

Conceptualizations and Impacts of Multiculturalism in the Ethiopian Education System

by

Fisseha Yacob Belay

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Graduate Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This research, using critical qualitative research methods, explores the conceptualization and impact of multiculturalism within the Ethiopian education context. The essence of multiculturalism is to develop harmonious coexistence among people from diverse ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds. The current Ethiopian regime has used the ethnic federalism policy to restructure Ethiopia's geopolitical, social and education policies along ethnic and linguistic lines. The official discourse of Ethiopian ethnic federalism and multicultural policies has emphasized the liberal values of diversity, tolerance, and recognition of minority groups. However, its application has resulted in *negative ethnicity* and social conflicts among different ethnic groups.

Two universities, one in Oromia and another in Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's (SNNP) region, were selected using purposive sampling for this study. Document analysis and in-depth interviews were used to collect data from ten professors, ten students and three curricular experts. The findings of this study revealed that Ethiopian multiculturalism has stemmed from the ethnic federalism political system; however, participants' conceptualizations ranged from unity to division and difference to allegiance. Data further revealed that the impact of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system has involved mother tongue usage, quality of education, lack of leadership and foreign policy, while the impact on inter-ethnic relationships

includes the declining social cohesion, the rise of ‘narrow nationalism’ and the implication of ethnic conflicts. This study discusses the effects the politics on language use, the declining quality of education and policy transfer all have within the Ethiopian education system. In addition, the study addresses the proliferation of negative ethnicity and the path to genocide. Finally, it makes recommendations to educators and policy makers to improve the education system as well as provide an environment to cultivate ethnic harmonious coexistence.

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Abbreviations

AAPO	All-Amhara People's Organization
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Democratic Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESLCE	Ethiopian School Leaving Certification Examination
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MoE	Ministry of Education
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organization
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programs
SEPDM	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
TTC	Teacher Training College
TVET	Technical Vocational and Education Training

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Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction

Multiculturalism is a very contested concept referring to the coexistence of people from diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Historically western countries like the United States of America, Canada, Australia and Britain have adopted multicultural policies in order to manage diversity (Banks, 2004; Li, 1999; Rattansi, 2011; Taylor, 1992). Clusters of social movements for social justice and recognition of human rights, coupled with the rise of immigration, have played a pivotal role for the development of multiculturalism in the western world. Descriptively, multiculturalism has signified countries with multiple cultures, ethnic groups, religions, etc. It has been widely studied and analyzed in the western world, but it also exists in countries that are perceived to be more culturally homogeneous. For instance, most African countries are very multi-ethnic and Ethiopia is one of them, with over 80 ethnic groups. In the 1990s, the current government of Ethiopia seized power and restructured the country using the discourse of ethnic federalism called '*yabiher bihereseoboch*' which translates into multiple ethnicities. Ethnic federalism has divided the country ethno-linguistically and has provided many rights to these regions including governing and cessation abilities.

Ethiopia's education system has evolved along with the governments of the time; the educational policies and practices have included the ideologies of the ruling regime. Traditionally, education was dominated by the Orthodox Church and taught mainly religious studies. In the 20th century, the education system was expanded and centralized. The Amharic language was used as a national language and medium of instruction for primary schools until 1991. Through the regime changes, each government at the time prioritized the expansion of education, and the promotion of nationalism and government ideals. The current government has

differed from its predecessors as it implemented ethnic federalism and created a constitution that transformed the country from a centralized state into a federation of ethnic territories (EPRDF, 1995). The constitution also amended a controversial article that granted nations, nationalities and people's of Ethiopia the rights to secede. Further, Ethiopia's social, political and educational policies were reformed around an ethnic federalism discourse with emphasis on multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism in education has created many challenges and opportunities for educators. Scholars have noted that the mainstream multicultural education theories in the USA, Canada, and UK are predominantly guided by liberal values of respect and recognition for individual and groups rights (Gérin-Lajoie, 2008; Kymlicka, 2007; McCarthy, 1990). According to McCarthy (1990), "Multicultural curriculum theory and practice take a liberal pluralist and functionalist approach to society and education and must be understood as part of a curricular truce" (p. 47). Within the functionalism school of thought, the sole purpose of schooling has been to maintain the social equilibrium and transmit the dominant class cultural values and norms to the next generations (Giroux, 1992). This framework has been criticized for its exclusionary aspects of minorities' access to social, political and economic domains (Henry & Tator, 1999). Gérin-Lajoie (2008) has noted that multicultural education is often mis-conceptualized by many as 'transformative' and as addressing social inequalities. She further noted that the actual practice of it has been a 'food and festival' approach that involved the celebration ethnic diversity through food, music and costumes from their country of origins (Gérin-Lajoie, 2008). This conceptualization does not address the complex power dynamics, institutional and structural oppression marginalized groups encounter in society.

In Ethiopia, multiculturalism in education has been applauded as promoting diversity and coexistence. However, the political and social climate in the country has consisted of ethnic conflict and unrest. Therefore, the intent of this study was to explore the conceptualizations and

impacts of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian higher education system.

This study has employed a critical qualitative research methodology in order to explore how multiculturalism is conceptualized. A qualitative methodology was chosen to explore the views, opinions and ideas of the participants, as they were able to explain their knowledge and experiences of multiculturalism in education and its impacts. A critical methodology was used to reveal the power relations that exist within the political, social and cultural aspects of the education system. Specifically, critical multiculturalism and critical pedagogy were used as the theoretical frameworks in order to include and address the social injustices that exist in the institutional and structural practices. In order to answer the research questions, the study involved document analysis and semi structured interviews with educators and students from two universities in Ethiopia, as well as three curricular experts.

In this study, I first presented the purpose, rationale, and contextual and educational background of Ethiopia. Second, I discuss the broader literature on multicultural education, including literature on the major themes that exist in the field. Third, I present my theoretical framework and the methodology. Thereafter, I present the findings in three chapters. The final chapter contains conclusion and recommendations.

Rationale

Ethiopia is a very diverse country containing over 80 ethnic groups. Historically, the country has expanded as new regions were conquered and ruled over, thus creating differential power relations between those who rule and those who are ruled over. The political, social and economic dominancy of specific ethnic groups, mainly the Amhara and Tigre populations, have played a major role in shaping the country's geopolitical social and historical aspects.

In the last two decades Ethiopia's education system has undergone multiple policy reforms with multicultural education and language use at the heart of the policy reforms. In

1995, the government created nine regional states based on ethno-linguistics, as it decentralized the administration and created new regions according to the ethnicities and languages of the people residing in each region (Dessalegn & Meherat, 2004; Zelalem, 2004). This exacerbated the conflicts and divisions that previously existed, as students were now primarily learning about their own regional state and ethnic language instead of their nation. Therefore, this study explores how educators responded to the introduction of multiculturalism education policy. It further investigated its impacts in the education system. The study provides valuable information for education policy makers, practitioners and scholars to promote not just ethnic identity discourses but also inclusion and social justice for all Ethiopians.

The essence of multiculturalism is to develop harmonious coexistence among diverse people. This has been similar to the official discourse of Ethiopian ethnic federalism and multicultural policies that has emphasized the liberal values of diversity, tolerance, and recognition of minority groups. However, its application has resulted in negative ethnicity¹, a root cause for ethnic conflicts and social unrest among different ethnic groups in Ethiopia and many other African countries.

Since 1960, over five million lives in Africa have been lost due to ethnic conflicts. The Rwandan genocide was the most recent horrific crime against humanity due to negative ethnicity (Wa Wamwere, 2003). Civil wars have been triggered by negative ethnicity in Sudan, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, Bosnia, and Sri Lanka have consumed the lives of millions of people. Despite its catastrophic impact, proper attention has not been

¹ Negative ethnicity is ethnic hatred and bias (Wa Wamwere, 2003).

² Data was retrieved from CSA (2007).

³ Ethiopia is divided into regions, and within each region there are zones; woredas are divisions within the zones.

⁴ Here, the terms 'traditional' and 'modern' refer to the periods in time and not the type or quality of education.

⁵ MDG Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education (UN, 2015,

given to the root causes or early stages of negative ethnicity. Wa Wamwere (2003) expressed his frustration as:

a glaring failure in academic studies of Africa today is rushing to write doctoral theses and postmortem analyses of genocide after it happens, showing absolutely no interest in these tragedies while they incubate. The genius of medicine does not lie in writing postmortem reports but in preventing human beings from dying. Equally, the challenge of scholarship should not be to write polished analyses of human tragedies like genocide but to understand and prevent a force like negative ethnicity before it strikes. (pp. 14-15)

Therefore, the early signs of conflict and ethnic tensions should be addressed before they evolve into greater social unrest, which has been seen in many African countries. Similarly, following the ethnic federalism political system of Ethiopia, the trajectory of ethnic conflicts has been on the rise causing grave concerns for the country's stability. In the last two decades, conflicts attributed to negative ethnicity have resulted in the loss of many lives in different parts of Ethiopia.

As a member of the minority group throughout my childhood in Ethiopia, I have witnessed and experienced ethnic oppression and alienation. It was these experiences that have compelled me to explore the conceptualization of multiculturalism in education and its impact among the diverse ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Thus, critically examining the contemporary multicultural policy and education system would provide educators, policy makers and stakeholders with valuable data and analysis to understand the intents and impacts of educational policies.

Significance of the Study

The use of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system has been an under-researched area; therefore, my research study fills existing gaps in literature regarding multicultural education in the Ethiopian context. Further, it provides an in-depth understanding of multicultural policies and pedagogical practices that encourage policy makers, teachers, politicians and stakeholders to take multiple perspectives while designing social and educational policies to incorporate the multiple voices, contextual realities and indigenous knowledge of Ethiopian society. It also creates an opportunity to critically examine how multiculturalism is being implemented in Ethiopia at individual, societal and institutional levels.

This study contributes to improving practice and informing policy as a valuable reference point for policy-makers to implement inclusive learning approaches and multiple ways of integrating the concept of multiculturalism within curricula. It provides the opportunity to critically analyze and validate the impact of multicultural theoretical frameworks and their implementation. The study facilitates better ways of incorporating an inclusive education system, thereby minimizing fragmentations and developing a holistic approach towards emancipatory education where all voices and ideas including those from minority ethnicities are included and integrated.

Personal Location

As a teacher and social worker, I have been confronted with issues related to social wellbeing, identity formation and education policies. My questions for this study arose from my experiences in education within multicultural contexts in Ethiopia and Canada. Before relocating to Canada ten years ago, I completed my Bachelors of Education in Ethiopia and taught at several international elementary and secondary schools as well as a pre-service teacher training institute. I found teaching a wonderful and rewarding profession, in which I could contribute to

shape the minds of younger generations. My experiences gave me the opportunities to realize the complexities of the teaching-learning process.

In 1991, I witnessed a regime change in Ethiopia. The government adopted a constitution in 1995 which gave nations and nationalities the rights of self-determination up to secession. In addition, the former unitary state of Ethiopia was redefined as ethnically federated states and divided into nine provinces along ethnic lines. Since then, the ethnic identity discourse has become central to Ethiopia's geopolitical, social, economic and education policies. The overemphasis and power vested in ethnicity in dictating public policies including education has made me raise several questions and increased my curiosity to further research my topic.

When I relocated to Toronto, Canada, I began working in government and non-government organizations in social work and education. I began to see the practical applications of multicultural policies and also began to compare these with what I had learned and experienced in my home country, Ethiopia. While multiculturalism in Canada was intended to be inclusive of the diverse cultures, it has also reinforced the structural injustices and oppressions minorities encounter. Living and working in Toronto, one of the most diverse and multicultural societies, has made me realize the importance of designing inclusive policy to embrace and integrate diversity. I believe that my lived experiences coupled with my graduate courses at the University of Toronto influenced my decision to explore the existing situation in the Ethiopian context. Through constant reflections, deliberations, and discussions with my professors, I was able to narrow my research topic and study it.

Research Questions

My research questions arose from my interest in multiculturalism in Ethiopia and my own experiences in the education system. The questions reveal how multiculturalism has been

conceptualized in the Ethiopian education system as well as its impacts in education. The following questions have guided my research study:

1. How is multiculturalism conceptualized in the Ethiopian higher education system by students, instructors and curricular experts?
2. What is the impact of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian higher education system?

Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of eight chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the topic, the rationale for studying it and the research questions that were explored. Chapter two presents an overview of Ethiopia and the specific regions being studied. It also includes the history and structure of education in Ethiopia and the education structure. Chapter three follows with a review and synthesis of relevant literature on multiculturalism; globalization and education reforms in developing countries; curriculum in Ethiopia; language use; medium of instruction; the Ethiopian constitution and ethnic conflict. Chapter four presents the methodology employed, describing the participants, data collection procedures, and theoretical framework that shaped the study. The findings and discussion of these findings are presented in chapters five, six and seven. Chapter five answers the first research question as it highlights and discusses the conceptualizations of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system. Chapter six and seven answer the second research question regarding the impact of multiculturalism. Chapter six presents and discusses the findings on the impact within the education system and chapter seven focuses on interethnic relationships. Finally, chapter eight provides conclusion of the thesis with a summary, recommendations and implications of the research.

Chapter Two Context

Ethiopian Context

Ethiopia is a unique country and, as already stated, it has a large variety of ethnic groups and languages. It is an ancient country located in the horn of Africa and the only African nation that has never been colonized by European powers. Its size is 1.1 million km² and it borders with Eritrea on the north, Kenya on the south, Somali and Djibuti on the east, and Sudan on the west. According to Zewde (2002),

The term Ethiopia is of Greek origin, and in classical times was used as a generic and rather diffuse designation for the African landmass to the south of Egypt. The first known specific application of the term to the Ethiopian region is found in the Greek version of the trilingual inscription of the time of Ezana, the Aksumite king who introduced Christianity into Ethiopia towards the middle of the fourth century AD. (p. 1)

Ethiopia's present day location is between longitudes 33⁰ and 48⁰ E, and latitudes 3⁰ and 15⁰.

Ethiopia boasts world-renowned geographical and archaeological points of interests including the Great Rift Valley, Lucy and the Nile River. The Great Rift Valley fault line divides Ethiopia diagonally into two uneven halves with the northern part of the Rift Valley containing larger plateaus including the Ras Dashen, the tallest mountain in Ethiopia at 4630m above sea level. Due to its high elevation plateaus, Ethiopia is termed the 'roof of Africa.' The south part of the Rift Valley contains the lowland areas including Hadar, in which the oldest human skeleton was found and is named Lucy or *Dinqinesh* in Amharic which literally translates to "you are marvelous." Paleontologists believe that this section of the Ethiopian Rift Valley was the origin of humanity (Pankhurst, 1998).

Based on its topographies and climatic conditions, Ethiopia has been divided into three major geographical regions: *Dega* (cooler highland areas with lower temperature), *Weyna Dega* (highland areas with optimum temperature and the highest number of inhabitants) and *Qolla* (the hot lowland plains and Rift Valley areas). Ethiopia has two major rainy seasons. The first and main rainy season occurs between mid-June to the end of September and is known as *Keremt*. During this time, the southern and western parts of Ethiopia receive the highest rainfalls. The second rainy season, called *Belg*, is between March and May. This season is mostly known for its flash floods (Zewde, 2002). Ethiopia has many rivers including the famous Blue Nile which is 6000km long, making it the longest river in the world; it originates from Lake Tana in northern part of Ethiopia.

With respect to the population size, the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) of Ethiopia (2007) has indicated that Ethiopia's population is 73,750,932. As shown in Table 1: Ethiopian Population by Region, the Oromo and Amhara people make up more than two-thirds of the entire population. There is also religious diversity with the main religions being Orthodox Christianity followed by Islam, and then smaller proportions of Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Judaism and other traditional beliefs. The four language families, Cushtic, Omotic, Semetic and Nilo-Saharan, are spoken in different parts of the country, but the Amharic language has been the longest serving official language and medium of instruction for primary schools from 1950 to 1991.

Table 1: Ethiopia's Population by Region²

² Data was retrieved from CSA (2007).

Region	Population	Percentage
Afar Region	1,390,273	2%
Amhara Region	17,221,976	24%
Beneshagul-Gumuz Region	784,345	1.1%
Gambella Region	307,096	0.5%
Harari Region	183,425	0.24%
Oromia Region	26,993,933	36%
Somali Region	4,445,219	6%
Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's (SNNP) Region	14,929,548	20%
Tigray Region	4,316,988	6%
Addis Ababa City Administration	2,739,551	4%
Dire Dewa City Administration	341,834	0.45%
Total	73,750,932	

The Ethiopian federal government is made up of nine ethnically administrative regions and two federal administrative states. As already mentioned, the country's political system has been based on ethnic federalism which grants the rights of secession to its nations and nationalities. The Ethiopian constitution was adopted in 1995 and has established the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) which is responsible for general policies, national defense and foreign relations. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) is the main political party made up of four political parties; the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Southern

Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM) and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). In addition, there are over fifty ethnically-based political parties that are registered and operational under the EPRDF platform.

The Ethiopian economy has been dominated by the agricultural sector (46% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)) and the service sector (41% of the GDP). More than three-fourths of the population is dependent on agricultural products. Agriculture is the leading sector in terms of contributions to economic development, including domestic consumption, raw materials for manufacturing and exporting commodities. Ten per cent of the GDP is in industry with the majority of that in manufacturing. Exports are highly concentrated in a few products, mostly coffee (60%) as well as hide and skins, oilseeds, khat, minerals, gold, marble and a few others (Government of Ethiopia, 2015).

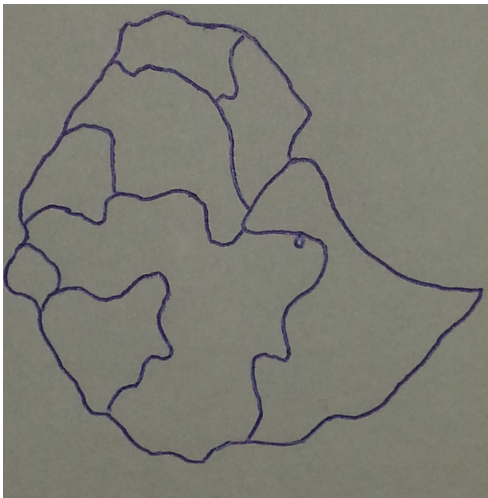
Study Context

This research focused on two regions: the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's (SNNP) region and the Oromia region. These regions were selected because of their diverse range of ethnicities and large population sizes. In what follows, I briefly describe the two regions to better understand the study contexts. To further illustrate, two maps of Ethiopia pre and post 1991 were used. These maps are significant as they show the restructuring of the Ethiopia along ethno-linguistic lines. The first map, Ethiopia Pre-1991, illustrates the former 14 administrative regions, including Eritrea, with the central government region in Addis Ababa. This second map, Ethiopia Post-1991, provides a contrast as it outlines the restructured boundaries of Ethiopia based on ethno-linguistic lines.

Map 1: Ethiopia Pre-1991



Map 2: Ethiopia, Post-1991



The Southern Nations, Nationalities People's Region

The Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's region (SNNP) is one of the federal states located in the Southwest part of Ethiopia and covers an area of 105,887km². The region lies between 4° to 8° north latitude and 34° to 39° east longitude (see Map 2). SNNP region shares borders with the Gambella region in the northwest, Kenya in the south, Sudan in the southwest and Oromia in north, northwest and east directions. Administratively the region is

divided into 13 Zones, 96 Woredas³ and 8 special Woredas with Awassa (also referred to as Hawassa) as the capital city. The SNNP region is known for its rich and diverse historical and cultural heritage. It contains several national parks, wild reserves and sanctuaries.

The SNNP region contains a vast range of topographies with many national resources including the Rift Valley, mountains, rivers, lakes, wildlife reservations and archeological sites. The rainfalls and temperatures in the region vary and the national meteorology indicates that the annual rainfall of the SNNP region ranges from 400 to 2200 milliliters annually. In addition, the temperature in the region ranges from 10 to 31 degrees Celsius.

Economically, the region is dependent on exporting cash crops, such as coffee and khat. In addition, the growing tourism industry is becoming a major sources of revenue for the region. According to the tourism bureau of SNNP, the region has rich tangible historic and cultural heritages including the ancient monasteries, mosques, and anthropological sites. Ethiopia has two of the eight World Heritage Sites, which are Tia and Lower Omo anthropological sites. Furthermore, SNNP region is famous for its indigenous knowledge of landscaping and ecosystem preservations.

In terms of demography, SNNP region contains 20 percent of the total population of Ethiopia at 14.9 million (CSA, 2007). The region is extremely diverse and has 56 different ethnic groups, many with their own unique languages, identities and sociocultural practices. According to CSA (2007), the largest ethnic groups in the region are Sidama (19.38% of the region's population), Walayta (10.59%), Hadiya (7.98%) and Guraghe (7.54%). Four major language families (Omotic, Cushitic, Semitic, and Nilo-Saharan) are spoken in SNNP region. About 45 languages in the region are spoken; the majority of them are oral but not written, which makes it

³ Ethiopia is divided into regions, and within each region there are zones; woredas are divisions within the zones.

challenging to use them as media of instruction. The languages that are widely spoken in the SNNP region include Sidamigna (19.59%), Welayta (10.48%), Hadiyigna (8%), Guragigna (7.13%), Gamoigna (6.9%), and Keffigna (5.36) (CSA, 2007).

According to the SNNP regional state government, access to education at all levels has improved remarkably in the last decade. Statistical data collected between the years 2003 to 2008 shows that the enrolment rates for primary students (grades 1 to 8) has increased from 74.1% to 92.7%, and the enrolment rate for secondary school students (grades 9 to 12) has risen at a rate of 18.9% per annum between the years 2003 and 2005 (CSA, 2007).

There are five major government universities in SNNP region offering multidisciplinary programs at graduate and undergraduate levels. The Ethiopian Ministry of Education report shows that a total of 70,220 students were enrolled at university in 2011, with 54,192 male and 16,028 female. Of these, 1659 students were enrolled at graduate levels, with female students consisting of just under 11% (MoE, 2011).

The use of mother tongue language as the medium of instruction in Ethiopia formally started after the current government replaced the previous Derg regime in 1991. During the Derg regime (1974-1991), Amharic language was used as the medium of instruction for primary school (grades 1 to 6) and national language. During this time, an additional 15 local languages were used informally to address the challenge of illiteracy. Following the downfall of the Derg regime, Amharic language was replaced by mother tongue languages and each region started using their local languages for administrative and education purposes. Currently in SNNP region, of the 45 languages spoken, 13 are used as media of instruction for grades (1-4). Starting from grade 5, the medium of instruction is changed to English language.

The Oromia Region

The Oromia region is one of the Ethiopian federal regional states located between 20° to 120° north latitude and 340° to 440° east longitude (see Map 2). It occupies the central part of Ethiopia and covers an area of 363,378 km². The Oromia region shares borders with the states of Afar, Amhara, Benshangul/Gumuz in the north, Southern Nations, Nationalities People's (SNNP) region and Kenya in the south, the state of Somali in the east, and the state of Gambella and the Republic of the Sudan in the west. The Oromia region consists of 12 administrative zones and 180 woredas.

Geographically, the region of Oromia consists of multiple relief features with altitudinal ranges from 500 meters to 4400 meters above sea level. Mount Tullu Dimtu in the Bale zone is the highest mountain in Oromia region, 4377 meters above sea level. About 50 % of the land is highland receiving the highest rainfall in Ethiopia. Located in the heart of Ethiopia, the region contains plenty of historical, cultural and national resources, including mountains, hot springs, waterfalls, forests and caves. In addition, the region is home to a variety of wildlife including elephants, lions, zebras and others.

The Oromo people are the single largest ethnic group in East Africa, comprising one-third of the total population of Ethiopia. The population size of Oromia region is estimated at 27 million (CSA, 2007). Historically, the people of Oromo were migrated from the present places called Borena, Guji and Bale areas of Oromia region to the eastern and western highlands of Ethiopia in the mid-16th century. Throughout the migration process, the Oromo were able to assimilate non-Oromo people via 'gudifecha' or adoption process. During the assimilation process, it was customary to slaughter sheep and celebrate the acceptance of new members to the clan or family.

Many Oromo people are engaged in pastoralism, and are mainly governed by the Geda system, a ritual indigenous system of governance that has been practiced by the Oromo for

centuries. Geda's complex social structure ruled the social, political, religious and economic aspects of Oromo people from birth to death. It is believed to be democratic and has eleven stages of development (Hassen, 1996). Currently, the Geda system is mainly practiced in Borana, Guji and some Oromia regions.

The language spoken by Oromo people is called 'Afan Oromo' or 'Oromiffaa'. Afan Oromo is an indigenous language that belongs to Cushitic language family and uses Latin orthography for transcription. Since Ethiopia was restructured along ethnic lines in 1991, Afan Oromo has been serving as a working language and medium of instruction for primary and junior high schools (grades 1-8). Universities and colleges have also established Afan Oromo departments and started training students in Oromiffa language. In addition, Oromia region has the highest enrollment rate for primary and secondary students (MoE, 2011).

In the Oromia region there are three major religions: Islam, Christianity and the traditional Oromo religion. The traditional Oromo religion is an indigenous religion the Oromos have practiced for centuries prior to the introduction of Christianity and Islam. They believe in "Waqayoo" meaning God is the creator of the entire world including human beings.

Economically, Oromo people are dependent on agriculture. The region's fertile soil and varied climatic conditions provide a favorable atmosphere for cultivating food and cash products including coffee and khat. The agriculture sector is a fundamental sources of income for nearly 90 percent the people in the region. Predominantly coffee, oil seed and hide and skin products generate major revenue for the region and the country as well. Nearly 65% of Ethiopia's agricultural products come from the Oromia region.

History of Education in Ethiopia

Traditional Education⁴

For nearly sixteen centuries, from the 4th century to early 20th century, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church schools dominated the traditional education system in Ethiopia with the main purpose of training priesthood and religious educators to transmit Christianity and religious knowledge to future generations (Levine, 1965; Pankhurst, 1967; Wagaw, 1979; Wubneh & Abate, 1988). The traditional education system in Ethiopia was primarily in Geez, which is an ancient African language used in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The Church had the “exclusive task of designing and propagating an education system whose central subjects were the religious beliefs, values, and practices of the Ethiopian Church” (Kebede, 2006, p. 6). The pedagogical approach used in the traditional education system was transmission and rote memorization (Levine, 1972; Tekleselassie, 2005; Wagaw, 1979). In order to complete the highest level of church education, one had to spend up to thirty years in rigorous and demanding learning environments through the four main categories: (a) “Nebab Bet” which was reading; (b) “Zema Bet” which was religious music; (c) “Kine Bet” which was poetry; and (d) “Metsahift Bet” which was the final stage of higher learning and consisted of several branches of studies such as theology, history, and law (Kalewold, 1970, p. 1). As church education was the only source of education, trained monks and clergy used to serve as lawyers, judges and teachers in the secular environments.

Modern Education

Modern education in Ethiopia emerged under Emperor Menelik II in the early 20th century (Pankhurst, 1976; Wagaw, 1979; Zewde, 1991). According to Wubneh and Abate (1988), secular education was introduced under the sponsorship of Emperor Menelik II’s

⁴ Here, the terms ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ refer to the periods in time and not the type or quality of education.

government. During this time, he inaugurated the first school in Addis Ababa in 1908 and issued a proclamation urging parents to send their children to school. He was quoted as stating, ““We need educated people in order to ensure our peace, to reconstruct our country and to enable it to exist as a great nation in the face of the European powers”” (Wagaw, 1979, p. 26). In order to expand education at the time, he sought out foreign teachers, curricula and policies and sent many people abroad to access education from European countries. French language was used as the medium of instruction and education policies were mainly based on French values, culture and norms. Therefore, the education system did not meet the demands and needs of the local context, resulting in negative implications for the development and expansion of the local education system.

While Emperor Menelik II pioneered modern education, its expansion occurred under Haile Selassie’s regime (1930-1974). At its infant stage, modern education in Ethiopia encountered multiple challenges involving the lack of trained professionals, educational resources and infrastructure, as well as the devastation from Italian invasion (1935-41) (Wagaw, 1979; Zewde, 1991). During this period, the education system was highly centralized and Amharic language was used as the medium of instruction for primary levels and English language for secondary and tertiary levels. It has been argued that Amharic language was the only Ethiopian language with its own written scripts and wealth of available literature. According to Wagaw (1999),

Ethiopia is one of the most ancient civilizations in the world and remains to this day a multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual country. Amharic, arguably the most ancient written African language on the continent, has been an official language of the Ethiopian State since 1270. (p. 76)

Many critics have argued that the Amharic language has been assimilationist and dominated other languages in the country for a very long time. In addition, it has favoured its native speakers from the northern and central parts of the country and provided them with access to social, political and economic opportunities. People who did not have the linguistic capital encountered difficulties in accessing employment opportunities in government sectors.

Between 1936 and 1941 the development of modern education in Ethiopia was interrupted due to the Italian invasion. Prior to this invasion, Emperor Haile Selassie built 30 public schools, which served 5000 students. However, the war destroyed the emerging schools and nearly all trained teachers were massacred. According to Wagaw (1979), “Educated men and women were hunted down and killed in cold blood, and at least 125 of those known to have met their deaths were people educated abroad at great expense and sacrifice who had returned to Ethiopia to modernize their country” (p. 48) resulting in irrecoverable damages to the emerging education sector. Tasissa (2009) has explained that during the Italian invasion, students were allowed to go to school only up to grade four. Some of the subjects taught at the time were Italian language, geography and military drills. Wagaw (1979) has stated that the Italian education system was intended to indoctrinate Africans with the Catholic religion and create ‘Italianized’ armies. With respect to the medium of instruction, Tasissa (2009) has written, “As a media of instruction the major mother tongues Oromo, Amharic, Sidama and Tigirigna were used at primary level” (p. 22).

Following the expulsion of Italy in 1941, the Emperor Haile Selassie’s throne was restored and the process of rebuilding the country resumed. The education sector rapidly accelerated in order to address the needs of the people with the inauguration of Haile Selassie University in 1950, now Addis Ababa University, and the importation of teachers, curriculum, and resources from foreign European countries, especially Britain. Unfortunately, the imported

educational policies and curricula were not relevant to students' social and contextual realities (Kebede, 2006).

In 1974, the Derg military displaced the Emperor's regime and replaced the monarchy with socialist ideology. Education was used primarily to inscribe nationalism and socialist ideologies. "Ethiopia Tikdem!" (Ethiopia First!) was the slogan that led the nation formation process during Mengistu's era and the three main guiding principles were: "Education for production"; "Education for scientific inquiry/research"; and "Education for socialist consciousness" (Tasissa, 2009). The curriculum was used for both academic and vocational purposes, imitating the education practices of the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and other socialist countries.

Amharic language continued to serve as the official language and medium of instruction for primary level. In addition, more local languages were also used to enhance basic literacy skills for the diverse population in the country. The initiative taken to incorporate more languages to enhance literacy was great idea; however, critics have argued that these languages were used informally at after school programs only. Therefore, the application process did not allow for the progress and development of local languages to be incorporated formally at institutional levels. As a result, Amharic remained the dominant language that functioned as the medium of instruction and lingua franca.

In 1991, the current Ethiopian ruling party TPLF/EPRDF deposed Mengistu and took over power. As pointed out earlier, EPRDF restructured Ethiopia using an ethnic federalism policy and divided the country along ethno-linguistic lines. As the political atmosphere shifted in Ethiopia, the education system also went through similar restructuring process. Consequently, regional languages replaced Amharic language as the medium of instruction for primary levels.

The adoption of the constitution in 1995 enabled Ethiopia to transform itself from a centralized state into a federation of ethnic territories (Bariagaber, 2003). This new constitution (which is further discussed in the literature review) has been extremely important in not only encouraging the existence and development of Ethiopia's multiple ethnicities and cultures, but also as a national declaration that has enabled and promoted division and cessation under the ideology of multiculturalism.

The government of Ethiopia has created nine ethnically based administrative regions called 'killils', term that refers to restricted or fenced areas in Amharic language. The use of the word 'killils' has drawn immense criticism locally from various oppositions, as the meaning signifies separation, segregation, reservation and division from one another in the country. Freire (1970) has observed that, "as the oppressor minority subordinates and dominates the majority, it must divide it and keep it divided in order to remain in power" (p. 141), and this has been evident in the current government's articles in their constitution, which encouraged divisions among its diverse ethnic groups. Although the government has claimed that ethnic federalism allows for harmonious coexistence, greater divisions between ethnicities have been created by the policies and the language used to define these policies.

Following the establishment of the constitution in 1995, the Ethiopian Education system has undergone a massive decentralization restructuring process. Provincial governments were given the mandate to reform their education policies in order to implement mother tongue education. According to Yigezu (2010), after the current government assumed power in 1991, "several vernaculars were introduced in formal primary education and other official purposes as part of a wider reorganization of geopolitical and administrative structures in Ethiopia that has placed language at the center of the process of social redefinition" (p. 37). The Ethiopian education policy that came in effect in 1994 was predicated on the EPRDF constitution article

(39) which affirmed the rights of all nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia to promote their culture and languages. The Ministry of Education of Ethiopia (MoE) also revealed, “primary education is given in the mother tongue for all nations and nationalities” (MoE, 2007, p. 23); thus, the language and cultural reform enabled the nations and nationalities in Ethiopia to use their local languages as media of instruction for primary schools.

The Ministry of Education of Ethiopia (2007) has explained that the implementation of vernacular languages as the media of instructions, which replaced the Amharic national language, increases access to marginalized students, while simultaneously preserving local languages and cultural heritages. The notion of ethnic federalism and the use of indigenous languages in different parts of Ethiopia has been an outstanding ideology as it provides equal status and recognition for all languages in the country (EPRDF, 1995); however, Wagaw (1999) noted that, “The current language policy has the potential for far-reaching consequences, and at worst it could engender hatred and divisiveness to a point that might lead to war” (p. 86). Therefore, he indicated that the ethnic federalism policy could have devastating impacts on national unity and social cohesion.

Education Structure in Ethiopia

Ethiopia’s social, political and educational policies have been restructured to fit the political ideologies of the ruling party; historically, when regimes gained power, their education practices were also designed to reflect their political ideologies. Between 1960s and 1990 the Ethiopian education structure followed 6:2:4 approach (refer below to Table 2: Ethiopian Education Structure, 1960-1991). Six years of primary school for grades 1 to 6, two years of junior secondary school for grades 7 and 8, and four years of high school for grades 9 to 12. The medium of instruction for primary students was Amharic language, while English language was

taught as a subject from grade 1. When students started junior high school, the medium of instruction switched to English language and Amharic language was taught as a subject.

