

**ETHIOPIAN IDENTITY IN THE POST-1991 NEW NATION-
BUILDING PROCESS: CURRICULUM RESPONSES AND
STUDENT PERSPECTIVES**

By

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**A PhD Dissertation Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
of Addis Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the
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Curriculum Design and Development**

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Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAU – Addis Ababa University

ABE – Alternative Basic Education

ALF – Afar Liberation Front

ANDM – Amhara National Democratic Movement

CEE – Civic and Ethical Education

CNCS – College of Natural and Computational Sciences

CSS – College of Social Science

COMESA – Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

ECA – Economic Commission for Africa

EPLF – Eritrean Peoples’ Liberation Front

EPRDF – Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front

ESDP – Education Sector Development Program

ESDP IV – The Fourth Education Sector Development Program

EGSECE – Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination

EHEECE – Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Certificate Examination

EPDM – Ethiopian Peoples’ Democratic Movement

ETP – Education and Training Policy

FDGs – Focus Group Discussions

FDRE – Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FDRE-PCC – Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia Population Census Commission

FDRE-MOFED – Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Finance and
Economic Development

FDRE-GCAO – FDRE Government Communication Affairs Office

GEQIP – General Education Quality Improvement Program

KG – Kindergarten

GTP – Growth and Transformation Plan

HEIs – Higher education institutions

HEP – Hydro-Electric Power

IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority on Development

IMF – International Monetary Fund

ISSP – International Social Survey Program
MMR – Mixed Methods Research
MoE – Ministry of Education
NDR – National Democratic Republic
NEPAD – New Partnership for African Development
OLF – Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF – Ogaden National Liberation Front
PDRE – Peoples Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
PSLCE – Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination
REBs – Regional Education Bureaus
RRNURC – Republic of Rwanda National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
SNNP – Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples
SNNPR – Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region
SPLA(M) – Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (Movement)
TPLF – Tigrean Peoples’ Liberation Front
UN – United Nations
UNECA – United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNO – United Nations Organization
UNESCO – United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization
U.S – United States
WTO – World Trade Organization
WWII – World War Second

ABSTRACT

The new nation-building thesis – ‘unity in diversity’ – instituted since 1991 by the EPRDF marks a historical departure from its predecessors. As such, probably no topic creates a big gulf among Ethiopian and international scholarship on whether this new nation-building approach could lead to national unity with the apparent diversity. Therefore, this study was intended to understand the ongoing new-nation-building process through the lenses of the national and regional education system curriculum and students’ attachment to the values, symbols and traditions represented in the curricula. For this purpose, exploratory sequential design was chosen as an appropriate strategy of inquiry to examine how Ethiopian identity is presented in the formal education curriculum and students’ reactions and attachments to these representations. The study was conducted in two phases where the findings of the initial qualitative study served as a basis for the latter quantitative study. In order to understand curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity, qualitative content analysis – thematic and relational – was done on upper primary and secondary education level Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks. The major identity attributes presented in these textbooks were analyzed for the meaning they carried and for the way they were related to the multination state of Ethiopia. This study also attempted to understand how students – both individually and in groups – construct their being an Ethiopian through their prior exposure to different courses at school and to the social environment by using interviews and FGDs. Thus, the major values, symbols and traditions which represent Ethiopian identity were explored from the first phase qualitative study through content analysis of Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks and in-depth interviews and FGDs with students. In the subsequent quantitative design, 400 first year university students representing the various ethnic groups in Ethiopia were surveyed to understand their level of attachment to Ethiopian identity attributes presented in the curricula. The quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and standard deviation. In the national and regional education system curriculum, Ethiopian identity was presented in the form of major political symbols (such as national flag, national anthem, national holidays and heroes/heroines) and historico-cultural symbols (like obelisks, palaces, churches, mosques, etc), citizenship identity (basic laws and institutions as well as citizenship rights and duties), and socio-cultural values (such as heroism, religious tolerance and hospitality). However, the quantitative results revealed that although students were exposed to similar curriculum, their identification with and attachment to those symbols, values and traditions presented in the curricula considerably differ. Moreover, students reported that compared to other factors, formal education has contributed marginally in their group identity development. Some of the challenges of the Ethiopian formal education in nation-building include: emphasis for diversity/differences rather than ‘unity in diversity’, exclusion of some groups in textbooks narratives, ideological orientation of textbooks, obsessions with historical narratives on oppressions and dominations of groups, contradictions between school experiences and out of school experiences and between the planned curriculum and the experiential curriculum. It seems due to these challenges that, rather than formal education, religion and family play a key role in the students’ ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity development. A major finding of this study is that although the national and regional education system curriculum has been contributing to the ongoing new nation-building process by portraying and communicating the above stated values, symbols and traditions, it also plays a parallel nation-destroying role through developing feelings of exclusion and ethnocentric attitudes, which could be detrimental to the vision of creating a sustainable multination state Ethiopia.

Keywords: Curriculum, Ethiopian identity, ethnic identity, unity in diversity, education and nation-building, attachment to multination state, citizenship identity, political and historico-cultural symbols, socio-cultural values

GENERAL ORIENTATION OF THE DISSERTATION

In Ethiopian history the 1960s and 1970s could be characterized as the time in which higher education and secondary school students played a critical role in political and social movements. Evolved from the late 1960s and early 1970s Ethiopian students movement, a historically new nation-building process has been institutionalized since 1991 to date. As clearly elucidated by Bahru (2014), the new thesis of nation-building adopted by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (hereafter, EPRDF), at least in its institutionalized context, had evolved from the Ethiopian students movement. Such issues as '*national oppression*', '*national question*' or '*the question of nationalities*' and '*the right to self-determination up to and including secession*' which appear to EPRDF's political central thesis were largely propagated in the late 1960s and early 1970s students' movement. The 'right to self-determination up to and including secession' – as enshrined under Article 39 of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (hereafter, FDRE) Constitution – was considered by some of the leading figures in the students' movement and now by the EPRDF as the ultimate guarantee to discourage secession and encourage national unity. For instance, Tilahun Takele – one of the leading figures in the Ethiopian students' movement – asserted that: "We believe that the support of the right to secession will, by itself, discourage secession" (Tilahun Takele, 1970: 32 in Bahru Zewde, 2014: 187). Yet, whether such logic works in present day Ethiopia remains a very contested issue among academics, politicians and the populace.

The 'national question' and 'the right to self-determination up to secession' had created a big gulf among Ethiopian students and/ or student associations. Similarly, the adoption of the current Ethiopian federalism and 'the right to self-determination including secession' in the 1995 FDRE Constitution have also been a topic of discourse among Ethiopian and international scholars and political commentators. Notwithstanding, the contentious nature of these constitutional adoptions, the EPRDF led government has been engaged on a new nation-building process: at times coined the 'New Ethiopia'. Of particular interest to this study is how this new nation-building thesis first ingrained in the 1960s and 70s Ethiopian students' movement and latter constitutionalized by the EPRDF has been presented in the

national and regional education system curriculum and reflected in students' perspectives or values as a means to national unity as expected.

It could be contended that in post-1991 Ethiopia, probably no topic appears as contentious as the meaning of being Ethiopian and the specific attributes which it may comprise. In the literature, it is firmly established that for a workable “ethnic”-based federalism there should be at least a strong sense of national unity – be it a civic identity or association to some of the symbols or histories of the nation – in the populace ([Cohen, 1995 cited in Keller, 2010](#)). Historical evidence shows that schooling or formal education has been instrumental to nation-building, among other things, by fusing society together through nurturing its preferred and shared values, beliefs and traditions. But this traditional function of education has been eroded as a result of the unbalanced emphasis given for human capital over social and cultural capital. The available international and Ethiopian scholarship suggests that human capital could not be possible without an adequate basis of social and cultural capital. This research project is, therefore, intended to understand the contribution of the Ethiopian federal and regional education system curriculum to the new nation-building process by exploring how Ethiopian identity has been presented and reinforced in the Ethiopian national and regional education system curriculum materials and then by examining students' identification and level of attachment with the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

To this end, the study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase qualitative study, the dissertation derives some major attributes portraying Ethiopian identity through content analysis of some selected primary and secondary education system textbooks and in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (hereafter, FGDs) with some students intentionally selected on the basis of mainly ethnic and regional background. Then in the second phase quantitative study, the researcher conducted questionnaire survey by using some basic attributes (values, symbols and traditions) of Ethiopian identity primarily derived from the first phase qualitative study so as to access a relatively larger section of the student population from diverse ethnic, linguistic, gender, regional and religious backgrounds. In this way – by avoiding a prior imposition of a conceptual framework on what counts as being an Ethiopian by the researcher – the dissertation tries to understand the state of

Ethiopianness in the ongoing nation-building process primarily from, what anthropological research says, the ‘emic’ perspective.

The dissertation is organized in ten chapters. The first chapter helps to understand the political and historical and theoretical context under which the current research project is conducted. It justifies the need to study and understand the state of Ethiopianness in the new nation-building process in curriculum discourse and through student perspectives. As such it demonstrates how the study would fit into the broad framework of knowledge and theory in the area and identifies some of the gaps left open by previous scholarship and shows how it contributes to fill these gaps. Chapter two is mainly a theoretical contribution and as such it reviewed and synthesized what previous scholarship says about national identity and other social identity sets in curriculum discourse. That is, theoretical and empirical evidences and perspectives regarding national identity and its place in nation-building processes have been analyzed. Then theoretical perspectives or models which would guide the direction of analysis have been derived.

Chapter three presents the design and methodological issues – and the associated paradigms – involved in the research process. First, as previous scholarship did not establish a sound theoretical and conceptual framework on the meaning of being Ethiopian and the specific values, symbols and traditions used to portray the Ethiopian political and cultural community, the dissertation first tries to explore or derive what constitutes Ethiopianness from qualitative content analysis of some selected national and regional education system textbooks and in-depth interviews and FGDs with first year university students. Second, the literature suggests that as national identities are sometimes exclusive as much as they are inclusive, it was felt mandatory to reach a relatively larger proportion of students of diverse “ethnic”, linguistic, cultural, regional, religious, and gender backgrounds and come up with more or less generalizable values, symbols and traditions which could navigate through these social boundaries.

From chapter four through chapter six, the dissertation attempts to understand curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity through qualitative content analysis of some selected textbooks of the national and regional education system curriculum as well as through

students and teachers evaluation of the contribution of the primary and secondary education system curriculum. Subsequently, the dissertation comes up with a general understanding of the meaning of being Ethiopian and the values, symbols and traditions which could transcend “ethnic”, linguistic, cultural, religious, gender and regional backgrounds. The dissertation further corroborates the attributes representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community derived from content analysis of textbooks through student perspectives. As such, in chapter seven, the major findings of in-depth interviews and FGDs conducted with the study participants purposefully selected on the basis of “ethnicity”, gender, religion and regional backgrounds have been treated.

Chapter eight presents the findings of the subsequent quantitative study. Accordingly, the students’ level of association with some basic attributes of Ethiopian identity derived from the first phase qualitative study has been determined. Under chapter nine, in order to fully understand the state of Ethiopian identity in the current new nation-building process through the lens of the national and regional education system curriculum and student perspectives, the findings of the two phases of the study have been combined and discussed thoroughly against the available Ethiopian and international scholarship. Finally, chapter ten states the conclusion and draws some implications.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the context in which the current research project has been grounded on. The context of the study may be understood at two dimensions. First, it may be conceptualized in terms of Ethiopia's past historical narrative and current political and socio-cultural context; and second, the context of the research project may be understood in terms of the positioning of the current study vis-à-vis evidence in other multicultural countries and Ethiopia. This latter conceptualization of the context of the study is mainly related with the theoretical background. The introductory section of the dissertation is also devoted to identifying the place of national identities in curriculum discourse and its implication for nation-building. As such, it would help us to show the gaps in existing scholarship by scrutinizing what has been done (and what is not) in Ethiopian and international scholarship and justify how the current research could try to fill these gaps.

Accordingly, in an attempt to understand the historical, social and political context under which this study has been conducted, nation-building attempts in Ethiopia across historical periods are briefly analyzed. This is followed by describing the place of national identities for nation-building in the current context of growing globalization and interdependence through the analysis of the available Ethiopian and international scholarship. Finally, a short description and justification of the need to study Ethiopian identity in the current new nation-building process and a concise explanation to justify the importance of examining and/ or understanding Ethiopian identity in curriculum discourse has been presented.

1.1. Historical, social and political context

Existing scholarship shows that physical background (geographical location, climate, and resources), history, political system and demography play an important role in the making of a sense of nationhood (Parekh, 2000; Smith, 1991; Sumara, Davis & Linda, 2001). For instance, Parekh (2000) noted that in modern societies – in addition to social ties and even more than that – territoriality has unparalleled significance in the making of a sense of nationhood when he said: "...a nation's territorial boundary encloses its members and gives

them a distinct geographical and political identity including a collective name” (p. 180). He further noted that modern nations are primarily defined and identified by geographical boundary which falls under their state jurisdiction. This suggests that a nation’s collective identity has both a spatial and social dimension. Accordingly, a country’s national identity has been found deeply embedded in its past history and physical, social, cultural, political and economic contexts. Thus, Ethiopia’s historical past and physical, social, cultural and political contexts have some implications for collective identification and degree of attachment to the political nation.

A slight cursor into both international and Ethiopian scholarship shows that Ethiopia has a very long history of statehood, political sovereignty, rich biodiversity, diversified landscape; and it is the origin of the first human ancestor as well as the home of various nations and nationalities – all of which may inspire a sense of national identification, pride and attachment with the (political) nation among fellow citizens. In terms of size, Ethiopia has a total surface area of 1.25 million square kilometers ([Central Statistical Authority, hereafter CSA, 2008](#)), and this is almost “*twice the size of France*” ([World Bank, 2005: 3](#)). Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census by the FDRE Population Census Commission ([FDRE-PCC, 2008](#)) puts the country’s population as 73,918,505 – which makes it the second most populous country in Africa. Ethiopia has one of the highest rate of population growth (2.6%) in the world and with this rate of growth, its population is projected to reach 128 to 143 million in 2037 ([CSA, 2013](#)).

Although its historical past remains contested, three perspectives appear to exist on the origin on the Ethiopian state. Regarding the first position, various sources ([Assefa, 2010; Bahru, 2002; Tadesse, 1972](#)) indicate that Ethiopia is one of the oldest independent nations in the world. Some scholars ([for example, Assefa, 2010](#)) went on to assert that the history of Ethiopia is as old as the origin of the first human being itself. This claim is grounded on the assumption that the country has been the birth place of the first hominoid who was discovered in 1974 in the Afar Region of Northeastern Ethiopia. Similarly, the [U.S Department of State \(1998\)](#) puts Ethiopia as the oldest sovereign country in Africa and as one of the oldest independent nations in the world. The Department justifies this claim in line with the description about Ethiopia by the early Greek historian, [Herodotus](#), in the fifth

century B.C and the Old Testament of the Bible which depicts the foundation of the Ethiopian Empire by the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (see also Keller, 2010). It seems due to this last mythical claim that the Solomonic Dynasty has been later taken as a prominent national symbol of Ethiopian kings and monarchs for legitimizing their authority. Such claim – *God's chosen leaders for the God's chosen people* – justifies a national identity rooted on the supremacy of the kings and religion. Therefore, until the last Emperor, the kings, religion – the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Christian Religion – and national culture as well as Amharic as a national language were taken as the symbols of Ethiopian identity.

On the other hand, some scholars contend that Ethiopia as an independent statehood had appeared only in the late nineteenth century. Although he did not agree with this claim, Levine (2011) indicates that some scholars (such as Holcomb & Ibssa, 1990; Sorenson, 1993) considered Ethiopia as a late nineteenth century “imperialism invention” (p. 317). Similarly, Asafa Jalata (2009) associated the emergence of present day Ethiopia with the period of European colonization in Africa. He contends that the present day Ethiopian nation was emerged as an empire “by claiming the name of ancient and historic Ethiopia with the help of the West during the partition of Africa by European powers...” (p. 5). Asafa further asserted that “...contemporary Abyssinia/Ethiopia was the product of neocolonialism, invented by the alliance of Ethiopian colonialism and European imperialism...” (pp. 5-6). Assefa portrays Ethiopia as a colonial nation which was created through a colonial expansion to the south, southeast and southwest during the period of the partition of Africa by European colonizers. And yet if Ethiopia had actually participated in the ‘partition of Africa’, why the same country faced a series of colonial invasions and why the same country strongly supported national liberation movements and struggles in Africa and elsewhere against colonialism raise some questions on the soundness of such narrative.

Yet some other scholars (for instance Bahru, 2002; Merera, 2007; Tadesse, 1972) have a more modest claim. Although these Ethiopian scholars agreed on Ethiopia's historical extension back into the Ancient and Middle Ages in some sense, they suggest that Ethiopia, in at least its present form, has been created in the late nineteenth century and they consider the whole process as nation-building rather than colonization. This last assertion seems to

dominate a bulk of the existing Ethiopian and international nation-building literature. In line with this latter claim, being cognizant of its historical continuity, here the dissertation reviews the process of nation-building attempts in the post-nineteenth century Ethiopia.

To begin with, as a descendant of the Solomonic line of descent, as He claimed, Emperor Haile Selassie attempted to build a strong national identity in various ways. The school system might be regarded as the nucleus of nation-building in the Imperial period particularly through a strong national identity construction. Among others, one of the core functions of education during the last Monarchy was to cultivate a strong sense of identity and attachment to the Monarchy, national culture, national religion and language (Desta, 2014; Tekeste, 1996). The Emperor intended to shape the country's history and national identity both within and outside the school compound. The last Emperor's splendor was reinforced in almost all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life of the people through memorials, place names, national anthems, festivals, and within the school system through formal and informal school activities. In addition to the formal curriculum, the Emperor's status was clearly visible when one entered into any public school compound where his picture found hung and all students gathered around a field and make a display to recite the national anthem and salute the King every morning. It seems in view of such contexts that Parekh (2000: 184) considers the state as "a deeply homogenizing institution" and education as its key instrument.

The overthrow of the Monarchy and the coming into power of the Military government in 1974 brought a significant shift – though not fundamental (Clapham, 2011; Mengistu, 2014; Merera, 2007) – in the content and dimension of Ethiopian identity. The Dergue's only radical departure from its predecessors was religious freedom where Orthodox Christianity no longer continued as a state religion (Keller, 2010). The Military regime's attempt to respond to diversity is well documented by Mengistu (2014). He stated that as enshrined in the 1987 Dergue's (PDRE) Constitution there were attempts to language equality, regional autonomy, and equality of nationalities. For instance, during the Military regime's illiteracy campaign about fifteen nationality languages were used as a medium of instruction. But yet, as Mengistu argued, despite some efforts to address the issues of identity and diversity, only Amharic language had a constitutional guarantee as the national

language of the regime and in practice the Military Regime failed to respond to the basic questions of equality of nations and nationalities.

A more or less similar discourse about the Military Government's some, but failed, reform efforts to the longstanding questions of the equality of nations and nationalities are found in the works of [Clapham, Keller, and Merera](#). Although the 1976 National Democratic Revolution (NDR) draft proposal ([Merera, 2007](#)) and the establishment of the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities (ISEN) which latter evolved into a Constitutional Commission ([Keller, 2010: 72](#)) and the ethnic mapping of Ethiopia ([Clapham, 2011: 17; Keller, 2010: 72-73](#)) by the Dergue appeared a radical departure from the Imperial past in responding to "ethnic" nationalism and regional autonomy, the national question was soon regarded as counter revolutionary and hence dismissed by the Military Regime.

Thereafter the Military Government had attempted to forge a strong national/Ethiopian identity rooted on the ideals of Marxist-Leninist manifesto, which bases its claim on the then USSR definition of collective identity – '*socialist patriotism*' and '*proletarian internationalism*'. As clearly indicated by [Caputi \(1996\)](#) the Soviet Socialists advocated the Marxian principle of international working-class identification which says: '*A working man has no nation*'. But just like its predecessors, the military government espoused assimilation into one homogenized and dominant national culture as a tool of strong unity and cultivating a socialist oriented Ethiopian identity and such mission was largely advocated, among others, by the country's school system. It was during the Dergue Regime that Political Education was introduced as a course into the country's education system curriculum starting from Grade four ([Abebe, 1991](#)).

Within no more than two years of overthrowing the Monarchy and assuming political power, the Dergue adopted 'scientific socialism' as an organizing political principle and thus citizens were grouped into mass organizations defined on the basis of economic or social ties. By extension, ethnicity was not taken as a legitimate and fundamental organizing principle in state politics. Therefore, just like the previous feudal regimes, the new revolutionary government was not keen to address the national question.

At least in the formal education program, the Dergue believed that educating children in only one language of instruction would create a homogeneous socialist state and national identity (Desta, 2014). This non-inclusive conception of national (Ethiopian) identity that has been embraced by the nation's school system for almost a century is contended to be inconsistent with the apparent ethno-linguistic, cultural, religious and territorial diversity of the Ethiopian people.

It seems the denial of self-definition and recognition of Ethiopian nations, nationalities – as many political commentators say (see for instance, Donham, 2002; Keller, 2010; Keller & Omwami, 2007; Merera, 2007) – had led to the proliferation of ethno-national armed groups who claim self-determination and recognition; and even some demand a loose attachment with or complete secession from the country. Some – but not all – of the major armed groups who fought to totally divorce from the Ethiopian state apparatus include the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), and Afar Liberation Front (ALF).

Following the overthrow of the military regime – by the coalition of the Tigrean Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF), the Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (EPDM) and the EPLF in particular – and the coming into power of the EPRDF as a new governing body since 1991, the issue of nations and nationalities has emerged as a primary political agenda and a founding principle of the new Ethiopian state. Accordingly, as per Article 47(1) of the 1995 FDRE Constitution, the EPRDF introduced a mix of ethnic and territorial based federalism which administratively divided the country into nine self-governing “ethnic” regions or regional states and two city administrations as follows: (1) *The State of Tigray*; (2) *The State of Afar*; (3) *The State of Amhara*; (4) *The State of Oromiya*; (5) *The State of Somalia*; (6) *The State of Benishangul/Gumuz*; (7) *The State of the SNNPs*; (8) *The State of Gambella Peoples'*; (9) *The State of Harari Peoples'*; (10) *Addis Ababa City Administration*; and (11) *Dire Dawa City Administration*.

Then political power has been divided between the federal government and the regional states on the principle of self-rule and shared-rule. Unlike most of its predecessors, the EPRDF pledges the unity and solidarity of the Ethiopian people through the appreciation of

its ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural, and territorial diversity. Accordingly, some of the fundamental social and political changes felt by the new state apparatus have been documented under various articles of the 1995 FDRE Constitution; but the most important of which may be the right to *self-determination up to secession* (Article 39(1)) and the language issue (equality and utilization of nationality languages as a working language – Article 5 – and as a medium of instruction in primary schools – Article 39(2)) as instrumental to maintaining national unity.

Therefore, in view of the above historical context, Ethiopia appears to be in an ongoing new nation-building process since 1991. The process of nation-building felt by the EPRDF has been understood through the lens of interethnic relations with seemingly subordinating the intra-ethnic relations. This might emerge from the new conception of nation-building brought about by the new federal arrangement. In the EPRDF's new nation-building discourse, citizens are expected to maintain their own “ethnic” loyalty while belonging and giving allegiance to the wider Ethiopian political community. In line with this, Clapham (2009) characterizes the nation-building process in the current Ethiopian political context as:

For the EPRDF [...] belonging to a particular nationality and belonging to Ethiopia as a whole are not only compatible but complementary: federal Ethiopia is quite extraordinary among states in insisting that its people cannot be simply 'Ethiopian', but requiring that they belong to Ethiopia through their prior membership of a particular nationality (p. 18).

This conceptualization of nation-building appears to deviate from the long standing historically rooted Ethiopian nationalism advocated by the Imperial Period and the Dergue where the country had a hegemonic status over each citizen or group and as such allegiance to the political nation had been superior to any other commitment – religious, ethnic, gender, culture, regional etc. Accordingly, in the previous regimes, citizens were expected to identify themselves primarily as Ethiopian and to identify with their ethnic group second. More specifically, subordination of ethnic identity to national loyalty and allegiance characterizes the nation-building process in pre-1991 Ethiopia.

In post-1991 Ethiopia, allegiance to ethnic group and the wider Ethiopian society are taken as a fact of life and thus considered compatible and complementary in the sense that ethnic identity is the basis for identification with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. The dissertation adopts this last conceptualization of nation-building process in Ethiopia. But yet many scholars, including Clapham, are more skeptical about the effectiveness of the new nation-building process which considers *ethnicity* as a primary basis of political participation and the subsequent primacy of ethnic identification and allegiance over identification with and allegiance to the wider Ethiopian political and cultural community.

Accordingly, such terms as *living together on the basis of equality, pride in cultural legacies or territories, shared interests, common outlook, common destiny, living as one economic and political community* have been found embedded in the Preamble of the 1995 FDRE Constitution. In the country's Education and Training Policy (FDRE, 1994), it was intended to produce citizens endowed with "*humane outlook, national responsibility and democratic values*" (p. 6). Similarly, the country's Pre-College Education Curriculum Framework (MOE, 2010) also advocates that one of the key principles guiding schools in whole-school planning and curriculum development is respect for cultural heritage, diversity and unity as stated: "Young people will be educated in a way that respects diversity while unifying into one country" (p. 7). This quotation suggests that the current government has intended to use education as a means to maintaining the unity of the Ethiopian people while respecting its ethno-linguistic, religious, cultural and territorial diversity – or what is often called '*unity in diversity*'.

As an extension of the constitutional pledge to decentralization and devolution of power and responsibility to the regions and reach the local people, primary education has become the responsibility of the regional states. Thus, as explicitly stated in the 1994 Education and Training Policy (hereafter, ETP), the content of primary education textbooks, teachers' training, learning resources, and language of instruction has been determined by the respective regional states. Of course, the selection of the contents of primary education textbooks is expected to follow the national primary education system curriculum framework designed by the Ministry of Education (hereafter, MOE). In addition to this, the

patterns of financing and the overall management of primary education in Ethiopia have become a regional mandate.

Above all, as national identity construction has largely been a state enterprise (Lall, 2008), there appears a manifest discontinuity in the content and dimension of Ethiopian identity attempted to be reinforced by the respective governments of Ethiopia – where one is almost the antithesis of the other. Therefore, it is under this complex context of historical, social and political discontinuity and ambiguity that this research project attempts to understand Ethiopian identity in the post-1991 new nation-building process.

Current scholarship suggests that the issue of national identity becomes more complicated under greater diversity (Banks, 2011; Parekh, 2005; 1997) and under radical social and political change (Darr, 2011). Banks (2011: 245) insists that unity must be the main preoccupation of multicultural nations, like Ethiopia, which boldly recognize diversity. He further asserts that “diversity without unity leads to balkanization” as excessive emphasis on unity leads to conflicts and discontents (p.246); and as such multicultural nations should maintain a proper balance and harmony between diversity and unity. In the Ethiopian current political discourse, the issue of Ethiopianness advocated by the EPRDF – ‘*unity in diversity*’ – represents a radical historical departure from its predecessors. It follows that for a country which constituted its overarching identity on assimilation policy for more than a century, this new version of Ethiopian identity appears as one of the pressing questions demanding deeper investigation.

In a recent publication, the FDRE Government Communication Affairs Office (FDRE-GCAO, June 2016) indicated that the EPRDF government has identified *chauvinism*, *narrow ethno-nationalism (parochialism)*, *corruption* and *lack of good governance* as major challenges of the new nation-building process. In a recent meeting of the party, the above problems have been identified as major impediments for the ‘New’ Ethiopia’s development and sustainability as a multination state. Similarly, in a recent meeting with some selected intellectuals from all corners of the country including universities, the current prime minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, indicated that ethnocentric attitudes are defining features of Ethiopian higher education institutions (HEIs) in which staffs are

labeled as ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ based on the language they speak. As such, it appears that the country is at best in a transitional stage of the nation-building process. This also adds to the recent context of nation-building in Ethiopia.

From the analysis of the historical, social and political context of the country, we can conclude that Ethiopia is on the new path to nation-building. It is firmly established in the literature that the process of nation-building is primarily concerned with creating positive relations and consensus among the nation’s citizens so that they could have a common vision and destiny towards their country. If this is the case, the investigator of this study believes that formal schooling is one of the primary institutions to achieve this end. Therefore, after having justified that Ethiopia has been on the new path to nation-building and pointing to the place of formal education in the process of the same, the next section of the dissertation is devoted to the theoretical and empirical evidence justifying the urgency of studying nation-building or national identity in curriculum discourse in a multicultural developing country context vi-a-vis the ongoing global interdependence, market liberalization and multiculturalism.

1.2. Theoretical background

Nation building is one of the most slippery concepts and so far it has no universally accepted definition in the academic and political circle. In the large array of existing literature, the conceptualization of nation-building ranges from strengthening state institutions and physical infrastructures (Soutphommasane, 2009) and constructing social, cultural and historical bonds among citizens (Fukuyama, 2004a cited in Somit & Peterson, 2005) to creating new nations (Saad, 2009; Smith, 2009). Hippler (2005) asserted that overall the intersection of a *unifying ideology*, *social integration* and *state-building* have been essential elements of successful nation-building projects.

The literature shows that in the American tradition, nation-building is often confused with state-building. In the American tradition, nation-building has been conceptualized as constructing and promoting political or state institutions and major economic transformations (Fukuyama, 2006; Somit & Peterson, 2005). Such conceptualization of nation-building often ignores the deeply rooted shared values, traditions and symbols

which could weld people together as a nation. Fukuyama further argued that in the American perspective nation-building becomes a top-down and externally imposed strategy than essentially an endogenous process.

At this juncture, it appears imperative to distinguish between nation-building and state-building. Fukuyama (2004a: 1) has tried to make a clear distinction between nation-building and state-building by characterizing the former in terms of the cultural, social and historical attributes which weld a nation's people and by defining the latter in terms of establishing and strengthening state institutions such as the security, judiciary, economic infrastructures, social institutions (like health and education systems), etc (cited in Somit & Peterson, 2005). For the purpose of this study – despite variations in conceptualization – nation-building is understood in terms of creating and/ or strengthening the bond (common values, symbols and traditions) that could weld citizens together as a political and cultural community essentially in a multicultural perspective. By extension, such conceptualization of the term nation-building is, more or less, equated with Ethiopian identity. Therefore, the dissertation understands nation-building in terms of constructing Ethiopian identity in a multicultural context.

Historically, the place of nation-building in political and academic discourse has passed through a series of discontinuities. Hippler (2005) noted that although nation-building is a very old concept, its importance in foreign, security and development policy was particularly evident in the 1950s and 1960s with the end of colonization in Africa and Asia. During these periods, the conceptualization of the term was very much influenced by modernization theories (ibid), which more or less equated modernization and/ or development with Westernization (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989). This marked a historical departure from traditional values which often create local, ethnic, tribal, religious, etc. affiliations to those leading to unconditional loyalties and attachments to modern nation-states (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989; Hippler, 2005).

However, nation-building as a political and academic discourse again vanished in the 1970s mainly for its conceptual link with coercive military and brutal political strategies (Hippler, 2005). It appears in view of this historical context that Connor (1972) considered 'nation-

building’ as ‘nation-destroying’. He contended that nation-building processes primarily overlook ethnic consciousness and legitimize homogenization or assimilation through public education and other state institutions. Therefore, Connor concludes that nation-building is a ‘nation-building’ project for the dominant nationality and a parallel ‘nation-destroying’ process for national minorities.

Yet in his final analysis, Hippler – and many other scholars as well – demonstrated the re-emergence of the concept as an essential policy and academic discourse with the end of the Cold War and recent complex violent conflicts which threatened the survival of states. The end of colonization in the twentieth century followed by the disintegration of the former USSR into smaller independent states (Miller, 1995; Zhuojun & Hualing, 2014) and the fate of Russians in the new republics and the ensuing new global order (Apple, 2013; Zhuojun & Hualing, 2014) have posed new challenges for nation-building all over the developing world. Miller (1995) contends that what matters most in the years ahead has been fixing state boundaries and identifying the criterion for inclusion into and exclusion from a nation’s domain. Accordingly, the kind of culture, religion, language and other attributes to be promoted by newly emerging states, as Miller argued, in the process of nation-building received much more emphasis than the choice between the free market and planned economies.

The issue of nation-building has been further fueled by the ongoing global political, economic, social and cultural homogenization process which gives meaning and significance only to particular Western ideas and practices (Kluver and Weber, 2003). In the current context of *globalization*, *liberal individualism* and *marketization*, maintaining state boundaries and national attachment becomes a tough challenge for most developing countries. For instance, Kluver and Weber (2003) contend that globalization gives meaning and significance to only Western values and traditions and this cultural homogenization process has been eroding the social and cultural capital of citizens in the developing world.

Similarly, the growing ideological influence of *neo-liberalism* – which celebrates individual freedom and choice – has left little or no room for collective responsibilities and/or the common-good (Apple, 2013; Connell, 2013; Woolman, 2001). As such the neo-

liberal thesis has been individualizing social problems under the banner of individual gain, freedom and choice (Rhodie & Liebenberg, 1994). By extension, the current global emphasis on individual rights and responsibilities instead of collective rights and duties, at least in a liberal sense, have been undermining the utmost significance and commitment given to collective responsibility and/ or the common-good. This is particularly a serious challenge for developing countries, like Ethiopia, where state institutions could not be strong enough to create a sense of attachment among citizens so as to counter this global challenge.

In response to this challenge, developing countries have been engaged in nation-building projects through the construction of more inclusive national identities which could culminate in unity, solidarity and political stability (Saad, 1980). In this context, national identity has been conceptualized in terms of identification with some basic attributes of a nation as well as the strength of attachment to such attributes of a national community (Darr, 2011; Huddy & Khatib, 2007) in a multicultural perspective.

Although the process of nation-building through *national identification* (Saad, 1980; Smith, 1991), *state legitimation* (Darr, 2011), and *political involvement* (Huddy & Khatib, 2007) has become the main preoccupation of developing countries immediately after the end of colonization and the gradual surge of market forces into individual and collective life, national identification and attachment is still the concern of most developed Western nations as well. To further substantiate this position, Zhuojun and Hualing (2014: 144) assert that “...crises of national identity have become a shared challenge for both the developing and the developed world”.

Moreover, empirical research conducted on national identity in the United States (Citrin, Wong & Duff, 2001; Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Tsai.etal, 2002), Canada (Lee & Hebert, 2006; Sumara, Davis & Lidlaw, 2001), France (Caron, 2013; Simon, 2012), and Australia (Rashid, 2007) – to state some but not all – amplify this apprehension. These research findings broadly noted that the erosion of national identification, loose attachment with the nation and state, gradually weakening constructive patriotic feeling, and lack of civic and political involvement, and disregard for the common good have been some of the apparent

challenges facing the developed Western world as well. But the issue of nation-building is more important for developing countries like Ethiopia than the developed West because – as [Bush and Saltarelli \(2000\)](#) and [Fagerlind and Saha \(1989\)](#) rightly put it – the latter have political, social and economic institutions or foundations which can effectively deal with conflicts and the dangers of disintegration in society.

Many scholars assert that it is shared beliefs ([Miller, 1995](#)) or common belonging ([Parekh, 1997](#)) which holds nations together. Further building on Anderson's definition of nations as 'imagined communities', which exist through collective acts of imagining, [Miller](#) contends that nations would exist only if they can communicate this collective imagining. There are various institutions involved in communicating such collective imagination of a nation to its citizens. Some of these major institutions include family, peers, education, media, political parties, religious institutions, etc. Formal education has been taken by many scholars (see for example, [Ahonen, 2001](#); [Parekh, 2000](#); [1997](#)) as one of the main institutions to communicate a sense of nationhood or common belonging among citizens. Such mission of formal education curriculum also seems implicit in David Miller's assertion above.

Education and nation building have not been considered as separate entities in historical times. Scholars (for instance, [Fagerlind & Saha, 1989](#); [Gallagher, 2010](#)) assert that the primary purpose of the emergence of schooling was to serve political functions. Further building on [Cohen \(1970\)](#), [Fagerlind and Saha \(1989\)](#) contend that in history formal education had been intended to produce 'elites' who were supposed to preserve the national boundary of what [Cohen](#) called "*civilizational states*" (unification of smaller tribal entities into larger states) by breaking-down local loyalties and by strengthening, instead, loyalties to the state (p.34). They further contend that although the purpose of schooling has diversified with the emergence of mass education in the nineteenth century, the political purpose of schooling from antiquity to date remains more or less the same. This position is clearly reflected when they argue that: "With more complex economic and political structures, boundary maintenance, political loyalty and conforming behavior become even more important for State survival, and indeed for societal advancement" ([Fagerlind & Saha, 1989: 34](#)).

Historical experiences further show that formal education has been instrumental to nation-building. [Bush and Saltarelli \(2000\)](#) maintained that the introduction of mass education systems at the end of the 19th century played a key role in creating a sense of national unity and belonging among citizens. They went on to assert that, although they adopted a different model, historically education was instrumental to nation-building, for instance, in Great Britain, the United States, and Canada. In Great Britain, schooling had contributed to national unity by promoting tradition and history while in the United States schooling had acted to promote the “melting pot” metaphor where large numbers of migrant populations were assimilated into the American culture. Historically, a somewhat different model was pursued in Canada. In Canada, schools had been organized to promote a multicultural approach to nation-building where differences were recognized and appreciated. Although countries follow different models and have mixed results, it appears that education has played an important role in nation-building through the inculcation and promotion of common values, beliefs and traditions which may ultimately create unity of purpose and harmony among a nation’s citizens.

Yet [Bush and Saltarelli](#) did not stop on simply documenting the historical significance of education in nation-building. They most importantly tended to demonstrate what they called “the two-faces of education”. On their seminal work entitled: “The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict”, [Bush and Saltarelli \(2000\)](#) wrote the following:

Education is often used as a panacea for a broad spectrum of social ills [...] while the impact of such initiatives has been mixed, their starting premise is the same: that formal education can shape the understandings, attitudes, and ultimately, the behavior of individuals. If it is true that education can have a socially constructive impact on intergroup relations, then it is equally evident that it can have a socially destructive impact (p. 9).

As indicated in the above quotation, the authors communicate the idea that education is a “two-edge sword” which may build or destroy society on the basis of how it has been manipulated. More interestingly, [Bush and Saltarelli \(2000\)](#) contend that it is merely because more scholarly energy devoted to the positive face of education that its negative face has been obscured. [Coexistence International \(2005\)](#) also shares this position. Education can be an important means to promote social cohesion and inter-cultural, inter-

religious, or inter-ethnic relations only if it is properly planned. It asserts that similarly education can play a divisive role in society if it is not properly planned as sensitive to the issue of social cohesion.

The above literatures suggest that in any context it appears difficult to consider education as a panacea to all social problems. On the basis of its structure and contents of the curriculum, formal education can play either a constructive or destructive role in society. Under this theoretical context, the dissertation argues that – although its role may not be too much exaggerated – if properly planned yet education can play an instrumental role in nation-building by creating a sense of belonging and attachment to a political nation through nurturing some selected common values, symbols and traditions among students or citizens. Here it is also worth mentioning that it is unrealistic to reduce nation-building to a classroom wall and even a school frontier.

Generally, in the existing literature two main functions of education have been underlined: social function and individual function (Apple, 2013; Tekeste, 1996). Historically, however, education was intended to serve society by promoting the common good (Connell, 2013). But such function of education has been more seriously challenged today than at any other time in its history. Some of these challenges may emerge from globalization (Witte, 2009), liberal individualism and marketization (Apple, 2013; Connell, 2013). These forces have been influencing not only the values and lifestyles of citizens of developing countries but also their education policies, programs and processes through potential funding. Their net impact has been the disintegration of what Parekh (2005: 3) called '*traditional moral consensus*' which hold societies together throughout their history.

Still another pressure emerges on the societal function of education. The challenge emanates from failure to maintaining a proper balance between education for human capital and education for social capital and cultural capital (Adams, 2002; Apple, 2013; Okuma-Nystrom, 2009). Nowadays, national education policies and programs have been giving more emphasis for human capital than social and cultural capital. But, the extant research (see for instance, Bourdieu, 1986; Goodwin, 2003; Imandoust, 2011; Putnam, 1993) shows that human capital's benefit to society depends to a certain degree on social and cultural

capital. Thus, it is against this backdrop or context that today the quest for national identity (the common good) re-emerges as a dominant academic discourse in the fields of Education and the Social Sciences such as Political Science, History, Social Anthropology, Psychology, etc. in both developing and developed countries.

Formal education has been one of the key institutions for nation-building. To substantiate this position, it is better to consider some pieces of theoretical and empirical evidences. Many scholars suggest that one of the major purposes of education has been the formation of identities (see for instance, Apple, 2013; Lall, 2008; Msila, 2007). Apple considers [public] schools as significant avenues for the formation of “collective identities”; and thus society, as he suggested, should be committed to building an education system that envisioned the “common good” (p. 21). To further substantiate this position, Msila (2007) states that education is always supposed to serve identity construction (p. 146). In the same vein, Lall (2008: 103) clearly demonstrates the purpose of education for the formation of national identification as stated: “Education is a central tool in national identity formation fostered through states”. Lall explains how education has been manipulated by Indian and Pakistan governments to create antagonistic national identities by using ethnicity and religion as its specific markers of ‘who belong’ and ‘who do not belong’ to the respective nations.

In addition to the above theoretical foundations, there is also ample empirical evidence on the role of education on nation-building. For instance, in his study of the role of the Thai national education system in current global competitiveness through enhancing national self-definition, Witte (2000) reported the loss of national identification brought about the erosion of self-confidence, pride, self-reliability and stability among the Thai population. In line with his finding, Witte recommends that the main concern of formal education should be on reconciliation of globalization and national identification because such harmony can bring about global competitiveness as stated: “After all, a widely shared sense of national identity can serve to enhance competitiveness” through reinforcing social cohesion and consent among fellow citizens on a nation’s strategic issues (p. 243).

Similar empirical evidence also shows that schooling/education is instrumental to social cohesion by providing the common attributes needed for identity formation (Ahonen, 2001). Ahonen shows how History curriculum has been manipulated to restore a nation-state conception of national identity through a framework of the grand narrative of nationalism in post-1990 Estonia; and how it has been used to forge a more inclusive national identity through a general liberal approach, including ‘*multiperspectivity*’ and alternative narrative of the past in Germany (pp. 190-191). Similarly, Darr (2011) also found out that History curriculum has been used in China for nation-building through enhancing national identity and state legitimation. Darr concludes that “There are real and substantial links between education and national identity...and national identity and state support” (p. 181).

In the African context, schools are expected to “cultivate a common national spirit and unity” (Woolman, 2001: 27) and national identity is one of the common venues where the unity of ideas, values, norms, interests and hopes have been realized. Similarly, Njeng’ere (2010) posits that “... a major purpose that education has been identified to achieve is national cohesion and integration” (p. 3). By taking the Kenyan case, Njeng’ere posits that despite national cohesion and integration is a major purpose of education in Kenya, the gap between the intended, implemented and achieved curricula undermines national cohesion and integration. Similarly, based on her empirical study of primary school Social Studies curriculum through the lens of teachers’ perceptions, Wyse (2010) found out that education plays an important role in the construction of Malawian national identity as symbolized by *language, citizenship, and socio-cultural traditions and values*.

Some other empirical findings and experiences in other African countries also reveal that a strong sense of national identity is an important condition for nation-building by promoting shared values and universal consensus among citizens on many of the country’s policies and strategies. For instance, in her study on national identity in a comparative context in Uganda and Tanzania, Tumwine (2009) found out that a strong sense of national identity in Tanzania brought about by *value-oriented education system, political mobilization, and a common language* has led to a historically rooted peaceful and stabilized society. She goes on to assert that the high level of national identity which maintains unity and solidarity in

multicultural Tanzania is also attributed to the values promoted by the Nyrere's Government *African Socialism Program*. On the other hand, although Ugandans have some sense of identification and attachment to their country symbolized by – some but not all – the *national flag, the coat of arms, the national currency, and their geographical territory*, yet the country did not develop a strong sense of national identity. The multifaceted problems of *insecurity, tribal clashes and high levels of corruption* in Uganda, as Tumwine argued, are attributed to the lack of a strong sense of national identity.

In Ethiopia, the issue of Ethiopian identity has been at least loosely stated in various legal, political, institutional, curricular, and other relevant strategic documents of the country, including the 1995 FDRE Constitution, the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), the 1994 ETP and the Education Sector Development programs (ESDPs). In the 1995 Constitution, the diversity of the Ethiopian people and the associated pledges inherent to this diversity has been underlined. Issues like *self-determination up to secession* (Article 39(1)), equality of all languages (Article 5), using and developing ones' language and history (Article 39(2)), and self-government (Article 39(3)) have been some of the manifestations of attempts to accommodating diversity. The Ethiopian GTP has also been designed to achieve broad-based growth – economic, social, and political – through popular or mass mobilization and eventually eradicate the poverty trap from the nation and thus create '*one political and economic community*' (FDRE-MOFED, 2010).

Accordingly, several sector-based development programs have been designed to mobilize the public to achieve the objectives and missions of the GTP. In the education sector, a rolling five year education sector development programs (ESDP I to V) have been designed to play its part in the overall nation-building process of economic, social, and political integration and transformation of the Ethiopian people. ESDP V (2015/16 to 2019/20) identified five priorities for the Ethiopian education system. One of these five priorities reads as "assist children, youth and adults to share common values and experiences and to embrace diversity" (MOE, 2015: 34). Thus the creation or strengthening of the multinational state Ethiopia seems to be one of the concerns of politicians and policy developers.

But, how this legal and political pledge to diversity has been managed to maintain the unity of the Ethiopian people through a pan-Ethiopian identity appears obscure and loosely defined. Moreover, a clear conceptualization of Ethiopian identity is almost missing in government documents including, for instance, the 1995 FDRE Constitution and the ensuing strategic development documents of the country. Again, up to the researcher's knowledge, no comprehensive research has been conducted to conceptualize and operationalize the issue of Ethiopian identity through a sound theoretical framework. As such, this study is intended to fill some of such gaps by crystallizing the conceptualization and operationalization of Ethiopian identity in curriculum discourse through a sound theoretical and conceptual framework.

