

GEOG 27500 Sub-Saharan Africa

Name -----

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### **Q1. Final Exam.**

**Write an essay about the main Characteristics of the African Identity and Culture. Give at least 4 examples from peer reviewed journals.**

- 1- Possession of a black skin. Blackness is a shared characteristic of the Africans south of the Sahara.
- 2- Africans view the relationship between mankind and nature differently from western societies. I.e. Christians see nature as separate from God and man is outside and above nature, and nature exists for the wellbeing of humans. African traditional religions believe that spiritual forces are found in the environment. Gods and Spirits are associated with major elements of the physical environment such as rivers, earthquakes, thunderstorms, lightening and winds.
- 3- Past and future generations of Africans are linked through a “**chain of life**”. Large families are preferred, to maintain this chain of life and children are taught the tradition of the group. Africans who live in cities sustain their link through marriage, gifts, visits, sending money to parents or relatives in rural areas.
- 4- African identity is closely tied to land and Africans work as farmers and herders. Most Africans are still practicing these activities. That means African people have close relationship with nature. African societies protect access to land by treating it as communal ownership, rather than an individual property, especially in rural areas. However, from development view points, planners do not agree with this view point. Planners believe that ownership of land has to be an individual property, so that the owner can take good care of it.
- 5- Africans respect their leaders and chiefs, because they are social administrative, spiritual and political figures. Usually those leaders have wisdom, integrity, and wealth.
- 6- Africans live in extended rather than nuclear families. This illustrates the communal spirit of the society. That means individuals live as part of a group and not as an individual.
- 7- The arts, especially sculpture, music, dance and storytelling are good indicators of the African identity.
- 8- A shared history of colonialism contributes to the sense of unity.