The same trend continued at high school and higher education institutions where the medium of instruction remained English language. Students at grades 6, 8 and 12 had to pass national examinations to move to the subsequent levels. At grades 6 and 8 the examinations were called Ministry Examinations and conducted nationwide. At the completion of high school, students wrote Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) in order to join higher institutions. Even though the passing mark was 2.0 average points from 4.0 points, due to the high competition and limited spaces at higher institutions, only students who scored above 3.0 point average were admitted to higher institutions. This was mainly due to the fact that education in Ethiopia was free at all levels until 2003, when the government policy introduced cost sharing strategy of making students share tuition fees with the government. Students must have completed two- and four-year university training to obtain their diploma and undergraduate degrees respectively. The Ethiopian Education Policy and Training (1994) stated that the primary objective of education was to develop students' cognitive, rational, social and emotional intelligence of students (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1994). In addition, it was intended to develop students' problem solving skills and prepare them to join the labour force.

Table 2: Ethiopian Education Structure, 1960-1991

Level	Grade	Years	Medium of Instruction
Primary	Grade 1-6	6	Amharic language English language as a subject from

			Grade 1
Junior Secondary	Grade 7-8	2	English Language Amharic language as a subject
Secondary	Grade 9-12	4	English language
Higher Institution	Grade 12+ 4, 12+2	4 years of undergraduate degree program and 2 years of diploma program	English language

After 1991, the Ethiopian education structure adopted a 4:4:2:2 approach. As shown in Table 3: Ethiopian Education Structure, Post-1991, students spend 8 years of schooling at the primary level which is divided into two cycles. The first cycle includes grades 1 to 4 and the second cycle is grades 5 to 8. During the first cycle, students in different regions of Ethiopia use their mother tongue languages as the media of instruction. This level is also self-contained where one teacher is responsible for all subject matters. The curriculum at this stage focuses on developing students' cognitive, social and rational skills. At the second cycle (grades 5 to 8), some regions like Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray continue using mother tongue languages as the media of instruction. Other regions like SNNP region, Beneshangul Gumuz, and the federal administration states (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa) use English language as a medium of instruction. The curricula in this stage focuses on "offering basic and general primary education to prepare students for further general education and training" (Federal Democratic Republic of

Ethiopia, 1994). According to the Ministry of Education, 23 local languages are being used as the media of instructions at primary schools in Ethiopia (MoE, 2011).

The secondary level is also divided into two major sections: grades 9 and 10 called general secondary school and grades 11 and 12 called preparatory. Students start using English as a medium of instruction and Amharic and mother tongue languages as subjects. In grades 10 and 12, students write national examination which determines whether they will attend higher institutions or Technical Vocational and Education Training (TVET). The curricula at secondary and preparatory levels are intended to prepare students for higher learning and work purpose. Students who complete this level can compete to join TVET programs or Teacher Training College (TTC) programs. Students who complete preparatory levels compete to join universities and colleges for their undergraduate studies. According to the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1994, article 3.2.4), “Higher education at diploma, first degrees and graduate levels, will be research oriented, enabling students become problem-solving professional leaders in their fields of study and overall societal needs.” Therefore, the main purpose of education was intended to produce productive generations.

Table 3: Ethiopian Education Structure, Post-1991

Level	Grade	Years	Medium of Instruction
Primary	First Cycle (Grade 1-4)	4	22 Mother tongue languages including Amharic
	Second Cycle Grade 5-8)	4	
Secondary	Grade 9-12	2	English language

	General Secondary (Grade 9-10)		
	Preparatory (Grade 11-12)	2	
TEVT	10+3	3	English language
Higher Institution	Grade 12+3	3 years of undergraduate program	English language

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the context of Ethiopia and specifically the two regions that were studied, the SNNP region and the Oromia region. The history of the Ethiopian education system was provided, explaining its evolution through various governments. Education traditionally was for religious purposes, but then was expanded in the 20th century to reach the wider population. As it grew, more schools were created, higher institutions were built, and there were additional resources and infrastructure. While education was used as a tool to expand national ideals, the government also brought in experts and resources from foreign countries with whom they had strong political affiliations to assist in their development. The centralized government under Haile Selassie involved British expertise while the socialist government under Mengistu used USSR and socialist countries' resources and knowledge. The current government has implemented material and policies from a variety of countries that have provided aid and assistance to the country economically, which will be further discussed in chapter three. Chapter two concluded with a description of the education structure.

Chapter Three Literature Review

This chapter presents literature on multiculturalism in education in general and Ethiopian education system in particular. The term multiculturalism is discussed, along with the various interpretations including the conservative, liberal and critical forms. The chapter also discusses multicultural education. Following this, literature is reviewed from a globalization perspective in relation to education and development. Furthermore, the chapter highlights literature on curriculum and education in Ethiopia, and language use and the medium of instruction. Ethiopia's constitution is then deconstructed and the rise of ethnic conflict is discussed. The chapter provides a synthesis of relevant literature to understand the concept of multiculturalism as well as the context in which it has been situated.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is a complex and contested term. Ideologically, it has referred to the co-existence of diverse ethnic groups in the same geographical setting, living harmoniously with mutual respect, maintaining their unique values and identities. Fedorowicz (1997) has describes multiculturalism as:

social interaction and integration (not assimilation) is thus grounded in a theory of communication: a multicultural society is not the sum of many disparate cultural identities and practice, but the possibility of their standing in mutual relationships, retaining distinctiveness while being able to communicate with each other. (p. 83)

Therefore, multiculturalism is a way of multiple cultures living with respect and understanding of each other without dominating or oppressing one another. It is supposed to celebrate cultural 'differences' and encourage tolerance and acceptance between different ethnic backgrounds. In the Western context, including Canada, the United States, Australia and Western Europe,

multiculturalism has referred to policies created to manage the ethnic and linguistic diversity represented by the native and immigrant inhabitants; however, in the non-West including countries in Africa, Asia, South America and Eastern Europe, “the term ‘multicultural’ has been used descriptively to refer to societies that are multiethnic” (Rattansi, 2011, p. 12).

Scholars have argued that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s in the United States and immigration practices have played central roles in the emergence of multicultural policy in different parts of the world, including their education system (Banks, 1995, 2004; Gay, 2004; Modood, 2007). According to James Banks (2004),

Civil Rights Movement in the United States, echoed throughout the world. French and Indians in Canada, West Indians and Asians in Britain, Indonesians and Surinamese in the Netherlands, and Aborigines in Australia joined the series of ethnic movements, expressed their feelings of marginalization, and worked to make the institutions within their nation-states responsive to their economic, political, and cultural needs. (p. 297)

Therefore, social movements and demands for justice, recognitions and human rights forced the adoption of multicultural policies in different parts of the world. In Canada, the fight of the French Nationalist Movement in the mid-1960s to preserve the French language and culture by Québécois pressured the federal government of Canada to adopt bilingualism and biculturalism policy. Li (1999) has argued that, the “the question of Québec and the underlying current of French nationalism” (p. 150) have played a decisive role for the federal government of Canada to adopt multiculturalism policy in 1971. In other words, for Canada, multiculturalism was a way of survival for the country.

Following the Second World War, immigration also facilitated the adoption of multicultural policies in North America (Banks, 1995; Rattansi, 2011). The struggle and

demands of immigrants for their rights and recognition have played a key role for the development of multicultural policies in the United States and Canada. Taylor (1992) has argued that the demands for social justice and recognitions have created clusters of social movements for the emergence of multicultural policies in various parts of the world.

The proponents of multiculturalism have argued that it plays a vital role for diverse people from different backgrounds to live harmoniously in close proximity accepting each other's rights and cultures while maintaining each other's values and norms. They also indicated that the idea of multiple cultures is to celebrate cultural 'differences' and encourage tolerance between different ethnic groups while at the same time create a peaceful community in a given society (Kymlicka, 2007).

Multiculturalism has played a significant role in bringing different people together and creating opportunities to learn from each other. Writing about the passions of pluralism, Greene (1993) noted that "learning to look through multiple perspectives, young people may be helped to build bridges among themselves; attending to a range of human stories, they may be provoked to heal and transform" (p. 17). Thus, multiculturalism has been viewed as a mechanism for recognizing and encouraging growth and progress of multiple cultures within the same society. In addition to this, Fowers and Richardson (1996) noted that multiculturalism provides a great solution for violence and conflicts, creating an inclusive environment for all, regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

In contrast, the critiques of multiculturalism argued that the official discourse of multiculturalism policies is 'assimilationist' and 'conformist' (Giroux, 1992; Henry & Tator, 1999; May & Sleeter, 2010; Nieto, 1999). Some scholars indicated that multiculturalism has a counter-productive effect since it promotes fragmentation and is against unity. Huntington (1996) contended that multiculturalism rejects the common values and aspects that exist among

diverse people. The discourse of multiculturalism has predominantly focused on ‘differences’ rather than diversity (West, 2005). Furthermore, Ravitch (1990) has described multiculturalism as a threat towards common culture due to its promotion of ethnocentrism rather than shared social values. In this line of arguments, multicultural policies have had negative implications on social cohesion and unity.

African scholars have stated that multiculturalism in the African context has always existed (Abdi, 2007). According to Abdi (2007),

It is interesting to note that although European writers have been intent on de-historicizing African existentialities, Africans, via their life philosophies of seeing their own humanity through the humanity of others, were able to see the world as primordially multicultural and epistemologically multicentric. (p. 254)

In addition to this ideology that Africans often viewed their existence as multicultural, many geographical regions consisted of various ethnicities, cultures and/ or tribes living together. According to Dadoo and Gündüz (2011), multiculturalism is literally multiple cultures interacting and influencing each other. They further explained that its objective is to create synergy based on “respect, tolerance of ambiguity, non-disparagement, personalizing individuals views and empathy” (p. 42). In describing multiculturalism in South Africa, they noted that the country has been preoccupied with the discourse of racism, and further stated that “acknowledging and using cultural diversity for creating synergy is a noble task, but multiculturalism itself cannot be a substitute for just redress and compensation” (Dadoo & Gündüz, 2011, p. 34). Therefore, in order for multiculturalism to be effectively implemented, it has to incorporate and address the injustices and inequalities that exist in society. Abdi (2007) explained that in order to discuss multiculturalism, “[w]e need to prefix it with the terms critical or radical in the sense that it (a) aims to practically improve the lives of, especially, cultural

minorities; and (b) it achieves a radical equalization of memories, histories, epistemologies and life aims” (p. 254). In addition, he further explained that using a critical or radical lens to view it would enable the reclaiming of African humanity. This study used a critical multiculturalism lens, which is discussed below.

Types of Multiculturalism

Literature has showed that multiculturalism is a complex term and subjected to multiple interpretations. Even though there have been different categories of multiculturalism, only the three most common types of multiculturalism; conservative, liberal and critical are discussed below.

Conservative Multiculturalism

The central argument of conservative multiculturalism has been that ‘other’ cultures should subscribe to the dominant socio-cultural, political and value system. In this framework, the role of education has been to perpetuate and transmit the dominant cultures and values to the students. According to Naseem (2011), conservative multiculturalism has believed that “the multicultural societies must strive for a pluralism that fosters a rich common culture” (p. 11). Therefore, immigrants should conform to the dominant culture. For instance, in the United States of America, multiculturalism has been conceptualized as a process of assimilation of ‘other’ cultures into the dominant culture. Lei and Grant (2001) have argued “the metaphor of the United States as a melting pot became a very popular symbol for the process of Americanization, which implied that all various cultures would ‘melt down’ to produce one common culture” (p. 210). This approach has been criticized for its aggressive assimilationist behaviour of different cultures into a monoculture.

In addition, conservative multiculturalism has included culture-blind governance (Fleras, 2009; Aguado & Malik, 2011). Culture-blind refers to the absences of acknowledgement of

cultural differences and uniqueness, as it ignores the differences and assumes that all cultures are equal within the dominant culture. This approach has believed that every individual regardless of his/her sociocultural background is entitled to equal democratic rights and should not be given special treatments because of difference. Conservative multiculturalism has also promoted a meritocratic aspect and believed that the relationship between the dominant culture and ‘others’ is hierarchical with the ‘others’ being subordinate to the mainstream culture in which they reside. In education, conservative multiculturalism has taught all people the dominant culture as well as the equalities that are available for all people within the society of the dominant culture.

Liberal Multiculturalism

Liberal multiculturalism differs from conservative as it has been based on “the principle of unity and equality within difference and diversity” (Fleras, 2009, p. 14). It has provided equal treatment to the people by taking difference and situationality into account to ensure equality. In education, liberal multiculturalism has taught and celebrated equality, difference and diversity.

Liberal multiculturalism is a strategy used by the state to manage and govern diversity through tolerance, accommodation and inclusion. For example, in Canada it has been the “response of the state and societal institutions to complex and intersecting demands of an increasingly diverse population” (Naseem, 2011, p. 10). In education, scholars have criticized the official discourse that functions as “managing diversity” through liberal values of tolerance and accommodation (Gérin-Lajoie, 2008; Henry & Tator, 1999). Modood (2007) described the power relations that exist within the notion of tolerance, including the power to disapprove or disagree and the power to tolerate. However, “liberal multiculturalism is predicated on the belief that there is a natural equality between the members of different groups (dominant and subordinate) in a given society [and] that the absence of equality between these groups can only be due to the relative lack of social, economic, and educational opportunities” (Naseem, 2011, p.

10). Thus, it has viewed the existing social inequalities and injustices from a micro-level point of view in which discrimination and racism are the products of the lack of opportunities and not a result of unequal policies, structures and institutions. In discussing the limitation of liberal multiculturalism, May and Sleeter (2010) argued that the liberal multiculturalism framework views culture as a static and performance of ethnic individuals, in which “the root of conflict is viewed as misunderstanding of differences rather than inequitable power relations” (May & Sleeter, 2010, p. 4). In the education system, liberal multiculturalism has not accounted for the power relations that exist, including who creates pedagogy, curricula and teaching practices and who is privileged versus who is disadvantaged due to these relations on societal and institutional levels. For instance, McCarthy (1990) criticized the liberal education system in the United States of America as it was “the fallout of a political project to neutralize Black rejection of the assimilationist curriculum models that were in place in the 1960s” (p. 47). Therefore, liberal multiculturalism has prioritized simplistic forms of inclusion but has failed to address the major issues of social injustice and systemic exclusion in the education system.

Critical Multiculturalism

Critical multiculturalism has acknowledged and addressed the complex, institutional and structural injustice and practices that minority groups encounter in a given social order (Abdi, 2007; Dadoo & Gündüz, 2011; Gérin-Lajoie, 2008; Giroux, 1992; Henry & Tator, 1999; May & Sleeter, 2010; Nieto, 1999). It has viewed multiculturalism as value-laden and contextually bounded and it seeks to challenge the unequal power dynamics that exist within society. Nieto (1999) argued that a deeper understanding of critical multicultural theories needs social, political and contextual knowledge. According to Nieto (1999),

a sociopolitical context in education takes into account the larger social and political forces operating in a particular society and the impact they may have on

students' learning. Thus, the notion of power is at the very centre of the concept because it concerns issues such as structural inequality and stratification due to social class, gender, ethnicity, and other differences, as well as the relative respect or disrespect according to a particular culture, language and dialects. (p. 180)

Therefore, the critical multicultural framework has incorporated social change by calling attention to the complex, institutionalized and structural challenges that marginalize minority groups from accessing social, economic and political power. Dadoo and Gündüz (2011) explained how multiculturalism has to go beyond understanding the racism that exists within a context and seek to redress the injustices that are and have occurred.

Critical multiculturalism has differed from conservative and liberal multiculturalism as it views the power dynamics within the social structure. Specifically, the conservative multiculturalism perspective has been criticized for being assimilationist or, at best, for wanting ethnic groups to be add-ons to the dominant culture. Similarly, liberal multiculturalism has also been criticized as its main function has been to manage diversity through the liberal values of tolerance and accommodation (Gérin-Lejoie, 2008; Henry & Tator, 1999). Henry and Tator (1999) critically examined the gaps between the rhetoric discourses of policies and practices of multiculturalism. They argued that multiculturalism policy has been superficial and focused on simplistic form of inclusion of minority groups prioritizing foods, clothing and the traditions while excluding the major issues of social injustice and systemic exclusion of minority groups from power and privileges. Scholars also explained how multicultural policy has exacerbated the structural challenges through 'democratic racism', which refers to justifying and legitimizing the structural oppression of minority groups (Gérin-Lejoie, 2008; Henry & Tator, 1999; Nieto, 1999). Therefore, critical multiculturalism aimed specifically not to be assimilationist like the conservative approach or simply tolerant and accommodating of 'other' cultures, but rather to

recognize, address and change the structural oppression of minority groups. Critical multiculturalism has understood oppression, discrimination and racism as complex, normalized and justified realities of social practices. It has offered a critical lens to reveal the invisible hegemonic power and privileges of the dominant groups. Furthermore, it has not viewed culture as a fixed performance of individuals, but rather as a fluid and dynamic aspect of humanity that constantly shifts as time and context change.

Critical multiculturalists argued that multicultural education should critically examine the power dynamics in a given social order. They perceived schools as social transformation ground in fighting against inequalities in the society (Abdi, 2007; Dadoo & Gündüz, 2011; Dei, 2007; Freire, 1970; Giroux 1992). Critical multiculturalism has addressed the roots of social injustices and then provided transformational solutions through active engagements. Naseem (2011) illustrated this as, “critical multiculturalism aims to develop school as a site from where the hegemonic and assimilationist knowledge constructions and pedagogical practices can be challenged and eventually undermined” (p. 11). Critical multiculturalists have seen teachers as transformational agents who are capable of engaging their students in praxis for social transformation (Apple, 2004; Kinchloe & McLaren, 2008). Furthermore, since critical multiculturalism should improve people’s lives as it equalizes memories, histories, epistemologies and life aims for all cultures (Abdi, 2007), teachers are essential to engage and empower their students.

The critical multiculturalism lens, combined with critical pedagogy (discussed in the next section), are used as the theoretical frameworks to analyze data in this study.

Multicultural Education

In addition to the variety of interpretations of multiculturalism, multicultural education has also been interpreted differently. According to Grant, Sleeter and Anderson (1986), scholars

have used different terms to refer to multicultural education, including multicultural, pluralistic, bilingual, bicultural, ethnic and multiethnic. James A. Banks, a prominent scholar in the field of multicultural education, has stated that multicultural education is a reform emanated from the civil right movement and “if implemented in thoughtful, creative, and effective ways, has the potential to transform schools and other educational institutions in ways that will enable them to prepare students to live and function effectively in the coming century” (Banks, 1995, p. 391). He conceptualized multicultural education in three major categories: concept, education reform, and process (Banks, 1995). Conceptually, multicultural education has engaged in maintaining the provision of equal access and opportunities for students regardless of their social, economic, racial and ethnic locations. It has also pointed out that certain groups of students are denied access and opportunities due to discriminatory practices. Thus, it challenged the notions of exclusion and promoted inclusive approach. Multicultural education as a movement has attempted to reform the education system to make it more equitable and accessible for all students. It has challenged the status quo and called attention towards evolutionary changes. As a process, multicultural education has been a dynamic phenomenon that consistently engaged in maintaining social justice, equity and freedom.

Banks (1995) further categorized multicultural education under five dimensions “(a) content integration, (b) the knowledge construction process, (c) prejudice reduction, (d) an equity pedagogy; and an (e) empowering school culture and social structure” (p. 392). According to Banks (1995), content integration has referred to the incorporation of various cultural sources and frameworks to make the education system inclusive of minority students. He further noted that multicultural education should enable students to understand how knowledge is constructed, interpreted, and implemented in the wider social order. Banks (1995) argued that prejudice reduction has helped students to develop positive attitudes for diversity and peaceful coexistence.

He further stated that having equitable pedagogy has encouraged all students to construct knowledge in collaboration and enabled them to view their schools as a complete social system.

Policy Development

In 1944, the World Bank was established with the main objective of financing and reconstructing war torn European countries. After rebuilding European countries, the World Bank moved to offer loans for developing countries. In order to access loans from the World Bank, countries were required to align their economic strategies with the United States of America's neoliberal policies, which prioritize free market and privatization (Klees, 2008). As a result, loan recipient countries including Ethiopia were forced to adopt neoliberal economic policies. Furthermore, loans and financial assistance were usually tied to conditional policies and forced recipient countries to restructure their internal economic and education policies. For instance, critiques noted that tied-education policies in Ethiopia created negative implication as priorities were shifted toward increasing the number of enrollment at the expense of quality of education. Klees (2002) argued that the World Bank's approach towards education has been primarily viewed through the bank model of investment, rate of return and profit maximizing. As a result, education has been viewed as a commodity and includes a 'one-size-fits-all' policy regardless of social, local and contextual realities (Klees, 2002).

In addition Steiner-Khamsi (2012) criticized the reform policies that were transferred from the western, developed world to the developing countries with conditions attached to them. In many instances, recipient countries were expected to align their policies in order to secure financial assistance and loans. She also noted that policy makers gravitated towards borrowing educational policies in order to learn from others' 'best practices' for better outcomes. Silova (2012) further noted that regardless of the actors behind education policies "the underlying assumption is that there exists a common and legitimate 'blueprint' of educational policies and

practices, which would lead (if implemented properly) to increased educational opportunities and improved educational quality worldwide” (p. 229). This approach to policy borrowing has prioritized Western modernity and followed its practices in progress and scientific expertise (Silova, 2012, p. 230). The neoliberal market based policies have guided and normalized educational policy diffusion from the global north to the global south. The discourse of policy borrowing influenced the education sector, as well as the larger social, economic and political values and norms of nation states (Silova, 2012).

Policy borrowing should be analyzed in depth prior to importing and implementing. Steiner-Khamsi and Quist (2000) explained that instead of examining ‘what’ can be imported from elsewhere, research analyses of the complex trajectories of educational borrowing and critical examination of a variety of issues related to historical, political and economic dimensions of the educational borrowing process has to first occur. Many comparative educational researchers (beginning from Sadler’s famous Guildford lecture of 1900) have continuously warned against uncritical, decontextualized educational borrowing. In particular, a growing number of scholars (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Silova, 2012) have attempted to shift the focus from normative ideas of policy borrowing and lending towards more analytical and context relevant approaches.

Steiner-Khamsi (2012) cautioned about the uncritical forms of educational policy borrowing and traveling policies, as she questioned whether globalization has been pushing the world to a converging point and homogenizing under the auspicious of ‘international standard’ and ‘best practice.’ According to Nóvoa and Lawn (2002),

From Ulaanbaatar to Berlin, from Anchorage to Cape Town, the similarities have grown to the extent that policy makers unscrupulously refer to these reforms as ‘best practices’, or ‘international standards’, in education, *as if* there existed a

clearly defined set of standards, policies, and practices that are universally shared.

Nevertheless, *imagined globalisation* [sic] in education has affected agenda-setting as significantly as the *real* pressure to harmonise or align the education systems with systems in the same region, or in the same ‘educational space’.

(Nóvoa & Lawn, 2002, cited in Steiner-Khamsi 2012, p. 4)

Often policy borrowing has existed within the context or framework of best practices. However, there have always been political, social and economic agendas into which they have been aligned and supported.

Globalization and Education Reform

Globalization as a new world order has become a dominant discourse following the end of the Cold War. It has played a critical role in intensifying the transfer of technologies and policies from the global north to the global south (Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000). According to Steger (2009), “The term *globalization* applies to a set of social processes that are thought to transform our present social condition into one of globality. At its core, then, globalization is about shifting forms of human contact” (p. 8). He used the term ‘globality’ to signify the dynamism of social interdependence and interconnectedness. Therefore, with globalization the divisions between countries have become less relevant as there becomes freer movement of people, information and resources.

Mundy (2005) explained that the term globalization is complex and often viewed by the economic changes in global interactions but that it can also be explained by looking at the new cultural and political relationships. The four main aspects of economic globalization that are included in understanding the term involve the mobility of the chains of production, production becoming concentrated in multinational or transnational organizations, the increasing globalized flow of capital, and a new emphasis on information transfers. Furthermore, the most common

factor included in all definitions of globalization is “deterritorialization of social relationships and rapid integration of societies across previous territorially bound units” (Mundy, 2005, p. 13). Therefore globalization has to be understood as social, political and economic processes.

Scholars have argued that the neo-liberal policies have been the main driving force behind the intensification of globalization process and policy transfers. Since the 1980s, the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, and the Prime Minister of Britain, Margaret Thatcher, placed the free-market economy discourse at the heart of social, political, economical and educational policies. Stiglitz (2003) noted that,

the most dramatic change in these institutions occurred in the 1980s, the era when Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher preached free market ideology in the United States and the United Kingdom. The IMF and the World Bank become the new missionary institutions, through which these ideas were pushed on the reluctant poor countries that often badly needed their loans and grants. (p. 13)

Within this new world order, the opening up of territories for market economy and privatization has resulted in the massive movement of public goods to private sectors that further increased social inequalities. This process intensified policy transfer from one place to the other. As a result, loan recipient were forced to reform their economic and education systems. For instance, Structural Adjustment Program led education policy reform was one of many examples to have impacted the education system of aid recipient countries including Ethiopia.

Structural Adjustment Programs and Education Reforms

As the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) implemented policy borrowing from developed countries into developing one, the loan-recipient countries were often required to incorporate Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Structural Adjustment Programs have forced countries to restructure their economies around free market and privatization

policies. Human rights violations have been worsening as a result of the SAPs in Africa (Fonjong, 2014). According Carnoy (1995), SAP has been “normally associated with correcting the imbalances in foreign accounts and domestic consumption (including government deficits) and with the deregulation and privatization of the economy” (p. 653). Therefore loan recipient countries were forced to implement SAPs to access additional funding or loan. As a result, governments’ capacities to provide social services in education have declined. These reforms were primarily focused on market liberalization and reduction of government sizes. In addition, SAPs increased social inequalities and accelerated the move of public resources to the private sectors collapsing social safety nets of the poor. In this regard, Mundy (2008) noted that within the globalized economic system,

rich country governments refused to provide sustainable debt relief or to drop trade barriers to the primary commodities produced by the developing countries. Instead, they encouraged countries to adopt a set of “belt tightening” and liberalization reforms, often through their engagement with the International Monetary Funds (IMF) and the World Bank. “Structural Adjustment Programs” encouraged governments to place a cap on public spending, often with severe effects on educational provision. In case such as Tanzania and Kenya, these caps on spending led to the reintroduction of user fees in health and education. (p. 60)

The impacts of these policies on developing countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania have created significant repercussions on their education and health care systems. Since the public goods have been reduced, governments were forced to introduce small user fees that forced millions of children out of schools. In addition, SAPs have had a direct impact on the capacity building of developing countries in limiting their ability to invest in higher education.

Munene (2008) noted the importance of marketization and privatization in education

discourse, especially higher education. He wrote that

Central to the fundamental issues arising from marketisation [sic] and privatisation [sic] in developing countries are the reasons for, and the nature of, the rapid expansion of privatisation [sic] and marketisation [sic] in public higher education and stakeholder anxiety over the increasing reconfiguration of institutions to reflect market realities. (Ntshoe, 2004, 2004, cited in Munene, 2008, p. 1).

In addition, Munene (2008) noted that the globalized political economy has been the catalyst for transforming higher education into the marketplace, in addition to the role of multinational agencies like the World Bank and IMF. He also expanded that,

Dynamics connected to external and internal factors provided the impetus for university transformation, from a fully funded public university towards a more market-oriented university with a growing private revenue base and a complex organisational [sic] form. Donor demands for increased role of private resources and market forces in education finance coupled with global tendencies that favour these trends have been the most conspicuous external drives shaping the reforms. Social demands for higher education and state budgetary rationalisation [sic] requirements have been the most significant internal pressures for reforms. (p. 14)

In addition, Wane and Gatheya (2003) argued how the cost-sharing discourse in African contexts was attributed to the structural adjustment policy and has created “further marginalization of children from low socio-economic groups, including street, slum, and nomadic children, girls and the disabled” (p. 188). They further explained how the improvements in education have been negatively affected by the cost-sharing measures.

The discourse of education policy reforms in the late 80s and 90s was primarily to enhance human capacity for economic competitiveness in market world. In both Britain and the United States of America, the notion of de-regulation and ‘free-market’ ideology became prominent in guiding educational reform policies and this was diffused to aid recipient countries to implement similar strategies. According to Bergeron (2008), “the neoliberal agenda was linked to macro-level structural adjustment policy conditionalities aimed at expanding the role of market forces and constraining the role of the state” (p. 349). Hence, the application of Structural Adjustment Programs in developing countries resulted in higher social inequalities and slower economic progress. To this end, Hellinger (2007) further elaborated this issue as “after over a decade of structural adjustment imposed throughout Africa by the IMF and the World Bank with the strong backing of the US government, Africa is in even worse shape than it was at the beginning of the 1980s” (p. 84). In order to finance their debt, countries had to take austerity measures and cut-back on social services, education, and health care. Steven Klees (2008) argued that the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programs to aid recipient sub-Saharan African countries has deteriorated their social as well as economic development. He further argued that the World Bank has perceived education through the human capital framework whereby education is evaluated in its capacity to generate revenue.

Curricula and Education in Ethiopia

Curriculum is a complex term with multiple interpretations. It has signified different meanings for different scholars. According to Franklin Bobbitt (1918), “the word *curriculum* is Latin for a race-course or the race itself, -a place of deeds, or a series of deeds. As applied to education, it is that series of *things which children and youth must do and experience*” (p. 42). Furthermore, Johnson (1968) argued that “curriculum consists of the sum of the experiences of learners while they are under the auspices of the school” (p. 3). Beauchamp and Beauchamp

(1972) used the term curriculum in three ways to refer to a written document, system and field of study or inquiry. They explained curriculum as “a written document intended to be used by teachers for developing their teaching strategies for specific groups of students” (p.3). They further illustrated that the primary question of the document was to provide an answer for “what shall be taught in schools” (pp. 3-4). Similarly, Ralph Tyler (1949) identified four major topics to be analyzed while developing curriculum documents, including what the purposes should achieve, what the experiences can provide, how the experiences can be organized, and how to evaluate if the purposes are being achieved.

It has been widely argued that schools are a reflection of the society. Thus, the fundamentals of curricula have been rooted in the cultural and social practices (Johnson, 1968; Schubert, 1986; Taba, 1962). According to Smith, Stanley and Shores (1957),

the curriculum is always in every society a reflection of what the people think, feel, believe and do. To understand the structure and function of the curriculum, it is necessary to understand what is meant by culture, what the essential elements of a culture are, and how these are organized and inter related. (pp. 3-4)

Thus, having clear knowledge about the cultural and contextual knowledge has been essential to understand the curriculum. To this end, Gay (2004) explained that the notion of curriculum is “best understood when the functions and effects are explained in relation to other sub theories such as administration, instruction, education psychology, policy studies, supervision and evaluation” (p.30). Therefore, contextual knowledge has been critical to clearly understand the purposes and functions of curriculum.

Miller and Seller (1985) argued that the development and implementation of curriculum is a dynamic, complex process, and they explained curriculum as “an explicitly and implicitly intentional set of interaction designed to facilitate learning and development and to impose

meaning on experience” (p. 3). The explicit curriculum instructions highlighted the formal intended learning outcomes accepted officially. The implicit curriculum referred to unwritten rules and norms tacitly exist in the ‘hidden curriculum’. Giroux and Penna (1981) indicated that through hidden curriculum, schools and institutions reproduce and legitimize the dominant class’s socio-cultural values. Apple (2004) described how schools have played a significant role in the reproduction of power dynamics in the society. He explained that curriculum has been set to enforce structure in schools but also to represent and perpetuate the unspoken rules and regulations of society. According to Apple (2004),

[s]ocial and economic control occurs in schools not merely in the forms of discipline schools have or in the dispositions they teach – the rules and routines to keep order, the hidden curriculum that reinforces norms of works, obedience, punctuality, and so on. Control is exercised as well through the forms of meaning the school distributes. That is, the ‘formal corpus of school knowledge’ can become a form of social and economic control. (p. 61)

Therefore, curriculum has been a very powerful instrument deeply rooted in the socio-cultural context and has controlled wider social practices. Similarly, Eggleston (1977) echoed these ideas in his writing; “for the curriculum is one of the key areas in which the values and power system of the school and the society areas come together; a key mechanism of social control over the young and over those who teach them” (p. 12).

Different scholars have formulated theories around the function of education and curricula. William Schubert (1986) classified the theories of curriculum as descriptive, prescriptive and critical. Descriptive curriculum theory has focused on the intended learning outcomes based on plans for lessons or programs. Teachers under this theory are expected to enact the curriculum. The prescriptive curriculum has incorporated students’ experiences into the

teaching and learning process. The critical curriculum theory has been primarily concerned with social justice and emancipatory education.

Similarly, Miller and Seller (1985) have situated the role of education into three major positions or paradigms which are transmission, transaction, and transformation. They argued that the prime function of education under the transmission position has been to transmit stated facts, skills, cultural norms and values to the students. In this paradigm, the teaching and learning process has been predominantly a top-down approach where teachers are conveying information to their students. This approach has also been termed as ‘traditional’ where students in this paradigm are expected to memorize and master the skills. Miller (2008) argued that in the transmission learning style “knowledge is seen as fixed rather than a process and usually broken down into smaller units so that students can master the materials” (p. 10). Within this practice there has been no place for reflexive learning as the knowledge flow is unidirectional from the teacher to the student. In the transaction position, Miller and Seller (1985), stated that education has been perceived as a dialogical process between the learner and the curriculum. The central theme of curriculum and education process has been to develop students’ cognitive and rational skills in order to make them solve problems and be productive in the wider social context. This approach has emphasized the human capital theory whereby students become more effective and productive in their society. It has been argued that the transaction position philosophically and psychologically emanated from Dewey’s pragmatic and Piaget’s development works.

Miller and Seller (1985) explained that the transformation position has been primarily concerned with individual and social change. The curriculum and education system in this paradigm have aimed to develop the students’ rational, social, emotional and cognitive skills. In other word, this stream has treated children as a whole beings. According to Miller (2008), “[t]ransformational learning acknowledges the wholeness of the child...the curriculum and the

child no longer seen as separate but as connected” (p. 11). In this process, learners have been able to realize the interconnectedness among themselves, their environment and communities.