1.3. Statement of the problem

Today, only few countries of the world are what [Kymlicka \(2003: 149\)](#) calls '*mono-national*'. [Parekh \(2005: 1; 1997: 523\)](#) also stated that "almost all modern societies are multicultural" and they draw their diversity from globalization, the decline of traditional moral consensus, liberalism, and immigration ([ibid](#)). Globally, from 185 member states of the UN only twenty of them can be categorized as more or less *homogeneous* in terms of their historical, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, regional and religious attributes ([Rhodie & Liebenberg, 1994](#)). It follows that diversity has become, more or less, the universal feature of modern nations.

Official reports ([see for example, CSA, 2013; FDRE-PCC, 2008](#)) show that Ethiopia has more than 80 ethnic groups exhibiting greater linguistic, religious, cultural and territorial diversity. Ten of these ethnic groups have a population of more than one million ([FDRE-PCC, 2008: 16](#)); and even some ethnically dominant regions have a population size greater than many independent African countries. Various governments of the country have attempted to establish a kind of nation-building which they think is appropriate to the Ethiopian context. The pre-1991 modern Ethiopia system of governance – particularly with regard to the pressing national question – remained more or less the same, with some exceptions during the Reign of Emperor Yohannes IV and the Military Government ([Merera, 2007](#)). Emperor Yohannes through his regional autonomy policy, and though not

successful and largely remained on paper, as he argued, the Military Regime through the NDR proposal had attempted to accommodate the national question.

The kind of federalism – largely “ethnic”-based – introduced as a system of governance in the post-1991 Ethiopia by the EPRDF, which brings ethnic loyalty and identity into the nation-building equation, has been taken as a radical departure from its predecessors mainly in view its response to the pressing national question (Alem 2003; Fasil, 1997). But yet there has been a growing debate as to whether federalism of such kind can be appropriate to maintain ‘*unity in diversity*’ in Ethiopia. Proponents of “ethnic”-based federalism point out that it would maintain the unity of the Ethiopian people and the territorial integrity of the state while providing full recognition to the principle of “ethnic” equality. For instance, in the international scholarship it is widely recognized that federalism is a mechanism to accommodate ethnic diversity for plural societies like Ethiopia (Van Der Beken, 2012). A more optimistic view about the Ethiopian largely “ethnic”-based federal arrangement has been found in Frank (2009). The Ethiopian “ethnic” federalism has been considered by Frank as a means to ease ethnic tensions and bring regional peace and stability as stated: “...a voluntary union of diverse regions is promising to reduce ethnic conflicts and stabilize the region. Theoretically, “ethnic” federalism endorses the principle of a voluntary union and it is therefore a positive factor for the current system” (p. 3).

Such great optimism about Ethiopian ethnic federalism in the international literature has also significant support in Ethiopian scholarship. For instance, Alem (2010) contends that the ethnic-based federal arrangement is a necessary precondition for sustained peace and overall socio-economic development in Ethiopia. Similarly, Tesfaye (2010) argues that ethnic federalism has played a pivotal role in solving conflicts by allowing each ethnic and cultural-linguistic community to have control of those regions of the country where it is in the majority while respecting basic minority rights. A more modest assertion regarding the role of the Ethiopian “ethnic”-based federalism on the protection of minority rights appeared in Frank’s explanation. Frank (2009) contends that one of the most important reasons to support the Ethiopian ethnic federalism is that today international law tends to protect minority rights.

Generally, the above assertions about the desirability of “ethnic”-based federalism in Ethiopia appear to be grounded on [Bermeo’s](#) claim that “Often, it is the refusal to federalize, rather than federalism itself, that stimulates secession” ([Bermeo, 2002: 105](#)). She contended that Tamil Tiger in Sri Lanka, the SPLA(M) in Sudan and the EPLF in Ethiopia decided for secession when their demand for federation had failed. [Bermeo](#) goes on to contend that “...it is historically inaccurate to argue that it [federalism] brings on separatism” ([p.107](#)). Although she strongly advocates a federal system of governance, Bermeo still warns that federalism should not, in any way, be taken as a panacea and/or a guarantee of peace and stability. However, here it is important to bear in mind that Bermeo discusses federalism at its most generic level and she still did not specify the kind of federalism best suited to the respective countries.

The current EPRDF political leaders of the country also consider “ethnic”-based federal arrangement as the only means of survival for the Ethiopian political community. In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) on the evening of 21 May 2016, the Federal Affairs Minister, [Kassa Teklebirhan](#), maintained that it is the “ethnic”-based federal apparatus put into effect by the EPRDF since 1995, at least constitutionally, practically solved the long awaited ‘national question’ which could have led the country into crisis. The Minister contended that “the ethnic-based federal arrangement could not, in any way, be a problem by itself; if any problem arises, it should be automatically interpreted as our failure to put the principle into practice”. This view appears to line up with the proponents of ‘ethnic’-based federalism discussed above.

On the other side of the debate, the opponents of “ethnic”-based federalism argue that the federal structure could lead to ethnic consciousness and conflicts rather than unity and solidarity among the Ethiopian people. They contend that the introduction of “ethnic”-based federalism would not result in sustained peace and stability rather it could lead to growing tensions, instabilities and ultimately to the disintegration of the Ethiopian state apparatus. For instance, [Kymlicka \(2006: 58\)](#) considered the adoption of “ethnic”-based federalism in Ethiopia as a “fragile experiment” which would ultimately lead to ethnic tensions and disintegration. [Assefa Fiseha’s \(2006\)](#) explanation seems to support Kymlicka’s position. However, [Assefa’s](#) claim mainly focuses not on the very principle of

“ethnic”-based federalism but most importantly in terms of the discrepancy between what the theoretical promises manifested in the 1995 FDRE Constitution and the actual practice on the ground.

Furthermore, Keller (1998) also contended that the “ethnic” based-federal arrangement which broke up the country into a few large ethnic regions does not at least answer the national question and at worst would intensify it. The ethnic based federal system instituted by the EPRDF since 1991, as he argued, allow the Ethiopian people to hold – but not to practice – the right to self-determination up to secession. In this case, Keller seems to argue against “ethnic”-based federalism from the perspective of practice rather than from its very principle. Alemante G/Selassie (2003) also joined this line of debate as he stated that “ethnic” federalism “...erects permanent walls of ethnic separation and impairs the chances for inter-ethnic cooperation, the development of a common citizenship, and the unity and security of the state” (p. 96). Alemante goes on to say that:

...as ethnic fundamentalists insist, that ethnic federalism is the only alternative. [...], this option offers some advantages, but is ultimately unworkable at best and dangerous at worst. By recognizing specific regions of a country as the "homeland" of particular ethnic groups, it serves to encourage loyalty to one's ethnic group (at the expense of loyalty to the nation) and to whet the appetite for ethnic nationalism (Alemante, 2003: 99).

In the same vein, Clapham (2009) states four reasons for the undesirability of “ethnic” federalism for Ethiopia. The first reason emerges from that fact that since the relationship between the Ethiopian state and nationalities primarily based on ethnic identity, participation in the political life of the country primarily demands being an Oromo, Amhara, Tigre, or any other ethnic group. Second, “ethnic” federalism deteriorates the relationship between nationalities as it leads to territorial conflicts which did not previously exist. Third, “ethnic”-federalism leads to the loss of mixed identities for power because in Ethiopia local governance primarily depends on ethnic identity. The last reason, as Clapham argued, is that “ethnic” federalism leads to tensions on the relationship among different peoples of the same ethnic group. For instance, what is Oromoness, Amharaness, Tigreness, Guragheness, Wolayitaness, Sidamaness, etc is not the same for all these nationalities. By extension what is Oromoness means different things for Arsi, Bale,

Wollega, Shewa, and Jimma Oromos in the same way as being Amharaness is different for Gondar, Gojjam, Wello and Shewa Amharas. In short, the primacy given to ethnicity as a dominant organizing principle could not provide room for other identity sets that people in any given nationality live with.

Still some scholars have a mixed image about the “ethnic”-based federalism adopted by the EPRDF in post-1991 Ethiopia. For instance, [Abbink](#) contends that the “ethnic”-based federation in Ethiopia of course brought important changes in economic terms but it undermines a sense of common citizenship identity. [Abbink](#) further contends that:

Economic upsurge is in full swing and has been successes. But these do neither “compensate” for the socio-political problems nor guarantee stability. At present there are constraints and dilemmas in the field of ethnicity and citizenship ([Abbink, 2011: 611](#)).

[Abbink](#) argues, in the current political context of Ethiopia, the ethnic discourse both in its ideological and practical administrative dimension may impede political, social and economic transformation and as such the current experiment of “ethnic”-based federation in Ethiopia needs some form of amendment.

From the above contentions about the Ethiopian federalism discourse it appears possible to understand that the introduction of “ethnic”-based federalism and the positioning of “ethnicity” as a founding political principle of the new Ethiopian state apparatus have created a big gulf among Ethiopian and even international scholarship and yet no topic appears more contentious than the issue of Ethiopian identity in post-1991 Ethiopia. Those who stood against the “ethnic”-based federalism assert that as primary identification with ethnic community could lead to less loyalty to the political nation, citizens should drop their hyphenated identities, including their ethnic identity. This group justifies its claim by asserting that *Article 39* of the 1995 FDRE Constitution (*the right to self-determination up to and including secession*) and the “ethnic”-based federal arrangement officially offers a ‘legal license’ for those ethnic entrepreneurs to advance parochial sentiments on behalf of their ethnic community.

On the other hand, those who advocate the ethnic-based federal arrangement contend that individual’s or citizens’ primary identification with their ethnic community is a source of

their unity and loyalty to the nation. It is a common rhetoric among the current Ethiopian government officials and a day-to-day public media discourse about the desirability of “ethnic”-based federalism for multination state Ethiopia. They essentialise the “ethnic”-based federalism for the very existence – and for sustainable nation-building – of the political nation (Ethiopia). Moreover the “ethnic”-based federal experiment is often regarded as a panacea to all political, economic and social ills the country has experienced in history. But whether ethnic consciousness serves as a solid base of national unity or stimulates disintegration requires intensive empirical study.

The main intent of reviewing the available scholarship on the current Ethiopian political context was not to judge which side is right or wrong on the appropriateness and inappropriateness of the ethnic-based federal arrangement. Practical evidence would provide the basis for which position is reflected. But still the researcher contends that – up to his knowledge – most of these assertions on both sides of the debate appear gross narratives centered merely on the legal constitutional dimension or framework of the “ethnic”-based federal arrangement and some are even position statements that are not largely grounded on empirical explorations.

Moreover, much of the existing theoretical debate on the desirability and undesirability of the current “ethnic”-based federal arrangement for building a common sense of belonging and unity of purpose among the Ethiopian political and cultural community remained an elite discourse which overlooked individual or mass/public opinion on the same issue. This dissertation, therefore, attempted to enrich current theory and understanding on education’s role in developing identity and provide empirical evidence on student attachment and identification with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. It also examined the role of the national and regional education system curriculum in cultivating an Ethiopian identity which could transcend ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural boundaries – to name a few – so that they culminate in the unity and solidarity of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples while respecting their inherent diversity.

Most of the existing scholarship ([see for example, Lall, 2008; Reid, 2000; Woolman, 2001](#)) suggests that national education system curriculum, while accommodating diversity, should

operate on shared values, interests, norms, beliefs and experiences which would reinforce the unity and integrity of a nation's people. In the word of [Parekh \(1997: 528\)](#) "...educational institutions are indispensable foundations of a well-organized political community". For instance, in multicultural countries like the United States and Canada, the Social Studies curriculum has been used as a key tool to create a shared sense of national identity on their citizens through the reproduction and dissemination of social values to the new generation and hence enables the continuity of culture, society and nation ([Hardwick, Marcus & Isaak, 2010](#)). However, as [Parekh](#) argued, the community-building purpose of education through cultivating common citizenship has been ignored by many non-Western societies.

Since its inception in the beginning of the twentieth century ([Abebe, 2000; Amare & Temechegn, 2002; Bahru, 2002; MoE, 2011](#)), modern education in Ethiopia has always been regarded as an engine of national development ([Tekeste, 2010](#)). It could be, more consensually, claimed that Ethiopian leaders, policy makers, planners and educators have almost always held great optimism about modern education. The history of modern education in Ethiopia indicates that education has always taken a driver's seat in state development agendas. In line with this, [Tekeste \(2010\)](#) contends that the priority the education sector has secured over other sectors throughout history can be taken as a common denominator of the last three systems of governance or regimes of Ethiopia. However, there have been repeated critics on the part of the populace and some Ethiopian scholars that the national education system curriculum often overlooks its core values, beliefs and traditions. This problem may partly emerge from the fact that the modern education system of the country had been copied from the West and did not germinate or evolved from the Ethiopian soil.

Many scholars ([see for example, Apple, 2013; Dewey, 1959; Tekeste, 1996](#)) suggest that schools should not be divorced from the society for which they are intended to serve. Furthermore, [Ballantine \(1993\), Dewey \(1959\), and Hann \(1961\)](#) suggest that for education to be relevant and effective it should be grounded on the appreciation of the cultures, values, norms and traditions of the communities to whom it belongs. One of the most important functions of education for society is the formation of national identities where its

shared values, symbols, norms, experiences and aspirations can be cultivated ([Ahonen, 2001](#); [Njeng'ere, 2010](#); [Msila, 2007](#); [Reid, 2000](#); [Witte, 2000](#)).

As suggested by various scholars (for instance, [Apple, 2013](#); [Njeng'ere, 2010](#)), the purpose of education in nation-building has been nurturing shared values, norms and experiences among a nation's youth without compromising its inherent diversity. Thus, whether shared values, beliefs and norms documented in the 1995 FDRE Constitution, the 1994 ETP, the Pre-College Curriculum Framework, the GTP, ESDPs and other relevant strategic development documents of the country transpire the school curriculum, textbook design, students' social and intellectual development and/ or practice merits research.

Moreover, previous research indicates that miseducation can counteract a nation-building process. Some empirical evidence in Africa and Asia also support this proposition. For instance, [Msila \(2007\)](#) demonstrated how formal education in Apartheid South Africa was manipulated as an instrument to systematically create a racially divided and unequal society. In Apartheid South Africa, schools were organized on the basis of race and the curriculum was designed to create a mono-cultural citizenship and thus to reinforce divisions in the society. Similarly, [Lall \(2008\)](#) also found out that in India and Pakistan education or national curricula have been used to create hostile national identities through narrowly defined markers of 'we' and 'the other' such as religion and ethnicity.

The Rwandan case offers another example. The Republic of Rwanda National Unity and Reconciliation Commission ([RRNURC, 2002](#)) explicitly demonstrates how miseducation and biased teachings given to Rwandans over generations put a premium on ethnic cleavages and culminated in the eventual 1994 genocide and massacres. Historically the Hutu majority have been treated in the national curriculum as the original native citizens of Rwanda whereas the minority Tutsi as newcomers. Such treatment of the two major ethnic groups as 'natives' and 'aliens' respectively gradually developed ethnocentric attitudes in the minds of students which claim Rwanda as exclusively belonging to the Hutu majority and leaving aside the Tutsi minority as second citizens. The RRNURC plainly disclosed that those curricular problems leading to ethnic cleavages and the 1994 eventual genocide were generated by miseducation of Rwandans by Rwandans themselves. Generally, these

empirical studies largely indicate that, based on how it is organized, in as much as developing consensus among a nation's population formal education reinforces tensions and divisions in a society for which it stands.

Some studies conducted on education and identity in Ethiopia appear to show that intergroup relations and Ethiopian identity are not dominantly prevalent among study subjects and the formal curriculum as well. For instance, perceptions of “irrational hatred, fear of the different, and ethnocentric attitudes” among ABE primary school children ([Ambissa, 2010: 23](#)); worsened interethnic relations often leading to conflicts and the absence of unity of purpose among Addis Ababa University Amhara, Oromo and Tigre students which could challenge the one-Ethiopia image ([Abera, 2010](#)); ethnic-based conflicts among Bahir Dar University students ([Tilahun, 2007](#)); and ethnic resonance of Social Studies textbooks ([Dawit & Haftu, 2012: 142](#)) may be taken as some of the symptoms of inadequate intergroup relations observed in the school setting of the country. These studies, though limited in scope, at least appear to indicate the gaps in the national and regional education system curriculum to create positive intergroup relations and thus its limitations to significantly contribute to the ongoing nation-building process.

In his anthropological study of interethnic relations among the Oromo, Amhara and Tigre Students at Addis Ababa University Main Campus, [Abera \(2010\)](#) found out that there existed almost a complete absence of shared sense of understanding and tolerance among students of diverse ethnic background. The main reason behind the strained relations and conflicts among Oromo and Amhara students – as Oromo students believe – has been narratives of the oppressed and oppressor relations among their ancestors respectively. At the core of the conflict with Tigrian students was that – as Oromo and Amhara students believe – key positions in government are held by political elites from Tigray and as such they indiscriminately categorize Tigrian students as having strong affiliation with the current government simply because they are Tigrians. Accordingly, the day-to-day activities and even classroom discourse of students in the University Compound has been based on ethnic allegiance. There are even places within the University Compound reserved for and named after certain ethnic groups.

From [Abera's](#) finding we can infer that the absence of common understanding and unjustified hatred seem to intensifying interethnic competition rather than cooperation which may lead to ethnic-based conflicts in the higher education institutions (hereafter, HEIs) of the country. Against this background, [Abera](#) points to the current “ethnic”-based federal arrangement and poor university management as the root causes of ethnic cleavages and conflicts among ethnic students in the Ethiopian HEIs. Of course, his assertion has not been without theoretical and empirical support from Ethiopian and international literature. Furthermore, [Mesfin \(2006\)](#) also believed that ethnic conflicts are the results of deliberate manipulation of ethnic sentiments and identities by either leaders of the respective ethnic groups or government officials as a means of securing economic and political advantages. [Abbink \(2006\)](#) also believed that the Ethiopian “ethnic” federalism has been decentralizing ethnic-based conflicts at regional and local levels. Similarly, [Lubo \(2012\)](#) asserts that the “ethnic” federal arrangement has become a major source of ethnic conflicts over identity, territory and claims to power and resources.

However, despite such theoretical backdrop this dissertation argues that [Abera](#) and related studies appear to point to the symptoms rather than the root causes of the conflict among ethnic students in the HEIs of the country. It appears that in-depth study of the merits and demerits of “ethnic”-based federalism is required before one may reach to such bold conclusions. In principle, it is true that students joining HEIs of the country are the hopes of the future generations. They will be researchers, educators, peace advocates and future political leaders whose role has the power to decide the fate of the country. Therefore, the dissertation contends that as students are far from the existing state bureaucracy brought about by the “ethnic”-based federalism, the way they learn at school and in their family than a form of political administration which primarily crystallizes and defines their intra-ethnic and interethnic relations. It follows that assessment of the country's national and regional education system curriculum or the way they are educated would provide a relatively better insight into the root sources of conflict and friendly relations among students of diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

In Ethiopia, there are also some studies showing cultural identity crisis. In his analysis of the modes of cultural imperialism reflected in the narratives of Daniel Kibret, [Addisu](#)

(2012) found out that there is a total identity crisis in the country brought about by ‘cultural imperialism’ where only a physical self without Ethiopian mentality remains intact in the Ethiopian soil. In line with the identity crisis brought about by ‘cultural imperialism’, Addisu considers gross imitation, submissive behaviour, and undermining domestic knowledge, cultures and values as some of the defining features of the current Ethiopian generation. He grossly criticizes the current generation, from an ordinary Ethiopian to a distinguished university professor, for echoing Western voice or values. Against this finding, Addisu recommends among other things that schools are important venues for the preservation of indigenous knowledge, values and cultures and thus designing context-specific appropriate school curriculum would help cultural preservation.

Although there are also other studies (for instance, Mahlet, 2006; Simret, 2009; Yasin, 2006) showing identity crisis in Ethiopia, almost all treat the issue in the context of cultural intrusion. Generally, these studies are limited in dimension, at least, from the perspective of methodological limitations. They tried to understand the preservation of indigenous cultures, values and identity only through text narratives rather than exploring individual attitudes or opinions about the Ethiopian culture and identity from the emic perspective through interviews, FGDs, surveys and other primary data instruments.

In Ethiopia, despite the inherent diversity of its people, a contested past history, and apparent discontinuity in the content and meaning of Ethiopianness, only few studies have been conducted on intergroup relations through the lens of the national education system curriculum. For instance, in their assessment of Social Studies textbooks in the Amhara Region and students’ perceptions of the impacts of those textbooks in shaping their group identity, Dawit and Haftu (2012) found out that those textbooks mainly portray a non-inclusive ethnic conception of group identity. Similarly, through his empirical study of intergroup relations among ABE school children aged ten to fourteen, Ambissa (2010) found out that the curriculum did not address Ethiopian diversity and thus students have a negative perception towards out-groups. These findings suggest that the issue of group identity still poses a potential challenge for national cohesion and integration. But, the main gaps in these studies are that in their study of intergroup relations and identity, these scholars have failed to directly point to the contested issue of Ethiopian identity. Moreover,

given their limited scope and lack of sound theoretical and conceptual framework, these studies did not sufficiently explore curriculum responses and student values or perspectives on Ethiopian identity.

The fact is that plural societies have conflicting interests, beliefs, norms, values, and aspirations about their imagined future. But, it is the intersection of values, interests, beliefs, and aspirations about their imagined future which holds diverse societies together. Many scholars suggest that one of the manifestations of the commonalities of the interests, hopes and beliefs of plural – multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic, and multi-religious – societies lies in their national identity. Ordinary citizens could not be held together because of their mere presence in the same country; rather, it is the deep-rooted pervasive psychology or emotional bond which would hold them together.

This dissertation asserts that the Ethiopian national and regional education system curriculum should present and reinforce some socio-cultural and political constituents of Ethiopianness. It could be argued that if the national and regional education system curriculum remains indifferent to the issue of Ethiopian identity, it is indirectly allowing and even privileging some groundless non-inclusive and parochial symbols, values and traditions to dictate interethnic and intra-ethnic relations and in effect it restricts the active participation and belongingness of all nations, nationalities and peoples in the new nation-building process on the principle of common dialogue where all voices would be equally valued.

Generally, current scholarship shows that in plural societies, like Ethiopia, the issue of national identity usually remains contested. Although one of the main concern of the country's national and regional education system curriculum and the ensuing research should be about how to effectively cultivate and develop Ethiopian identity so that significantly contribute to the ongoing nation-building process, unfortunately this core issue appears to remain overlooked in Ethiopian academic discourse. This study is therefore intended to crystallize and enrich the emerging discourses (theories) on Ethiopian identity in contemporary Ethiopia through the analysis of national and regional formal education system curriculum and student perspectives in a multicultural context.

1.3.1. Rationale for Ethiopian identity in curriculum discourse

The dissertation contends that existing Ethiopian (and international as well) research in the broad field of education in general and curriculum studies in particular mainly focuses on the technical aspects of curriculum design, implementation and evaluation rather than on the broader impacts of education on overall national (social) development. By extension, it appears imperative to justify this position and eventually attempt to reverse this dominant trend in local curriculum discourse. Accordingly, the researcher intends to present justifications for the question: ‘*why to study Ethiopian identity in curriculum discourse?*’ and then to show the gaps in current scholarship on the issue under treatment. First, we shall try to answer the question ‘*Why Ethiopian identity?*’ and then we will proceed to justifying ‘*why Ethiopian identity in curriculum discourse*’.

1.3.1.1. Why Ethiopian identity?

To begin with, individuals have several co-existing and overlapping identities including – some but not all – racial, ethnic, territorial, linguistic, religious, and gender (Banks, 2011; Citrin, Wong & Duff, 2001). But national identity is probably regarded as “the most fundamental and inclusive” of all collective forms of identifications for which modern human being has claimed to (Smith, 1991: 143). Building further on Greenfield’s and Chirot’s claims, Citrin, Wong & Duff (2001) assert that national identity has emerged as a dominant academic discourse because the dominant way to boost social solidarity in modern plural societies would be emphasizing loyalty to the nation and making this the essence of the individual’s political self-definition.

The new conception of nation-building – ‘*unity in diversity*’ – in Ethiopia since 1991 which took ethnicity as its founding principle probably poses new challenges and opportunities for a country which strictly followed a more centralized *assimilationist* policy – both voluntary assimilation probably subconsciously coercive and mandatory assimilation consciously coercive – throughout its history. Recognizing that the Constitution has been an essential signifier of the re – imagined Ethiopia, the 1994 ETP derives its core values and principles from the Constitution. Consequently, the formal education curriculum discourse is expected to cultivate and develop the new Ethiopia within multiethnic, multi-

linguistic, multi-religious and multicultural understanding and consciousness. Recent scholarship suggests that diversity would be a nation's resource if and only if it is properly managed. Therefore, for plural societies, like Ethiopia, an overarching Ethiopian identity which would bring unity of spirit and action, or what Miller (1995) calls *empathy and trust*, among Ethiopians is one of the mechanisms to maintain its unity and solidarity.

In various legal, political, and strategic development documents of the country including – the GTP, ETP, ESDP-IV and Pre-College Curriculum Framework – the role of education in national development has been underlined. Although research have been conducted on the economic and to some extent on the political viability of the new “ethnic”-based federation, yet its psychosocial impact through Ethiopian identity development via the lens of its ETP and subsequent curriculum planning and implementation remains little researched. Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the kind of Ethiopian identity reinforced through the country's ETP in general and its subsequent curriculum planning and implementation in particular.

Moreover, from the researcher's lived experience, although the issue of identity and diversity appears constitutionally resolved by the current government, ethnic-based conflicts still erupt, particularly in the HEIs of the country. This situation can lead even a naive observer to raise the question: *Does education fail to serve its purpose of nurturing shared values, norms, beliefs, interests, experiences, and aspirations of society to whom it belong and accordingly unable to build consensus among the nation's citizens?* This research project therefore partly explores some contributing factors to this problem. However, the researcher would like to remind its potential audience that although the title of the research project appears to emerge from this grand question, its findings cannot, in any way, present a complete answer to this question.

1.3.1.2. Why Ethiopian identity in curriculum discourse?

In this new era of globalization, the dominance of the neoliberal ideology and the subsequent surge of market forces into almost every aspect of economic, political, and social life inspire countries of the world to restore their national distinctiveness (Miller, 1995). Many scholars agree that education/ curriculum is one of the means to accomplish

such mission. Among the foremost scholars – up to the researcher’s knowledge – in this line of discourse is [William A. Reid](#). Further building on Frederick Rudolph’s synthesis, [Reid \(2000\)](#) contends that curriculum should be one of those areas of knowledge where we declare our national identity or “*who we are*” (p. 113). He suggests that the main focus of national curriculum discourse should be about the kind of nation we belong to and the deep meaning of belonging to that nation. [Reid](#) advocates the national distinctiveness of curriculum as he stated:

National curricula are cultural artifacts in the same way that national songs, stories, and festivals are cultural artifacts. Even if they use the same basic materials, what results from those materials has unique meaning for individual nations (Reid, 2000: 113).

Similarly, one of the four pillars of learning in the twenty-first century identified by the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century by [Delors, et al. \(1996: 85\)](#) is ‘*learning to live together*’. This pillar of learning is primarily concerned with the growing interdependence, shared purposes, common projects and joint future and this involves knowing ourselves and developing an understanding of others. Thus, ‘*learning to live together*’ is directly related to issues of [national] cohesion and integration and therefore globally national cohesion and integration has been a major purpose of education or curriculum. UNESCO’s further optimism about education’s role in strengthening societal unity and solidarity is found in the following quotation as stated:

Education is indispensable in strengthening the bonds that hold communities and societies together. Education helps people understand democracy, promotes the tolerance and trust that underpin it, and motivates people to participate in politics. Education’s role is especially vital in regions and countries where lack of tolerance is associated with violence and conflict (UNESCO, 2013:18).

Moreover, as education is a social activity it has significant influence on the cultivation of shared values, norms, beliefs, experiences, and interests. To further substantiate this position, [Saldana \(2013\)](#) asserts that “The school system has become the glue that holds society together” (p. 228). From its early inception, as he argued, the main purpose of formal education was to cultivate commonality in a heterogeneous society. The school system served as a thread which connects the various isolated parts of society together. Among the venues of the manifestations of such shared values, norms, interests, and beliefs

cultivated by the school system have been national identities; and this is particularly important for plural societies, like Ethiopia.

The other rationale for studying national/Ethiopian identity in curriculum discourse is that a very large array of academic or intellectual work in the area has been, to a large extent, limited to the technical issues of how students learn best and achieve good results in tests and examinations. In line with this, in his seminal book entitled *'Ideology and Curriculum'*, Apple (2004) reminds us that “...a truly critical study of education needs to deal with more than the technical issues of how we teach efficiently and effectively—too often the dominant or only questions educators ask” (p. vii). Building further up on Apple’s suggestion, this research project argues that curriculum discourse should extend beyond the horizon of methodological issues in teaching and learning a subject matter.

Although there is a relatively extensive literature on the analysis of the contents of textbooks for other dimensions, Ethiopian scholarship that applied textbook narratives for understanding a nation-building process has been scanty. Furthermore, the main gap in current scholarship is that most of the existing international literature on national identity is dominated by elite discourse rather than empirical individual/ public attitudes (Dar, 2011). The existing literature also defines and understands nation-building through the lens of nationalism which often has vague and unstable meanings. Therefore, the dissertation argues that a conceptual framework which employs national identity is found to be preferable to understand the ongoing nation-building process in Ethiopia.

1.4. Research questions

This study is intended to understand the state of Ethiopian identity in the ongoing nation-building process through the assessment of national and regional education system curriculum and student perspectives. In order to achieve this grand objective, the research project bases its focus of inquiry on the following seven research questions:

- 1) What kind of, if there is any, distinct Ethiopian identity is portrayed in the country’s national and regional education system curriculum?
- 2) How is Ethiopian identity presented and reinforced in the national and regional education system curriculum?

- 3) How do students (and teachers) assess the contribution of the formal education system curriculum in shaping their Ethiopian identity?
- 4) How do students define and/ or understand the meaning of what it means to be Ethiopian and why they define it the way they do?
- 5) How and to what extent do students associate with the values, symbols and traditions embedded in the national and regional curriculum as manifestations of Ethiopian identity?
- 6) What is the interface between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity in the national and regional education system curriculum and in student values?
- 7) Which factors shape the students' values or perspectives on Ethiopian identity?

1.5. Significance of the study

The major findings of this research project which emerge through the assessment of curriculum representations and student perspectives on Ethiopian identity would have important implications for policy, theory and practice. This study could benefit the country to expose its major attributes (values, symbols and traditions) of Ethiopian identity to its citizens and to the external world through the dissemination of knowledge represented in its major findings. The research would also be used as a steppingstone for initiating national identification projects which would intensify the unity and solidarity of the Ethiopian people without compromising its inherent diversity. Generally, although this research project might have significance to other stakeholders, its particular audiences would include: the State, curriculum planners, students, and the academic community; and its findings are intended to significantly contribute to each of these groups as follows:

To the State: The available literature suggests that there exists a fundamental link between nation-building and national identification. Therefore, through examining curriculum materials and student perspectives on what it means to be Ethiopian, the research project identifies some of the constituents of Ethiopian identity and suggests potential areas which would help the State authorities to further consolidate unity and cohesion among the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples without compromising the inherent ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity. As such, the research finding could have an implication for policy. For instance, a survey study conducted by [Huddy and Khatib \(2007\)](#)

reveals that national identity is an important predictor of political involvement when they noted “Americans with a strong national identity paid more attention to politics, knew more about current events, and were more likely to vote” (p.74). Another study conducted by Darr (2011) also found out that public education has been effectively used to cultivate national identity and state legitimation and ultimately to ensure political stability in China.

This research project explores some basic attributes of Ethiopian identity from basic curriculum documents and assesses students’ level of attachment to them. Accordingly, its findings could inform the FDRE government some of the gaps in the national and regional education system curriculum to form and reinforce Ethiopian identity and suggest alternative ways or approaches of nurturing it through curriculum policy, planning and implementation so that the formal education system curriculum can be utilized as a means of nation-building and state-building through national consciousness and mass mobilization. It could also inform political leaders about the successes and challenges in building the new Ethiopia as evidence from students’ values reveals whether the current education system has succeeded in creating a shared sense of belonging to the Ethiopian political and economic community.

To Curriculum planners: Examining curriculum materials and student perspectives on Ethiopian identity identifies specific attributes of national identification and the deep meaning of attachment to it. As such, the study could provide curriculum planners with some theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the integration of Ethiopian identity in national and regional education system curriculum planning and implementation. In other words, it could give national and regional curriculum planners some insights on the link between national and regional education system curriculum and Ethiopian identity development.

To students: The findings of this research project could help students to crystallize what it means to be Ethiopian and the meaning of attachment to it. Such awareness could help students to identify their role in the ongoing nation-building process through their understanding of the deep meaning of belonging to their country – political and cultural community – and the degree of attachment to it. In other words, being aware of the main

attributes of Ethiopian identity and understanding the meaning of being attached to these attributes could help students to build common understanding or mutual trust and hence live in harmony with their fellow Ethiopian citizens of diverse ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural and territorial origin. This could, in turn, guarantee inter-generational continuity of some attributes of Ethiopianness.

To the academic community: [Fagerlind and Saha \(1989\)](#) stated that there are two perspectives on the role of education in changing society. The first perspective held great optimism about education's role in the economic, social, political, and cultural transformation of society. The proponents of this position consider education as a panacea to all society's problems. On the other hand, the second position reflects the apparent skepticism in education's role to solve society's problems. This research project, through the investigation of national and regional education system curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity and students perspectives on the same, could contribute to enrich current theory and understanding on the place of formal education system curriculum in national identity construction in a multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious developing country context; and therefore, it could be taken as a welcome addition to this theoretical debate.

Another significant contribution of this research project to the academic community may be that in the process of exploration of Ethiopian identity from national and regional education system curriculum and student perspective, it identifies specific attributes of Ethiopian identity which are scant in the existing body of Ethiopian and international literature. As such, it could bridge the gaps in the conceptualization and theorization of Ethiopian identity in the Ethiopian literature. The last but not least contribution of this dissertation to the existing body of knowledge could be that most of the existing international literature understands nation-building through the lens of nationalism, which often carries unclear and vague meanings. This dissertation could provide an understanding and conceptualization of nation-building through the lens of national identity in a multicultural perspective. Therefore, it adds to the international nation-building literature.

The dissertation uses mixed methods design where the initial qualitative finding informed the subsequent quantitative survey. In doing so the dissertation could also have methodological contributions. In Ethiopia some studies have been conducted by using mixed methods design. However, most of them simply combine quantitative and qualitative data to enrich the evidence base of their findings. Simply stated, they applied mixed methods research design for the purpose of data triangulation rather than methods triangulation. As such, this dissertation could contribute to existing scholarship by advancing the utility of mixed methods design in educational research settings through demonstrating the inherent interdependence between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Furthermore, as educational research often focuses on the technical aspects of teaching and learning (Apple, 2004), this research, through its primary focus on what students should learn, could influence such research orientation in Ethiopia and beyond.

1.6. Delimitation of the study

In this section, the dissertation demonstrates what is within its purview and what lies outside it in terms of spatial, content and temporal dimensions. In terms of territorial or geographical scope, the study, more or less, covered all regional states of the country. For instance, a more or less, adequate representative of students from the school system of almost all regional states of the country were accessed and participated in the questionnaire survey, and some in the in-depth interviews and FGDs. However, the content analysis dimension of the study was limited to three ethnic regions, namely: Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions. These three regions were purposefully considered on the basis of population size, composition of ethnically dominant population, historical political background and their place in the current nation-building process (for details, please refer pp. 155 –156 of this dissertation).

Regarding the content dimension of the dissertation, there were some aspects of identity and curriculum covered and/ or studied while there were also some components excluded and hence not studied. As to identity issues, many scholars agree that there are various forms of identification an individual has – ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, gender, spatial, and economic. In this research project, only Ethiopian identity has been given top priority because it is the *most inclusive of all* (Smith, 1991) while, at the same time, it

remains to be the most contentious in the new Ethiopian nation-building process. In the political and sociological sense, nation, ethnicity, ethnic identity, national identity and nationalism appear inseparable concepts. In this study, all these concepts have been treated and discussed only to conceptualize and understand Ethiopian identity. Moreover, this research project could not provide a very deep understanding of each of these concepts because the main intention here is not to deeply explore how each of these concepts are formed and related but to understand the portrayal and enforcement of Ethiopian identity in the national and regional education system curriculum materials and in student perspectives. We hope future research would bridge this gap.

Similarly, the study examines curriculum materials in relation to the portrayal and description of values, symbols, beliefs and traditions which may denote Ethiopianness or Ethiopian identity. As such, this study mainly focuses on the intended curriculum (what is meant) and the attained curriculum (what students know at the end of learning through the curriculum) leaving aside the implemented curriculum (the teaching and learning process in the classroom). In short, the dissertation heavily relied on the what aspect of curriculum conception. The instructional aspect of the curriculum may be covered by future research.

Furthermore, this research project is intended to explore and demonstrate whether Ethiopian identity implicitly presented in the country's 1995 FDRE Constitution and the ensuing 1994 ETP, National Education Curriculum Frameworks, GTP, ESDP-IV and other strategic development documents translated into national and regional formal education system curriculum and/ or textbooks so that it influences student perspectives. Therefore, it does not seek to show the causal link between the national and regional education system curriculum and Ethiopian identity development and draw generalizations accordingly.

The other point is that although all primary school textbooks have been prepared following the National Education Curriculum Framework, there may be some variations in the content of these textbooks across ethnic regions. Therefore, in order to minimize the effects brought about by this regional sensitivity of specific contents of primary education level textbooks, content analysis of primary education level (Grade five up to Grade eight) and secondary education level (Grade nine up to Grade twelve) Social Studies, Civic and

Ethical Education (hereafter, CEE) and History textbooks has been made on the three ethnic regions of Ethiopia such as Oromiya Region, Amhara Region and Tigray Region where the medium of instruction is both Amharic and nationality languages. Given the largest proportion of schools and student population of these regions, it is hoped that content analysis of some selected primary and secondary school textbooks in Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray Regions would mirror curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity at the national level.

In terms of chronological scope, this study is primarily cross-sectional. It tried to explore, describe and explain the status of Ethiopian identity in the national and regional education system curriculum and in student values or perspectives. Thus, the dissertation is mainly interested in finding out the place of Ethiopian identity in Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks and in student perspectives as it stands during the course of the study. It follows that although students who passed through the Ethiopian upper secondary education level experienced two sets of textbooks, the dissertation attempted to analyze only those sets of textbooks produced within the last five years (in the first GTP) under GEQIP (General Education Quality Improvement Program) and currently in use in the upper primary and secondary school system of the country. As the 2010 National Pre-College Education Curriculum Framework suggests, there was no significant difference between the two sets of textbooks mainly in terms of specific contents intended to be communicated to students. The difference was mainly pedagogical (in the approaches of teaching and learning). Moreover, students have passed through only one set of History textbooks which were published in 2005 and 2006.

For assessing student perspectives or values on Ethiopian identity those who passed through the country's primary and secondary school system and currently (in 2015) joined HEIs were considered as major study participants. As such, although the dissertation's chronological scope appear to extend from September 2003 to June 2015 (1996 to 2007 Ethiopian academic calendar), the study was mainly interested in the current state of affairs.

1.7. Limitations of the study

This study is intended to explore the status of Ethiopian identity in the country's national and regional education system curriculum through the assessment of some selected textbooks and student values. Therefore, it is clear from the very outset that the research project could probably yield better results if it draws data from sample schools/ institutions and textbooks in all ethnic regions of the country. However, due to financial limitations and time constraints, the dissertation is forced to draw data from textbooks in some national regional states. In order to minimize this problem – particularly for the survey part – the dissertation attempted to draw data from fairly representative samples of newly admitted first year undergraduate students of Addis Ababa University recruited from the various ethnic groups of the country in the 2015/2016 academic year.

The other obstacle faced in the course of the study was that mainly due to the political/ideological sensitivity of the research theme, the study participants' have had lower appetite to get involved in the study and to be audio and video recorded. This problem has been tolerated through convincing the participants about the objective of the study and ensuring absolute confidentiality of their responses during the consent agreement session. For some students, department heads and course instructors were contacted to mediate the process so that students develop confidence and freely participate in the study.

It is also important to note that as the data collection process extends to the eve of the demonstrations or protests in some areas of Oromiya Regional State against the proposed Addis Ababa City Integrated Development Master Plan, some of the findings of the study – mainly the questionnaire survey – may be constrained by the responses of Oromiya Region students. Despite this drawback, the dissertation attempted to clarify and convince students on the nature and purpose of the research project.

1.8. Theoretical and conceptual framework

The issue of Ethiopian identity emerges from the assumption that in a multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural, and multi-religious society, differences – and even conflicts – in values, norms, beliefs, and interests are unavoidable. But while recognizing and respecting ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity – to state some but not all –

and conflicts in values, norms, interests, and beliefs, we should find a common platform where these differences and conflicts of values and interests converge. Ethiopian identity has been believed to be one of those areas of convergence or gravity which could bind the entire nation's political and cultural community together. Thus, the national and regional education system curriculum could adequately nurture shared values, norms, interests and hopes of the Ethiopian politico-cultural community without compromising its inherent diversity.

Based on such theoretical assumption, this section of the dissertation begins with a brief overview and explanation of some of the competing perspectives or theoretical foundations to studying national identity often utilized by previous scholarship in the social sciences and education. These theories have been scrutinized for their potential strengths and gaps in understanding the issue of national identity in curriculum discourse. On this basis, the dissertation first identifies its preferred theoretical framework which could help to understand Ethiopian identity in curriculum discourse. It then proceeds to defining some of the key terms accordingly – such as nation-building, nation, nationalism, national identity, citizenship and ethnic identity – as they apply to understanding Ethiopian identity. The dissertation attempts to demonstrate the potential of the constructivist approach to understanding the question of Ethiopian identity in national and regional education system curriculum discourse.

1.8.1. Competing perspectives to studying national identity

There are competing perspectives on the study of nations, nationalism and national identities. Some scholars (for instance Croucher, 2004; Ozkirimli, 2000) suggest that the various perspectives of nation, nationalism (and national identity) can be grouped into two as *primordialist* theories and *modernist* or *constructivist* theories. Primordialism, being probably the first and oldest theory (Ozkirimli, 2000), contends that nations have been predetermined and fixed and as such they are as old as the first human being. It follows that their frontiers, origin, place, character, mission and destiny remained fixed and natural and so does their identity (Ozkirimli, 2000; Smith, 2009). Accordingly, to form a nation and identification and attachment with it is a natural human instinct (Imtiyaz & Stavits, 2008; Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009). Thus Primordialists appear to equate our national identity with

the naturalness of our body parts – like ears, nose, eyes, etc (Gellner, 1983). It seems due to this naturalist perspective that the primordialists often symbolize national identity through objective or ascribed criteria such as kinship, language, religion, ethnicity, race and other markers defined on the basis of culturally acquired attributes and genetically determined characteristics or simply by descent or genealogical ties (Imtiyaz & Stavis, 2008; Ozkirimli, 2000; Smith, 2009). This implies that national identity is perceived only as an independent variable used to explain – but unexplained by – other variables (Croucher, 2004).

In response to this earliest grand theory of nations and nationalism, a second most influential school of thought, called *modernism or constructivism*, has emerged to explain the origin and characteristics of nations and national identities (Croucher, 2004; Ozkirimli, 2000; Smith, 1999). The proponents of this perspective contend that nations are modern phenomena resulted from late eighteenth century modern conditions such as industrialization, urbanization, mass literacy, standardized mass communication systems, state bureaucracy and secularism (Gellner, 1983) and their attributes are mere constructions rather than ‘givens’. Thus constructivists often reject the primordialist thesis which posits that nations have existed since time immemorial (Smith, 2009) and their characteristics remain fixed. As such, the modernists or constructivists often employ subjective criteria to characterize nations and national identities (Ozkirimli, 2000).

The main intent of this study is to understand how Ethiopian identity has been portrayed and reinforced in the national and regional education system curriculum textbooks and reflected in student perspectives. It follows that exploring student perspectives on Ethiopian identity does not aim at assessing students mastery of a specific body of knowledge and skills in the selected fields of study, but it is primarily intended to explore how students construct some attributes of Ethiopian identity and feel allegiance and committed to them. This suggests that as the purpose of the dissertation is to explore, describe and explain national identity through the lens of the national and regional education system curriculum and student perspectives, the *primordialist* thesis which considers national identity as exclusively explanatory variable could not serve its purpose. On the other hand, the *modernist* or *constructivist* conception of nation and national

identity as constructions rather than ‘givens’ or predetermined, considers national identity both as an independent and dependent variable used to explain and explained by other variables. To this effect, the theoretical and conceptual framework of the dissertation points to the constructivist theories of learning and identity construction and reinforcement.

In classroom discourse, the traditional behavioural school of thought posits that knowledge is actually discovered rather than being constructed (Glaserfeld, 1984; Tabler, 2011). As such, students are expected to passively absorb the contents portrayed in textbooks and presented to them through teachers as principal sources of knowledge (ibid). Against it, the constructivist perspective asserts that knowledge is not something waiting to be discovered, but it is essentially a construction by the ‘cognizant’ subject alone as well as inter-subjectively (Glaserfeld, 1984; Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002; Pritchard, 2009; Tabler, 2011). Accordingly, students need not passively absorb knowledge or contents portrayed in textbooks and presented in classroom discourse and other contexts, but they actually engage in the knowledge construction process by critically scrutinizing and interpreting the information they encountered in the course of their study in the light of their prior ideas and experiences and accordingly they derive meaning and significance to their learning. Similarly, this dissertation considers students’ perspective on those values, symbols and traditions portrayed in textbooks as representing Ethiopian identity mainly to understand how they construct and deconstruct Ethiopianness rather than as simply absorbing what was presented in textbooks.

