periods were related with the actual occurrences of limited resource such as power, problem succession, the need to prestige and honor, the ambitious of supremacy, respect, dominancy over the individuals in the society and so forth were laying the presences of war, conflict, revolution, and competition in Ethiopia history. At last not the least, the symbolical interactionism perspective was able to be associated with the history of Ethiopia on the ways that our identity or sense of self is shaped by social interaction, human beings are distinctly always concerned to study the ways in which people give meaning to their feelings, their actions, and to the wider social world in which their lives exist, society is actually created by people interacting together on a daily basis and so on.*

**Key Words:** History; Ethiopia; Theoretical Perspectives; Sociology; Politics; Religious

## Introduction

Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in Africa and one of the oldest countries in the world (Munro-Hay, 1991; Henze, 1985: 3; Bahru, 1991:1). What are believed to be the oldest remains of a human ancestor ever found, which has been dated as being some five million years old, were discovered in the Awash Valley in Ethiopia (Henze, 2001). This beats the discovery of "Lucy", a 3.2 million year old skeleton, who was unearthed in the same area in 1974, so Ethiopia is a strong claim to being the oldest country of the world (Bahru, 1991:7; Henze, 2000:1).

Some scholars believe that the tradition held by the Ethiopian people that their ancestors migrated from Arabia to their present home on the Horn of Africa accords with Biblical accounts of the Semitic peoples, as well as with the writings of the Ancient Greeks and Romans (Abebe Zegeye et al., 1955). However, these findings were demoted by the American Professor Martin Bernal, Professor Hansberry, and Dr. Labiso based on the paleontology and the linguistic evidences. Based on the paleontology,

professor Bernal and Hansberry assured that the Ethiopian people and their ancestors were not migrated from the Arabia, but rather they are native and indigenous because it is a cradle of human kind (Bernal, 1897; Hansberry, 1981), and based on linguistic evidences, Dr. Labiso confirmed that the people were migrated and settled from Ethiopia to Europe and Asia across the red sea in the first time, which means the European and Asian peoples' genealogy and/or family tree were tracing back from Ethiopia (Lapiso, 1999:68).

By the above historical inception in Ethiopia, being studied Ethiopia history does not mean being studied the birth and the death of the kings, the queens, the nobles, the topography and the landscape, the environment and the climate of the state, but rather studying in all about the power relations of the people, the chaos, the conflict, and the clashes of the states and the people, the mutually cooperation and consensus of the society, the ways of governance and the hierarchical administration of the state in the given time and place (Lapiso, 1999), which means the image of any society is a historically specific image (Mills, 2000:149). So, these

basic premises for being studied history are too much interlinked with the theoretical perspectives of sociology: Functionalism, Conflict theory, and Symbolical interactionism theory (Mooney et al., 2007). These perspectives tend to focus on a way of looking at various features of the world-an orientation that suggests methods for studying the social experience and finding explanations for it, and are aids-mental constructs-that allow you to visualize something (Carpenter, 2012). Thus, a given theoretical paradigm or school of thought may have its own general assumption concerning views of human beings and motivation (Ogunbameru, 2005). In other words, the adherents of each perspective ask somewhat different questions about society and so provide us with different images of social life (Scherer, 2009)

Each of these views is based on general ideas as to how social life is organized and represented an effort to link specific observations in a meaningful way (Hutchison, 2012). Or, each theoretical perspective offers a variety of explanations about the social world and human behavior (Mooney et al., 2007; Hutchison and Charlesworth, 2009).

Functionalists see social stability is necessary to have a strong society, and adequate socialization and social integration are necessary to achieve social stability; social institutions perform important functions to help ensure social stability (Burrell and Morgan, 2005). Slow social change is desirable, but rapid social change threatens social order, and it is also categorized as the terms functional and dysfunctional to describe the effects of social elements on society (Mooney et al., 2007). Elements of society are functional if they contribute to social stability and dysfunctional if they disrupt social stability (Merton, 1968). Sociologists have identified two types of functions: manifest and latent: manifest functions are consequences that are intended and commonly recognized where as latent functions are consequences that are unintended and often hidden (Merton, 1968).

Conflict theorists see society in terms of many groups in conflict, competing for scarce resources (Carpenter, 2012), which means groups are constantly competing for unequally distributed resources, such as wealth and power, with each group seeking to benefit their own interests (Hutchison and Charlesworth, 2009; Ogunbameru, 2005).

Symbolical interactionists most fascinating aspects of the social world are the everyday, routine interactions among individuals that we often take for granted, and society and these larger social structures must be understood through studying social interactions that are based on shared understandings, languages, and symbols (Stolley, 2005).

In general, the theoretical perspectives of sociology on the history of Ethiopia mainly classified in to three: ancient, medieval, and modern (Hari, 1990). The ancient period of Ethiopia was occurred from before 4.2 million years to The Zagwe Dynasty (Hari, 1990). The medieval period of Ethiopia was emerged from Yekuno Amlak, claiming to be a descendant of King Solomon and Queen Sheba, established the 'Solomonic dynasty' in 1270 to the end of the Era of Princes in 1855 (Lapiso, 1999; Bahru, 1991). And, modern time of Ethiopia was begun from the rise of emperor Tewodros II to the fall down of the Derg regime in 1991 (Bahru, 2001).

These periods in Ethiopia categorized as the historical change (Marcus, 1994), which means for historical change is change of social structures, of the relations among their component parts, just as there is a

variety of social structures, there is a variety of principles of historical change within periods and times (Mills, 2000:150); therefore, the writer of this article is able to associate these historical changes in periods to the basic theoretical perspectives of sociology such as Functionalism, Conflict and Symbolic interactionism as much as possible.

### **1. Theoretical Perspectives of Sociology and the History of Ethiopia: the Bird's Eye View**

The present period of sociological theorizing is characterized by a diversity of theoretical approaches and perspectives (Merton, 1957). Sociological theories are necessary because without theory our understanding of social life would be very weak. Good theories help us to arrive at a deeper understanding of societies and to explain the social changes that affect us all (Merton, 1968).

A sociological perspective was made possible by two revolutionary transformations. The Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries radically transformed the material conditions of life and bringing with it, initially at least, many new social problems.

And, The French Revolution of 1789 marked the symbolic endpoint of the older European agrarian regimes and absolute monarchies as republican ideals of freedom, liberty and citizenship rights came to the fore. Enlightenment philosophers saw the advancement of reliable knowledge in the natural sciences, particularly in astronomy, physics and chemistry, as showing the way forward for the study of social life (Sociology guide.com, 2016).

Sociologists view society in different ways. Some such as August Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim see world basically as a stable and ongoing entity. They are impressed with the endurance of the family, organized religion and other social institutions. Some sociologists such as Karl Marx see society as composed of many groups in conflict, competing for scarce resources. To other sociologists like Max Weber, Georg Simmel, the most fascinating aspects of the social world are the every, routine interaction among individuals that are sometimes take for granted. These three views, the ones most widely used by sociologists, are the functionalist, conflict, and interactionist perspectives (Schaefer, 2005)

### **1.1. Functionalism Theoretical Perspective**

From the days of the founding fathers of sociology such as August Comte and Emile Durkheim in France, or Karl Marx, Max Weber and Georg Simmel in Germany, sociologists have struggled with the question of interpreting social life and social phenomena (Carpenter, 2012).

In its inception, functionalism as a theoretical perspective attempted to explain social institutions as collective means to meet human needs (Durkheim, 1964b). Classical functionalists, hence, had a close affinity with the predominant evolutionary thinking of their time as it could be illustrated in their tendency towards biological analogy and notions of societal evolutionism (Hawkins, 1997)).