In the transformational learning process, students are taught to develop their critical consciousness and schools are used to facilitate and install the notion of critical thinking skills into their students. In this regard, Giroux (1988) explained the importance of schools to cultivate a spirit of critical thinking and human dignity for the students as well as the ability to link personal and social issues so that students will become critical and active citizens. Therefore, teachers have been perceived as transformational agents capable of engaging their students in critical dialogues actively. Wane and Gatheya (2003) noted that “[a]s educators, we must counter the negative effects of oppression and address areas where critical work is needed” (p. 171). Therefore, educators have the responsibility to ensure that students are taught to see the power dynamic and social inequities in the wider context.

Having gone through the Ethiopian education system as a student and a teacher for nearly two decades, I have come to realize that the Ethiopian education system is better characterized by the transmission paradigm. The notion of curriculum in the Ethiopian education context has been conceptualized narrowly and focused exclusively on the instructional aspects of the written document. Similarly, the multicultural education curricula in the country have been narrowly preconceived around linguistic and ethnic differences. However, educators have argued that curricula need to be understood broad, complex and dynamic since they are interwoven with the social, political and cultural aspect of the society (Apple, 2004; Banks, 1995, 2004; Giroux, 1989, 1992).

In the Ethiopian context, teachers must follow the rules and regulations stated by the preset curriculum. It has been predominantly a teacher-centered methodology, as teachers have been restricted to complete a given text book within a specific timeframe. In most public schools,

class sizes are very large with an average of 60 students (Negash, 1996). Quite often, teachers are the prime source of knowledge and students are perceived to be passive recipients of knowledge. Furthermore, teachers in Ethiopian public schools are often stressed and stretched to cover every topic in the curriculum within a given period of time. This approach has been widely criticized as it undermines teachers' professionalism and decision-making skills. More priority has been given to the coverage of the materials than the depth of the contents. Serbesssa (2006) acknowledged that in Ethiopian public schools, "[m]ost teachers complained that the teaching materials are full of large amounts of information to be memorized by students and thus, many teachers feel responsible to cover the curriculum in the available time" (p. 134). Similarly, Beck and Kosnik (2006) have recognized that educators are under pressure to cover large number of lessons and topics despite their relevance.

In the Ethiopian teaching-learning environment, the relationship between teachers and students has always been top-down and teachers have implemented authoritative teacher-centered methods in order to finish the curriculum in a timely manner. However, Freire (1970) has countered this totalitarian way of delivering lessons in which teachers use a 'banking' system of education and explained that "[e]ducation thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (p. 72). He further illustrated that the needs and interests of students should be integrated in order to make the teaching-learning process more dialogical and the students more engaged and involved in the learning process.

Dewey (1902) has argued against the notion of a prescriptive curriculum and education system that views students as passive recipients of 'fixed' knowledge. Rather, he emphasized that education is an active process whereby students are able to develop their own independent thinking skills and construct knowledge from their imagination and experiences. He stated that:

subject-matter never can be got into the child from without. Learning is active. It involves reaching out of the mind. It involves organic assimilation starting from within. Literally, we must take our stand with the child and our departure from him, it is he and not the subject-matter which determines both quality and quantity of learning. (Dewey, 1902, p. 9)

Dewey (1902) pointed out that knowledge construction is an active process and children need to be encouraged to develop their own independent thinking. However, in the Ethiopian education contextual reality, the curriculum has taken precedent over the students learning.

Language Use and Media of Instruction in Education

The majority of nations of the world are composed of multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural societies. Choosing languages for national or instructional media has been a challenging task for many nations, as it needs careful consideration of the social, cultural, economic and geopolitical aspects of the context. Pierre Bourdieu (1991) in his *Language and Symbolic Power* wrote,

The official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and in its social uses. It is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language. Obligatory on official occasions and in official places (schools, public administrations, political institutions, etc.) this state language becomes the theoretical norm against which all linguistic practices are objectively measured. Ignorance is no excuse; this linguistic law has its body of jurists – the grammarians – and its agents of regulation and imposition- the teachers- who are empowered *universally* to subject the linguistic performance of speaking subjects to examination and to the legal sanction of academic qualifications. (p. 45)

Therefore language has been inextricably linked with power dynamic and legitimized the dominant discourses, values and norms within the social structure. The designated official language has become a powerful tool to conduct major social, political, and educational activities. Subsequently, the native speakers of the official language have had better opportunities in society, and their values and cultures have been the ‘acceptable’ norm that shapes the wider social order. Similarly, the education system, knowledge production and dissemination also favoured the native speakers and enabled them to navigate through systems easily.

Scholars have contended that educational language policies have been the product of the contextual, social and political aspects. According to Yigezu (2010), “Educational language policies can only be properly understood when related to the philosophy and ideology held by the political system and the politics connected to the society” (p.23). Education language policy formations have not been purely pedagogical since decision making regarding language application has been primarily influenced by the political system. Likewise, the educational language policies in the Ethiopian context have also revealed these realities. According to Heather (cited in Paulston, 1994) “language decisions are primarily made on political and economic grounds and reflect the value of those in political power” (p. 5). Thus, politicians rather than public stakeholders predominantly influenced the selection of national language and media of instructions.

In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian education policy reform of 1994 has been criticized for its tone of being political rather than pedagogical. Decision making regarding which language should have been used for medium of instructions has generated contested and conflicting views. Especially, in a multicultural and multilingual society like Ethiopia, language selection for media of instruction has been very challenging as it favours certain groups and disadvantages the

others. In order to address issues related to language use and media of instruction, the Ethiopian government reformed the language policy and replaced Amharic, the former medium of instruction, with local languages.

The Ethiopian People's Republic Democratic Front (EPRDF) Constitution

Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia

Federalism has referred to the 'division of power' among central and provincial or state governments depending on their arrangements. Historically, federalism has been functional for the last 200 years in different parts of the world. For instance, in USA, governing power has been divided between the central and state governments. Similarly, this power division arrangement in Canadian context is between the central and provincial governments. Maddox (1973) argued that federalism is a method of dividing power in order for the government to operate within their own regions where they are independent from each other. In the federal political and governance realm, states and the central governments have distinctive yet collaborative roles and responsibilities to ensure individual and collective human rights. The executive, legislative and judiciary bodies have enabled power dynamics to be shared in a balanced manner. Further, it is noted that federalism has been critical in maintaining shared values, pluralism and sense of communities.

The emergence of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system has been tied to the ethnic federalism policy that restructured Ethiopia along ethnic and linguistic lines. Some pointed out that the policy has been primarily intended to advance the political agenda of 'divide and rule' to maintain power. In order to understand Ethiopia's internal affairs including the education system, it is imperative to look at governing bodies and its constitution.

The current government, EPRDF, was formed from multiple parties, including the Tigray People's Liberation Party (TPLF), Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), Amhara

National Democratic Movement (ANDM), and Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM). The TPLF was established in 1974 in the Tigray (northern) region to liberate the Tigray region from Ethiopia and displaced the former regime in 1991. Thereafter, they conducted a National Conference and formed the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in order to legitimize the rights and abilities of the regions. According to Wagaw,

EPRDF hastily assembled people from the various ethnic groups for a four-day conference in Addis Ababa. From that assembly emerged a provisional charter which prescribed the principles of Ethiopia's present policies regarding human rights, self-determination, the administrative divisions of the country, and language policies. The final document was ratified in 1994, became the constitution, and more or less followed the guidelines outlined in the provisional charter. (Wagaw, 1999, p. 83)

This is evident in the formal constitution that came in effect in 1995. According to the EPRDF (1995) constitution, permeable section:

We, the Nations, Nationalities and People of Ethiopia: *Strongly committed*, in full and free exercise of our right to self-determination, to building a political community founded on rule of law and capable of ensuring a lasting peace, guaranteeing a democratic order, and advancing our economic and social development; ... *fully cognizant* that our common destiny can be best served by rectifying historically unjust relationships and by further promoting our shared interests; convinced that to live as one economic community is necessary in order to create sustainable and mutually supportive conditions for ensuring respect for our rights and freedoms and for collective promotion of our interests. (p.75-76)

A closer analysis of the constitution document has revealed how the TPLF ruling party strategically managed to use the discourse of multiculturalism to dismantle the Ethiopian national identities and redefined millennia old essences and national sentiments. For instance, various scholars and opposition parties have strongly criticized the EPRDF's constitution as it has perpetuated ethnocentrism. "We, the Nations, Nationalities and People of Ethiopia" illustrated that there was no 'Ethiopian' national identity; rather, the 'nations, nationalities and people' were identified based on compartmentalized ethnic identity markers. One of the main features of ethnic federalism crafted by TPLF was abolishing 'nationhood' sentiments and replacing it with ethnocentric ideologies.

The constitution further stated that "Strongly committed, in full and free exercise of our right to self-determination to building a political community." This powerful statement showed that the intention of the TPLF party to separate Ethiopia into smaller nations as it grants the full right for "'nations' and 'nationalities' to secede and form their independent political communities. In other words, this discourse of "self-determination" perpetuated the disintegration of Ethiopia into various mini-nations. The constitution also declared the establishment of "one economic community" and rejected the social, cultural and family ties developed over generations.

Implementing the ethnic federalism policy, TPLF restructured Ethiopia's geopolitical, social and educational policies along ethnic and linguistic lines. The International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 153 (2009) noted, "The regime not only restructured the state in to the current Federal Democratic People of Ethiopia, but also vigorously redefined citizenship, politics and identity on ethnic grounds" (p. 4). The newly adopted constitution changed Ethiopia from a centralized state into ethnically federated states. As a result, nine ethnically based administrative regions called 'killils' were established. The term 'killil' in Amharic refers to restricted

boundaries and territories. The use of the word ‘killil’ has drawn immense criticism locally from various oppositions as the meaning signifies separation, disintegration, reservation and division from one another in the country. According to the constitution of 1995 Article 39, (1), (2), and (3),

Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination including the right to secession. Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write to develop its own language; to express, to develop and promote its culture; and to preserve its history. Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to a full measure of self-government which include the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in the State and Federal Government (EPRDF, 1995, p. 96)

This new constitution was critical in shaping and informing the multicultural policies and practices in the Ethiopian social, economic and education system. According to Articles 46 (2) & 47 (1), of the EPRDF constitution,

States shall be delimited on the basis of the settlement patterns, language, identity and consent of the people concerned. Member States of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia are: 1) The State of Tigray, 2) The State of Afar, 3) The State of Amhara, 4) The State of Oromia, 5) The State of Somalia, 6) The State of Beneshangul/Gumuz, 7) The State of The Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, 8) The State of the Gambela Peoples, 8) The State of the Harari People. (EPRDF, 1995, p.103)

The government at the time indicated that the bold move towards ethnic federalism was intended to transform Ethiopia into a democratic, peaceful and prosperous country. Article (39) of the

constitution declared that the nations, nationalities and the people of Ethiopia have full right to “self-determine up to secession and form their independent nations.” According to the ruling party of Ethiopia, this discourse of ‘self-determination’ was to maintain lasting peace and put a final end to emerging interethnic conflicts.

The government of Ethiopia has firmly argued that embracing the ethnic federalism policy has been the right strategy as it enables the peoples to foster harmonious coexistence, curbs further interethnic conflicts as well as provides opportunities for fair and equitable political representations. Further, proponent scholars of ethnic federalism praised Ethiopia’s ‘experiment’ of ethnic federalism policy. Some saw this approach as a move away from the ‘Amhara’s colonial’ and Marxist and Leninist centralized government towards recognizing the ethnic groups that have been oppressed (Lewis, 1993; Young, 1993). Lewis (1993) further noted, “Twenty-seven political organizations, nineteen of them explicitly based on ethnic (or “nationals”) groups, emerged from exile or from the countryside to participate in an attempt to reconstruct Ethiopia on whole new foundation” (p. 158). Therefore, the ruling party of Ethiopia and some scholars believe that the ethnic federalism formula was the right approach to govern the country.

In addition, the TPLF government also affirmed that ethnic federalism policy has laid a strong foundation for unity and fair distributions of political power and resources. In conjunction to this, Aalen (2011) wrote,

After many years of war between the Derg-controlled central state and ethnic liberation movements, ethnicity had become a political force that could not be removed or ignored. Thus, a TPLF- controlled centralised unitary state without ethnic concessions would have been vulnerable to the same ethnic revolts that had brought down the previous regimes. (p. 36)

Thus, the TPLF ruling party established a country that is divided based on languages and ethnic differences for its own survival.

Contrary to the government views, the constitution at large faced stiff resistance and objections from various opposition parties, intellectuals and observers. The majority of opposition parties refused to accept the restructuring process along ethnic difference, calling the move as a ‘divide and rule governing policy’ (All-Amhara People’s Organization). Particularly, Article 39 (1) that grants nations and nationalities the power of secession was denounced.

Opposition parties like the All-Amhara People’s Organization (AAPO) and Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD), historians, educators and intellectuals have sharply opposed the ethnocentric policies orchestrated by TPLF. Members of AAPO parties and representatives vehemently disagreed the inclusion of ‘secession’ in the constitution as it would lead the country to disintegrate into smaller nations, which ultimately leads to the collapse of the nation. Furthermore, major parties like CUD warned that the exclusive use of ethnic difference for political governance would trigger serious ethnic conflicts, social unrest and chaos in the country. Scholars point out that ethnocentric governments are termed as ethnocracy (Yiftachel, 2000). He elaborated ethnocracy as:

a specific expression of nationalism that exists in contented territories where a dominant ethnos gains political control and uses the state apparatus to ethnicize the territory and society in question. ... The lack of democracy rests on unequal citizenship and on state laws and policies that enable the seizure of the state by one ethnic group. (p. 731)

Yiftachel (2000) explained that within ethnocratic governing systems, geopolitical and social policies are structured around ethnic identities. Similarly, the Ethiopian ethnic based federal system has been characterized by ethnocracy since ethnic identity defines Ethiopia’s social and

political structures.

The Rise of Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia

Ethnic conflicts in the last five decades have been one of the most challenging phenomena for international security and stability of the globe. Following the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, the proliferation of ethnic conflicts and violence in different parts of the world has resulted in irrecoverable damages to tens of thousands of human lives, economic and environmental degradation. In particular, the wellbeing of most African, Asian and Balkan states has been seriously threatened by the carnages of ethnic conflicts (Jeong, 2000; Wa Wamwere, 2003).

Though ethnic conflicts have been caused by multiple factors, sociologists and experts primarily categorized them in three major streams: primordial, instrumental and constructivist (Horowitz, 1985; Young, 1993). Primordial theorists have argued that ethnic conflicts have primarily emanated from ancient hatreds among ethnic groups. In the primordial framework, kinship and blood relationships played a significant role in categorizing members within the same family groups. They have believed that identity formation is fixed and static. Horowitz (1985) argued that the contemporary social crisis, ethnic chauvinism, conflicts and atrocities are connected with pre-existing hatred.

Instrumentalists on the other hand have noted that ethnic conflicts have resulted from the grievances of group experiences and socioeconomic needs. The instrumentalist school of thought has argued that elite politicians use ethnic identities for social mobilizations in order to gain access to political and economic power. Wolff (2006) underscored that ethnic conflicts are primarily triggered due to structural, political, economic, and cultural factors. Structural factors have referred to the inability of the states to govern and protect their citizens, territories, and borders. States that have been unable to function properly due to structural factors become

fragile and fertile grounds for internal ethnic conflicts. Instrumentalists have stated that poor economic conditions and repressive political system play a central role in creating ethnic conflicts and tension within societies.

Constructivists have contended that ethnic conflicts are the product of socially constructed aspects. They argued that historical injustices and the animosity developed among ethnic groups over the course of time causes ethnic conflict. Jon Abbink (2007) wrote that one of the major mystical powers of ethnicity has been its potential of categorizing people under ‘fictive kinship’ through the notion of common ancestral lineages and enables social mobility. He asserted that ethnicity is “a discursive construct, and primarily to be interpreted as cultural-cognitive representation of social conditions and problems that can harden into an alternative—though usually inaccurate—version of social reality.” (p. 60). Gurr (1993) further argued that uneven resource distribution, denial of access and opportunities towards political sphere play central role in triggering conflict among different ethnic groups. Discriminatory practices based on ethnic identities and denial of access to economic development, job opportunities and employments have played a central role in fueling interethnic conflicts.

Regardless of their causes, ethnic conflicts have resulted in serious crimes against humanity and forceful displacements (Gurr, 1993). For instance, in Africa, ethnic conflicts resulted in the Rwandan genocide that killed a million people in three months. In Sri Lanka, ethnic conflict has devoured the lives of thousands of innocent people including children, women and non-combatant civilians. In the former Yugoslavia, due to ethnic conflict between Serbian and Croatian tens of thousands people were killed and displaced from their homes.

Ethnic conflicts have exposed people for multiple forms of violence including physical, psychological and emotional trauma and distress. Galtung (1990), Harris (2010) and Reyhler (2001) have explained the physical, psychological and structural manifestations of violence.

Physical violence refers to the use of force to cause a physical harm, damage or kill individual or group. It has been widely argued that physical violence is the most common and visible type of violence. According to Harris (2002) “physical violence includes direct harm to others – war, ethnic rivalry, juvenile crime, gang attacks, sexual assault, random killing, and physical forms punishment” (p. 16). This violence is visible and it is “intended to deter, coerce, wound, and even kill people” (Reychler, 2001, p. 5). Further, Jeong (2000) pointed out that, direct violence represents the forms of physical injuries and the infliction of pain. Thus, physical violence has been a direct and deliberate action to cause human suffering.

Psychological violence is another form of violence primarily intended to harm the mental state of human being. Reychler (2001) contended that psychological violence “aims at minds and hearts and tries to incapacitate the sentimental power of people. Psychological violence is often intended to produce mental suffering or spread fear and hate” (p. 5). Harris (2002) also revealed that psychological violence results in “diminishing person’s sense of worth and security” (p. 16). Thus, psychological violence causes internal crisis to the victim. With respect to structural violence, Gultang (1990) noted that structural violence is an indirect type of violence built into the social structure and less visible than physical or psychological violence. He explained that structural violence is a hidden form of violence and practiced within a given social structure.

Many scholars have argued that the intention behind promoting multiculturalism in Ethiopian schools has been to maintain dominancy and control over the wider society. Dessalegn and Meherat (2004) and Zelalem (2004) argued that following the set up of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia in 1991 and the drafting of the constitution in 1995, the country’s administrative map was re-drawn along ethno-linguistic lines, giving birth to the formation of nine ‘National Regional States’ by underpinning nations, nationalities, and peoples. It was these moves that have fuelled inter-ethnic conflicts.

Jon Abbink (2007) argued that in Ethiopia's ethnic federalism structure, ethnicity has become powerful element to determine Ethiopia's geopolitical, socioeconomics and identity formations. Abbink (2007) noted that,

At present, Ethiopian citizenship for all practical purposes (voting rights, marriage, K'ebele registration, etc.) is defined through ethnic identity (i.e., by official ascription, making it, e.g., obligatory for children of mixed family to "choose" to belong to the ethnic group of one of the parents, even if this in itself can already be difficult to determine). This ethnic definition of citizens thus seems to have been extended into domains where it is completely irrelevant. (p. 63)

Ethnic federalism states have created sensitive and explosive racial tensions between different ethnic neighbors. This has created major conflicts among different ethnic groups in the country and it has become common to witness the effects of these conflicts on resources. Habtu (2004) pointed out ethnic entrepreneurs, political leaders and elites manipulate ethnicity or ethnic nationalism to achieve their political ends. Further, he argued that ethnic nationalism is a major source of social conflict within and between ethnicities. Some scholars also argued that the ruling party has played a significant role in addressing its agenda, using the Ministry of Education as a medium to perpetuate regionalism, rights of local languages, identity, cultural pluralism, and ethno-centrism, which results in negative ethnicity. Negative ethnicity has been described as one of the major sources of conflict in the world that has claimed millions of innocent lives like the Rwandan genocide and civil wars in Sudan, Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, and many others. According to Wa Wamwere (2003),

Africa, which has no nuclear bombs and never suffered a nuclear attack, has created its own weapon of mass destruction, one more powerful than the atomic,

hydrogen, or neutron bombs: negative ethnicity. With it, Africa has killed and continues to kill millions of its own men, women, and children. (pp. 11-12)

The notion of negative ethnicity has been perpetuated through negative language. The languages and expressions that are used to describe certain ethnic groups have a perpetual impact of resulting severe damages in their history, culture and lives. For instance during the Rwandan genocide Wa Wamwere (2003) noted that,

Hutus called Tutsis cockroaches, bushes, and weeds while Tutsis called Hutus monkeys and hyenas. Any name provoking fear, stirring the desire to destroy and justifying the death of the other, is used: hyena, rat, snake, lice, and cockroach. (p. 46)

The portrayal of a group as *cockroaches*, *hyenas*, *rats*, and *snakes* signifies that the group is a vicious animal-like creature and needs to be eliminated. Misrepresenting and relating certain groups with animals has served as a rationale for the dominant groups to take severe action against the minority groups in the societies. Further, it has indicated the power of negative ethnicity in denying human rights and resulted in endless conflict among diverse ethnic groups.

The ethnic federalism experiment of TPLF government in Ethiopia has created serious ethnic tensions among different groups (Habtu, 2004; Wagaw, 1999). The rise of ethnic conflict in different parts of the country has been an alarming issue that needs to be addressed in a proper manner. Following the ethnic federalism policy in Ethiopia, the escalation of ethnic conflicts on spaces and resources has become a serious concern to witness. This is evident in the numerous recent problems and conflicts in different regions of Ethiopia (Zelalem, 2004). Abbink (2007) noted that ethnic conflicts in the last two decades in Ethiopia resulted in the deaths and displacements of hundreds of people as well as inflicted a never-ending hostility among ethnic

groups. Similarly, Habtu (2004) warned that the catastrophic impact of ethnic conflict in the country is posing serious threats to Ethiopia's unity and territorial integrity.

Theoretical Framework

The theories used to understand the influences and impacts of multiculturalism in education were critical multiculturalism and critical pedagogy. Critical multiculturalism has been previously discussed in the literature review, therefore critical pedagogy is explained below.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy has played a significant role in awakening educators and students' critical consciousness (Freire 1970; Giroux, 1988, 1992, 2004; McLaren, 1997). It enables people to liberate themselves from the multiple forms of oppression. Paulo Freire (1970) stressed that through dialogical process and praxis, social transformation can be achieved. He further argued that critical pedagogy enables people to emancipate themselves from the injustices of structural and institutional oppressions. According to Freire (1970) critical pedagogy,

as a humanist and liberating praxis, posits as fundamental that the people subjected to domination must fight for their emancipation. To that end, it enables teachers and students to become Subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism; it also enables people to overcome their false perception of reality. The world—no longer something to be described with deceptive words—becomes the object of that transforming action by men and women which results in their humanization. (p.

86)

Therefore, critical pedagogy enables the unveiling of the multiple forms of oppression that are built into the social structure and address them in ways which allow for the humanization of all people, both the oppressed and the oppressors. It does this by empowering people to engage in a

critical thinking process to reflect on the institutional and structural oppression and calls for action for democratic social transformation. It is primarily concerned with social transformation and emancipatory education (Apple, 2004; Freire, 1970; Giroux & McLaren 1993; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2001).

In addition, critical pedagogy includes the complex relationships in classroom teaching, knowledge production and power dynamics that exist in the larger social structure. McLaren (1997) described how critical pedagogy plays a central role in addressing social inequalities and transforming society. He stresses that a revolutionized approach towards education is necessary in order to transform social inequalities.

Not only does critical pedagogy address the complex relationships, it also engages teachers and students to think critically about their existing social, cultural, political and contextual realities. It enables them to deconstruct the power dynamics and knowledge production that legitimize privilege and hegemony (Giroux, 1988). In moving beyond the simplistic form of understanding education at school level, critical pedagogy addresses the discourses of education from historical, political, and social and contextual point of views. According to Giroux (1988), schools need to cultivate students' critical thinking skills so that they are able to see the power dynamics and social inequities in the wider context. To this end, teachers can and should be transformational agents capable of engaging their students in to critical dialogues actively.

Critical multiculturalism and critical pedagogy are integral in understanding how multiculturalism is conceptualized and what its impacts are in education. They allow power relations and dynamics to be understood and addressed within the political, social and cultural context. Using these lenses to understand multiculturalism, I conducted a critical qualitative

research study. I used document analysis and interviews to collect data so that I could best answer my research questions.

This chapter provided a review of literature on multiculturalism in education in the Ethiopian context, and theoretical framework that is used to analyze and interpret data. It began with a review of multiculturalism followed by globalization and development within which it is occurring. While chapter two presented the context, this chapter highlighted relevant literature on the concepts of multiculturalism, development, curriculum, language use and media of instruction. It also presented the Ethiopian constitution, which has greatly affected how education is provided, and a discussion on ethnic conflict, which has been increasing at alarming rates in Ethiopia. It is within this scholarly body that my research on the conceptualizations and impacts of multiculturalism is situated. Chapter four will present the methodology for my research, and the findings will be presented and discussed in chapters five, six and seven.

Chapter Four Methodology

As previously discussed, Ethiopia is a very diverse country which has had increasing ethnic tensions and conflicts. Within this context, I sought to understand how multiculturalism is conceptualized in the Ethiopian higher education system by students, instructors and curricular experts, and also what the impact of multiculturalism is in the Ethiopian higher education system. This chapter outlines the process of my research. A critical qualitative methodology was used to understand how multiculturalism is conceptualized and what its impacts are in the education system in Ethiopia. A critical approach was used to reveal the power differences and inequalities with an end goal of empowering all the cultures. The instruments in this study included document analysis and interviews. These methods allowed an exploration of the views and experiences of educators, students and curricular experts as well as of the documents that informed policies and practices. The interviews were with educators, students and curricular experts from two universities in different regions in Ethiopia. Critical multiculturalism and critical pedagogy were the theoretical frameworks used to guide the collection and interpretation of the data as these theories include addressing and combatting the social injustices that exist.

Design of the Study

In order to closely examine how teachers and educators in these universities understand and enact multicultural education, my study implemented a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research study primarily seeks to understand how meaning is constructed and interpreted from human experiences (Bouma and Atkinson, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Patton 1990, 1987). Van Maanen (1979) explained that qualitative research method explores complex issues in-depth using multiple strategies. It employs multimodal approaches to interpret and make sense out of social interactions and experiences. According to Patton (1990),

“Qualitative methods are practically oriented towards exploration, discovery and inductive logics” (p. 44); therefore, employing these strategies enabled access to a wide range of information to better understand my research questions.

I also used a critical inquiry approach because multiculturalism, curriculum, and education are all contested and value-laden. Scholars have argued that critical research is concerned with empowerment and social transformation (Giroux, 1981; 1992; Kinhole & McLaren, 2008), and using a critical approach allowed me to investigate the power relations that exist within the education system. This approach enabled me to use “a process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves” (Neuman, 1994, p. 66). Therefore, employing this method enabled my study to understand the wider contextual social order and power dynamics that influence the outcomes of education system. Merriam (2009) has argued that critical education research interrogates “the context where learning takes place, including the larger systems of society, the culture and institutions that shape educational practice and the structural and historical conditions framing practice” (p. 35). Thus, to understand the multicultural education policies and practice in Ethiopia and their implications for equity, quality and cohesion, it was critical to closely examine the historical, cultural, and geopolitical aspect of the social order that governs the education sector as well as to examine the content and practices of school curriculum.

This research was conducted in two universities in Ethiopia, one in Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ (SNNP) region and the other in the Oromia region (see Map 2: Ethiopia, Post-1991). These regions were selected as they are home for multiple ethnic groups and contain people from diverse social, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. There are over 75 different ethnic groups in Ethiopia and 56 of them exist in the SNNP region (Central Statistical

Agency of Ethiopia [CSA], 2007). Similarly, Oromia region was selected for my research study due to its large geographic and population size. According to CSA (2007), the Oromo people are the single largest ethnic group in Ethiopia and consist of approximately 35% of the general population. Thus, exploring how educators understand multiculturalism and integrate it into their practice in these regions yielded rich information.

Participants

Participants and the research sites for my research were selected using purposive sampling strategy. For the site selection strategy, I used maximum variation as the sites were vastly different from each other, and for the participant selection I used diversity sampling with criteria for inclusion (Patton, 2002). The criteria for inclusion included diversity, educational experiences, knowledge of multiculturalism and belonging to the social sciences including language, anthropology, sociology, history and cultural studies departments.

The two universities were selected as the universities in SNNP and Oromia regions offer multi-disciplinary programs and contain students and educators from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Scholars have written that purposive sampling enables the researcher to gather a wide range of rich information for in-depth analysis (Creswell, 2008; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 1990). Patton (1987) indicated that “[t]he power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases*” (pp. 51-52) for deeper analysis and greater understanding of the issues. Therefore, I intentionally selected participants who have knowledge and experiences of multiculturalism in the education system.

The participants at these universities included ten professors (five from each university), ten students (again five from each university and ranging from first to third year) and three curriculum experts (one from each region the university was in and another from the national ministry of education). The professors, students and curriculum experts were in the social

sciences departments. These departments are very important as they primarily deal with the social, political, and historical realities of the society and can provide me with valuable information to answer the research questions. Additionally, the social sciences field of study is used in incorporating and enacting government policies. Teachers and educators in these departments are expected to adapt their thinking, teaching strategies, and approaches according to the mandated reforms of the governments of Ethiopia. Thus, the experiences and expertise of these educators provided me with significant information to address the research questions.

In order to select participants, I approached administrators, and then instructors and students from universities in the two regions who are from diverse socio-cultural and ethnic groups (please see Appendix A, B and C). For the administrators, I provided them with a description of the study and asked for their verbal consent. As this study carries some emotional and social risks in participation, I did not use written consent but rather asked for verbal consent and recorded this agreement. In addition, as an Ethiopian I am aware that it is culturally inappropriate to request people to sign for participation since signing of documents is only done for major and life changing occasions and this would significantly discourage people from participating. This protocol was discussed with the Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto. After approaching the administrators and obtaining their consent, I then approached instructors and students from the universities and provided them with a description of the study and asked for their participation. I found the participants at social venues and places that are in the vicinity of the universities, outside of the university grounds and classroom hours. I asked them several questions to ensure that they were a good fit for the study, including their ethnicity, specific department and program, and year of study. In order to obtain data from diverse participants, there were a few participants that I had to decline from interviewing as I had already had participants with similar backgrounds. I did not keep records of the names of potential

participants that I did not interview in order to maintain their privacy, safety and confidentiality. For the curricular experts, I approached people I was advised to approach by instructors and administrators. I interviewed three curricular experts; one from SNNP region Ministry of Education, one from Oromia region Ministry of Education and one from the Addis Ababa region Ministry of Education. Since the Ethiopian education system implements a ‘top-down’ approach, the knowledge and experiences of curricular experts generated essential information to better answer the research questions. Again, I ensured that they were or are involved in developing the curriculum in social science fields at universities.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

In my study, I implemented two strategies to collect data. Semi structured in-depth interview and document analysis. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008) “the combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry” (p. 7). Thus, document analysis and one-on-one in depth interviews were employed to collect ‘thick’, rich and detailed information from wide range of sources to better analyze data on the conceptualization and integration of multicultural education in the Ethiopian education system.

At the preliminary stage of the data collection process, background information from archives, official and public documents from government offices, libraries, the Ministry of Education and schools were reviewed and analyzed. Creswell (2008) has pointed out that documents are great source of information and enable the researchers “understand the central phenomena in qualitative studies” (p. 231). Therefore, I analyzed documents in order to understand the policies and practices that were occurring before I spoke with the participants. Attention was given to the content of multicultural education curricula and the federal language

policy documents. Furthermore, this gave me additional understanding and knowledge on the constitution and policies created to implement the constitution.

At the second stage of the study, I conducted interviews with ten instructors, ten students and three curricular experts in order to explore their understandings of multicultural education in Ethiopia and how it impacts the education system (see Appendixes for the interview guides). Patton (1990) argued that by using interviews we can understand the experiences and perspectives of others. Esterberg (2002) noted that using in-depth interview process, people who are historically marginalized can be able to reveal their experiences as well as issues and factors of marginalization in school and society. My study employed semi-structured interviews to collect the needed data as they enabled me to explore the issues in depth and provided flexibility encouraging participants to express their ideas freely (Guba & Lincoln, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Esterberg, 2002; Merriam, 2009). The interviews were conducted in English to maintain uniformity. I interviewed participants at locations of their choosing, usually in social venues (like restaurants or cafes) where we could have one on one conversations. Each participant was interviewed once and these interviews ranged in length from one hour to two hours depending on how much they were expanding on their answers.

The interviews were first audio-recorded, then transcribed, coded and categorized in themes. This process enabled me to manage the large amounts of information in an organized manner. Most scholars have pointed out that organization of data in qualitative study plays a significant role in managing complex data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Data analysis for my study was performed as an on-going basis starting from the early stage. In order to manage data and develop greater insights towards emerging themes, the process of analyzing data was performed simultaneously with data collection. I transcribed the data and used open coding (Merriam, 2009) to generate my initial codes. As I proceeded with the transcriptions and analysis, my codes were

sorted into larger categories. Guba and Lincoln (1981) have suggested guidelines for categories that include the frequency something is mentioned, the audience stating it's importance, it's uniqueness, and outlying areas not recognized. I used these guidelines to inform my grouping into categories. After completion of coding all the interviews, these categories were restructured and grouped into themes that answer the research questions. Merriam (2009) suggests that "the process of data analysis is recursive and dynamic" (p. 169). In addition, at the last stage of the study, field notes and analytic memos were reviewed for comprehensive data analysis.

During data collection and analysis, I used a word program, Microsoft Word, and encrypted my transcriptions and coding notes to maintain confidentiality and security of the data. I was careful to ensure that there were no identifying features of participants in the data either recorded or transcribed. Reid (1992) has broken down data management into data preparation which includes typing notes and transcriptions, data identification which is the division of data into meaningful parts, and data management which involves sorting, searching and rearranging data. Throughout this process I relied on my word program and coding in the margins so that I could be immersed in the data and each participant's voice. As I rearranged the data, I colour coded the participants' responses and reorganized them according to frequency, importance and uniqueness of the categories.