There are two versions of constructivism: *radical constructivism* and *social constructivism* (see for instance, Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005; Jones, 2002; Tabler, 2011). As they all advocate constructed or subjective rather than objective reality and knowledge, the two versions of constructivism have more or less the same ontological and epistemological roots. But the basic difference lies on whether primarily the emphasis should be given to the individual or the socio-cultural environment. *Radical constructivism* posits that “every reality is unique to the individual” (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005: 18) and as such emphasis should be given to individual or personal meaning-making and construction of knowledge (Tabler, 2011). Tabler goes on to say that for radical constructivists knowledge could be constructed by an individual student through his/her private interaction with the

environment. Accordingly, although students use the same standard curriculum, textbooks and other learning materials, they will come up at the end with a personal version of meaning or knowledge from what is being taught in classroom contexts (ibid). Tabler further adds that depending on their prior knowledge, skills and values brought with them and personal interpretation and construction of knowledge, it is also possible to assume that students can develop a different knowledge, skill and value system from what is planned by the curriculum designer, textbook writer and classroom teacher. That is why the dissertation tends to study textbook portrayal of the values, symbols and traditions representing Ethiopian identity through qualitative content analysis and then student perspectives on the same sequentially in two phases.

Tabler's assertion has been further substantiated by Glasersfeld. Glasersfeld (1991) affirms that "It is an illusion that there is knowledge in textbooks They contain language, that is strings of words, put into them by authors" (p. 175). Accordingly, the words or texts in textbooks will have meaning for both the authors, students and any audience only when they interpreted texts subjectively on the basis of their prior individual experience. In short Glasersfeld asserts that texts will not contain knowledge or meaning unless interpreted subjectively by individuals according to their prior experiences.

On the other hand, the social constructivist perspective posits that as much of human learning is social in nature, the construction of new knowledge through the lone subject interaction with the environment appears incomplete (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). They conceptualized the defining features of social constructivist thinking in terms of *ontology, epistemology, and learning*. The social constructivist thinking assumes that "Reality is not an entity waiting to be discovered"; rather "it is...something to be made by the individual" (p.7). Furthermore, as each individual constructs his/her own view of reality which will not correspond with other person's reality (Pritchard and Woollard, 2010) members of a community can create their own shared world through dialogue, negotiation or agreement (Kukla, 2000 cited in Pritchard and Woollard (2010). Social constructivists see knowledge as a human creation through the process of social interaction and interface with the environment. Just like reality, the knowledge held by an individual can be different from

knowledge held by other individuals and thus groups or communities construct knowledge of their own through social negotiation.

At the core of the social constructivist perspective is that the individual world is a subset of the larger unified social world and thus there would be no individual reality detached from the socio-culturally constructed world (Belbase, 2014). It follows that as students live in a macro and micro social world, their identities have been significantly influenced by families, peers, media, schooling and other constituents of the socio-cultural environment. In a classroom context, each student will bring a different set of experience and even the curriculum intended to reach to all students will be interpreted and understood by individual students in a variety of ways. But through classroom interaction, conversation, dialogue, discussion and direction by the teacher, the personal experiences of each student could be a collective experience so that students could reach to a shared understanding of their world (Belbase, 2014). Social constructivists consider learning as a highly interactive process so that students help each other to refine their derivation of meaning or construction of new knowledge. In the same vein, what counts as being Ethiopian is not given, rather it is constructed by students through interaction with the social world; and thus Ethiopianness and its constitutive elements could be negotiated by students through interactions with themselves, the teacher, the curriculum and the school context.

At this juncture, it is worth mentioning that each of the two versions of constructivism is not without limitations. Critical constructivism's excessive reliance on individual construction of reality and/ or knowledge and social constructivism's disproportionate emphasis on the socio-cultural environment in the process of knowing and knowledge construction has been considered by many scholars as incomplete to fully understand the social world. In view of this gap, many scholars (see for instance, Belbase, 2014; Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005; Tabler, 2011) suggest that a fuller understanding of student's learning and/or knowledge construction could be possible only through the integration of the two versions of constructivism. These scholars suggest that employing both radical constructivism and social constructivism as a combined theoretical framework could balance the excessive reliance on the lone individual knowledge construction process and on the socio-cultural environment mediated process of knowing and knowledge

construction on a separate basis. Accordingly, the combined framework recognizes individual's role in the process of knowing and knowledge construction while at the same time emphasizing the role of the socio-cultural environment or interaction as a means of generating new knowledge. Similarly, the meaning of being Ethiopian and its basic attributes could be constructed and deconstructed by individual students through their lone interaction as well as through their inter-subjective interactions, discussions, dialogues and negotiations with other students, with their teachers, with curriculum materials and with the school frontier as a whole.

The constructivist school of thought posits that identity is primarily a construction (Cohen, 2010) and a relationship which would be forged and strengthened in social interactions (Karimifard, 2012; Parekh, 1997). To further substantiate this position, Miller (1995: 127) contends that “National identities are not cast in stone:...they are above all imagined identities, where the content of the imagining changes with time”. As much as national identities conceptualized as social constructions, learning can be defined as a social activity and knowledge as a social construction. By extension, both identity construction and learning emphasize situated or context specific, relative and value-laden knowledge. It follows that this research project has been theoretically informed by the critical constructivist and social constructivist theories so that it can understand how students construct and deconstruct the meaning of being Ethiopian both individually and in group through discussions, common dialogue and negotiation.

1.8.2. Definitions of national identity and kindred variables

Having identified and established the preferred theoretical framework of the study, the next step could be defining some of the competing variables often used to understand national identities. Scholars agree that terms like nation-building, nation, nationalism, ethnic identity, citizenship and national identity are closely related but have highly fluid and elusive conceptualization in current academic discourse (see for instance, Miller, 1995; Ozkirimli, 2000; Smith, 1991). At the core of this confusion among scholars in the field, according to Ozkirimli (2000: 58), is the “ambiguity of the relationship between nation and other, kindred, concepts such as ethnicity, ethnic group, [race] and so on”. At the same time, the extent of contribution of each of this ancillary variable to the definition,

understanding and construction of a nation and national identity is still controversial. Despite this fact, scholars in the field of political science, psychology, history, education, and sociology have attempted to differentiate and define each of these terms on their own academic circle. This study is not intended to make a comprehensive characterization of each term and present their apparent relationships; rather it attempts to conceptualize and operationalize the term national identity vis-a-vis its accompanying variables.

In this dissertation, the first term which needs clarity is ‘nation-building’. Nation-building may be understood at two dimensions: the process of creating new nation (Smith, 2009) and in terms of maintaining positive relationships among citizens of a nation and mobilizing them to develop their nation economically, politically and socially (Somit & Peterson, 2005; Saad, 1980). The latter perspective dominates the current academic discourse and this dissertation also follows this tradition. Soutphommasane (2009) understands nation-building as “the use of a political means to reinforce and to shape a national identity” which spans from cultural reproduction of national identity to building physical infrastructure (pp. 94-95). In the current Ethiopian political context, the process of nation-building appears to be understood in terms of maintaining positive inter-ethnic relations. As such, this dissertation adopts Fukuyama’s conceptualization of nation-building in a multicultural context as stated: “the process of creating or repairing all the cultural, social, and historical ties that bind people together as a nation” (Fukuyama, 2004a: 1 cited in Somit & Peterson, 2005: 36). In the literature, nation building involves strengthening the ties that bind people together and thus it has been, to a large extent, equated with national unity and integration with full recognition and respect of their apparent diversities.

‘Nationalism’ is the second important concept which needs clarity for understanding national identity. Nationalism is an ideology and a social movement which claims that nations (ethnic communities) should have their own statehood or autonomous status (Smith, 2009) and as such modern nations are the product of nationalism (Gellner, 1983; Ozkirimli, 2000). However, nationalism does not recognize differences of any sort in a nation’s population and as such it eliminates all kinds of differences – ethnicity, religion, language, gender, etc – that divide populations internally (Gellner 1983). It appears due to

this claim that nationalism has been often viewed by current scholarship as emotional or blind attachment to a nation, which often amplifies superiority and dominance. As nationalism undermines internal plurality, national identity in multicultural societies, like Ethiopia, could not be constituted on the basis of it. Nationalism is basically different from patriotism because the latter primarily relates to states whereas the former solely relates to ethnic communities (Smith, 2009). For instance, it is possible to speak of German or Arab nationalism as we can say American or British patriotism (ibid). Accordingly, for multination state Ethiopia, the dissertation opts to conceptualize Ethiopian identity through the lens of constructive patriotism rather than blind nationalism. By extension, it appears that Ethiopian nationalism has been outmoded in current academic and political discourse.

The third important term which should be clarified here is ‘nation’. Miller (1995) suggested that one cannot clearly understand what national identity means without clarifying its root term, nation. Miller was right because national identity in essence implies identification with and the depth of belonging to a nation, which could be achieved by the identity bearer through critical scrutiny, deliberate selection and understanding rather than blind attachment to it. This conception differentiates nation and national identity from nationalism. Miller (1995) contends that nations are not mere physical objects existing independently of people’s beliefs. Rather nations should be understood as a composition of a group of people who would be defined not only in terms of physical characteristics or their behaviour but also in terms of what they conceive of themselves.

Probably, the most frequently cited definition of the term *nation* is the one suggested by Anthony Smith. According to Smith (1991), a *nation* can be conceptualized as “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members” (p.14). In this definition, two conceptions of a nation are portrayed: ‘*ethnic-genealogical nation*’ and ‘*civic nation*’ which produces, according to Ozkirimil (200), *genealogical nationalisms and territorial nationalisms respectively*. The *civic-territorial* model of a nation, which first arose in Western Europe, implies a political community with a well-defined territory, common institutions and a single code of rights and duties for all its members. Some of the components of the standard Western model of a nation,

according to [Smith \(1991: 11\)](#) include: “Historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology”. The non-Western or *ethnic-genealogical* model of a nation, on the other hand, denotes a community of common descent marked by birth and native culture. In the ethnic model of a nation, “genealogy and presumed descent ties, popular mobilization, vernacular languages, customs and traditions” have been considered as its major markers ([p. 12](#)).

Conceptually, whether a nation is a mere geographical location, a government constructed entity, or an *imagined community* ([Anderson, 2006](#)) still remains contested. In line with this, there are several definitions suggested by scholars for the term nation, but the majority of conceptualizations by current scholarship converge at viewing a nation as a *modern, constructed and imagined* entity ([Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 1983](#)) which reflects, a more or less, a modernist and post-modernist perspective. Furthermore, [Hill and Fee \(1995: 13\)](#) contend that just like nation, nationalism and nation-building are fundamentally synthetic processes. Accordingly, the dissertation adopted such characterization of a nation and national identity largely in its both civic and cultural dimension.

‘Ethnic identity’ is probably the fourth important but most confusing concept with national identity. The conception of ethnic identity often arises from the ethnic conception of a nation as defined by Anthony Smith. Accordingly, ethnic identity refers to a process of maintaining positive distinctiveness and identification with an ethnic group marked often by genealogical descent ties and distinct language, religion and culture ([Smith, 1991; Wan & Vanderwerf 2009](#)). Such conceptualization of group identity has been often used to define national identity in nation-states. But, in modern multicultural societies, like Ethiopia, such characterization of national identity cannot serve as a unifying force in the process of nation-building.

Probably the last term which needs to clarify in the study of national identities may be ‘*citizenship*’. Simply defined, citizenship refers to the legal contract between the citizen and a state ([Jones & Gaventa, 2002; Manby, 2010](#)). In short, “the legal bond between the state and individual is at the core of its meaning” ([Manby, 2010: ix](#)) and such bonding brings with it some rights and duties. This definition corresponds with the [FDRE-MOE](#)

(2011) CEE textbooks portrayal of the term. However, many scholars (such as Miller, 1995; Parekh, 2008; 2005; 1997; Smith, 1991) contend that a sense of national unity and solidarity cannot be extracted from the political or civic dimension of national identity or citizenship rights and duties alone and as such they suggest that a thick form of national identity has been required to create a strong cohesive society. Even there are cases where citizenship may be considered as not more than a simple legal entitlement or a passport (see for instance, Jones & Smith, 2001; Purvis & Hunt, 1999). It follows that there may be citizens with more than one passport. For instance, an Ethiopian can be an American as long as she or he has got a passport. Thus, after clarifying and operationalizing the term nation-building, nationalism, 'nation', ethnic identity, and citizenship the next task could be defining and characterizing the term 'national identity' in sufficient details as follows.

National identity refers to “an individual’s recognition of membership in a nation ...” and the emotional attachment to it (Darr, 2011: 58); “a subjective or internalized sense of belonging and attachment to a nation” (Huddy & Khatib, 2007: 65); “the set of attributes and beliefs shared by those who belong to the same nation...” (Guibernau, 2004: 140); “...the sum of all the qualities” – real or imaginary – which in the minds of a particular nation’s people distinguishes itself from the rest of the world (Crabb, 1985: 19 cited in Rashid, 2007: 1-2). Keane (1994) suggests a more comprehensive definition of national identity that reads “an awareness of affiliation with the nation that gives people a sense of who they are in relation to others, or infuses them with a sense of purpose that makes them feel at home” (cited in Hjerm, 1998: 339). It follows that, in all these definitions of the term, the content dimension or the attributes and the depth of attachment or belonging to a nation have been always emphasized to characterize national identity. For the purpose of this study, national identity refers to a subjective (voluntarist) sense of attachment and belonging to society (and state) defined on the basis of some commonly shared political, historical and socio-cultural attributes in a multicultural context.

1.8.3. Conceptualization of Ethiopian identity

Identity could be defined as a sense of belonging or attachment to a ‘collectivity’ constructed in accordance with some specific temporal and spatial conditions (Inac & Unal, 2013; Pakulski & Tranter, 2000). These scholars consider identities as social constructions

and hence individuals have multiple identities hierarchically organized and enacted based on social conditions. It follows that identities could refer to a subjective sense of attachment or belonging and solidarity to a larger ‘collectivity’ such as a nation, an ethnic group and other groupings as portrayed through different values, symbols, traditions and commitments. In this case, in their study of Australian national identity, [Pakulski and Tranter \(2000\)](#) employed nation (ethno-national identity), society (civic identity) and state as important collectivities individual Australians could identify with.

At least two challenges have been almost always accompanying the conceptualization of the term ‘national identity’. The first problem has been the apparently thin boundary and overlap between ethnic identity and national identity in different contexts. That is, attributes used to define national identity in one context may be used to signify ethnic identity in other contexts and vice versa ([Dawit & Haftu, 2012](#)). For instance, in America, Canada, Australia and other Western nations attributes signifying national and even continental identity – African, Asian, Latino, and so on – have been used to denote ethnic identity. Similarly, Singapore, Chinese, Indian, and Malay signify ethnic identity while Singaporean represents national identity and yet Chinese and Indian may be used to denote national identity in China and India respectively.

In this research project, though they are fluid and elusive, ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity are operationally defined in the context of the 1995 FDRE Constitution and other multination-states and, most importantly, the conceptual framework adopted for the dissertation. Accordingly, Ethiopian identity is defined as a subjective (voluntarist) sense of attachment or belonging to a set of political, historical and socio-cultural attributes commonly shared by the Ethiopian political and cultural community. On the other hand, ethnic identity refers to a sense of attachment or solidarity to a group of people who have a common language and descent and inhabit an identifiable territory within the multination state of Ethiopia. However, conceptualizations of terms like ethnic and national identity have multiple ideological and philosophical positions and this research project has no such orientation.

The second challenge in the conceptualization of national identity arises when one attempts to fix specific attributes which signify identification with a nation. National identities encompass different kinds of attributes for different nations. As a result, it is difficult to find one common epistemology to be shared by all. However, some scholars have attempted to develop concepts which can bridge these variations. One of such theoretical frameworks incorporates a typology of national identities as civic and ethnic nations. Such typology of national identities has been adopted from Anthony Smith. This dissertation relies heavily on the works of [Miller \(1995\)](#), [Parekh \(2008; 2005; 1997\)](#) and [Smith \(1991, 2009\)](#) to understand the definition and constitutive elements of national identity.

In the definition of a nation outlined above, Smith typifies two models of a nation and/ or national identity and enumerates their defining elements. However, his macro-level conceptualization of the term and its constitutive elements could not automatically enable us to measure individual level identification and attachment with a nation. As such latter scholarship has attempted to operationalize national identities as measures of individual level identification with a nation. For instance, the [1995 International Social Survey Program](#) (hereafter, [ISSP](#)) [module](#) operationalizes national identities through seven survey questions; and later [Hjerm \(1997\)](#) and [Jones and Smith \(2001\)](#) have classified the ISSP module survey questions by using Smith's characterization of national identities.

In the ISSP module, national identities were operationalized through seven survey questions, which demand alternative responses regarding birth, citizenship, residence, language, religion, laws, and sentiments/feelings. These survey questions have been classified by [Jones and Smith \(2001\)](#) as ethnic identity markers which constitute birth, religion and residence; and civic identity markers which embody citizenship, respect for institutions and laws, and feelings or sentiments. [Jones and Smith](#) prefer to use the *objectivist/ ascribed versus subjectivist/ voluntarist* dichotomy for the same questions.

Similarly, [Hjerm \(1997\)](#) typifies the survey items of the ISSP module into civic and ethnic identities. For [Hjerm](#), birth and residence can characterize the ethnic model and the rest may belong to the civic model. However, religion was not part of [Hjerm's](#) analysis. In these two studies, language assumes to belong to both the civic and ethnic models of

national identification on the basis of its competing interpretations. Here it should be born in mind that in practice, national identities can neither be purely ethnic nor civic (Smith, 1991); rather both can exist in some way but in different degrees at different times. This suggests that national identities can be best understood through both the ethnic-genealogical and civic-territorial model of a nation.

In the same vein, Miller suggests five constitutive elements to understanding and interpreting national identities. Miller (1995) insists that national identity implies a community '*constituted by shared belief and mutual commitment, extended in history, active in character, connected to a particular territory, and marked off from other communities by its distinct public culture*' (p. 22-25). According to Miller, these features distinguish national identities from other variants of identities. Just like Smith, Miller also emphasizes both on the cultural and civic attributes of a nation. Although his characterization of a nation appears to incline towards a Western civic model, Miller still capitalizes on the cultural basis of a nation. As such, it could be contended that in view of the attributes they employed to characterize a nation, both Smith and Miller propagate a thick form of national identity.

A further refinement of national identities and their constitutive elements has also been suggested by Parekh (1997). He asserts that national identity is needed for holding a plural society together and such a shared sense of self-understanding creates a conception of what it is and stands for. However, a plural society will ensure '*unity in diversity*' if its national identity mirrors and verifies its plural composition. On the basis of this theoretical assumption, Parekh articulated national identity in terms of three basic components: *constitutional patriotism*, a political community's *self projection*, and *shared sense of belonging* with a political community.

The first component implies that the Constitution which represents the common platform or self-understanding of a political community remains the minimum basis of unity. The second component assumes that a political community is primarily created and sustained by imagination, which may be articulated through *images* and *myths*. It is through self-projections that members of a political community contribute and sacrifice even without

knowing and seeing each other. Finally, the third component presupposes that identity is primarily a relationship or form of identification with a political community. National identity is conceptualized as identification and attachment with a political community in a way which will yield mutual trust, goodwill and tolerance. Parekh believed that this shared sense of belonging should be elastic and conditional as stated: “I cannot be one of you if you refuse to accept and treat me as one of you, and I cannot be committed to you if you do not make a similar commitment to me” (Parekh, 1997: 530). *National anthem, the flag, national ceremonies, rituals, and monuments to the dead heroes* have been suggested by Parekh as emotional symbols of national identity or common belonging. From this characterization of a nation and national identity, it may be inferred that, just like Smith and Miller, Parekh also suggests a thick form of national identity.

In comparison with the theoretical frameworks suggested to explain national identities, Parekh’s conceptualization appears more appealing to adapt to interpreting and understanding Ethiopianness. Current scholarship clearly demonstrates that the civic and ethnic dichotomy of national identification proposed by Smith (1991) may be problematic in a sense that they transcend each boundary in different contexts. The ethnic model defines national identification in terms of a cultural community and the civic model conceptualizes national identity in terms of a political community. But, although there may be nations without states, nation and state are mutually existing entities and as such a political community can be also a cultural community and vice-versa. Moreover, as an advocate of the ethnic origin of nations, Smith’s conceptualization of national identities largely characterizes ethnic nations (nation states) more than multicultural societies. Therefore, Parekh’s (1997) conceptualization of nations and national identities in a modern plural society context provides an important framework to understand the meaning of being an Ethiopian in multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual and multi-religious contexts. Accordingly, the specific attributes of Ethiopian identity symbolized by ‘*constitutional patriotism*’, the Ethiopian politico-cultural community’s ‘*self-projection embedded in images*’, and ‘*common belonging*’ could be explored from curriculum materials and student perspectives. It is believed that these conceptual categories of Ethiopian identity could open some space to think of Ethiopia both in terms of a political and cultural community and

thus such conceptualization of Ethiopian identity cannot in any way be restrictive. However, myths have been purposefully rejected by the researcher for the assimilationist perspective they may entail.

In a plural society, like Ethiopia, identifying what constitutes being Ethiopian is not an easy task. However, the notion of Ethiopian identity cannot, in any way, be emptied of any substance. It follows that there could be some attributes which define Ethiopianness and fellow citizens have been expected to identify with and exhibit greater attachment to it accordingly. Hence, in multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual, and multi-religious Ethiopia, Ethiopianness may be constituted along some politico-cultural and historical symbols which represents its shared interests and visions and cement the Ethiopian people together. But, the conceptualization and operationalization of Ethiopian identity could not in any way exclude ethnic identity. As many scholars ([see Miller, 1995](#)) suggest that it is natural for ethnic groups to think of as having ‘hyphenated identities’ (for instance, Oromo-Ethiopian, Amhara-Ethiopian, Tigre-Ethiopian, Gurage-Ethiopian, Somali-Ethiopian, etc) and thus Ethiopian identity could be possible only when it carries meaning and significance to ethnic identity while at the same time transcends ethnic boundaries.

This dissertation derives the conceptualization and operationalization of Ethiopian identity and its constitutive elements from a broad review of the existing literature and from the interpretations of the FDRE Constitution, content analysis of textbooks and qualitative exploration and survey of student perspectives. The 1995 FDRE Constitution locates Ethiopia in a multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious context. A very large array of current scholarship suggests that in plural societies, like Ethiopia, the overarching identity could not be established on the basis of genealogical or descent ties. Accordingly, a largely civic (and some historico-cultural) identity model which could transcend ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and gender – to state some but not all – boundaries has been required.

The positioning of Ethiopian identity largely in a civic/subjective model does not imply that ethnic identity has been marginalized. In other words, the civic conceptualization and operationalization of Ethiopian identity would not in any way undermine the weight and

significance given to ethnic identity. In plural societies, like Ethiopia, it is unrealistic to think of Ethiopian identity without recognizing and giving space for ethnic identity. The 1995 FDRE Constitution makes it clear that the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples will make significant contribution to the country (Ethiopia) if and only if their identity has been recognized and respected and this position has empirical (see Sidanius, et.al, 1997) and theoretical (see for example, Miller, 1995; Parekh, 2000, 1997; Smith, 1991) validation.

In this dissertation, the conceptualization and operationalization of Ethiopian identity that the national and regional education system curriculum has been expected to reinforce could not be taken as an attempt to homogenize and unify the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples around some selected dominant values, symbols, traditions and memories by rejecting other overlapping identity sets. Rather, it is an attempt to explore and understand the commonly shared values, symbols, memories and images which could transcend the ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural boundaries of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples.

Empirical and theoretical evidences suggest that the main concern of national identity discourse in plural societies should be whether its conceptualization and operationalization transcend group boundaries – ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, and gender – so that it will be so inclusive and ultimately bring a sense of unity, solidarity and belongingness. Therefore, the main intention in this dissertation is to assess whether symbols, values and traditions portrayed in the national and regional education system curriculum and in student perspectives transcend ethnic boundaries and thus bring about unity of purpose and solidarity among the Ethiopian nations and nationalities.

Moreover, in addition to the above dimensions, the dissertation pays attention to – if there are – other forms of Ethiopian identity that are not included in the conceptualization of Ethiopian identity but emanate from the analysis of the textbooks and students' conceptualization of Ethiopian identity. Thus, the Ethiopian identity conceptualization proposed here is mainly used to guide the analysis of textbooks and student perspectives. And yet, if there are other forms of identity that are reflected in the national and regional

education system curriculum and in student perspectives, they were considered in the data analysis process. Finally, given this conceptualization and operationalization of Ethiopian identity, student perspectives on which of the elements that they consider as representing their Ethiopian identity has been examined. It is worth noting that this whole approach should not, in any way, be considered as an imposition of a conceptual framework on the study participants' perspectives about Ethiopian identity. This was merely done to give adequate focus and direction to the study. As the saying goes on '*a ship which failed to identify its route could end its journey nowhere*'.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

The major purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the theoretical positioning of this dissertation and identify theoretical and empirical models proposed by prior research for understanding and analyzing national identity in curriculum discourse by scrutinizing their relevance and practicability in a multicultural developing country context. Accordingly, the literature review first discusses national identity and ethnic identity theories and concepts as they apply to a multicultural society context. This includes scrutinizing the conceptualization and operationalization of national identity and ethnic identity, its relevance in nation-building process and the challenges associated with it – particularly in a plural society context. The literature review then proceeds to conceptualizing key concepts in development or nation-building discourse by analyzing development theories and models as they apply to justifying the place of education in national political, economic, and social development or in the overall nation-building process through nurturing national identities.

There are various institutions which could serve as the prime sources of identity. For instance, the family, peers, religious institutions, civil society, political parties, the media and educational institutions have significant contributions to make national identities. Thus after the conceptualization of development and nation-building models and the positioning of education or curriculum in the overall nation-building process, a separate treatment of the major sources or agents of national identities has been presented and discussed.

The next section of the literature review attempts to analyze whether identity is a major curriculum issue through the lens of available theoretical and empirical evidence. In line with this, many scholars suggest that national curriculum can be considered as culturally distinctive as national songs, festivals, stories, etc. National school systems shape their students' identities by creating what [Caraballo](#) (2011) calls it a 'figured world' in which they assign meaning and significance to some selected symbols, values, beliefs and

traditions and reject others intentionally through curriculum planning and textbook design as well as actual classroom discourse.

In current curriculum discourse, what kind of knowledge is most worth for citizens is debatable. The decision to define some groups' knowledge as legitimate and hence communicated to students involves different actors and/or powers. Thus in order to understand the kind of knowledge brought to the school system by different actors, the dissertation gave space to the analysis of theoretical and empirical literature on 'curriculum and ideology'. This could shed light on understanding the historical ideological context of national education system curriculum planning and operation in Ethiopia for developing a sense of Ethiopianness among students. Similarly, in the current context of an interdependent global environment whether national identities have been required to bring national unity and solidarity is a hot debate. As such, the dissertation critically analyses these contesting discourses in national identities as they apply to multicultural societies, like Ethiopia.

Current scholarship suggests that individuals have multiple or overlapping identities and one of those identities competing with the overarching national identity has been ethnic identity. Therefore, the next part of the review literature analyses the theoretical models suggested to understanding and interpreting the interface between ethnic identity and national identity in plural societies. The dissertation critically assessed the interface between national identity and ethnic identity across historical periods in Ethiopia with particular reference to the last three government systems where one is almost the antithesis of the other.

Finally, the literature review proceeds to understanding the overall context of education and nation-building and the challenges associated with it across different historical periods and competing ideologies in a developing country context. More specifically, the dissertation critically reviewed and analyzed the objectives and processes of education in Ethiopia through the analysis of the context for education and training policies, curriculum development and textbook production across historical periods as it applied to cultivating a

shared sense of belonging and identification with the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

2.2. Perspectives on national identity and ethnic identity

In this dissertation, the theoretical framework essentially aims to demonstrate the potential of the constructivist approach to understanding the issues of national identity and related variables as they apply to the Ethiopian context. The conceptualization and operationalization of national identity could not be possible without a clear definition and conceptualization of its kindred variables – such as nation, nationalism, ethnicity, ethnic group and ethnic identity. Although the degree still remained controversial ([Ozкимli, 2000](#)), each of these concepts is significantly linked with national identity. As such, the conceptualization of each of these concepts would have significant implications on the conceptualization and operationalization of national identity.

Many scholars agree on the apparent ambiguity in the definition of nation, nationalism, ethnicity, ethnic group, ethnic identity, citizenship and national identity. The primary source of such confusion, according to [Ozкимli \(2000\)](#), is the ambiguity of the relationship between nation and the above stated variables – nationalism, ethnicity, ethnic group, ethnic identity, citizenship and national identity. [Ozкимli](#) asserts that generally the different perspectives on the conceptualization of nation, nationalism, national identity, ethnicity, ethnic group and ethnic identity may be categorized into two as objectivists and subjectivists. That is those who emphasize objective criteria and those who opt to employ subjective criteria to define and characterize nation and other kindred concepts.

It was clearly noted in the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study that identity has been a construction rather than a ‘natural’ or ‘given’ phenomenon. By extension, identity could be taken as a personal choice rather than a pre-determined, given or inherited phenomenon. As such modern man has been living with multiple, changing, overlapping, and contextual, rather than fixed and static identities ([Banks, 2011: 247](#)). Further building on Bank’s conceptualization of identity, this dissertation has attempted to understand Ethiopian identity in the context of multiple identity sets.

In the existing literature, two perspectives appear to dominate the national identity discourse. The first and probably the oldest perspective – called *primordialism* – presumes that identity is static, given and/or predetermined. As such, in this perspective identity could be treated exclusively as an independent variable often used to explain other variables, such as conflict, unity, friendship, and the like. On the other hand, the alternative *constructivist* perspective considers identity as a construction, changeable and situational. As a result, the constructivist view treats identity as both a dependent and independent variable explained by – and used to explain – some other factors such as state, education, media, and the like. This dissertation adopts this latter perspective (identity as a dependent variable) to understand how Ethiopian identity has been cultivated by the national and regional education system curriculum.

The dominant perspectives on conceptualizing and understanding the nature of identities in current multicultural societies have been found in the grand theories of nation, nationalism and ethnicity. Based on this assumption, the following two sections provide a detailed treatment of these perspectives which would help us derive the definition and/ or conceptualization of national identity and its kindred variables.

2.2.1. Some theories of nation and national identity

There are four major perspectives or theories on the origins of nations (and nationalism): nationalist (Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009) or naturalist (Ozkirimli, 2000) theories, perennialist theories, modernist theories and post-modernist theories. The *Nationalist theory* is the first basic theory on the origin of nations and nationalism, which posits that the origin of nations is as old as the first human-being himself; and to form a nation is a natural human instinct (Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009). Such theory considers nation as predetermined and fixed in a sense that its frontiers, origin, place, character, mission and destiny remained unique and natural. Nationalist theory is one of the variants of *primordialism* which may be taken as the earliest of all the perspectives of nations and nationalism (Ozkirimli, 2000).

The second major theory on the origin of nations and nationalism is *perennialism*. This is a second less radical variant of the primordialist perspective, which posits that nations have existed since ‘time immemorial (Ozkirimli, 2000; Smith, 2009; Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009).

It asserts that nations are perennial entities whose presence historically extended to pre-modern ethnic communities (Smith, 2009). Although perennialists give weight and significance to past history, they do not specify a period or date for the emergence of nations (Ozkirimli, 2000). Regarding national identity, perennialists contend that although nations may take different forms (and even they may dissolve), their identity remains unchanged (Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009). Just like the nationalist theory, the perennialist perspective considers national identity as fixed and unchanging. But perennialism is different from the nationalist perspective because it claims the antiquity of national and ethnic ties without asserting their naturalness (Smith, 2009).

The *modernist theory* is the third (and probably the most influential) perspective on the origin of nations and nationalism in current scholarship (Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1999). The modernist theory considers nations and nationalism as entirely modern phenomena and/ or social constructions which emerged after the French and Industrial Revolution (see also Croucher, 2004). The modernists believe that nations have been constructed as a result of the emergence of modern conditions such as capitalism, bureaucratic states, industrialization, urbanization, mass communications, education or mass literacy and secularism (Gellner, 1983). Accordingly, in the modernist perspective nations should be imagined only in line with a modern industrial society and therefore the past has no relevance.

The *post-modernist theories* of nations share some commonality with the modernist theories. Just like the modernists, post-modernists also believe that nations are the products of modernity and considered as social constructions (Croucher, 2004; Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009). Further advancing this idea, post-modernists posit that nations are recent cultural artifacts emerging from an era of print capitalism, reading politics, and political mobilization (Smith, 1999). Nations are deliberate and planned constructions by modern nationalist elites and symbolized to others through print media such as books, newspapers and other works of art. As such, nations are artificially constructed by the (political) elites to further their own interests. Modern nationalist leaders (elites) select and even invent past traditions, symbols, history and mythology and use the present to create the past in its own image. In this perspective, the past has special significance only for nationalist leaders to

justify the legitimacy of their actions (Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009). According to Smith (1999), Benedict Anderson's description of nations as "imagined political communities" best represents the post-modernist perspective of nations.

A further refinement of the theories of nations and nationalism has been made by Umut Ozkirimli. Ozkirimli (2000) contends that the theories of nation and nationalism can be broadly categorized into three as *primordialism*, *modernism* and *ethno-symbolism*. He considers other classifications simply as labels or nicknames, more or less, denoting the same theoretical assumption. Accordingly, the term 'essentialist' or 'perennialist' may be used instead of 'primordialist' in the same way as some other scholars prefer to apply 'instrumentalist' or 'constructivist' in the place of 'modernist'. "But the description of the categories and the logic of classification remain the same" (p. 61). Croucher (2004) also follows the same tradition.

Ozkirimli prefers to use the term primordialism by combining nationalist and perennialist theories of nations and nationalism which have, more or less, the same theoretical position. Such treatment appears relevant to critically assess the potential strengths and weaknesses of this theoretical perspective to understand nations and national identities. The primordialist perspective bases its theoretical assumption on the antiquity and naturalness of nations. In the word of Ozkirimli (2000), the word primordialist is used to denote scholars who claim that "nationality is a natural part of human beings, as natural as speech, sight or smell, and that nations have existed since time immemorial" (p. 64). Accordingly, for primordialists a person's national identity is a natural part of his/her life in the same way as he has ears, nose, eyes, etc. (Gellner, 1983). As such, they symbolize national identity through primordial attachments to the nation such as kinship, language, religion, ethnicity, and other markers defined on the basis of descent or genealogical ties.

In his review of the theoretical debate on the origin of nations and nationalism, Ozkirimli has brought '*ethno-symbolism*' as a new addition to the international nationalism literature. The ethno-symbolism perspective serves as a bridge between the two basic theoretical assumptions (primordialism and modernism) which often appear polar opposites. Though they do not specifically trace the historical period where the first nations occur, ethno-

symbolists believe that nations have extended to pre-modern ethnic ties. [Anthony Smith](#) is often cited in the existing literature as the ardent proponent of ethno-symbolist theory. In his seminal book entitled “*Ethno-Symbolism: A Cultural Perspective*”, [Smith \(2009\)](#) suggests that the inner-world (identity) of ethnic communities can be easily understood by thoroughly examining their commonly shared symbols because such symbols are not mere inventions. The ethno-symbolists contention appears more appealing in a context where most of the extant scholarship treats the theoretical debates on nation and nationalism as polar opposites.

The ‘antagonistic’ (to use [Smith’s, 1999](#) terminology) nature of the theoretical debate between primordialists and modernists has been clearly noticed not only on the emergence and/ or roots of nations but most importantly on the attributes used to conceptualize and operationalize nation and national identities. With regard to individual and group identity (including national identity), the primordialists often use objective criteria such as kinship, ethnicity, religion, language, class, gender, race, etc while the modernists emphasize subjective criteria such as self awareness or solidarity ([Ozkirimli, 2000](#)).

It appears due to such a theoretical divide between those who ascribe objective criteria and those who prefer subjective criteria to define nations and national identities that latter scholarship brought the typology of nations and national identities as civic and ethnic nations into the international nationalism literature. Civic nations refer to those political or national communities with a shared commitment to a set of political principles and institutions whereas ethnic nations refer to those cultural communities with a common ancestry ([Croucher, 2004](#)). Such distinctions as Western versus Eastern nationalisms, rational versus irrational nationalisms, and liberal democracies versus illiberal authoritarian nationalisms have been used to refer to civic and ethnic nations respectively. The former is exemplified by United States, France and Canada and the latter by Germany, Japan and Eastern European countries ([ibid](#)).

According to [Croucher \(2004\)](#), the civic/ethnic dichotomy first appeared in the writing of a historian, Hans Cohn. Using the Rhine River as a natural divide, Cohn drew a distinction between Western and Eastern nationalisms. Western nationalisms exemplified by England,

the United States and France were described as rational and voluntaristic where “the nation was a free association of rational individuals” (p. 87). On the other hand, Eastern nationalisms exemplified by Germany, Japan and many Eastern European countries were described as deterministic and organic where identification and belonging to a nation is ascribed at birth. Many scholars of nationalism have also followed the same typology.

For instance, in his seminal book entitled “*National Identity*”, [Anthony Smith \(1991\)](#) applies the same typology of nations and national identities. He conceptualized the civic-territorial model of a nation in terms of *historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology* (pp. 10-11). Primarily, the Western or civic model of a nation is a territorial conception which asserts that nations must have a well demarcated territory through which members identify with and feel belonging (see also [Miller, 1995](#)). [Smith](#) further elucidates that it is this sense of unique *homeland* or *historic land* which intersects people and terrain. Second, the civic or Western model of a nation presupposes that all the members of the political community should at least have some common institutions and a single code of rights and duties. In his words, it implies “a minimum of reciprocal rights and obligations among members and the correlative exclusion of outsiders from those rights and duties; it also implies a common code of laws over and above local laws” (p. 10).

With legal-political equality of members, Smith implies that all members of a political community are legally equal and all abide by its laws without any discrimination. Finally, Smith suggests that in order to bind its political community in their homeland together a nation must have a common culture and civic ideology, shared understanding and destiny, sentiments and ideas (see also [Miller, 1995](#)). This task of creating a common public, mass culture, according to Smith, has been principally given to public education and the mass media. Cognizant of the powerful influence of the West in this age of globalization, Smith asserts that the civic attributes of a nation remain vital constituents of national identity in the non-Western world as well.

The second model of a nation, according to Smith, is the non-Western ethnic nation distinguished by its preoccupation with a community of birth and native culture and as such

belonging to it is not a personal choice but predetermined through a sense of cultural or genealogical community. Membership remains fixed whenever and wherever you may be. In this model, a nation is considered as a community of common descent. The rigidity and naturalness of membership to a community is well articulated by Smith as he stated: “Whether you stayed in your community or emigrated to another, you remained ineluctably, organically, a member of the community of your birth and were forever stamped by it” (p. 11). This quotation suggests that in the ethnic conception of a nation, space and time have lost their relevance. Genealogy and presumed descent ties, popular mobilization, vernacular languages, customs and traditions constitute the elements of the non-Western ethnic model of a nation. Thus, in the ethnic model of a nation the place of law – in the Western civic model – has been replaced by vernacular culture, usually languages and customs (ibid). In short, Smith considers national identity as a “dual commitment or attachment” to an ethnic community and to the political unit in terms of citizenship rights and duties.

But, the civic and ethnic dichotomy in the conceptualization of a nation is not welcomed by all scholars in the field. For instance, Croucher (2004: 87) and Smith (1998: 126) argued that such distinction between the civic and ethnic model of a nation is not only *analytical or descriptive* but also *prescriptive* and *normative*. This typology of a nation may mislead us to reach the conclusion that to be civic is good and to be ethnic is bad (Croucher, 2004). Similarly – although he seemed to advocate the ethnic/civic distinction – in his final analysis, Smith also acknowledges the flaws in making a clear boundary between civic and ethnic nations as follows.

“In fact every nationalism contains civic and ethnic elements in varying degrees and different forms. Sometimes civic and territorial elements predominate; at other times it is the ethnic and vernacular components that are emphasized” (Smith, 1991: 13).

As such, Smith goes on to say that once the most civic and political attribute of a nation could turn to be ethnic and linguistic and vice versa. Croucher and Smith jointly observed that certainly there are only few nations of the world which possess exclusively the ethnic or civic dimension. The two models often overlap and thus a nation may exhibit both the ethnic and civic dimension at the same time, or it may historically move from one type to

another and back. It appears due to this fact that by combining the ethnic and civic conceptions of a nation that [Smith \(1991\)](#) finally offers a definition of the nation as he stated: “*a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members*” (p. 14). As an ardent advocate of the ethnic origin of nations, [Smith](#) contends that such attributes of a nation outlined above are the results of certain social and historical conditions worked out upon preexisting ethnic cores.

Similarly, from such conceptualization of a nation, [Smith](#) identified five basic elements of national identity: (1) an historic territory, or homeland; (2) common myths and historical memories; (3) a common, mass public culture; (4) common legal rights and duties for all members; and (5) a common economy with territorial mobility for members. [Smith](#) contends that nations should always have ethnic elements. In its ethnic dimension, a nation is understood as a community of common myths and memories. The issue of territoriality has both ethnic and civic dimensions.

[Brown \(2000\)](#) brought a third typology of a nation into the above ethnic and civic conception, what he calls a *multicultural nation or nationalism*. For [Brown \(2000: 126\)](#), the civic model of a nation is “a community of equal citizens whose distinct ethnic attributes ought to be politically irrelevant” and the ethno-cultural model of a nation presupposes a homogenous cultural community assimilated into the ethnic core. He goes on to assert that the three models of nationalism basically differ in their conception of a nation and belonging into its domain. The civic model, which considers the nation as a community of equal citizens, as [Brown](#) argues, is not sensitive to the treatment of ethnic communities in public policies and institutions and as such it demands primary commitment and loyalty to the state before their ethnic group. On the other hand, the ethno-cultural model assumes the nation as a “community of people united by a belief in common ancestry and ethno-cultural sameness” (p. 126). In this model, it is only those inherited or assimilated into the ethnic core culture can be considered as legitimate members of a nation. The multicultural model considers a nation as ethnically heterogeneous community each of which has equal status and rights.

In short, the three models consider a nation as a community of: equal citizens (civic model), equal communities around the ethnic core (ethno-cultural model), and equal ethnic groups (multicultural model). [Brown's](#) multicultural model appears to correspond with the 1995 FDRE Constitution conception of the current Ethiopian nation. In the current nation-building discourse, Ethiopia is conceived as a community of equal ethnic groups – according to the 1995 FDRE Constitution, they are also called Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. Such conceptualization of the Ethiopian nation and identity in a multi-cultural context goes one step further to favor ethnic minorities in government policies and institutions beyond the civic conception of a nation and national identity.

In their empirical study of national identity by using the 1995 ISSP survey data, [Pakulski and Tranter \(2000\)](#) found out three types of identity sets in Australia, namely: *civic identity*, *ethno-national identity* and *denzin identity*. Australians define themselves across these three identity categories. They conceptualized civic identity as a strong sense of attachment to the Australian 'society' and hence more open and voluntary where as ethno-national identity refer to a strong sense of 'culturally circumscribed' attachment to the Australian 'nation' and as such less inclusive. Those weakly attached to Australia were defined by [Pakulski and Tranter](#) as 'denzins'. The 'denzins' were treated as those who merely live in Australia and have cosmopolitan orientation.

To sum up, primordialist theories appear to base their assumptions essentially on ethnic-genealogical grounds and hence largely explain the origin and strengths of ethnic identities rather than civic identities. The basic flaw of the primordialist assumptions may be the belief that ethnic and national identity conferring attributes – such as kinship, religion, language, race, etc – have been 'given' by nature and hence ethnic and national ties remain fixed or permanent all the time and transmitted from generation to generation without major alterations. It seems due to this fact that [Llobera \(1999: 1\)](#) describes primordialism as "...irrational attachments based on blood, race, language, religion, region, etc".

Primordialists believe that nations and national identity are predetermined, natural and given. According to this perspective, it is natural for any Ethiopian citizen to show deep loyalty and attachment to a fellow Ethiopian citizen merely because, as [Croucher \(2004\)](#)

and [Llobera \(1999\)](#) clearly put it, allegiance to one's nation is assumed to be natural, predetermined and spiritual. But such unconditional commitment and loyalty to the nation could inevitably lead to blind nationalism which in effect undermines and at worst eliminates all differences or diversities in a population. In the current Ethiopian political discourse ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity has been considered as a source of unity and solidarity. But the primordialist perspective considers diversity as a source of conflict. In the primordialist assumption when ethnically diverse groups came into conflict, they consider it as inherent to the groups' culture and even genetic make-up.

Moreover, in the primordialist perspective identity – including national identity – has been used only to explain other variables or factors and identity itself remains unexplained. This conceptualization of identity does not open any space to explain national identity through the lens of other variables. Therefore, in response to this apparent weakness of the primordial thesis, the dissertation resorts to the constructivist perspective which considers nation and national identity as construction, invention and imagination. This perspective considers various identity sets both as dependent and independent variables which may be explained by and used to explain other variables.

[Ozkirimli \(2000:11\)](#) contends that any study of national identity should acknowledge differences of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class or place in the life-cycle that affect the construction and reconstruction of individual identities. Alongside [Ozkirimli](#), this dissertation argues that in a multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious Ethiopian society, the primordial conceptions of nation and national identity and the main attributes which characterize it appears unrealistic to conceptualize and understand Ethiopian identity in a multicultural context. Instead, the modernist (constructivist) theories of national identity which give meaning and significance to multiple identities could provide a better theoretical basis for understanding Ethiopian identity. In current academic discourse ([see for example, Banks, 2005; Kymlica, 2004 cited in Banks, 2009](#)) it is boldly recognized that citizens with clear attachments to their local communities' cultures, languages and values have been found better identify with and attached to the nation-state than those citizens without having such orientation. Finally, it is important to bear in mind that the theoretical debate on the civic and ethnic dichotomy of nations and national

identities is often followed by whether loose or thick national identities are required for a cohesive and peaceful society. This contesting perspective has been discussed in the sections ahead.