The functionalism paradigm owes much to the ideas of August Comte, who was concerned about how society could remain unified while undergoing massive change, this led sociologists to give emphasis on how society could remain integrated by maintaining its stability and social order (Pickering, 2003).

Another who advanced this theoretical approach was the English sociologist

Herbert Spencer. He asserted that the structural parts of human body-the skeleton, muscles and various internal organs such as the heart, lung, kidney and others are interdependent and each one has a function that contributes to the survival of the human organism (Carpenter, 2012). Likewise, Spencer reasoned that the elements of human society are interdependent and work together to keep society operating. This approach, then, leads sociologists to identify the various parts of society, asking what part each plays in the operation of the whole (Turner, 2003).

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Before the development of functionalism, social explanations were most predominantly evolutionary: the evolutionary perspective rests on a combination of two aspects: causality and selection. The ways of explaining such aspects were depended on the two types of evolutionary explanation: Sociobiology, which used biological factors such as race, to explain social phenomena; and biological-analogy, which tries to explain social processes by drawing on analogies with biological processes: through time, institutions and even whole societies undergo evolutionary selection in its goal of structural and functional adaptation (Spencer, 1965; Hawkins, 1997).

Emile Durkheim continued the development of functionalism paradigm as the father of functionalism in classical period in France. Like Spencer, Durkheim investigated ways

in which modern societies maintain their social integration. These early functionalists because they drew on the work of natural scientists, they compared society to a living, evolving organism. Societies develop social structures, or institutions that persist because they play a part in helping society survive. Later on, American sociologists like Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton refined furthermore the functionalism school of thought (Jones, 2003).

Therefore, the writer of this paper has tried to illustrate in what extent could be applied functionalism theoretical perspective on the ancient, medieval, and modern periods of Ethiopia as the follow:

### **1.1.1. Ancient time**

The ancient history of Ethiopia was started to the social structure in existence before and during the period of South Arabian contacts (Lapiso, 1982). The ancient people of Ethiopia were living in a different place and area in order for gathering some wild fruits and hunting their wild animals to be survived before 10,000 B.C. (Henze, 2000). Homo Habilis flaked stone in to knives, hand axes, choppers, and other pointed tools for domestic use and for hunting. While the

women and the juveniles foraged nearby and collected 75 percent of the group's food, the man ranged away from the campsite in the quest for game (Marcus, 1994:2). Much of the linguistic development came after the eighteenth millennium B.C., as population grew consequent to the domestication and the herding cattle, goats, sheep and donkey and the intensive collection of wild grains (Marcus, 1994)., though some scholars like Adejumobi believed that such period was the period of prehistory (Adejumobi, 2007). Such occurrences in Ethiopia can be associated to the functional perspective that society is held together by social consensus, in which members of the society agree up on, and work together to achieve, what is best for society as a whole, it is characterized by a concern for providing explanations of the status quo, social order, consensus, social integration, solidarity, need satisfaction and actuality (Burrell and Morgan, 2005:18).

Becoming the sense of private property of those people; however, they wanted to live in one specific area as used traditional agriculture as the livelihood in the shores of rivers and lakes (Tekletsadik, 1974). The grater versatility of these cultivated foods

enables proto-Ethiopians to advance in to the temperate plateau to clear the land, which cultivated with the plow, a feature of highlands as old there as the agriculture itself (Henze, 2000), which means the earliest period of indigenous occupation at only village and or hamlet level with on special preference for situations (Sergew, 1972). Of comparable on significances of those social structures in Ethiopia at this period, the people are those who were lived on that structures formed their own autonomous governance systems, small nucleated settlements, institutionalized traditional beliefs and no large religious sanctuaries, the means of communications, the social values and norms, their own identities and so forth to be implemented their political arenas (Lapiso, 1982; 1999). These happenings are able to link with the functional perspectives of sociology that each aspects of society is interdependent and contributes to society's stability and functioning as a whole in the social system (Spencer, 1965). By this fact, the family of ancient Ethiopia had their own roles to preserve the existence of politics i.e. designing how to make govern and control the people, and make a diplomatic relation with other peoples, and the economic

conditions for the facilitating of the political emergences (Tadesse, 2009; Aba Gorgoriyos, 1994). In more specifically, the presence of the function of religious, politics, and economy during this period made the society is to be perpetuated (Tadesse, 2009; Hansberry, 1981). This is also interlinked with the central concern of functionalism is that the explanation of the apparent stability and internal cohesion of societies necessary to ensure their continued existence over time (Rakhi and Licy, 2011)

To be continuing the perpetuation of its overall actions in the world, the Axumite kingdom had made a diplomatic relation within aboard countries for making their countries' peace and stable (Munro-Hay, 1991). Despite the fact that the Axum's relations with abroad were uncertain, it made relations of Meroe, South Arabia, Rome, Constantinople/Byzantium, Palmyra, Persia, India, Sri Lanka, the Far East for the purposes of maintaining their stability (Munro-Hay, 1991). This period somehow illustrated that Ethiopia was linked with Egypt's queen Hatshepsut on the ways of diplomatic relations on the form of trade in 1500 B.C. (Tekeletsadek, 1974); queen of Ethiopia, Makeda (queen Sheba) formed a

diplomacy linkage with King Solomon in Israel around 1000 B.C (Marcus, 1994). These histories can make to relate with, therefore, functionalists that our survival depends on our ability to maintain a precarious balance among the living and nonliving component comprising the biosphere, including the county (Hughes et al., 1999)

One of the ways that built a diplomatic relations with the other countries was indicated by on the ways that following their religious (Tadesse, 2009; Munro-Hay, 1991)). During the pre-Christian period, the worship of Ethiopia was taken from the South Arabian gods such as Astar, Ilmuqah, Nuru, Habas, Dhat Himyam, and Dhat Ba'adan and Ilmulah, they could not be mentioned by the Axumite inscription, but this inscription concentrate mainly on Astar, Beher, Meder and particularly Mahrem, identified with Ares (Munro-Hay, 1991). Mahrem was the Axumite royal or dynastic god, who was regarded as the father of the king, and his invincible guard from danger, there was taking place a ritual ceremony of thank-offerings after the campaign (Hunro-Hay, 1991). These relations based on religious can inter-relate to the point of functionalism that the unified system of

beliefs, rituals, and practices associated with religion provided a community with collective representations that helped to create a sense of social order and establish the foundation for all other social relationships (Durkheim, 1965).

However, Axum immediately changed from believing Mahrem to Christianity during the reign of Ezana at 4<sup>th</sup> A.D (Tadesse, 2009)). And then the first Christian kings such as Ezana implemented the dogma of Christianity in to Ethiopia in practically way and widely expanded by the “Nine Saints” who came from eastern Roman Empire by showing unbelievable miracles, salvage the peoples’ chronic problems and so on (Aba Gorgoriyos, 1994). Such type of ancient Ethiopia history is able to concurrence with the functional perspective that, which is highly pragmatic in orientation, concerned to understand society in a way which generates knowledge which can be put to use; it is often problem-orientated in approach, concerned to provide practical solutions to practical problems (Burrell and Morgan, 2005:18).

While in Ethiopia, queen Sheba was reversed as an Ethiopian queen named Makeda, in ancient and medieval Palestine and Arabia it was widely believed that the renowned Queen of Shewa was actually an ancient Arabian queen named Belkis, and that the Yemenite kingdom of Himyar was her ancestral domain. However, the archeological discoveries and various historical tracts leave little doubt that Ethiopia was in fact the mother of the Queen of Sheba (Adejumobi, 2007).