Ethical Consideration

Participants were informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntarily and they are they were free to withdraw at any time or choose not answer questions without any judgment or penalty. Participants were also informed that there was no serious risk or harm associated with the study and their responses were kept confidential in a secure location. My research study was guided with The Ethical Protocol of University of Toronto. It strictly adhered to the rules and regulations of the University of Toronto Research Ethics Board (REB).

Participants were informed that the main purpose of this study was to understand the impact of multiculturalism and mother tongue language in facilitating inclusive education in the Ethiopian contexts. At the interview, participants were asked about their working experience, their conceptualizations of multicultural education, mother tongue language use, their social, historical, contextual and pedagogical skills their knowledge of inclusive education, strategies they implement in fostering the concept of communities in their classes, as well as their practical and theoretical experiences of multicultural education.

In order to maintain confidentiality and protect the identities of the participants, pseudo names were used in the writing, publications and presentations. To further maintain anonymity and confidentiality, identifiers such as personal contact information or their working places were not collected.

Chapter Five

Conceptualizations of Multiculturalism in the Ethiopian Education System

Findings of Conceptualization of Multiculturalism in the Ethiopian Education System

In this chapter, the participants' conceptualizations of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system are presented. Multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context has been conceptualized and interpreted in multiple forms. The major themes that arose from these conceptualizations include unity, division, difference and allegiance. An overwhelming number of participants highlighted the popular definition of multiculturalism as peaceful coexistence, but they also noted other aspects of multiculturalism including its divisive characteristics. Despite the range of ideas presented, participants blended the notion of multiculturalism and multicultural education as well as focused on the language aspects specific within their own context.

Unity

Participants provided various interpretations of multiculturalism that ranged from unity to division and difference to allegiance. In addition to the range of concepts, many participants began describing multiculturalism as coexistence and intermixture of various cultures. The data revealed that multiculturalism within Ethiopia has involved the existence of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and many participants expressed this as an umbrella with many cultures under it. They consistently emphasized that multiculturalism in Ethiopia occurred naturally as people from different ethnic groups have cohabited for centuries with harmony, respect and magnanimity. For instance student Abera defined multiculturalism as,

the multiplicity of cultures. ... Multiculturalism is a kind of umbrella that collects different cultures underneath; it has various aspects such as language, culture, dressing style, eating, hairstyles, mourning ceremonies, and marriage ceremonies.

We, Ethiopians, are great example for Africa and the rest of the world with our diversities and our ways of living for centuries.

The idea of Ethiopia as a multiethnic and diverse society was consistently highlighted suggesting that multiculturalism was inextricably linked with diversity. Similar to Abera, instructor Yeshi perceived multiculturalism as the peaceful existence of diverse people in a common geographical area. Yeshi described multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context as:

The intermixture of people from different culture and linguistic backgrounds. These differences also reflect language, culture and ways of life; ... Since it has culture and culture has also language, it deals with these various aspects in general in my view. Ethiopia has more than 80 different ethnicities, languages and cultures. For me, this is multiculturalism. People who are different in culture and language live together. It is good for people to celebrate the culture day, show their cultures and come together. For instance, just like Indian caste system, we have different mixed cultures and that makes us multicultural. The collection of different cultures, languages and peoples living in one country. I think multiculturalism is a collection of many cultures. Tolerating with each other and living with each other is the major point of multiculturalism in Ethiopia.

In this depiction, though instructor Yeshi explained the various dimensions and components of multiculturalism, she also compared it to the Indian caste system which stratifies people based on their social status. It was ironic to listen to her compare Ethiopian multiculturalism with the outlawed Indian caste system as people from lower castes are typically exposed for multiple forms of oppressions and excluded from accessing social, political and economic privileges. I also wondered if she clearly understood the essence of the caste system.

In addition to describing the quantity of cultures that exist in Ethiopia, many participants also discussed how these cultures were shared and taught within the school system, allowing students to recognize their traditions and cultural heritages. According to student Melaku,

Ethiopia has a lot of ethnic groups as well, and that means the country is multiethnic. Multiculturalism for me is the integrated cultures and languages as people living together. Here, we have many languages, different cultures in this country. Almost more than 80 languages, the process for these communities to live together gives us a multicultural community. We learned about these cultures in lower classes, starting from elementary school. For instance, we used to bring traditional arts and materials to introduce it to students.

In line with this, student Roba also indicated that multiculturalism empowered students and enabled them to freely express themselves. He explained his gratitude to the current Ethiopian government for making ethnicity a major part of the social, political and educational policies. According to Roba,

Our rights to live respectfully, to learn in our languages and freedoms, are declared in our constitution. There is a great thing about multiculturalism in this country, especially the cultural day celebration. [During this celebration] every ethnic group shows its talent, dress, food and items. There are unique dances, music and celebrations.

Roba's description showed that learning his language and using it to express himself was a very important aspect of multiculturalism for him. Student Tesfa further explained how multiculturalism in Ethiopia maintained the country's unity and he pointed out that the annual Ethiopian culture day celebration created an atmosphere of unity among students.

There are different cultures from various places to celebrate together and this is something great and this will help us strengthen our unity. People dance together. For example when you have Oromo music, everyone starts dancing Oromo [style], when you hear Tigre music everyone dances together, when you hear Amharic music everyone dances together and this makes everyone happy... There are unique dances, music and celebrations.... For instance, I am from the SNNP region, specifically Welayta. SNNP has 56 ethnic groups. We have our own different languages, cultures, foods and ways of living. On cultural day, we share all our cultures and celebrate the day in the universities. There is cultural sharing among students; everyone brings his own traditions on cultural day.

Tesfa continued to describe how the government-sponsored culture day celebration reinforced unity among students in his institution:

When you look at the cultural days, people come from different places and bring their own traditions, cultures, music, food and other things to introduce to each other. The celebration makes students happy and they learn from each other. There are different traditional clothes. People from different cultures come and celebrate together and perform cultural music and dances about their communities. Every culture is respected. In this case, you can also reinforce unity, you know. In the cultural days people come from different regions. I can say there are varieties of cultures in the university and people in the cultural day wear traditional clothes and celebrate. ... So it is bringing people together. It also helps to live in unity you know. It also enables people live with tolerance and respect.

In the above explanation, Tesfa denoted that culture day celebration enabled students to foster a sense of community. Similarly, the majority of the students described that multiculturalism provided them with opportunities to share their historical and cultural heritages.

The theme of unity was described by participants as they expressed the country's longevity of peaceful cohabitation among its multiple ethnicities. Most participants focused on describing the quantity of cultures when describing multiculturalism, and they also expressed multiculturalism as an umbrella of their diverse cultures. Participants frequently highlighted the celebratory aspects of multiculturalism and many discussed how culture days provided education about the variety of cultures and empowered them to be proud of their identities, backgrounds, and languages.

Division

Despite the unifying aspects of multiculturalism, participants also explained how multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context created divisions among students and instructors. Most notably, educators described how Ethiopian multiculturalism has mainly prioritized linguistic and ethnic differences. They further explained that the divisive discourse of multiculturalism has become central for the Ethiopian government's political structure. According to instructor Bekuma,

This multiculturalism in our country is like a project or assignment to create division among the peoples of Ethiopia. The divide and govern project is the goal, and education is the major tool for the government to use it the way they like. For positive and negative, education is an instrument. When you look at the central government, policy comes either promoting the interest of the people or of the few government.

Contrary to the idea held by most of his fellow students, student Melaku shared the view of instructor Bekuma and highlighted the divisive aspect of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context. He expressed his concerns in the following manner,

It is great that people know that they are diverse but it [multiculturalism] also made everyone very narrow-minded and make them focus only on the local areas, territories and there is no communal thinking any more. The biggest problem it has caused is this division based on ethnic background. It weakens the unity among the people.

In the above descriptions, both instructor Bekuma and student Melaku underlined the divisive characteristics of multiculturalism practiced in the Ethiopian context. Instructor Alemayehu also indicated that the government of Ethiopia has been using multiculturalism for its purposes while promoting the culture day celebration. When asked to comment further, he said that,

Multiculturalism is mainly about the language and ethnic differences, and that is the focus of our multiculturalism in our country. The government has a day for all cultures and ethnic groups to celebrate the culture day, in that case every group comes prepared with music, clothes, and traditional meals. So it is how students celebrate the culture day. The government gives it huge fund for the day and there are various activities on the day.... This is just to show, to make it look like we are this, we are that, and the government uses it for their purposes.

Instructor Alemayehu believed that the Ethiopian multiculturalism was narrowly constructed around language and ethnic difference. He also noted that the culture day celebration maintained the government's positive image of promoting cultural diversity.

The majority of the participants described the impact that the EPRDF's constitution has had on multiculturalism. They stated that the emergence of multicultural policies in Ethiopia was

rooted in the ethnic federalism policy from the constitution that came into effect on January 1995. They explained how the policy restructured Ethiopia along ethnic and linguistic lines and was primarily used to ‘divide and rule’ the diverse people of Ethiopia. They also indicated that multiculturalism in Ethiopia had created compartmentalized societies based on ethnic differences with a diminished sense of national feeling and unity. According to instructor Mola, “multicultural policy is primarily intended to use a ‘divide and rule’ approach to control the diverse people of Ethiopia. It is a strategy of the ruling party to easily govern its own people.” Thus, it appears that the ruling party of Ethiopia has been using multiculturalism to maintain power while creating a divided society.

According to curricular expert Girma, the Ethiopian government has used culture day celebrations to expand its control and influence over the diverse Ethiopian people.

In Ethiopia, there are two forces. I call them two poles like the north and the rest [east, west and south]. This is to say that the west, the south and the east in the country have been thinking they have been deprived of their right and power since the north has been dominant in the political power for centuries in the country. So multiculturalism, though the government is trying to show it on the national TV the dances, foods and clothing style of different ethnic groups, [meanwhile] the reality on the ground is different. ... The policy is a pretext for a single ethnic group to expand its power, resources and dominancy over the rest of the population. Once a year, on the 29 of November, the country celebrates multicultural day. Multicultural society requires certain solid criteria and willingness to live together. Respect, valuing each other, sharing resources and power, tolerance.

Girma's criticism showed the gaps between the theoretical and practical application of multiculturalism in Ethiopia. He also indicated that a single ethnic group dominated the majority of the Ethiopian people. Similarly, instructor Zerihun expressed his frustrations regarding the application of multiculturalism in the country. He believed that multiculturalism was used as a tool to manage, control and manipulate the people using their ethnic locations. According to Zerihun,

Multiculturalism for the government is a tool, a tool of divide and rule.

Practically, this is what we are observing. ... But when you come to the general public, most of them do not understand the practical application of multiculturalism. Most people still do not understand the danger of multiculturalism in our country. What concerns me is that the application of multiculturalism in Ethiopia is seriously dividing people into ethnic groups. For example if you overemphasize diversity and differences beyond limit, you cannot achieve unity. In fact, you are creating gaps and more divisions among the diverse population, there will be no unity. And this is what is happening in Ethiopia. It seems rational to talk about diversity, but here, we are talking about division.

Division and unity cannot go together.

Zerihun believed that the divisive aspect of multiculturalism within the Ethiopian context was over emphasized and created divided society. He also noted the difficulties of achieving unity while promoting ethnic divisions.

Therefore, participants described multiculturalism as a divisive tool. They explained that it divided people based on their ethnicities and languages, as stated in the constitutions. Some expressed how unifying celebrations like culture days were actually divisive as they solidified the divisions between ethnicities. As a critical researcher myself, it is troubling and unsettling to

learn the implementations of the ‘divide and rule’ discourse to manipulate and control the diverse people of Ethiopia.

Difference

Another major theme that arose from the data and conversations with my respondents was the notion of difference. Most of the participants noted that in a multicultural society people from different sociocultural backgrounds coexist harmoniously without dominating one another. However, they also described that the application of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context emphasized linguistic and ethnic differences of people. In this regard, instructor Mola explained, “the continuous demarcation of the country based on its ethnicity pushes people to focus exclusively on their differences rather than common aspects of humanity.” Therefore, the notion of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context has been grappling with difference of linguistic and ethnic identities.

A significant number of participants highlighted that ‘diversity’ in their institutions was perceived as ‘difference’. For instance, instructor Alemayehu indicated that the perception of diversity as difference plays a major role in negatively impacting the country’s sense of unity. According to Alemayehu,

People in general have categorized themselves with language and geographical settlement. The division of students in the country is one of the biggest problem I worry about ...what scares me is also that we are losing the real meaning of living together. For instance, if you look at marriages now-a-days, it is not like before where people get married despite their different ethnic backgrounds due to love. Now people purposely look for each other’s partners from the same ethnic group. The main criterion for marriage now is ethnic identity. I know two friends who really loved each other and she introduced her lover to her famil[y] and decided to

marry him (her fiancé is from [a] different ethnic background from her), her family created [a] huge problem. The family said, they could not intermingle with each other or marry.

Instructor Alemayehu's expression showed the hidden social struggles and challenges of multiethnic societies. He described the discourse of difference that has been at the core of the government's policy and has negatively impacted community formation within the society.

The other points raised by participants were challenges related to language difference and communication. They indicated that communication barriers have been negatively impacting their social and academic skills. For instance, participants talked about the difficulties students have encountered in using Amharic, the working language of Ethiopia. According to instructor Kassahun,

I recall in previous times, Amharic language was used as a medium of instruction, which was a mistake. But looking at the current policies, it appears that when they tried to reverse this approach, they have gone too far to the extent that they created hostile neighbours and provinces based on linguistic differences. It seems to go against the use of Amharic as a media of instruction. The approach that is being used at the moment has created resentment towards Amharic language; mind you, Amharic language is a working language for the country.

When asked to explain the lack of Amharic language skills, Kassahun mentioned that students who lacked Amharic language skills faced communication challenges with students as well as officials at their institutions. In addition they are not able to work in the federal offices. Instructor Kassahun further stated that,

There was a student who came from Oromia, and didn't know Amharic language and he faced serious problems starting from registration at the registrar's office.

He was not able to communicate with the officials, because his English skills were poor. When they tried to speak to him in Amharic language, he was not able to respond to them. Besides he had developed negative attitude towards Amharic language and disliked it, despite [the fact that] Amharic is used as a working language in Ethiopia. I know that learning with one's own language is important, but in our case, it didn't stop there. It has being used to create hateful generations as if using one ethnic language is perceived as doing something that is totally wrong.

Kassahun's expression showed the lack of having a common language with the negative outcome on students' social engagements and communication abilities. Similarly, student Jote in the following excerpt expressed the challenges he encountered due to the lack of Amharic language abilities,

Most of us who came from Oromia regions had challenges of using Amharic language, as we rarely learn Amharic language in Oromia regions. But this language is the one that is used most of the time. I couldn't even process what was written in Amharic on the notice board. I didn't even understand greetings when I first came to the university but now I am improving. I have learned Amharic through interaction with other students. Initially when I tried to explain that I don't clearly understand the language, some students did not take me seriously and thought I was joking. However, there is some important information that I cannot process. For instance during an exams, some instructions were given in Amharic and I didn't understand, I missed out on it and it has impacted my studies negatively.

Here it is important to make clear distinction between media of instruction and communication for socialization purposes. Higher institutions in Ethiopia have been using the English language for media of instruction. However, this does not mean that students use English language to communicate with each other. Rather they prefer their own languages to socialize and express themselves. Arguably, the Amharic language is still widely spoken among Ethiopian students at higher institutions and has been functioning as *lingua franca*. This is mainly due to the fact that it has been the official language of Ethiopia for centuries and medium of instruction for primary schools (grade 1-6) until 1991. It is also worth noting that the Amharic language is the working language of the federal government of Ethiopia (EPRDF, 1995). Since universities in Ethiopia fall under the federal government's jurisdictions, their working language is Amharic. Therefore, students like Jote encountered significant challenges of communication and accessing employment opportunities at the federal levels.

In addition, participants highlighted the communication gaps that existed among students from different ethnic groups in their institutions. For example, students from Oromia hardly communicate with students from Amhara or Tigrie regions. They indicated that that most of the Oromo students do not speak the Amharic language and the majority of Amhara and Tigrie students do not speak the Oromiffa language. This is evident in Jote's expression below,

Oromo students do not want to use Amharic language due to the historical problems between the Amharas and the Oromos. Because they feel that Amharic language had been dominating Oromiffa language in the previous regimes. Most students in Oromia regions refused to learn or speak Amharic language.

Jote's expression indicated that the lack of common language could have far-reaching consequences of creating divided societies.

In addition to language differences that existed among students, respondents pointed out the growing tensions and conflicts among students at higher institutions. For instance, instructor Zerihun explained how the historical aspects of the country were used to perpetuate various conflicts among students. According to Zerihun,

I think the government's role is huge in instigating and creating tacit hates and tensions among different ethnic groups. The current trend of the ethnic conflict is happening in this country. The government just thinks that sustaining their power, is their priority. But what is really happening is that they are creating conflict that will last for generations to come. In history, the world has experienced multiple atrocities. If you look at the entire Europe and their wars, many people were killed and lots were injured. In these countries, they learn from it and come up with solutions not to repeat the conflicts. But when it comes to our nation, it seems that they are trying to bring conflicts of the 19th centuries and create more problems to the society. At school level too, if you don't teach people to learn from the past history then it becomes dangerous for the future. Teaching students that these kinds of history don't only belong or are unique to our country, rather everyone in the world had experienced and changed their policies for the better and learn from their past mistakes.

Instructor Zerihun noted the importance of learning historical facts and building better future for the coming generations.

The Ethiopian multiculturalism discourse affirms the rights of nations, nationalities and people's to promote their cultures and languages. However, respondents disclosed that the multicultural ideology adopted in the last two decades has created ethnically segregated societies. According to instructor Zerihun,

Basically, diversity is beauty in theory; it has never been a source of problem for centuries in our country. The 80 different ethnic groups in Ethiopia should give beauty, not be the source of problems. Personally, instead of being similar or homogenous, it is better to be different and heterogeneous. For centuries, the diverse peoples of Ethiopia have lived in peace. But after the ethnic federalism policy, our diversity had become a problem to the extent that it will result in civil war among its own people. These did not happen overnight or accidentally.

Zerihun's description indicated that following the ethnic federalism policy, interethnic relationships among Ethiopian people have been affected negatively. For instance, instructor Yeashi pointed out that ethnic identity has become the main factor to determine socialization and relationship formation among students at higher institutions. To this end, Yeshe expressed her frustrations with a celebration event that prioritized difference over unity,

The group dynamic is primarily based on regions. I remember last year, there was a Flag Day celebration in our university. But what I have observed was really painful. On a Flag Day celebration to my surprise I couldn't see the Ethiopian national flag anywhere. Students carried their own region's flags but the main flag that was supposed to be there was not there. I was so sad with what I observed, and went to the organizing committee and expressed my feelings. I appreciated that everyone came with their own region's flag but this is not reflective of the whole country. The day was supposed to celebrate green, yellow and red colors, the colors of the Ethiopian flag. Then I told them that the country's flag, the one that includes all of us was not there at Flag Day. The committee basically laughed at me and ignored my concerns. ... The current generation is being created and shaped in an environment where unity is non-existent and it has become hard for

them to form that allegiance. Students in our universities are divided and grouped based on their ethnic identities even in their dormitories. Everyone prefers to be with people from the same ethnic backgrounds, even to walk to classrooms. Students do not want to integrate with each other from different backgrounds. Most of the students who are coming from different regions hardly mingle with others.

Therefore, Yeshe's expression showed the lack of cross-cultural integration among students in the Ethiopian higher institutions.

Participants highlighted the importance of difference within their conceptualizations of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system. They explained the differences they felt between the ethnicities, in terms of social relations and communication. They also expressed the hostility that they felt when using or not using certain languages and explained how linguistic and ethnic identity markers have become central to creating difference among people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Allegiance

In addition to unity, division and difference, a major theme that arose from the discussion with participants on multiculturalism was the formation of groups and alliances based on ethnic identities. Most of the participants described their concerns regarding ethnic based groupings and allegiances in their school communities. Student Melaku described how they are often grouped based their different ethnic identities;

Every time assignments were given we are divided into groups, and what's observed is that everyone teamed up with others from their own ethnic groups; the Amharas to the Amharas, and the Oromos to the Oromos, and the Tigre to the Tigre group. Even during exam time, we sit according to our ethnic groups. So,

for instance, in front of me or behind me there must be an Oromo student. One line is only Oromo, and the other Tigre, and Amhara, and so on. And I remember one day, when we were about to take an exam, a student called me out to go and sit with my ethnic group.

Further, student Roba rationalized these allegiances in the following manner:

Ah, well, I think I am more comfortable with students from my region and I can easily understand them. Because of the language barrier, it is difficult for me to have communication with students who don't speak my language. I wish I can speak other languages but I don't have the knowledge. Sometimes we use English but not all the time. The other reason why people stick to their own ethnic groups is because you feel people hate you for your language or for your region.

Everyone likes their group, their region, their language, their culture and so on. I wish we can mix but there is always tension between students from different regions. Sometimes in dorms if you are speaking a different language or if you are from a different region, you change the room. I think it is the issue of security and you are scared if you are alone among people of different regions and if there are many people from the same region. Nobody talks to you, then you feel so bad and you must change the place.

Melaku and Roba highlighted how ethnic identity has shaped socialization among students at higher institutions. Roba also indicated that he was more comfortable with people from his region due to the common cultural and linguistic capital. The prevalence of exclusive ethnic centered socialization is also troubling educators in their respected institutions. In this regard instructor Mola stated that,

To be honest, my feeling about my identity in the last five years is different from my current feeling. The reason is that there is a forceful imposition and external pressure that pushes you towards these aspects, when you want to integrate and live together harmoniously with anyone from diverse background, if you encounter pressure and exclusion, then you have no choice. The only thing you want is to be affiliated with your own ethnic groups. Whether you like it or not, you end up being segregated. This is the reality in our universities everywhere. For instance, when there is a group assignment and discussion, everyone stays with his or her ethnic groups in the class, library, cafeteria or any other place. This has created serious difficulties. Students from the same ethnic groups prefer each other in the class and even arrange seating in that way. Our classrooms have become representations of the country's regionalism.

Mola's expression highlighted the exclusionary characteristics of ethnocentric socialization. He further noted that people in those situations formed homogenous groupings for safety reasons.

Instructor Kassahun also described the divisions created among students but felt that education should be used to solve those problems rather than perpetuate them. According to Kassahun,

Using first language for educating children would be perfect but the intention and direction is not motivated by prioritized learning. It is politically motivated. The outcome has been hatred of each other. Hatred of the students who do not come from our place or who do not speak the same language as us... friendships are formed along ethnic lines, let alone marriages. This has happened as a result of exploiting diversity by elite leader groups. Education should be solving our problems, not adding to them.

Even though Kassahun indicated that education should solve ethnocentric socialization, he did not provide a solution as to how education could achieve this.

Throughout the interviews, respondents repeatedly indicated how ethnocentric mentality has threatened to break the social bond that was built over generations. According to instructor Alemayehu,

Nowadays, students prefer to be grouped ethnically. They do not mingle or interact with others who have different backgrounds. Even when we try to intermingle for collaborative works, group works, students still prefer to be grouped with students from the same ethnic backgrounds. This is a clear indication of separation, ... like garlic, a symbolic expression of the disintegrating and being apart from each other. In garlic you have different pieces, just like that the country is disintegrated to different pieces. For instance, when you see an onion one layer covers the entire onion. But with garlic, you have different, separate pieces, and these separate pieces grow independently and are scattered.

That is what we are afraid of happening to us.

Alemayehu's garlic analogy highlighted the troubling social crisis that could lead Ethiopia to disintegrate into pieces. Curricular expert Mezgebu also explained that multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context has created desegregated societies based on their ethnic locations. He argued that the tensions among ethnic groups in Ethiopia were aggravated due to the multicultural policies implemented by the government. According to Mezgebu,

Multiculturalism in our country seems to be a vehicle for fuelling the ethnic hatred. In addition to all this, there appears to be lots of external factors in making the ethnic relations worse. We also have the assemblies. We have the Oromo

assembly, the Amhara assembly, the Tigre assembly, and the Orthodox, Muslim and Protestant groupings.

Mezgebu's view indicated the deterioration of the social cohesion in the Ethiopian context. Further, participants explained that the promotion of exclusive group formations could create an unstable society which would lead to conflicts among different interests.

Participants in this study indicated that allegiance and socialization were primarily influenced by their ethnic identities. They described their group solidarity feelings, including safety, knowledge and history. While it was their preference to form ethnic allegiances, participants described the problems with ethnocentrism and stated that education should be used to overcome these problems.

Discussion of Participants' Conceptualization of Multiculturalism in the Ethiopian Education System

Participants described multiculturalism in terms of unity, division, difference and allegiance. This section presents a discussion of these findings and integrates them with the wider literature on multiculturalism. First, it covers the ranging definitions of multiculturalism and then moves to the contradictory outcomes of multiculturalism.

Ranging Definitions of Multiculturalism

The participants' views of multiculturalism were similar to what is found in the literature. As shown in the findings, their conceptualizations included unity, division, difference and allegiance. Within their descriptions, they described the celebratory approach to multiculturalism, the 'divide and rule' approach, challenges with the discourse of difference, and the formation of allegiance. Multiculturalism has been a very contested concept referring to the

co-existence of people from diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds geographic boundaries such as a nation state (Kymlicka, 2007).

The notion of multiculturalism has been widely debated and has generated multiple perspectives. These views range from conservative or assimilationist to critical or emancipatory. Steinberg and Kincheloe (2001) categorized multiculturalism into five areas within the public and education discourses, including conservative, liberal, pluralist, left-essentialist, and critical. They explained that conservative multiculturalism consists of one dominant culture that others must subscribe to and is known for its aggressive assimilationist policy towards ‘other’ cultures (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2001). Liberal multiculturalism stresses the discourse of equality among diverse people in a given society and argues that social inequalities are the product of individual’s lack of opportunities rather than structural problems, while pluralist multiculturalism shares the liberal values but prioritizes race, colour and gender. Pluralistic multiculturalism “has become the main articulation of mainstream multiculturalism” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2001, p.3). Left-essentialist multiculturalism “assumes that only authentically oppressed people can speak about particular issues concerning specific group” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2001, p. 3), and critical multiculturalism addresses power dynamics in society as it is “committed to social justice and egalitarian democracy that accompanies it” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2001, p. 5).

Historically, western countries like USA, Canada, Australia and Britain adopted multicultural policies in order to manage diversity and usually held the conservative view of multiculturalism. Clusters of movements for social justice and human rights, coupled with the rise in immigration, have played a pivotal role for the emergence of multiculturalism in the western world (Banks, 1995; Kymlicka, 2007; Li, 1999; Modood, 2007). Along with this, the liberal, pluralist, left-essentialist and critical views of multiculturalism arose.

Participants framed multiculturalism within the Ethiopian context and education discourse as the peaceful coexistence of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This was similar to many scholars who also have described multiculturalism as “social interaction and integration” (Fedorowicz, 1997, p. 83), using “multiple perspectives... to build bridges among themselves” which can lead to healing and transformation (Greene, 1993, p. 17). Furthermore, multiculturalism has the potential to create an inclusive environment for all, regardless of their cultural background (Fowers & Richardson, 1996). Participants stressed that in Ethiopia, multiculturalism is a fact of life as people from different ethnic groups have cohabited for centuries with harmony, respect and magnanimity.

One of the questions directed to the participants was to explain how multiculturalism is defined in their context. Most respondents defined multiculturalism as a mixture of two or more cultures in a given society. They also highlighted that in multicultural societies, people from different socio-cultural backgrounds would live together in harmony. Most respondents underlined the liberal values of respect, accommodation, and tolerance (Banks, 1995; Kymlicka, 2007; Nieto, 1999). Participants in this study described how multiculturalism symbolized an umbrella that collects many cultures. They also explained that each culture has its own unique traditions, languages, customs and practices. Instructor Yeshe further explained that the fact that Ethiopia consists of more than 80 different ethnic groups by itself made Ethiopia a multicultural country. She contended that for years the diverse people of Ethiopia were able to live harmoniously. Similarly, instructor Bekuma explained that the manifestations of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context can be characterized as “a bottom-up” system, meaning the diverse ethnic groups in the country have coexisted for centuries and developed common social, political and cultural ties throughout generations.

Most participants held a liberal view of multiculturalism as they described the events that were used to celebrate diversity, without addressing the power dynamics or inequalities that exist in society. A significant number of participants touched on the Ethiopian Culture Day Celebration held annually at their universities. They pointed out that Culture Day celebrations provided them with the opportunities to share their unique cultures and traditions with each other. According to student Eyasu, “the government brings people together on culture days.” Eyasu indicated that the culture day celebration reinforced positive relationships and unity among the diverse students at his university. When asked to comment further, he elaborated that “there are different cultures from various places celebrated together and this is something great that will help us strengthen our unity.” This view is also echoed by the liberal perspective of multiculturalism as diversity is used to manage the differences within society as well as celebrate them; however, Wane (2005) has explained how celebratory multiculturalism takes attention away from the social and institutional inequalities within the social order.

Scholars like Modood (2007) have viewed managing diversity as a liberal form of multiculturalism that is “concerned to encourage a vision of communalities, of what is shared across difference, and through remaking citizenship and national identity” (p. 64). Furthermore, Nieto (1999) has argued that celebratory aspects of multiculturalism approaches hardly address social inequalities. According to Nieto (1999), celebrating diversity has often hidden the severe structural inequalities that are reinforced and replicated in schools every day by unequal and unfair practices. Therefore, scholars have recognized that the celebratory approach to multiculturalism does not extend beyond recognition and thus reinforces the unequal social situation. According to Weinberg, diversity without equality equals oppression (Weinberg, cited in Nieto, 1999, p. 19).

Student Tesfa also explained the importance of multiculturalism as it has empowered him and enabled him to reclaim his language and cultural heritage. According to Tesfa, in previous times, people from the Walayita ethnic groups including himself, used to be ashamed of speaking their languages in public settings due to stigma and discrimination. But after the current government came to power, Walayita people use their languages to “promote their cultures without fear.” This shows how Ethiopian multiculturalism empowers students to express themselves, their heritages and their cultures.

In contrary, critical multiculturalists have scrutinized the celebratory approach of multiculturalism, as it does not address the power dynamics and social inequalities within the social fabric (Giroux 1992; Henry & Tator, 1999; McLaren, 1997).

A majority of the respondents in this study highlighted that diversity is the core foundation of multiculturalism. Various scholars have indicated that in multicultural societies, people from diverse sociocultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds are able to coexist (Kymlicka, 2007). One of the questions directed to participants was to explain how diversity was reflected in the Ethiopian multicultural context. A significant number of participants expressed that the application of multiculturalism in Ethiopia was based on linguistic and ethnic differences. Instructor Mola explained that restructuring Ethiopia using the ethnic federalism policy played a major role in creating ethnically divided societies. It is critical that schools provide positive learning environments and accommodations for students from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds.

Participants in this study also explained that the restructuring of Ethiopia along ethno linguistic lines was primarily used to ‘divide and rule’ the diverse people of Ethiopia based on ethnic and language differences. According to instructor Mola, multiculturalism has been used as a strategy to divide and govern the people in Ethiopia. Similarly, Habtu (2004) and Wagaw

(1999) pointed out that the ethnic centered education policy of Ethiopia in the last two decades has created divided societies based on language and ethnic identities. In addition, instructor Alemayehu explained that after Ethiopia was restructured along ethnic lines, people who were not from the given regions experienced exclusion from accessing social, political and employment opportunities. When prompted to explain the impact of segregation on people, he said,

If you look at the higher official appointees, first the person must be politically affiliated with the ruling party and at the same time, the person should be from the local area and trusted by the party members. These appointments are not merit based at all, they are very biased and even though ... more qualified and experienced people exist, they do not get the chance to be appointed to these high positions.

This shows that it has been increasingly difficult for people who are not from the titular region to access employment and reside in some provinces.

Nieto (1999) also explained that critical multicultural theories involve looking at the social, political and contextual situation and address the power dynamics that shapes the education outcomes. According to Nieto (1999),

A sociopolitical context in education takes into account the larger social and political forces operating in a particular society and the impact they may have on students' learning. Thus, the notion of power is at the very centre of the concept because it concerns issues such as structural inequality and stratification due to social class, gender, ethnicity, and other differences, as well as the relative respect or disrespect according to a particular culture, language and dialects. (p. 180)

Critical multicultural theory addresses the complex, institutional and structural injustices and practices that minority groups encounter in a given social order and it extends beyond the views that only emphasize the celebration of differences, foods and festivities (Gérin-Lejoie, 2008; Giroux, 1992; Henry & Tator, 1999; May and Sleeter, 2010; Nieto, 1999).

The Ethiopian multicultural discourse has asserted that it grants equal opportunities for people in the country regardless of their ethnic, social and economic backgrounds. However, instructor Alemayehu revealed that the existing multiculturalism practices in Ethiopia were exclusionary and discriminatory based on people's identities. He described that access to power and privileges were organized through ethnic identities and political affiliations. According to Alemayehu, "I was told to leave my education advisory role because I was not from the local area. This was heartbreaking and demoralizing. I was made to feel the 'other' just because I am from a different ethnic background". Therefore, preferential treatment based on ethnicity at higher institutions has been violating the core principle of multicultural policy that declares 'equal opportunities for all'. Similarly, Aguado and Malik (2011) argued that use of multiculturalism within the education system has enabled the justification of systemic exclusion and discrimination of minority students. According to Aguado and Malik (2011), "multiculturalism has been the focus in schools, it has contributed to reinforcing differences between individuals and has been used as a reason to justify discrimination" (p. 279). Despite the right to live and work in any part of the country, preferential treatment based on political and ethnic connections has created detrimental factors for social cohesion.

Historically, the policy responses to diversity have included suppressing difference, insisting on difference, denying difference, inviting difference and critiquing difference (Harper cited in Gérin-Lajoie, 2008). Within the Ethiopian context, the first four policy responses to diversity have been implemented at various stages. For instance, participants described

multiculturalism as a way to suppress difference, in which policies were used to “assimilate subordinate groups into the dominant group through the suppression of former group’s cultures and/or languages” (Harper cited in Gérin-Lajoie, 2008, p. 14). Participants explained that the language policies in Ethiopia recognized the differences and insisted that they are accommodated through mother tongue language at different levels. Furthermore, in Ethiopia policies denied difference as they brought all students together in post-secondary institutions, without taking into account the fact that students had very different elementary and secondary learning environments both in terms of language and resources. “This approach is associated with the popular notion of meritocracy, which emphasizes success is an individual responsibility, and that with hard work and perseverance, any one can succeed” (Harper cited in Gérin-Lajoie, 2008, p. 15). In addition, “expectations are that all students attain common performance standards as measured by government standardized tests, regardless of the students’ background, past performance, and social reality” (Harper cited in Gérin-Lajoie, 2008, p. 15). Inviting difference has occurred in Ethiopia as well and is evident in the participants’ descriptions of celebrating diversity. Inviting difference was described as “celebrating diversity, where the notion of multiculturalism is central. It is more about tolerance than about change. ... This approach invokes a folkloric notion of culture” (Harper cited in Gérin-Lajoie, 2008, p. 15). The final response to diversity is critiquing difference.