2.2.2. Some theories of ethnicity and ethnic identity

The extant literature treats ethnicity, ethnic group and ethnic identity as slippery concepts. In most of the existing sociological, psychological and political literature the term ethnicity has been understood in terms of some aspects of relationship. From their review of the existing literature on ethnicity, national identity and related concepts, [Wan and Vanderwerf \(2009\)](#) define ethnicity as a shared sense of relationship and/ or solidarity among people who consider themselves as culturally distinct from other peoples. Similarly, [Eriksen \(2010: 5\)](#) defines ethnicity as “aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive”. While recognizing the foundational role of primordial ties, these scholars contend that ethnicity should be seen essentially [as] an aspect of relationship, rather than as a property of a certain group. Such conceptualization of ethnicity as an aspect of relationship would have aspects of gain and loss in interaction, and aspects of meaning in identity formation. This suggests that ethnicity has political, organizational and symbolic aspects.

The term ethnicity has appeared in the scholarly literature very recently ([Banks, 2011; Eriksen, 2010; Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009](#)). The pre-1945 literature widely used the term ‘*tribe*’ to refer to pre-modern traditional societies as the term ‘*race*’ was applied to refer to modern societies. The term ‘ethnicity’ has emerged after WWII in the academic literature to replace the term ‘race’ which was believed to have been linked with the Nazi ideology. [Banks \(2011\)](#) stated that the issue of ethnicity dominantly appears in the literature since the 1960s and 1970s ethnic revitalization movements in the United States.

Currently, ethnicity has been understood differently by Anglo-American and European traditions. In the Anglo-American tradition, the term ethnicity has been used to refer to minority groups – such as African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinos, etc – as distinct from the mainstream or dominant culture. As such most American and English scholars define ethnicity as minorities who lie outside the politically dominant core population. On

the other hand, the European tradition has used the term ethnicity to refer to ‘nationhood’ or ‘people-hood’ and hence ethnicity may include any people (majority or minority) in a society. Therefore, the Anglo-American tradition which ascribes ethnicity to only minority groups in a society appears reductionist in approach (Eriksen, 2010; Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009).

Therefore, the dissertation follows the European tradition of understanding ethnicity not as referring solely to minority groups but essentially to people and hence any section of a society can belong to an ethnic group. This conceptualization of ethnicity seems to correspond with the definition of Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples suggested in Article 39 Sub-Article 5 of the 1995 FDRE Constitution. The Constitution seems to employ the term Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to refer to both ethnic majorities and minorities of the country or to any section of the Ethiopian political and cultural community. However, in the Ethiopian context a nation/ nationality is a politically mobilized ethno-national group and as such it is a political concept. While sharing some common cultural markers, the group also thinks that it is distinct from the ‘next other’ and has political claims for self-rule, representation and/ or territory and in the worst case even secession. Needless to say Ethiopia has many of this category of national liberation fronts. Finally, the tragedy has come to an end with the demise of class-based movements and the victory of ethno-national fronts. One need to mention the lives lost and the properties damaged among the political parties espoused class and ethno-national based movements. This is to put into perspective that in Ethiopia ethno national based mobilization has gone far beyond ethnic group as conceptualized in the anthropological literature. In this case, nation/nationality is more inclusive than ethnic group often defined based on a common descent. But here it is important to note that what the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples exactly refer to remains obscured in the Ethiopian literature.

Yet, in an exclusive interview with one government official the researcher found out that nations, nationalities and peoples in the 1995 FDRE Constitution have been used to refer to the following. ‘Nations’ are larger collectives with a commonly shared language, ethnicity, culture, psychological makeup, territory and myth. In the current Ethiopian political context, nations are fully fledged states. On the other hand, ‘nationalities’ refer to those

collectives who cannot attain the status of fully fledged states but stand alone and act as collectives in different occasions. They are largely clan-based tribal societies within the fully fledged states of Ethiopia. Finally, ‘peoples’ refer to those minorities within fully fledged states who cannot stand alone and act independently as collectives in different occasions.

As we have seen in the preceding section, the theories of nation and nationalism may be broadly divided into two opposing camps: primordialism and modernism. Similarly, the theories of ethnicity may be roughly categorized into two as primordialism and instrumentalism (Smith, 1999). Smith further asserts that primordialists see ethnic communities as natural entities while instrumentalists consider them as simple constructions by interest groups.

Primordialism is an *objectivist* or *essentialist* theory of ethnicity which maintains that ethnicity is “one of the givens of human existence” and as such it “exists in nature, outside time” (Smith, 1991: 20). Primordialists assert that one’s ethnic identity is ascribed at birth and hence, more or less, remains fixed and unchanging (Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009). They simply see human society as a collection of discrete social groups where membership to it has been determined at birth. Accordingly, ethnic identity or identification to an ethnic group has been based on primordial attachments marked by kinship and descent ties and hence remains fixed throughout one’s lifetime.

The primordialist perspective – which remained dominant until the mid-1970 (Banks, 2011; Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009) – was seriously challenged by more progressive instrumentalist and constructivist theories of ethnicity. Instrumentalists see ethnicity as an ever-changing, constructed and subjective phenomenon manipulated by some dominant groups to achieve their political (and economic) interests. They contend that modern political elites deliberately construct ethnicity and symbolize and manipulate it through memories, symbols and history to sustain their power. Modestly speaking, the idea that ethnicity and ethnic identity are not given and unchanging has attracted the attention of current scholarship where instrumentalist and social constructionist theories of ethnicity found their foundational basis. The commonly cited ethnic identity markers – such as

language, religion, culture, etc – are frequently changing and so does ethnic identity. Such theoretical assumption would help us to conceptualize and understand ethnicity and its kindred variables.

The other major theory of ethnicity is *instrumentalist theory*. Against the Primordialist thesis, proponents of the instrumentalist theory highly emphasize the flexibility and variability of ethnic boundaries. That is, the content and boundaries of an ethnic group are open to changing socio-political and economic conditions. As such, individuals not only change their group membership but also can be members of more than one ethnic group concurrently. Furthermore, Marxist theories consider ethnic identity as a '*false consciousness*' mobilized by the dominant group to sustain its hegemonic material interests. Accordingly, they believe that ethnic ties or identities will eventually die out and be replaced by working class identity (Llobera, 1999). But yet these theories are also subject to criticism. For instance, Llobera contends that at least choices are very limited for attributes, like race and again it is difficult to assume that all situations allow manipulations.

To sum up, modern theories of nationalism suggest that both national identity and ethnic identity are constructions rather than being natural or given. Although both refer to membership and attachment to a certain social group, they significantly differ in terms of political status and hierarchy. As clearly put by Darr (2011), conceptually, national identity could be understood as one's identity as a member of a political nation whereas ethnic identity mainly denotes one's identity as a member of an ethnic group. It follows that nations have a necessarily political status than ethnic groups do. Smith (1991) draws important distinctions between nations and what he calls, *ethnies*. He contends that ethnic communities generally lack most of the attributes of the nation. For instance, ethnic communities need not necessarily be residents of their territorial homeland and their culture may not be a public culture common to all the members. They also often lack a common economy or division of labour, and common legal rights and duties for all members (p. 40).

Generally, the theoretical debates on the origin and conceptualization of nations appear to polarize around the primordialist – modernist theses. The above sections devoted to the

theories of national identity and ethnic identity attempted to demonstrate whether nations and national identities are ethnically rooted or modern constructions in the light of which one can understand whether the Ethiopian nation justifies either of these claims.

2.3. Education and nation-building

In order to understand the place of formal education in national political, social, and economic development process, it is imperative to analyze the conceptualization of the term ‘nation-building’ and the theoretical models suggested to explain the nation-building process. [Hippler \(2005\)](#) asserts that the term nation-building was a key concept in the 1950s and 1960s development discourse, particularly in Third World countries, where development was defined in accordance with modernization theories. [Hippler](#) further noted that nation-building was largely used to entail economic development and political development. Economic development was in turn used to imply a market economy and political development was employed to refer to the nation-state conception and as a prerequisite for economic development and regarded above-all as a nation-building process. Thus development was viewed as ‘modernization’ which combines a market mechanism and a nation-state conception. Generally, [Hippler \(2005\)](#) identifies three closely-linked central elements of successful nation-building: ‘*a unifying persuasive ideology, integration of society and a functional state apparatus*’ (*p. 7*). The main purpose of nation-building is to foster national unity, integration and identity through a process of developing a sense of patriotism and solidarity among a nation’s people.

In this line of discourse, a detailed and more inclusive treatment on the conceptualization of the term ‘development or nation-building’ and the place of formal education in national development can be found in the work of [Fagerlind and Saha \(1989\)](#), which deserves attention. In short, they conceptualize development as any change which promotes or actualizes the human potential. In other words, the term development has been taken as any process of actualization of the biological, psychological and sociological capacities of individuals and society. The dominant development discourse suggests that the term development has been conceptualized in a multidimensional perspective. Therefore, development incorporates the combination of economic, psycho-social, and political dimensions ([Adams, 2002; Fagerlind & Saha, 1989](#)).

The conceptualization of development solely in either economic, or social, or political dimensions appears to overlook some of its essential dimensions. *Economic development* models define change or growth quantitatively as measured in terms of GNP and GDP and the level of living standards through per-capita income (Adams, 2002: 20-21). These development models generally focus on improved living conditions through the fulfillment of basic material human needs such as food, shelter, water and energy. However such economic indicators represent only one dimension of development.

The *psycho-social dimension* of development mainly assumes improved living conditions through the satisfaction of basic psycho-social human needs such as education, security, recreation and communication. The psycho-social indicators of development, such as education or health, mainly focused on distribution fairness and improved quality of life. But in addition to concern for economic growth and equal distribution of resources, a third dimension of development discourse, called *political development*, is required. Political development, according to Fagerlind and Saha, mainly focuses on domination and power – levels of decision - making regarding the distribution of resources. It enables political participation and no group dominance and in effect national integration and cohesion. Education cuts across (transcends) all the above three important dimensions of development: the economic, the psycho-social and the political dimensions (Adams, 2002: 25; Fagerlind & Saha, 1989: 29-31).

The available scholarship suggests that the term ‘development’ has gained the attention of governments, politicians, international donor organizations and scholars particularly after the Second World War. Accordingly, despite numerous classical theories and models of national development which gave formal education largely a socialization role, this dissertation mainly analyzed national development theories and models which emerged since the mid-twentieth century and give education more than a mere socialization role. Some of the development theories which give value and significance to education in national development discourse may, according to Fagerlind and Saha (1989), mainly include: modernization theory, human capital theory, Marxist theories, dependency theory, and liberation theory, each of which discussed hereunder.

The first of the above national development theories which give value and significance to formal education in national development discourse is the *modernization theory*, which emerged in response to the classical development thoughts in the 1950s. The theory assumes that national development could be achieved only when the majority of its population holds modern values. Thus, development has been equated with holding modern values, which are found in the Alex Inkeles modernity scale (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989). With regard to the education sector, the theory assumes that the inculcation or creation of modern values is undertaken by particular social institutions – the most important of which may be schools. In this theory, education is considered as the necessary requirement for societal development. But, the theory has been criticized and rejected for, among other things, its incompatibility thesis between modern values and traditional values and for it equates modernization with Westernization.

The second development theory which gives value and significance to formal education in national development discourse could be the *human capital theory*, which emerged in the field of Economics and brought to the education discourse, according to Tekeste (1996) and Fagerlind and Saha (1989), by Theodore Schultz. The theory probably represents one of the most optimistic perspectives about investment in education as well as its returns. The premise of this theory lies on the productive capacity of human-beings or manpower in national development process. Thus, it equates investment in human-beings with a form of capital investment, which has definite returns. Thus, the basic assumption of the human capital theory is that “the most efficient path to the national development of any society lies in the investment of its population, that is, its human capital” (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989: 18).

In line with the education sector, probably the most frequently cited work is found in Theodore Schulz’s (1961) publication, which assumes education as a productive investment, not a form of consumption. Schultz generally advocates the economics of education; and he contends that education has economic returns both at the micro and macro levels. That is, investment in education has both individual and societal returns and hence it is a necessary precondition for economic development. Moreover, formal education has been considered as the most important of all the unexplained inputs to economic growth. But, the theory is criticized on the ground that investment in education

may not automatically lead to improvement in income at individual level and in economic growth at societal level. In a recent publication entitled '*Can education Change Society?*' [Apple \(2013\)](#) clearly demonstrates such skepticism about the role of education in changing society.

The third development theory which gives value and significance to formal education in national development discourse is *Marxist theories of development*. These theories generally consider conflict as a major dimension of social change or development. As cited in [Fagerlind and Saha \(1989: 20\)](#), Nisbet (1969) considers conflict and change as “two sides of the same coin”. Similarly Marx contended that society is almost always composed of two conflicting classes: the exploiting and the exploited. Thus, with regard to the education discourse, Marxist theories assume that for formal education to contribute to national development or societal change, it must assume the task of consciousness creation among the exploited working class society so that it could be aware of its exploited status. In other words, in Marxist theories mass-literacy and ideological consciousness-raising are considered as essential inputs to national development.

The fourth development theory which gives some value and significance to formal education in national development discourse is the *dependency theory*, which postulates: “development and underdevelopment as relational concepts within and between societies are inversely related” ([Fagerlind & Saha, 1989: 22](#)). The theory assumes that the development of one country or region would happen at the expense of another. As such, the theory is mainly concerned with understanding the extent of dependency of poor countries on the rich. With regard to the education sector, the theory assumes that education can facilitate modernization, but it is largely used as a means by which rich countries exploit the poor countries by instilling their values and interests on political leaders and the elites. But such theoretical assumption has been strongly criticized for externalizing problems of development and ignoring internal processes and structures.

The fifth development theory which gives value and significance to formal education in national development discourse is the *liberation theory*. The basic assumption of the liberation theory is that poor peoples of the underdeveloped countries are exploited by their

fellow countrymen who hold power and resources. As such they suggest that in order to eradicate exploitation and benefit the poor, a radical change in the structure of society and in economic, social, cultural, and political order is required. With regard to the education sector, probably the liberation theorists can be taken as one of those who hold greatest optimism about education in national development discourse. Liberation theory considers education as the most essential instrument to overcome the prevailing oppression through awareness creation on the poor to be aware of their oppressed situation. In this line of discourse, the most frequently cited scholar may be [Paulo Freire](#), who considers education as a political instrument for liberation and national development. Therefore, liberation theory principally sees education as an essential input of national development from the perspective of political mobilization or consciousness.

Early classical theorists capitalized on *physical capital* – such as land, finance and labour – as essential requirements of economic productivity; and next, emphasis on intangible *human capital* – knowledge and skills ([Fagerlind and Saha, 1989](#)) and habits ([Goodwin, 2003](#)) – began to dominate the development discourse up until the 1980s. The human capital theory mainly refers to any set of skills and knowledge that increases a worker's productivity. From the economic perspective, the term human capital has been used to refer to a set of marketable knowledge and skills or any combination of such characteristics of workers which would contribute to productivity. Accordingly, the human capital thesis weighs knowledge and skills in line with its marketability (its value in the market) in the current knowledge economy.

However, later experience showed that economic productivity and sustainable development could not be achieved through mere emphasis on physical capital (land, labour and finance) and human capital (knowledge and skills). In modern development discourse social and cultural capital – behaviors, attitudes, norms, values – which enable the acquired human knowledge and skills (capabilities) to put into effect receive the attention of governments, scholars, and development planners. Here it appears relevant to give some space for the treatment of social capital in development discourse.

To begin with, a simple and straightforward definition of social capital is forwarded by [Imandoust \(2011: 52\)](#) as stated: “Social capital is a sociological concept, which refers to connections within and between social networks”. [Goodwin \(2003\)](#) defines *social capital* as: “...the stock of trust, mutual understanding, shared values, and socially held knowledge that facilitates social coordination” (p. 6). He conceptualized the term ‘social capital’ as any population characteristics that promote cooperation or mutual support among groups of people whose joint, interdependent efforts are needed to achieve a common goal. Such conceptualization of social capital and the characteristics or variables applied to characterize it may have practical utility for the purpose of this dissertation.

Similarly, [Bourdieu \(1986: 241-242\)](#) defines social capital as: “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”. In his conceptualization of the term, Bourdieu contends that social capital is not reducible to a person’s or group’s economic or cultural capital but it is linked to both – cultural and economic capital – based on its exertion of a “multiplier effect” (p. 242). Therefore, Bourdieu conceptualizes social capital in terms of a strong social network of personal relationships and memberships in groups and in essence more inclusive or accessible than any other form of capital. [Putnam \(1993: 167\)](#) also provides a more or less, similar definition of social capital as stated: “social capital ... refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, which can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” for mutual benefit.

A more comprehensive exploration of the term ‘social capital’ can be found in [Woolcock \(1998\)](#). Woolcock identifies four dimensions of social capital: i) the extent of horizontal associations; ii) the nature of social ties within communities; iii) the nature of the relation between civil society and the state; and iv) the quality of governing institutions (cited in [Temple, 2001: 84](#)). There are various more definitions suggested for the term social capital by sociologists and other social scientists, but all definitions appear to be guided by the assumption that social networks and/ or relationships have significant value to the wellbeing of individuals and society. Accordingly, in this dissertation the conceptualization

and operationalization of Ethiopian identity and the purpose formal education intended to achieve appear to fall largely within the domain of social and cultural capital.

Many scholars (see for example, Apple, 2013; Okuma-Nystrom, 2009) contend that in this era of globalization, the social aspects of development have been diminished and replaced by economic principles and dimensions. Thus the State is assuming more and more a responsibility of protecting markets and less responsibility for social welfare and as such the conceptualization of democracy in neoliberal States has changed from political and social to economic (Apple, 2013). The market principle puts education into a private consumption rather than as a public good. In the word of Okuma-Nystrom (2009: 35),

In the globalizing marketization of many social aspects, even the civil society is marketized where people increasingly solve social problems with money rather than with social action.

The available literature suggests that education has almost always remained to be the hub of national human and economic development agendas. In accordance with Fagerlind and Saha, if development is conceptualized as a process of actualization of the human potential for economic, psycho-social and political development, formal education can definitely be an essential component in the process of national development. Theories of human development suggest that individuals and societies have innate biological, psychological and sociological capacities and potentials and the education discourse would be evaluated in terms of actualizing such potentials or capacities in balanced proportions.

However, much of the existing international literature regarding the nexus between education and national development prioritizes education's contribution to economic productivity (Apple, 2013; Adams, 2002). In current scholarship on the relationship between education and development, the economic dimension appears to dominate the education discourse and/ or practice. Accordingly, the economics of education appears to dictate the attention of scholars, governments, and non-governmental organizations.

Similarly, the economics of education seems to receive a significant consideration in the post-1991 Ethiopia new nation-building process. The privatization of public education, the cost-sharing scheme introduced into the HEIs, vocationalization and the 70:30 student

admissions model are cases in point. However, as many scholars argue, it is questionable whether economic development would be possible under the prevailing highly fragile social arrangement.

Generally, in the current context of national development in Ethiopia, human capital and social capital have been conceptualized and dichotomized simply to demonstrate the over-exaggerated focus on knowledge and skills intended to contribute to the economy and the particular individual over the attitudes, values and behavior which would create a sense of community – belonging, integration and unity. Accordingly, it could be argued that the social function of education in nation-building appears to be overlooked. Development of any kind would be achieved if citizens or society remain cohesive and as such the education discourse and practice primarily focuses on nurturing shared social values, norms, beliefs and traditions which would lead to national unity and integration. Therefore, this study is intended to assess the representation of Ethiopian identity in the national and regional education system curriculum and in the students' values and in effect, at a broader level, demonstrates the balance between human capital and social/cultural capital in the nation's education system curriculum.

2.4. Sources of (national) identity

Recent theories of nation and nationalism suggest that national identity is not something 'given', but constructed through the family and various state institutions such as, the school, the workplace, the media, and the army ([Ozkirimli, 2000](#)). Building further on the constructivist theory, the fundamental theoretical assumption on which this study has been based is that national identity and its kindred variables – such as nation, nationalism, ethnicity, ethnic identity, etc – are socially constructed and contested among individuals and groups. Given this theoretical assumption, the dissertation attempts to identify and explain the key social actors or institutions involved in the students' social (national) identity construction process.

Psychological and sociological theories suggest that children's adaptation to the social and natural world has been performed by various actors through the life cycle. Many scholars ([such as Gimpel, Lay & Schuknecht, 2003; Massials, 1977; Saldana, 2013](#)) believe that the

family, peers, media, religious institutions and education have been considered as significant actors in shaping children's personality. They further elucidate that these agencies play significant roles in determining what is being taught and communicated to the children and youth members of society. The intersection (or at least dominance of one actor over the other) of such influences will help children to gradually develop a sense of who they are in their life span.

In contemporary society, the family, the church and the school have been considered as the three traditional agents of socialization through which society transmits its achievements, values, beliefs, traditions and other aspects considered desirable to the culture (Saldana, 2013). Other sources also indicate that political parties, civil society and peers also play a very important role in the transmission of societal values, beliefs and traditions. These institutions thus help intergenerational continuity in thought processes, values, traditions and beliefs in society.

It is firmly established in the literature that family is the first social institution for children's attitude formation and behavioral orientation towards objects and peoples around them and the social world at large. In line with this, Bush and Saltarelli (2000: 3) stated that "Students do not come to the classroom as blank slates. They bring with them the attitudes, values and behavior of their societies beyond the classroom walls". Families can shape a child's political behavior through the direct transmission of factual political knowledge, patriotism, religious beliefs, policy views, and even party identification (Havighurst & Davis, 2013). There are three ways through which parents shape the behaviors and orientations of their children: '*direct influence, imitation and transference*' (Torney, 1968 cited in Greenburg, 1970: 42). That is, parents directly influence their children's attitudes and orientations by teaching or orienting them towards authority figures and the law; and then children imitate and generalize clearly observable roles, attitudes and behaviors in the family through consensus between children and their family.

Gimpel et al. (2003) capitalized on the role of parents in orienting children towards religious beliefs, which has direct implications for their latter social and political participation and orientation. They contend that as religion mainly focuses at teaching

moral values such as selflessness and self-sacrifice, it contributes significantly to growing participatory attitudes. Gimpel et al. found out that in the United States religious identification is an important explanatory variable for political knowledge, discussion and efficacy. They assert that political knowledge and efficacy become higher for American Jewish than Catholic, Protestant and Muslim Communities and conclude that "...Judaism carried with it substantial political capital and promoted uniformly better citizenship among its adherents than any of the other major religious traditions" (p.127).

The other very important orientation most commonly shaped by the family is *partisanship* (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989; Gimpel et al. 2003). At early childhood, party identification and candidate preferences are effectively communicated by the family. Fagerlind and Saha (1989: 127) found out that for a child in the United States party identification was possible at the age of seven prior to the stage appropriate to grasp and interpret political message. For instance, in the United States of America children who celebrated their seventh birth day can label themselves as *Republicans* or *Democrats*. As a result of this, they contend that the foundations for political orientation or behaviour are laid down by the family long before the child steps into the school-gate.

Similarly, in an empirical study of 750 samples of Mexican-American families, Knight, et al (2011) found out that families – especially mothers’ – play an important role in the identity socialization process of their children through the transmission of cultural values denoting Mexican-American ethnic identity. It is not difficult to accept such findings because children learn uniqueness – cultural, linguistic, religious, class, gender, etc – at home than at any other social milieu such as schools, religious institutions, media and even with peers (for children are now living in a cosmopolitan world). In a multicultural liberal society context, such primordial attachments which signify ethnic identity among children have been performed by families at large.

However, under the context of the very short hours of a day families stay at home and spent their time with their children and the subsequent loose and gradually waning attachment between them, it appears difficult to exaggerate the role of families in the process of shaping the identity of children. Moreover, psychological theories of human development

suggest that the influence of family as an agent of socialization is strongest at the period of youth and such influence will be taken over by peer groups, school, religious institutions and the media at the age of adolescence (12 to 19 years). Accordingly, when children grew up and get exposed to external environments, their attitudes and orientations have been continuously shaped by forces outside the family – such as schooling, peer groups, religious institutions and the media. However, in largely traditional agrarian societies like Ethiopia family could have a significant role in shaping children's orientation towards their ethnic community and Ethiopia at large.

The second but strongest agency for children's political socialization is the school (Havighurst & Davis, 2013; Niemi & Sobieszek, 1977). Schools are taken by many scholars as the most critical social institutions in formally disciplining adolescents towards attitudes, beliefs, norms and dispositions which would help them integrate harmoniously with their society. In line with this, Fagerlind and Saha (1989: 126) contend that for children's political orientation, schooling can be the strongest of all agents mainly due to its relative autonomy from other intervening agencies. To further substantiate this idea, Gimpel et al. (2003: 145) assert that formal education is supposed to prepare students for life in the real world and the most important of which could be the political aspects of their country and the world at large.

Similarly, Saldana (2013) contends that the school remains the strongest and most stable agent of socialization. Saldana asserts that schooling is responsible for socializing children and the youth on both specific task-oriented skills and societal values. For instance, in contemporary American society schooling is charged with the task of both training “the individual for practical occupations and skills and to provide the individual with basic societal values, like loyalty to country, politeness, etc” (p. 228). Furthermore, Bandiera, et.al (2016) assert that historically, during the Age of Mass Migration – between 1850 and 1914 – compulsory schooling was introduced in the United States as an instrument to nation-building even at the time of high literacy rate to instill civic values to the culturally diverse population migrated to the country.

In Coleman's conception of political socialization, formal education has played an important role in the political system. The function of education in this regard includes: (a) the socialization of children and youth into the political culture, (b) the selection, recruitment, and training of political elites, and (c) the political integration or nation building of groups of people (Coleman, 1965 cited in Massialas, 1977: 274; Fagerlind & Saha, 1989: 125). Schools politically socialize students in four ways (Niemi & Sobieszek, 1977). The first mechanism may be through formal instruction (curriculum), secondly in their classroom discourse through individual teachers, thirdly through co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and finally through formal and informal peer-group dynamics.

Fagerlind and Saha (1989) contend that comparatively most of the existing political socialization research has been conducted in the developed Western nations than in the developing countries. Yet political socialization through formal education has been required, as they argued, more in the developing than developed countries. Fagerlind and Saha provided three justifications for this assertion: (1) the impact of other socialization agents – such as family, peers, media, political parties, civil society – is insignificant and the general political participation culture found to be minimal; (2) in developing societies, the schools are required to breakdown the prevailing political culture based on tribalism and localism and develop a new political culture and nationalism; and (3) in many developing countries there is apparent conflict between the political values of the traditional culture and the new culture (128).

In addition to political socialization, formal schooling is also related with the political system through the selection, training, and recruitment of political elites (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989: 125). Generally, in the role of the school in political socialization Fagerlind and Saha interestingly conclude that formal education or schooling has played a significant role in political participation as it does on economic growth and social change.

The mass media also plays an important role in shaping the social and political behavior of adolescents. Radio, television, news papers and the recently emerged social media like face-book, twitter, etc. have significant implications for students' sense of nation-hood as well as their political values, attitudes and norms. For instance, Ortmann (2009) found out

that in present day Singapore the internet emerges as an important podium for the construction of Singaporean identity. Similarly, [Darr \(2011\)](#) showed us how the Chinese government has created a strong sense of Chinese national identity and nation-building through a firm control of the mass-media and public education. In Ethiopia, the mass-media is largely under the control of the government. Despite repeated claims against government intervention in their affairs, private providers have been to some extent engaged in the print media and some operate in FM radios. Overall, it could be safely stated that in Ethiopia although the mass-media, including the Internet, has been at its infancy, nowadays it is emerging as a significant platform for the negotiation and construction of group identity, including Ethiopianness.

Religious institutions have been also taken as important agents of socialization. As other identity sets, students' national identity may be shaped by religious teachings. Against this background, a number of scholars also amplify the divisive role of religion across communities. For instance, considering the education policy of the Labour Government in England as a starting point, [Faulks \(2006\)](#) contends that the unreserved support given for faith-based schools has intensified the ethnic and cultural differences across communities already divided by economic and social variables. Faulks suggests that religious schools "whose ethos is dominated by a single religion" ([p.133](#)) are not suitable for creating common understanding and tolerance with followers of other religion and any belief system.

Moreover, as clearly put by [Parekh \(2008: 29\)](#), "*There is almost no religion whose followers do not think it the best one of all*". By extension, the sense of superiority advocated by each religious institution may not bring people of different religions into unity within their religious diversity. Taking Parekh's stance we come to the assumption that as religious institutions singularly concentrate on their adherents and instill selected values which could not transcend religious boundaries, their contribution to nation-building through national identity development and reinforcement – particularly in a multi-religious context – appears insignificant. But coming to the Ethiopian context, many sources indicate that identification and attachment to the political nation has been well defended by major

religious groups such as Christianity and Islam. Moreover, Orthodox Christianity was a state religion and a symbol of Ethiopian identity up until the 1974 Revolution.

Similarly, it is widely recognized that, keeping other factors constant, people of similar ages and social status often share interests and as such peer-groups can be another important factor in adolescent political and social behavior and orientations. But its influence appears most evident in college and university campus life (Havighurst & Davis, 2013). In order to minimize the net impact of peers on students' Ethiopian identity development, this dissertation attempts to explore and understand the status of Ethiopian identity in pre-college student values and curriculum materials.

Generally, the school obviously both competes and cooperates with other agencies in the process of national identity construction (La Noue & Adler, 1968). But the frequency and intensity of influence excreted by the school system is by far greater than other agents. What the school contributes is a range of information, beliefs, and concepts which build up on these earlier attitudes engendered by the family, media, peers and/ or religious institutions (La Noue & Adler, 1968: 23). Moreover, students may bring information about Ethiopian identity from their past exposure to the external environment such as the family, media, religious institutions, political parties, and civil society at large. Then the knowledge, values and beliefs about Ethiopianness gained at school will be added to the already established information so that a deeper and broader understanding of Ethiopian identity could be crystallized by the school system.

Most of the extant research considers the chief agents of socialization (such as family, schools, peers, religious institutions and media) as explanatory variables and identity as a dependent variable. But the purpose of this research is not to see the causal link between education and Ethiopian identity. Rather it tries to understand the status of Ethiopian identity in post-1991 Ethiopia through the lens of the formal education curriculum and student perspectives. As such it is important to admit that there could be other agents of Ethiopian identity construction and reinforcement other than the school.

2.5. Curriculum and ideology

The most frequently asked question in curriculum discourse, according to [Muller \(2000\)](#), is *‘what knowledge is of most worth for the millennial citizen?’* In an attempt to find an adequate answer to this very question, scholars of education and/ or curriculum generally have been generally divided into two groups: those who give primary emphasis for cultural and political or moral knowledge and skills; and those who amplify knowledge and skills for economic productivity. The first group stresses on social skills for cultural and political participation whereas the second group advocates cognitive skills for economic participation – flexibility, innovativeness and adaptability. However, the advent of the global knowledge economy and the rise of the neo-liberal consensus lead to *instrumentalization, commodification and marketization* of knowledge. As such, the skills (and knowledge) required to promoting economic innovation and more relevant to competitive advantage have been the focus of education ([Muller, 2000: 41-42](#)).

In today’s post-modern society, the nature of knowledge has been more flexible, fragile and contesting. In line with this, [Zaidi \(2011: 44\)](#) asserts that “Since society is forever evolving, social knowledge is always open to flux, and can remain contested and open to change or manipulation”. As such educational policies and changes and the overall thought processes in formal education settings becomes the territory of a particular dominant group at different times. In line with this, [Apple \(1993\)](#) contends that curriculum is a battleground where different actors negotiated and contested. Thus, what to teach is not the sole decision of curriculum specialists and/ or it does not remain to be a mere professional discourse.

In more concrete terms, [Fagerlind & Saha \(1989\)](#) stated that the reciprocal relationship between education and ideology or political behaviour has been noticed since Plato and Aristotle. They went on to say that Coleman rightly put this two-way relationship between the State and education as: “As is the State, so is the school”, and, “what you want in the State, you must put into the school” (Coleman, 1965: 6). Based on this, Fagerlind and Saha concluded that “formal education is both determined by and a determinant of the political system” (p. 123). Education promotes state legitimization, integration and political participation in as much as the state determines and controls what goes on in formal

schooling. This suggests that formal education is largely influenced by – and equally influences – state ideology.

As education is partly a political undertaking national ideological orientations and philosophy significantly determine its intentions and practice. Drawing from the ideals of critical educators – like [Paulo Freire](#), [Henry Giroux](#), [Michael Apple](#), and their compatriots – many scholars in the literature contend that the goals, objectives, contents, learning experiences, and assessment strategies of an educational system have been significantly determined by the socio-economic conditions and political ideology of the country concerned. In line with the dominant position of political ideology and other socio-economic and cultural mix of a nation on the process of its curriculum development in particular, it is worth mentioning Apple's most frequently cited argument as follows:

The curriculum is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation. It is always part of a selective tradition, someone's selection, some group's vision of legitimate knowledge. It is produced out of the cultural, political, and economic conflicts, tensions, and compromises that organize and disorganize a-people ([Apple, 1993: 222](#)).

Apple further contends that the decision to define some groups' knowledge as legitimate and official remains in the hands of those who hold dominant power in society. "Thus, whether we like it or not, differential power intrudes into the very heart of curriculum, teaching, and evaluation" (p. 222). [Apple](#) attempts to show, on the basis of who holds power, how school curriculum reproduces and alters dominance and subordination in society.

Just like Apple, [Kliebard \(1986\)](#) insists that curriculum planning and/ or the inclusion and exclusion of some knowledge, skills and values is influenced by a number of competing ideologies or perspectives. [Kliebard \(1986: 8\)](#) further stated that:

We do not find a monolithic supremacy exercised by one interest; rather we find different interest groups competing for dominance over the curriculum and, at different times, achieving some measure of control depending on local as well as general social conditions. Each of these interest groups, then, represents a force for a different selection of knowledge and values from the culture and hence a kind of lobby for a different curriculum ([cited in Richards, 2001:114](#)).

In Ethiopia, scholarly works on the link between formal education system curriculum and ideology appears almost missing. However, theoretical and empirical evidences from the Western world suggest that schooling is the strongest of all the major agencies for the ideological orientation of adolescents. [Greenburg's \(1970: 4\)](#) theoretical framework suggests that: (a) every political regime seeks to instill what it considers proper political orientations in its young generation; (b) childhood political learning is relevant to later adulthood orientations and behaviors; and (c) individual political attitudes [and their aggregates] have an impact on the operation of a nation's government and political life. Accordingly, it appears imperative to critically analyze historical political socialization attempts in the Ethiopian formal education setting by using Greenburg's theoretical framework as its analytical tool.

There is apparent variation in the civic and/ or political values desired among countries ([Fagerlind & Saha, 1989: 127](#)). The fact is that every political system has its own specific way of defining and perceiving what is worthwhile for its existence, stability and continuity. Thus, it would be straightforward to expect thematic, temporal and spatial variations in the political beliefs, norms, and values maintained and preserved by the respective Ethiopian regimes vis-a-vis the prevailing national, regional, and global ideologies and/ or perspectives. By extension, there might not be such things as universal political beliefs, values, and norms maintained by the different Ethiopian regimes and the national education system curriculum throughout its political history. In other words, Ethiopian schools have been mandated to socialize children to a political culture through Political Education, Social Studies and Civic and Ethical Education and other curricular and co-curricular activities differently at different times in the country's political history. As such what is considered true (beliefs), what is important (values), and what is expected of them (norms) showed significant variations in the last three government structures of the country.

When we see the historical ideological context of national education curriculum planning and practice in Ethiopia, we may witness a series of discontinuities (and even contradictions) in its ideological (civic and/ or political) orientation. The education system drawn along the ideals, values and traditions of Feudalism during the last Monarchy was

totally shifted to reflect the ideals of Scientific Socialism during the Military regime and now the education system curriculum appears to be reconstituted in consistent with the ideals of Revolutionary Democracy. These historical episodes – one is almost the antithesis of the other – might have significant implications on the process of building a well-functioning and matured education system and curriculum based on Ethiopian (rather than a particular state) values, norms, beliefs and traditions. In turn, such historical discontinuity may have significant impacts on national unity and integration and hence on the ongoing nation-building process. It seems due to this reason that [Coleman \(1965 as cited in Weiler, 1968\)](#) stated that formal education carries a much heavier load of political socialization in developing countries than it does in the developed nations.

Against the above theoretical background, the ETP of the country explicitly states that national education in Ethiopia is totally free from any ideological orientations. It follows that Ethiopian national education curriculum and school practices are not expected to indoctrinate particular ideology. An education system primarily focuses on the dissemination of particular ideology and historiography has been considered as a dividing than a unifying force ([Zaidi, 2011](#)) among a nation's population.

2.6. Curriculum and national identity

Research interest about the political socialization of adolescent citizens is traced back to the period of the early Greek's civilization when its great formulator, Plato, attempted to design a civic education program for citizenship education and training through his famous work "*The Republic*" ([Carr, 1998](#); [Greenburg, 1970: 4](#); [Fagerlind & Saha, 1989: 123](#); [Shizha & Kariwo, 2011: 10](#)). His education program was intended to produce intellectual elites who could act as the guardians of traditional values, cultural heritages and universal truths ([Carr, 1998](#)). Since then formal education has been preoccupied with disciplining the youth ("ideal man") to conform to the established social, economic and political order. Many scholars (see for instance, [Cohen, 1970](#); [Coleman, 1965 cited in Fagerlind & Saha, 1989: 35 & 123](#)) have capitalized on the political function of education more than its economic significance. These authors suggest that schooling principally emerges from antiquity to dish-up political interests – as an instrument for the stability and continuity of the State and society.

Current scholarship suggests that more than any other social institutions – public or private – schools play a prominent role in cultivating active citizenship. It seems due to this claim that Parekh (1997) wrote:

The best places to acquire the virtues of citizenship are educational institutions, especially the schools and, to a lesser extent, the colleges and universities. They are public institutions, act as bridges between the private and the public realm, are subject to collective control, and involve working and living together with people of diverse backgrounds, religions, ideologies and interests. As such they are cradles of citizenship in a way that other social institutions are not (p. 527).

Schools through curriculum planning or textbook design and classroom practices represent a “figured world” in which students will assign meaning and values to some selected symbols, subjects and objects which would gradually shape their identities. Then schools gradually control society “by normalizing mainstream perspectives as natural and pathologizing those outside the classroom as deficient, lacking, or abnormal” (Caraballo, 2011: 167). He further asserts that in academic contexts identities are constructed by the identity negotiator – the student – by continuously interacting with the ‘figured’ world through critical scrutiny.

The most frequently cited scholar in the link between curriculum and national identity is William A Reid. Reid (2000) contends that national curriculum should provide opportunities for learners to create a sense of who they are or their national identities. Reid considers national curriculum as one of a nation’s cultural artifacts – such as national songs, festivals, and stories – which symbolizes its cultural or national distinctiveness. Similarly, Banks (2011) amplified the role of formal education curriculum in cultivating good citizens in a multicultural context as stated:

Schools must nurture, support, and affirm the identities of students’ diverse groups if we expect them to endorse national values, become cosmopolitans, internalize human rights values, and work to make their local communities, nation, region, and the world more just and humane (Banks, 2011: 250).

Banks seems to suggest that students drawn from diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, regional, gender, etc groups would better identify and associate themselves with the local, national, sub-regional, regional, continental and global community whenever

their primary identification and attachment with their cultural community has been valued and affirmed.

To this effect, the curriculum would help students to explore their own identity and then locate themselves in the wider national community (Maylor, 2010). Echoing the necessity of national identity in modern Britain, Gordon Brown argued that British society ‘should be able to gain great strength from celebrating a British identity which is bigger than the sum of its parts’ (Maylor, 2011: 246). In his empirical study of pupil’s and teacher’s perception of Britishness, Maylor posits that “Where lessons accentuate ‘differences’ rather than similarities or omit particular groups, this could potentially undermine perceptions of shared British identities” (p. 246).

But curriculum design and classroom practice addressing Ethiopian identity does not mean incorporating fixed, narrow, unexamined or uncritical values, symbols, beliefs and traditions which could enhance blind identification and attachment to the nation’s political and cultural community. While valuing and appreciating their ethnic, religious, regional, linguistic, etc identity and loyalty, in their continuous interaction with curriculum documents and classroom practices or what Caraballo calls the ‘figured world’ (school), students could develop a sense of Ethiopian identity through critically examining the available curriculum materials and practices around them.

2.7. National identity in an era of globalization

Under this heading, the dissertation intends to shed light on the place of national identity in current multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic, multiracial, and multi-religious countries in the context of growing global interdependence and the move towards knowledge-based economies. To this end, first the place of national identities in human history has been briefly described. Then theoretical perspectives and empirical studies on the reciprocal relationship between national identities and globalization with particular emphasis on the national education system curriculum have been presented. Finally, a summarized reflection on the role of national identity in the context of globalization concludes the section.

The place of national identities in human history has been well documented by James Banks. In one of his famous article entitled “*Educating Citizens in Diverse Societies*” [Banks \(2011\)](#) stated that the issue of national identity was a major academic and policy discourse just before the 1960s and 1970s ethnic revitalization movements. Accordingly, public schools were primarily preoccupied with cultivating citizens who internalized their national identities symbolized, among other things, by national values, national heroes, and national grand narratives. But later on these aims of public education became gradually obsolete with the recognition of multiple identities and more flexible citizenship rights.

The other scholar who extensively wrote on national identities in the context of current globalization and multiple identities has been [Anthony Smith](#). On the place of national identification in current multicultural, multi-linguistic, multiethnic and multi-religious world society, Smith maintained that:

In the modern era of industrial capitalism and bureaucracy, the number and in particular the scale of possible cultural identities has increased yet again. Gender and age retain their vitality; but today, professional, civic and ethnic allegiances have proliferated, involving ever larger populations across the globe. Above all, national identification has become the cultural and political norm, transcending other loyalties in scope and power ([Smith, 2001: 58](#)).

Other scholars also suggest that nowadays with growing interconnectedness of the world’s nations and the emergence of global identities and commitments, nationalism recurs as a strong organizing force in nation-states. In the word of [Banks \(2011: 243\)](#), “Nationalism and globalization coexist in tension worldwide”. In a similar vein, [Zaidi \(2011\)](#) also demonstrates the apparent tension between national distinctiveness and globalization. Post-colonial societies and the newly emerged nations are struggling between the need to preserve their heritage culture and identity and the cultural universalization process imposed by colonizers and globalization ([Zaidi, 2011](#)). In response to these forces threatening their identity, [Zaidi](#) noted, developing countries are preoccupied with instilling a sense of collective identity and security among their fellow citizens and this sense of insecurity has been clearly felt in curriculum discourse.

A more or less similar discourse on national identity in an era of globalization and its implications to the national education system curriculum emerges from Singapore. Reyes (2013) asserts that the increased context of globalization and the push towards knowledge-based economies has hastened the policy discourse on how national education system curriculum should operate to cultivate identification with and attachment to the nation. He adds that in a rapidly changing context of globalization, more than ever, the issues of engendering good citizenship, national identity and political socialization have been receiving the focus of government policy in Singapore. But in Singapore, growing ethnic and religious parochialism, increased Westernization, political alienation of minorities, emigration of youth, contradictions due to pragmatism, a lack of authentic history, and immature civic society pose serious challenges to the conceptualization of Singaporean identity. In response to this challenge, Reyes recommends that the national education system should – beyond its economic function – serve as an important beginning to nurture national identity along more social and civic ideals.

In his study of national identity and state-society relationships in three Post-USSR republics – such as Kazakhstan, Russia, and Azerbaijan – Blum (2007) found out that in the context of increased global social and economic interdependence, in these countries there is greater social consensus on basic attributes of national identity. He also cites Japan, South Korea, India and China as those countries which successfully defended the challenge of cultural convergence or homogenization brought about by globalization and knowledge-based economies and they successfully constituted their own distinct national identities.

Yet there has been a growing debate on whether national identity is required in the context of global interdependence and flexible or porous national boundaries. Proponents of national identities (such as Banks, 2011; Miller, 1995; Parekh, 1997, 2005; Smith, 1991) contend that boundary maintenance is an important part of all nations. The debate on whether thick or thin national identities discussed in section 2.2.1. of this dissertation is also as hot as the very necessity of national identities in the context where the whole world has been unequivocally equated to a global village. But, as Smith argues, whether this weak civic conception of national identities can bring and sustain national unity and a sense of belongingness remains unclear.

On the other hand, opponents of national identity contend that in the current context of increasing interdependence of peoples, cultures and economies and the growing heterogeneity of modern societies, it is unrealistic to find an overarching national identity which could equally include all citizens (Faulks, 2006). This school of thought asserts that instead of a narrowly defined national identity, it is the principles of democracy and universal human rights which could bring about unity and solidarity among citizens. This position leads them to suggest cosmopolitanism, a term whose origin traced back to, according to Luke (2006), the end of eighteenth century Immanuel Kant's essay entitled '*To Eternal Peace*' (1795) where he advocated a "transnational, worldly citizenry" (p. 135).

Those who advocate for cosmopolitanism consider strong national identities as parochial nationalism which restricts the inherent free mobility of people. These scholars further contend that national identities often represent the dominant ethnic group and exclude and marginalize ethnic minorities (Maylor, et.al, 2007). For instance, in the UK, as Maylor et al stated, there is a move to redefine British identity in relation to a common global identity because as 'Britishness' has been symbolized by the Queen, Englishness, Whiteness and Christianity it represents only the dominant group (the English) and excludes the Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish and other ethnic minorities.