When the expansion of Christianity in Ethiopia around 4<sup>th</sup> C A. D., the religious education was limited to expand, but after a while during Amde Tsion and Zerayakob, it was apace grown up (Haileselassie I, 1937). Christianization of Ethiopia led to the commencement of hierarchical system of religious instruction organized and presented under the aegis of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Damtew and Altbach, 2003:317). Monasteries and convents of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church were the epicenters of such educational system whose utmost objective was producing religious functionaries (Pankhurst, 1968: 666). And, the Christianity and its education were adjudged to the county’s king, nobles and their families in order to endorse the expansion of Christianity in overall the individuals. (Mengistutu, 2004). Hence, the functionalism perspective supports the above idea that collective representations such as the ideas, beliefs, and values shared

by a religious community that generate a likeminded attitude on the part of individual believers (Durkheim, 1965).

There were burials in the main cemeteries at Axum; in the royal cemetery, the dead were probably buried with considerable amount of valuable gear, and with the full panoply of ceremony, sacrificial offerings, and so on; the dead of high rank were laid in stone coffins and surrounded with their equipments (Hunro-Hay, 1991). Here of, one of the functions of religious in the society is ritual ceremony which makes social solidarity (Durkheim, 1965); religion provides the basis of the collective conscience – the shared values and ideas – of a society. Religion, therefore, expresses and fulfils a social need and promotes social solidarity and cohesion: in other words, it binds people together (Marsh and Keating, 2006:47).

And also, According to Lapiso (1999:37), there was a mutually cooperation of in military, economic, and cultural attributes between Muslims and Christians between 615 and 661

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The functionalist approach suggests that religion, in one form or another is a necessary feature of society.

A major problem with this approach is that in modern societies several religions coexist, regulating and integrating their followers differently; thus religious pluralism will tend to work against social cohesion. This criticism implies that Durkheim's analysis of religion is perhaps more appropriate to small-scale, simpler societies. A second important problem is that functionalism focuses on the integrative functions of religion – the provision of shared values and so on – and tends to ignore the effect of religion as a force for division and disharmony in society. There are many societies divided over religious dogma and belief, and such divisions can be so deep-rooted as to lead to bitter and violent conflict (Marsh and Keating, 2006:48)

A.D. Functionalists assured that if one system fails, it influences to other systems to be dysfunctional, which means if the two religious couldn't make economical and political cooperation, it influence on their religious to be perpetuated and the vice versa (Merton, 1968)

### **1.1.2. Medieval Period**

During the medieval period, lot historical politico-religious scenes were happened on the ways of forming diplomatic relations, aggression, territorial expansion and on and on (Hari, 1990).

On the situation of diplomatic relation, the Portuguese established and re-established contact with Ethiopia in the 1500s primarily

to strengthen their control over the Indian Ocean and to convert Ethiopia to Roman Catholicism (Sergew, 1972). During this period, it had happened two significance situations: the Portuguese wanted to expand their territory in political arena, and converting Christianity to Catholic in social arena. And, Ethiopia had linked with Rome for more than 181 years from 1441 to 1622. In 1441 some Ethiopian monks travel from Jerusalem for the aims of the probability of establishing religious partnership and a possible union with the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches (Tadesse, 2009; Aba Gorgoriyos, 1994). Therefore, functionalists bolster such mutually religious partnership on the idea that religious beliefs, rituals, and practices can be significantly impacted by the society concept when the society or the state at large describes and explains oneself in terms of religious affiliation (Carpenter, 2012). Besides that, functionalists also recognize that as one part of the system changes, other parts of the system have to readjust to accommodate the change that has taken place elsewhere (Stolley, 2005:23), which is why the kings of Ethiopia made a well organized relations with other countries and within the internal

nobles for the purposes of keeping its stability for the perennials.

On the time of 16<sup>th</sup> C, Emperor Fasiladas decided to found a new capital in 1636. However, Gondar was different from its predecessors: it was to be the first permanent capital since Fasiladas' plan worked and Gondar flourished for well over a century (Marcus, 1994; Henze, 2001; Solomon, 2008; Mengistu, 2004). Hence, the permanent establishment of Gondar as the capital city is too much acquiesced with the functionalists' notion that social consensus, order and integrations allow society to continue and progress in one specific area in the given time and place because there are shared norms and values, for that mean all individuals have a common goal and have a vested interest in conforming (Rakhi and Licy, 2011).

Following that, almost all foreign countries in which they lived in Ethiopia fought against Ethiopians in implicit and explicit way, and yet the society abominated those countries for the reasons that they were murdering lot Ethiopians, and endangered its sovereignty. So, Susenyos' son and successor, Fasiladas, expelled the meddling Jesuits and forbade all foreigners to set foot in his empire for a long period of time for

being made the state's and the society's peace and security (Solomon, 2008). By this concussion, the functionalists announce that the nature of individual behavior or decision making was always considered in relationship to the degree of influence held by the larger community (Carpenter, 2012:2). Or, society influences our human actions but that society is also something that exists beyond individuals (Durkheim, 1964b).

At the same century, under the ample patronage of church and state, the arts and crafts flourished. Impressive churches were built, among them the famous Debre Berhan Selassie in Gondar, which can be seen to this day (Aba Gorgoriyos, 1994). Outside Gondar, building projects included some remarkable churches at Lake Tana's historic monasteries (Tadesse Tamrat, 2009; Haile Selassie I, 1937). This concept gets adminicle from the functionalism perspective that mutual consensus in one phenomenon makes social integration (Mooney et al., 2007). One of the indicators for this concept is that religious is instituted by the social consensus, and again it makes social integration (Hadden, 1997).

### **1.1.3. Modern Time**

The actual pioneer of the modern period of Ethiopia was begun during the king of unifier, innovator, and reformer, i.e. King Tewodros II In 1855, this is due to the fact that he had tried to enwrap and begird many of the princes' together for being come to stability, modernization, and civilization (Adejumobi, 2007). Thence, this historical event can be associated with the functionalist perspective that political institutions used as collective means to meet individual and social needs (Carpenter, 2012).

During the Minilik II, the Treaty of Wechale was signed between Ethiopia and Italy in order to bring peace in between the two countries during the colonization period; however, it led to come over the Adwa war between the two countries; the main disagreement was brought from the versions' interpretation of Italian and Ethiopian (Pankhurst, 2001; Tilahun, 1993). This conception is able to associate with the notion that disorganization or disagreement in the system leads to change because societal components must adjust to achieve stability. When one part of the system is not working or is dysfunctional, it affects all other parts and creates social problems, which means if the two countries could not be reached consensus on their treaties, it leads to war, and this war also

affects the economic, the social, and the environmental situations as the whole system (Shildrich and Rucell 2015).

Unforgotten contribution of Minilik II for Ethiopia was the greatest technological achievement in the forms of construction of Ethiopia's railway, education, ways of forming the central government and so forth for the aim of facilitating political conditions in Ethiopia (Bahru Zewde, 2001). Functionalist believed on this history is that social system's parts are interdependent; the system has a "normal" healthy state of equilibrium, analogous to a healthy body; and when disturbed, the system parts reorganize and readjust to bring the system back to a state of equilibrium, any changes in society occur in structured, evolutionary ways (Wallace and Wolf 1999:18). For the more explanation, the types of social institutions like education, politics and others are functionally integrated to form a stable system, and that a change in one institution will precipitate a change in other institutions, it addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements (Rakhi and Licy, 2011).

Emperor Haileselesie and his society were also giving his intention for domestic and in

the field of foreign affairs too attempt to be improving the country's international image, abolishing the Ethiopian slave trade, peace-keeping the countries and doctrines of human and democratic rights in the principles (Haile Selassie I, 1937). So, functionalism perspective views society as a complex system of interrelated parts working together to maintain stability (Parsons 1951; Turner and Maryanski 1979).