This response is about understanding power relations. How and when difference is produced becomes the main focus of inquiry. ... Anti-racist education is the best known example of this type of critical inquiry. It examines prejudices and systemic discrimination and emphasizes that the way that society is structured limits some students while placing others at an advantage. (Harper cited in Gérin-Lajoie, 2008, p. 15)

While a few participants themselves critiqued difference, they also complained that the government had not done much and that there were no policies that addressed the prejudices and systemic discrimination. Therefore, while each of Harper's five historical responses to diversity is evident in Ethiopia, the one which would empower people has not been implemented into any policies but has only been acknowledged by a few participants as a possible response to diversity.

Contradictory Outcomes

In addition to the ranging definitions of multiculturalism, the contradictory outcomes of multiculturalism were also evident in analyzing the data. The dichotomies that exist within their conceptualizations were evident. The Ethiopian official discourse of multicultural policy facilitated the fostering of peaceful coexistence among the nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia (EPRDF, 1995). The Constitution affirmed that its citizens have the right to live in any part of the country. According to the Ethiopian Constitution (EPRDF, 1995) Article 32, (1) "Any Ethiopian or foreign national lawfully in Ethiopia has, within the national territory, the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence, as well as the freedom to leave the country at any time he wishes to." Despite the constitutional declarations, data collected revealed that the practical outcome of the multicultural policy in Ethiopia has resulted in paradoxical outcomes. The policy's practical outcome in the last two decades has mainly focused on difference rather than diversity, limited integration and reinforced segregation and interethnic conflicts.

Abbink (2007) noted that despite the claim of the Ethiopian government, ethnic conflicts of the country have not been resolved. Rather, the ethnic centered federalism experiment has incensed negative ethnocentrism among the diverse people of Ethiopia and resulted in various ethnic conflicts. In this regard, Abbink (2007) wrote,

In the present contribution we contend that the post-1991 regime in Ethiopia, despite its promise and claims to bring solutions, has been less successful than expected in managing ethnic tensions in the country, and has basically only ‘decentralised’ the problems by defining the sources of conflict to be on the local and not national level. (p. 390)

Therefore, the ethnic federalism policy that restructured Ethiopia was the root cause of interethnic conflicts.

Participants in this study further revealed that the multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context is narrowly constructed around identity differences. According to instructor Meron, “multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system is narrowly defined as it only focuses on languages and ethnic differences.” Similarly, instructor Bekuma also explained that multiculturalism is not clearly understood and integrated within the education system. He stated that “glaring issues with lack of resources, trained professionals and policies have made it challenging for multicultural education to be developed.” Further, participants also expressed their concerns of social division due to the discourse of difference. Instructor Alemayehu noted that the Ethiopian multicultural policy overstates differences instead of diversity. According to Alemayehu “the existing policy in the education system is not about diversity even though the government of Ethiopia declares it so, rather it is about division based on linguistic and ethnic differences ... There is no room for unity, collaboration and working together.” Thus, multiculturalism in Ethiopian context has disadvantaged the society as its impact has pulled people apart and created disintegrated societies based on ethnicity. However, Modood (2007) countered this idea suggesting that “Multiculturalism is clearly beyond toleration and state neutrality for it involves active support for cultural difference, active discouragement against

hostility and disapproval and the remaining of the public sphere in order to fully include marginalized identities” (p. 64).

According to instructor Meron, multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context has not provided solutions for social issues. To the contrary, she says it is a “counter-productive policy and resulting disintegration of the society rather than community formation as it is dividing people based on their ethnic groups.” Furthermore, she revealed the prime focus of multicultural education is food, clothing and music which Gérin-Lajoie (2008) criticized as a simplistic forms of inclusion based on superficial aspects when she critiques liberal multiculturalism. Similarly, instructor Zerihun contested that “multiculturalism is being manipulated by elite politicians imposing specific thinking ideas where the students and societies are forced to process everything through ethnic ideologies.” As a result the outcome of the policies of multicultural education has resulted in a divided society where people are categorized based on their ethnic and linguistic identities. Participants noted that this approach perpetuated the notion of dividing the larger society into segments in order to govern it easily. Gudina (2003) and Wagaw (1979) reminded us that the current ethnic centered political platform of TPLF was first implemented by the of Italian invaders (1930-35) to divide and rule the Ethiopian people based on various features. According to Gudina (2003),

The Italians tried to exploit the religious, ethnic, and regional differences among the various peoples of Ethiopia to their own advantage. Although this did not work well for the Italians, it clearly exposed the fragility of the hoped for “nation-building” process. Some members of the Tigray, Oromo, and Amhara regional elites seized the opportunity of cooperating with the Italians, both lured by the material rewards offered by the Italians and in revenge for the domination of the Shewan Amhara elites. (p.147)

Therefore, education policies and practices that were embedded into the social dynamics and had legitimized oppressions need to be addressed properly. Further Wane (2008) has reminded us to critically analyze the colonial education discourses that perpetuated social segregations and exploitations in African contexts. According to Wane (2008), “Eurocentric discourses serve the purpose of justifying the neo-colonial agenda, which remains deeply embedded in systems of education that influence current educational approaches at the international, national, and local levels” (p.190). Wane (2005) also explained the importance of using indigenous African knowledge in teaching and learning.

Participants in this study argued that Ethiopian multicultural policies implemented by the ruling party have resulted in contradictory outcomes. They pointed out that despite its positive intentions of affirming the rights of the nations, nationalities and the people of Ethiopia, the implementation process has resulted in a divided society based on ethnic identities. According to instructor Alemayehu, multiculturalism was used as a tool to divide and rule Ethiopian peoples. He further explained that the ethnic federalism policy that has been implanted in Ethiopia is the key strategy for managing its society. Alemayehu further noted, “our multiculturalism is intended for dividing, controlling and governing the people of Ethiopia.” Scholars have noted that one of the major goals of multicultural policies was managing diversities (Dewing & Leman, 2006; Gerin-Lejoie, 2008; Henry & Tator, 1999; Modood, 2007; Nieto, 1999). Dewing and Leman (2006) explained that,

Multiculturalism at the policy level is structured around the management of diversity through formal initiatives in the federal, provincial and municipal domains. Finally, multiculturalism is the process by which racial and ethnic minorities compete to obtain support from central authorities for the achievement of certain goals and aspirations. (Dewing & Leman, 2006, p. 1)

Therefore, multiculturalism at policy level has played several roles including the management of diversity while providing support for minorities to maintain their cultural heritage.

In addition, participants expressed their frustration with ethnic based preferential treatment that provided certain groups with more opportunities and privileges. For instance, instructor Mola explained that all levels of staff in his university staff were slowly replaced by people from the local regions despite their competencies, skills or knowledge. Therefore, the ethnic based preferential treatment contradicted the fundamental principles of multicultural discourse that treats people equally regardless of their ethnic, linguistic or religious identities. Wagaw (1999) also argued that the ethnic based preferential treatment in Ethiopia has denied people the right to work and live in places of their choice. According to Wagaw (1999),

In the past, ethnic and religious groups in Ethiopia have intermarried and lived in different part of the country. Now some local groups are forcing out those people whom they believe do not belong in a given area...therefore it is apparent that something like apartheid and ethnic cleansing is going [on] in different parts of the country resulting in mass dislocations and loss of life and property. Teachers and other government employees have been fired, businesses have been confiscated, and some citizens have lost their homes, simply because they happen to belong to ethnic groups different from that predominant in that regions. This is despite their many years of residency in the same region and fluency in the local language. (p. 11)

Thus, the multicultural discourse in the Ethiopian context has been perpetuating preferential treatment and damaging interethnic relationships.

As noted in the finding section, the majority of the participants revealed their preference and desire to be associated with people from the same ethnic group. According to student Roba,

socialization among students was predominantly predicated on ethnic identities. He also revealed that students rarely engaged in cross-cultural integration. When asked to elaborate why students preferred to be with similar ethnic groups, Roba explained that the ethnic based educational policy in Ethiopia has created a negative impact on collaboration and community formation among students at higher institutions. On a similar account, instructor Abebech explained that Ethiopia's ethnic centered education policy was increasing disparities among students and the society in general. According to Abebech, group affiliation is obviously ethnic centered. She stated that "Even when we try to form mixed groups for group work or group assignments, they still prefer to be placed with students from the same ethnic background." As a result, homogeneous group formation has been the dominant form of socializations among students at higher institutions in Ethiopia.

One of the core objectives of multiculturalism has been to facilitate the integration of people from various sociocultural backgrounds. However, participants in this study revealed that multicultural policy in Ethiopia has become an obstacle for social integration. For instance, instructor Yeshe explained that the ethnic federalism policy restricted people's movement across provinces and limited them to live and work in specific geographic locations. Similarly, most of the students expressed their plans to return to their provinces for employment opportunities. For instance, student Bedilu explained his reasons for wanting to return to his province as, "growing up in Oromia region and learning in the Oromiffa language for the most part of my life, I didn't want to live and work in Amhara or Tigray regions... If you are not from the region and do not know the language of the region, you have no access to employment opportunities." This showed that students would likely return to work in the regions they grew up in once they graduated. As the participants noted, the implementation process of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian context has been a limiting factor for social integration.

Many respondents have also highlighted how the Ethiopian multiculturalism policy reinforced the dominance of the ruling party. When the current government assumed power in 1991, it guaranteed that education would be free from political or religious impositions, unlike its predecessors' regimes. Using media and press, officials continuously disclosed that they were going to form a free, fair and democratic Ethiopia. During Emperor Haile Selassie's regime, the influence of religion was significant in the education system. Under Mengistu's ruling time, the education policy was mainly guided by Marxist- Leninist ideologies (Zewde, 1991; Wagaw, 1999; Kebede, 2006; Tasissa, 2009). However, despite the promises made to make education free from political impositions, the education system did not escape the ruling party's influence and political dominancy.

Scholars have written how education is not neutral and cannot be free from political influences. Critical theorists like Paulo Friere (1970) have contended that education can be used to develop critical consciousness and awareness towards social injustices. On the contrary, education has also been manipulated and used as a tool to dehumanize and oppress people.

Educators pointed out that the lack of critical inquiry, discussions and dialogues at higher institutions in Ethiopia has severely affected students' capacity to understand the interwoven complexities of geopolitical, societal and educational aspects. Curricular expert Girma believed that the education system in Ethiopia has been creating passive generations. According to Girma,

The current generation is sadly passive and only active in online social media, mainly Facebook. They have great attachment with their electronics and cellphones and completely forget their responsibilities of taking care of their society, country and themselves. They have very limited knowledge of the social, political and economic development of the country.

Most respondents further highlighted how the youth generation was consumed with electronic hyper sensationalism and disengaged from social activism and resistance towards oppression. In other words, the younger generation in the oppressive society has not been giving attention to the existing injustices due to the lack of critical praxis (Freire, 1970).

In addition, participants noted how experienced professors who were critical of the education policy have become victims of retributions. For instance, instructor Kassahun recalled the dismissal of forty senior professors from Addis Ababa University due to their critical stances of the ethnicised education policy proposed by the government. He also elaborated that multiple fear tactics and strategies were implemented to silence their critics. Therefore, the critical consciousness of students at the higher level was very limited. Contrary to this, many scholars (Biko, 1978; Fanon, 1963; Freire, 1970; Wane, 2008) have underscored the importance of critical consciousness in addressing oppression and social inequalities. For instance, Biko (1978) asserted the criticality of Black Consciousness against the fight of Apartheid collectively in South Africa. He wrote,

Black Consciousness is an attitude of mind and a way of life... Its essence is the realization by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression – the blackness of their skin – and as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. (Biko 1978, pp. 91-92).

Therefore, it should be imperative that students at higher institutions in Ethiopia awaken their critical consciousness through emancipatory pedagogy and critical engagements.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the main research question “How is multiculturalism conceptualized in the Ethiopian education system?” Participants in this study described it as

unity, division, difference and allegiance. When integrating the findings with the literature, the main themes that arose were the ranging definitions of multiculturalism and the contradictory outcomes. Multiculturalism conceptualizations included the celebratory approach, the ‘divide and rule’ approach, the discourse of difference and the creation of a docile generation. While participants and scholars recognized the positive aspects of multiculturalism and the potential it has to unify as well as maintain, respect and empower diverse ethnicities, in practice it has often provided contradictory outcomes. Therefore, in theory multiculturalism could provide great benefits to all groups of society; however, this has not happened in Ethiopia. The divisive and controlling aspects of multiculturalism have appeared to be dominant and pervasive in their conceptualizations. This has strong impacts both in the education system and in interethnic relations, and these will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Chapter Six

Impact of Multiculturalism on the Ethiopian Education System

Findings on the Impact of Multiculturalism on the Ethiopian Education System

In chapter five, I discussed how multiculturalism has been conceptualized within the Ethiopian higher education system. The following two chapters address the second research question that focused on the impact of multiculturalism within the Ethiopian education and the wider society. Chapter six will look at the participants' descriptions of the impacts of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian higher education system. Chapter seven will present the impacts of multiculturalism on interethnic relations and social dynamics in the Ethiopian context.

In the first part of this chapter presents the findings from the data collected. The following section of the chapter contains the discussion of findings as they are integrated into literature. The main themes that arose from the findings were the impacts of mother tongue usage, quality of education, lack of leadership, lack of academic freedom and foreign policy. The participants discussed the benefits and challenges of using mother tongue in education as they explained the improvements in access, empowerment and learning and simultaneously explained the challenges in teaching and in differences between students of different regions. In exploring the impact of multiculturalism, the data revealed that improved access for diverse students directly impacted class size and resources. In addition, a lack of both leadership and academic freedom within the education system was highlighted, as political affiliations dominated hiring practices and appointments over actual qualifications and abilities. Finally, the foreign policy that participants raised as an impact of multiculturalism involved the imported and aid related policies that had attached conditions not relevant for the local context. The discussion of these findings includes the impact of politics on language use, declining quality of education and policy transfer will be explored below the findings.

Mother Tongue Usage

A main theme discussed by participants on the impact of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system was mother tongue language usage. They explained that following the ethnic federalism policy education reform, people of Ethiopia began to use their local languages for work and education purposes. All participants referred to mother tongue usage at the elementary levels and continued to explain how it then impacted students at the secondary and post-secondary levels. While this study focused on multiculturalism in education at the university level (see Interview Guide in Appendix), the participants' responses integrated elementary and secondary levels in their explanations and showed that education is a continuum that needs to be viewed within the full context in order to be understood. Therefore, mother tongue language use is an integral theme which participants addressed in great detail. They also described both the benefits and challenges of mother tongue applications as media of instruction, which ranged from an increase in access, empowerment and improving learning to difficulties with training and materials, gaps in schooling and divisions in society.

The majority of the participants stated that the linguistic reform of the Ethiopian education originated from the ethnic federalism policy. As a result, public schools in the country enacted the policy of using their local languages for the teaching-learning process. According to curricular expert Girma,

After the change of the government in 1991, Ethiopia embraced federalism policies and the country was divided into different provinces. These provinces started using their local languages for medium of instruction and working purposes. Ethiopian government declared that every child should learn his or her mother tongue. Specifically, the policy declared that children will be taught in the mother tongue until they reach high school.

Therefore, the mother tongue language application in the Ethiopian education system was a result of the ethnic federalism policy that restructured the country along ethno linguistic lines. Mezgebu, also a curricular expert, described when mother tongue as the media of instruction began and how it was implemented.

Mother tongue is very important for all the students, teachers and people. The policy reform of the education is aligned with the federalism policy and the regions have their mandates to perform because this is what the decentralization process involves. Major policies are basically coming from the federal office, and once it is approved by the ministers then it is implemented in the regions.

Here, Mezgebu's explanation indicated that each province became responsible for its education programs following the ethnic federalism restructuring policy. In particular, provinces were given the mandate of creating curricula and preparing teaching learning resources using their local languages for their primary schools. In addition, some teacher training colleges which also operate under the provincial jurisdictions and access financial support from the federal government have been teaching in local regional languages.

Since the current government took power from the previous socialist regime in 1991, mother tongue languages replaced the Amharic language, formerly used as a national language of Ethiopia and media of instruction for elementary schools (grade 1-6). The Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MoE, 2005) praised the move towards using mother tongue as media of instruction. The Ministry has further argued that the use of mother tongue languages is critical in building students' confidence, self-reliance and learning capacity. According to (MoE, 2005), "if nations and nationalities use their languages...they will have the advantage of promoting their cultures and retain self-identity" (p. 22). Thus, using mother tongue language has had multiple advantages as it provides students with the opportunities to access education in a familiar

language, enhances their reading skills, provides them with contextual knowledge and develops their critical thinking skills. Similarly, participants highlighted how multiculturalism enabled people to use their mother tongue languages for teaching and learning process. According to instructor Mola,

The use of mother tongue in education is very wonderful as it provides great advantages for children to grasp the concept being taught. It empowers them to easily gain the basic content being transmitted. Three aspects are key for understanding lessons: cognitive, psychomotor and affective. These three domains need to be developed from the earliest stages of the children's lives.

Using mother tongue, students can have the benefits of transferring skills.

Especially, from grade one to four there is a strong cognitive development.

Mother tongue also increase thinking levels. If students can speak their local language, mother tongue, it makes it easier to learn a second language.

Thus, using mother tongue languages to teach children at their formative stages have improved their cognitive, social and emotional skills. Mola also indicated that students who learn their mother tongue language had better chances of learning additional language as they could easily transfer their skills.

Furthermore, curricular expert Mezgebu described that "Bilingual education is also one aspect of multiculturalism and students are learning in their mother tongue and that gives them benefit to develop other language and culture." When asked further to comment he said that,

The use of mother tongue is very important for the children in particular from grades 1 to 8. It has been proved scientifically that the use of mother tongue as a language of instruction in the initial grades is extremely important for cognitive development.

Additionally, student Tesfa explained how mother tongue language empowered students and provided them with contextual knowledge. He stated that,

I personally think using mother tongue language to educate children is a great idea. This approach also has been endorsed by UNESCO. When children use their own language, it helps them to understand the topic without difficulties. I believe this is a great strategy for empowering our students as it provides them with contextual knowledge to effectively understand lessons.

Both Mezgebu and Tesfa delineated the importance of using mother tongue language as the media of instruction. They believed that the implementation of mother tongue language was scientifically proven pedagogical strategy for teaching and learning process.

Even though participants explained the benefits and importance of mother tongue languages, they also highlighted the various challenges associated with the implementation processes. These challenges included lack of training resources, creation of gaps between regions, difficulty of switching from learning in mother tongue to English in higher education institutions, and divisions in society. Furthermore, respondents highlighted the lack of adequate trainings and educational resources that impacted the implementation process negatively. In this regard, instructor Alemayehu noted that, “I really doubt whether research was conducted before implementing mother tongue languages as media of instruction. I personally think that these policies came with the current government and are implanted without clear language policy, training or sufficient resources.” Alemayehu’s expression showed that the use of mother tongue languages as media of instruction in Ethiopia has a direct link with the federalism policy reform. He specifically noted that the policy came into effect without proper planning, resources or training. In agreement with Alemayehu, student Tesfa expressed the challenges of using local languages without proper training or resources. Tesfa stated that, “Language application can be

disadvantageous; just because you speak the language doesn't mean that you can teach with it". Here, Tesfa's concern was legitimate as most of the languages in Ethiopia are predominantly oral and did not develop written forms or orthography. Therefore, using them as media of instruction requires large amounts of resources and trainings.

In addition to the lack of resources, participants repeatedly explained the lack of a consistent language policy that could guide the application of mother tongue languages within the Ethiopian education system. They also voiced their opinion on how this process created gaps among students from different provinces. For instance, instructor Mensur stated that,

The mother tongue language policy in Ethiopia does not have uniformity across the provinces. In some provinces children learn with their mother tongue till they reach high school. In some places, they learn till grade 4 and switch to English as the medium of instruction. For instance, in Oromia and Amhara regions, students learn using their local languages till grade 8 and when they enter grade 9, they start using English language as medium of instruction. In the SNNP, they changed this policy and only students learn in their ethnic language until they reach grade 4. Once students reach grade 5, they start learning using English language as they start their second cycle. For me this approach has created significant disparities and challenges with students especially at higher level. To the extent we can't be able to communicate at higher level due to the lack of common language competencies.

As highlighted by instructor Mensur, issues related to inconsistent language policy in the Ethiopian education system have been negatively affecting students' communication skills and academic performances at higher levels. Mensur further explained that the majority of the students who used mother tongue languages up to high schools faced difficulties in

comprehending English language, which is the medium of instructions at higher institutions in Ethiopia. According to instructor Mensur,

When I teach communication skills for the freshman students, I noticed some of the students were unable to communicate with me or with each other. One of the major challenges I noticed was students' abilities to comprehend and communicate in English language. Mainly students who were coming from countryside and public schools suffered a lot. Students who were coming from more privileged schools where they used English language from lower levels usually become successful at higher levels. Be it in their academic or social lives.

While these gaps have affected students' ability to communicate at an individual level, the lack of a common language has also created divisions in the school communities. In this regard, student Fitsum explained how divided societies have been created at higher institutions due to the lack of common language. He explained that,

The policy of multiculturalism and the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction theoretically sound wonderful and empowering. I know science also supports the use of mother tongue and advance that when you learn using your mother tongue, you will have more success, understanding and easily get the concept of the lesson. On the other side the practical implementation of regional language make everybody focus only on their local ideas and ethnicity. This is a problem, it creates severe disintegration among people from diverse ethnic groups, I think it is affecting the nation negatively, because it is creating serious division among people from different background and limiting students. These policy makers who create them send their children to expensive private schools where their children start learning and mastering English language from KG

levels. These children are privileged and have access to higher scholars who build their capacities in various ways. But still these policy makers will say otherwise, I myself disagree with the approach and think it is negative and bad to the real progress of the students.

Fitsum differentiated between the theory and practice of using mother tongue languages as media of instruction, which has created disparities among students from different regions. He also noted the advantages of getting access to the English language from an early stage and how that benefits students from the privileged groups in Ethiopia.

The participants expressed the benefits and challenges of mother tongue usage as well as the political implications that existed within it. Curricular expert Girma included all of these aspects in his description of using local languages as he explained,

The idea of using all local languages to teach is fantastic. But in practice, the education system of the country does not have the capacity to use all its languages in the country ... as media of instructions. Just because you speak a language does not mean you can read and write in it. Most of the schools in our country have limited resources and I think it is over ambitious to think that we can use every language in the country. We do not have the materials or the appropriate training to support this endeavor.

Girma's perspectives in his expression showed that the realistic challenges associated with using all languages in Ethiopia for media of instruction. Even though the government's linguistic and multicultural reform has granted nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia the right to use their mother tongue languages, their implementation process has not been effective or consistent.

Participants in this study highlighted both the positive and negative aspects of using mother tongues as media of instruction. While respondents commended the move towards using

mother tongue languages for education purposes, they also pointed out that the linguistic policy reform was primarily political rather than pedagogical. They further revealed how inconsistent language policy and lack of educational resources created gaps in communication and achievements at higher institutions.

Quality of Education

Ethiopia's education reforms have enabled the government to expand higher institutions across the country. In the last two decades, universities have increased their intake capacities to provide access to large number of students. Despite the positive efforts made by the policy reforms, participants repeatedly highlighted how the ethnocentric education policy reform affected the quality of education at higher institutions. In addition, they also described how the discourse of multiculturalism affected educational leadership, educators' lives and academic performances of students within the Ethiopian education system.

Respondents in this study discussed the interconnectedness of education quality at lower and higher levels. Most of the instructors noted that the quality of education at all levels was interrelated and the majority of students at higher institutions lacked the strong foundations from their earlier education levels. According to instructor Alemayehu,

Education quality is related at all levels of schooling, from primary years and into higher levels. What is lost at lower levels can not be mended or fixed at higher levels. A problem at lower level can not be corrected at higher level. With so many students in the primary levels, many schools do not have sufficient materials, resources and dedicated teachers, and leaders. All over the country I can say that the quality of education is poor.

Alemayehu's expression highlighted larger problems of the Ethiopian education system. He believed that students who did not have good foundations at their elementary and secondary levels have encountered difficulties at higher institutions.

The participants explained that while more people gained access to education in the last two decades, the education qualities at higher institutions were being compromised. According to participants, this involved large class sizes, low socioeconomic status of instructors, lack of strong leadership, and restricted academic freedom. For instance, instructor Alemayehu explained how education quality at higher institutions of Ethiopia was compromised due to the high number of enrolment. According to Alemayehu,

The quality of education at higher level has deteriorated and it is in bad shape.

Teachers and concerned citizens have been talking about the declining quality of the education. However, the government officials have indicated that quality was not their concern. Their concern is the number of students and the number of graduates. There is emphasis on the expanding primary and secondary schools and higher education. I think this is a great accomplishment by the government, but the quality of education is also important. Students are not at the same level, and when you look at students who came from different regions, their knowledge of understanding the lessons is really challenging for most of them.

Alemayehu's expression underscored that the government's focus was mainly to increase access to higher education at all costs.

The theme of declining quality of education at all levels was also expressed by many participants and described as an impact of the ethnocentric education policy reform. Curricular expert Mezgebu noted that the quality of education in Ethiopia was compromised for various factors. According to Mezgebu,

The government just wants to say there are these numbers of students enrolled in primary, secondary and tertiary levels. It just wants to have the numbers and present them to the donor agencies that push the government and to get more money. The officials ensure that the schools and universities have the numbers. But we do not have the resources to do this. For instance accessing books and reference materials is very challenging. There is a serious resource shortage in every learning institution. The student-book ratio is very high.

Therefore, Mezgebu highlighted how the quality of education at higher institutions was compromised due to numbers of students as well as the lack of proper educational resources. In addition, he touched on funding pressure from donor agencies that prioritizes quantity over quality. Similarly, Zerihun explained how the government's policy of expanding higher institutions in different parts of the country shifted attention away from the quality of education. He stated that,

quality of education is determined by various aspects. For instance, the lack of resources is a key element in affecting quality of education system. In the last ten years, universities that have been operational in the country face major resource problems. The government has focused on increasing the number of universities without preparing sufficient educational materials, teachers and provision of necessary equipment for higher institution standards. The number of students that are coming every year is high. However, there are no enough resources. For example, students do not have sufficient reference books, audiovisuals, or other laboratory materials. Educational resources are key. You do not open universities for the sake of doing it. You need to have proper materials, resources and trained educators to fully function.

Thus, it is evident that the continuous expansion of higher institutions without trained educators has affected the quality of education. In addition, curricular expert Mezgebu criticized the government of Ethiopia was for misusing educational institutions for political purposes.

According to Mezgebu,

As a professor at the university for the last 15 years, I have taught different students but at no time that I have witnessed the morale and quality of education has been fallen behind as current times. Especially, the quality of education has been neglected and emphasis is only given to the number. Look! Now the government opens universities for political purposes in every region. There are 32 universities and nearly 20 of them have been opened in the last 10 years. They have become a place where the government is training its cadres. The Ethiopian government is opening universities like shops. I disagree with the approach of opening universities and similar departments in all of them. Besides, without proper resources and inputs, it would create saturation. If the government of Ethiopia does not intervene in timely manner, the existing situation of the country will lead to a devastating impact with respect to social crisis.

Mezgebu's expression indicated that the rapid expansion of higher institutions would need proper planning and resources to maintain the quality of education. He also believed that the main purpose of expanding higher education in parts of the country has been to gain political legitimacy from the public.

Lack of Leadership

Participants indicated that lack of strong educational leadership was to be blamed for the declining quality of education at higher institutions in Ethiopia. Most of the respondents repeatedly underscored the how leadership appointments in the education system were based on

ethnic identities and political loyalties rather than their educational capacities. They reported that these practices of ethnic based appointments existed as a result of how multiculturalism was implemented in the country, as a divisive approach that promoted ruling party allegiances. According to instructor Kassahun, after the ethnic federalism policy, leaders at higher intuitions of Ethiopia were assigned to their positions based on their ethnic identities and political affiliations with the ruling party; “If you are someone who is not supporting the political view of the ruling party, you can’t have power, promotion and benefits.” He further explained that,

The other problem is poor leadership which is significantly affecting the education quality from top to bottom. If not all, most of the educational positions are occupied by politicians. The abilities and performance of these politicians in these positions is questionable. Most of them do not have the capacity, skills or proper knowledge to make important educational decisions. ... Decisions that are key, in key pedagogical aspects, decisions that are appropriate to the local context are being made by people who are not well informed. The majority of teachers do not like and want to be led by such impositions.

Similarly, Meron pointed out how political affiliations in hiring practices has created poor leadership in the Ethiopian education system. According to Meron,

When you elect someone for a higher position especially to run higher institution, you need to make sure that the person has the skills, knowledge and capacity to lead the institution. Leaders should be selected based on the experience in leadership, community service, educational experiences. But, in our universities leadership positions are given to individuals with political and ethnic affiliation. Those politicians who are loyal to the ruling party will be given the positions and their main purpose would be to aid the ruling party in return to enable the

government to stay in power. The approach in Ethiopia has resulted in and is resulting in poor education quality.

Both Kassahun and Meron highlighted how access to major leadership positions were linked to ethnic identities and political loyalties. They believed that those practices have negatively impacted the quality of education. Instructor Shafi also stated that the appointments of positions were not based on knowledge and experiences. He noted that,

I wish they could leave out their politics from the education system. The government knows that its survival is dependent on the education system and in order to control the entire system. In every position, they have appointed people who are affiliated with politics and do whatever the ruling body wants. These appointees are assigned in different posts and have their special benefits and are the watchdogs and trusted bodies for the government parties. In order to keep their privileges, these people would do anything and enforce government policies. For instance, even at the university level, official appointees, first they must be politically affiliated with the ruling party and secondly be from the local area and trusted to the party. These appointments are not merit based at all. They are very biased and even though there are more qualified and experienced people they never get a chance.

Shafi's illustrations revealed how higher institutions in Ethiopia have been controlled by the government authorities for political gains.

While the data revealed the overwhelming presence of political affiliations in hiring practices, participants repeatedly expressed how the coercive relationships among educators and the government administrators affected the quality of education in Ethiopian higher instructions. In particular, instructors felt that the government's education policy has been repressive and

devoid of their participation in major decisions. They also described how their low socioeconomic status negatively affects the quality of education. For instance, instructor Alemayehu noted that,

There are different issues that hinder quality assurance. First, these days, teachers are dissatisfied in Ethiopia. Teachers are in a serious poverty. They occupy low socio economic status in the society, they are neglected and disrespected. Most of the teachers are not satisfied because of their poverty status. ... As a result, they are not committed to the profession, students or the general practices. You know, teaching needs heartfelt dedication and commitments. But nowadays, all these qualities, the commitment, dedication, and love for teaching profession have been eroded.

Therefore, being an educator has not been a valued occupation economically or socially. This has affected educators' ability to provide quality education as well as their personal financial stability, self-esteem and social status. Similarly, instructor Bekuma pointed out that,

The major and critical issue in the education field is the lack of compensation for the instructors. It is just like the entire education department is undernourished. Due to these problems, teachers find it so hard to become successful in what they do. Besides, life is getting so expensive and for the most part, with their salary, it is hard to get by and be productive on top of that. Teacher's poverty is a sad issue. It is impossible to live on teachers' salaries. Teachers are exposed to different forms of internal and external pressures. They are expected to pay house rent, buy food, pay transport and meet other living costs. Within these circumstances, teachers feel discouraged to work hard and be productive. The social status of teachers in the community and even among students is very low. These create

psychological damages and frustrations. The teachers low morale in return has impacted our performances and effectiveness. Besides, the majority of students don't want to be a teacher. So students with better results choose different departments. They know with teaching salaries, it becomes hard to afford books, laptops and other materials.

It is very interesting to see how policy reform in the education system has impacted educators contributions in their fields of profession. As indicated in Bekuma's expressions, educators' low socioeconomic status has negatively impacted the outcomes of education quality at higher institutions in Ethiopia.

Participants explained that after the ethnic federalism policy, there has been a great lack of leadership in higher education. They described that the lack of leadership was caused by the prevalence of ethnic based appointments as well as the declining status of teachers. They further commented on how this lack of leadership has affected the quality of education.

Lack of Academic Freedom

One of the major themes that participants indicated to have affected the quality of education negatively was the lack of academic freedom in the Ethiopian context. Participants explained that restricted academic freedom affected the quality of education and their ability to teach. They discussed how there were being closely monitored and scrutinized by their supervisors. According to curricular expert Mezgebu,

Education in reality can't be free from political activities. You either use education to develop students' awareness or use it as a political tool. The Ethiopian education policy in the last two decades created very passive students. In fact, the government is able to manipulate the education centers and use them to extend its life. Experienced professors, researchers and educators who were

opposed to the policies were dismissed, arrested or forced to live in exile abroad.

When educators express their ideas, the government people intimidate or terminate their contract.

Mezgebu in his expression highlighted that critical educators who voiced their opinions or concerns regarding the social or political aspects have faced severe retributions from the ruling party and they have been systematically silenced. Instructor Zerihun further explained that in recent years teachers in Ethiopia have become a target of the ruling party due to their political positions. According to Zerihun,

Majority of the teachers during 2005 election supported the opposition party and demanded change in leadership. Because of this reason, teachers became aggressively attacked by the government. The politicians were convinced that some of the teachers were the instigators of change in the country and the ruling party did not want that at all. There were a lot of teachers who were jailed, tortured and even killed during the strike after the election was over. ... The government also successfully dismantled the opposition parties using force, incarceration, intimidation, torture and jail. As a result teachers didn't really have any other political party, besides, following the then elected government, the government forced teachers to become member of the ruling party in order to stay on their jobs.