To sum up, just before the 1960s and 70s ethnic revitalization movements in North America and Western Europe, the issue of national identity has been a hot academic and policy discourse. As such schooling was preoccupied with nurturing a shared sense of national identity until the issue of multiple identities has got wider recognition. Nowadays, the cultural homogenization process brought about by globalization and the surge of knowledge-based economies into the public education arena caused national identity to re-emerge as an important academic and policy discourse. But yet there is a growing debate in current scholarship with regard to the need for overarching national identities vis-à-vis global interdependence and porous national boundaries. Advocates of cosmopolitanism contend that identification with the global community is much more appealing than either ethnic or national (and even regional) identities. It follows that cosmopolitan identities should transcend ethnic, national, and regional boundaries so that they can be more

inclusive than any identity set. As such civic identities like the principles of democracy and universal human rights could serve as important attributes of global citizenship and identity.

Despite such contention, a large part of the available scholarship suggests that in the current context of globalization and knowledge-based economies national identities have been required to foster belongingness, unity and solidarity among citizens for a common national purpose. After all, historical evidence shows us that a nation has been primarily built by no one other than its citizens. It is true that like any other form of identity sets, national identities may exclude as much as they include into a nation's domain. By extension, this dissertation argues that if care has been taken to select all-inclusive attributes symbolizing national identity in a multicultural context, national identities can significantly contribute to nation-building by creating a shared sense of belongingness, unity of purpose and solidarity among citizens. Today, most scholars agree that the healthy functioning of a society not only depends on the fairness of its constitution and institutions but most importantly on the “virtues, identities and practices of its citizens, including their ability to cooperate, deliberate and feel solidarity” with co-nationals of different ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural, regional, etc. backgrounds (see for example Kymlicka & Norman, 2000: 10).

2.8. The interface between national identity and ethnic identity

Current scholarship suggests that individuals have multiple identities. While some scholars consider multiple identities of an individual as conflicting, others contend that they are coexisting. In line with this, among the most widely spoken group identity sets which remain contested in current academic discourse may be ethnic identity and national identity. Some scholars have suggested theoretical models for understanding the relationship between these two group identity sets. In this context, although they employ different terminologies, three scholars such as Hashim (2014), Parekh (2005), and Sidanius et al. (1997) appear to intersect in the conceptualization of the interface between national and ethnic identities. But, mainly due to its conceptual precision and clear boundaries among each marker, Sidanius et al (1997) approach seems to offer a better space for understanding the nexus between the two identity sets.

Sidanius et al. (1997) suggest that there are three theoretical models for understanding the interface between national and ethnic identity: the *melting-pot* model, the *multicultural or ethnic pluralism* model, and the *group-dominance* model (p. 103). The melting-pot perspective honors identification and absolute loyalty to a nation with little or no room for identification with one's ethnic group (Parekh, 2005; Sidanius et al, 1997). One's ethnic identity is largely regarded as irrelevant and only identification and loyalty to a supranational identity has been required of a good citizen (sees also Hashim, 2014). The melting-pot perspective presupposes a negative relationship between ethnic identity and national identity (Sidanius, et.al., 1997). That is, the greater one's identification and loyalty to his/her ethnic group, the lesser the identification and loyalty to his/her political nation as a whole will be.

The *ethnic pluralist model*, which emerged in the 1960s ethnic revitalization movement in response to the 'melting-pot' perspective, assumes that the two identity sets – ethnic and national – are co-existing or complementary where commitment and loyalty to one identity set will further strengthen commitment and loyalty to the other set (Parekh, 2005; Sidanius et al, 1997). It follows that there would be a positive relationship between an individual's identification and loyalty or commitment to his/her ethnic group and his/her identification and loyalty to the nation as a whole. Generally, the major defining features of the ethnic pluralist model include: appreciation of ethnic subgroup distinctiveness, equality of all ethnic groups without any room for domination and subordination, and dual commitment to both ethnic particularism and the nation as a whole.

The "group dominance" perspective assumes that the emergence of current multiethnic nations has been primarily related to continuous wars of conquest and, ultimately, the nation belongs to the victorious dominant group (Sidanius, et.al., 1997). Thus the victorious dominant group has the ultimate right to the ownership of the nation's resources and symbols, and even the nation itself. It follows that in the group dominance model, membership and identification with the dominant ethnic group automatically bestows membership and identification with a nation. The best example of this model of national identification may be the Israeli "Law of Return" (Kretzmer, 1990 cited in Sidanius, et.al. 1997: 105) where identification with the nation has been more of a matter of being Jewish

than place of birth and any other markers. Generally, in this model, as [Sidanius, et al](#) argues, identification and attachment to a nation would be stronger and/ or more positive for members of the dominant group than for the subordinate groups.

To sum up, different countries espouse different systems of nation-building which they think appropriate. However, the relevance of such systems could be weighed in terms of their potential to bring about national unity and solidarity. In order to understand the kind of nation-building and/ or Ethiopian identity followed up and practiced by successive governments of Ethiopia, this dissertation adopts the above three theoretical perspectives suggested by [Sidanius and colleagues](#) as its analytical framework. Accordingly, the kind of nation-building (and/ or national identity) strictly followed up during the pre-Dergue era (Monarchy), the Military Government and the EPRDF would be analyzed in the light of the melting-pot, group dominance, and ethnic pluralism models.

2.8.1. During the pre-1974 Revolution Ethiopia

There are different theories on the emergence of state and the way it would be governed. Among these, the classical Divine Right Theory appears to justify the conceptualization of the Ethiopian state and governance mainly during the Monarchy (pre-1974 period). According to this theory, states have been considered as institutions created by God and their rulers as true representatives of God's will. Proponents of this theory also claim that the social order and position in which an individual finds himself/herself in society is determined by birth and God given. Accordingly, it is the will of God for some to rule over and some to be ruled. On the basis of this claim, many kings in Pre-Revolutionary Ethiopia considered themselves and their male descendants as God chosen to rule over the country ([MOE, 2011](#)).

To justify this claim the Ethiopian monarchs resorted to the legend of Queen of Sheba of Ethiopia and King Solomon of Israel as stated:

The legend of Queen of Sheba and King Solomon maintains that Queen Sheba or Negeste Saba, the supposed queen of Ethiopia at one time, visited King Solomon of Israel. When she returned back to her country, the queen gave birth to a son called Menelik I. According to the legend, Menelik I is the son of Queen Sheba and King Solomon. The legend also states that Menelik I and his descendants ruled as kings of Ethiopia for

long period of time and that the rulers of Ethiopia had to be direct descendants of this line (MOE, 2011: 149).

The Solomonic dynasty and line of descent were said to remain the sole source of political power in Ethiopia from the early Axumite state up to the deposition of the last Emperor in 1974, with the only interruption by the Zagwe Dynasty. However, this mythical origin of the Ethiopian polity yet remains contested in the large array of Ethiopian scholarship.

Historical evidences suggest that modern Ethiopia – as it appears today – was created through continuous wars of conquest and forceful incorporation of various nations, nationalities and peoples into the nation's domain by Emperor Menilek II. In the word of [Van der Beken \(2007\)](#) “The formation of the modern Ethiopian state is not therefore the result of external imperialistic design”. According to [Baheru \(2002\)](#), the process of territorial expansion and the formation of the modern Ethiopian empire-state had been finalized in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. He goes on to assert that the ruling elites defined Ethiopian identity in a manner which symbolizes their ethnic, religious, economic, political and social backgrounds only.

During the Imperial period, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was the symbol of authority and identity. According to [Keller \(2010: 61\)](#), the basic argument of the *Kebre Nagast* (the Glory of Kings) – the first written document justifying the mythical origins of the royal family – was that the Ethiopian people are ‘the chosen people’ and that only Ethiopian monarchs of the Solomonic line of descent has the right to rule not only the Ethiopian people but the entire world. Any person who has such descent and consequently the right to rule was required to be affirmed by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church through its written document known as the *Fetha Nagast* (The Law of Kings), which carried the duties and obligations of the subjects of the Crown and those of the Crown to the people ([Keller, 2010: 62](#)). The Church had a legitimizing role to any claim to the throne. Generally, ascendancy to the throne in the pre-Dergue era was determined by three criteria: *the Solomonic line of descent, membership to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and masculinity*. Article 2 of the 1955 Constitution depicts the Solomonic line of descent which justifies the Imperial authority.

Another feature of the Imperial period was that Amharic was used as a national language and other language families had no State recognition. This is explicitly stated in the 1931 and 1955 Constitutions and in the 1930 Nationality Law of the country which states that any foreign national would be granted Ethiopian citizenship if and only if he/she fluently speaks and writes in Amharic. This could be contrasted with the present Ethiopian Nationality Law. According to the Ethiopian Nationality Law Proclamation No. 378/2003, a foreigner who applies to acquire Ethiopian nationality by law shall be able to communicate in any one of the languages of the nations/nationalities of the Country ([Article 5 sub-article 3](#)).

But scholars ([for instance, Bermeo, 2002](#)) contend that the forced imposition of state language (as in Spain and Sudan) and state religion (as in Burma) could create a fertile ground for the germination of separatist movements. This appears also the case in pre-1991 Ethiopia. Many scholars and people in the political circle believe that it was the inequality of nations, nationalities and peoples exemplified by the imposition of Amharic language and Orthodox Christian Religion which led, among other things, to the emergence of armed group struggles for recognition and some even for complete secession from the Ethiopian state machinery.

Therefore, in view of the defining features of nation-building discussed above it appears logical to assert that the group dominance perspective could, more or less, be used to understand the kind of nation-building (and/or national identity) strictly followed up and practiced by the then Imperial regimes of the country. This is because during the period of the Monarchy membership to the mythical Solomonic line of descent and Orthodox Christianity would automatically guarantee claim to political power or ascendancy to the throne. Moreover, the political nation was considered as a gift from God to this so called ‘God’s chosen’ dominant group.

Accordingly, the formal education system curriculum was designed to produce loyal and obedient citizens who would maintain the status-quo. However, formal education seems to serve a different function than what was intended by the Imperial government’s education policy formulators, curriculum developers and textbook writers. This could be exemplified

by the fact that the 1974 Revolution which led to the overthrow of the Monarchy and the national question which abolished the military regime had been primarily ignited by the 1960s and early 1970s Ethiopian secondary school and higher education students' movement.

2.8.2. During the Military Government

During the Military Government, identification with one's ethnic identity and other identity sets was considered as having a divided loyalty to the nation (Ethiopia) and to the working class community. The only identity set demanded by the Dergue's *scientific socialism* was working class solidarity and identity (Keller, 2010). Its nationalistic motto of *Ethiopia Tikdem* – “Ethiopia First” – demonstrates the Military Government's homogenizing and/ or assimilation policy of group identities. The country had given, at least theoretically, a hegemonic position above everything and everyone and as such other commitments and loyalties were not only considered subordinate to it but also parochial and divisive.

Of course such position has some theoretical and empirical backing. For instance, Amali and Jekayinfa (2013) contend that cultural pluralism and loyalty to sub-group identity has been the apparent threat to national integration and nation-building in Nigeria. This is further implicated in their definition of the term nation-building as stated: “The process of bringing together or uniting people of diverse cultures, languages, religion, and belief systems into one which eschews parochial and subordinate loyalties and sentiments to the ethnic groups” (p. 141). Throughout their analysis, these two scholars have attempted to demonstrate the dangers of ethnic loyalty to Nigerian unity and stability.

However, in modern plural societies it is common for people to have hyphenated group identities – for instance, Oromo-Ethiopian, Amhara-Ethiopian, Tigre-Ethiopian, and the same combination for other ethnic groups as well. The issue of Ethiopian identity is about who belongs to the political nation and its conceptualization should be as inclusive as possible so that it will give space for all ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, gender, etc groups to identify with and have a sense of attachment to the political nation. But as the Dergue strictly followed the ‘melting-pot’ perspective where all diversities were assimilated into a single national culture and language, a very large array of the population

remained alienated from national self-definition. Such exclusionary conceptualization of Ethiopian identity adopted by the Military Government, as some political commentators say, forced fellow citizens to feel as if they were outsiders while living and sacrificing for their political community.

As clearly noted by Edmond Keller, the Dergue's definition of Ethiopian identity and response to diversity has been clearly evident in the 1987 Peoples' Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (hereafter, PDRE) Constitution. Keller contended that:

The rights of nationality groups were not deemed as important as those of citizens belonging to mass organizations (such as workers and peasants associations, women's associations, students associations, etc). In other words, individuals were expected to owe their primary loyalty to these types of mass organizations, rather than to their ethnic kin" (Keller, 2010: 73-74).

More than anything else, unconditional loyalty and identification with working class associations had been strongly emphasized in the 1987 PDRE Constitution. But, the search for self-definition or the 'national question' and the 'right to self-determination up to secession' which began earlier at the Addis Ababa University compound gradually evolved to a bloody civil war and finally culminated in the overthrow of the Military Government and the subsequent introduction of a new version of nation-building or Ethiopian identity in post-1991 Ethiopia by the EPRDF.

Generally, the process of nation-building attempted by the Imperial Regime and the Military Government appear to converge at forging a strong Ethiopian nation-state with superficially linguistic and cultural homogeneity. As such, the various dimensions of group identities individual Ethiopian citizens identify and live with were pinched as symbolized by a single dominant religious, linguistic and cultural identity. Of course, historical experiences indicate that many African leaders in post-independence period followed a more or less similar path to nation-building. Some post-independence African leaders aggressively worked to forge a strong national identity by relegating ethnic, religious, regional and other group identities to a personal affair. Some other African leaders even attempted to 'erase' ethnic identity and loyalty from their citizens as a prerequisite to effective nation-building. For instance, it is frequently stated in the literature that (see for

instance, Mamdani, 1996: 135) the President of post-independent Mozambique once stated: “For the nation to live, the tribe must die”. Most post-independence African leaders appeared to give prime focus for sub-regional, regional and continental identities than the hyphenated or nested identities of their citizens. For instance, the earlier advocates of the Pan-African Movement did not address the ‘national question’ in their respective countries. Instead, coercive assimilation and integration were used as the main strategies of nation-building in many post-independent African countries, including pre-1991 Ethiopia.

But the process of nation-building through assimilation and coercion has been rejected by many Ethiopian and international scholars. For instance, Bermeo (2002) and Parekh (2005) contend that assimilation as a mechanism of accommodation into a nation’s domain is not a practical solution. Borrowing data from Karl Deutsch, Bermeo stresses on the fact that the full assimilation of ethnic groups may take from 300 to 700 years and at worst, “...we can never be certain that the process will pay-off” (p.103). The process of nation-building through coercive assimilation is considered not only morally unacceptable but most importantly unsuccessful and has negative long-lasting consequences. As such, she suggested that “Hard-liners should remember that separatist movements are more often the stepchildren of threats than concessions” (Bermeo, 2002: 105).

Assimilationists believe that unity and stability in any society could not be possible unless its members have a commonly shared national culture, belief system, attitudes and practices both at individual and collective level (Parekh, 2005). Parekh stated the ontological basis of assimilationism as follows:

Some assimilationists give the argument an ontological basis, and maintain that human beings are so constituted that they find it extremely difficult, even impossible, to relate to and identify with those holding substantially dissimilar views to theirs on moral and cultural matters (Parekh, 2005: 5).

Parekh goes further on to mention that for assimilationists this tendency is a natural human instinct which could not be eradicated. However, the flaws in this school of thought is that, Parekh argued, it is difficult to imagine that human beings can only identify with and attached to those who hold essential similarities. He maintained that if this is the case, successful interethnic, interreligious and intercultural marriages and friendships would not

be possible. Conversely, there would not be intra-ethnic, intra-religious and intra-cultural differences and conflicts in the so-called homogeneous societies. Parekh interestingly concluded his argument against assimilationism by stating that “By demanding far more than what is possible, they [assimilationists] fail to secure even what is necessary (p. 6).

Probably this theoretical debate had been more practically evident in Ethiopia than any other nation in the world. The policy of assimilation strictly followed up by almost all the previous governments of Ethiopia could not create a strong and united political community which stood for a common vision or national purpose as expected; instead it gradually led to protracted civil wars and horizontal divisions in the Ethiopian society. Assimilation has two forms: voluntary and mandatory or coercive. During the Dergue period, assimilation into the national culture (working class identity) and language was not a matter of free individual choice. It is believed that, more than ever, the coercive assimilationist policy strictly followed up by the Dergue regime which practically endangered the unity and sustainability of the Ethiopian nation. The proliferation of many armed groups in the country’s history who fought for national self-definition and even some for complete secession from the country could be a case in point.

2.8.3. During the post-1991 Ethiopia

One unique feature of the post-1991 Ethiopia nation-building process could be the place of ethnic allegiance and identity in the whole nation-building process. The EPRDF redefined the nature of the Ethiopian state away from the previous highly convergent or assimilationist imperial and military regimes and recognized ethnic, regional, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity as a virtue and foundation of the new Ethiopian state. That is, while the previous regimes treated the various sets of group identities as segregated and non-interactive, the EPRDF considers such diversities as ‘nested. Accordingly, the post-1991 Ethiopian state has been reconstituted as multicultural, multilingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious country where such wide and deep-rooted diversities coexist and they could be sources of intergroup cooperation, sense of belonging, strength, accord, and inspiration for the Ethiopian people rather than being potential sources of division, discontent, conflict, and eventual disintegration of the Ethiopian state apparatus. The EPRDF affirms ethnic, regional, linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity as a basis for

national cohesion, a source of strength and above-all as the only means for nation-building and state-building in post-1991 Ethiopia.

The definition of the Ethiopian state in terms of interethnic relations in the post-1991 nation-building process by the EPRDF represents a historical departure from its predecessors. This is clearly evident in the 1995 FDRE Constitution. The Preamble of this Constitution explicitly describes the historic failure of previous Ethiopian governments to effectively address the problem of ethnic disharmony as stated: “We must find a solution which is beneficial to the Ethiopian people today, therefore, history will not provide the answer.” This ideological shift in the definition of the Ethiopian nation and state has been clearly documented in various Articles and sub-articles of the 1995 FDRE Constitution and in the subsequent national strategic development documents.

But such a radical ideological departure of the EPRDF from its predecessors is not welcomed by all the academic community. Accordingly, some scholars feel skeptical about the unity and solidarity of the Ethiopian people with the apparent ethnic-based constituent of the Ethiopian state apparatus. In this line of discourse, [Keller \(2010\)](#) asserts that the current development strategy based on ethnic federalism has been felt by a number of scholars as a faulty approach; and even as “a fragile experiment” by [Kymlicka \(2006: 58\)](#) and [Abbink \(2009: 1\)](#). Some scholars contend that such strategy will “likely to lead to more rather than less ethnically based conflicts [...] and ultimately result in the demise of a unitary Ethiopian state” ([Keller, 2010: 81](#)).

[Alemante](#) also appears to support Keller’s and Kymlicka’s position. [Alemante \(2003\)](#) contends that the introduction of ethnicity in post-1991 Ethiopia as a state organizing principle would lead to ethnic loyalty and thus unlikely to create a common national identity. He treats ethnic identity and national identity as divergent and often conflicting. Accordingly, ethnic based federalism in Ethiopia, as [Alemante](#) argued, could encourage these two conflicting and divergent versions of citizenship. He goes on to say that when ethnicity appears as a fundamental political organization and identity, citizens would regroup themselves under the banner of ethnicity and assert their distinctiveness which could precipitate disintegration rather than integration. Moreover, as ethnic and territorial

boundaries rarely coincide, [Alemante](#) asserted, members of ethnic minorities within major ethnic regions could be treated as *outsiders* and hence discriminated against the exercise of their citizenship (human and democratic) rights while the so called *sons of the soil* or ethnic majority enjoy the same rights.

Despite such theoretical contentions, however, in plural societies like Ethiopia the process of nation-building will not be a simple undertaking. The political and ideological context and the process of nation-building currently governing individual and collective life in Ethiopia appear to fall largely within the domain of the ‘ethnic pluralist’ model suggested to understanding the interface between national and ethnic identity sets by [Sidanius and colleagues](#). According to this theoretical model, appreciation of and respect for ethnic group distinctiveness and equality of all ethnic groups would consolidate identification with and attachment to the political community and hence ethnic identity and national identity are not only co-existing but also complementary. Therefore, in this dissertation the ethnic pluralist perspective has been used to understand and justify the interface between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity in the post-1991 Ethiopia new nation-building process.

To sum up, in Ethiopia there were some attempts of nation-building by the respective governments of the country at different historical periods. In view of the theoretical models reviewed above, the whole process of nation-building attempts in Ethiopian history may be broadly divided (and conceptualized) into three distinct historical periods. The first broad category may be the whole pre-Dergue era which could be conceptualized or interpreted as a process of nation-building simply by *God’s will*. This position emanates from the fact that in the pre-Dergue period only *religion* and the *Solomonic line of descent* were the symbol of authority and identity in Ethiopia and, in the modern sense of the term, there were no founding documents of the political nation – except the *Kebre Nagast*, *Fetha Nagast*, and the 1931 and 1955 Constitutions, which still praised religious affiliation and the divine rights of the Kings.

The Dergue era may represent the second period which could be interpreted as nation-building attempt merely by *decree*. Although the Dergue has some founding documents

such as constitution, they could not practically prevent it from doing whatever the Committee wishes to do. This position has significant backup from Ethiopian and international scholarship. The last category probably includes the post-1991 period which could be taken as a nation-building process by *consensus*. This position was taken merely based on the fact that at least in view of the founding documents of the country – such as the 1995 FDRE Constitution – and the presence of democratic institutions, at least physically, the ongoing nation-building process may be underway in the freewill of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples. But it is important to note that ethnic-based conflicts are still evident among the nations and nationalities of Ethiopia whose secession credentials have been generously guaranteed at least constitutionally.

2.9. National identity in the context of multicultural Ethiopia

Almost all societies today are multicultural, that is, they consist of several distinct and self-conscious cultural communities. Managing them is not easy. The cultural communities cherish their identities and rightly wish to preserve these. However they must also find enough in common to enable them to live together as a single community. How do we reconcile the demands of diversity on the one hand and social unity and cohesion on the other? (Parekh, 1997: 523)

Under the heading ‘*National Identity in an Era of Globalization*’, the dissertation briefly reviewed the place of national identity in the current context of growing global interdependence and knowledge-based economies with particular emphasis on the national education system curriculum. Here, the dissertation elucidates the nature of national identity in multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic and multi-religious Ethiopia in the light of existing theoretical perspectives and empirical evidences.

Almost all modern societies are multicultural (Parekh, 2005; 1997) and the destiny of every society falls under the shoulder of its fellow citizens. Plural societies, like Ethiopia, have diverse interests, beliefs, values, traditions and aspirations. Current scholarship shows that one of the main challenges of multicultural societies has been to maintain unity and solidarity while respecting and enforcing the apparent diversity (Banks, 2011; Parekh, 1997). At this juncture, two alternative challenges characterize the management of modern multicultural societies, including Ethiopia. First, if society privileges unity and ignores

diversity, it will inflame discontent and conflict which may culminate in disintegration. Second, if society, on the other hand, privileges diversity and fails to reconcile different demands, it may endanger its unity and solidarity (Banks, 2011; Parekh, 1997). Therefore, it is imperative for multicultural societies to maintain a right balance between the demands of unity and diversity (ibid). For holding a plural society together, it needs a shared self-understanding among its political community which is commonly found in its national identity. In short, the issue is about inclusivity (Parekh, 1997: 526-528).

It appears due to this reason that in current academic discourse and practice, national identities have been assuming the civic-territorial model rather than the ethnic-genealogical model and in a largely multicultural world society such orientation appears to be logical. However, the kind of civic values, traditions, and beliefs desired by each nation of the world varies significantly. For instance, in large parts of Western Europe, North America, and Australia individual success or gains and freedom (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989) have been emphasized whereas in many African nations social values or service to society (Njeng'ere, 2010) have been prioritized.

In both instances, the issue of national identity is by itself a group (social) identity – identification with a nation. But, the difference lies on the ideological basis of its definition or construction. The ideological basis of civic identity in the Western world has been motivated by neoliberalism. The neoliberal consensus in national identity conceptualization and construction centers on the individual rather than groups. It assumes that individual freedom and gains would bring strong national identity, social cohesion and stability (Okuma-Nystrom, 2009). To substantiate this position, Apple (2013: 7) contends that “neoliberalism gives people [only] one option of who they are” – that is mere consumers – and hence people are bonded together for individual gains rather than social responsibility.

On the other hand, the civic identity model often advocated for African countries by scholars and politicians has been centered on social values, interests and responsibilities. This position is based on the assumption that nurturing social values, rather than mere individual gains, would bring national identity, strong unity and stability (Njeng'ere, 2010; Woolman, 2001). In line with this it is worth mentioning the influential speech of one of

Africa's top political leaders and advocates of African Unity, [Jomo Kenyatta](#), as stated: "For Europeans individuality is the ideal in life, where as for Africans, the ideal is right relations with, and behaviour to, other people" ([Kay 1975:189, cited in Woolman, 2001: 42](#)). Although it appears a position statement, such speech gives the context for understanding the conceptualization and operationalization of national identity in Africa, including Ethiopia.

The group resonance of national identity in the African context has been also found in the Ethiopian late Prime Minister [Meles Zenawi's](#) Speech as stated: "...Ethiopian identity would remain indispensable so long as it has value and significance to nations [...] nationalities [and peoples]" ([EthiopiaFirst.com, 2009, cited in Dawit & Haftu, 2012: 108](#)). The issue of group (ethnic) identity and right appears to be the founding principle of the current Ethiopian state apparatus. By extension, though it appears civic in nature and shares some features with the liberal Western societies, the issue of Ethiopian identity as a means of building strong and integrated society largely found embedded in group rather than individual right and success; and this is explicitly stated in the 1995 FDRE Constitution and the ensuing national strategic development documents. Individual freedoms, rights, and gains are believed to be secured within the framework of the freedom, rights and gains of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is one of the most ethnically, linguistically, culturally and religiously diverse nations in Africa. Accordingly, the main concern in the definition or conceptualization of Ethiopian identity is mainly about inclusivity. It was due to this context that the researcher attempts to conceptualize Ethiopian identity along three markers: constitutional patriotism, Ethiopia's political community self-projection and common belonging. The operationalization of Ethiopian identity markers was made from the perspective of inclusivity in defining who belongs to the nation by the self and by external others as well.

International experiences show that the curriculum is an important venue for the construction of national identities in multicultural contexts. For instance, in their review of the issue of diversity and citizenship in the curriculum, [Maylor et al \(2007\)](#) found out that

in England the national curriculum has been used to cultivate national identities through shared knowledge of the country's spiritual, moral, social and cultural heritages.

Some case study findings indicate that education plays an important role in nation-building through the cultivation of national identities in multicultural contexts. For instance, [Mino \(2011\)](#) found out that the expansion of nationalized History education in Uganda helped many Ugandans to develop national identity and a sense of belongingness with strong ties to regional and continental communities. Based on his empirical finding, [Mino \(2011\)](#) strongly rejects the mischaracterization of African politics as tribal.

In the current context of globalization and multiculturalism, national unity and belongingness would not be imagined without a more inclusive approach to nation-building. In line with the value of accommodating diversity for successful nation-building in a multicultural context, [Hall \(2006: 361\)](#) asserts that “The capacity to live with difference is, in my view, the coming question of the twenty-first century”. The theoretical perspectives and empirical evidences presented above indicate that national identity could be not only possible but also necessary for successful nation-building in multicultural contexts, including Ethiopia.

2.10. Education and nation-building in Ethiopia

This section of the dissertation aims to critically review and understand the purposes and processes of education in Ethiopia through the analysis of the education and training policy context, curriculum development and textbook production process and then derive the basic identity issues impliedly reinforced across historical periods. Drawing from the systems approach (considering all levels of education as an interconnected whole), it tries to show first the broader context of education in Ethiopia and then its general purposes in the light of Ethiopian identity construction. The assumption is that the analysis of the broader macro-level context of education as a single functional unit could shed light on the general picture of the purposes and processes of education in Ethiopia. Therefore, here the historical development of the country's education system and what purposes it supposed to serve at different times in its history is briefly analyzed.

Modern education in Ethiopia has a relatively short lifespan; and as many scholars (like Abebe, 1991; Mekasha, 2005; Tekeste, 1996) agreed upon it was introduced only a century ago. Of course, the country has its own indigenous traditional education and ‘curriculum’ maintained by the Orthodox Church since the fourth century. However, the contribution of the traditional church education to the emergence and magnificence of the country’s modern education system has been deeply contested in the available literature. Most Ethiopian scholars (for instance, Amare, 2003; Solomon, 2007; Tekeste, 1996) contend that this early traditional native education and curriculum which began in Ethiopia during the Axumite Civilization did not evolve into a modern type of education and curricula in the country.

On the other hand, in his assessment on the contributions of the indigenous traditional education for the emergence and expansion of the modern education system of the country, Mekasha has provided some concrete evidences of interdependence and continuity. Mekasha (2005: 128) asserted that “most modern educators and most great intellectuals, academically and socially important people in Ethiopia, have a strong religious educational background”. By extension, as these elites with traditional indigenous education background had taken-over teaching and administrative positions in the then modern education setting and disseminated their knowledge, values and skills to the broader school community it may be worth mentioning that the indigenous traditional church education has significant implications for the evolution and expansion of the modern education system of the country.

But, as a system, still the indigenous traditional education of the country did not evolve into a modern education system. It seems partly due to this very reason that the exact picture of the indigenous traditional education system in Ethiopia has been largely missed in the scholarly literature. Moreover, Ethiopia’s late entrance into the modern education system coupled with the slow progress the sector has achieved in its short history left a significant proportion of its citizens largely illiterate.

Many scholars (such as Brock-Utne, 2000; Tekeste, 2006) agree that the education system of most sub-Saharan African countries largely has a colonial legacy. As such, for the great

majority of these states the language of instruction and curriculum has been more or less the same. [Tekeste](#) further asserts that despite a very short Italian fascist presence historically Ethiopia was never colonized. However, the modern education system introduced to the country was not basically different from that prevailed in other previously colonized states of Africa. For instance, in both cases modern education was primarily introduced and carried out by European missionaries.

Many Ethiopian scholars agree that Ethiopia's entrance into the modern education system was marked by the opening up of Menelik II School in Addis Ababa ([see for instance, Abebe, 1991; Bahru, 2002](#)). In Ethiopia, a fully fledged modern education system at all levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) was observed in the first decade immediately after the Italian Occupation Period ([Abebe, 1991](#)). A slight cursor into the history of expansion of the modern education system of the country suggests that the recent experience has no historical comparison. For instance, gross student enrolments at all levels of the Ethiopian education setting grew up from 35,000 in 1946 to more than 1,000,000 in 1973 ([Tekeste, 1996](#)); and in the year 2012 it reached to 19,769,307 ([MoE, 2012](#)). Accordingly, the growth in gross enrolments from 1946 to 2012 is almost 565 fold and, on the average, an 8.1 times increase successively recorded in the last 70 years. Official government reports show that currently the total student population enrolled at the Ethiopian primary and secondary education level is more than 27 million. Furthermore, over half a million students are currently attending upper secondary (preparatory) level education and over 150,000 students are joining higher education institutions ([see FDRE-GCAO, June 2016](#)).

Since modern education took roots in Ethiopia, the country has passed through three systems of governance, according to [Tekeste \(2006; 1996\)](#), each of which may be distinguished by its education policy planning and implementation. The first system of governance was the Monarchy which ruled the country from 1930 to the 1974 Revolution; the second was the Military regime which remained in power from 1974 until 1991; and the third system of governance has been the EPRDF which assumes political power since 1991 to date. Current scholarship reveals that national educational objectives and curricula represent the ideological context of a particular political system ([Apple, 2013; Tekeste, 1996; 2006](#)). Accordingly, these three systems of governance in Ethiopia appear

ideologically different – one is almost the antithesis of the other – and such divergence may well be observed in the purposes of national education system curriculum advocated by each government system. To this end, in the subsequent sub-sections of the dissertation the purposes of education and the meaning of being Ethiopian impliedly derived from the policy context and education/curriculum purposes are critically analyzed.

2.10.1. Purposes of schooling during the Monarchy

The imperial government has no clearly documented education policy (Solomon, 2007; Tekeste, 2006). There was no legally defined institution mandated to curriculum development. During this period, the curriculum was *ad hoc* and left to teachers who came from different countries with different academic and social backgrounds. For that reason, the curriculum was not responsive to local contexts and as such it was soon proved irrelevant. This was followed by subsequent education sector reviews with the involvement of domestic and foreign experts.

During the last Emperor's regime, education was supposed to serve two purposes (Tekeste, 2006). The first purpose of education during the last Emperor was its use as an instrument to achieve respect for the 'king, country, and religion' and such education carried out by Lutheran missionaries was the most favored by the Monarchy (Tekeste, 2006: 13). Such purpose of education was largely favored by the Emperor at least because the Imperial government sensed the communication gaps between the generations brought about by the country's modern education institutions. Moral studies which included Civics and Religious Education were essential components of such curriculum. The second grand objective of education during the last Monarchy was to use education as a means of the economic development of the country and this role [of education] was externally induced by the UNESCO (ibid). Such objective of education appears to be motivated by the theoretical direct causal association between education and individual and societal economic gains.

The effects of the spread of modern education system in Ethiopia during the Monarchy have been categorized into two as the training of '*functionaries*' and '*intellectuals*' (Bahru, 2002: 109). The first group constitutes those elites who were trained to staff or run the

growing bureaucracy and as such they have strong affiliation with the State apparatus and seek to maintain the status-quo. On the other hand, the second group constitutes those intellectuals who criticize the backwardness of the country and as such advocated several political and socio-economic reforms. The intellectuals also called '*Japanizers*' were trained and lived abroad and they remained relatively distant from the state apparatus (pp. 109-110).

However, even education as a means for 'modernization' was conceived largely as staffing various offices to run the state machinery. Despite greater appetite to expand formal education on the Imperial government's side, the education system was entangled with several problems to achieve its objective. One of the manifestations for the failures of the sector was that in the early years of the 1970s the unemployment rate of secondary school graduates had reached 25 percent in an event of a gross enrolment rate of only 10 percent (Tekeste, 2006: 15). In terms of distribution fairness (equity), modern education during the Imperial period was highly 'elitist' for it reached largely the urban dwellers and marginalized the rural majority (ibid).

Against this backdrop, growing dissatisfaction with the Imperial Education System began to emerge among secondary school graduates, the clergy and nobility, and the intellectuals. The then modern education system was criticized for leaving a larger proportion of secondary school graduates unemployed. It was also attacked by the conservative clergy and nobility for its failure to nurture Ethiopian values, beliefs and traditions among the nation's youth. The system's failure was also evidenced by growing illiteracy among the Ethiopian rural masses.

The above pressures on the imperial regime's modern education system had led to the emergence of subsequent education sector reviews. The Education Sector Review Team, according to Tekeste (2006), was composed of 51 Ethiopian and 31 international experts. The main task of the experts of the Ethiopian Education Sector Review of 1971-72 was to devise strategies which would enable to achieve universal primary education and resolve the problems of unemployment among secondary school graduates. Accordingly, the experts proposed entry to secondary education to be equivalent to the annual rate of

Ethiopian population increase, which was estimated at 2.1 percent per annum. Regarding the universalization of primary education, the new Education Sector Policy targeted the rural masses and it proposed that in the year 2000 all citizens of the country would get access to primary education. But, unfortunately, the policy issues pretty stated in the Education Sector Review largely remained on paper mainly due to the 1974 Revolution which removed the Monarchy.

From the above brief review of the Imperial period modern education system, it appears plausible to assert that the Ethiopian education system curriculum failure to instill Ethiopian values, beliefs and traditions was observed from its very formative years. For instance, in the word of [Tekeste \(2006\)](#):

The conservative elements of the Ethiopian [orthodox] church and nobility argued that there was very little Ethiopian in the curriculum and that those young Ethiopians who passed through the school system were disrespectful of their society and its institutions (p. 16).

Generally, during the Monarchy education was conceived as an important instrument for nation-building. In the word of one scholar: “Regent Teferi had, from the beginning, regarded education as an essential requirement to be fulfilled in the process of nation-building” ([Abebe, 1991: 59](#)). But the kind of nation-building the education system curriculum intended to serve was to train or discipline children to be obedient and passive adherents of the status quo. That is, respect for the king, the territory, and religion ([Desta, 2014](#), [Tekeste, 2006](#)). Consequently, unconditional identification and attachment with the Monarchy, national religion, national culture and national language were taken as the defining features of Ethiopianness among the nation’s school youth. Despite this fact, one of the fierce oppositions in the late 1960s and early 1970s which ultimately led to the demise of the Imperial regime had emerged mainly from Ethiopian secondary school and HEIs students. It seems that the Imperial government education system was able to create a critical mass who successfully challenged the status-quo. This could be partly attributed to the absence of a clearly stated education policy and a government institution mandated for curriculum development, which left little room for the Imperial Government to manipulate its modern education system.

2.10.2. Purposes of schooling during the Military Regime

Despite ideological differences, structurally the education system of the Dergue regime had continued to be a three tier structure as 8-4-4 just as it did during the Imperial period. At the course level, the most significant change from the Imperial period was increasing the number of subjects offered at secondary school level from 7 to 12 with the addition of five new subjects like *Agriculture, Production Technology, Political Education, Home Economics and Introduction to Business* (Abebe, 1991). But, the education sector had continued to operate under deteriorating pedagogical conditions and poor teaching/learning infrastructures and materials (ETP, 1994; Tekeste, 2006: 18-21). As clearly stated by Tekeste (2006), during the Military government the education sector was supposed to serve the following functions:

...to cultivate Marxist-Leninist ideology in the young generation, to develop knowledge in science and technology, and to integrate and coordinate research with production so as to enable the revolution to move forward and secure productive citizens (p. 18).

The above quotation explicitly demonstrates that the education sector was highly ideology-oriented although scientific knowledge, technology transfer, research and innovation were also emphasized. But although scientific knowledge, technology transfer and research-based production were cherished, the ultimate end of education was to indoctrinate the youth and to build the Marxist-Leninist ideology and working-class identity. But as such ideology was not based on Ethiopian values and ideals, the education policy issues and subsequent strategies defined by the Military regime and pretty stated in its policy and strategic development documents had largely remained on paper. As such, the Military government's education system seemed a breeding ground for anti-government struggles and oppositions rather than being a venue for mobilizing the country's youth on the government side. For instance, the leading figures of the TPLF, EPLF and EPDM and later on the EPRDF were largely high school and university level students of the early Dergue era.

The politicization of national education during the Military Government was evident in its national aims of education and the subjects or content areas identified to achieve them. Some of the manifestations of the politicization of education by the Dergue can be found in

the works of [Abebe Bekele \(1991\)](#), [Bahru Zewde \(2002\)](#), [Desta Asayehegn \(2014\)](#), and [Tekeste Negash \(1996; 2006\)](#). During the Military government, [Abebe](#) stated, Political Education was given as a course in public schools starting from Grade 4. Every subject, including the most scientific and technical courses, were supposed to cultivate a socialist ideology in the minds of Ethiopian children. [Abebe \(1991\)](#) goes on to say that one of the grand objectives of the introduction of General Polytechnic Education into the country's school system was to set the material and technical basis of socialism.

In a similar vein, [Tekeste \(2006\)](#) asserts that the ideology of Marxism was the main pillar of education during the Dergue period. He goes on to say that “The entire Ethiopian society was now in one way or another subjected to political indoctrination” (p. 18). Bahru Zewde also joined Abebe Bekele and Tekeste Negash on the politicization of the country's modern education system during the Dergue Regime. It seems due to the politicization of national education and other realms of social life that [Bahru \(2002: 243\)](#) stated: “The Dergue has passed into history – not without reason – as one of the most doctrinaire Marxist regimes that has appeared in the twentieth century”. Therefore, it could be asserted that the politicization of formal education and the ensuing working-class identity, with complete rejection or suppression of ethnic identity, has largely characterized nation-building orientation of the modern education system curriculum of the Dergue period.

2.10.3. Purposes of schooling during the EPRDF

The overthrow of the socialist-oriented military government and the coming into power of the EPRDF in the 20th of May 1991 has brought about fundamental socio-political and economic policy changes in the country. The adoption of a decentralized system of governance and the free market principle into its macro-economic policy has significant implications for the education sector as well. For instance, some public institutions and services which were under the monopoly of the state have been legally opened for private providers. Moreover, the provision and management of primary education has become a regional mandate.

But, yet in Ethiopia the privatization and regionalization of education mainly implies its provision and management. In both cases, the curriculum contents and methods of

instruction seemed to remain under the federal government's jurisdiction. The national curriculum framework for primary and secondary education (public, private and regional) and the subsequent curriculum documents have been designed and prepared with a strong or direct involvement of the federal MOE. Accordingly, minimum learning competencies or student profiles, the contents and methods employed in public, private and regional schools would be expected to remain, more or less, alike.

Besides privatization and regionalization of primary education, such political and economic policy shifts from the previous centralized system of governance and command economy have also brought about a corresponding conceptual and structural change in the education system of the country. Conceptually, education has begun to be conceived with a more expanded horizon as, beyond generating graduates who run the state machinery, a means to achieving intellectual growth, national economic development and civic participation. And, structurally the education system of the country has been re-organized in a four tier structure as 4-8-4-3 and this will be discussed in detail in the next sub-section.

In any context, the general purposes of education have been reflected in the education and training policy of a country. The education and training policy of a country, in turn, reflects its political, economic, ideological and social orientations. In line with this, [Apple \(2013\)](#) asserts that education policies mirror the social and political contexts of any given society. In further capitalizing on the influence of economic and political powers on education and curriculum, [Apple](#) asserted that "...educational policies are a major site of such ideological disarticulation and rearticulation" (p. 156). He goes on to contend that education policies and schools in general serve as arenas in which major transformations in ideological affiliations are fought out.

Against this backdrop, it appears plausible to understand the place of Ethiopian identity in the country's education system curriculum and in students' values or perspectives at large in the light of the current education policy context, curriculum context and textbook production process. As curriculum essentially deals with 'what should be taught' and 'how', whose knowledge has most worth remains a policy issue. [Stenhouse \(1975\)](#) reported that the purpose of education is basically a policy issue; and the focus of curriculum

research and development should be evaluating how educational purpose is translated into policy and assessing the extent and basis of the gaps in implementation. By extension, it appears difficult to understand curriculum purposes without resorting to highlight some of the key features of the country's education system curriculum and policy issues. As such the following section is devoted to the analysis of the education and training policy context for subsequent curriculum development and the production of curriculum documents.

2.10.3.1. Education and training policy context

Upon the overthrow of the military government, the EPRDF has inherited an education system that was entwined with Marxist-Leninist ideology and deteriorated pedagogical conditions (ETP, 1994; Tekeste, 2006). Some of the problems of the previous military regime's education system were presented in the policy document as regional and urban – rural disparity in access to education, failure to meet societal needs, poor education and training infrastructure and facilities, which might be generalized as lack of relevance, quality, equity and access. The gaps in the previous education system were portrayed in the new ETP as they generally span from general policy direction to specific contents and modes of presentation. Accordingly, the new Education and Training Policy was initiated by the incumbent government to pull out the country's education system from this 'vicious circle'.

The analysis of the meaning and significance of education in Ethiopia has been made in accordance with the meaning it carries in the current ETP context. Accordingly, the definition of education suggested by the 1994 ETP appears to correspond with the meaning suggested by Farrant and John Dewey. Farrant (1988) defines education as a means by which society reproduces itself across generations. He perceives education as a cultural reproductive system used by society to pass on its values, beliefs, aspirations and experiences from generation to generation.

The utility of education for intragenerational and intergenerational continuity of societal values, beliefs, experiences or achievements, etc has also been capitalized by other scholars too. For instance, in one of his most seminal books entitled '*Democracy and Education*', Dewey (1959: 9-10) stated that as nutrition and reproduction required for physiological life,

education is an essential requirement for social life. The Ethiopian ETP document has provided a more or less similar definition and general purpose of education as stated:

Education is a process by which man transmits his experiences, new findings, and values accumulated over the years, in his struggle for survival and development, through generations. Education enables individuals and society to make all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, ability, skills and attitudes (ETP, 1994: 1).

The above quotation suggests that in Ethiopia education is conceptualized as a means of intergenerational continuity and civic participation. Accordingly, education should serve as a means by which the achievements, experiences, values and aspirations of one generation have to be transmitted to the next generation. Such intergenerational continuity of the core achievements, experiences, beliefs and values of the Ethiopian society could enable the incoming generation to live a life which is assumed to be stable and better. If education fails to serve this purpose, each incoming generation would be compelled to begin a life from without. As a result, the anticipated intergenerational continuity would be impaired.

As the policy suggests, the meaning of education is not limited to value transmission across generations. Education is also conceptualized as the process of knowledge, ability, skill, and attitudes acquisition which could enable students' all-rounded participation in society as active citizens of this country. It is meant to develop problem-solving skills, identify harmful traditions and replace them by useful ones, conserve the environment, respect human rights, democratic values, equality, mutual understanding and cooperation (ETP, 1994: 1-2). As such both the individual and social purposes of education as well as transmission and production of knowledge, skills and values appear reflected in the new ETP context.

In addition to the conceptualization of education, the new ETP also presented the objectives of education and training in Ethiopia. The policy objectives have been broken down into five general and fifteen specific objectives of education and training. The general objectives of education and training identified by the policy document (ETP, 1994: 7-8) include the following:

- i) *Develop the physical and mental potential and the problem-solving capacity of individuals by expanding education and in particular by providing basic education for all.*
- ii) *Bring up citizens who can take care of and utilize resources wisely, who are trained in various skills, by raising the private and social benefits of education.*
- iii) *Bring up citizens who respect human rights, stand for the well-being of people, as well as for equality, justice and peace, endowed with democratic culture and discipline.*
- iv) *Bring up citizens who differentiate harmful practices from useful ones, who seek and stand for truth, appreciate aesthetics and show positive attitude towards the development and dissemination of science and technology in society.*
- v) *Cultivate the cognitive, creative, productive and appreciate potential of citizens by appropriately relating education to environment and societal needs.*

The policy objective emphasizes both the individual and societal function of education. A closer look at the objectives of education portrayed in the policy document tells us that in Ethiopia education is intended, among other things, to bring social cohesion through the cultivation of such civic values and skills as democratic unity, liberty, equality, dignity, tolerance, justice, morality, and social responsibility among citizens. Equally significant is the weight given to the function of education for individual intellectual growth, national development and global environmental awareness.