The UN decision, given in 1950, is that Eritrea shall become part of Ethiopia from 1952, as an autonomous federal province with its own constitution and elected government. In that year an Eritrean administration duly takes control, bringing to an end the temporary British rule in the region (Lapiso, 1993). Therefore, functionalists believe that society is held together by social consensus, or cohesion, in which members of the society agree upon, and work together to achieve, what is best for society as a whole (Rakhi and Licy, 2011).

After the Ethio-Italy war (1935-41), the restored emperor continues to give Ethiopia a leading role among the nations of Africa (Pankhurst, 2001). The most notable

example of this is the establishment of the Organization of Africans Union for the continuity of their diplomacy (Bahru Zewde, 2001). This notable action is inter-related to the functionalist perspective that to study the function of a social practice or political institution is to analyze the contribution which that practice, or institution, makes to the continuation of society (Shildrich and Rucell, 2015).

Totally, the socio-political situation which are genuinely tried to illustrate on the modern time is entirely had to do with the basic perspective of functionalism, the stability of the society incredibly a positive impact of the presence of education, making a diplomatic relation with other countries, withstanding the behaviours of society in the forms of judges and other instance courts, incorporating unjust phenomena in the normal and so forth and the vice versa, which means society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole; it emphasizes the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts (Mooney, 2007). Ensemble, if all goes well,

the parts of society produce order, stability, and productivity. If all does not go well, the parts then must adapt to recapture a new order, stability, and productivity (Rakhi and Licy, 2011).

## 1.2. Conflict Theory

Historical conflicts start, as a rule, with a community which is socially pretty highly organized, such conflicts have to arise between different groups where there is an attitude of hostility to others involved, but even here a wider social organization is usually the result (Mead, 1962: 303). So, obviously, wars were frequent events throughout Ethiopian history. Internal wars were fought mainly for territorial expansion, political supremacy and because of tribal feuds of one sort or another (Menale Adugna, 2013:1)

By the above inception, the origins of the conflict perspective can be traced to the classic works of Karl Marx; he suggested that all societies go through stages of economic development (Mooney et al., 2007). This perspective has become popular over and over again throughout

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In sociology, the conflict perspective has two traditions: a utopian tradition that foresees a society in which there is no longer a basis for social conflict, and a second tradition that sees conflict as inevitable in social life (Hutchison et al., 2012:43).

history, with roots that can be traced back to German philosopher George Hegel (1770–1831) and Italian philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), and perhaps even further, drawing attention to conflict, dominance, and oppression in social life (Collins, 1994; Ritzer, 2008b; Antonio, 2003). The conflict perspective typically looks for sources of conflict and causes of human behavior in the economic factor and political inequality arenas, and more recently in the cultural arena (Hutchison, 2012).

Besides to that, Coser makes the case for two kinds of functional consequences of conflict: conflict that occurs within a group and conflict that occurs outside the group. An example of internal conflict is the tension that can exist between indigenous populations or first nations and the national government. Notice that this internal conflict is actually between or among groups that function within the same social system. Examples of external group conflicts are the wars in which a nation may involve itself. When considering the consequences for internal group conflict, Coser is concerned with low-level and more frequent conflict. When explaining the consequences for

external conflict, he is thinking about more violent conflict. (Rakhi and Licy, 2011:32).

Therefore, the writer of this article has tried to associate the historical phenomena of Ethiopia with the theoretical perspectives of sociology in conflict as the follows:

Sociologist Max Weber pointed to the importance of not just economic factors in producing and sustaining inequality, but also the influence of power, status and prestige in perpetuating dominant relations ( Nahom Eyasu, 2016:17; Shildrick and Rucell, 2015).

### **1.2.1. Ancient Time**

When the state Axum emerges in to the wider light of history at the end of the first century of A. D., it is a full-blown, if not well- integrated, trading state due to stratification. (Marcus, 1994). This is due to the fact that, conflict theorists, are concerned with how it is that some groups acquire power, dominate other groups, and affect their will in human efforts on the emergence of stratification (Ogunbameru, 2005:101).

Due to a dearth of information, there are less significant evidences about the stratification of the Axumite society (Lapiso, 1982:1999). But, there was the pertinent existence of the ancient peoples opened an opportunity for the structure of socio political stratification (Marcus, 1994). By this fact, during the

expansion Axumite kingdom, a number of flourishing urban communities appear to be had grown up; the urban setting throughout Ethiopia, including port, capital and market or trading towns, implies the development of social stratification (Munro-Hay, 1991:42). These historical occurrences of the ancient period of Ethiopia pertain to the Karl Marx's basic premise that social stratification should be brought in terms of common relationship between a group of individuals and means of production that makes societal collision (Nahom, 2016).

Social class may well have been based on the ownership of land (Henze, 2001; Bartos and Wehr, 2002:30). The entire land of Axum territory was governed by the king himself; he had a power to give the land grant to the individuals, the churches, and other local institutions; the persons are those who gave to services for the king and his families and loyalists were termed as peasants (Munro-Hay, 1991). This category had worked hard on ploughing with oxen, sowing, clearing, reaping, harvesting the crops, shepherding the flocks and herds and so forth were their daily

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Functionalists argue against the conception of social stratification on inequality on the fact that they emphasized

the functional necessity of social inequality for the well-being of society; they argued that social stratification served a function because society needed to find ways to ensure that its members ended up in social positions that best suited them (Shildrick and Rucell, 2015). Furthermore, inequality is an unconsciously evolved device by which societies ensure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Hence every society, no matter how simple or complex, must differentiate persons in terms of both prestige and esteem, and must therefore possess a certain amount of institutionalized inequality, by this fact Davis and Moore, concluded that class stratification was inevitable because it offered a 'use value' or a function to society (Davis and Moore, 1945).

works; whereas, the peoples who were in urban settings had made the specialist potter, well decorative metal work, and so on for the kings, and their intimacies, but they were not the owners of their product (Lapiso, 1999). These peasants in rural and artisans in urban had also served for as military expeditions in keeping and expanding to the boundaries and for being made army alliances with other states, and a guard of the landowners and the rulers of the dominant class's house and their social environments because of lack of obtaining limited resources such as land and power (Pankhurst, 1990).

The above fundamental occurrences or events in ancient period of time in Ethiopia secured with the Karl Marx's and his

followers' assumption on the thinking that, expanding human requirements and economic activities are placing ever increasing pressures on land resources, creating competition and conflicts and resulting in sub-optimal use of both land and land resources, and at times loss of lives and property (Ogunbameru, 2005:102). By this situation, the king of Ethiopia was the ownership of the entire land of Ethiopia due to getting from the limited resources such as power, and he had a power to give some limited resources such as land to the individuals if he wanted. Nevertheless, if some groups wanted to acquire such resources via war and competition, they would be lost their lives and property because the king had well organized than the peasants (Hutchison, 2012). To be supported such ideas by the Karl Marx's finding that Marx pointed to the stark divide between the impoverished working classes who had nothing to sell but their labour, and the capitalist classes who, by virtue of their ownership of the means of production, were able to exploit this labour to their profit; society is structured via a set of objectively defined interests which serve to create relations of exploitation, particularly in

respect of production ( Shildrick and Rucell, 2015).