Zerihun's expression underscored the wider social and political challenges educators encounter in the Ethiopian context. He also highlighted how educators have been restricted and forced to support the government party to retain their employment positions.

Instructor Mola explained how those punishments have discouraged educators from effectively performing their tasks. When asked to comment further, Mola said that,

The academic freedom is not there. If you do not have a free mind, it is hard to get what you want. And it is hard to give the best lesson for your students; the students also do not get important lessons. Teachers who are critical always face harsh punishment and get fired from their positions or even thrown to jail. When you look at these things, it discourages you and the government's strategy is to humiliate, disrespect, and suppress the teachers to keep them silent.

Similarly, instructor Kassahun described how he started self censoring from controversial topics due to fear and anxiety of retribution. He stated,

Well, it is clear that the lack of academic freedom makes teaching difficult and it limits what you say or what you teach. You become very nervous of even discussing topics that are controversial. For instance, historical topics that deal with ethnic relation lessons have resulted in serious problems for teachers. So we have been fired and kicked out of institutions. So your interests in advancing knowledge in not there. And we are not motivated at all.

Instructors described how higher institutions in Ethiopia have become highly politicized and their activities were closely monitored by internal cadres. Instructor Abebech believed that co-op grouping was a strategic way of closely monitoring and controlling the school communities.

According to Abebech,

Nowadays, our schools are schools of politics, every academic activity you do is interpreted politically and sometimes misunderstood. All academic achievement is reflected on political achievement. What I am saying is that students are organized into cells of one to five throughout the country. There is one to five grouping of students in the name of cooperative learning. Teachers are also grouped in this way and being monitored, their movements and their actions are monitored by

their own peers. No one trusts each other. In this manner everything you do is constantly monitored and reported to the above level supervisors. Anything you do inside or outside the school is reported. Every time you are evaluated by your own peers and colleagues. Your personalities will be evaluated by your group members. You feel there is no freedom; you feel that you are under constant surveillance. Academicians are not comfortable in these institutions.

This showed the extent to which educators at higher institutions in Ethiopia were being closely monitored and deprived of their academic freedom. Abebech depicted the strategies that are being employed by the government to undermine educators' roles within the education system. She also pointed out that, within those teaching environments, it has become challenging for educators to deliver quality education.

Instructor Kasahun described how negative and restrictive environments have been impacting their teaching performances. According to Kassahun,

It affects our performance greatly. First, new philosophies can't be created or raised in academic areas. Academic areas should be sources of noble ideas but when you are controlled by someone, when you are under constant or periodic supervision by somebody, you don't have a sense of professionalism because you feel that you are an enemy of somebody under control. I am not saying politics should be absolutely swept out of the education system. But ours is beyond the limit and creating problems on the quality of the learning process and teachers' performance in general. The role of politicians in the area of education is above the limit no days, so it is affecting our commitments. It is affecting our energy. It is affecting our resources and time. It invites teachers to be careless individuals and it also makes you fearful.

Instructor participants consistently pointed out that their activities on and off duties are being monitored and scrutinized by government representatives. They indicated that in their classroom there were student cadres covertly assigned to monitor and report their activities. Most of them indicated that these processes have impacted their freedom of engaging their students in critical discussions. Instructor Kassahun noted that “Teachers can not freely express their feelings and encourage their students to discuss social problems for fear of cadre students in their classrooms. Especially, if they raise social, political, economic or governance issues, they will face serious consequences.” Similarly, instructor Abebech explained how she was reprimanded and given a warning for expressing her frustrations in a department meeting, “I once commented about the academic freedom issue in a meeting and my head of department accused me of objecting the EPRDF’s policy to the mayor of the town. So this is a big problem. I was threatened. I was told, if I am working in the government university; I have to follow the policy of the government quietly.” Thus, most educators would stay silent in order to avoid becoming the targets of internal cadres.

Participants explained that multiculturalism has led to lack of academic freedom as there are political affiliations and ethnic based appointments. They reported that this has negatively impacted the quality of education. They detailed government surveillance, self-censorship and trust as major factors that restricted their academic freedom. Instructor participants in particular stated that the ruling party of Ethiopia used education as a tool to control the larger society. In addition, they indicated that higher institutions have become centers where government political agendas are being transmitted.

Foreign Policy

Participants in this study discussed how multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system led to the adoption of multiple foreign educational policies. While foreign policy

adoption and policy borrowing existed in many educational contexts, the respondents expressed that ethnocentric educational reforms has intensified aid related policy transfers. They also explained that most of the imported policies have negatively impacted the Ethiopian education system due to their lack of relevance.

Educators both criticized and applauded policy adoption, explaining the problems with it and simultaneously discussing the benefits of it. When describing the impacts of multiculturalism, many instructors blamed the government of Ethiopia for adopting foreign policies without proper studies whether they were relevant to the local contexts. According to instructor Zerihun,

We have policy after policy in our field. They tell us this is from this country and this is from that other country. The idea of any policy is, as I understand, is to make the education better or give us more ideas to improve. But most of the policies in our institutions are for a very short period of time and they are changed Teachers are forced to keep switching from one to the other. The main reason is, there is funding that comes with the new strategies. I sometimes think we are a training ground for these new ideas. It is frustrating. Maybe these strategies are working in some place. But they are not necessarily working other places. Every time they tell us they worked in Norway or Sweden and are effective. Student centered approaches could work at these rich countries where you have small student populations and more facilities. In our situation we have a lot of students in one room, you don't even know who is in your class, we don't have the facilities and learning conditions are different. I wish they can see that before they introduce one strategy after another.

Zerihun's expressions highlighted the practical challenges imported policies have been encountering in the Ethiopian context. He also indicated how contextual differences affected the outcomes of imported educational policies.

Some participants also touched up on how foreign education policies provided them with new strategies to improve their teaching styles. According to curricular expert Addisu, "strategies from developed countries give us new ideas. They themselves used it and developed their countries, so it is good practice to take innovations and use it. I think people sometimes don't want to try new things or willing to change." Addisu further explained the problems that exist despite the positive intentions;

The education policy of our country is supported and influenced by other countries. The policies are good in theory but when it comes to the practice, the classroom, the teachers, the resources and other things are a big problem. ... Also when the government brings policies from other countries, it doesn't necessarily mean they will be effective and yield the same result. For instance, federalism policy that was brought from China or India could not work here. It might have worked for the Chinese or Indians, their policies are designed by their people for their local environments depending on the social, economic and cultural aspects. But they are not for us. Just because a single policy works in one context does not mean it will also work in the Ethiopian context.

Addisu highlighted that external policies may benefit Ethiopian education practices; however, he pointed out that instructors were hesitant to either change or accept new policies. In addition, he explained that imported federalism may work in other contexts but not necessarily in the Ethiopian local context. Instructor Alemayehu echoed Addisu's frustration and explained how

external education practices undermined the learning process at local levels. According to Alemayehu,

There is a ‘copy-paste’ aspect of policy implementation in our education system. Which is a very dangerous approach. It is severely undermining the education quality at local level. First, these policies need assessments of their compatibility, relevance and appropriateness to the local contexts. These policies need assessment of their effectiveness before bringing them to our education systems. Thus, these copy-paste policies are not relevant and effective to the education system here. Secondly, teachers are fed-up of these policies. Besides, these policies are changed continuously. The frequent changes of policies have become a headache for the teachers. After the downfall of the previous regime, many policies have changed frequently. Now it becomes like a game for some people when a new policy comes and teachers are asked to take trainings, most of them joke that other new policy will emerge before the current is fully implemented. So they do not take it seriously and are fed-up with the constant changes of policies. These approaches are wasting our time, energy and resources.

Here, Alemayehu explained the importance of conducting needs assessments prior to full scale foreign policy implementations. In addition, he noted that the frequent changes in educational policies were affecting the teaching and learning process.

Participants also described how tied aid or donations with conditions did not take local contexts into consideration. For instance, instructor Kassahun stated that,

Policies coming to our system are attached with some conditions or the outsiders have their own objectives when they give you aid. I think in this regard, our leaders are wrong, because, as a nation you have to shape your own citizens with

your own policies and teaching approaches. You have to do it your own way; you don't have to drift aside for the sake of earning some money. That money may do something, but it kills your people. Even though, these policies are not fit for your local areas, teachers are forced to implement it. Then we try to contextualize it. In order to solve these issues, the government should give teachers recognition, teachers should be valued and there should be academic freedom.

This showed how educators were forced to contextualize policies that were coming with their own objectives. Kassahun also highlighted how these policies undermined educators' roles in the teaching-learning processes.

The majority of the participants expressed their frustration as they believed that universities had become like 'testing grounds' for imported policies. Instructor Mensur described his feelings as follows:

Well, with regards to policies that are coming from different countries, the Ministry of Education takes the money and our institutions became the testing grounds. Our students are used for experiments for different policies. I remember there was one policy that came from a country, and there was some money involved. The policy was to take high school students from grade ten and send them directly to teacher training. They were given courses in packages but since they were missing essential years in secondary schooling, they were not very successful in the program and unable to transfer to any others. After five batches and they realized that these students have been taking courses that were not relevant to schools.

Instructors backed up their statements with comments from the government officials over accepting aid with educational policies attached. Instructor Shafi explained,

You could hear this issue being discussed in the media, the Prime Minister openly talked about receiving aid and assistance. The Prime Minister explained that this money was accepted because it was beneficial to our country. This means that when aid comes with policies and practices tied to them, the Ministry of Education has to then implement them. Often, the government accepts the aid and the policies that are tied to them without seeing their relevance and importance to the local education system. This is done for political and economic gain rather than learning.

Another major concern instructors pointed out was the frequent switching of these policies. They explained that policies that are being imported to the Ethiopian education system have been frequently switched and replaced before their full implementation. They complained that teachers were forced to enact one policy after another policy. According to Girma,

With respect to Ethiopia's education policy, it frequently changes and that by itself has created serious problem among educators. For instance, two years ago there was a policy change, saying that one department should be divided into two. For example, if you are in Chemistry department, you will have two streams one for teaching and one for applied or non-teaching. Recently, that policy was changed, and now we have one department again.

The curriculum experts also described the changing policies that were imported from other countries or international organizations like the World Bank [WB]. According to curricular expert Mezgebu

When you think about quality of education, the first step you are thinking about and doing is to change the curricula. This means you are changing various things. For instance, if you look at the high school books that our children are using, they

are produced and written by non-Ethiopian people. For instance, the World Bank sponsors. The textbooks are published in different countries and dumped in our schools and universities. I think this should be changed. We need books that reflect local people's knowledge, books whose context reflects the ideals of Ethiopia.

He further explained that,

The ministry of education allows European countries like Sweden, Norway, England and other countries to be involved in different educational policy projects....Consultants from USAID or the World Bank come and tell us how should education should be done. ... I think our government's education policy should not be donor agency driven. For instance telling us to reduce the four years university studies to three years, introduce cost sharing to the students, and bringing the European and North American ideologies and pushing on our context resulted in more damage than good. For instance pushing the modularization grading system that the Europeans use, is not appropriate for it is a waste of our time and energy. Instead, I would suggest that higher education should be free from external influences. This would enable us to produce our own policies focusing on improving teaching conditions in our country. Foreign driven policies will not help us to improve our conditions. Instead, our policies should originate from our people and context, and this will improve our education system and address our challenges.

On the other hand, instructor curricular expert Addisu indicated how the Ethiopian government is forced to adopt foreign education policies due to its low socioeconomic status. He recognized the

pressure on the Ethiopian government to accept policies that were tied with preconditions. When asked to comment further he stated that,

In the Ethiopian education case, the donor countries influence the government to take their policies and implement it in the Ethiopian context. For instance external agencies like the World Bank and the IMF set plans without consulting the local educators or clearly understanding the local context. Because their funding only comes if the government takes the plans, then the government of Ethiopia bows to this pressure. It is because of this pressure that they take every policy and implement it until the funding ends. If we do not take the policies from the World Bank or the IMF, then we do not receive the loans. I think these policies that come to developing countries have their own agendas. They impact the progress of our country negatively.

Thus, most of the imported policies in the Ethiopian context were developed external stakeholders who were devoid of the local and contextual knowledge. Participants expressed how multiculturalism had led to increased policy borrowing, as the government was continuously bringing international policies relevant to other cultures and countries into the Ethiopian education system. Most participants criticized the international policies and practices as they have not been contextually relevant.

Therefore, the themes raised by the participants on the impact of multiculturalism within the education system were mother tongue usage, quality of education, lack of leadership and foreign policy. Specifically, they explained the benefits including the increase in access, empowerment and learning as well as the challenges which involved difficulty with training and materials, gaps in schooling and divisions in society. They also discussed the quality of education, describing that there was greater access for diverse students that was provided at the

expense of the class sizes, available resources and academic performance. Participants explained the lack of leadership as one in which appointments were based on ethnic identity and political affiliations, which in turn impacted the academic freedom of instructors. Finally, they also noted that the impact of foreign policy, in which imported and aid related policies had attached conditions, lacked knowledge of the local context and were frequently changed based on other countries practices and aid policies.

Discussion of the Impact of Multiculturalism in the Ethiopian Education System

The participants explained that the impact of multiculturalism and ethnic centered policy in the Ethiopian education system included mother tongue usage, quality of education, lack of leadership, lack of academic freedom and foreign policy. These themes are consistent with literature on the impact of multiculturalism in education as many scholars have discussed these issues. This discussion presents literature that coincides with the participants views under the impact of politics on language use, declining quality and policy transfer.

Participants highlighted how the government of Ethiopia has manipulated the education system to control its society. They also underscored that the ethnocentric led education policy has compromised the quality of education, mistreated educators and diminished academic freedom.

Politics on Language Use

Ethiopia's use of local languages as media of instruction has been commendable as it has provided students with opportunities to access education using their mother tongue language. However, critics have pointed out that the decision making process of mother tongue language implementation in Ethiopia has been primarily political rather than pedagogical. Wagaw (1999) illustrated this ideas as,

The language policies related to education and training will not lead to nation building or serve the educational and trained needs of the children and youth of any segment. Rather, the policies are designed to promote artificial divisions among Ethiopians, even at risk of creating hatred among divisiveness which might lead eventually to deep rancor and fighting. It is tragically ironic to see that Africans reinvent for themselves the policy of apartheid, notions which colonial powers have been forced to abandon everywhere in the world (p. 11)

In addition, community stakeholders, educators and parents were not consulted in the decision making process or implementation process. According to Tasissa (2009), there was not enough time and effort made to engage concerned parties in education and language policies. He explained that only one year was allocated for preparation and training professionals before it was launched. Therefore, the implementation process began without proper discussion or clear policy guidance.

Participants in this study also indicated how the mother tongue language process was mainly driven by political reforms. According to instructor Meron, “the use of mother tongue languages as media of instruction is driven by the ethnic federalism policy rather than by educational goals. The aim of this policy has been to create more divisions among people in the country.” Thus, the ruling party has been using education as a means to achieve its end goal of dividing the society based on linguistic and ethnic differences (Wagaw, 1999).

Most respondents further highlighted the lack of a clear language policy that could guide the implementation process of mother tongue language application in the Ethiopian education system. To this end, instructor Zerihun stated, “Mother tongue language implementation in the Ethiopian education system is done without a clear policy or sufficient resources.” Furthermore, provinces’ mother tongue language implementation is inconsistent and irregular. In other words,

in Oromia and Amhara provinces, students learn using their mother tongue languages as the media of instruction until they finish their primary schooling. On the other hand, students in the SNNP and other regions learn with their mother tongue languages only until grade 4. As a result, the mother tongue language implementation in the Ethiopian education system lacked clear vision and regulation (Negash, 1996; Wagaw, 1999). Negash (2006) has noted that,

The major feature of the new educational policy that became operational in Ethiopia is the introduction of ethnic languages as mediums of education for primary education. Overnight more than a dozen languages were deemed fit to function as mediums. (pp. 22-23)

Therefore, the application of mother tongue language usage in Ethiopia was done without clear language policy, proper study and preparation.

In addition, participants repeatedly highlighted the negative impact of inconsistent language policy. For instance, student Taddese underlined the challenges he encountered in the following excerpt:

I came from the Oromia region, where we learned in Oromiffa language until we reach grade 9, while other students from Addis Ababa and SNNP regions started learning all subjects from lower grades using English language. In the university, we learn in English and I think it is unfair since we spend a lot of time and effort to learn the English language more than the academic subjects.

Hence, the lack of a uniform language policy regarding media of instructions has created significant disparities in students' success, academic achievements and communication skills at higher levels. Instructor Kassahun also stated that the mother tongue language application as a media of instruction in Ethiopia was creating inequalities in academic achievements among students from different provinces. He thought provinces with strong resources and trained

personnel were at an advantage in comparison to those with limited access to educational resources and trained professionals. Habtu (2004) also noted that

Out of some 80 local languages spoken in the country, 22 are now in primary school use... Due to lack of resources in the local language, including writing system, adequate teaching material, and teaching staff in the local language, as well as to pragmatic considerations such as prospects of employment and social mobility, many communities have chosen Amharic as their language of instruction. (p. 104)

Therefore, they described the importance of taking contextual realities into consideration while planning and implementing educational policies. In addition, scholars have noted that a coordinated effort is critical in formulating uniform and consistent language policies to guide the implantation process of mother tongue languages as media of instructions (Yigezu, 2010).

Higher institutions are sites where students meet from different linguistic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Most of the participants in this study explored the communication challenges that existed in post-secondary institutions and affected students' academic and social lives. According to student Roba, the majority of the students from Wollega, Oromia region have had a very hard time communicating with Amharic speaking students and they encounter difficulties communicating and integrating with other students from different regions. When asked to further elaborate Roba explained that, "there is communication barrier between the Amhara, Tigres and Oromos because students that are coming from the Oromia region do not have proper Amharic knowledge and students from Amhara and Tigre regions do not speak Oromiffa language." As a result, the lack of common language competencies at higher institutions has negatively impacted students cross-cultural integration.

In addition, participants explained how students with limited knowledge of the English language face difficulties in expressing themselves and sharing their ideas in their classrooms. They also noted that students who were learning in English earlier in their studies have had stronger linguistic competencies and success in the higher levels. For instance, students from Addis Ababa, Dire Dewa and SNNP regions have been exposed to English language in their earlier grades and they have had greater successes in post-secondary. In addition, students from Oromia, Amhara and other provinces which use English as media of instruction in secondary school have encountered more difficulties in post-secondary institutions. In this regard, student Tadesse noted that, “there was a student doing a presentation in our class who wasn’t able to effectively communicate with the medium of instruction. The teacher did not understand what the student was explaining so another student had to translate her presentation from her local language so that she could explain it better.” Hence, students with limited English and Amharic language skills face various challenges academically and socially in higher education institutions.

Language use and lack of competency in the medium of instruction can be problematic and damaging especially when it denies students their ability to express themselves. Wane (2008) has argued that language is a powerful tool used to access power and privilege. She has indicated that using a foreign language as medium of instruction dislocates students from their social realities. According to Wane (2008),

The use of a foreign language as a medium of education makes a child foreign within her or his own culture, environment, etc. This creates a colonial alienation.

What is worse, the neo-colonized subject is made to see the world as seen and defined by or reflected in the culture of the language of imposition. (193)

Therefore, in the Ethiopian education system, language has been used as a political tool.

Participants and scholars have outlined how mother tongue language use has been implemented in order to divide society. While mother tongue language use has been a pedagogically sound educational practice in some contexts, it has not been implemented in a clear or consistent manner in Ethiopia. This has created disparities between students and affected their communication abilities. Scholars have noted that the power of language as well as the problems related to power differentials when learning in ‘colonizers’ or developed world languages.

Declining Quality

A recent report from the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia (MoE, 2011) has indicated that Ethiopia has shown remarkable achievements in providing access to education at all levels. Since Ethiopia pledged to provide primary education for all in 2015, the MoE has worked hard to attain the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)⁵ and UNESCOs Education for All (EFA) goals⁶. According to Ethiopia’s Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP, 2005), the government of Ethiopia has been committed to expanding higher education in the country. As a result, in the last decade alone, twenty universities have been opened in different provinces (MoE, 2011).

While Ethiopia has enjoyed huge success in providing access to education, a large number of scholars and participants directly linked the improvements in quantity at the expense of quality. Adamu and Addamu (2012) explained that the Ethiopian higher education system is

⁵ MDG Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education (UN, 2015, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/education.shtml>)

⁶ UNESCO’s Education for All Goals include: Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children” and Goal 5: “Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.” (Unesco, 2015, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/efa-goals/>)

in the middle of rapid expansion and “it is always difficult for any nation to maintain quality standards in the midst of rapid enrollment expansion” (Saint, 2004, p. 106, cited in Adamu & Addamu, 2012, p. 839) and that quality is often negatively affected when expansion occurs and resources are in short supply (Teferra, 2007, cited in Adamu & Addamu, 2012, p. 839). Munene (2013) noted that when African governments encounter legitimacy crisis, they tended to expand higher institutions along ethnic lines to gain mass loyalty. He explained that “[a]ccess to political power is a conduit for the acquisition of educational resources, employment opportunities in the state bureaucracies and state contracts, among others, by the ethnic group in power” (p. 48).

Participants described how the quality of education in Ethiopia remains a serious challenge. They explained that both internal and external educational policy reforms affected the quality of education in the country. Furthermore, respondents indicated that the government of Ethiopia was more concerned about enrollment numbers than the quality of education that students received.

Instructor Meron explained how the Ethiopian government rejected criticisms directed at the quality of education as a “non-urgent” matter. Similarly, instructor Kassahun indicated that the pressure of fulfilling the MDG goal of providing access to education for all has forced the government of Ethiopia to focus on the quantity rather than the quality of education. He further elaborated that Ethiopia’s officials were more concerned with raising Ethiopia’s statistics over their actual outcomes. Instructor Mola also noted that “enough attention is not paid to strengthen students’ content knowledge at least in the core areas like mathematics, science and languages at the lower or senior levels.” Negash (2006) has noted that,

The federal state did very little to confront the decline of the quality of education, mainly arising from the lack of proficiency in English among Ethiopian teachers.

Anecdotal accounts tell about the arrogance of government officials treating quality as an elitist issue. The government loudly told its critics far and wide that it was busy expanding primary education with the implication that quantity would soon take care of issues/aspects of quality. (p. 31)

Therefore, it can be deduced that expansion of Ethiopian education is being accomplished at the expense of the quality of education.

Another major challenge that both student and instructor participants highlighted as negatively impacting the quality of education was the lack of strong leadership, which they attributed to the ethnic policies of the government. According to Mascall (2007), leadership is “the ability to influence others” (p. 52). In addition, educational leadership has the ability to create strong and positive effects on student learning (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood & Anderson, 2010). Literature has shown that leadership in education is very complex and that it is not neutral as leaders possess power, tools and resources (Ingersoll, 2003; Scott, 1998). A large number of participants blamed the gaps in leadership for the declining quality of education in Ethiopian education system. They highlighted how leadership positions were accessed through political affiliations as leaders were selected based on their political allegiance to the ruling party rather than their educational experiences. According instructor Bekuma, “leaders at our institutions lack the capacity, skills and proper knowledge to make good decisions about education, but they usually make key decisions which affects the quality of education from lower to higher levels.” In addition, instructor Zerihun expressed his frustrations as people who were not necessarily competent in their roles, but were loyal to the ruling party, were given the highest positions with the responsibility of implementing the government’s agenda and interests. According to Zerihun,

I have taught more than ten years at this university and I know that the entire university's management personnel are politicians who were hand-picked and appointed to their positions. Most of these leaders do not have the needed professional knowledge and capacity to advance strong education policies or lead the education sector.

Education leaders have impacted the teaching learning process negatively if their focus is on implementing political mandates rather than pedagogical aspects. Scholars have explained the importance of having teachers actively engaged in decision-making as well as their own professional learning processes (Fullan, 1993; Kruse, Seashore-Loius & Bryk, 1994).

Participants' also noted that in addition to political affiliation, ethnic identities have played a major role in accessing powerful positions within the Ethiopian higher intuitions.

According to instructor Yeshe,

For a university located in the Oromia region, the president must be from Oromo ethnic group and at the same time he or she must be an active member of the OPDO, an organization created by the TPLF. For a university located in the Amhara region, the leaders are ethnically Amharas and politically affiliated with the ANDM political groups. For a university in Tigray, the leaders are from Tigray and affiliated with TPLF.

Hence, the educational leaders in the country were appointed based on their ethnic affiliations and political loyalties. Consequently, they have affected the outcome of higher education negatively. Participants explained that the primary mandates of these appointees were to make sure that the government policies and procedures were properly applied within the higher education institutions.

Participants in this study warned that the government of Ethiopia should be paying serious attention to improve the quality of education in the higher institutions in order to produce vibrant, productive and responsible generations. Instructor Mola explained the importance of the quality of education;

Improving the quality of education will enable us to produce great engineers, lawyers, researchers, educators, doctors and nurses. However, if the government does not address issues related to quality, but instead continues to prioritize their ethnic political gains, then the damages and crisis in our country would be devastating and impossible to reverse.

Thus, participants recognized the criticality of improving quality of education in order to avert a foreseeable social crisis.

Participants also explained that the governments' intrusive approach towards education has been denying educators and students their freedom of engagement in critical based inquiries. For instance, instructor Abebech indicated that "since the government came to power in 1991, the education sector has become the main avenue to transmit political agendas to the society." As a result, the relationship among educators and administrators has been deteriorating and putting a huge strain on the quality of education. Instructor Kassahun also termed the relationship dynamics between the administrators and educators as 'master-slave' whereby educators are being viewed as 'second class citizens'. Therefore educators' performances have been negatively impacted to deliver quality education. Beck and Kosnik (2006) have noted that teachers require a supportive and collaborative environment to become successful educators.

Participants further expressed that government officials needed to realize the role of educators in shaping future generations and contributing to the wellbeing of the entire society. They also stressed that educators need to get proper recognition and compensation for their hard

work. It should be known that teachers are at the center of teaching learning process as well as implementing educational policies (Giroux, 1988; Miller, 2007).

Participants disclosed that the ruling party has refused to entertain criticism regarding social, political and educational policies. They indicated that the government has successfully managed to silence and disempower educators using coercive forces such as intimidation, incarceration and termination of employment. As previously mentioned, participants explained that experienced professors were fired due to their stand against the ethnicized education policy of the Ethiopian government. They explained that this contributed to the loss of professors, educators, researchers and intellectuals, which had negative repercussions on the quality of education in the country.

Participants highlighted that ethnic policies and practices created political affiliations and fear of persecution. According to participants, educators in Ethiopia were disempowered and mistreated by the administrators and the ruling party accomplices. In this regard, instructor Alemayehu indicated, “higher institutions have become schools of politics where all academic activities are controlled and criticized.” He described that the academic spheres were being closely monitored. In addition, instructor Meron thought that educators were under constant pressure and harassment. Even though participants acknowledged that education could not be free from political ideologies, they indicated that the interference of politics in the Ethiopian education system has become beyond imaginable and was impacting their commitments for the teaching-learning process. Gérin-Lejoie (2008) has explained how teachers are becoming more ‘accountable’ to the prescribed curriculum, rules and regulations rather than focused on their engagement in the teaching learning process, and this is evident in the descriptions by the participants.

In addition, participants disclosed that instructors in Ethiopia were under constant fear and stress that they would lose their positions or be jailed for voicing their concerns or opinions. A large number of respondents highlighted that Ethiopian higher education centers were not independent spaces to generate innovative ideas. In other words, the majority of universities and colleges in Ethiopia were not free from the political discourses and dominance. Particularly, instructor participants revealed that issues related to ethnic politics were creating precarious atmospheres at higher institutions and negatively affecting their potentials to produce capable graduates.

Following the 2005 election, the government enforced a new policy called one to five co-op organizations (GTP, 2005). The policy has dictated that every employee of government offices including university professors, students and public servants must form a group of five. The government's discourse for its policy, which categorizes people in groups, has been to enable students, educators, and public servants to work in collaboration. However, participants in this study contested this approach as its prime motive was political and has enabled the government to closely monitor people's activities at higher institutions. According to instructor Zerihun, "Now-a-days, our schools are centers of politics, where every academic activity you do is interpreted politically and misunderstood." Furthermore, participants pointed out that government personnel are secretly assigned among students and staff members to closely monitor and report daily activities. Participants revealed that this approach has undermined their academic freedom and created psychological crisis on educators and students not to freely engage in critical inquiry, dialogue and knowledge construction. According to instructor Bekuma, "among our students and staff, there are thousands of cadres secretly assigned to monitor everyone. Due to this fact, most of the educators do not express ideas and opinions." This indicated that educators refrain themselves from engaging their students in critical social,

political and contextual discussions. Instructor Mola also pointed out that professors at higher institutions were under tremendous stress as they “cannot freely express their opinions and engage students in free discussions for fear of the internal cadres. Especially, if educators raise issues related to social, political, or economic governance, they will face serious consequences and either be fired and jailed.” Therefore, educators have found it very challenging to enhance their students’ engagement and critical thinking skills. In a nutshell, participants indicated that multiple factors have contributed for the declining quality of education in Ethiopia. In particular, they mentioned that the ethnicized education policy, lack of strong leadership, lack of academic freedom and low socio-economic status of teachers have negatively affected the teaching learning process at higher institutions.

Policy Transfer

Education policies have been transferred from one place to another in multiple forms. In this regard, aid plays a fundamental role for the dissemination of foreign educational policies from the developed to the developing countries (Carney, 2012; Klees 2002; Moyo, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). Ethiopia, as one of the most aid recipient countries in the world, has been highly susceptible to adopt tied aid education policies irrespective of their cultural appropriateness and contextual relevance.

The culture of adopting foreign education policies began with the inception of modern education in Ethiopia. The practice of policy borrowing has continued into the present day and the Ethiopian education system has been overwhelmingly inundated with variety of imported policies. For instance, at the inception of modern education, in the early 20th Century, Emperor Menilik (1886-1930) adopted French education policies. His successor, Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-74) implemented British education, in which this period was termed the ‘British era’. The Derge regime (1974-1991), that abolished the monarchy system, adopted education policies from

socialist countries, mainly Russia and the former East Germany (Levine, 1972; Negash, 1996; Wagaw, 1979; Zewde, 1991). The current regime, which displaced the socialist government in 1991, has continued the trend of adopting foreign policy from the Western and European countries with neoliberal agendas at their core.

Various scholars have described the ineffectiveness of aid model policies in creating sustainable and independent societies. Critics of aid model policies such as Moyo (2009) and Klees (2008) have argued that billions of dollars have been invested in Africa through donation in the last six decades; however, the anticipated progress has not been achieved. This has been mainly due to tied-aid policies in which donations have come with preconditions. Some participants highlighted that multiculturalism policies in Ethiopia is the byproduct of tied-aid policies that are coming to Ethiopia through donation and financial assistance. In addition, curricular experts blamed the lack of locally developed education policies for the ongoing policy adoption from outside. According to curricular expert Girma “we do not have a ‘home-made’ curricula in general. Instead we always take policies from other countries and use their curricula. We do this even though the ancient Ethiopian civilization had invented its own ‘Ethiopics’ written scripts and numbers.” Further, it was revealed that policies that have been enforced through aid have not necessarily aligned with the contextual needs in the country. There have been significant disconnections between the local culture and imposed modern policies. Girma further elaborated that, “in our case the missing problem is that we did not appreciate what we invented and we jumped to policies from other countries. So the modernization without local culture and tradition created problem for us.” Thus, adopted educational policies have not been aligned with local cultural realities.

Takayama and Apple (2008) have argued that the global cultural politics are central in perpetuating and legitimizing the western dominant discourse within the ‘other’ context. As a

result most countries have remained passive recipients of the western scientific knowledge and education systems. They further pointed out that the phenomenon of educational policy transfer usually has perpetuated western cultural imperialism legacy and knowledge production in order to create social stratification. Participants acknowledged that policy makers, politicians and leaders of developing countries have been under serious pressure to adopt policies that have come from the dominant organization like WB and IMF. The Ethiopian government has not resisted pressures from donor countries and agencies. As a result, it has accepted and enacted educational policies. According to curricular expert Addisu “if the government on the other hand refuses to implement the policies that foreign agencies like World Bank suggests, then your country will not be able to access loans or other essential support.” Therefore countries that rely on donation and financial support accept tied policies that have not been relevant to the local contexts.

Participants expressed their concern with respect to the education policies that were coming from other countries in various forms. Nóvoa and Lawn (2002) have argued that the growing trend of policy borrowing and transfer from the developed world to the developing world under the guise of best practices has been affecting the progress of aid recipient countries.

Policies that are tied with aid, donations or loans from the western developed countries have negatively impacted the education sector as they have perpetuated dependency and deterred the development of science, innovation and higher education at local levels. Instructor Kassahun expressed his concerns regarding education policies that were coming to the Ethiopian context. He believed that the Ethiopian education system has been following a ‘cut and paste’ policy approach from donor countries. In addition, he explained that the MoE has adopted policies without having conducted preliminary needs’ assessments. In this regard Kassahun noted that, “they take policies that are developed for different countries and different students. Then they

bring them in and attempt to implement it directly without considering local needs. The policies that are taken from other countries do not address our education problems.” Therefore, imported educational policies have negatively affected the local policy development.

In the process of adopting foreign policies, it has been critical to recognize issues related to compatibility, adaptability and relevance to the local context. In addition, adopted policies should be able to address the internal social, political or education issues.

Educational reforms and policies that have been transferred to the developing countries have had multiple ramifications on the context they are applied. In Ethiopia, participants repeatedly expressed their concern regarding the introduction of cost sharing policy in higher institutions. They pointed out that this policy was mainly implemented due to the influence of external policy recommendations. Ethiopia’s higher education cost-sharing policy came in effect in early 2000s following the demand imposed by World Bank. Previous to this, students in Ethiopia were entitled to access free higher education provided that they passed the national examination. However, the World Bank led educational reforms in 2003 have changed this practice and enforced cost sharing practices in which students were made to pay ‘user’ fees.

Bruce Chapman (1999), a World Bank consultant, has argued that Ethiopia’s higher education system was seen as an outdated model for providing free higher education. According to Chapman (1999), “The fact that there is not tuition charge for higher education in Ethiopia implies strongly that the system is regressive... Not charging for higher education – that is, a 100 percent subsidy is – unusual in an international context” (p. 11). He called Ethiopia “regressive” because it provided free higher education, but he failed to account for the government’s dedication and value placed on higher education as well as the future economic benefits for the society and the students. Comparing Ethiopia’s situations with the developed world countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia, the World Bank criticized Ethiopia’s free higher

education approach and urged it to adopt a cost sharing policy. Ironically, the World Bank and its consultants constantly have reported that the majority of Sub Saharan African people, including Ethiopians, live on less than a dollar a day; however, they have insisted that higher education institutions should enforce cost sharing policies for these same people to pay for higher education. The cost sharing policy in Ethiopia has been a lingering issue as students profoundly objected the notion of attaching cost to higher education.