In addition to the above changes in the conceptualization and objective of education and training, the [1994 ETP](#) also introduced structural changes in the country's education system. Structurally, the current Ethiopian education system has a four tier structure: 4-8-4-3. That is, four years of kindergarten education (from pre-KG up to KG-3), eight years of primary education (i.e. four years of basic education – Grade 1 up to 4 – and four years of general education – Grade 5 up to 8), four years of secondary education (i.e. two years of general secondary education – Grade 9 up to 10 and two years of preparatory or upper secondary education – Grade 11 up to 12), and 3 years of undergraduate education.

Students are required to sit for three major nation-wide examinations which serve as screening criteria to determine their destiny in the education ladder. *Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE)*, which is given at the end of primary school education would determine students' transition to first cycle secondary education and the *Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE)* has been offered as a screening criteria to join second cycle secondary education (or simply preparatory education), technical and vocational education and the world of work. Finally, upon successful completion of preparatory education, students are expected to sit for the *Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Certificate Examination (EHEECE)* as a means to joining tertiary or higher education institutions.

Kindergarten education is conceived as a preparation for formal schooling and as such it focuses on the all-round development of the child. It serves as a transition to primary education. Primary education is generally intended to prepare students for further education and training and for the world of work as well. General secondary education is intended to prepare students for further education, for specific training and for the world of work. Similarly, upper secondary or preparatory education is intended to prepare students to join HEIs and for the world of work. Higher education – both at undergraduate and graduate studies levels – is intended to help students to develop societal problem solving or research skills and professionalism.

As per the policy premise, technical and vocational training has been given parallel to the general education for those who leave school from any level of education. It is intended to produce semi-skilled middle level manpower. As such training has been given in agriculture, crafts, construction, home science, and commerce for those upper primary and lower secondary school leavers who could not continue in the education ladder for different reasons. But in a very recent publication, the Federal Ministry of Education ([MOE, 2015](#)) declared that it is those students who sit for the *Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE)* and failed to join second cycle secondary (preparatory) education could have the opportunity to get technical and vocational training.

The ETP (1994: 4) further maintains that “*Education, as a very important factor to human development, is of a high priority in the overall development endeavor of the government*”. Accordingly, it appears due to this commitment that the education sector witnessed a dramatic continuous system expansion in the subsequent years. Various sources suggest that in Ethiopia the last fifteen years have witnessed the proliferation of educational institutions in almost all parts of the country at all levels. In at least quantitative terms, the education infrastructure as well as the student population has shown a historic remarkable growth. According to the MOE (2011: 7), the primary schools of the country have a gross enrollment rate of as high as 95 percent. The secondary schools and HEIs of the country have also achieved a very significant growth in gross enrolment rate. In the 2010/2011 academic year, the total enrollment in all levels of education in Ethiopia was over 20 million, which is more than one-fourth of its total population in the same year. However, many Ethiopian and international scholars remain skeptical about this rapid system expansion as it may compromise the quality of education and training.

Despite such a remarkable system expansion, the new ETP has been criticized for at least three things: (1) for being an imposition from above; (2) for its failure to address the contemporary needs of individuals and sub-groups; and (3) for being subject to the ideological influences of the state. For instance, Solomon (2008) contends that “...though there had been public consensus on the need for a new education policy, the public was not consulted as to what contemporary needs are” (p. 62). On the ideological orientation of the new ETP, Solomon (2008: 60-61) argued that the policy anticipated to address more of the societal than individual needs and such group oriented policy directive emerges mainly from the ideological basis of the EPRDF’s Revolutionary Democracy and such an imbalance between individual needs and societal needs could risk both needs. Solomon goes on to say that:

EPRDF...didn’t come without a vision and ideological philosophy of education. Prior to even the formulation of the task force, there had been clear signs about education in general and secondary education in particular that the transitional government (EPRDF) would like to impose (Solomon, 2008: 60).

However, whether the group orientation of education and education policy necessarily addresses or signifies societal needs rather than individual needs seems debatable. For instance, education and education policy targeted some groups such as the Afar, Gambella, Harari, Somali, etc could not at least signify the Ethiopian society. It all depends on the scope of our definition of society.

Despite these and other similar assertions, various legal and institutional documents of the Ethiopian Government declare that the country's education system has been totally divorced from the political and ideological orientations of any party, including the EPRDF itself. For instance, [Article 90\(2\)](#) of the 1995 FDRE Constitution declares that "Education shall be provided in a manner that is free from any religious influence, political partisanship or cultural prejudices" (p. 133). It may be safely contended that, as many critical educators say, whatever the case may be education policy just like other sectoral policies could not be completely divorced from the ideological orientation of the government in power.

The other significant reforms brought to the education landscape by the new ETP which deserve special consideration for the purpose of this study, have been the regionalization of primary level education and the adoption of vernacular languages as medium of instruction. As children's learning in their own language is a fundamental right and, most importantly, supported by learning theories if properly implemented this approach is commendable. However, if not implemented with utmost care, the utilization of vernacular languages could in turn be a source of ethnocentric sentiments and hence internal divisions in the Ethiopian wider society. For instance, if the scope of application of vernacular languages in the primary schools is limited to regional level, such as Benishangul Gumuz, Afar, Tigray, Oromiya, Amhara, etc, it would be a blessing for children's of the dominant group and a curse for the sub-groups or ethnic minorities. Such absence of a common legal space and practice would impair the one economic and political community project envisioned for multination state Ethiopia.

It seems due to this very reason that following the regionalization of primary education and the introduction of nationality languages as medium of instructions, some Ethiopian

scholars feel skeptical about the contribution of the national and regional education system curriculum to the post-1991 new nation-building process through nurturing shared understanding and/ or common belonging among the Ethiopian political and cultural community. For instance, [Desta \(2014\)](#) felt that the regionalization of primary education and the utilization of vernacular languages for the same level would produce parochial forces that deteriorate interethnic relations.

To sum up, it is common values, beliefs, interests and traditions which give life to a political and cultural community. If every citizen of the country emphasizes differences rather than commonalities all the time, it is almost impossible to build one political and economic community who stood for a common purpose or destiny. In line with this, [Dewey \(1959: 4\)](#) asserts that “what they [men] must have in common in order to form a community or society are aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge – a common understanding – like-mindedness...”. In this dissertation, such conceptualization of education partly as a means of intragenerational and intergenerational continuity through the transmission of society’s worthwhile activities, values and beliefs begs some relevant questions. The first, and may be the most important, question could be: *‘what to pass to the next generation?’* This very question, in turn, leads us to deeply explore and answer the question: *‘what are the values, beliefs, traditions and experiences which identify with the present generation?’* This dissertation is therefore a deep search for those commonly shared values, beliefs and traditions nurtured by the Ethiopian national and regional education system curriculum through qualitative content analysis of some selected subject areas textbooks and student perspectives.

2.10.3.2. Curriculum context

It seems impossible to understand the curriculum and curricular materials largely used in the school system of the country without understanding its education and training policy context. For this purpose, the previous sub-section provided a brief review of the education and training policy context for curriculum design and textbook production. In this sub-section, the dissertation attempted to analyze and understand the context for curriculum development which guides subsequent textbook and other curriculum documents production.

In any context, curriculum is designed to meet the stated objectives of education and training. When education is viewed as a process, the curriculum is correspondingly considered or understood as a guideline to facilitate the teaching and learning process. The [ETP \(1994\)](#) considers the curriculum as a finished text to be rigidly implemented by practitioners in order to achieve the stated objectives of education. The policy stressed that the preparation of curriculum should be on the basis of the stated objectives of education which enable the achievement of relevant standards and expected student profiles. It also emphasized the importance of curriculum development and textbook production, both at central and regional level, to be based on sound pedagogical and psychological principles and international standards with due attention to concrete local contexts. The policy also advocates the need to involve teachers, professionals and other stakeholders at all phases of curriculum development (such as design, implementation and evaluation).

Since its implementation, the country's primary and secondary education system curriculum has been revised twice. The first revision of 2005 mainly focused on rearranging the contents and most importantly the inclusion of some relevant issues like CEE, HIV/AIDS education, gender and other government policies and strategies. The second revision, which was made in 2010, on the other hand, mainly concentrated on active learning strategies and a competency-based approach to education. Unlike the first revision, the second curriculum revision brought no new issue or content area into the country's primary and secondary education system curriculum except significant innovations in terms of the approaches to teaching and learning.

In the current Ethiopian education landscape, all the primary and secondary schools of the country have been following a national curriculum framework designed by the MOE. The Ministry has developed a revised National Curriculum Framework in 2010 for pre-college education which would guide the conduct of teaching and learning in the country as a whole. In the curriculum framework, such values and principles as *respect for cultural heritage and diversity, equal opportunity, learning skills, new technology, active participation* and *relevance* have been considered as key principles which guide the subsequent development of curriculum materials across all grade levels. The curriculum framework also treats 'unity in diversity' and civics and ethics as overarching issues as it

stated: “Syllabi should promote understanding of all cultures within Ethiopia in the context of a diverse but unified country...where appropriate syllabi should include civics and ethical values” (MOE, 2010: 13).

As per the curriculum framework, students in the lower primary education level have been taking six subjects with a total of 30 periods per week. At this level, CEE and Social Studies have been given as integrated with other subjects and called *Environmental Science*. In the upper primary education level, students have been taking 12 subjects and attending five days a week with a total period of 30, each lasts for 40 minutes. It is at this level that CEE and Social Studies have emerged as independent subject areas. The aim of CEE is to enrich the cultural base and civic competencies of students as a requirement for better citizenship. It also focuses on creating peaceful and harmonious relationships among citizens and the state in the country. The CEE continues as an independent subject area vertically with, more or less, the same thematic areas but with greater depth up to tertiary education level in all disciplines.

Social Studies have been intended to develop a sense of responsibility, participation and accommodation of different perspectives on local and international issues among students. However, unlike CEE, Social Studies only last for four grade levels (Grade five up to Grade eight). In the lower secondary and preparatory schools of the country Social Studies have been split into Geography and History. As clearly stated in the curriculum framework, among other things, History education is intended to enable “individual students to develop a sense of identity and belonging” (p. 48). The subjects offered in grade 11 and grade 12 have been given in two streams, Natural Science and Social Science structured as Specialized Courses, Common Courses and Electives. At this level, History education has been given as a specialized course for only Social Science Stream students. CEE has been offered as a common course for both Natural Science and Social Science students. Moreover, CEE is expected to be given to students at all levels and in all disciplines.

As per the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the financing, management as well as the production of textbooks in the secondary schools of the country have been given to the Ministry of Education. The regional education bureaus (REBs) have been authorized to

design their own primary school textbooks – of course under the national curriculum framework. They are also responsible for the management and financing of primary schools. Moreover, regional states have the mandate to decide the language of instruction for their primary schools and to adapt the specific contents to be incorporated in all primary school textbooks.

Above all, the analysis of the 1994 Education and Training Policy, Pre-college Curriculum Framework and other relevant strategic development documents of the country suggest that in the post-1991 Ethiopia primary education has been intended to achieve ethnic identity under implicit Ethiopian identity. In other words, Ethiopian identity is believed to be developed within ethnic allegiance and identity. It could be contended that, at least from a policy context, the determination of the languages of instruction and specific contents of primary school textbooks, teachers training and the administration and financing of primary schools by the regional states education bureaus appear to emphasize more of ethnic consciousness than Ethiopian identity.

2.11. Curriculum challenges to Ethiopian identity

The curriculum challenges to Ethiopian identity may be understood at the policy context and at the level of practice through the lens of the balance between human capital and social and cultural capital. At the policy context, the 1994 Education and Training policy and the subsequent strategic development documents such as GTP, ESDPs, curriculum frameworks and textbooks appear to emphasize human capital and overlook the alternative model, social and cultural capital. In these policy and strategic development documents, the role of the national and regional education system curriculum in cultivating economically productive citizens who could drive out their country from the poverty trap has been emphasized. However, as some social scientists and educators say, how much sustainable economic development is possible in the context of weak social relationships brought about by a fragile social order remains debatable.

The national education system policy and curriculum planning resonance to economic productivity rather than social service and social action may be explained by the recent emphasis in the privatization of public education, vocationalization, and the utmost

significance and proportion given to science and technology. In 2008, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education introduced a policy into the education sector which gives strong emphasis for science and technology. In line with the policy premise, all preparatory schools and HEIs of the country modified their curricula so that 70 percent of student intake shifted to science and technology and the remaining 30 percent to the arts and humanities. This huge eminence on science, engineering, technology and mathematics (hereafter, STEM) has been clearly articulated in the country's ESDP III (MoE, 2010). The five year ESDP was intended to address the main challenges of the sector through "...strengthening of the capacity for knowledge creation, in particular in the domain of science and technology, through expansion of access to TVET and to higher education..." (p. 6).

In fact, the recently adopted 70:30 model student intake ratio, which stresses on STEM could have significant implication for national economic development and technology transfer. In this case, although the emphasis given to science and technology is commendable, its magnitude in line with the current economic status and local labour market context of the country is highly contested. Some scholars contend that under extremely low industrial base, very scarce resources to finance the sector, and serious shortage of capable human capital that can effectively run teaching, research, and administrative positions the huge eminence for science and technology may not bring the anticipated change.

At the most broader level, Amare Asgedom commented that soft skills which are required for interpersonal communication, collective responsibility and/ or the common good have been among the missing elements from the current Ethiopian education system. Amare (2000) argued that in the current Ethiopian education system among the three domains of educational objectives, the affective aspect is almost totally missed. He asserted that:

... the most neglected but the most important profile of graduates is the affective aspect which predisposes graduates to act or not to act in a certain way. Aesthetizing truth, seeing beauty in love of others, helping the weak, generosity, responsibility for promoting public interest, indebtedness, hard-work, courage, public good, etc; are important graduate profiles that are necessary preconditions for applying one's skills and intellectual abilities. This profile has been fully neglected in

our education system. In its place, Western values of smartness, competitiveness, selfishness, commodity fetishism, etc; have been allowed to be very pervasive in transfer (Amare, 2000:88).

The apparent skepticism on the exaggerated weight given to science and technology is also felt in other countries as well. Daugherty and Elfed-Owens (2003) have tried to concentrate on the impact of mere emphasis for science and technology with a, more or less, neglect of arts and humanities, particularly in this era of global interdependence, on being Welsh. They strongly argue that "... the new curriculum [of Wales] would need to give expression in some way to what Welshness might mean for young people being educated in state-funded schools" (p. 249).

Therefore, in response to this, some scholars suggest that rather than the government drafting the policy [70:30 model] and aggressively enforcing it through a series of reforms, it is better to let the market demand sort out what kind of knowledge, skills and competencies education institutions should provide for the market.

History tells us that no country has yet achieved successful economic development without a strong industrial base. Thus for a country envisioned to join middle income economies in the near future, giving emphasis for human capital development mainly in the areas of science and technology which could enable the production of innovative and inventive mind is commendable. But such exaggerated, and probably unplanned, emphasis for science and technology may produce graduates to the extent that the economy could be unable to absorb this huge emerging labour force. Here it is worth remembering the late 1960s and early 1970s unemployed high school graduates roaming the streets of Addis Ababa and other major towns of Ethiopia and the subsequent anti-government protests which led, among other things, to the overthrow of the Imperial government. In view of the recent violent anti-government demonstrations or protests in some parts of the country which led to the declaration of the State of Emergency probably fuelled by graduate unemployment. The incumbent government also reported that the lack of opportunities for the youth is one of the sources of recent anti-government protests in some areas of the Oromiya and Amhara regional states.

Yet added to this line of argument is the privatization of education in Ethiopia. As the private sector is local labour market oriented and derived mainly from the profit motive and for which student enrolments are largely in Business and Information Communication Technology (ICT) rather than in the Arts and Humanities, privatization of public education has been also contended to undermine students' (citizens') concern for the common good. In any modern society, there exists a growing tension between the private and the public realm of life. At least theoretically, the privatization of education often converts education into a commodity to be exchanged in the market place and this could undermine its traditional role of infusing social values, traditions, norms and beliefs into students' perspectives. However, for a country dominated by illiterate mass and economically underdeveloped to fully finance public education, it appears logical to open the sector for private providers.

Generally, the main argument here is that in order for national and regional education system curriculum to play its part in nurturing cohesive and stable Ethiopian society and therefore contribute significantly to the overall nation-building process, it should strike a balance between human capital and social capital or at least it should not overlook the social dimension of nation-building. Accordingly, this theoretical assumption has been used to justify the study of Ethiopian identity in the overall nation-building process through the lens of the national and regional education system curriculum and student perspectives. At the practical context, the social significance of education for nation-building shall be explained in line with the integration of Ethiopian identity attributes in the national education system curriculum and reflected in students' values.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In the current new nation-building process, the meaning of being Ethiopian and the constitutive elements which comprise it remains to be one of the most deeply contested issues in the Ethiopian academic and political discourse. The main purpose of this research project is, therefore, to explore, describe and explain the status of Ethiopian identity in the new nation-building process through the lens of the national and regional education system curriculum and student perspectives or values. Previous scholarship did not attempt to establish a sound theoretical and conceptual framework as to what constitutes Ethiopian identity. As such, the dissertation intended to first explore the constituent elements of Ethiopian identity from the national and regional education system curriculum documents (textbooks) and student perspectives and then describe and explain such attributes of Ethiopian identity in significant details through subsequent qualitative and quantitative studies.

In this chapter, some attempts have been made to analyze the type of research methodology and design best suited to the dissertation as derived from the epistemological and/ or philosophical positioning of the research project, which provides guidance to the general research process. [Crotty \(1998\)](#) suggests four elements of research design – *epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods*. Based on Crotty’s framework, [Creswell \(2003\)](#) proposes three elements for a research framework: “a philosophical assumption about what constitutes knowledge claims; ...strategies of inquiry; and detailed procedures of data collection, analysis, and writing...” (p. 3). He condenses Crotty’s two elements of a research design – epistemology and theoretical perspective – into one as *knowledge claims*. [Creswell](#) presents his proposed model of research design in a stepwise progression as: assessing the knowledge claims brought to the study, considering the strategy of inquiry, and identification of specific methods ([Creswell, 2003](#)). Thus any plan to conducting research demands the intersection of philosophical assumptions, strategies of inquiry and specific methods of data collection, analysis and reporting.

Thus, after justifying its philosophical stance, this research project proceeds to establish its design and specific methods involved in the research process. Accordingly, the design prioritized for this research project – as informed by its philosophical stance – that is well suited to addressing the kind of specific research questions raised in the dissertation has been selected and justified. Similarly, specific methods of data collection and analysis informed by its strategy of inquiry and research questions have been determined. To this effect, site selection, major data sources, procedures of data collection and analysis, validity and reliability of instruments, and ethical issues have been presented and justified. The overall approach of this research project has been proposed by borrowing Creswell's three constitutive elements of a research framework – knowledge claims, strategies, and methods – as its framework of analysis.

3.2. Research methodology

Research methodology refers to a theoretical assumption or epistemological stance which would inform the design of a research project. It is a broader conception which guides the research by focusing on how procedures are connected with theoretical assumptions. Methodology does not simply refer to a set of procedures – the specific methods of data collection, analysis and reporting (Creswell, 2012; Crotty, 1998). As such, the methodology section of the dissertation highlights the theoretical assumptions which would guide the subsequent determination of its specific research design and methods.

What exactly determines the choice of best approaches to be used in a research process is still contested in the literature. Some scholars concentrate on world view or philosophical assumption as a starting point in research (paradigm purist Positivists and Subjectivists) while others give more emphasis to research questions and purpose (Pragmatists). Recent scholarship suggests the centrality of research questions or research problem in determining the best methods and tools to be used in the research process (Ridneour & Newman, 2008; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). Ridneour and Newman contend that any research is initiated to find answer to the research question. They further posit that “The research question is fundamental, much more fundamental than the paradigm (qualitative or quantitative) to which a researcher feels allegiance” (p.1).

This research project has located itself in the second perspective. The positioning of this study in the latter perspective has been on the assumption that prioritizing research questions to inform the methods enables the researcher to freely select and use the best research techniques available to answer the research questions throughout the research process (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2010). Accordingly, this dissertation employed the mixed methods research (MMR) approach – mixing both quantitative and qualitative approaches to study a phenomenon of interest. The MMR approach enables the researcher to understand the problem in its totality and it would expand the breadth and depth of inquiry and generalizability of findings (Hesse-Biber, 2010). In this dissertation, the MMR approach was felt imperative because the use of either quantitative or qualitative method or data does not adequately address the research problem and as such securing more data would enable to explain or elaborate and expand its data source and findings.

The often cited reason for the use of MMR is the logic of *triangulation* (Creswell, 2003, 2009; Hesse-Biber, 2010). Triangulation has two dimensions: methods triangulation (employing two or more methods to study a single phenomenon) and data triangulation (using multiple data sources in a study). Method triangulation helps us to expand an understanding from one method to another; and data triangulation enables to enrich findings through different data sources. Finally, the convergence of data collected by all methods of a study would maximize its credibility and enrich its conclusion (Hesse-Biber, 2010: 3).

The MMR is distinguished from the conventional quantitative and qualitative approaches in that it rejects the “either – or” (quantitative or qualitative) choices throughout the research process (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2010: 5). This feature leads to the MMR guiding methodological principle, what Teddle and Tashakkori call it, “methodological eclecticism”, which enables a mixed methods researcher to freely select and integrate the best available techniques to thoroughly investigate a research problem. It rejects the “incompatibility perspective” widely held by the paradigm purist subjectivist and objectivist researchers (p. 5-6). It follows that for a mixed methods researcher, quantitative and qualitative research approaches are not polar opposites: a study tends to be more qualitative than quantitative and vice versa (Bryman, 1988; Creswell, 2009). As suggested

by Bryman, the MMR approach does not afford equal weight to the qualitative and quantitative dimension. Accordingly, this dissertation accorded more weight to qualitative exploration and the quantitative dimension has been used to supplement and cross-validate its qualitative findings and conclusions (simply depicted as QUAL + quan). Furthermore, the findings of the qualitative dimension had been used to facilitate the construction of the ensuing quantitative survey items intended to assess the students' level of identification with and attachment to some attributes of Ethiopian identity.

The MMR approach bases its knowledge claims on *Pragmatism*, which asserts that truth is what it works at the time and thus the concern should be more for applications and solutions to problems. As such, Pragmatism is '*consequence-oriented, problem-centered and pluralistic*' (Creswell, 2003: 20). Pragmatism honors different philosophical stances and as such it does not subscribe to any one system of philosophical assumption and reality (Creswell, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). It asserts that paradigms like other discourses are socially constructed and thus are to be changed and challenged. To further substantiate this position, scholars like Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 134) contend that making research paradigm-bound is a sign of "*stagnation and conservatism*". It follows that rather than a philosophical position, it is a particular social problem or research question which determines the methodology of a research. This gives mixed methods researchers a freedom of choice over the methods, techniques and procedures which best fit to answer research questions. In the word of one scholar:

"For the mixed methods researcher, Pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as to different forms of data collection and analysis in the mixed methods study" (Creswell, 2003: 13).

Generally, the methodology of this research project bases its approach on a Pragmatic knowledge claim which would give the freedom to employ possible research approaches to better understand the problem and answer its research questions. The Pragmatic perspective is characterized by its emphasis for '*what works*', employing diverse approaches, centrality of research problem or questions, and honoring both objective and subjective reality. The researcher believes that the research questions raised under this research project would not be answered by simply subscribing to either quantitative or qualitative approaches. It

follows that the MMR approach provides a useful option. The basic assumption behind prioritizing mixed methods research is that combining both quantitative and qualitative methods would enable to better understand the research problem than using either of them in isolation. Recognizing that all approaches have some limitations, combining quantitative and qualitative methods would enable to exploit the strengths of each approach and offset their inherent weaknesses. After deciding on the philosophical assumptions guiding the methodology of this research project, the next section discusses specific research designs and procedures employed in the course of the study as informed by its philosophical assumption.

3.3. Research design

Research design comprises of the specific methods one employs to undertake a research study and the methods principally apply the design (Ridenour & Newman, 2008). The use of one specific research design over another requires an in-depth investigation of its comparative advantages and limitations with the other large array of approaches. According to Yin (2009: 2), the choice of one research design over another would be determined by the nature of research questions, the researcher's level of '*control over behavioral events*', and the temporal focus of the study. In this research project, there are research questions demanding survey design and there are also research questions which require an in-depth qualitative investigation. Accordingly, mixed methods research design which employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches to understand a research problem or answer its research questions presents better option for this study.

Creswell (2009: 209-210; 2012: 540) elaborated that there are six mixed methods research design commonly used in social science and educational research: *the explanatory sequential design, the exploratory sequential design, the sequential transformative design, the concurrent triangulation design, the concurrent embedded design, and the concurrent transformative design*. These six types of MMR design suggested by Creswell may largely fall in two broad categories: sequential and concurrent designs – the first being two-phased and the latter single phased study. The *explanatory sequential design* is a two-phased model which utilizes qualitative results to supplement the findings of a primarily quantitative inquiry and vice versa for *exploratory sequential design*, where quantitative

data is collected to supplement a prior qualitative finding. The *sequential transformative design* is a two-phased project with an initial phase (quantitative or qualitative) followed by a second phase (quantitative or qualitative) that builds further on the earlier phase. This design involves a strong theoretical lens or ideological orientation for studying inequalities and discrimination.

On the other hand, *concurrent triangulation design* involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously and then comparing them for convergence or divergence and thus enables cross-validation or confirmation. The *concurrent embedded design* is a single-phase model which involves simultaneously collecting both quantitative and qualitative data with one of which guiding the project and the other intended to support it. Finally, the *concurrent transformative design* involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data with a strong theoretical perspective and shares the design features of either an embedded or triangulation approach.

In this research project, among the six MMR designs suggested by Creswell, the *exploratory sequential design* has been given top priority because it enables the researcher to identify attributes or variables “actually grounded in the data obtained from study participants” (Creswell, 2012: 544). Creswell further insisted that the *exploratory sequential design* has been found preferable to other MMR designs when the attributes or variables commonly used to define a population under study could not be well-known and identified. As such, the application of the *exploratory sequential design* for this research project would enable the researcher to derive sets of attributes symbolizing Ethiopian identity from data obtained through qualitative content analysis of textbooks and in-depth interviews and FGDs with students and then to measure the students’ level of identification and attachment with their political and cultural community through a second-phase questionnaire survey. In this dissertation, the main assumption for choosing *exploratory sequential design* was that the issue of Ethiopian identity is a more subjective experience and thus the attributes used to symbolize it should be derived from textbooks and the study participants themselves – or simply from the *emic* perspective – rather than through external imposition of such symbols, values and traditions by the researcher.

The *exploratory sequential design* is a two-phased model which involves collecting and analyzing qualitative data to be followed by quantitative data collection and analysis. Accordingly, the researcher conducted the study in two phases. The first phase involved qualitative content analysis of textbooks and in-depth interviews and FGDs with study participants. This was followed by large-scale questionnaire survey with students or graduates of Ethiopian Preparatory Education. The purpose of the qualitative data was to derive attributes of Ethiopian identity through qualitative data instruments (content analysis, interviews, FGDs) and the quantitative data (survey questions) have been used to describe the students' level of attachment and identification with the attributes of Ethiopian identity derived from qualitative findings. Supplementing qualitative findings with the quantitative data could help us to explain the patterns or relationships observed in the initial qualitative explorations. Therefore, the application of *exploratory sequential design* would enable the research project to produce more detailed and, more or less, generalizable results by further building on and refining the initial findings of the qualitative exploration.

In this design, both datasets were collected and analyzed in separate phases and usually merged during the interpretation phase of the study. Though they were collected and analyzed in separate phases, the qualitative exploration findings would provide an essential basis for the latter quantitative study. The convergence of the first phase qualitative exploration and the second phase quantitative survey would guide the conclusion and recommendations and/ or implications of the study. Thus, this kind of research design appears to be more fitted for this research project because essentially national identity is more subjective and deals with people's feelings, emotions, values and sentiments about a nation's political and cultural community. As such, it is difficult to begin with and propose objective attributes of Ethiopian identity and then measure the level of attachment students have with the political nation.

Interestingly, however, the application of the *exploratory sequential design* would first help us to have a general picture or preliminary understanding of the attributes of Ethiopian identity in the national and regional education system curriculum and student perspectives and then to construct survey questions in line with the attributes derived from the initial qualitative exploration so that describe the students' level of attachment with Ethiopian

identity. This approach is useful to deeply investigate the issue and to further elaborate and expand the initial qualitative findings. The following figure depicts the proposed research design of the dissertation (exploratory sequential design) as adopted from [Creswell \(2012\)](#).

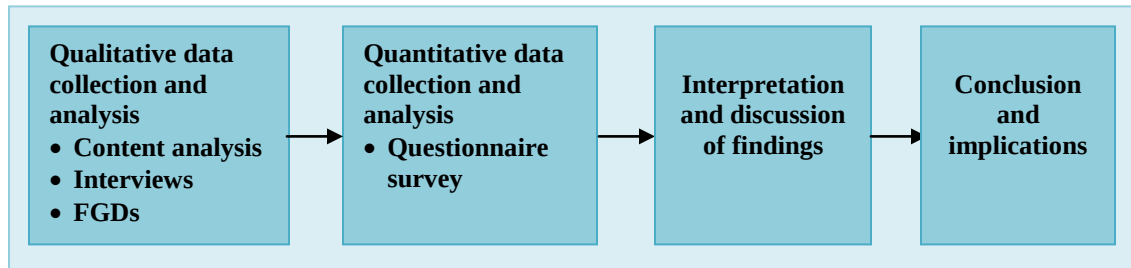


Figure 1: The proposed research design of the study

As depicted in Figure one above, the dissertation employed a two-phased approach to understanding Ethiopian identity in national and regional education system curriculum discourse and in student perspectives. Accordingly, in the first phase of the study curriculum responses to and student perspectives on Ethiopian identity have been identified through qualitative exploration. Then the students' level of attachment to those values, symbols and traditions identified through the first phase qualitative exploration has been determined through the second phase quantitative study or questionnaire survey.

3.4. Research methods

Research methods refer to specific techniques or procedures involved in the research process as informed by the proposed strategy of inquiry. In short, they refer to specific procedures of data collection, analysis and interpretation under the guidance of the proposed research design for the study. Under this heading, major sources of data, instruments for data gathering, determination of samples and sampling techniques, specific study participants and mechanisms of accessing them, methods of data analysis, issues of validity and reliability as well as ethics have been thoroughly discussed.

3.4.1. Reaching the study participants

As per Article 47(1) of the 1995 FDRE Constitution, Ethiopia has been divided into nine ethnic regions, some of which may be larger than some independent African countries. These regions include: the States of Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, Somali, Benishangul/Gumuz, the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, the Gambella Peoples, and the Harari People. Furthermore, there are two city states – Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa City Administrations – which constituted the Ethiopian state domain. The Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples are found dispersed in these regional states and city administrations. The federal arrangement intended to bind all regional states – Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples – together was principally opted to reinforce ethnic consciousness and equality so that it would remove historical injustices which undermined their recognition and equal status ([see Permeable of the 1995 FDRE Constitution](#)).

Therefore, in the post-1991 new nation-building process Ethiopian identity appears to be understood through interethnic – as well as intra-ethnic – relations. It follows that the issue of Ethiopian identity has been primarily concerned with representation or inclusiveness of all Ethiopians – Nations, Nationalities and Peoples – into its domain. Accordingly, the prime focus of research intended to understand the views and perspectives of the various Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of the country about Ethiopian identity could be on getting access to ethnic communities rather than simple spatial variations or geographical coverage. It follows that curriculum responses and student perspectives on Ethiopian identity could be best understood through the lens of ethno-linguistic diversity rather than simple regional variation. That is, the main focus should be, in as much as possible, getting access to the ethno-linguistic diverse students and this could not be possible by simply sampling the ethnic regions and their students in the respective schools. Accordingly, in the current context of Ethiopian formal education landscape, higher education institutions of the country offer easy and open access to preparatory school graduate student populations from diverse ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

The higher education institution selected for this study to easily get access to the study participants has been Addis Ababa University (AAU). The first rationale behind the

purposeful selection of Addis Ababa University as the main gate to the study participants was that the University has been the largest and oldest in Ethiopia and as such it houses the largest student population – in terms of number and diversity – in the country. The second rationale for the selection of AAU was that as it is situated in the national capital and occupies a more or less geographically central position, it may constitute the primary choice of most preparatory school graduate students and as such draws a significantly larger proportion of students from significant proportion of various ethnic backgrounds.

The third rationale was that unlike most other higher education institutions of the country the AAU is not geographically situated in any ethnic region and as such it may present, a more or less, the same sense of belonging and attraction for almost all students of diverse ethnic background. This would help the researcher to get adequate sample of students representing diverse ethnic backgrounds or regions (nations, nationalities and peoples) in the country. The last rationale behind the purposeful selection of Addis Ababa University as a means to access the study participants was the issue of geographical proximity and access to information. The University is geographically situated in relative close proximity to the researcher's residential area and education institution. The most striking issue in research of this kind, however, is the issue of access to information and/ or informants. Addis Ababa is the researcher's home city and work place and the University is his education institution so that he could easily access the study participants and any other relevant data.

3.4.2. Data sources

This study has derived data from various sources of evidence. The research project generally bases its source of evidence on both primary and secondary data sources. The major primary sources of data for the dissertation include government officials from the Ministry of Federal Affairs and curriculum experts in the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus (REBs), teachers, students, textbooks and [syllabuses](#). Data extracted from government officials and curriculum experts in the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus could help us to have a preliminary understanding of the policy context under which the country's education system has been operating to cultivate

Ethiopian identity. It could also help us to shed light on the conceptualization and operationalization of Ethiopian identity in the ongoing nation-building process.

Curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity are extracted from qualitative content analysis of selected textbooks and from in-depth interviews with teachers and students. Similarly, student perspectives or values on Ethiopian identity are secured through in-depth interviews, FGDs and questionnaire survey with students from diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural, gender and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, the secondary sources of evidence for the study have been extracted from the analysis of various legal, political, policy, and strategic documents of the country and other scholarly works in the area. Finally, the convergence of data obtained from the above sources of evidence could help us to understand the status of Ethiopian identity in the ongoing nation-building process through the lens of the national and regional education system curriculum and student values.

3.4.3. Instruments

As clearly stated in sections 3.2 and 3.3 above, this research project employed a MMR design and thus it integrated both qualitative and quantitative sources of evidence to understand the problem in its totality and answer the research questions. Accordingly, qualitative data was secured through an initial content analysis of some selected Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks and in-depth interviews and FGDs with the study participants. The major findings of the initial qualitative exploration were followed by a large scale questionnaire survey among graduates of Ethiopian preparatory school. As such, the main data gathering instruments widely used in the dissertation include: qualitative content analysis, interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaire survey. As one instrument of data collection compensates the other's limitation, the application of different tools could help the researcher to minimize distortions both in the research process and in its results. The following table depicts the matrix of basic research questions and relevant data gathering instruments and analysis tools.

Table 3.1: A matrix of basic research questions and major data gathering and analysis tools

Major Research questions	Data gathering instrument(s)	Data analysis tool(s)
1) What kind of, if there is any, distinct Ethiopian identity is portrayed in the country's national and regional education system curriculum?	Content analysis	Relational analysis
2) How is Ethiopian identity presented and reinforced in the national and regional education system curriculum?	Content analysis	Relational analysis
3) How do graduates of Ethiopian secondary education and teachers assess the contribution of the formal education system curriculum in shaping the students' Ethiopian identity?	Interviews and FGDs	Thematic analysis
4) How do graduates of Ethiopian secondary education define and/ or understand the meaning of what it means to be Ethiopian and why they define it the way they do?	Interviews, FGDs and survey	Relational analysis, percentages, mean & SD
5) How and to what extent do students associate with the values, symbols and traditions embedded in the national and regional curriculum as manifestations of Ethiopian identity?	Interviews, FGDs & survey	Relational analysis, mean, percentages, and SD
6) What is the interface between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity in the national and regional education system curriculum and in students' values?	Content analysis, interviews, FGDs & survey	Relational analysis, mean, simple percentages and SD
7) Which factors shape the students' values or perspectives on Ethiopian identity?	Content analysis, interviews, FGDs & survey	Thematic analysis, mean, percentages and SD

3.4.3.1. Content analysis

Content analysis of any sort of print materials (such as textbooks, magazines, newspapers, legal and policy documents, etc) has two dimensions: quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The quantitative dimension of content analysis simply focuses on identifying the presence or absence and frequency of occurrence of certain variables of interest. Thus the

researcher's main task has been counting frequencies depicting an element of some selected variables of interest in some print materials or documents. On the other hand, the qualitative dimension of content analysis concentrates on exploring and understanding the meaning and relationship of a certain variable of interest depicted in those written materials or documents rather than counting its frequency of occurrence (simple word-counts). Thus qualitative content analysis is required when the researcher's interest has been to understand meaning and perspective (Krippendorff, 2004).

Grasersfeld (1991) once noted that textbooks do not carry knowledge or meaning in themselves. They simply contain language or texts assembled by the authors. He goes on to say that the words or texts have meaning for the students, authors and readers at large only when each one of them build subjective interpretations and meanings on the basis of their prior experiences. Simply putting Grasersfeld's assertion: "Texts contain neither meaning [n]or knowledge—they are a scaffolding on which readers can build their interpretation" (Grasersfeld, 1991: 175). It is based on this premise that the dissertation intended to assess how Ethiopian identity has been portrayed or constructed by schooling through qualitative content analysis of some selected national and regional education system textbooks.

For this study, the quantitative dimension of content analysis could not serve its purpose. This is because quantitative content analysis would be realistic if Ethiopian identity has been operationalized from the very outset as it comprised of some predefined set of attributes. But, as clearly spelled out in its conceptual framework, this research project intends to derive the main attributes constituting Ethiopian identity from the analysis of textbooks of some selected grade levels and academic subjects – and from student perspectives as well. Therefore, significant sets of attributes of Ethiopianness which transcend ethnic boundaries could be most importantly understood through exploration for meaning rather than counting frequency of occurrence. Although their frequency of occurrence probably indicates relative importance, the main emphasis is given to the presence and then the context of using each attribute to symbolize Ethiopianness and ethnic identity. For instance, the same variable or attribute may exist on textbooks to depict an element of both ethnic and Ethiopian identity. In this case, the analysis was made on the basis of the meaning it carries and communicates to students rather than mere presence of

the attribute and its frequency of occurrence. In other words, in order to understand the contextual usage of the attribute both manifest (what the text explicitly stated) and latent content analysis (what the text implicitly refer to) is applied.

Previous research suggests that a nation's national identity is found embedded in and has been reinforced through some selected academic disciplines or subjects such as History (Ahonen, 2001; Barton & McCully, 2005; Darr, 2011) and Social Studies (Hardwick, Marcus & Isaak, 2010; Wyse, 2008) and Civic and Citizenship Education (Cohen, 2010; Lall, 2008). On the basis of this theoretical assumption, qualitative content analysis of textbooks was made on Social Studies, History, and CEE textbooks of all grade levels (Grade 5 upto Grade 12). But this does not mean that some attributes of Ethiopian identity could not be found in and reinforced by other subject areas. These subjects were purposefully selected simply because the thematic areas they covered largely coincide with the attributes of national identities more than other subject areas.

In the current Ethiopian formal education landscape, the selection of academic subjects offered in the school system of the country and the subsequent curriculum framework intended to guide textbook design has been solely determined by the Ministry of Education (FDRE, 1994). As explicitly stated in the country's 1994 Education and Training Policy, the Ministry of Education has the mandate to administratively manage and produce textbooks for secondary schools of the country. On the other hand, ethnic regions have the mandate to produce primary school textbooks as they suit to local contexts, of course on the basis of the proposed national primary education curriculum framework by the MOE.

It is clearly noted in the Ethiopian Pre-College Education Curriculum Framework (MOE, 2010: 33-34) that CEE has been offered as an independent field of inquiry starting from Grade 5 up to Grade 12. On the other hand, in the Ethiopian upper primary school education (Grade 5 through Grade 8), History has been given as integrated with other academic subjects. At these grade levels, the Social Sciences have been taught as Social Studies, which draws content elements from History, Geography, Environment, Law, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics and Business (MOE, 2010: 30-31). However, Social Studies draws its content elements mainly from Geography and History.

As national identity has a spatial and temporal dimension, content analysis of Social Studies textbooks offers an insight to understanding the status of Ethiopian identity in curriculum representations. History appears as an independent academic discipline only from Grade 9 through Grade 12. Therefore, in order to see the status of Ethiopian identity in this subject area separately, content analysis of Grade 9 up to Grade 12 History textbooks is also made.

The three ethnic regions where content analysis of CEE and Social Studies textbooks has been made include Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions. The three regions were purposefully selected for many reasons. First, official statistical reports ([see for instance, FDRE-PCC, 2008](#)) show that Oromiya and Amhara Regions together constitute 60 percent of the total population of Ethiopia. These two regions have a population size greater than the population of all other ethnic regions of Ethiopia combined. Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions together constitute more than 65 percent of the population of the country. By extension, these regions have constituted the largest number and proportion of schools and students in the country. Second, it is firmly established by the existing scholarship that ethnic identity has been one of the most competing sets of identities individuals live with. As such, when compared with other Ethiopian regions, except Somali and Afar, these three regions constitute ethnic dominant populations where primary school education has been offered in vernacular languages and this gives room to understand the regional sensitivity of textbook design and the ensuing student perspective on Ethiopian identity in a comparative context.

Third, many scholars ([see Assefa, 2006; Merera, 2006](#)) contend that the Amhara political elite historically advocate a strong pan-Ethiopian identity ingrained largely on assimilation into one national culture, language and religion. Almost all the Amhara political elites, starting from Emperor Tewodros ([Teshale, 1995](#)) to the last Emperor ([Merera, 2006](#)), had followed their twin purposes of modernization with strict centralization. The Tigray political elite, on the other hand, largely defend a loose Ethiopian identity rooted on regional autonomy. For instance, Emperor Yohannes had tried to establish a loosely united Ethiopia with autonomous regional rulers governing their respective areas while they recognized his kingship and pay him annual tribute ([Bahru, 1991](#)). Even though the issue of

diversity and decentralization has become the order of the day, the current political rhetoric – ‘*unity in diversity*’ – advocated by the EPRDF seems to emerge from such loose conception of Ethiopian identity. The Oromo elite have created a historically rooted and strong ethnic nationalism who aspire autonomy and some even complete detachment from the Ethiopian state apparatus. In this historical and political context, Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions may present a sharp contrast to understanding Ethiopian identity in the new nation-building process. Moreover, the existing Ethiopian scholarship demonstrates that there is apparent tension and competition among students of these three ethnic regions. In line with this, [Abera’s \(2010\)](#), [Ambisa’s \(2010\)](#), and [Tilahun’s \(2007\)](#) empirical findings can be cases in point.

Probably the final rationale for the purposeful selection of the three ethnic regions may be that in the current context of the Ethiopian state structure – although all regions are equally important – Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions play a pivotal role for the new nation-building process to remain perennial. Historically, the Amhara and Tigre elites remained principal title contenders in Ethiopian politics. Given its matured ethno-nationalism coupled with total area, population size, and resourcefulness, Oromiya appears to be one of the pillars in the current Ethiopian politics. Generally, in view of the aforementioned four rationales, textbook design and students’ orientation to Ethiopian identity and level of attachment in the selected three regions could have significant implications for the ongoing nation-building process.

Therefore, in view of the three ethnic regions there are a total of 12 CEE textbooks and 12 Social Studies textbooks (4 textbooks in each region for each subject). As such, there were totally 24 textbooks in the upper primary schools of the three ethnic regions of the country. In addition to this, there were 4 CEE textbooks and 4 History textbooks in the national secondary and preparatory schools of the country as a whole. Accordingly, there were a total of 32 textbooks in the upper primary and secondary and preparatory schools of Ethiopia in which the meaning of being Ethiopian has been presumed to be portrayed and communicated to students.

But, given the large number of textbooks, it appears impossible to analyze each textbook page by page for the depiction and meaning carried and communicated about Ethiopian identity. Thus, only those chapters or contents of these textbooks related to the Ethiopian issue have been analyzed. Such strategy is found to be imperative because it allows an in-depth reading and analysis of the contents, the graphics and other modalities depicting Ethiopian and ethnic identity. Accordingly, the chapters and specific contents of these textbooks were analyzed for the kind of Ethiopian identity portrayed and reinforced through them. Moreover, these textbooks were analyzed for the meaning they carried and communicated regarding some basic attributes of Ethiopian and ethnic identity.

But here we should bear in mind that while it gave prime focus to chapters and contents depicting Ethiopian and ethnic identity, the dissertation also takes care of the fact that sometimes under a different heading other than Ethiopia – for instance take ‘world history’ or ‘African history’ – we may find something about Ethiopia’s contribution to the world and the continent which is very important to enhance a sense of pride, identity and belonging to Ethiopia, of course, based on the way it was presented. In this case, a bird’s eye view or surface reading of each content area of the textbooks page by page was made and the contents of those textbooks which carried such meaning and relevance were critically analyzed.