One of the ways the acquirement of land in Ethiopia in ancient time was carrying out territorial expansion (Henze, 2001). The Axumite kingdom justified the wars for expanding its territories from each direction, and then after justification for war, the inscription next recounts any diplomatic effort towards achieving a peaceful settlement and, these failing, there finally came the decision to make war (Hari, 1990). Ethiopia had a continuous war with Arabs around red sea for the reasons that Ethiopia fought Arabs across their coastline, and then the Arabians assumed that the Mecca will be overrun by Ethiopian, so war is needed to protect their coast and their territories (Hari, 1990). These happenings in ancient history of Ethiopia related with the conflict perspective that it explains various aspects such as the acquirement land, of our social world by looking at which groups have power and benefit from a particular social arrangement such as war (Mooney, 2007:2). The significant evidences for this happened situation that had been shown at the ancient period of Ethiopia was king Eila Amida, his son Ezana, and Kaleb had made conflict

with Sudan and Yemen for the purposes of territorial expansion in order to show their dominance over the conquered countries (Sergew, 1972); there was a hotly war between the South Arabian and the Axumite empire due to the fact that South Arabian monarchy wanted to show their political supremacy over Axumite (Munro-Hay, 1991); Axum kingdom had military expeditions for other countries for territorial expansion especially for Sudan, Yemen and Eritrea (Hari, 1990:4)

### 1.2.2. Medieval Period

Warfare was frequent throughout the medieval period; the country's rulers were continually in the field fighting domestic vassals in rebellion or else enemies on the periphery of the realm, conflict on one kind or another were, however, so common that every year many warriors spent most of the year making war (Pankhurst, 1990:13).

The war between the Muslim society and the kings of Zagwe dynasty were continued and the Muslims were tackling for Zagwe dynasty to make a relation and a communication with a broad except for Egypt and Sudan, these effects were overwhelming to the newly emerged

dynasty i.e. the Zagwe dynasty in Ethiopia and substitute to see the Solomonic dynasty (Hari Atekenes, 1990:10). It's not certain what brought the Zagwe dynasty to an end; it was likely a combination of fighting within the ruling dynasty and local opposition from the clergy. In 1270 the dynasty was overthrown by Yekuno Amlak; new political power shifted south to the historical province of Shoa (Pankhurst, 1990).

The establisher of the glory of Solomonic dynasty, Amde Tsion had given his life for the expansion of his territory from the beginning of South Ethiopia, Awash, Gojjam, Begemeder, Shewa to Denkel with fighting to the Muslims; his warrior strategies were imitated from his grandfather and the founder of Solomonic Dynasty: Yukno Amlak (Hari Atekenes, 1990). These basic medieval histories of Ethiopia had been ensured by the conflict theorists to be assured that, groups or the owners of the limited power are constantly competing for unequally distributed resources, such as wealth and power, with each group seeking to benefit to satisfy their own interests. In this scenario, one or a few groups control these resources at the expense of others

through oppression, war and other means (Stolley, 2005)

From the 13th century, relations with the Muslim Ethiopian emirates of Ifat and Adal were showing signs of strain with increasing competition for control of the valuable trade routes land connecting the Ethiopian highlands with the Red Sea; tension was growing (Marcus, 1994). By this fact, one of the kings of Solomonic dynasty such as King Yese'aq (1416-1427) waged the Muslims war in order to tackle their expansion; King Zere'ayakob (1434-1468) opened war with Muslims for prohibiting his land invasion by Muslims and forcefully baptize them for being followed Christianity; on the period of King Lebene Dengel (1508- 1544), Amhed Gragn war was occurred between the Christianity and Muslims for 16 years (1527-1543); King Tseretse Dengel (1563-1596) was confronting war with Turk around Messewa port; there was a conflict between Christianity and Catholic during King Susenos in the years between 1620-1622, and Amde Tsion (1314- 1344), Dawit I (1382-1411), Tewodros I (1411-1414), Eskinder (1478-1494), Naod (1494-1508), Gelawediwos (1540-1559), Minas (1559-1563), Sertse Dengel , and others were

making conflict with Muslims till 1974 (Aba Gorigoryos, 1994; Tadesse Tamirat, 2009, Lapiso Delebo, 1999). Such happenings were entirely accustomed to the conflict concept that these are a power struggle which is most often won by wealthy elite and lost to the common person of common means (Rakhi and Licy, 2011)., which means a huge amount of land resources were under the control of Christianity, but not having Muslim with comparing them; however, they lost their small amount of resources again via war and competition (Lapiso, 1999).

What the writer of this paper searched that there were conflicts between Muslims and Christians over 1, 332 years from the beginning of the Christians who fired Jin across the Arabian coastline in 642 A.D. (Hari, 1990) to the 1974 (Lapiso, 1999:48). In spite of the fact that the Christians-Muslims wars were starting at 642 A.D. (Hari, 1990; Adejumobi, 2007), and hotly carrying out during the medieval period, there were going on and off till Mengistu Hailemariam came in to power; However, the 1529-1543 A.D. war between the Christian and Muslim was unforgotten (Hari Atekenes, 1990) because it was

plagued by some of the most costly, bloody and wasteful fighting in Ethiopian history, in which the entire empire and its culture came close to being wiped out (Henze, 2001).

To be making more specifically, King Libne Dengel and Gelawediwos were fighting against Turkish, which wanted to overrun Messawa and patronage of the expansion of Muslim (Henze, 2001). One of the genuinely indicators of such type of conflict in Ethiopia was that in 1535, the Emperor Lebna Dengel then Gelawodiwos made alliance with Portuguese in fighting against Turkish and Muslims. In 1541, 400 well-armed musketeers Portuguese arrived in Messawa led by Dom Christovão da Gama, son of the famous mariner Vasco da Gama and met and defeated Ahmed Gagn and his benefactor Turkish at Woina dega in 1543, those foreigners had had their own latent political agenda (Pankhurst, 2001). This is because religion was perceived as encouraging the underprivileged to accept their social condition in this life by providing the hope of a better life to come, because it is the opiate of the masses (Marx, 1964).

Problem succession among the family hood was one of the root factors civil war in

medieval period of Ethiopia. For instance, after king Sertse Dengel Altruistic suicide, his brothers' sons such as Ze Dengel and Susinoyos, and his child such as Ya'ecob opened war for the purposes of achieving the throne of King Sertse Dengel (Hari Atekes, 1990) since the king of Ethiopia were coming through hereditary in a particular family following the system of primogeniture (Tadesse Delessa, 2006). This is the fact that a group of individuals would have competed limited resources; here up on, the mechanism of the acquisition of such limited resources are war, competition, struggle and so forth (Stolley, 2005). Besides to that, the definition of conflict offered here implies that conflict behavior can occur not only because the parties have incompatible goals but also because they feel hostility toward each other. Whether you rely on your intuitive understanding of hostility or on a more formal definition such as an antagonism, opposition, or resistance in thought or principle (Webster's, 1976:553),

During the Oromo movement and expansion, they were fighting with King Gelawodiwos, Sersa Dengil, and Emperor Yaqop due to their expansion and movement (Berhanu et al., 2007:341).

On the last not the least, from 1769 to 1855, for over 86 years, there was no central power in Ethiopia. This "Era of the Princes" was characterized by the turmoil caused by local rulers competing against each other. The Era of Princes was featured rival feudal lords and their powerful provincial armies and country disintegrated and civil war became the norm (Solomon Getahun, 2005), because competition over scarce resources is at the heart of all social relationships (Rakhi and Licy, 2011; Adejumobi, 2007).

### **1.2.3. Modern Time**

In the aftermath of Tewodros' death, there arose another battle for succession (Bahru, 2001). Using his weaponry gained from the British in exchange for his support of their Maqdala expedition, Kassa Mercha of Tigray rose to the fore. In 1871, at the battle of Assam, he defeated the newly crowned Emperor Tekla Giorgis. With the latter, he struck a bargain: in exchange for keeping their kingdoms, they were obliged to recognize the emperor's overall power, and to pay taxes to his state (Bahru Zewde, 2001). This is related to the conflict theorists that individuals and groups that benefit from any change occurs as a result of particular

structure strive to see it altered (Rakhi and Licy, 2011).