In connection with the cost sharing policies, the ministry of education of Ethiopia reduced the time to receive first degrees from four years to three years. In most universities it has always taken students four years to gain a bachelor's degree. Instructor Abebech pointed out that cost sharing and minimizing the time of study was mainly influenced by external pressure. It was also revealed that students and teachers are under tremendous pressure to finish the course loads within the shortened period of time. This process has negative implication for the quality of education students receive as the focus is mainly shifted to finish the course in time than deeper understanding.

Participants indicated that following the ethnic federalism reform, the introduction of cost sharing policy was mainly implemented to maximize profit and treat education as a product to be purchased. Steiner-Khamsi (2012) has argued that education policy borrowing has been for political and economic purposes. She has noted that, "policy borrowing in developing countries is coercive, and unidirectional. Reforms are transferred from the global North/West to the global South/East" (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, p. 5).

Participants also objected the educational plans that were choreographed by the external agencies like USAID, WB and IMF. Curricular experts criticized policies that were formulated on the basis of external interests as they were not able to address the local challenges. However, if aid recipient countries have not enacted policies that came from financial institutions, they

have faced difficulties in accessing loans and financial assistance from WB and other organizations. As a result, countries like Ethiopia have been forced to enact recommended policies and reforms regardless of their contextual needs.

Another new policy that has recently started being implemented in higher education institutions is modularization. Participants explained that modular system of education was adopted from Western countries and has been implemented in the Ethiopian education setting. The modular approach is an intensive way of delivering large course loads in a very short period of time. According to curricular expert Mezgebu “we are told to teach a course in one month that we were previously given a whole semester to teach.” In this teaching and learning style, teachers and students are under serious pressure to finish a given topic and move to the next level quickly. This process is affecting the quality of education in the country. Silova (2012) has argued that neoliberal led market policies legitimize and normalize educational policy transfer for economic purposes. Thus, policies that have been adopted from other countries should have be contextually relevant and take local realities into considerations prior to their implementation.

Participants explained that the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia has enforced the modularization policy despite various resistance and opposition to it. Instructors who participated in this research expressed the lack of resource allocation, time and professional development training that was given to enact the modular teaching approach. In addition, they pointed out that the modularization teaching strategy has not given the students time or resources to engage in dialogue, discussion and develop their critical thinking skills. The approach has also been criticized for depriving students of the time to digest complex topics. Educators further noted that following the modularization approach, more students failed their classes. Participants stated that students need more time to digest complex and challenging concepts, ideas and theories but that the existing enforced pedagogical approach only provided enough time to memorize before

examinations. Consequently, their success rate was negatively impacted. According to instructor Kassahun,

I do not like to fail students, but they do not know the material. The amount of students who fail now are too many and I find it heart breaking. Higher level courses need to provide time for students to understand and retain the information.

But in this modular system, students are forced to memorize the material only to pass the exams. There is no room for class discussions at all.

Therefore the application of the policy was creating more challenges on the learning environments at higher institutions of the country. It is evident that the ethnocentric led education reform policies have influenced Ethiopia's higher education in multiple ways. As revealed by respondents repeatedly, educational policies that were imported from developed countries carried their own risks, as they did not necessarily take contextual realities in to considerations. Despite their positive intentions, most of the imported education policies seemed to have negatively impacted the local education system in Ethiopia.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented how multiculturalism has directly and indirectly impacted education. The themes described by the participants on the impact on education were mother tongue usage, quality of education, lack of leadership, lack of academic freedom and foreign policy. The discussions of these findings, when integrated with the literature, highlight the impact of politics on language use, declining quality and policy transfer. It is evident that multiculturalism has a direct impact on education in terms of how it is delivered, the materials used to deliver it, and on the teachers' abilities and potential. Ethnic based appointments and affiliations greatly impacted the quality of education, the leadership within institutions, and educators' academic freedom. In addition, international politics and policy adoption has affected

the education system. Participants described how external pressure was affecting their education, as they had to adopt policies and practices from international countries and/or organizations, with their external interests, values and cultural knowledge imbedded into the curriculum and material. Educational policies have been adopted to appease international interests and aid, manage the internal diversity and be delivered to the large numbers of students. However, they have also greatly impacted the quality and ability of the education system to provide meaningful and valuable education to the students. While multiculturalism has greatly impacted the education system, it also greatly impacted the interethnic relations that exist, and this will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven

Impact of Multiculturalism in Interethnic Relationships

Findings on the Impact of Multiculturalism in Interethnic Relationships

This chapter addresses part of the second research question as it presents the findings and discussion of the impact of multiculturalism on interethnic relationships. The main themes that arose from the data were the declining social cohesion, the rise of ‘narrow nationalism’, and the implications of conflict. As social cohesion declined, tension and conflicts increased to a point that has been nearing social crisis. People prefer their ethnic identities more than their national one and criticize the ‘otherization’ that has been occurring within education and the country as a whole. Furthermore, they have blamed the current government for instigating and perpetuating the conflicts with the ethnic federalism policy which segregates people based on their ethnic identities. In addition, the mandated allegiance to the government and the policing that has existed intimidates and scares educators and students. This chapter concludes with an in depth discussion of the themes into literature and analyzes the proliferation of negative ethnicity and the resulting consequences, as well as the path to genocide.

Declining Social Cohesion

One of the main themes that emerged from the data was the deterioration of social cohesion among students from different ethnic backgrounds. The data showed the escalation of negative attitudes, tensions and conflicts among students from diverse ethnic origins in higher institutions. Many participants indicated that Ethiopia’s ethnic centered political system created negative interethnic relations. Instructor Abebech pointed out that the restructuring of Ethiopia based on ethnic differences resulted in tensions and conflicts among ethnic groups. She believed that the implementation of Ethiopian multiculturalism has incensed ethnic tensions among the diverse groups internally. According to instructor Abebech,

Since this government came to power in 1991, ethnic identities have replaced our national identity. The application of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia is creating a very bad atmosphere. Because of this policy, ethnocentrism is affecting everyone's life in the country, especially the bitter relationships between the Amharas, Oromos, Tigres and Afar.

Instructor Shafi further expressed his concern over the growing tensions among students at his university campus. He revealed that interethnic relationships in Ethiopian higher institutions were deteriorating and forming isolated and segregated groups. According to Shafi, "There is zero trust among students. No one trusts each other and groups are always suspicious of each other. I can say that the majority of the students in this generation worry about their ethnicity and the ethnicity of others around them." When asked to comment further, he said,

The problems of ethnicity started even before they came to the universities.

Before they arrived at the gate of the universities, students were already infected with negative attitudes about each other and that affects the willingness to communicate and mix with students from other regions. They have already been told that other ethnic groups are their enemies. So it makes it very hard for students from different ethnicities to become friends. They are not willing to live together, they are not willing to eat together, and they are not willing to share things together.

Both Abebech and Shafi highlighted the growing disparities and segregation among students from diverse backgrounds. They also blamed the ethnic federalism political discourse for the coercive relationship development among students. Instructor Shafi further elaborated how those tensions have resulted in ethnic conflicts throughout higher institutions. According to Shafi,

There are serious conflicts that have been created among the Oromos and the Tigre and Amhara students. There was a student who wore a shirt with derogatory Oromo term written on it in the campus. The Oromos were so angry and started hitting the non Oromo students. The fights escalated to a point where one student was killed and a lot were injured. There was a rumour that it was deliberately done. Now at the university, communication among students from different ethnic groups is difficult and they are always fighting.

Shafi's expression was very troubling as the growing negativities among students were making them intolerant of each other. Furthermore, instructor Shafi feared that the ongoing interethnic tensions and conflicts would result in unprecedented internal social crisis. He elaborated that the raising tensions and conflicts among the diverse peoples in Ethiopia posed a threat for the wellbeing of the country as a nation. When asked to comment further, he said that,

the day to day relationship between the country's ethnic groups is becoming very bad ... The ethnic centered government education policy created division to control the people easily. The use of mother tongue has segregated this generation so that they could not communicate properly. Students do not know each other; they do not share with each other. Ethnic based preferential opportunities are seriously creating division among people. Even in the same ethnic groups, there is special treatment for specific clans and locales.

Shafi's expression highlighted the intensity of fears and anxieties generated from internal social crisis. From his depictions, it was clear that students hardly integrate and willing to live together.

Participants in this study repeatedly expressed how the government of Ethiopia has misused ethnic identities to easily manage and control people. To that end, instructor Alemayehu noted that students have reflected the beliefs and value system of their communities. For

Alemayehu, the negative relationships among students signified serious issues within the larger society. Similar to the other instructors, Alemayehu also believed that most of the students arrived at their universities having already developed negative attitudes and perceptions towards one another. According to Alemayehu, tensions, conflicts and social unrest among the diverse Ethiopian peoples was due to the “exaggerated and over emphasized use of ethnicity by the leading groups.” When asked to elaborate further, he said that,

I worry very much about the extent that ethnicity is misused in Ethiopia. For instance, if one day, the government collapses, then I don’t feel secure. I feel as if that somebody will come and execute me. I am scared that genocide can occur in Ethiopia. If a government collapses as it happened during the fall of the previous regime in 1991, serious bloodshed can happen among the multiple ethnic groups in our country.

When prompted to explain what solutions he envisioned could alleviate ethnic tensions in Ethiopia, Alemayehu replied,

I have spoken with very close colleagues and friends but we can’t propose the solution to our leaders because we could be targeted ... We worry privately about the future of our country. We have lost our passion and interest to develop proposals that would bridge the divide between students of different ethnicities. With respect to the Ethiopian ethnic federalism, it is a mistaken form of federalism. Politicians misunderstood it in the first place when they made it into a policy. They didn’t analyze its consequences. The outcome of ethnic federalism is scary. It is like hidden explosive, a time bomb ready to explode one day and destroy all of us. As a professional, individual and instructor, I wish the

government could revise this policy before it is too late. The current ethnic federalism system should be changed.

Participants explained the result of ethnic federalism states that has created a decline in the country's social cohesion. They explained ethnic rivalries and tensions, the violence and potential for violence, and their fear and anxiety. Participants described how the ethnic federalism arrangement affected them at their institutions as they explained the sensitive and explosive racial tension among students at higher institutions.

The Rise of 'Narrow Nationalism'

Another major theme that emerged from data collected revealed that the ethnicization of Ethiopian education system in the last two decades had produced 'narrow minded' students. Instructor Zerihun expressed their feelings that higher education students are trapped with negative ethnocentric views that limited their worldviews. According to Zerihun,

National feelings are disappearing from all levels. The impact of ethnic federalism has developed a form of 'narrow nationalism' which is a fact. People are very loyal to their ethnicity only. This stage in our country is frightening to the extent that this narrow nationalism is heading towards the creation of serious social unrest and ultimately civil war... Things like killing, ethnic cleansing, burning houses and kicking people from their places have become common nowadays. If I happened to be from different ethnic group in some parts of the country, I am running the risks of getting robbed, kicked out of the place or even killed. Today, the atmosphere is scary to that extent and people are living in devastating fear.

When asked to elaborate 'narrow nationalism' Zerihun said that,

In the past, university students were expected to create new ideas and improve their societies. Now, most of the current generations only worry about themselves.

We are producing very self-centered individuals. During the Emperor's time, movements of students were related to social justice, resource distribution, and land for the farmers. The struggles were about major issues that impacted the bigger society as a whole. During the Derg time also, issues raised by university students were much bigger issues. Students unions were strong and they cared for the society. Today, students at Ethiopian universities are primarily focused on ethnic identities. Their issues are very narrow and hover around ethnic issues only.

He further pointed out that how the 'narrow nationalism' mentality contributed to the dismissal of a professor in one of the Southern Universities. According to Zerihun the issues related to ethnicity made difficult for professors and students to openly discuss controversial issues.

One of my friends, a history instructor, was forced to resign from his post simply because there were 'offensive' terms for the Oromo ethnic group in the reference book he recommended. The term was used when Italy attempted to control Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea in the early 1930s. The Italians used the term (--) [purposely omitted], which is now derogatory and offensive, to signify the Oromia regions and Oromo people. Students from Oromo ethnicity complained about the use of this term, threatened him and finally he had to resign. What is interesting here was that the instructor himself is an Oromo person.

In the last two decades, ethnic identities have become central in the Ethiopian social, political and educational policies. Participants were asked to explain how their identities have been shaped and their preferences from national and ethnic identities. An overwhelming number of students revealed that they preferred their ethnic identities prior to their national identities. Student Taddesse noted that, "I prefer my ethnic identity and I am proud of my origin, my

culture and my language.” He further elaborated that he is an Ethiopian but that his ethnic identity is very important and he prefers to be with people of similar ethnic identities. Similar to this, student Tesfa indicated that “I am for my ethnic identity first and then the national one. It is very important for me. First, I am a Welayita person and second I am an Ethiopian person. But I like my Welayita identity better.” Instructor participants also repeatedly described how students, teachers and the general communities have preferred to be affiliated with their ethnic identities. According to instructor Yeshe,

students are very limited in their thinking and it is very hard for them to go beyond their ethnic grouping and mingle with people from different ethnic groups. They do not want to settle in different geographical settings besides their own. Directly or indirectly, the ethnic federalism policy of Ethiopia has limited people’s mobilization. For instance, if you go to different regions and do not know the regional language, you can’t work. An Amhara has to go to the Amhara region or a Tigre has to work in the Tigray region. In previous times, an individual could work in any place in Ethiopia regardless of their ethnic origin. The federalism forces you to remain in your region. Nowadays, movement across regions is very rare. In addition, the feelings across ethnic groups are polarized and negative. I personally think that it is better to minimize these negative feelings, as there are very bad experiences. These factors also affect unity of the nation.

Therefore, she described how the ethnic federalism policy and practices have reduced cross-cultural integration across the Ethiopian regions and affected national unity.

Further, instructor Kassahun described how the ethnic centered political approach has impacted Ethiopian nationality. According to Kassahun, “when it comes to ethnicity, division and difference based on language, region and religion we have gone backward in disintegrating

ourselves based on ethnicity, tribes and clan. You will be made feel the ‘other’ in your own country just because you happen to be from a different ethnic background.” When asked to elaborate further, he stated that,

The Ethiopian sentimentality has been eroded and replaced by the notion of ethnicity in the country. The knowledge of Ethiopia as a nation has been hidden from the public for the last twenty years whether from the media or in the education system. Everyone was made to focus on province and ethnic identity rather than Ethiopianism.

From Kassahun’s expression, it is evident to see how the discourse of ethnic federalism has repealed the national identity with ethnic identity. For instructor Mensur, “The current ethnic based ruling system is creating confusion after confusion and crisis after crisis in the country.” Instructor Mensur described the transitions in government that existed, as well as the social problems that coincided these.

The discourse of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia has been creating ethnocentric individuals and homogenous group dynamics among students at higher institutions. As most of the respondent indicated, most of them preferred to be identified with their ethnicities. In promoting and encouraging regional affiliations, language use and knowledge construction, the government has failed to simultaneously allow the promotion or creation of a national identity, pride or cohesion. The discourse of ethnic empowerment in which people are proud of their ethnic identities has been great; however, it is being misused to perpetuate divisions in society. Therefore, different ethnic groups feel little to no allegiance with each other and instead feel resentment and hatred for the groups that have or are oppressing them, especially when they are not in their own ethnic region.

Participants revealed that subsequent to the introduction of ethnic federalism policy in the Ethiopian context, the previous national identity feeling has been slowly diminished and replaced with ethnic identities. They indicated that TPLF's negative ethnocentrism replaced the notion of Ethiopian-ism. Participant disclosed that the national sentiments following the arrival of the current government has been replaced by ethnic identities and the sense of Ethiopian national feelings have been successfully repealed from the public sphere. As a result, students at higher institutions prefer to be identified with their specific ethnic location rather than their national identities. Instructor Shafi stated, "students in our universities prefer to be identified in their ethnic groups primarily. The Oromo would prefer to be called Oromo rather than Ethiopian; the Tigre would prefer to be called Tigre rather than Ethiopian; the Adere would prefer to be called Adere rather than Ethiopian." Therefore, Shafi's expression reflected the dominance of ethnic identities that has existed among higher education students in Ethiopia.

The Implications of Conflict

The final main theme that arose from the data collected on the implications of multiculturalism on interethnic relations was the implications of the conflict. Many participants explained that the ruling party of Ethiopia was the major mastermind of ethnic conflicts among the Ethiopian peoples. According to respondents, the government has instigated social unrest among the diverse ethnic groups in multiple forms in order to sustain its power deliberately. An overwhelming numbers of participants implicated the Ethiopian ruling party, TPLF, in various ethnic conflicts in the country since occupying power.

Instructor Alemayehu indicated that the existing ethnic chauvinism in Ethiopia might have a prolonged impact in the coming generations. When asked to explain further, he explained that the government had a huge role in instigating hate and tension among ethnic groups at the societal level. He described how the government's political alliances and power retention were

prioritized over peace in the Ethiopian society and that this would last for generations.

Alemayehu further suggested that students could learn to appreciate how conflicts and disagreements could be resolved in multicultural environments without resorting to violence. He explained that highlighting negative relationships throughout time only reemphasized the differences and made conflict resolution even more difficult.

Participants expressed their concerns regarding the negative relationships among the diverse ethnic groups in Ethiopia. They feared that the ethnic federalism that restructured Ethiopia could lead to unprecedented social unrests. Instructor Alemayehu indicated that, “we have crisis at our hand.” When asked to explain further, he said “the ethnic conflict leaves the country in a dangerous condition. Our future is in danger with respect to ethnic tension in the country.”

Participants in this study recognized the importance of preserving local languages and cultural heritages. They also noted that ethnic differences should not be exploited and misused to gain political advantages. For instructor Mensur, the rising ethnic conflicts were mainly due to the exploitation of ethnic identities. He underlined that the eruption of interethnic conflicts in different parts of Ethiopia was attributed to the ethnic federalism policy. He described his thoughts as, “from the beginning I never thought the ethnic federalism policy in Ethiopia has ever worked for the people. Rather, it created a divided society. Everyone is leading a fearful life honestly speaking.” He further indicated that,

After this government came to power, ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia have become worse. The conflicts are spreading further among clans. Ethnic conflicts are dividing clans and tribes in the southern part of the country. For example, in the Southern part of Ethiopia, the Sidama ethnic group has 18 clans, the Welayta ethnic group has 120 clans and the Kafa has even more clans. So the conflicts among these sub-groups are becoming very scary. Everyday new things come to

create more divisions. For example, since last month the same ethnic families in Borona and Guji area have been fighting due to the change of the capital city's name. These people have lived for a very long time as one family but now they are fighting and a lot of people are dying daily.

Mensur's expressions highlighted the growing rifts among different ethnic groups in Ethiopia. He also believed that the spread of negative ethnicity enabled the government to easily control the people.

In addition, participants have discussed the conflict between government forces and the society at large. In particular, they explained the excessive force used by the Ethiopian federal police to deal with protesting students. They also explained how the federal army force was often deployed to universities to restore order. They recounted how the federal army was involved in stopping protests and had violently beaten students and instructors indiscriminately. According to instructor Mola, "when there is a conflict or some problems in the university, the federal police comes and physically stops the conflict. It is scary and everyone runs." When he was asked to comment further, she said that,

There were serious conflicts among students from the Oromo, Amhara and Tigre in the television room that led to a fight where people fought in line with their ethnicity. The Oromo students were hitting others with metal, wood and chairs. I was very scared. Then the federal police came at night and a lot of students were beaten. They broke the dormitory doors, they hit everyone and they arrested students.

Student participants also noted that the federal police violated their rights and suppressed them with force. Instructor Mola indicated that he developed fears and anxieties towards the federal police. According to Mola, "I am always stressed and afraid of the federal police. There are a lot

of students in prison and no one knows where most of them go once the federal police captured them.” Student Jote also indicated his negative attitude towards the federal army police after they broke his arm during a protest. He recounted that Oromo students protested against the Ethiopian government’s proposed plan to expand Addis Ababa that incorporates Oromia regions. Oromo students in different parts of Ethiopian universities protested against this plan. Jote explained that,

I used to think the government was good. But now I know that it does not protect me. The federal police came and beat us for protesting in our campus. They broke my left arm but thank God I am fine now. This happened because we protested against the government plan to take over the farmers’ land in Finfine [near Addis Ababa, the capital city] areas. The federal police killed many Oromo students because of these questions. Now when I see federal police, I am scared.

When asked about the roles of teachers in mitigating and calming violent situations among students, Jote explained that teachers were the first to leave the campus. According to Jote, “If there is disturbance in the university, the teachers go out immediately. This is because the federal police hit everyone, including the teachers.” In agreement with students, instructors also confirmed that they leave their universities whenever strikes or protest happened. Instructor Shafi indicated that, “When there were clashes related to any form of ethnicity, I never participated or tried to mediate among students. Immediately, I left the compound and the federal police came and dealt with the students.” When asked why teachers leave their universities, instructor Shafi said that, “Because conflicts among students are out of teachers’ and administrators’ control. Teachers are not involved to solve student conflicts.” Shafi’s expression underlined the challenging circumstances educators and students encounter at the time of crisis.

He also noted how much educators have become disempowered and unable to solve the conflicts within their institutions.

The participants revealed the impact of multiculturalism on interethnic relationships and highlighted the declining social cohesion, the rise of ‘narrow nationalism’ and the implications of conflict. They feared that these conflicts are becoming generational and the divisions within society are widening, making it very difficult for reconciliation and unity among them. They explained the political influence as well as the use of force to maintain the divisions and repress students and others from expressing their ideas.

Discussion on the Impact of Multiculturalism in Interethnic Relationships

Within a multicultural society, positive interethnic relationship can play a vital role in fostering a cohesive society. Participants in this study highlighted the deteriorating interethnic relations following the multicultural discourse in the Ethiopian context. The themes that arose from the data were consistent with critical literature on the negative consequences of interethnic relationships. Therefore, this discussion centers around the proliferation of negative ethnicity and the path to genocide.

The Proliferation of Negative Ethnicity and Resulting Consequences

Negative ethnicity has been described as ‘ethnic hate and bias’ that evolves from bias to conflict and often into genocide over time (Wa Wamwere, 2003). It can provide a false sense of superiority of the ‘self’ vis-à-vis the ‘others’ and it can perpetuate the discourse of self-righteousness as, “only we are perfect, those who are different from us culturally and linguistically are less human than we are. They are our enemies and we are entitled to enslave, exploit and destroy them if they resist” (Wa Wamwere, 2003, p. 44). Therefore the discourse of negative ethnicity has perpetuated and justified ethnic cleansing, killing and extermination of

people based on their identities. Participants in this study voiced their concerns regarding the raising of interethnic tensions and conflicts in Ethiopia. They stated that social markers such as racial, ethnic and linguistic identities should not be exploited and misused for political purposes. According to Wa Wamwere (2003),

Africa, which has no nuclear bombs and never suffered a nuclear attack, has created its own weapon of mass destruction, one more powerful than the atomic, hydrogen, or neutron bombs: negative ethnicity. With it, Africa has killed and continues to kill millions of its own men, women, and children.” (pp. 11-12).

Therefore, it is imperative to understand how certain policies have been misused to instigate interethnic conflicts and address them. Student Bedilu noted, “Today we have failed to think and focus on our humanity. Everyone is more concerned about race and ethnic grouping” indicating the hyper focus given to ethnic identities in the Ethiopian context. Participants also blamed the Ethiopian ethnic federalism policy for the proliferation of ethnic conflicts in the country. Instructor Zerihun pointed out that after the inception of ethnic federalism, Ethiopia has experienced multiple social crises due to interethnic disputes. According to Zerihun “restructuring Ethiopia on ethnic differences produced more conflicts among the peoples of Ethiopia.” Instructor Kassahun also expressed his concerns about the rising tensions among Ethiopian peoples. Kassahun stated that interethnic violence in Ethiopia could drive the country in unprecedented directions. Furthermore, instructor Alemayehu stated how students at higher levels and in the wider society were entrenched with ‘local base’ thinking and ‘narrow nationalism’. Alemayehu noted that, “local base thinking is deeply rooted in the ethnic federalism policy of Ethiopia and negatively affecting the traditions of togetherness.” He explained that subsequent to the ethnic federalism reform, ‘narrow nationalism’ ideologies have dominated Ethiopia’s social, political, and educational policies and threatened to breakup the

country. Abbink⁷ (2007) has also reminded us interethnic clashes and conflicts in Ethiopia in the last two decades have consumed the lives of tens of thousands of men, women and children. Further, these conflicts have forcefully dislocated more than half a million people from their homes.

Division has been a common theme for maintaining control and involves violence and dehumanization. Within the context of colonization and ‘divide and rule’, Fanon (1967) has explained the process of ‘depersonalization’ which involves the culture of repression, removal, distortion of indigenous peoples’ history and their worldviews, where there are misconstrued images and misrepresentations of the colonized bodies (Fanon, 1963; Freire, 1970; Wane 2005). The discourse of colonization has based its root in the ‘divide and rule’ strategic framework that dismantles a unified society in order to avoid organized resistance. It has focused on dividing people based on various features like color, race, ethnicity, physical appearances and other characteristics. The legacy of colonization has never cleaned itself out of African continent and it has been embedded and reincarnated in the social, cultural, political, and educational structures (Dei, 1996; Wane, Manyimo, & Ritskes, 2011).

Specifically, in Ethiopia, participants noted that the Ethiopian ruling party used the ethnic federalism policy to ‘divide and rule’ the diverse people of Ethiopia. They indicated that this process incensed ethnic rifts. Instructor Abebech indicated that restructuring Ethiopia on ethnic differences resulted in various forms of tensions, feuds and rifts among the diverse people. She

⁷ Abbink (2007) has written specifically about the ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. According to Abbink (2007), between 1991-2006, ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia killed more than 3000 and displaced nearly 75, 000 people from their residences. This caused property damage worth millions of dollars, and houses were burned, businesses were confiscated and people were robbed by the perpetrators. In most of these conflicts the Amhara people were predominantly the targets of multiple forms of abuse, torture and killing.

noted that restructuring of boundaries gave birth to new forms of social unrest. According to Abebech,

Federalism by its nature is a healthy governing political approach. It allows power to be distributed between the central and provincial governments. But Ethiopia's ethnic federalism governing policy is authoritarian. It is manipulated by TPLF cadres to gain advantages over the rest of the Ethiopian people by implementing the divide and rule tactic.

Therefore, it could be deduced that the contemporary social unrest and ethnic conflicts that have erupted in different parts of the country predominantly stemmed from TPLF's ethnocentric governing system.

Instructor Mola warned that misusing ethnic identities for political purpose could destabilize Ethiopia in the long run. He expressed his concerns regarding the ethnic federalism policy as a "dangerous recipe for disaster waiting to happen." When asked to comment further, he said that the interethnic violence has been intermittently breaking out in different parts of Ethiopia and could trigger mass social crisis. In addition, instructor Alemayehu warned that unless the government of Ethiopia reassessed its ethnocentric policies, the eruption of disastrous ethnic violence in the country would be inevitable. Similarly, instructor Kassahun expressed his fear and anxiety regarding the ongoing ethnic tensions and clashes in Ethiopia. He pointed out that in different parts of Ethiopia ethnic conflicts had become rampant and had cost the lives of tens of thousands of people. Therefore, participants explained the damaging impacts of interethnic conflicts on the country's social dynamics.

Data collected revealed the conflicts attributed to negative ethnicity among students at higher institutions in Ethiopia have become a common phenomenon to witness. Respondents explained that relationships and tolerance among students from different ethnic origins at higher

institutions have considerably deteriorated. For instance, instructor Bekuma indicated that in the last ten years, more than dozens of conflicts in universities were triggered due to ethnicity which forced temporary university closures. Student participants also explained that they experienced high levels of stress and anxiety due to the ethnic tensions at their universities. In addition, student Tadesse stated that interethnic tensions and conflicts among students had affected their wellbeing and performances negatively.

University life for many students represented what was happening in the country. For Fitsum, conflicts in university had symbolized conflicts in Ethiopia as students from various regions within the country were forced to interact even in atmospheres of increasing tension between ethnicities. According to Fitsum,

Our university is just like a little Ethiopia. We all came from different areas and different cultures, so the university itself is a replica of our society. The conflicts between you and I [referring to me as fellow student] for example will reach the rest of the students and slowly increase and make many damages.

Wa Wamwere (2003) has explained that ethnic conflicts spread rapidly among people and cause vast damage on human life and resources.

Participants noted that conflicts among students have emerged due to negative and polarized relationships. Student Eshetu stated that ethnicity triggered conflicts at the universities and have resulted in life threatening injuries and damages to personal and public properties at their university campuses. Eshetu also recalled an incident between a student from Oromia region and another student from SNNP region in which their interaction with each other had forced their university to shutdown for days. Similarly, student Eyasu stated that conflicts attributed to ethnicities among university students were rising and becoming dangerous. He noted that tolerance levels among students from different ethnic backgrounds were fading away. Student

Eyasu further explained that in his university clashes between an Oromo and Amhara students caused disastrous damages among students from both ethnic groups. According to Eyasu, “There was a huge fight between two individuals, an Oromo and an Amhara. The fight spread throughout the campus quickly. It was very bad fight and students from Oromia started chanting and screaming for non-Oromo students to get out of the campus and go back to their places.” Participants revealed the rising tension, intolerance and lack of harmony among students from different ethnic backgrounds. Within this particular situation, the Oromo students felt ‘at home’ since the university is located in Oromia region and they were telling students who were non-Oromo and therefore considered ‘others’ to go back to their regions. The process of creating the ‘other’ in a given social structure has been primarily to create a hierarchical society where the ‘others’ become the target for various forms exploitation, discrimination and violence.

Participants further elaborated their concerns, fears and anxieties of the rising interethnic tensions and conflicts among the students and the larger society in Ethiopia. Instructor Alemayehu feared that the intermittent ethnic clashes in different parts of the country would grow to a larger scale and create endless social crisis in Ethiopia if the current trends are not properly addressed. Alemayehu expressed his worries as, “we are approaching a serious crisis. People have categorized themselves with language and geographical settlement. The division of students in the country is one of the biggest problems that I personally worry about.” Thus, the prevalence of ethnic related conflicts and social unrest at higher institutions and in various parts of the country was threatening the wellbeing of the Ethiopian society.

Path to Genocide

The constitution of Ethiopia states that restructuring the country based on ethnicity will foster peaceful coexistence among its peoples. However, participants indicated that after the restructuring process, interethnic conflicts have escalated in various provinces. Instructor

Alemayehu expressed his distresses concerning the constant eruption of interethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. He warned that interethnic conflicts could cause irrecoverable damages to human lives and resources in Ethiopia if not managed soon. According to Alemayehu, “if the government’s divisive approach does not change, Ethiopia could slip into chaos and genocide could occur in Ethiopia.”⁸ Similarly, instructor Yeshe predicted that if conflicts among ethnic groups were not resolved, Ethiopia might face the fate of neighboring countries like Sudan, Somalia and even worse Rwanda. Wa Wamwere (2003) wrote about the Rwandan genocide that consumed the lives of million Hutus and Tutsis’ in a three-month time period. He stated that the main cause of that heinous crime against humanity emanated from ethnic bias, chauvinism and negative ethnicity.

A core aim of all genocide in Africa is to eliminate political oppositions.

Political enemies should be identified by their political beliefs and expressions, but the code of negative ethnicity demands that they be identified by their ethnic origins. When whole communities are identified with political opposition, there is no distinction between political and ethnic enemies. When political guilt is determined by negative ethnicity, the oppressor does not bother to ask victims what their political beliefs are. As long as you belong to the targeted ethnic community, you are potentially guilty, even if you are still in the wombs. (Wa Wamwere, 2003, pps.154-155)

⁸ A report by Genocide Watch in 2012 warned that the interethnic clashes in Ethiopia could trigger massive social unrest and lead the country into a genocide stage. The organization argued that early signs of genocide in Ethiopia have been spotted in different parts of the country. As a result Ethiopia’s current condition is categorized under ‘genocide alert’. Some of the signs of genocide alerts that have been practiced in the last two decades are: forceful dislocation of people, preferential treatments denial of human rights, ethnic cleansing and mass murders. In line with this, in 2003 more than 400 Agnuak people were massacred in the Gambella region by the Ethiopian army. Reports show that between 2003-2012, more than 75,000 Agnuak people were displaced from their lands under the ‘Villegization’ program the Ethiopian government enforced. This ‘land grabbing’ program was primarily intended to sell the land to the Indian and Chinese investors.

Therefore, he has explained that it is imperative to understand the negative trajectories of ethnic conflicts and address it before it is too late. In addition, Gregory Stanton (2004) has argued that warning signs of genocide should be dealt during their early stages before they cause atrocities and mass casualties. He has explained the eight major stages that lead to genocide and crime against humanity, which are classification, symbolization, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, extermination and denial (Stanton, 2004, p. 211). He further explained that the stages are not mutually exclusive but rather that they function interdependently and can occur simultaneously or hierarchically. He stressed that there can be preventative measures taken during the stages in order to stop human tragedies. In looking at the interethnic relations in Ethiopia as described by participants and scholars, it is evident that the country has already entered into many of these stages on the path to genocide.

Stanton (2004) described the first stage, classification, as the process of categorizing people using ‘us’ versus ‘them’ in a dichotomized manner based on ethnicity, religion, race or nationalism. In order to avoid this social categorization, it would be important to find common ground and avert social catastrophes such as genocide. In using an example, Stanton (2004) explained that prior to the Rwandan genocide, the Hutu extremists campaigned aggressively to create the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ disparities between the Hutus and Tutsi people. In the Ethiopian situation, following the ethnic federalism policy, the country has been classified along ethnic and linguistic differences increasing the formation of ‘otherness’⁹ in the social and political order.

⁹ According to Kafale (2013), “ethnic federalism in Ethiopia, by placing ‘sovereignty’ over the ethnic groups, introduced a new system of entitlement. Accordingly, those who live in their designated ethnic homeland became titular, whereas those who for different reasons, find themselves out of their designated ethnic home land became non-titular” (p. 4).