As an extension of the 1995 FDRE Constitution and the ensuing 1994 Education and Training Policy (FDRE, 1994), primary education in Ethiopia has been given in vernacular languages. Thus, academic subjects or textbooks selected for content analysis in the three ethnic regions of the country have been prepared in the respective region’s nationality/vernacular languages. By extension, content analysis of such textbooks in all these ethnic regions requires understanding the language of instruction and textbook writing. For Oromiya Region where primary school textbooks have been prepared in both Amharic and the nationality language (Afaan Oromo) and for Amhara Region primary school textbooks, the researcher himself has undertaken the content analysis process. But, in order to cope with the language barrier, for those textbooks designed for Tigray Region upper primary schools, a native speaker of Tigrigna language and a PhD candidate of Federalism at Addis Ababa University have been used to translate the text. Given his

academic background, he could not have any noticeable gap to catch the meaning carried and communicated about Ethiopian identity through the textbooks. But yet the content analysis was made by the researcher himself in collaboration with the translator.

After having identified and determined the source materials and potential coders, the next logical step may be devising appropriate content analysis tools. Many scholars (such as Neuendorf, 2002; Prasad, 2008; Thayer et al, 2007) suggest that the next logical step in content analysis research after the formulation of research questions and the identification of the source material and potential coders should be developing categories and determining the unit of analysis. Accordingly, on the basis of the theoretical review of some prominent scholars in the field of nation, nationalism and multiculturalism, such as Anthony Smith, Bhikhu Parekh, David Miller, and James Banks – to state some but not all – the dissertation derived a conceptual framework for Ethiopian identity to constitute three components: *constitutional patriotism*, *self-projections*, and *common belonging*, which would serve to guide content analysis of textbooks.

From a bird's-eye-view or surface reading of some selected Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks and the operationalization of nation and national identity in its civic and cultural dimension, the dissertation developed content categories and then operationally defined each content category accordingly. In this case, *constitutional patriotism* as one component of Ethiopian identity was operationally defined to include – but not limited to – the following content categories: (1) *a well-defined common territory*, (2) *common laws and institutions*, (3) *legal equality of citizens*, (4) *popular sovereignty (Nations, Nationalities and Peoples)*, (5) *constitutional supremacy*, (6) *common legal rights and duties*, and (7) *common economy*, etc.

From the dissertation's conceptualization of national identity, the second component of Ethiopian identity appears to emerge from Ethiopia's political and cultural community imaginations about itself. Thus, *myths and images* as a constitutive element of Ethiopian identity have been considered to justify the Ethiopian cultural and political community's self-projection, its distinctiveness and unique contribution to the world at large. But from a surface reading of some selected textbooks the dissertation found out that some of the

specific attributes of Ethiopian identity symbolized by the Ethiopian political and cultural community's self-projection embedded in *myths* were completely absent in these textbooks. Accordingly, *myths* as one content category of Ethiopian identity intended to guide textbook content analysis were rejected.

A shared sense of Ethiopianness (common belonging and attachment) as the third component Ethiopian identity was operationally defined to include political and historico-cultural heritages and/or symbols, values and traditions and accordingly it embodies such content categories as: (1) *national flag and anthem*, (2) *national heroes/heroines*, (3) *national holidays*, (4) *historico-cultural heritages and symbols* such as obelisks, castles, caves, palaces, ancient churches and mosques, etc.

The above content categories have been developed and operationally defined to guide content analysis of the selected textbooks. As the dissertation primarily aimed at qualitative exploration – and hence its procedures would be largely emergent – additional content categories could be created in the course of the content analysis process. Furthermore, in order to catch up those concepts or themes which may not exactly fall into the above content categories supplementary content categories were created in the course of the study.

After content categories have been created and operationally defined, the next logical step has been determining the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis could be any theme in the textbooks – it may be a word, picture, phrase, sentence, paragraph or the whole text (see for instance, Neuendorf, 2002; Prasad, 2008; Thayer et al. 2007) – depicting an element of Ethiopian identity. In addition to coding the units such as words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, pictures or the whole text portraying an element of Ethiopian identity into each content category, the context in which it appears in the textbooks was also emphasized. This leads us to the search for relationship and meaning rather than counting mere frequency of occurrence. Finally, a coding sheet has been prepared with a column heading of the above operationally defined content categories (see Addendum 1).

Thus, first data was collected from Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks simply to see the presence or absence of an element of Ethiopian identity represented and reinforced through them through selective coding. Accordingly, the words, phrases, concepts, graphics and other modalities used to depict an element of Ethiopian and ethnic identity were identified and coded. Then, inferences about the messages carried and communicated through these modalities were made on the basis of the analysis of the meanings and relationships of such concepts denoting Ethiopian and ethnic identity. In other words, the contents of Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks were analysed for concepts rather than simple frequencies and for relationships rather than mere presence so that the status of Ethiopian identity in those textbooks could be determined. Texts are used, in this context, to mean chapters or units, sub-units, or paragraphs, or sentences, or phrases and/ or words. Above all, the place of Ethiopian identity in the selected textbooks has been determined through a final summative analysis.

As clearly spelled out in the country's ETP and the ensuing Pre-College Curriculum Framework, lower primary education (Grade 1 to 4) has been intended to provide basic education and to create, among children, a sense of awareness about their immediate environment. Thus, lower primary school textbooks have been purposefully rejected for content analysis mainly because they may not provide significant source of evidence for the research project. Moreover, in the current Ethiopian Pre-College Education Curriculum Framework, Social Studies and CEE subjects emerge as independent academic disciplines starting from Grade five.

Generally, qualitative content analysis of some selected national and regional education system textbooks was made with the intention to understand curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity by seeking answer to the following three research questions:

- 1) *What kind of, if there is any, distinct Ethiopian identity is portrayed or presented in the country's national and regional education system curriculum?*
- 2) *How is Ethiopian identity presented and reinforced in the national and regional education system curriculum?*
- 3) *What is the interface between ethnic and Ethiopian identity in the national and regional education system curriculum?*

In order to further operationalize and measure these three research questions, 22 specific questions were constructed as a starting point for subsequent content analysis and this could help us to partly capture curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity. After having identified some of the attributes denoting Ethiopian and ethnic identity and related concepts and their meanings through the long and detailed questions, a further refinement and focus on the questions was made by constructing a content analysis checklist with a tabular column heading: *name of attribute, grade level, subject, chapter, page number, page proportion, frequency, representation (as Ethiopian or ethnic), and finally summary or justifications* (see Addendum 1). Such approach could make the data analysis and interpretation procedure which follows the textbook content analysis phase feasible.

Finally, in order to back up evidences obtained through content analysis of some selected academic discipline textbooks, the researcher analyzed various documents directly or indirectly related to the purpose of the study. For instance, constitutions, policy and strategic development documents, programs, curriculum frameworks, syllabi and reference books were consulted. In addition to this, annual statistical reports referring directly or indirectly to curriculum responses to Ethiopian identification and attachment were thoroughly investigated. Finally, a document log separated by type has been prepared for properly managing the data obtained through document analysis.

3.4.3.2. Interviews

This study has triangulated its sources of evidence and enriches the content analysis and FGDs data through in-depth interviews with the study participants. Various sources indicate that interview is preferable to questionnaire because study participants feel at ease when they are asked to talk than to write (Best & Kahn, 2005) and it gives them more freedom to express what they feel. Abdelal, et al (2009) also capitalized on the special significance of interviews [unstructured] in identity research as stated: “These techniques [interviews] can be adapted to great benefit in identity research as well because they allow individuals and groups to offer and establish their own self-definitions” (p.4). They further suggest that open-ended survey and interviews avoid the researcher’s prior biases and interpretations about ‘*who is* and ‘*who is not*’ belong to a collectivity because such

instruments allow study participants to freely define who they are in their own words and justify the why and how of their decision.

The *radical constructivist* perspective posits that individuals through their prior experiences can build a subjective knowledge of their world alone (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). It further asserts that “individuals live in the world of their own personal and subjective experience [and as such] it is the individual who imposes meaning on the world, rather than meaning being imposed on the individual” (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005: 18). It follows that through their prior exposure to different courses at schools and the social environment, students can individually construct a subjective meaning and knowledge of their being Ethiopian. Thus in order to understand how students individually construct and deconstruct what being Ethiopian means to them and the basic attributes which it can define, in-depth interviews were conducted with a significant number of students of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds.

The study involves extended interviews with two groups of study participants so that an insider’s perspective on the issue under treatment can be obtained. The first groups of the interviewees include officials and curriculum experts drawn from various offices of the FDRE Government and Regional Education Bureaus (REBs) mainly based on their relevance to the study. Data obtained from these groups of persons would help us to understand the policy context under which the country’s education system has been expected to operate in order to reinforce some attributes of Ethiopian identity. The second groups of the interviewees include: students and teachers. Evidence which is extracted from these groups of persons might enable to understand the practical curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity and the actual practices at the grassroots level. In-depth interviews with the students and the actual practitioners (teachers) could enable the researcher to understand how students behave in their day-to-day classroom discourse in particular and in their Ethiopian identity construction process in general.

To this end, the dissertation made a kind of guided conversation with selected student participants of the study so as to listen what they perceive about their Ethiopian identity vis-à-vis their multiple and overlapping identities. Thus, with the intention to secure

multiple perspectives on the issue of Ethiopianness, the researcher conducted in-depth and extended interviews with 20 student participants drawn from different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. The dissertation employed purposive sampling technique to select actual student participants of the interview mainly on the basis of ethnic background.

The researcher also intended to understand curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity through the lens of teachers' perspectives. Thus, due to their familiarity with issues related to Ethiopian identity, Social Studies, CEE and History teachers were purposefully selected as study participants. On this basis, one teacher from Grade 8, one teacher from Grade 10 and one teacher from Grade 12 currently teaching the respective three subject areas in the three ethnic regions were purposefully selected on the basis of teaching experience and qualification. Accordingly, a total of 18 teachers from the three ethnic regions upper primary schools and lower secondary and preparatory schools of the country have been actively involved in the research interview process. That is, 3 Social Studies teachers, 6 History teachers and 9 CEE teachers were selected for the interview. These teachers were purposefully selected as study participants mainly because they have better academic preparation to evaluate curriculum (textbook) responses to and student perspectives on Ethiopian identity. Such approach would also help us to sort out curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity disaggregatedly at upper primary, lower secondary and preparatory education level. The selection of both primary and secondary school teachers from the three ethnic regions as study participants was intentionally made to avoid the influence of regional context on teacher's responses and values.

The proposed number of participants in the interview process were found to be sufficient because in qualitative exploration of this kind, what is more demanding is the depth of the information and the variations in experiences; and depth deemed to be far more important than number. In order to substantiate this position, it appears quite interesting to cite [King's and Horrocks' \(2010: 29\)](#) suggestion as reads: "The criteria most commonly proposed for sampling in qualitative exploration is diversity rather than representativeness".

Accordingly, semi-structured interview protocol was prepared and conversations have been conducted on a one-on-one basis. The inclusion of items of the semi-structured interview was guided by the attributes derived from qualitative content analysis of Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks. The interview began with some descriptive information so as to put the participants at ease with their involvement in the study or to simply set the context for interviewing and step-by-step proceeds to issues directly related to the research questions. Probes were prepared for each interview question and after assuring consent with all the study participants actual responses have been audio and video recorded. In addition, short notes were taken by the researcher and research assistants to avoid some unexpected failures in audio and video recording. After having gathered the required interview data mainly from students and teachers, it was transcribed and then coded by themes emerging from the dataset itself.

3.4.3.3. Focus group discussions

The logic of data triangulation suggests that data collected through one instrument may sometimes be liable to distortions and this anticipated limitation shall be compensated by using multiple sources of evidence (Thomas, 2011: 68). Likewise, interview results may sometimes be subject to distortions and their limitations can be compensated through other sources of evidence, such as FGDs.

The *social constructivist* perspective postulates that the individual's knowledge is a subset of the larger socio-culturally constituted knowledge built by discourse with others or through social interactions (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). In this context, as these scholars asserted, meaning and new knowledge can be created through discussion and negotiation among social partners. To this effect, the dissertation conducted FGDs with ethnically diverse students in order to understand how they generate a shared knowledge and meaning of their Ethiopian identity through open dialogue, conversation, discussion, interaction and negotiation.

In order to further enrich the evidence obtained through content analysis of Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks and interviews, three FGDs were organized among students. Scholars suggest that FGDs should be composed of, on the average, 6 to 8 persons often

conducted in a period of 60 to 90 minutes (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011: 136) to 1 to 2 hours (Liamputtong, 2011: 3). In this dissertation, there were three FGDs – each had been composed of 6 persons and conducted in a period of, on the average, 2 hours in a safe and comfortable environment so that the discussion or deliberation became more interactive and meaningful.

In order to maintain the group dynamics and interactivity, FGD participants were purposefully selected by using ethnicity, religion and gender as specific markers so that new evidence that the other sources of data – such as content analysis, interview, and questionnaire – unable to access and uncover could be secured. The group dynamics and interaction helped us to extract new evidence from study participants. During the study participants selection process care was taken to maintain the numerical equivalence among each FGD session. Accordingly, each FGD was composed of six students from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Then, a FGD guide was prepared for the three sessions and each session was conducted in Amharic with the consent of the study participants. In addition to assuring their consent to conduct the discussion in Amharic, at the outset the researcher proved that the study participants have a good command of Amharic language. But yet it is important to note that there were some students who speak in English in between their conversations. Generally, data collection was continuously conducted from all of the above sources of qualitative data until the information gained from the participants repeats itself or reaches the level of ‘saturation’.

3.4.3.4. Questionnaire survey

Identities, including national and ethnic, often exist as both dependent and independent variables. So far research interest mainly focuses on analyzing whether a certain type of identity set leads the identity-bearer to act or do a particular thing or it aims at examining whether some other factors may lead a person to feel belonging or identification with a particular identity set (Abdelal, et.al. 2009). In the first instance, identity has been treated as an independent variable which could be measured and examined to assess its potential and practical impact on some other variables and outcomes and a large array of existing

scholarship has such orientation (see for instance, Abdelal et.al., 2009). But, this dissertation intends to treat Ethiopian identity as a dependent variable to be reflected in student values and/ or perspectives and the national and regional education system curriculum as an independent variable which may lead students to identify with and strongly attached to Ethiopian identity.

Though loosely stated, an element of Ethiopian identity has been found dispersed here and there in the FDRE 1995 Constitution and the ensuing various policy and strategic development documents of the country. Following Dawit and Haftu (2012); MOE (2010) and many other foreign scholars (for instance, Ahonen, 2001; Darr, 2011), the dissertation assumed that the constitutive elements of Ethiopian identity reinforced through national and regional education system curriculum have been found embedded in different grade levels of Social Studies, History and CEE textbooks and in students perspectives.

Abdelal et.al (2009) found out that surveys and content analysis are among the most commonly used methods for measuring various identity sets. Therefore, as part of a preliminary study, this dissertation tries first to identify the main attributes of Ethiopian identity represented and reinforced by regional and national education system textbooks through qualitative exploration; and then it measures the level of student identification with and attachment to the nation (Ethiopia) through questionnaire survey. Questionnaire survey was particularly important for this study because it enabled the researcher to collect large quantities of data from a considerable number and variety of people in a relatively short period of time. The researcher assumed that in the current Ethiopian education landscape it is through questionnaire survey – rather than qualitative instruments – that we can reach a large number of students from diverse ethnic, religious, regional, cultural, linguistic, and gender backgrounds. Such approach could also give the dissertation some space for generalization.

In this dissertation, the items of the questionnaire were mainly derived from its major findings of the initial qualitative exploration and the ISSP and Eurobarometer standard national identity survey questions. As clearly stated in the design section of this research project, the main attributes of Ethiopian identity have been intended to be derived from

textbooks and from the perspectives or values of the study participants (students) themselves rather than from an external imposition or suggestion of such attributes (symbols, values and traditions) by the researcher and then provide the study participants to merely choose among them.

However, an insight into how to phrase and operationalize Ethiopian identity survey questions was obtained from the ISSP and Eurobarometer standard national identity questionnaires. Even some scholars contend that, more or less, universal measures could be applied to studying national identities across the world's nations. For instance, [Jones and Smith \(2001: 47\)](#) assert that individual national consciousness may vary in *intensity* rather than in *kind*. But the researcher argues that the study of national identity is largely about the feelings, sentiments, emotions and values citizens have towards the political nation and hence national identities are highly subjective more than they are objective. As such it is difficult to apply objective measures for the largely subjective national identity attributes. This dissertation also conceptualizes and defines Ethiopian identity in its subjective dimension. Accordingly, this dissertation adopted the ISSP and Eurobarometer survey questions to operationalize or measure Ethiopian identity among students with major modifications in order to suit to the Ethiopian context.

Questionnaire items were prepared in both close-ended and open-ended formats. Constructing survey questions in close-ended format would help the researcher to give focus and direction for the study participants' responses. On the other hand, by reversing [Best's and Kahn's \(2005\)](#) claim that study participants feel comfortable when they are asked to talk than to write, we assert that as the issue of national identity is highly subjective and relational students who fill the items of the questionnaire independently may feel more freedom to write something about Ethiopian identity than to talk to anyone either on a one-to-one or group basis. Therefore, open-ended questionnaire items would help the researcher to explore or unlock some ideas or information not covered by close-ended questionnaire items, interviews and FGDs.

The survey questionnaire has three parts. Part one incorporates items intended to explore some background information about the study participants such as age, sex, ethnic group,

religion, vernacular language, region and their stream; and part two mainly embodies items of the questionnaire intended to measure the students' identification with and attachment to major attributes of Ethiopian identity. Finally, the third section was devoted to get additional information about Ethiopian identity beyond the close-ended questionnaire items. The inclusion of items in the questionnaire was guided by the conceptualization of Ethiopian identity in the current Ethiopian political context and in the findings of the initial qualitative exploration.

The items of the questionnaire were originally prepared in ENGLISH; but in order to help students clearly understand each item the researcher translated them into AMHARIC. Then, after clarifying the purpose of the study, the researcher himself personally administered the questionnaire in a closed session so that a maximum return rate was achieved. It was felt that if the study participants took the questionnaire to their home, a significant proportion of the questionnaire would not be returned and adequately filled out. It appears due to this reason that from a total of 400 questionnaires distributed to study participants 364 of them were appropriately filled out and returned.

The dissertation selected the actual participants of the survey through multi-stage sampling technique. In the 2015/2016 academic calendar higher education student placement by the MOE, there were 4714 students admitted in the Regular Undergraduate Program of Addis Ababa University. Accordingly, the University's Main Registrar has made student placement in the 10 colleges and various departments of the University. As students were found distributed in different colleges and departments, any attempt to select students from their complete list available at the University's Main Registrar by using systematic random sampling may lead to fragmentation in the data collection process. Moreover, the available biographical data of the students in the Addis Ababa University Main Registrar did not suggest their ethnic identification. These two assumptions made the sampling of colleges indispensable. Furthermore, in order to avoid the concentration of students of more or less similar background – ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic and spatial – at department level due to peer pressure, the selection of students for the survey has been intentionally made by sampling the colleges rather than departments.

Therefore, among students distributed across the 10 colleges of the University the dissertation managed to take those students admitted to the College of Social Science (CSS) and the College of Natural and Computational Sciences (CNCS) as its sampling frame. The first rationale for the purposeful selection of these two colleges was that they together constitute one fourth of the total newly admitted undergraduate regular program student population of the University in the base year. The second rationale was that such purposeful selection of these two colleges could give an insight into understanding the disparity in student perspectives between Social Science and Natural Science streams probably brought about by the difference in History education in their upper cycle secondary school years.

There were a total of 1178 students admitted to the CSS and CNCS of Addis Ababa University. Among these, 460 students were admitted to the CSS and the rest 718 students to the CNCS. After having secured a complete list of their names admitted to each department of the CSS and the CNCS from the Main Registrar Office of the selected higher education institution, a total of 400 student participants from the list of names arranged in alphabetical order have been selected for the survey by using systematic random sampling technique from each stratum (department) through proportional allocation. Accordingly, totally 156 students from the CSS and 244 students from the CNCS were selected as actual participants in the survey. [Table 3.2](#) below provides a more detailed treatment of the sampling technique employed for the selection of actual participants of the survey.

Table 3.2: Procedures of sample size determination and selection of survey participants

No	College	Department	Student Population	Samples selected
1	Natural and Computational Sciences	Zoological Sciences	139	47
2		Sport Science	90	31
3		Mathematics	82	28
4		Statistics	71	24
5		Chemistry	68	23
6		Physics	58	20
7		Computer Science	65	22
8		Earth Sciences	84	28
9		Information Science	61	21
Total			718	244
1	Social Science	Social Work	81	27
2		Political Science	61	21
3		Geography	70	24
4		Sociology	60	20
5		Archaeology	46	16
6		History	51	17
7		Social Anthropology	45	15
8		Philosophy	46	16
Total			460	156

As the AAU Main Registrar had a complete list of all newly admitted regular undergraduate students with only regional identification, the researcher was expected to extract the ethnic identification of students through a preliminary assessment of their biographical data just before the commencement of the actual survey. For this purpose, the dissertation had managed to get the accurate list of the ethnic identification of the selected survey participants through elected student representatives in each department of the respective colleges. Finally, as some items of the questionnaire directly refer to specific

ethnic groups, the questionnaire was duplicated and distributed as proportional to the number of each ethnic student.

Generally, in order to secure multiple perspectives on the issue under treatment, the survey was conducted with student study participants selected on the basis of ethnic diversity. As national identities are sometimes exclusive as much as they are inclusive, this approach was primarily favored to ensure inclusivity. Accordingly, newly admitted students in the first year first semester regular undergraduate program of Addis Ababa University from some available or accessible ethnic group who is selected through systematic random sampling technique has been most probably involved in the survey.

The next logical step after determining the actual survey participants and designing the questionnaire has been maintaining the validity and reliability of items of the questionnaire. The available scholarship suggests that probably the most important task in designing a good questionnaire is testing its degree of validity and reliability. The validity of a questionnaire deals with whether the items of the questionnaire adequately measure what is assumed to be gauged or “the items sample a significant aspect of the purpose of the investigation” (Best & Kahn, 2005: 312). Furthermore, the content validity of a questionnaire can be maintained by consulting with colleagues and senior experts in the field. In the same fashion, the reliability of a data gathering instrument (questionnaire) can be kept by administering the same instrument twice for the same target population, and then checking the consistency of the first and second responses (Best and Kahn, 2005: 317). In this sense, the reliability (consistency) of a questionnaire can be maximized through the administration of the questionnaire before and after the actual field survey.

Therefore, in order to maintain the content validity of the questionnaire the researcher has tried to consult with colleagues and senior professionals about which items to be included to achieve the stated objectives of the research project. Moreover, a pilot survey was conducted to see the strength of items of the questionnaire on whether they measure what was intended to be measured. In other words, in order to confirm the source of data as well as the content validity (strength of items) of the questionnaire a pilot survey was conducted before the actual field survey phase on a randomly selected 40 students. The pilot survey

also served other purposes. It helped the dissertation to evaluate how well the questionnaire was designed in terms of wording, sequencing and format so that a high response rate could be achieved. It also gave us the opportunity to test the dissertation's assumptions in relation to the research questions raised.

An attempt was made to maintain the reliability of the questionnaire through the application of some statistical measures. Among these, a *Cronbach alpha* (α) test was employed to measure the reliability of items of the questionnaire. The available literature widely applies *Cronbach alpha* measures to assess the internal consistency (also termed homogeneity) of items of a test. In the words of [Tavakol & Dennick \(2011: 53\)](#), internal consistency implies “the extent to which all the items in a test measure the same concept or construct and hence it is connected to the inter-relatedness of the items within the test”. They recommended that for the sake of ensuring validity internal consistency should be determined just before the administration of the questionnaire. In short, *Cronbach alpha* measures how well items of an instrument have focused on a single construct.

Cronbach alpha is expressed as a number ranging from 0 to 1. Many sources indicate that the acceptable value of *Cronbach alpha* ranges from 0.70 to 0.95 and as such the minimum acceptable reliability coefficient is 0.7; and even lower thresholds are still used in some of the available literature. In this dissertation, the *Cronbach alpha* value computed for all items of the questionnaire was 0.945, implies that it has – at least theoretically – a very low measurement error. The dissertation's questionnaire items deviate from the maximum *Cronbach alpha* value computed for standardized items only by 0.005, which is far beyond the minimum acceptable standard. This suggests that almost all items of the dissertation's questionnaire were more focused (or correlated) to measure the construct Ethiopian identity. An attempt was also made to determine the contribution of each question to the reliability of the whole questionnaire items through deletion of those whose value dropped below the minimum threshold value for alpha. As such, 6 items of the questionnaire were discarded in the process.

To sum up, in the research design selected for the dissertation, it is intended that significant attributes of Ethiopian identity could be derived from content analysis of Social Studies,

History and CEE textbooks at all grade levels (Grade 5 to Grade 12) and then their persistence in student values and perspectives could be examined through in-depth interviews, FGDs and questionnaire survey. In-depth interviews and FGDs with students were conducted to understand how they conceptually construct their Ethiopian identity by placing themselves in relation to the socially and politically constituted contents and activities of the national and regional education system curriculum. In-depth interviews and FGDs with students could also help us to understand how students live with and practice their Ethiopian identity in their every day social discourse. In-depth interviews with teachers could also help us to enrich curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity intended to be explored from content analysis of national and regional education system curriculum and student values.

Above-all, the qualitative dimension (content analysis of textbooks, interviews and FGDs) could help us to understand how students identify themselves with some attributes of Ethiopian identity and use them in their social interaction. On the other hand, the questionnaire survey would help us to understand individual level identification and attachment with some selected attributes of Ethiopian identity across diverse ethnic, gender, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Finally, curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity has been determined through content analysis of some selected textbooks and in-depth interviews with teachers; and student perspectives on Ethiopian identity was judged on the basis of the findings of in-depth interviews and FDGs with students and a subsequent questionnaire survey on a sizable student population of diverse ethnic, linguistic, religious, gender and cultural backgrounds.

3.5. Study participants

This study was conducted to assess the status of Ethiopian identity representation and reinforcement in the country's national and regional education system curriculum and in student values or perspectives. In order to access a relatively larger proportion of students from major Ethiopian nations and nationalities, graduates of Ethiopian Preparatory Education were the key participants of the study. Generally, graduates of Ethiopian Secondary Education have been purposefully taken as the subjects of the study for at least three reasons. First, in the current formal education landscape, for the great majority of

Ethiopian students Grade 12 is the last level in which they get organized or formal citizenship education through Social Studies, CEE and History courses. Thus, it is at this level that the aggregate impact or contribution of the Ethiopian national and regional education system curriculum on nurturing Ethiopian identity can be adequately captured.

Second, many scholars (such as Havighurst & Davis, 2013; Volkan, 1998 cited in Caputi, 1996; Niemi & Sobieszek, 1977) agree that early adolescence [aged 13 to 16 years] has been taken as a formative period of national identification and political thought. Volkan (1998) noted that adolescence is the more definitive phases of national identity formation and it is during this stage that national identification crystallizes and adolescents conceive of themselves as persons having meaningful bonds with a nation – its history, language, and culture. Drawing on Freud's (1921) writing about group psychology, Volkan characterizes adolescence as the search for suitable social targets of externalization where they get eager to recognize friend and foe not just within their neighborhood, but on a larger international scale. Similarly, Havighurst and Davis (2013) and Niemi and Sobieszek (1977) noted that students achieve independent moral judgment only during their secondary education. It is believed that most graduates of Ethiopian secondary education in Ethiopia belong to this age category or beyond and thus they are able to comprehend political, social and ideological messages.

Third, it is believed that the term national identity has a multidisciplinary conception: that is, it has a psychological, political and sociological dimension. Accordingly, students are expected not only to identify with national symbols – may be political, cultural or both – and have emotional attachment with it (psychological dimension) but also to derive meaning and significance to their identification and emotional attachment to it. Given their academic background and maturity level, students can pick any information by critically scrutinizing its rationality. Therefore, it is assumed that graduates of Ethiopian secondary education level could be capable of understanding and interpreting the meaning of being Ethiopian and its consequences.

Generally, the chief participants of the study include students, teachers, government officials and experts in the MOE and Regional Education Bureaus (REBs). The selection of

these study participants involved a kind of both purposive and random sampling techniques. Teachers, government officials and experts were selected purposefully on the basis of convenience (accessibility) and relevance. Generally, for the qualitative dimension purposeful selection has been applied for all study participants. On the other hand, student participants of the survey were selected by using systematic random sampling techniques through proportional allocation.

3.6. Data analysis

The *exploratory sequential design* of the MMR approach has been the research design proposed for this study. This research design demands the collection and analysis of qualitative data to inform the latter quantitative inquiry. As such both qualitative and quantitative datasets were collected and analyzed separately. Qualitative data was collected and analyzed to get a general picture of the presence or absence and meaning of some basic attributes of Ethiopian identity in the national and regional education system curriculum and student values and then quantitative data was collected and analyzed to further corroborate the findings of the earlier qualitative exploration. Finally, the integration of these two datasets could help us to get an in-depth understanding of curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity through the analysis of some selected Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks and student perspectives.

Accordingly, data analysis was made at two levels. First, textbooks were analyzed page by page for the meaning and type of Ethiopian identity they portray and communicate to students through selective coding. The direction of analyzing the data – which was coded by using the content categories developed prior to the actual content analysis phase – has been determined by the nature of the research questions. Thus after having created the content categories and coding the text, data analysis began with the description of the nature of the main content categories themselves. Then, the texts coded into these categories were thematically analyzed to understand textbook portrayal of Ethiopian identity in the new nation-building process and its interface with alternative identity sets, particularly with ethnic identity. In other words, first the major attributes (values, symbols, beliefs and traditions) portrayed in the textbooks were identified and then their type and relationship to the Ethiopian political and cultural community was analyzed. Thematic

analysis could help us to discover the themes and concepts embedded in each statement, paragraph and the entire textbook.

In addition to content analysis of textbooks, FGDs and interview responses from students and teachers on different dimensions of Ethiopian identity and the curriculum were analyzed by using thematic analysis. As such, first all audio-taped interviews and FGDs data were transcribed and the researcher went through them carefully to derive meaning. Next, meaningful data were categorized in line with the basic research questions of the dissertation. Accordingly, inferences were made on the basis of the meaning and/or insights embedded in each dataset and subsequently more descriptive major topics and sub-topics were formulated through a repeated data filtration process. Generally, the analysis of data obtained through qualitative exploration could help us to have a preliminary understanding of curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity.

Second, the survey dataset was analyzed through descriptive statistics such as simple percentages, mean and standard deviation. Descriptive statistics have been used to show the general status of student identification with and attachment to some basic attributes of Ethiopian identity. As such, simple percentages were used to describe the frequency of occurrence of some attributes of Ethiopian identity in students' values or perspectives and mean values were computed to determine the average scores of student responses on each attribute of Ethiopian identity. Then standard deviation was computed mainly to see the degree of concentration around or dispersion from the mean score in individual student responses to different attributes of Ethiopian identity. By doing so, the dissertation attempted to measure the deviation of individual student responses from the group mean value and subsequently got some insights into how much variation exists in student perspectives or values on the same sets of attributes symbolizing the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

For the quantitative data set as a whole, the IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20 was employed as a chief analysis tool because it is very quick and accurate than any mechanical computation. However, the dissertation did not measure variations in the direction and magnitude of students' attachment to the major attributes of Ethiopian identity by ethnicity,

religion and region and other characteristics. This issue was intentionally overlooked by the dissertation mainly due to the political sensitivity of the issue at least today and the focus of its basic research questions.

At this juncture, it is also important to note that the literature (see for instance, Yin, 2009) suggests that in qualitative research data gathering and data analysis go side by side. Thus, in this research project the researcher began data analysis from the time of the first assessment of policy documents, the first content analysis of textbooks, the first interview and the first FGDs with the study participants. However, for the quantitative dataset analysis had begun just after the commencement of the field survey and securing the relevant data.

Finally, the research project draws its conclusions on how Ethiopian identity has been presented in the regional and national education system curriculum and how it is perceived and understood by the students through the integration of the findings of the qualitative and quantitative datasets. In other words, the dissertation derives its conclusion from the intersection of the findings of the first phase qualitative exploration obtained through a thorough content analysis of Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks depiction of Ethiopian identity, in-depth interviews and FGDs with students and from the second phase quantitative survey on the students' level of identification and attachment with the values, symbols and traditions representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

3.7. Validity and reliability

Probably, the two primary threats to any research design may be the issues of validity and reliability. Simply stated, validity refers to measuring what is intended to be gauged (Muijs, 2004). By extension, the validity of any research finding can be judged in terms of whether it adequately measures what is assumed to be measured and this could be partly maintained by ensuring the content validity of its data gathering instruments which were determined in consultation with colleagues and senior experts in the field (Best & Kahn, 2005). In this research project, the threats to validity have been minimized through method and data triangulation and as such the convergence of data from multiple sources of evidence could enhance its validity.

Employing multiple methods and sources of data can be used as the main mechanism to enhance the internal validity of a study (Merriam, 2009, Mouton, 1996; Patton, 2002). Merriam claimed that *data triangulation* could be taken as the most well known strategy to maintain the internal validity of a research. In the words of Merriam (2009): "...from an interpretive-constructivist perspective,...triangulation remains a principal strategy to ensure for validity and reliability" (p. 216). In this research project, the utilization of mixed methods design which combines qualitative and quantitative methods could enhance its validity and reliability. Furthermore, multiple sources of evidence – such as content analysis, document review, interviews, FGDs and questionnaire survey – have been used to further enrich the validity and reliability of its findings. In line with this, Mouton (1996) also insisted that as various research methods and tools complement each other it is important to use various methods and sources in a single study so as to maintain its validity and reliability.

The second most commonly employed strategy to ensure for validity or credibility of a research, according to Maxwell (2005) and Ridenour & Newman (2008), is *member checks* or *respondent validation*. The underlying principle here is that in order to avoid or at least minimize misinterpretation of the meaning of what the study participants said and did and the perspectives they entertained, it is imperative to solicit feedback from some of the study participants by taking preliminary findings back to them. *Member checks* is taken by Maxwell as an important step for avoiding the researcher's misunderstanding and bias. In order to avoid misinterpretation of the study participants' responses and thus maintain its validity, interview and FGDs results were distributed back to seven students who participated in the interview and FGDs. This helped the researcher to go back through each response seriously and made some improvements on the interpretations of the study participants' responses. Some of the main concerns of the study participants reflected during the '*member checks*' process revolve around the presentation of heroes/heroines and some ideological issues.

Scholars who significantly wrote on the methodological issues of research (such as Maxwell, 2005; Patton, 2002; Ridenour & Newman, 2008) also suggest that 'adequate engagement (time spent)' in data collection, 'reflexivity' or critical reflection on the self or

explanation on the researcher's biases, dispositions and assumptions about the research being undertaken, and '*peer review*' are some of the other strategies to ensure the validity and reliability of a research project. Scholars noted that giving the preliminary finding to peers could help to get feedback on whether the findings emerge from the data.

Similarly, the reliability of a study refers to the level of consistency of its findings confirmed through repeated measurements. But, according to Merriam (2009) repeatability is a very difficult business in social science research as human behaviour itself is not static. Such conceptualization of reliability largely emerges from the assumption that there is only one reality which could not change through repeated measurements and as such reliability is a common variable in traditional experimental research. In this context, as there are many interpretations of the social world it is difficult to ensure reliability in the social sciences which involve human behaviour. Thus as Merriam rightly stated "...all reports of personal experience are not necessarily unreliable..." (p. 221). Thus the main focus in qualitative research is the interface between the results and the data. That is, whether the findings directly emerge from the data collected. Merriam suggested triangulation, peer examination, investigator's position and *audit trial* as mechanisms to ensure consistency or dependability in qualitative research.

The first phase of the study mainly relies on qualitative exploration, which involved content analysis of some selected primary and secondary school textbooks, interviews and FGDs with students and teachers. Accordingly in the content analysis process, first content categories were created and operationally defined and then a coding sheet has been prepared to code relevant data from textbooks. Thus, in order to check the appropriateness of content categories and assure the validity of the content analysis instrument, a pilot study or a preliminary content analysis of Grade 8 CEE and Social Studies textbooks and Grade 10 History textbook was made before the actual commencement of the study. This brought about the subsequent revision of some of the existing content categories and the development of new ones. In order to maintain the consistency of its interview and FGDs findings, the researcher stayed in the field for an extended time so that he can clearly understand the context and establish trustful relationships with the study participants

(mainly students and teachers) which would help him to make repeated measurements until the level of saturation.

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was maintained by consulting with colleagues and senior experts in the field and a pilot survey administered before the full scale commencement of the data collection process. In addition to this, items of the questionnaire were constructed in reference to the ISSP and Eurobarometer survey questions, which are repeatedly tested and re-tested by the respective institutions and other previous researchers for content validity and reliability. Moreover, for the sake of maintaining the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments employed in the course of the study, all the interview items, FGD questions, the questionnaire items and content analysis guide along with the basic research questions of the study were given to one PhD student of Federalism and one MA graduate of Political Science and International Relations. These experts have critically assessed whether the instruments designed to collect data could sufficiently answer the research questions and as such measure Ethiopian identity. Based on the feedback obtained from them, the dissertation incorporated some additional items while at the same time it discarded some other items.

3.8. Ethical considerations

Although the question of ethics has been largely contested in most Physical Sciences research, particularly in the fields of Biology and Medicine, the issue is still relevant in Social Science and Educational Research, which directly involve human subjects. Literally, ethics refers to principles of behavior about what is right and wrong or what is good and what is bad (Thomas, 2011: 68). Research ethics may be defined as “the appropriateness of the researcher’s behavior in relation to the subjects of the research or those who are affected by it” (Gray 2009: 68). In qualitative exploration, the issue of ethics is very difficult because what is right for a person may be wrong for another person (Thomas, 2011: 68) – note that this study has also a qualitative dimension. By extension, what is right for the researcher may be wrong for a research participant and vice-versa.

Silverman (2010) and Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) underlined the vulnerability of qualitative exploration to ethical problems. They posit that as qualitative research demands

close contact and intimacy with study participants, there is a likelihood of ethical violations in the course of the study. They further justify that ethical considerations are very critical in qualitative research traditions because they are often used to deal with very hot or sensitive social issues. The dissertation attempted to inform the study participants about the purpose of the research project, the value and confidentiality of their responses as well as their right to freely participate in the study or withdraw from the process at any phase of the study.

Bassey (1999: 73-74) classified research ethics into three: *respect for democracy, respect for truth, and respect for persons*. On the other hand, Gray (2009: 73) grouped ethical principles into four, namely: *avoiding harm to participants, insuring informed consent of participants, respecting the privacy of participants, and not to use deception*. These citations suggest that ethical considerations are particularly important for a researcher because he/she is most likely expected to be in close contact with research participants during the course of the study. It is important to note that research ethics is required during the planning, fieldwork, analysis, interpretation, and reporting phase of the research. Therefore, this dissertation has been guided by the following ethical principles:

Informed consent: Study participants were provided with sufficient information about the purpose of conducting the research in a way that enables them to make decision to voluntarily participate in the research. Furthermore, the dissertation also ensured them the right to withdraw from participating in the research process at anytime without any risk.

Confidentiality: Study participants have been assured that all information exchanged between the researcher and the researched would not be disclosed in any form without their consent. To this effect, all identifiable information regarding participants was removed from the research paper.

Anonymity: In order to protect the identity of research participants, the dissertation did not use their exact names and their identity could not be exposed in any form without their permission. To this end, a consent form has been prepared and dully acknowledged by research participants through their signature just before the commencement of the actual fieldwork (see Addendum 7).

PHASE I: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

CHAPTER FOUR

4. PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM TEXTBOOKS PORTRAYAL OF ETHIOPIAN IDENTITY

4.1. Introduction

This study is intended to assess the contribution of the Ethiopian national and regional education system curriculum to the ongoing new nation-building process through developing a shared sense of belonging and attachment to the nation among its youth. As clearly stated in the design section of the dissertation this study is conducted in two phases. Phase I of the study involves qualitative exploration of the values, symbols and traditions denoting Ethiopian identity through qualitative content analysis of some selected textbooks and in-depth interviews and FGDs with the study participants. Then the findings of such qualitative analysis could inform the succeeding quantitative survey intended to measure the level of attachment students have to the values, symbols and traditions representing Ethiopian identity identified through a priori qualitative exploration. This is primarily done to understand the place of Ethiopianness in student values from the ‘emic’ perspective and hence avoid an external imposition of a conceptual framework by the researcher.

As such, this part of the dissertation is devoted to the analysis of qualitative data obtained through content analysis, in-depth interviews and FGDs which could serve as a starting point for designing items of the questionnaire survey. The assessment of the contribution of the national and regional education system curriculum to the ongoing nation-building process through creating a shared sense of belonging and attachment with the Ethiopian politico-cultural community among students requires an understanding of the broader context of education in Ethiopia. Such an understanding is attempted through – in addition to content analysis of textbooks – the analysis of the national education and training policy context, curriculum development and textbook production process. An overview of the general context of education and training policy and curriculum development was presented in chapter two of the dissertation.

In this chapter, the dissertation attempts to critically analyze the specific context for the national and regional education system textbook production process. This was followed by

the definition of content categories used to guide textbook content analysis. Finally a separate treatment of some selected textbooks of the primary schools of the three ethnic regions for their portrayal and description of the values, symbols and traditions representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community concludes the chapter.

4.2. The context for textbook production

The country's 1994 Education and Training Policy states that the management, financing, teachers training and textbook production for the secondary level of education are the mandates of the MoE whereas the regional states are mandated for the above responsibilities for the pre-primary and primary level of education. The regional states have also a constitutional mandate to decide on the languages of instruction for their pre-primary and primary level of education. Consequently, regional variations in the primary education landscape of the country with respect to the specific contents communicated through textbooks are expected. This, in turn, could lead to a corresponding variability of educational processes and outcomes among the regions. And yet, it needs to be kept in mind that the regions have to operate within a national curriculum framework that defines the broader concepts, themes and outcomes for all levels of education. This could also serve as a unifying force on the content development of the textbooks.

In order to broadly understand the scope of variation at textbook level, the dissertation seeks to examine textbook production process in the Ethiopian national and regional education landscape.

As part of the country's General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP), the MOE has endeavored to follow a new tradition of textbook production process since 2010. The [MoE \(2008\)](#) asserted that prior to the year 2010, the quality and quantity of textbooks at all levels have been a major challenge to effective teaching and learning. The Ministry figured out five major problems with the previous sets of textbooks: (1) *textbooks are unattractive, using very few illustrations*; (2) *all textbooks are printed in a single colour (black)*; (3) *all binding is either wire saddle- or side-stapled, resulting in shorter book life*; (4) *paper is of low grade and weight, leading to show-through of printing and low resistance to tearing*; and (5) *the textbooks covers are very unattractive* ([p. 10](#)). It is worth

noting that most of the identified challenges, except the lack of adequate illustrations, are related to the physical appearance of the textbooks rather than the substantive matters.

In response to these problems, the MoE has followed a new approach to textbook production for all grade levels. It initiated the textbook production process from the fund secured from development partners and credited through the World Bank. Accordingly, international tenders were announced by the MoE for the development, printing and distribution of student textbooks and teacher's guides. Local Ethiopian partners in the publishing and printing industry were also invited to involve in the textbook production process. This approach could enable the MoE to purchase finished textbooks and teacher guides from publishers. Procurement followed a two-step process: (1) evaluation and selection of qualified student textbooks and teacher's guides at federal level; and (2) regional selection (by REBs) from those student textbooks and teacher's guides qualified federally.

At a broader policy context, the development, printing and distribution of primary level education (grades 1 to 8) textbooks is the responsibility of the REBs whereas the MoE has the mandate to produce textbooks for secondary level education (grades 9 to 12). As indicated in the GEQIP document, prior to the 2010 new textbook production approach, student textbook and teacher's guide development for primary level education were the responsibilities of REBs and it is since 2010 that such responsibilities have been removed and transferred to publishers under the guidance of the federal MOE.

The other important point is that in the pre-2010 period, textbook development was entirely dominated by a local publisher called Mega Publishing Enterprise, which has strong affiliation with the Ethiopian government. But now, the dominant winners and participants in the production of primary and secondary school textbooks and teacher's guides were international publishers. The responsibility for all sets of textbook and teacher guide procurement was undertaken at the federal level by the MOE. Winner publishers then submitted titles for evaluation and approval with a published price for each title. The MOE then evaluated textbook manuscript submissions for each grade level on the basis of

conformity to specifications and sent a list of titles, with their prices, to the REBs for further evaluation and selection.

In other words, REBs evaluated the MOE approved titles and select their preferences. After REBs have selected their titles, the MOE signed the contract and paid the publishers. Finally, REBs in collaboration with winner publishers translated qualified titles into their local languages of instruction. This was followed by the printing and distribution of finished textbooks in vernacular languages in collaboration with publishers. But it is important to bear in mind that an expert in the MOE reported that the World Bank project fund allowed the publication of only one version of textbook for those regions having the same language of instruction.

But despite such favourable provisions – at least at the policy context – to produce their own primary school textbooks, the regional states rather seem merely translated some of those centrally designed primary school textbooks by the Federal MOE than adapting them to suit to their specific environmental, social, political and cultural contexts. The gaps in the REBs to produce their respective primary school textbooks as provided by the national ETP framework may be associated with several factors. In order to understand such gaps in-depth interviews were conducted with officials and experts from the federal MOE and REBs. One of the interviewee from the Federal MOE maintained that the current sets of primary school textbooks were produced by the regions themselves. He described the degree of involvement of regional states in the primary schools textbook production process as follows:

The syllabuses for all subject areas were centrally produced with the active participation of regions on the basis of the proposed curriculum framework for primary education; and then regions translated the syllabi into nationality languages and produced their own textbooks accordingly.

The other expert in the MOE has a similar assertion on the participation of regional states in the primary schools textbook production process. First international publishers were invited to prepare student textbooks and teacher's guides having 24 pages for primary schools and 32 pages for secondary schools on the basis of the proposed minimum learning competencies and subject syllabuses. Then regions were invited to evaluate and select the

format and content of their textbooks submitted by publishers. Finally, after the textbooks were selected and approved by the REBs the full textbooks were written and distributed by publishers.