King Yohannes drew them into battle and resoundingly routed them at Gundat in 1875 and then again at Gura in 1876 because Egyptians wanted to see to expand their territory from the sources of Nile. His victories not only ended any Egyptian designs on the territory, but brought much captured weaponry, turning his army into the first well-equipped force in Ethiopian history (Tekletsadek, 1991). Therefore, such concepts are too much interlinked with the perspective of conflict on the way that the desire to dominate or escape from domination is a constant motivation for organized violence, whether for control within existing territory or for territorial expansion (Francis, 2004:5).

Meanwhile, the Mahadists came to seize a power and expand their boundaries across Ethiopia territory, Yohannes IV was coming in rushing in fighting against the Mahadists in order to protect the country's sovereignty from their aggression and his dominant power, but unfortunately he was assassinated at the battle field of Metema, Gondar in 1888 (Pankhurst, 2001; Bahru Zewde, 2001). The defeat of Yohannes IV

by Mahadists at the battle field of Metema can be associated with the conflict perspective's notion that Individuals within all groups and in any sphere of life compete for power, and most individuals in some areas of their lives are likely to be relatively powerful and in others relatively powerless (Francis, 2004:4).

Emperor Menelik II came to the power after the death of Yohannes IV, and he was fending off the encroachment of European powers such as Italy wanted to colonize Ethiopia. Fortunately, Ethiopians defeated Italy at the battle of Adwa in 1896, which remains famous today as the first victory of an African nation over a colonial power (Bahru, 2002).

After the death of Minilik II by natural disease, Lij Iyasu and his councilors pushed through a few reforms, including improving the system of land tenure and taxation, but they faced ever-deepening opposition from the church and nobility (Tilahun, 1993). This modern history has to relate with conflict theorists that, who are interested in how society's institutions, especially for political institution may help to maintain the privileges of some groups and keep others in

a subservient position in the form of taxation, labour exploitation, and alienation from their products (Burton, 1990).

After the overthrowing of Lij Eyasu from his throne, Ethiopia was under straining between the intellectual group who was guided by Ras Teferi and the conservative group headed by queen Zewditu from 1916 to 1930 (Tilahun, 1993; Pankhurst, 2001). Such problem succession between the two groups are able to communicate with the Karl Marx's perspective that For Marx, there are two essential components of a society: first, the economic base or infrastructure (also called the substructure in some texts), which provides the material needs of

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The essential components of the society in the world can be categorized in to groups between the material and the non-material world. The material world (the economic base) comes first and determines the non-material, because without it the non-material (the superstructure) would not be possible. The economic base is itself composed of the *forces* of production and the *relations* of production. The forces (or means) of production include factories, machinery, raw materials and technology. The relations of production refer to how people relate to one another at work, in particular to the relations that owners and

employers have with those who work for them. The superstructure is the non-material, but essentially it reflects the economic base. For example, the education system and the legal system protect and support the basic values of the economic structure of society (Marsh and Keating, 2006:50).

Some scholars such as Strecker (1994) denied Ethiopians by themselves had not won Italy at the battle field of Adwa in 1896. He asserted, "The grand strategy of the achievement of Ethiopian rulers and attributing all their successes to support from outside." And also, Ethiopia is not an independent state from the colonizers in history because he believed that the southern regions of what is called Ethiopia today were conquered and colonized by the 'Abyssinians' in the second half of the nineteenth century.

life, which have highly conservatives' intention; and second, the superstructure, basically the rest of society including the family, the education system, ideas and beliefs, the legal system, and the political system, which were run by the intellectuals' intention (Marsh and Keating, 2006). Of the last few centuries that have brought about global skewing of power: the domination of a few nations over the others (Francis, 2004), and they widely elaborated that there are six main reasons to occur colonialism or conflict behavior within the countries or the groups as well as the individuals: the parties may have (or believe that they have) incompatible goals, they each may have

achieved high solidarity, they may have organized for conflict, they can mobilize their conflict resources, they may be hostile toward their opponents, and they may have sufficient material resources (Bartos and Wehr, 2002 :9).

By these facts, after five years that king Haile Selassie seized up his power, nevertheless, the Italian forces cross the borders into Ethiopia in a two-pronged attack - from Eritrea in the north, from Somalia in the east. This time, unlike at Adwa forty years previously, the relatively primitive Ethiopian weapons are no match for a modern European armed force. In their advance the Italians have the benefit of tracked armoured vehicles, artillery, and fighter and bomber aircraft. To this conventional arsenal they also add one of the horrors developed in World War I, mustard gas (Pankhurst, 2001). These action, perhaps, related with the cause of conflict from Italy was hostile to Ethiopia and Italy can mobilize their conflict resources over Ethiopia (Bartos et al., 2002).

After that, meantime getting independence Eritrea from Italy by the decision of UNO, Emperor Haile Selassie I incorporated Eritrea to Ethiopia in 1952; however, the incorporation of Eritrea in the form of

federation in 1952, degree of unanimity also exists by now on the opposing side (Mengistu, 2004). In 1960 Eritrea's Muslim leaders, living in exile, form the ELF or Eritrean Liberation Front to fight for independence. By the mid-1960s, they have a guerrilla force operating in western Eritrea (Marcus, 1994). These situations can be shown on the perspective of conflict, which highly illustrated on power inequality may involve domination: party A has power over and dominates party B. Such situations often lead to a fight for liberation from

oppression; power inequality exists when A does not dominate B, but has greater power potential than B does. This type of power inequality also can lead to conflict. This is because power is often a “zero-sum” commodity: if one party gains it, somebody else must lose it. Thus when the less powerful party seeks to increase its power potential, the more powerful party will resist these efforts (Bartos and Wehr, 2002:31).

After a while, there were revolts in different area of the country against the governance system of the emperor, which was widely occurred in Woyene rebellion in Tigray in 1943, Bale between 1963 and 70, Gojjam in 1968, and the wildly student movement and participation (Gebru, 2001). Karl Marx

widely described such uprisings on his thought that the contradiction of the two or more antagonistic groups produces the new system through revolution, but not evolution, which means the Thesis (the oppressor class) makes collision with the Anti-thesis (the oppressed class) result to Synthesis (socialism) (Marx, 1983). By this reality, the emperor's power was abrogated by the people of Ethiopia's revolts and revolution, and brought the newly emerged socialist government (Bahru, 2002; Pankhurst, 2001).

After the emperor released his throne, the Provisional Military Administration Council (PMAC) or the Derg seized power to run for 17 years alone. Nevertheless, the external threats posed by Somalia and secessionist Eritrea were increasing; Somalia invaded Ethiopia in 1977 (Lapiso, 1999). And, pandemonium, Strife, and/or furor occurred throughout Ethiopia, particularly in the northern regions of Tigray and Eritrea because of the rampant of red and white terror actions and oppression of the ethnic groups. Internal political debate also degenerated into violence. In 1989, the Tigrayan People's Liberation front (TPLF) merged with the Amhara and Oromo liberation front's (EPDM & OPDO) to form

the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). In May 1991, the EPRDF forces advanced on Addis Ababa forcing Mengistu to flee to Zimbabwe (Henze, 2001). These imperious disobediences can be interrelated with the Marxist idea that conflicts are generated by structurally based social cleavages, not simply subjective identities (Burawoy and Wright, 2001:451)

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The Somalia-Ethiopia conflict drew the Emperor in to close alliance with Kenya which has experiences similar difficulties with the Somalia (Dick, 1969:105).