Participants noted that the ethnic federalism policy aggressively implemented by TPLF government was playing a major role in disintegrating the interdependence and kinship ties that had been developing in the Ethiopian society over many generations. Most of them noted that subsequent to the ethnic federalism policy the notion of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ narratives in the entire nation fostered otherness based on ethnic identities. Scholars have noted that “today there are both peaceful and, at times, violent contestations over ethnic identity. In several regions, ethnic activists, who could be named ethnic entrepreneurs, mobilize their constituencies to secure state recognition of their separate ideology” (Kafale, 2013, p. 3). In this regard, instructor Alemayehu argued that Ethiopia’s multiculturalism policy classified people based on ethnic and linguistic differences. He explained that the practical outcome of multicultural policies in Ethiopia created divided societies. According to Alemayehu, “I think the multicultural policy that is orchestrated by the Ethiopian government is slowly damaging the country. It is creating division among people based on ethnicity, I fear that one day, people will start shooting each other and killing each other just because they do not belong to the same ethnic group.” Thus, it is evident that the existing multiculturalism in Ethiopia has created the proliferation of interethnic conflicts in various parts of the country and these warning sign need to be addressed to avert a foreseeable social catastrophe.

Stanton (2004) revealed that the classification process enabled certain individuals or groups access to preferential treatment based on their ethnic identities. As such, participants indicated that Ethiopian ethnic centered system has provided preferential treatment based on ethnic identities and political affiliations. Meron elaborated how preferential treatment at Ethiopian higher institutions was causing major grievances among people as, “When we look at the constitution, it says Ethiopia is a house of multicultural societies. The federal constitution indicates as an Ethiopian you have the right to live and work in any part of the country. But

where I teach, the person who is in charge must be affiliated with the political ruling party and ethnically from the area.”

Therefore, preferential treatment based on social markers has the potential to intensify social strife and conflicts, and in order to prevent conceivable social unrests and ethnic conflicts, treatment based on ethnic identities and political affiliations should be addressed.

In addition to classification, symbolization has been another main stage on the path to genocide. Stanton (2004) has indicated that in symbolization, people who are classified based on their ethnic or religious locations would be given certain identification cards. This practice was used in the Rwandan genocide, and participants noted that within recent years, the Ethiopian government issued new ID cards with the requirement of ethnic identities. According to instructor Zerihun, the government of Ethiopia has started enforcing that people identify their ethnic origins on their ID cards. When asked to comment further, he said, “For instance, it is mandatory for everyone to include ethnicity on ID cards. This has never been the case in Ethiopia... The local representatives won’t issue you your ID unless you say I’m from this ethnic group.” Thus, this move by the government could be seen as another form of categorizing the Ethiopian people along ethnic lines.

The third stage described was dehumanization, which involves the intention of inflicting maximum distortion and damage to the target groups. Stanton (2004) has argued that the dehumanization stage provides “ideological justification to the genocidaires, who claim they are purifying the society. It overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder. If the other group is not human, then killing them is not murder” (p. 4). Data also revealed that ethnic conflicts in different parts of Ethiopia have dehumanized peoples and exposed them for multiple forms of abuse and torture. For instance, instructor Zerihun recounted the murders of the Guraghe ethnic group in the Gedeo Zone, the torture and killing of the Amhara ethnic group in

Oromia, Beneshangu-gumuz and the protracted conflicts between the Gijji and Burji peoples in the southern parts of Ethiopia.¹⁰ Participants also explained that university professors and students have experienced harsh treatment from the ruling party. Instructor Kassahun explained how the federal government police terrorized students on various occasions. Kassahun noted that,

In all of my time here, I have never seen university compounds invaded by military armies or police forces until now. Universities and schools used to be very special, respected and safe places. But now, when students raise any issue, the federal police break into the campuses and beat students like snakes.

Students who ask questions or participate in different activities are become the main targets. If they are arrested, then they will have a very hard time returning to school.

His explanation showed the extra judicial action taken by the federal army to brutally silence student protests against the injustices they face. In this regard, Freire (1970) has explained the notion of dehumanization,

which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a *distortion* of the vocation of becoming more fully human ...it is a result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn, dehumanizes the oppressed. (p. 44)

¹⁰ According to the Nazret news report, a well-coordinated support with extremist loyalist to the TPLF/EPRDF regime incited conflict in Arba Gugu, Hararghe area against the Amhara ethnic group. The houses of Amhara were burned with people inside, people were killed thrown over the cliff, people of hacked to death in broad day light, robbed, bodies mutilated by regime supporters ... Ethnic cleansing was conducted at a unprecedented scale. In 2012, the poor farmers of the Amhara ethnic group from the southern part of Ethiopia were expelled. People were made homeless; similarly, in 2013 the Amhara ethnic group from Benishangul-Gumuz area were forceful evicted. (<http://nazret.com/blog/index.php/ethiopia-tpIf-eprdf-nefarious-deeds-that-will-blow-your-mind-ethnic-cleansing?blog=15>)

Thus, it is critical to understand the damaging impact of dehumanization process on the target groups and provide protective mechanisms before further damages.

According to Stanton (2004), organization has followed dehumanization in the genocide stages. Using the example of the Rwandan genocide in which preplanning and organizations were held in secrete for a very long period of time and secret militias were organized, Stanton (2004) argued that any genocide, atrocities and mass murders require organization of various people. Similar to the organization that Stanton (2004) described, participants in this study warned that the categorization of people based on ethnic identities could have negative ramifications. Abebech noted that in her university, students were organized in ethnic groups and fought with one another. According to Kefale (2013) interethnic conflicts in Ethiopia have been transformed into boundary conflicts following the ethnic federalism policy.

The following stage described by Stanton (2004) was polarization, the process of showing certain groups as ‘others’. Stanton (2004) has noted that hate propaganda has emphasized the “us versus them” nature of the situation and “if you are not with us, you are against us” (Stanton, 2004, p. 215). The discourse of labeling the target groups as the ‘others’ has enabled perpetrators to justify their violent actions and the heinous crimes they commit. The languages, names and signifiers that have been used to represent target individuals, communities, and demographic groups play a central role in polarizing and justifying ethnic chauvinism.

Within the Ethiopian context, the last two decades of campaigns of polarization for targeted ethnic groups have been taking place and exposing them for multitude mistreatments. For instance, since the current government has assumed power, the constant demonization and portrayals of the Amhara population as ‘neftegnas’ (referring to someone with weapon) and the Oromos as ‘Tebabs’ (meaning extremists) have dominated the public discourse.

The last three stages described on the path to genocide are preparation, extermination and

denial. Preparation has involved engagement in small scale and sporadic ethnic cleansing signaling the upcoming of a larger magnitude of genocide (Stanton, 2004). Stanton explained that prior to the Rwandan genocide, multiple ethnic conflicts consumed hundreds of lives and if action had occurred during the earlier stages of conflict and killing, the mass genocide could have been averted.

In Ethiopia, participants explained how the ethnic federalism policies embraced by TPLF have greatly enabled the proliferations of ethnic chauvinism and ethnic cleansing in different parts of Ethiopia. According to Eshetu, in the last two decades in Ethiopia, the ‘unwanted’ ethnic groups have been cleansed from various parts of the country.¹¹

Extermination refers to the mass killings, massacring and wiping out of the target ethnic group under the pretext of an ethnic purification ideology. Perpetrators who have been engaged in the activity of exterminating the ‘others’ believe that “ they are “purifying” their society, by “exterminating” those who are less than human and are a threat to them” (Stanton, 2004, p. 217). Thus, it is critical to realize the risk associated with ethnic cleansing and avert it before transforming into genocide.

There have been warning sign for extermination in Ethiopia as people are currently targeted due to their ethnic identities. Participants noted that in recent times, interethnic relationships in Ethiopia have deteriorated and conflicts attributed to ethnocentrism were costing the lives peoples. According to Eshetu (2012),

¹¹ Nazret, an Ethiopian independent news agency, reported that the ethnic cleansing of Amharas in the Western part of the country, as “The despicable and barbaric action of targeting, evicting and deporting ethnic Amharas from the Benishangul-Gumuz ethnic state 11 in western Ethiopia is a horrific crime and a crime against humanity. ...Amharas were beaten, violently dragged off their homes” (<http://nazret.com/blog/index.php/ethiopia-behind-the-ethnic-cleansing-in-benishangul-gumuz?blog=15>)

EPRDF intensified identity politics which eventually led to the balkanization of the country with counter-intuitive order called ‘ethnic federalism’ with constitutional provisions for tribal states to secede. It let ethno linguistic identity politics beyond their presumed role for communal solidarity. (p. 129)

Instructor Alemyahu also expressed his fear that unmanaged conflicts among groups could result in mass atrocities in Ethiopia.¹² Alemayehu noted that policies that divide people based on ethnic differences should be reconsidered carefully. He also pointed out that Ethiopia’s diverse cultural and linguistic heritages should not be misused for immediate political gains.

The final stage is denial, in which the crisis of the social situation is denied. The ruling party of Ethiopia has presented itself as a democratic, multiparty and stood for the rights and freedom of all ethnic groups. As a result, it has equivocally denied and rejected the existing ethnic conflicts, chauvinism, preferential treatment of groups based on ethnic identities. The denial of the existing social and interethnic problems in the country should be addressed. Unless one admits the presence of crisis, it becomes very hard to prescribe solutions.

Despite the fact that multiple reports and documents have shown the ethnic crisis in Ethiopia, the TPLF government has not admitted the existence of interethnic problems nor does it attempt to halt the ongoing atrocities. The government also has not provided rehabilitation assistance for victims, families, children and women who have been forcefully displaced from their residents due to their ethnic identities. According to Wa Wamwere (2003),

¹² Documentary reports by Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) have aired a horrific massacre by TPLF armies in the Gambella and Ogaden regions. People in Gambella are targeted due to the fact that the government of Ethiopia is displacing Agnuak native people from their ancestral lands under the pretext of ‘villagization’ and selling their lands to the domestic and outside investors. This process has resulted for the killings and dislocation of Agnuak people in Gambella region. In similar account, various documentaries and leaked videos have shown the brutal murders of people in the Ogaden region, Eastern part of Ethiopia. The gruesome video of massacred people in the region asserts that Ethiopia is at the brink of serious social unrest.

two types of silence make genocide possible. First is the silence of victims, which is engendered by the fear. Without human rights, speaking against ethnic oppression in itself is a risk; this silence permits genocide to unfold smoothly without resistance. Second, the of course, the silence of the African press which carry the favor of the perpetrators of genocide. (p.155)

Respondents in this study repeatedly noted that the TPLF armies systematically silenced victims of abuse and torture. The majority of target groups were too traumatized to express the injustices they encountered due to fear and anxiety of retribution. Various media outlets, humanitarian organizations and international organizations have accused the Ethiopian government for its repressive actions. For instance, reports from Amnesty and Human Rights Watch (2012) suggested that the Ethiopian government has been a very repressive regime and has used extreme force and brutality to silence its victims and maintain its dominance. Participants indicated that the government of Ethiopia has controlled the national media and limited freedom of expressions. According to instructor Zerihun, after 2005 the government of Ethiopia banned freedom of press and expression. As a result, privately owned press, journals, magazines, and newspapers have vanished. He also noted that journalists and activists were hunted and thrown to jails. For instance, a recent report from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has indicated that Ethiopia has become the second worst jailer for journalists in the world.¹³

Chapter Summary

This chapter addressed the impact of multiculturalism on interethnic relationships. The participants explored the declining social cohesion, the rise of ‘narrow nationalism’ and the

¹³ According to Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), (2014) “A state crackdown on independent publications and bloggers in Ethiopia this year more than doubled the number of journalists imprisoned to 17 from seven the previous year, and prompted several journalists to flee into exile, according to CPJ research.” <https://cpj.org/reports/2014/12/journalists-in-prison-china-is-worlds-worst-jailer.php>

implications of conflict. These findings integrated into literature on the proliferation of negative ethnicity and the consequences of this as well as the path to genocide. It was evident from the discussion that ethnic hate is being ingrained into the social fabric and also reinforced through the divisions at structural, institutional and political levels. In addition, participants had explained how most of the stages of the path to genocide were occurring in Ethiopia as they feared the worst outcome of a large-scale conflict and eventually genocide. These stages included classification, symbolization, dehumanization, organization, polarization, all which have been occurring, as well as preparation, extermination and then denial. The participants have all noted the ethnic divisions and frequent killings that have been occurring in various regions of the country, and also all recommended that there needs to be drastic changes to address the causes and implications of these problems.

Chapter Eight Conclusion

Summary of the Study

This study examined multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system. The use of multiculturalism in Ethiopian education is under-researched and there is a gap in literature on multicultural education in ethnically diverse developing countries like Ethiopia. This study provided a critical examination of how multiculturalism is conceptualized in higher education as well as its impact. Its aim is to improve practice, inform policy and serve as a valuable reference point to implement inclusive learning approaches in a multicultural education system.

The research questions sought to understand multiculturalism and its impact in the Ethiopian higher education context. The questions were: “How is multiculturalism conceptualized in the Ethiopian higher education system by students, instructors and curricular experts?” and “What is the impact of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian higher education system?”

The study was conducted in two universities in Ethiopia, one in Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ (SNNP) region and the other in the Oromia region, as they contain people from diverse social, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In order to examine how multiculturalism is conceptualized and what its impact is, my study implemented a critical qualitative research methodology, using critical multiculturalism and critical pedagogy as the theoretical frameworks to guide the study. Interviews were conducted with ten university instructors (five from each site), ten university students (five from each site) and three curricular experts (one from each site and the third from the capital city). In addition, to further explore the research area, government official document analysis was completed.

Major Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion of each of the research questions was addressed in separate chapters. The first research question was addressed in chapter five and discussed the conceptualizations of multiculturalism according to the participants. The second research question was addressed in two chapters, as both the impact on education and on interethnic relations were discussed in separate chapters. Chapter six revealed the impact of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system and chapter seven explained the impact of multiculturalism on interethnic relations. Each of these will be briefly summarized below.

The findings of the conceptualizations of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system showed that participants viewed it differently, but that it was an integral part of Ethiopian society where different ethnic groups and cultures lived together. Their conceptualizations included unity, division, difference and allegiance. The discussion addressed both the ranging definitions and the contradictory outcomes that were revealed in the participants' conceptualizations of multiculturalism.

It was evident that they understood the positive as well as negative aspects of multiculturalism, including its ideal potential and actual negative impacts in their context. They indicated that it empowered them to preserve their languages and cultural heritage. Conceptually, some participants expressed many liberal values of multiculturalism including celebration, recognition and accommodation. However, others also had a critical understanding in which they highlighted the power dynamics where ethnic identity based politics was creating a segregated and divided society. Participants revealed that diversity was seen as difference, which created a divided society based on ethnic identities where homogeneous groupings and affiliations were preferred over interethnic relations. Specifically, networking and socialization were predominantly centred around ethnic affiliations and there was limited cross cultural

communication and integration among students which negatively impacted the unity among them.

The findings for the second research question, “What is the impact of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian higher education system?” were divided into the impact on education and the impact on interethnic relations in separate chapters. In understanding the impact of multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system, the major themes that arose were mother tongue usage, quality of education, lack of leadership, lack of academic freedom and foreign policy. The discussion showed how the impact of politics on language use, the declining quality and policy transfer all greatly impacted the Ethiopian education system.

Data revealed that the Ethiopian multiculturalism mainly focused on the application of mother tongue language use. The decision to use mother tongue languages was politically motivated and not pedagogical, and teachers, students and stakeholders in the community were not involved in the decision making process. While many participants noted that this was a great policy for empowerment of local languages and for all students to access education, they also indicated that the challenges it brought impacted its application. The lack of consistent language policies, lack of educational resources, trained professionals, materials, etc., all made it very difficult to effectively implement it and in turn affected the quality of education. Some students learned in the local languages longer and others changed to English earlier giving these students an advantage in universities which is the medium of instruction. Quality of education also depended on how much each region was able to develop their resources, as some have been able to do this while others have not.

One of the major impacts on quality of education, in addition to the lack of resources, training, materials, etc., was the great increase in numbers of students due to external pressure to meet the political focus on quantity and number of students in schools as a result of international

obligations and funding. As Ethiopia is one of the main aid recipient country and the pressure to satisfy donor countries and agencies has forced government policies to focus on increasing number of enrollment. Furthermore, the quality was also impacted by the lack of leadership and training, political affiliations and lack of academic freedom. The quality in this context was also confronted with foreign policy adoption, so not only were there more students, less educator resources and leadership, but there was also more pressure to adopt new policies and practices that were not culturally or context relevant. Therefore, they have not been effective.

The final area revealed in the findings was the impact of multiculturalism on inter-ethnic relationships. The themes that the participants shared were the declining social cohesion, rise of ‘narrow nationalism’ and the implications of ethnic conflicts. Using both critical multiculturalism and critical pedagogy to understand these themes, the discussion addressed the proliferation of negative ethnicity and resulting consequences, as well as the path to genocide that are currently occurring.

Participants highlighted that multiculturalism in education has created more division and segregation in Ethiopian society instead of unifying the country; therefore, the intended objective of unification was not occurring. The focus on difference within diversity has pushed ethnicities further apart and made collaboration and integration more difficult as ethnicities prefer allegiances over cross-cultural relations. The application of multiculturalism has produced a more divided society and as a result some believe this trend is increasing ethnic conflict in Ethiopia. In the last 20 years, ethnic conflicts have increased and intensified, and resulted in deaths of tens of thousands of people.

The decline of social cohesion coupled with the escalation of ethnic conflicts has become a major concern for people in this study. Students, educators and the larger community have categorized themselves based on ethnic identities and not on a national one. Data showed that

the ethnicity centred political structure is creating negative ethnic relationships. The Ethiopian government which put the ethnic centred policies can be characterized as ethnocratic (Yiftachel, 2000). In addition, participants expressed worry over the warning signs that the ethnic tensions were producing and fear that it could lead them to a path to genocide. The data along with many INGO reports explain that the existing ethnic conflicts have the potential to create a massive social crisis if no intervention takes place. The participants also discussed the rising of 'narrow nationalism' in which negative ethnicity is a source of endless ethnic hate and conflicts. Most of them noted that the proliferation of ethnic conflicts has stemmed from the ethnic federalism restructuring of Ethiopia.

In addition, participants highlighted many of the stages of the path to genocide that have already been occurring in Ethiopia for some time, including classification, symbolization, dehumanization, organization, polarization and preparation. They have not fully engaged in extermination and denial. There have, however, been major ethnic cleansing patterns in various regions of the country (specifically to the Amharas and Oromos as discussed in chapter 7). The fear for many participants is a lived reality depending on where they are studying or teaching, and if it is in their ethnic region.

Implications of the Study and Further Research Areas

This study has provided a critical understanding of how some higher education students, instructors and curricular experts conceptualize multiculturalism and its impact on education and interethnic relations. The data collected can be used to improve practice and inform policy. The knowledge, experiences and understandings of the participants provide a very valuable insight into how multiculturalism is and could be used. There were limitations to the study, but it did produce very useful points of reference to conduct further research as well as many valuable recommendations.

This study produced many useful findings; however, it is important to recognize that there were limitations that impeded the study. The limitations as a researcher were the lack of time to conduct the study and the lack of funding for it, especially as a student who was balancing work and school. This study could have included a longitudinal study that spanned over a year to really address how multiculturalism is conceptualized and its impacts by a greater number of participants and in several more universities. There were many additional limitations, including the tense political atmosphere that was occurring during the timing of the interviews. There was an election in the near future, and the government had won the previous election with 100% of the vote. Consequently, there were many protests that were occurring and the students were on strike during the data collection. There were uprisings in the cities and near universities as well as protests, which in turn created conflicts between the government and students. In addition, the participants took a risk in sharing information that could be considered critical of the government or policies.

After conducting this study, it is evident that there are many other areas for future research. There should be additional research to understand the extent to which multiculturalism has a direct relationship with the increasing of ethnic conflict, as well as including a range of voices to understand how the increasing conflict and social divisions can begin to produce a healing relationship. This study also focused solely on higher education, while other research could include both primary and secondary education. Another area for future research is on the declining quality of education and the actual impact of the 23 mother tongue languages that are being applied. The study could analyze the effects of language switching between the local languages and English and the differences between regions and grade levels at which these changes occur. Further research on multiculturalism in Ethiopia needs to also include a

comparative study looking at countries that have successfully and unsuccessfully restored ethnic relationships and averted the path to genocide.

While there is a range of topics to further explore in terms of understanding and using multiculturalism in the Ethiopian education system, this study did produce many important and useful recommendations. As multiculturalism is integral in the society due to the multiple ethnic groups who live together and study together, it is essential that unity and diversity be included in education in positive and empowering ways that foster respect and inclusion. Multiculturalism should be understood as a wider social policy, in which it should be used by policy makers, curricular experts, and educators to create a platform for peaceful coexistence among people from diverse social political, economic, religious and ethnic groups. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education, administrators and educators should be aware of the problems with ethnic based preferential treatment, power dynamics, and critical multiculturalism.

In addition, the language policy needs to be carefully examined and considered as all the benefits and consequences are weighed. The fact that there is no clear nation-wide language policy has created unequal access to education and resources. Though the idea of using all ethnic languages as per the constitution for media of instruction and administrative purposes appears to be inclusive, its implementation has proven to be inconsistent, challenging and preferential for some ethnic groups. The government, policy makers, curricular experts and educators should be involved in a discussion that rethinks what the purpose and outcomes of a clear language policy would be that benefits the students. They may find that it is more useful to use two widely spoken languages like Amharic and Oromifa as the national languages in which they can concentrate their resources, training and materials in these languages.

Participants expressed that educators need to be empowered in education and that this would be possible by increasing their social and economic status, by providing academic

freedom and by separating education from politics or at least minimizing it. Education experts should have experience and knowledge in education, specifically in Ethiopian education, and not be experts due to political affiliations. In addition, there should be greater focus on the quality of education, resources, teachers, training, pedagogy, materials, etc., and not simply on the quantity of students. Furthermore, many participants highlighted that the education policies do not meet the Ethiopian context, therefore foreign policy adoptions should be carefully analyzed and made to align with the Ethiopian education system. Government, policy makers and curricular experts should ensure that policy borrowing is interrogated critically before applying it as policies that are effective in wealthier nations may not be contextually relevant, have the same implementation procedures and processes, or have access to similar resources, training and background knowledge.

Finally, participants also explained in great detail that conflicts need to be addressed, political affiliations and preferential treatment should stop and the schools and universities should remain education spaces and not political conflict spaces. They also explained that there needs to be a concentrated effort to end ethnic hatred between ethnicities in Ethiopia, and that there should be a strong dedication to ending ethnic based conflicts and massacres. Diversity should not be confused with difference and exploited. This is evident in the Ethiopian context as diversity is conceptualized as difference and creating divided society based on ethnic identities. Social cohesion among the diverse people of Ethiopia will help create a sustainable and peaceful future. The government of Ethiopia needs to rethink its current divisive approach to managing diversity in order to avert the rising ethnic conflicts and unrest. It will have difficult but critical decisions to make if it is to create and foster social cohesion and the benefits of its diverse society. One way to do this would be to move toward citizen based politics and away from

ethnocentric politics. National identity and pride should be embraced and celebrated as well as individual citizen backgrounds, ethnicities and diversity.

These recommendations show that there are many possibilities that multiculturalism can create; however, there needs to be immediate and large scale changes to address the negative impacts that it has had on the Ethiopian society within its context and educational framework. Education can provide people with the means to live better lives as well as further develop the country. It is my belief that Ethiopia has so many untapped resources and potential within its diversity but the country needs to move beyond the divisive and antagonizing politics in order to access them. Therefore, I strongly hope that these recommendations are taken with full consideration.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Invitation Letter

Hello,

My name is Fisseha Belay. I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Toronto in the Curriculum and Teacher Development Studies department. I am conducting a research study as a part of a requirement for my doctoral degree and I would like to invite you to participate in this project.

The main purpose of this study is to understand the impact of multiculturalism policies in the Ethiopian public education system. I am recruiting a sample of 12 instructors, 10 university students and 3 curricular experts. The criteria for inclusions are: (a) Participants should be in the social science department i.e. (History, Anthropology, Language and Cultural Studies and/or Political Science) and (b) Participants should be from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds. This study will explore the importance of multicultural education and the use of mother tongue languages in improving inclusive education and peaceful coexistence among the diverse ethnic groups in Ethiopia.

If you decide to take a part in this study, you will be asked to participate in interview session, which will take an hour of your time and discuss your working experience, environment, personal and professional experiences.

If you would like to participate in this study, please contact me in the following address for further discussion.

fisseha.belay@utoroto.ca

Tel: 647 713 3731 (Canada)

Tel: 0913 56 95 36 (Ethiopia)

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, you may contact Office of Research Ethics of the University of Toronto at ethics.review@utoronto.ca Tel +1 416-946-3273.

Thank you very much in advance.

Sincerely,

Fisseha Belay

Appendix B – Administrative Phone Script

Below is a general script when I speak to administrators.

Hello (name)

My name is Fisseha Belay. I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Toronto in the Curriculum and Teacher Development Studies department. I am planning a research study that will involve instructors and students of your university. In order to start my study, I require your permission. The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of multiculturalism policies in the Ethiopian public education system. I am recruiting a sample of 12 instructors, 10 university students and 3 curricular experts. The criteria for inclusions are: (a) Participants should be in the social science department i.e. (History, Anthropology, Language and Cultural Studies and/or Political Science) and (b) Participants should be from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds. This study will explore the importance of multicultural education and the use of mother tongue languages in improving inclusive education and peaceful coexistence among the diverse ethnic groups in Ethiopia.

The study will involve semi-structured interviews and whereby participants will be asked their experiences, opinions and ideas regarding multicultural education. Participants will be informed that their participation in the project is entirely voluntarily and that they are free to withdraw at any time or choose not to answer any question without penalty or judgment.

In order to maintain confidentiality, the names and address of participants will not be disclosed however; their position and years of experience would be used in the data analysis. Information collected will remain confidential and only the researcher will have access to the data. Collected data will be stored in a secured lock and will be destroyed after five years.

There are no known risks associated with involvement in this project. This study will be very

important in providing teachers, policy makers and curricular experts to better understand the multicultural education and improve the teaching learning process.

If you agree, please verbally agree to your participation in this study.

Please contact me at any time if you have any questions or concerns at

fisseha.belay@utoronto.ca Tel: 1 647 713 3731 (Canada) or 913 56 95 36 (Ethiopia) You may also contact my supervisor Dr. Sarfaro Niyozov at sarfaro.niozov@utoronto.ca 252 Bloor Street West, OISE/UT Tel +1 (416) 978 0200. You may also contact Office of Research Ethics of the University of Toronto at ethics.review@utoronto.ca Tel +1 416-946-3273.

Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation,

Sincerely,

Fisseha Belay

Appendix C – Verbal Consent and Information Script

Hello My name Fisseha Belay, a PhD Student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning (CTL) department.

Purpose and Description of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of multiculturalism policies in the Ethiopian public education system. This study will explore the importance of multicultural education and the use of mother tongue languages in improving inclusive education and peaceful coexistence among the diverse ethnic groups in Ethiopia.

The interview will take approximately an hour and will be recorded using voice recorder. You can also require a copy of the transcription of your interview and make the necessary change or adjustments. You should be aware that you are free to withdraw from participating at any time or chose not to answer a question without any penalty or judgment.

Confidentiality

In order to maintain confidentiality, your name and address are not revealed however; your position and years of experience would be used in the data analysis. Information collected will remain confidential and only the researcher will have access to the data. Collected data will be stored in a secured lock and will be destroyed after five years.

Potential Discomforts

There are no known physical risks associated with your involvement in this study. However, you may feel some discomfort or get upset while expressing some painful experiences, events or stories in the interview. Should you feel these pains or discomforts, feel free to decline from participating or choose not to answer any questions that without and judgment or penalty. Your audio records will be deleted and destroyed.

Potential Benefits of the Study

This study will be very important in providing teachers, policy makers and curricular experts to better understand the multicultural education and improve the teaching learning process. You may find it very rewarding as your voice, opinions, ideas and stories can contribute for better educational policies and create a better and inclusive learning environments.

Consent to Participate

I understand from this consent what is required of my involvement and participation in this research study. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from participating in this research at any time or choose not to answer questions that I do not comfortable with. You are also entitled to get the transcriptions of your interviews should you like to do so and make adjustments.

If you agree, please verbally agree to your participation in this study.

“I consent to participate in this research study and being audio taped.”

Should you have any questions, comments or concerns please feel free to contact myself, Dr. Sarfaro, or the Research Ethics Office at the University of Toronto.

Sincerely,

Fisseha Belay

Email: fisseha.belay@utoronto.ca

Tel: 913 56 95 36 (Ethiopia)

Dr. Sarfaro Niyozov

Appendix D – Semi-Structured Interview Guidelines for Professors

Introduction:

Prior to starting the interview, I will extend my gratitude for taking part in the study and restate that their participation is completely voluntarily and can withdraw at anytime without any penalty or judgment. I will then explain the general overview of the study. Participants will be explained that the interviews will be audio recorded for transcription purpose. I will assure them that their interviews will be kept confidential and their identities are protected. Finally, I will ask them if they have any concern or questions to be addressed before the interview starts.

• Background information

vTell me about yourself, how long have you been in teaching position? What level and subject do you teach?

• Knowledge of multiculturalism

vWhat is your understanding of multiculturalism and the language policy reforms?

vWhat are the benefits of the policy reform for teachers, students and the teaching leaning process?

vHow well do you think multiculturalism is manifested in the Ethiopian education curricula?

What level? Why? How?

vDo you think it is good to have multicultural education policy? Why/ why not?

vWhat is peculiar about multicultural education policy in Ethiopian education system? What do you think are the benefits and challenges for Ethiopia?

vWhat is the main difference from the previous policies?

• **Pedagogical skills**

vWhat pedagogical implementation processes do you use? What challenges have you encountered?

vHave you received any professional development training regarding multiculturalism? If so, how important are they? What lesson have you gained?

vWhat types of resources are available for you to use and which ones do you use?

• **Mother tongue language policy reform in education**

vWhat are the advantages of using mother tongue languages as instructional media?

vWhat challenges have you encountered in implementing it?

vHave you ever taken any professional development trainings regarding the implementation process? Pre or post the education reform? If so how important was it?

vTo what extent does the use of mother tongue impact the quality of education? How?

vThe Ministry of Education of Ethiopia (MoE) indicates that more than 25 different languages are being used as instructional media. To what extent do you think this approach benefits the students? Why?

vWhat are the contributions of mother tongue language for diversity?

• **Diversity and Inclusive education**

- vTo what extent do you think it promotes inclusive education? How?
- vTo what extend do you think diversity is represented in the curricula?
- vWhat strategies do you implement to make the curricula inclusive and reflective of diversity?
- vWhat role do you think multicultural education play in resolving conflict among people from different ethnic background?
- vTo what extent do you think it promotes peaceful coexistence? How?
- vWhat impact does it have in building community in and outside the classroom?

Conciliation

At the end of our interview, I will thank them for taking part in the study once again and let them know that they can contact me at any time should they have any concerns or questions.

Appendix E – Semi-Structured Interview Guidelines for Curricula Experts

Introduction:

At the beginning of our meeting, I will extend my gratitude for taking part in the study and restate that their participation is completely voluntarily and can withdraw at anytime without any penalty or judgment. I will then explain the general overview of the study. Participants will be explained that the interviews will be audio recorded for transcription purpose. I will assure them that their interviews will be kept confidential and their identities are protected. Finally, I will ask them if they have any concern or questions to be addressed before the interview starts.

vWhat is your understanding of multiculturalism and the language policy reforms?

vWhat are the benefits of the policy reform for teachers, students and the teaching leaning process?

vHow well do you think multiculturalism is manifested in the Ethiopian education curricula? At which levels is it implemented? Why? How?

vHow often do teachers receive Pedagogical Development (PD) trainings regarding multiculturalism and mother tongue language use in education?

vWhat are the supports the Ministry of Education has provided for teachers to enhance their effectiveness regarding multicultural education?

vWho is mainly responsible for designing multicultural education curricula? To what extent do you think local teachers, students and communities are involved in the process of designing the curricula?

vIs there any other country or organizations that are involved in the process of designing multicultural curricula? If so, who? Why? What is their role and contribution?

vWhat are the main challenges regarding resources such as textbooks and reference materials?

- vWhat role does it play in community formation, how inclusive is the curricula?
- vWhat role does multicultural education play in mitigating conflict among diverse ethnic groups?
- vWhat are the major challenges the ministry encounter in making sure education quality is maintained?

Conciliation,

At the end of our interview, I will thank them for taking part in the study once again and let them know that they can contact me at any time should they have any concerns or questions.

Appendix F – Semi-Structured Interview Guidelines for University Students

Introduction:

At the beginning of our meeting, I will extend my gratitude for taking part in the study and restate that their participation is completely voluntarily and can withdraw at anytime without any penalty or judgment. I will then explain the general overview of the study. Participants will be explained that the interviews will be audio recorded for transcription purpose. I will assure them that their interviews will be kept confidential and their identities are protected. Finally, I will ask them if they have any concern or questions to be addressed before the interview starts.

vTell me about yourself, your department, faculty, and year of study.

vWhat is your knowledge of multiculturalism?

vTo what extent do you think your language, culture and identities are represented in the curricula?

vWhat are the pros and cons of having multicultural education at your university? Why?

vWhat role do you think it plays in bringing students from diverse ethnic groups?

vWhat are the challenges do you encounter with respect to communicating with students from different ethnic backgrounds?

vHave you ever encountered conflicts among students attributed to ethnicity? If so, how often does it occur? How do you solve it?

vWhat impact do you think multicultural education plays in promoting peaceful coexistence among students from different ethnicity?

vWhat are the main challenges/concerns regarding multicultural education?

vWhat types of student groups (communities) exist in your university? Is your university heterogeneous or homogeneous? Why? Which do you prefer? Why?

vHow comfortable are you in integrating with students from different ethnic backgrounds? Why?

vWhat are the challenges in the university with respect to your ethnic identity?

vFrom National and ethnic identities, which one do you prefer? Why?

vWhere would you like to work after you complete your study? Why?

Conclusion

I will thank participants for their time once again and let them know that they can contact me at any time should they have any question, concerns or suggestions.