Marx observed inequality throughout the growing capitalist society. The economics of capitalism, he felt, resulted in social classes that were constantly in competition for society's limited resources. Marx saw rich factory owners who obtained their wealth from the labor of factory workers who were paid little, often toiled long hours in dangerous conditions, and frequently lived in crowded and unhealthy spaces. Society, as Marx saw it, was an ongoing struggle between the classes: the "haves" (illustrated by the factory owners) and the "have nots" (illustrated by the workers). The result was social conflict and change as those without resources challenged those holding the resources for a piece of the proverbial pie (Marx, 1977a; Rakhi and Licy, 2011)

In general, according to Marx, throughout history societies have exhibited one of five modes of production, which, in chronological order, are primitive communist, ancient, feudal, capitalist and communist. Each of these forms of society

leads inevitably to the next. The importance of conflicts of production to Marx's historical analysis is demonstrated in his account of the ways in which societies move from one mode of production to another (Marsh and Keating, 2006:51); therefore, the feudal modes of production had been actually sustained and continued for a long period of time in Ethiopia history (Takletsadek, 1974; Henze, 2001).

### **1.3. Symbolic Interactionism Perspective**

While the functionalist and conflict approaches were initiated in Europe, interactionism developed first in the United States; George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) is widely regarded as the founder of the interactionist perspective (Mead, 1962). Interactionism is a sociological framework in which human beings are seen to be living in a world of meaningful objects; these objects may include material things, actions, other people, relationships, and even symbols (Herman, and Reynolds, 1994).

While the functionalist and conflict perspectives focused on the macro or larger scale structure of society, the interactionist perspective has traditionally been more

concerned with the micro or smaller-scale aspect of social life (Goffman, 1961).

### **1.3.1.AncientPeriod**

As the writer of this article has tried to describe the pre-Christianity time in Ethiopia above, the people of Ethiopia believed the war gods such as Aster, Beher, and Mahrem, and Habas (moon god) IImugah Nure, which came from South Arabia before the advent of Christianity to Axum (Tadesse et al., 2006:20). These idolaters could give sacrifice for it in order to keep the foreign attacks, natural disasters, and because it is the god of the king and so on (Munro-Hay, 1991). By this circumstance, the interactionists believed that religion is a social institution and focus on the way in which various definitions and meanings have an impact on social interaction at the individual and small group levels (Carpenter, 2012:5).

During the Axumite civilization, Axumite king was himself considered as the embodiment of the state, a dynamic figure, son of a deity, the leader of his people, as war hero and conqueror, but also a judge and law giver, and the people of the king and other world also accepted who he was (Tadesse Delessa et al., 2006:18). What the

king of Axum had felt to label he had, interactionists also assure their feelings on their assumption that human beings are distinctly always concerned to study the ways in which people give meaning to their feelings, their actors, and to the wider social world in which their lives exist (Marshall, 1996: 524), and Symbolic interactionism also suggests that our identity or sense of self is shaped by social interaction. We develop our self-concept by observing how others interact with us a label us. By observing how others view us, we see a reflection ourselves that Cooley calls the “looking glass self” (Mooney, 2007:2).

According to Tadesse and Girma (2006:8) and Munro-Hay (1991), Axum increased its significance as center of local political unity by the exercises of military initiative and partly perhaps by developing treaty relationship with its neighboring tribal groups and their gradual absorption brighten the prospect for expansion and political ideological exchange with South Arabia, Persia, India, Sri Lanka, and even China’s societies through Red Sea, and through its port of Adulis Axum participated actively. So, such historical events can be associated to interactionism, which is a theoretical

perspective that derives social processes such as conflict, cooperation, identity formation from human interaction (Rakhi and Licy, 2011).

During the Axumite period of time in Ethiopia, amazing human-made cultural materials were created. Material cultures were one of the famous contributions of the Axumite kingdom, these cultures shown to the social structure and its boundaries across other societies, which were created by the individuals. Pottery was made and used for the fetching water and small village decoration, metal work and well decorative gold materials were mostly indicating to provide the king's praiseworthy action for his state (Munro-Hay, 1991). As long as implemented such type of actions practically during the Axumite era, interactionist explain for this occurrence strongly that there is no such thing as solidarity individual; humans are always connected to others. The most basic unit of interaction analysis is that of the self, which stresses the ways in which people can come to view themselves as objects, and assume the role of others through a process of the role taking (Marshall, 1996: 524 ).

Another material cultures the one which was invented during the Axumite civilization

was coinage. This is emphasized on the coinage where the image of the kings appears both the obverse and the reverse of the gold coins accompanied by his name and the title "king of the Axumites" these coinages showing some symbolic representation of the state such as the disc and crescent in pre-Christian times in order to represent deities of the sun and moon, or perhaps the royal tutelary deity Mahrem god (Munro-Hay, 1991). Of being occurred like this unbelievable invention to see how far they are more civilized and developed state for that world, symbolic interactionism perspective also insists on the contribution for the world on the notion that the concrete details of what goes on among individuals in everyday life; they study how we use and interpret symbols not only to communicate with each other, but also to create and maintain impressions of ourselves, to create a sense of self, and to create and sustain what we experience as the reality of a particular social situation (Rakhi and Licy, 2011).

After accepting Christianity in 4<sup>th</sup> A.D., the symbol coinages were of the cross, and in fact incorporated the depiction of two ears of wheat or barley framing the royal bust and grain stalks on the obverse and the

reverse of the gold coins; its depiction on the coins could have been intended to show the king as the provider and the sources of bounty, and the grain stalks were actually a symbol of the Axumite state itself (Munro-Hay, 1991). It evidently simplifies the system in representing the medium of exchange, the standard of value-measurement, a means of holding wealth at discretion, and a means of payment for services, all in one form (Lapiso Delebo, 1999). So far in coinage widely used up for various purposes in different symbols at the time of Axumite civilization, the perspective of symbolic interactionism describes to support such concept on the notion that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them; these meanings arise from social interaction; social action results from a fitting together of individual lines of action (Blumer, 1969).

Due to the fact that there are lesser significant empirical evidences in all about the Axumite obelisks, different scholars have given different meanings about the Axumite obelisks. Some scholars such as Hary Atekes (1991) stated that there was one stone made obelisks in Axum for Sun and Moon worships, and others described that the kings of Axum during the pre-

Christian period formed one stone made obelisks, which seemed like to the prick like posture to show their supremacy, heroism, brave and courageous, and other believed that Axum Obelisks were formed for the purposes of incising golden coins. These different concepts have been releasing in different scholars about the Axum obelisk, so interactionists argue that we are able to interact with others because we create symbols and learn to interpret what those symbols mean in our interactions (Stolley, 2005). Besides to this, interactionists address the subjective meanings of human acts and the process through which people come to develop and communicate shared meanings (Blumer, 1969)

According to Michels (1986 cited by Munro- Hay, 1991:39), he explained the reign of kings during the Axumite period is that:

Quite probably, the kingdom was a confederacy, one which was led by a district-level king who commanded the allegiance of other petty kings within the Axum realm. The ruler of the

Axumite kingdom was thus “King of kings”- a title often found in inscriptions of this period. It is quite possible that at the death of a King-of-Kings, a new one would be selected from among all the kings in the confederacy, rather than through some principle of primogeniture.

This power substitution from the selection among all kings in the confederacy had been carried out when the king of kings passed away; hence, the symbolic interactionism’s perspective states for this event that social world is a dynamic and dialectal web, situations are always encounters with unstable outcomes, and lives and biographies are always in the process of shifting and becoming, never fixed, not upon rigid structures, but upon streams of activity with their adjustments and outcomes by the new comers (Marshall, 1996: 524).

The military establishment was undoubtedly one of the key institutions of the Axumite monarchy which was set up by the king himself, the king himself was commander-in-chief of the army but royal brothers and

sons and perhaps other relatives were frequently put in charge of campaign when the king was occupied elsewhere (Tadesse Delessa et al., 2006:21). Thence, the interactionists assure to be communicated this history in Ethiopia on the issue that institutional orders and situations of interaction are more and more seen as being constructed by the activities of different actors, groups and individuals in different social areas and situations (Eisenstadt and Helle, 1985).

During the Zagwe dynasty, Lalibela was a devout Christian emperor who contributed to the growth of Orthodox church by granting land to many prominent monasteries and churches in northern Ethiopia and particularly known for the construction of eleven monolithic churches of rock hewn from solid rock (Pankhurst, 1955). Hence, interactionists believe that social reality, insofar as it is recognized to have any existence outside the consciousness of any single individual, is regarded as being little more than a network of assumptions and intersubjectively shared meanings (Burrell and Morgan, 2005)

### **1.3.2. Medieval Period**

One of the famous contributions of the medieval period of Ethiopia was the creature of democratic relationship of the Gada System (Berhanu et al., 2007). This system was closely connected with the social and political structures since male Oromo's were organized according to age and generation for both the social and political activities (Lapiso, 1982). This happening during the medieval period of Ethiopia can be related with focuses on patterns of individual interactions. Although macro sociologists working in this tradition recognize that larger social structures exist and are important in shaping our lives, they point out that society is actually created by people interacting together on a daily basis to perform their social-economic and political activities; it is these smaller interactions that actually make up the larger social structures: social and political social structures (Stolley, 2005)

The Gada System had their own structure, the important officers was Abba Boku (the father of the scepter was an elected chairman who presided over the assembly. The principal function of Abba Boku is to preside over the parliament or tribal assembly to proclaim the laws, to act when necessary as a virtual expert in the Gada

ceremonies. Abba Dula (the defence minister) was also the leading figure in the Gada government. He was the leader of gondola (army) and was elected by the people. The other official was the chief of judge known as Abba Sera. The Gada laws were passed by the assembly, the Gada officials were elected for eight years by universal male suffrage, and also the main criteria for officials were know learn, honesty, bravely, demonstrated ability (Berhane Lemma et al., 2007:341). These Gada System figures and their roles can be built from that society and these larger social structures, especially political structure must be understood through studying social interactions that are based on shared understandings, languages, and symbols; a symbol is something that stands for, represents, or signifies something else in a particular culture. Symbols can be anything—gestures, words, objects, or events—and they can represent any number of others things, ideas, events, or emotions (Stolley, 2005). Or, The interactionists look beneath the symbols, processes, and interactions in order to determine the underlying patterns or forms of social life (Marshall, 1996: 524 ).

### **1.3.3. Modern Time**

After the ended up the era of princes, Tewodros II attempted to replace the regional armies of the princes with a national arms, and also he introduced a new chain of command, with military titles like Yasr Alaqa (commander of ten), Yamsa Alaqa (commander of fifty), and Yeshe Alaqa (commander of thousand) in order to order them easily; King Tewodros was also appointed different individuals in different position like he appointed Dajjach kasa Subagadis in Tigre, Gajjach Liban Amade in Wallo, ras Mareyye in Begemeder and on and on (Pankhurst, 1955; Bahru Zewde, 1991:33). Such hierarchical power distribution in Ethiopia can link with one of the basic tenet of interactionism perspective that institutional orders and situations of interaction are more and more seen as being constructed by the activities of different actors, groups and individuals in different social areas and situations (Eisenstadt and Helle, 1985).

King Tewodros II ambition to strengthen and modernize his army is clearly reflected in the manufacturing of modern Sebastopol armaments locally, at Gafat, an area nearly Debretabor, Gondar. By his interest, Tewodros succeeded in building up the first significant artery in Ethiopia history;

Tewodros II used force for Englishmen to produce modern cannon to Ethiopian but they couldn't show their ambition to make it, after a while he incarcerated them and then the English commander, Napier came to Ethiopia to release their citizens from the detention with modern weapon, at last it was a root cause for the king to make suicide at Meqdala (Tadesse Delessa, 2006). The situations in which the Englishmen's creative capacity on the modern armament in Ethiopia and the follow of conflict between Napier and Tewodros II can be interlinked with one of the main founding father of sociology, Georg Simmel, that Simmel believed that people possess creative capacities that enable them to produce objective culture, which means the things that people produce that transcends them. But objective culture comes to stand in irreconcilable opposition to the creative forces that have produced it in the first place based on the individual culture that the capacity of the individuals who produced the objective culture (Frisby, 2002).

After the altruistic suicide of Tewodros II, and after the defeated of king Teklegiorgis of lasta at the battle field of Assam by military supporting of Napier from England, Yohannes IV was faced under great

difficulties: Egyptian and later Italian expansion in the North, Mahadist (Sudan) incursion in the West, Menelik's insubordination in the South for the aims of colonization as well as power interest, but Yohannes IV made treaty with Italia, fighting with Mahadist to ban their focus and intention to Ethiopia (Berhan Lemma et al., 2007). Of associate these emergence during the reign of Yohannes IV to the basic notion of symbolic interactionism is that human action and interaction are understandable only through the exchange of meaningful communication or symbols. In this approach, humans are portrayed as acting as opposed to being acted upon (Rakhi and Licy, 2011).

Before Adawa battle field in the Menelik II reign, the vanguard force of the Ethiopian army, led by Fitawerari Gebeyehu, attacked and defeated the Italian at the battle field of Amba Alage, the Italian lost more than 2000 soldiers in dead including their commander, Toselli (Tadesse Delessa, 2006:157). These warrior experiences could be traced back from the daily and the routine exercises and interaction of well experienced individuals (Scheafer, 20050).

During king Hailsellasié I, there was the promulgation of Ethiopia's first and revised constitution in 1931 and 1955 respectively was a major step taken by the emperor in his direction, the main issue that the constitution dealt with the regulation of the relationship between the monarchy and the nobility; asserted the supremacy of imperial power for it legalized the emperor's absolute power in appointments and dismissals; the rendering of justice, the declaration and the termination of wars; and the granting of land and honor (Tadesse Delessa et al., 2006:198). It shows that how individuals act within society (Rakhi and Licy, 2011).

Though wars were fought mainly by men, women played a significant role in the mobilization of troops, organization and transportation of supplies and provisions; raising the morale of fighters; gathering intelligence information, nursing the wounded, and in the actual fighting. Women that did not go to battlefields had to carry the burden of men's work at the home front (Menale Adugna, 2013). Such irreplaceable actions which were done by the women during the Adwa battle field, the Ethio-Italy 1935-41 war and others wars can be associated to the Max Weber's notion that

the major sphere of society (political, economy, religious) are equally dominant in all society, it is the status and party affiliations (Nahom Eyasu, 2016).

## Conclusion

Different disciplines might be describing about the social realities based on their own subject matter and/or focusing area, sociology and history are social sciences that mostly explaining, describing and exploring the happened social phenomena. So, these disciplines could be seen by relied on the historical phenomena and the theoretical perspectives of sociology in Ethiopia on this paper. Since Ethiopia is one of the oldest countries in the world and having lot ancient, middle, and modern histories, the writer of this paper is able to show only the total history of Ethiopia with the theoretical perspectives of sociology in bird's eye view.

Despite the fact that the perspectives of functionalism, conflict, and symbolical interactionism had been seen in all of Ethiopian history, consensus and mutually living, cooperation, and stability i.e. functionalism perspective had been happened during the ancient time. In contrast, the history of Ethiopia is the history of conflict, especially during

medieval and modern period. These sources of conflict in those histories were the presences of politico-religious scene. By covering the systems of religious, different political agendas were carried out; as, Marx said religious is the opiate of the masses on his conflict theory. And also, symbolical interactionism perspectives had been occurred during the ancient, medieval, and modern time too.

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