Experts in the MOE maintained that the overall textbook production process was facilitated by the MOE but all decisions regarding the format and content of primary school textbooks were made by the regions themselves. They added that in some regions textbooks (for instance, Tigray, Oromiya, and SNNPR) the regional flag was added while in some other regions textbooks (such as Amhara, Dire Dawa and Gambella) the regional flag was discarded by their decision. But yet the colour of textbooks (in green, yellow, red and blue), FDRE-MOE and the Ethiopian national flag were made mandatory for all regions textbooks. Accordingly, all sets of textbooks have such patterns of background colour and carried the Ethiopian national flag and FDRE-MOE at their cover page.

Despite the above assertions that regions have had active participation on the textbooks development process, considerable similarities on the content and structure of CEE textbooks are found across the regional states considered for this study. Experts of the MOE generally associated such uniformity in the content and structure of primary school CEE textbooks across the regional states mainly with the apparent lack of capacity and experiences of REBs to adapt the textbooks to their local social, cultural and political contexts. On the other hand, interviews conducted with experts of the respective regional states' education bureaus rejected this assertion. For instance, one of the interviewees from the REBs maintains that primary school textbook production is an exclusive legal right for the regional states. He goes on to contend that:

Before the introduction of the so called 'GEQIP' we were free to write textbooks for our primary schools on the basis of the National Curriculum Framework proposed by the MOE. But now this legal mandate has been removed and taken over by the MOE under the banner of quality. We all were invited in the textbook production process only to give blessings to what the MOE did.

Another interviewee from other REB echoed the same idea on the level of their participation in the regional states primary education textbook production process by saying that "From the very beginning, the demand to produce new textbooks did not

primarily emerge from us. The initiative to produce new textbooks came from the MOE”. He added that “Even when we were invited by the MOE, we did what the MOE experts directed us to do;as a result, some of the existing textbooks have failed to reflect our practical context”. Interviews conducted with experts of other REBs more or less reflect this concern. They all associated the apparent failure to reflect local contexts in their textbooks with the World Bank’s policy of textbook production and the MOE strong intervention in the process.

Generally, experts of the MOE and REBs significantly differed with regard to the degree of involvement of regions on the primary education level textbook development and production process; but whoever produces and owns them, which version has been appropriate to the Ethiopian context was the aim of this analysis. In other words, here the intention was simply to understand the context for textbook production currently used in the primary and secondary education system of the country.

It was made clear by experts in the MOE that some regions have agreed to use the same textbook in common as long as the language of instruction remains the same. For instance, the Amhara, Dire Dawa and Harari regions showed their consent to use the Oromiya Region textbooks. Similarly, the Amhara Region textbooks have been used in the primary schools of those regions whose medium of instruction is Amharic. Moreover, as strongly affirmed by experts and officials of the MOE, the World Bank project did not allow textbook production in different languages for the same grade level in the same country. This appears a clear indication that some primary level education textbooks in the three regional states have been translated rather than adapted to reflect the practical regional or local context.

As to secondary school textbooks, the approach and path of textbook production was exactly the same. But the difference largely lies on the authority of REBs and the MOE in the selection of titles for textbooks. As secondary level education is the responsibility of the federal government, regions may not have as such significant involvement in the production of textbooks. However, all of the interviewees in the MoE declared that although the mandate has been given to the federal MoE, regional states were invited to

participate in the secondary school textbook production process. Experts of the REBs also confirmed that they were invited to participate in the secondary school textbook production process.

CEE and History textbooks followed a different path of writing. These two subject areas have been considered by the MoE as the most ideologically sensitive and hence they should not be given to international publishers. One of the interviewees from the MoE asserted that if they were given to international publishers, the taken for granted grand narratives which could not reflect the ideological orientation and actual histories and experiences of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples could be pervaded. Though they were prepared under GEQIP only for the purpose of quality maintenance, CEE textbooks were written by professionals and experts drawn from various offices by the MoE. For the rest subject areas at all grade levels, only minimum learning competencies and subject syllabuses were given to international publishers to produce and distribute student textbooks and teacher's guides.

Those textbooks published with the generous aid of Development partners through the World Bank project fund excluded History textbooks. In the current Ethiopian education landscape, History education is, probably, the most contested academic discipline. The question repeatedly raised by the incumbent government and by some scholars and yet remained unanswered has been “whose history?” In line with this, one of the experts in the MOE asserted that History textbooks should reflect a fairly representative historical narrative of the different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. He further added that the existing narrative does not reflect the true history of the Ethiopian people and this should be corrected. Further building on the expert's position, one official in the MOE has the following to say:

It is before five years that we gave the mandate to write History textbooks to professionals at Addis Ababa University. We expect them to write it in the way as it reflects the authentic history of nations, nationalities and peoples rather than some rulers. But yet they did not respond to our demands. As a result of this, the History textbooks currently used in the secondary education system of the country remained controversial.

Another expert added that the MOE is now prepared to invite professionals and experts other than the Addis Ababa University (AAU). Accordingly, History textbooks currently employed in the secondary schools of the country are those sets of textbooks produced in 2005 and 2006 by Mega Publishing Enterprise. Minimum learning competencies and syllabuses for each grade level History textbooks were prepared, but yet textbook writing on this basis remained open. This was taken up by the current prime minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, in a recent meeting in which he indicated that History education will be better taught by integrating the history of the nation state (Ethiopia) and historical representations of nations, nationalities and peoples history in the History education curriculum.

To sum up, the printing and distribution of primary and secondary education level basic curriculum documents such as curriculum framework, content flow charts, syllabuses and minimum levels of competencies or student profiles have been primarily determined by the federal MoE. The REBs participation in the development of national curriculum documents may be generally regarded as adaptation. Against such context of education and training policy, curriculum design and textbook production, the dissertation carried out content analysis of primary education system Social Studies and CEE textbooks currently in use in the regional states of the country for ‘what’ and ‘how’ they portray the values, symbols and traditions describing the Ethiopian political and cultural community. This begins with a brief description of content categories used to guide textbook analysis.

4.3. Description of content categories

Researchers suggest that in content analysis research data analysis begins with the description of content categories. A clear description of content categories helps to determine which of the texts would be coded into or excluded from these content categories and then thematically analyze to understand textbook portrayal of Ethiopian identity. Contentious it could be, as reviewed in chapter one, many believe that Ethiopia has a long history of statehood. It has also very rich historical and cultural heritages which could create a shared sense of belonging among its citizens. As such, the political and historico-cultural symbols may constitute the first broad content category of Ethiopian identity. In this study, the values, symbols, traditions and belief systems which could create such common or shared sense of belonging among Ethiopians is believed to include the

following content categories: (1) *national flag and anthem*, (2) *national heroes*, (3) *national holidays*, (4) *historical and cultural heritages or symbols*.

Although the country has not such a rich history of constitution and constitutional doctrine, constitutionalism appears as a dominant rhetoric and a leading political discourse in present day Ethiopian politics. Of course in multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual and multi-religious countries like Ethiopia adherence to the constitution and constitutional principles presents the minimum requirement and pledge to live as one political community. As such, constitutional patriotism may constitute the second content category of Ethiopian identity which could guide textbook content analysis. The content categories may include – but not limited to – *common Ethiopian territory, common laws and institutions, legal equality of citizens, popular sovereignty, constitutional supremacy, common legal rights and duties, and common economy*.

A slight cursor into the history of Ethiopia indicates that the country has a long history of independent statehood and also has unique contributions to the world in which its citizens feel proud and allegiance to it. Through its long history of sovereign statehood and intermingling of its Nations, Nationalities and Peoples brought about by the long distance trade routes long before its current shape, the country has accumulated a rich source of historical and cultural traits which could help its citizens to develop some unique self-imaginings about themselves as Ethiopians. This historical and cultural wealth of the country which may enable its citizens to gradually develop some images or projections about themselves as distinct from other political and cultural communities leads us to think of Ethiopia both as a political and cultural community. Therefore, the Ethiopian politico-cultural community's self-imaginings or projections which transcend ethnic, cultural, regional and religious – to state some – boundaries could constitute the third content category of Ethiopian identity intended to guide content analysis of textbooks.

In the modern multicultural societies individuals or citizens hold multiple identities. It is boldly stated in both the international and Ethiopian literature that Ethiopia constitutes one of the most ethnically, religiously, linguistically and culturally diverse societies in Africa. The fact is that 'unity in diversity' could be possible only when these differences intersect

at some – but not necessarily at all – point. This in turn depends on whether these diversities are believed to be co-existing or conflicting by the identity bearer. As such, in addition to the above three major content categories of Ethiopian identity, a fourth content category was created in order to see textbook depiction of the interface between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity sets. The intention was to understand whether identification and attachment particularly with ethnic identity leads to a corresponding positive identification and attachment with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Such analysis appears logical because in the post-1991 Ethiopia new nation-building discourse citizens have been expected to primarily identify with their ethnic community and then with their political community. Accordingly, whether textbooks portray such a radical historical departure in identity politics – the primacy of identification with ethnicity – as it conflicts or compatible with Ethiopian identity and ultimately undermines or consolidates the very idea of Ethiopianness could be examined.

On the basis of such content categories content analysis of Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks was carried out in order to understand textbook portrayal of Ethiopian identity. This was followed by understanding student perspectives on Ethiopianness through in-depth interviews and FGDs with some purposefully selected students who might mirror the different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. The analysis on textbook portrayal of and student perspectives on Ethiopian identity was critically made without simply picking the information depicted in textbooks and the ideas forwarded by the students. Rather, as much as possible, an attempt was made to understand the context under which the textbooks presented the symbols, values and beliefs symbolizing Ethiopian identity and the context of student responses to the very issue of Ethiopianness.

4.4. Textbook Portrayal of Ethiopian Identity in Oromiya Region

4.4.1. Introduction

The 1995 FDRE Constitution administratively divided Ethiopia into nine ethnic regions and two city administrations. On the basis of such division, Oromiya emerges as the largest of all the ethnic regions of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia both in terms of geographical area and population size. According to the 2007 Population and Housing Census results ([FDRE-PCCP, 2008](#)), Oromiya Region constitutes 36.7 percent, which is

greater than one-third of the total population of the country. The same applies true to total geographical area. In terms of total surface area, Oromiya Region roughly makes up 27 (26.8) percent of the total surface area of the country and with this relative percentage it is the largest region in Ethiopia.

Moreover, Oromiya Region makes up the largest proportion of the total primary and secondary school system in the country, which is almost one-third of the Ethiopia's school system. The Region has the largest proportion of student population in the country. The Ethiopian MoE annual education statistics report for the year 2014 (MOE, 2015) showed that the country has a total student population of 20,137,555, of which 18,139,200 was enrolled in its primary school system and the rest 1,998,355 in the secondary school system. In the same academic year, Oromiya Region has a total student population of 7,276,098, of which 6,628,320 were enrolled in its primary schools and the rest 647,778 in the federal secondary school system. As per the FDRE Constitution and the subsequent 1994 ETP premise, the Region has the mandate to manage the primary school system which falls under its areal jurisdiction. The overall management, teachers' training, language of instruction and textbook production of primary education remained the Region's mandate.

Having presented the background of the Region, the next task would be to describe the context for textbook production. In this research project, content analysis as one of its methods of data extraction was selected to understand the meaning of the texts/messages being portrayed and communicated in the textbooks. Such an understanding could be possible not only by in-depth assessment of the textbooks but also by examining the context under which the textbooks were produced. As such, it is also important to know how and who produced the textbooks and subsequently identify the role of the Region's Education Bureau in textbook writing, which could help us to understand the knowledge and history that have been portrayed, told and retold in such textbooks.

The primary school Social Studies textbooks of Oromiya Region were published by the Region's Education Bureau. They were originally written in Afaan Oromo and then translated into Amharic language to accommodate the linguistic diversity of the Region's

students. On the other hand, the Region's CEE textbooks were published by the Federal MOE. Just like the centrally produced textbooks, both the Social Studies and CEE textbooks of Oromiya Region have equal number of chapters with exactly the same content areas. Despite this fact, the specific messages depicted and communicated to students through the Region's particularly Social Studies textbooks, more or less, differ from other regions textbooks and as such they deserve a separate treatment.

4.4.2. Textbooks portrayal of political and historico-cultural symbols

Almost all countries have specific intangible – beliefs, values, traditions or ideas – and tangible objects which may create a sense of community among citizens. These symbols may serve as essential social fabrics which tie citizens together by reminding their achievements across history. In this dissertation, the main political, cultural and historical symbols used to depict Ethiopian identity were supposed to include national flag and national anthem, national heroes/heroines, national holidays and historico-cultural symbols. In the content analysis process, textbooks portrayal of political and historico-cultural symbols has been made on the basis of '*to whom they are associated (ethnic or Ethiopian community) and how*' rather than mere presence in the textbooks. The next sub-sections provide a brief description of the place of each of these specific content categories of Ethiopian identity in Oromiya Region Social Studies and CEE textbooks.

4.4.2.1. National flag and national anthem

The literature suggests that national flag and national anthem represent a political as well as cultural community's shared sense of understanding and belonging. In line with this, content analysis of Oromiya Region Social Studies and CEE textbooks was made to assess curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity through the depiction and reinforcement of Ethiopian national flag and national anthem.

To start with, the flag of the Oromiya Regional State was portrayed at the top left corner of the cover pages of all sets of Social Studies textbooks (grades 5 to 8). The textbooks also portrayed the Ethiopian national flag at the top right corner of their cover pages. The other important point which deserves consideration here is that except portraying in the cover pages of the textbooks, there was no content area in the main body of the text which raises

any issue related to both the regional and the Ethiopian national flag. Moreover, there was no depiction of both the Ethiopian national anthem and the regional anthem in the Social Studies textbooks of the Region at all.

As to the CEE upper primary education textbooks, they depict the Ethiopian national flag at the top right corners of their front pages and the Ethiopian national anthem in their inside front cover pages. They also portrayed the flags of the nine ethnic regions at their back cover pages in a concentric fashion with the FDRE national flag at the center. The flags of the nine ethnic regions were also portrayed in the inside back cover pages of all sets of CEE textbooks. The ordering or placement of the regional flags was made according to Article 47 of the 1995 FDRE Constitution. This was exactly the case for the cover pages of Amhara Region and Tigray Region CEE textbooks as well as the Amharic version of the Oromiya Region CEE textbooks. Those CEE textbooks of Oromiya Region translated into Afaan Oromo portrayed the Ethiopian flag at the left top corner and the Region's flag at the right top corner of the front and inside cover pages of all sets of CEE textbooks. The ordering of the Regional flag and the Ethiopian national flag in CEE textbooks was reversed from the Oromiya Region Social Studies textbooks.

Similarly, although the cover pages of Amhara and Tigray Region CEE textbooks appear exactly similar in the treatment of national flag, all sets of the Tigray Region CEE textbooks portrayed the Regional flag in all pages. Unlike other regions textbooks, the Amhara Region CEE textbooks did not portray the regional flag separately both in their cover pages and in the main body of the text. Except their simple portrayal in their cover pages, the treatment of the Ethiopian national flag by all sets of CEE textbooks across the ethnic regions remained more or less the same. This could be the case mainly because the CEE textbooks were centrally produced and simply translated into the regional states nationality languages (Afaan Oromo, Amharic and Tigrigna) without any significant adaptations into their social, political, economic and cultural context.

All sets of the CEE textbooks gave significant coverage to the discussions of the national flag and national anthem. Grade five CEE textbooks portrayed the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem as manifestations of the sovereignty the country has enjoyed

throughout its history and the dignity of its people. They also depicted the national flag and national anthem of Ethiopia as the symbol of the sacrifices the past generations had paid to defend the territorial integrity and independence of the country. The national flag and national anthem have been treated in grade five textbooks as important sources of patriotic and national feeling. The textbooks also depicted the national anthem as it symbolizes popularity, possession of unique cultures by Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and endowment of natural and historical heritages.

Grade five CEE textbooks have tried to infuse into the minds of students that when the national flag is flying high in the sky in any event, it has deep meanings and this bottomless meaning and necessity of the Ethiopian national flag has been found in unit five of grade five CEE textbooks as stated:

The national flag has a number of deep meanings. It inspires and motivates citizens to work hard together towards the development of their nation. The national flag indicates independence, heroism, cooperation, sovereignty and dignity of a country (p.64).

The textbooks also presented the inalienable links the Ethiopian people have witnessed between the national flag and the country even in the times of internal crisis. To further consolidate their understanding of the meaning of the Ethiopian national flag, students were asked to write a short essay on the feeling they have experienced when they see the Ethiopian national flag celebrated in victory. In grade five CEE textbooks students were introduced to the meaning and necessity of the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem.

In grade six CEE textbooks, the main emphasis has been to enhance students' understanding about the meaning of the emblem placed at the center of the Ethiopian national flag. On page 53, the textbooks portrayed the picture of the national flag of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and then students were asked to discuss the meaning of the emblem at the center. Citing Article 3 of the FDRE Constitution, the textbooks presented the arrangement of the three colours and the emblem in the center of the national flag with their respective meanings. Accordingly, the green represents fertility and prosperity, the yellow represents the bright future and hope and the red represents heroism

and sacrifice for the nation. As to the meaning of the emblem sketched on a blue background at the center of the Ethiopian national flag, the textbooks presented:

The emblem is made of converging yellow lines and a star illuminated by yellow lines. The blue circular background represents the nations, nationalities and peoples [as well as religious communities] of Ethiopia living together with tolerance [unity] and equality (p. 53).

In grade seven CEE textbooks students were introduced to the historical evolution of the Ethiopian national flag. The textbooks underlined the message that the Ethiopian national flag has a long historical continuity starting from the reign of Emperor Tewodros upto now with only minor modifications. However, the Ethiopian national flag with the current officially established colours and their arrangement had emerged in 1930 during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I. From that time onwards the Ethiopian national flag witnessed only a change in the emblem placed at its center to reflect the ideological orientation of the respective governments. The textbooks stated that today the emblem was added “to reflect the equality of nations, nationalities and peoples, their unity in diversity and their bright future” (p. 62).

Finally, grade eight CEE textbooks seek to demonstrate the contribution of the national flag and national anthem for the development of patriotic sentiment among students. On [page 56](#), the full National Anthem of Ethiopia was stated in Amharic and then students were asked to discuss on the following questions: (1) *what are the main points included in the national anthem?* (2) *What does the phrase “ድንቅ የግህል መድረክ” (the museum of cultures) explain?* (3) *Which phrase indicates that citizens have to take care of their country’s dignity?*

The textbooks also presented the historical sacrifices the Ethiopian people have made for the respect of the national flag and to the love of the nation. Respecting the flag and national anthem was equated with loving the country and its people. They also depicted the present meaning and purpose of the love of a country reflected through the national flag and national anthem as distinct from the previous conceptualizations. In the current political context, the national flag does not serve to mobilize people in times of external invasions only, but most importantly to eradicate poverty and backwardness and to promote

good governance, compassion and respecting one another. Respect for the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem has been presented in the textbooks as a patriotic citizenship duty.

At this juncture, it is important to remind that the CEE textbooks in the upper primary schools of the three ethnic regions were mere translations by the REBs rather than being prepared by the regions themselves on the basis of the national primary school curriculum framework. Accordingly, the specific contents (values, traditions, beliefs) did not show significant variation across the three ethnic regions. Thus, the aforementioned findings of CEE textbooks portrayal of Ethiopian identity symbolized by the national flag and national anthem made for Oromiya Region were the same in all the three ethnic regions of the country. Thus, for the purpose of avoiding mere repetitions, only the findings of content analysis of Social Studies textbooks shall be presented for the Amhara and Tigray regions.

4.4.2.2. National heroes/heroines

In Oromiya Region grade five Social Studies textbook, the only hero portrayed was *Nigus Ibssa or Ababegbo*. The textbook presented Limu Enarya as one of the five Oromo states of the then Ghibe Region and King Ibssa who ruled Enarya for more than 30 years (1825 – 1861) was portrayed as the famous and strongest king of Enarya. The textbook did not exhaust the traits of Nigus Ibssa so that students could have the opportunity to associate with him by critically examining his deeds.

In grade six Social Studies textbook, there were no regional and national heroes/heroines portrayed. In grade seven Social Studies textbook, we found Emperor Menelik II and Etege Tayitu who were depicted as national hero and heroine respectively. Both *Emperor Menelik II* and *Etege Tayitu* have been portrayed respectively as national hero and heroine in relation to the establishment of Addis Ababa as a capital city of Ethiopia and subsequent developments. Again in grade eight Social Studies textbook, *Emperor Menelik II* was also portrayed as a hero in the event of the Adwa victory as stated:

In 1893, Emperor Menelik cancelled the Treaty of Wuchale. He preferred war not to surrender the independence of his country. Then, Menelik marched northwards to fight the Italians at the command of 100,000 soldiers and achieved victory at Adwa (p. 37).

But yet, *Emperor Menelik II* was also depicted as a ‘dictator’ who annexed and ruled the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia, including the Oromo people, through force. Grade eight Social Studies textbook also depicted *Woizero Mulumbet Emiru*, *Woizero Shewareged Gedle*, *Dr. Wudad Kidanemariam*, *Dr. Abebech Gobena* and *W/ro Birnesh Asfaw* as Ethiopian heroines (pp. 109-111). The textbook treated *Woizero Mulumbet Emiru* as a national heroine for she was the first airline female pilot in Africa and became a well-trained pilot at the age of sixteen. Similarly, *Dr. Wudad Kidanemariam* was championed for being the first female medical doctor and for her service in Addis Ababa City Gandhi Memorial Hospital for more than ten years. *Dr. Abebech Gobena* has been considered as a heroine for she changed the lives of many Ethiopian children who lost their family for different reasons through her charity organization called *HOPE*. The textbook portrayed *W/ro Birnesh Asfaw* as the first female engineer in Ethiopia and praised her for the unreserved service she gave to the then Ethiopian Road Authority and Survey and Design Department.

The above four Ethiopian women were treated in the textbooks as heroines for their achievements mainly in civic duties. It was only *Woizero Shewareged Gedle* portrayed in the textbook as a female war patriot who fought the Fascist Italian forces along side with Ethiopian male patriots. The textbook praised her for the hardships she experienced while in prison and her latter contribution to break the Italian fortress. As such, unlike the rest four Ethiopian heroines who represent modern Ethiopian patriotism, *Woizero Shewareged* has been a war heroine and as such she symbolized traditional Ethiopian patriotism.

As to CEE textbooks depiction of national and regional heroes, in Grade five CEE textbooks there was no single hero portrayed in the textbook at all. Grade six CEE textbooks portrayed Etege Tayitu as the founder and backbone of hotels and tourism in Ethiopia. The textbook also treated Nelson Mandela as an international/cosmopolitan hero for his struggle against the unjust acts prevailed in his country and for his ability to organize and unite the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa and later laying the ground for the maintenance of justice and prosperity on the abolition of Apartheid rule in the Republic of South Africa. As a result, the textbook depicted Nelson Mandela as a person “...very much loved by people all over the world for his just deeds never seen

before” (p. 37). Such treatment of persons other than Ethiopians appeared that the textbook intends to promote cosmopolitan identity.

Grade seven CEE textbooks have no portrayal of heroes/heroines at all. In grade eight CEE textbooks, on the other hand, some Ethiopian names were depicted as national heroes/heroines for their deeds in the fields of humanitarian services and international sporting events. Accordingly, Dr. Jember Tefera has been treated in the textbooks as an Ethiopian heroine for her exemplary deeds in humanitarian activities she had started at the age of ten. As a result of her several model works done for the needy sections of Ethiopian society, she was called in the textbooks as “supporter of the needy” (p. 55). The Textbooks also described some famous athletes of the country as national heroes/heroines for their heroic trophy and the subsequent dignity of the Ethiopian national flag in the face of the international community. The textbooks portrayed the picture of some Athletes like Meseret Defar, Tirunesh Dibaba, Kenenissa Bekele, Haile G/Selassie and Sileshi Sihin wearing the Ethiopian national flag. Finally as to national holidays commonly celebrated in Ethiopia, there was nothing stated in both the Social Studies textbooks of Oromiya Region and in the CEE textbooks of all regions as well.

4.4.2.3. Historical and cultural symbols

The Oromiya Region grade five Social Studies textbook portrayed some cultural and historical symbols such as *Afaan Oromo*, *Gada System*, *the Axumite Obelisk*, *the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela*, *the Castles of Gondar*, *the Mosques of Dirre Sheik Hussien*, *the Palace of Abba Jiffar*, *the Palace of Kumsa Moreda*, *the Cultural Konso Woodwork* and *the Victory of Adwa*. Grade five Social Studies textbook described *Afaan Oromo* as the leading vernacular language in Africa and due to the sixteenth century Oromo people expansion it has the largest number of speakers in East Africa. The textbook underlined the message that that “The Oromo people who speak Afaan Oromo have shared common culture and settlement patterns” (p. 16). It follows that the textbook treated Afaan Oromo as it symbolizes ethnic (Oromo) identity.

The second cultural symbol which received significant consideration in the textbook was the *Gada System*. The textbook described the democratic nature of the Oromo cultural

political organization as it stated “...governance and legislative issues were a public affair” (p. 27). It also demonstrates the values of the cultural Oromo Gada system for the modern democratic governance. Overall, the textbook treated the Gada System as it depicts ethnic identity. In addition to the cultural Oromo Gada System, the textbook also presented other cultural political systems such as *Luwa* in Sidama, *Makebanto* in Afar, *Bahato* in Tigray, *Joka* in Gorden Guraghe, and *Semugnit* in Sebatbet Guraghe. But except for their mere presence in the respective places and cultural communities the textbook mentioned nothing about these latter cultural political systems.

The *Axumite Obelisk* was the third historico-cultural symbol described in the textbook. The textbook demonstrated the incredible architectural developments observed during the Axumite civilization as manifested through the monuments cut out of a solid big rock. The monuments of Axum were depicted in the textbook as one of the World’s heritages registered by UNESCO and the Obelisk is one of the historical heritages in Ethiopia. From such treatment by the textbook it appears logical to consider the Axumite Obelisk as one of the cultural symbols depicting Ethiopian identity. As such the Obelisk could give meaning and significance to all the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Of course this finding would be further corroborated through subsequent interviews, FGDs and student surveys.

The fourth historico-cultural symbol depicted by the textbook was the *Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela*. The architectural achievement of the Zagwe dynasty as manifested by the eleven rock-hewn churches was cherished by the textbook. Just like the Axumite Obelisk, the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela were treated in the textbook as one of the world’s heritage sites registered by UNESCO. The textbook further declared that the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela have been one of the historical heritages in Ethiopia. Such depiction of the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela in the textbook leads us to think of them as one of the historical and cultural symbols which could create a sense of belonging and identification with the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

The *Castles of Gondar* constituted the fifth historico-cultural symbols portrayed in the textbook. It was stated in the textbook that many of the Gonderine kings were busy in

building different castles and among these the Castle of Fasiledes is the most famous one. It appears that except mentioning the mere existence of the Castle as built by Fasiledes, nothing was said to whom it belonged. The Castle was not presented with its context. Accordingly, it is difficult to define the Castle's belonging and identification in terms of ethnic and Ethiopian identity. Probably, the inclusion of such symbols may be meant to introduce students to Ethiopian heritages.

The six historico-cultural symbol portrayed in the textbook was the *Mosques of Dirre Sheik Hussien*. The textbook described the *Dirre Sheik Hussien Mosque* as one of the well-known historical heritages among the Muslim world. Such depiction of the *Dirre Sheik Hussien Mosque* by the textbook leads us to think of the heritage site as representing international religious (Muslim) identity.

The *Palace of Abba Jiffar* was the seventh historico-cultural symbol which received significant coverage in the textbook. The textbook demonstrated that the Jimma state was one of the many Southwestern Ethiopia established by the Mecha Oromo and Abba Jiffar II built the Palace. As to the *palace of Kumsa Moreda*, as the eighth historical and cultural symbol, the textbook stated nothing except: "The Kumsa Moreda palace is one of the historical heritages" (p. 30). The *Cultural Konso Woodwork* was depicted in the textbook as the ninth cultural symbol. The textbook maintained that the "Konso are among the people of Southern Ethiopia who have their own historical and cultural heritages. They are well-known for their woodwork" (p. 31).

The tenth historical symbol well treated in the textbook was the *Victory of Adwa*. The textbook treated the Adwa victory as a manifestation of the unity of the Ethiopian people. It described Ethiopians as the only people to keep their independence while the people of Africa fell under colonial rule and this was possible because of the victory over the invading Italian fascist forces at Adwa in March 1, 1896. It also asserted that the unity of Ethiopia has several advantages and one of the main advantages of unity was that Ethiopia remained an independent country for many years. In short, the textbook used the Adwa victory to substantiate the advantage of unity. As such it appears plausible to consider the *Adwa Victory* as a symbol of Ethiopian identity.

The last historical symbol depicted in grade five Social Studies textbook was *Lucy*. *Lucy* was treated in the textbook as belonging to Ethiopia and all humanity. But most importantly, the textbook amplified Ethiopia's position in the history of the origin of the first human ancestor which could be symbolized by the discovery of *Lucy* in the Afar Region of Ethiopia. It follows that *Lucy* could create a sense of unity and belongingness among the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

In grade six Social Studies textbook, most of the above symbols were used to portray Ethiopian identity as stated:

Historical heritages are important means of income from tourists. They also used to show the identity of a country to the rest of the world. They reflect the life of the previous generation. Historical heritages promote our love and affection to our country... (pp. 13-14).

The historical and cultural symbols the above quotation refers to include: *the Axum Obelisk, the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Fasiledes Palace, Dirre Sheik Hussien, Abba Jiffar Palace, and the Harar Wall*. There were no historical and cultural symbols portrayed in grade seven Social Studies textbook. In grade eight Social Studies textbook, the only historical symbol treated significantly was the Adwa Victory. The textbook described the course of the war in significant details. It further demonstrated the Adwa Victory as a symbol of the courage and unity of the Ethiopian people against foreign aggressors and, beyond Ethiopia, as a tonic of anti-colonial struggle in Africa.

To sum up, the Oromiya Region Social Studies textbooks have portrayed significant number of the historical and cultural symbols used to depict Ethiopian identity. But yet many of such symbols portrayed in the Region's Social Studies textbooks were only loosely associated with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Even some of these symbols treated in the textbooks remained isolated from the Region's or the Ethiopian political and cultural community. This is because except listing their names the textbooks did not exhaust the facts or information behind each symbol or heritage with its context. Only the Axumite obelisks, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, the Adwa victory and Lucy were treated by the textbooks as symbolizing the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

As to the CEE textbooks depiction of historical and cultural symbols, Tiya Steale was the only historico-cultural symbol described in grade five textbook. The textbook portrayed the picture of the Tiya Steale. It appears that the Tiya Steale was described in the textbook as a symbol of Ethiopian identity. Along with the picture of the Steale, the textbook maintained that:

Since historical heritages are common properties, all citizens have duty to take care of them. Heritages are expressions of identity, they should not be destructed, stolen, etc., and hence individuals have to take care of them (p. 74).

In grade six CEE textbooks, the first historical symbol portrayed was the Adwa Victory. On page 54 of the Oromiya Region CEE textbook, Adwa was cited as a school name on debates regarding the attributes of patriotism among students. It appears that the Adwa Victory was used to symbolize Ethiopian patriotism and hence Ethiopian identity. The Wall of Harar and the Terraces of Konso were treated in line with citizenship duties to protect the historical and cultural heritages of the country. The textbooks portrayed the picture of the *Wall of Harar* and the *Terraces of Konso* on page 60. They also brought the *Tiya Stelae*, the *Shirin of Diresheik Hussien of Bale* and the *Wall of Harar* into students' attention in line with the need to know and explore attractive sites in Ethiopia.

Grade seven CEE textbooks portrayed the *Walls of Fasiledes* and the *Steale of Axum* to indicate the industriousness of the previous generations of Ethiopia. The textbooks also portrayed the pictures of these historical sites. Similarly, in grade eight CEE textbooks the importance of knowing and appreciating the attractive sites of Ethiopia such as *Tiya Stelae*, the *Shirin of Diresheik Hussien* and the *Wall of Harar*. In addition to this, on page 114 of the textbook the processes and significance of the *Adwa Victory* was given as a discussion exercise for students. It follows that overall CEE textbooks appear to cultivate Ethiopian identity among students through the depiction of historical and cultural symbols.

4.4.3. Constitutional patriotism

In the definition of content categories, the dissertation asserted that identification with and attachment to the 1995 FDRE Constitution and its basic principles serves as the minimum requirement to hold the Ethiopian political community together. Accordingly, the Oromiya

Region Social Studies (and CEE) textbooks were examined for their depiction of constitutional patriotism with the aim to reinforce Ethiopian identity among students.

Both sets of Social Studies textbooks in the three regional states showed no significant variation in the treatment of constitutional patriotism. In all the selected regional states, an important area of constitutional patriotism emphasized, to some extent, by both sets of textbooks was the issue of citizenship rights and duties. In line with citizenship duties, protection of natural resources (such as soil, natural vegetation and wildlife) and historico-cultural heritages, fighting HIV/AIDS, checking rapid population growth, eradicating poverty and backwardness and understanding and fighting harmful traditional practices were highlighted. As to citizenship rights, child rights and safety as well as gender equality were the main issues covered in the textbooks. In addition to this, the geographical location of Ethiopia where the Ethiopian political and cultural community to identify with was also treated in significant details by all the three ethnic regions Social Studies textbooks.

Attachment to the Constitution and constitutional principles has received significant coverage in CEE textbooks. In this dissertation, constitutional patriotism was assumed to include such content categories as *a well-defined common territory, common laws and institutions, legal equality of citizens, popular sovereignty (Nations, Nationalities and Peoples), constitutional supremacy, common legal rights and duties, and common economy*. Accordingly, upper primary education CEE textbooks were examined for the treatment of these content categories of Ethiopian identity as follows.

4.4.3.1. Common territory

As reviewed in chapter one of this dissertation, national identity has also a spatial dimension. Thus, it is not uncommon to define political and cultural communities, among other things, by their specific geographical dimension. The issue of territoriality is an integral part of the conceptualization of any nation of the world. Countries have been primarily defined by their well-defined territory and such territoriality has almost always given a historical origin and accordingly citizens associate their national belonging and identification to the historical land in various ways.

In this regard, the Social Studies textbooks of all the three ethnic regions gave some coverage to the relative location of Ethiopia. For instance, in all the selected regions grade five Social Studies textbooks the location of Ethiopia in reference to its immediate neighbouring countries as well as its geographical size was presented. In terms of geographical size, the textbooks described Ethiopia as the largest country in the Horn. They treated the internationally recognized geographical location of Ethiopia yet without making reference to the historical land.

The CEE textbooks gave significant coverage to the internationally recognized Ethiopian state. Most importantly they emphasized on the Ethiopian state established by the will of the people of the country. For instance, on page 18 grade five CEE textbook portrayed the political map of Ethiopia with its nine ethnic regions and city administrations. The textbooks depict Ethiopia as the union of nine self-governing states (regions) and two city administrations where students are expected to identify with. Further on page 26, they also portrayed the political map of Ethiopia as a home of different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples living on the basis of equality.

But as clearly described in Grade six CEE textbooks, the spatial dimension of Ethiopian identity appears to be deemphasized in the current Ethiopian political context. The textbooks clearly indicated that “Appreciation of one’s geographical boundary is not the only manifestation of patriotism” (p. 44). In the new nation-building process, Ethiopian patriotism is symbolized in the textbooks by respecting the right of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples in the fullest manner, respecting the national flag and national anthem, obeying the rule of law, knowing the country’s history, learning courageously and working hard as well as protection of common property and environment, pride in the country’s history, fighting and eradicating poverty, opposing destructive acts, voluntarism, etc. (pp. 45-57).

Furthermore, on grade seven CEE textbooks patriotism was first presented by a case study entitled “*History of a Country*” where students invited a historian to give them explanation about the history of their country. The topic given to the historian for explanation was

“*Developing Modern Patriotism*”. In giving explanations to the question: ‘How can we classify patriotism into modern and traditional types?’ the teacher replied that:

Patriotism in previous regimes did not focus on the culture, language, history and belief of peoples. Rather it was related to the topography of the country, the rivers, mountains, plants, etc. Modern patriotism is aimed at correcting the one-dimensional traditional patriotism and developing a patriotic feeling that focuses on nations, nationalities and peoples (p. 54).

The commitment of the Ethiopian people for sovereignty and territorial integrity have been found in grade eight CEE textbooks as stated hereunder:

Historically, all peoples of Ethiopia have not tolerated invasions which have come against their territorial integrity and sovereignty even in the event of unequal treatment by past political systems (p. 50).

Generally, the Ethiopian upper primary Social Studies and CEE textbooks attempted to instill in the students’ values and beliefs only a slight attachment to the historically common territory of the Ethiopian political community. The Social Studies textbooks described the relative location of present day Ethiopia without reference to the historical origin and evolution of its internationally recognized – at least on a map – geographical territory.

4.4.3.2. Common laws and institutions

It is firmly established in the literature that identification with and attachment to the common laws and institutions of a country are one of the manifestations of civic identity. This content category of Ethiopian identity was relatively dealt with in the CEE textbooks. Accordingly, the findings of content analysis of upper primary education textbooks presented hereunder concentrate on the CEE textbooks only.

In unit one of grade five CEE textbooks students were introduced to some of the common modern institutions of justice around them such as Kebele Administration, Police Stations and Supreme Courts as instruments of peace and security. On unit two, under a heading called “*Rule of Law*”, students were introduced to the meaning and necessity of constitution. Constitution was defined in the textbooks as “a basic document which states a country’s economic, political and social principles” (p. 13). Students were also introduced

to the FDRE Constitution and the constitutions of regional states. The FDRE Constitution is presented as the highest law of the land and thus it is the basis for the formulation of the regional governments' constitutions and other laws and regulations of the country. The Constitution was also presented as an essential instrument which enables citizens and to enjoy their rights and discharge their responsibilities. The textbooks diagrammatically portrayed the Federal Constitution as encircled by the constitutions of the regional states. The FDRE Constitution as a source of the equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples was presented in unit three of the textbooks.

Issues related to the FDRE Constitution and Regional States constitutions were slightly touched from grade six upto grade eight of the CEE textbooks. However, the common institutions expected to develop a sense of attachment and belongingness among students were, relatively, treated in significant details under grade eight CEE textbooks. In unit one of the textbooks, governmental institutions such as Courts, Police Station, Ombudsperson, Human Rights Commission and Media; and non-governmental institutions such as international civic organizations, local civic organizations and private mass-media working in Ethiopia were listed and described as the common institutions used to promote the human and democratic rights of citizens. In addition to this, the textbooks introduced students to the Federal Ethical and Anti-Corruption Commission and the Ethiopian House of Federation.

4.4.3.3. Legal equality of citizens

The assumption behind this content category of Ethiopian identity was that students would develop a sense of belongingness and identification with their country when they feel equal citizens of this country. Such content category of Ethiopian identity defined to guide textbook analysis was characteristically found in CEE textbooks. Unit two and unit three of both sets of CEE textbooks were devoted to this content category of Ethiopian identity. Grade six CEE textbooks define equality as it “refers to how nations, nationalities, peoples and citizens equally benefit within their country, free from any partiality and discrimination” (p.23).

On unit two, both sets of the textbooks discussed the necessity of the rule of law. Accordingly, they tried to underline on the equality of all citizens before the law. Obeying to the rule of law and equality before the law were considered as a necessary means of mutual co-existence. On unit three, the textbooks largely concentrated on group equality. Accordingly, the equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, equality of languages, the equality of cultures and religious equality, gender equality and equality of the disabled were presented. For instance, under the equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples grade seven CEE textbooks maintained that:

The nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia established the federal state through their agreement on the importance of equality. To achieve this they have adopted the constitution as a common binding covenant. As their right to equality respected, Ethiopia has become their country of equity and common homeland (p. 30).

In addition to legal equality of citizens, as individuals and groups, the equality of opportunity was presented in grade eight CEE textbooks. For instance, on the equality of opportunity of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia, grade eight CEE textbooks stated that:

The equality of opportunities of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples on their country's natural resources creates national consensus. It also encourages working together for common progress. When development is achieved; peace, unity and progress becomes real in place of war, fragmentation and backwardness respectively (p. 26).

To sum up, both sets of textbooks gave significant coverage to the constitutionally guaranteed legal equality of citizens. However, overall the textbooks devoted much of their volumes for group equality over individual equality. That is, the equality of nations, nationalities and peoples received much more coverage and/ or attention than the equality of individual citizens. This might emerge from the ideological orientation of the current political discourse – the EPRDF's Revolutionary Democracy – in the country.

4.4.3.4. Common legal rights and duties

Grade five CEE textbooks define citizenship as “a legal membership of a given country” (p. 62). If citizenship is understood as a legal contract between a citizen and the state, all citizens of the country need to be governed by common laws and rules of the state. Such

common laws and rules accompanying legal membership, in turn, bring with them clearly defined legal rights and duties. The textbooks maintained that as democracy began to take root in Ethiopia all legal citizens of this country have been enjoying their rights and while at the same time discharging their responsibilities. They treated citizenship rights and responsibilities as two sides of a coin.

In unit one of grade five CEE textbooks, students were introduced to the concepts of democratic and human rights and further elaborated by bringing them into the Ethiopian context in the succeeding grade levels. Human rights are defined as natural and inalienable rights acquired by virtue of humanity while democratic rights are those given to individuals or groups for being citizens of a country which enable overall participation in their country's affairs. For instance, in grade six CEE textbooks, democratic rights were defined to include the right to express one's ideas, to form associations, participate in peaceful demonstrations, to elect their representatives and to be elected. On the other hand, the right to life and physical security were presented as manifestations of human rights. The textbooks presented human and democratic rights as essential requirements to live in harmony, accomplish tasks peacefully and create a society free from oppression (p. 4).

Grade seven CEE textbooks presented a more comprehensive list of democratic rights in the context of the 1995 FDRE Constitution as stated hereunder:

In the democratic system that our country is following, the democratic and human rights of citizens are respected. For example, the rights for freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, holding demonstrations, petition and popular sovereignty and self-administration are some of the democratic rights constitutionally granted in Ethiopia (p. 60).

In terms of the list of human and democratic rights treated in the textbooks, the right to equality of all citizens before the law was dealt with in unit two of grade five CEE textbooks. In unit one of grade six CEE textbooks, the right to speak, write and develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history as a manifestation of group equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia – as clearly stated in Article 39(2) of the FDRE Constitution – were highlighted. Citizens' right to justice or the right to get fair or balanced decision on a case was underlined in unit four of both sets of the textbooks. For instance, grade six CEE textbooks stated that: “Citizens

have the right to justice. The FDRE Constitution guarantees citizens to equal and fair treatment. For instance, citizens have the right to fairly benefit from social services” (p. 35).

Another citizenship right described by the textbooks and communicated to students was the right to work. The textbooks asserted that in Ethiopia there is a constitutional right to work. “If a person is deprived of the right to work, it amounts to deprivation of the right to life. This is because the right to live and work is basic rights of human beings” (p. 85).

In parallel to citizenship rights, the textbooks devoted a significant proportion of their volume for individual and collective citizenship duties. For instance, in grade five students were introduced to some ethical responsibilities such as respect for mother and father, respect for elders, keeping their personal hygiene, studying hard, doing their homework properly, respecting their teachers, and keeping secrets. They also exposed students to the values of honesty, loyalty and integrity as best qualities of good citizenship which would enable them to discharge their responsibilities. Furthermore, fighting corruption, saying no to injustices, protection of common properties, giving humanitarian services, protection and preservation of historical heritages, avoiding extravagant practices, active community participation, and fighting poverty and backwardness by developing hardworking culture were presented in grade five CEE textbooks as some of the responsibilities students are expected discharge.

Grade five CEE textbooks have tried to summarize citizenship duties communicated to students by using the frequently cited saying of the former American president, [John F. Kennedy](#), in relation to citizenship duties “Rather than asking what my country has done for me, it is better to say what I have done to my country” (p. 63).

With regard to citizenship responsibility to fight unjust practices, grade six CEE textbooks maintained that:

...sometimes people perform unequal treatment based on language, religion, ethnicity, gender and political views. Evil acts that are based on abuse of power are unjust acts. In this case, it is the duty of all citizens to say “No” to unjust practices. The textbook portrays the

picture of Nelson Mandela as a symbol of struggle against injustice (p. 35).

Grade six CEE textbooks added taxation as another citizenship duty. The textbooks explained the significance of taxation for the common good of the society and hence “citizens have to know that paying tax is a citizen’s duty and citizens have to give their exact income amount to the concerned body honestly and truly” (p. 38). The textbooks portrayed the picture of a tax collection center with a caption: “Paying tax is the citizen’s duty”.

Being a patriot was another citizenship duty communicated to students by all sets of upper primary CEE textbooks. In grade five CEE textbooks, attributes expected from a patriotic citizen include: (1) *feeling proud of the historical legacy of our country and working hard for its development*; (2) *contributing something for people*; (3) *avoiding practices that will damage the nation*; (4) *respecting others language, culture, belief and opinion; promoting toleration and peaceful co-existence*; and (5) *putting all efforts together and work hard in order to reach to the level of industrialized countries* (pp. 57-58). Being self-reliant or self-sufficient was treated in the textbooks as a basic attribute of good citizenship communicated to and expected from students.

More specifically, in grade six CEE textbooks, such attributes of patriotic citizens as respecting the right of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples in the fullest manner, obeying the rule of law, knowing the country’s history, learning courageously and working hard, protection of common property and environment, pride in the country’s history, fighting and eradicating poverty, opposing destructive acts, voluntarism, respecting the national flag and national anthem were added to the responsibilities that should be fulfilled by every citizen of the country.

Similarly, in grade seven CEE textbooks discharging responsibilities and doing exemplary deeds were considered as some of the manifestations of modern patriotism. However, here the textbooks heavily underlined the unjust and biased nature of Ethiopian history which gave more space to its leaders at the expense of the history of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. Therefore, the textbooks maintained that it is the duty of patriotic citizens to

challenge the history books of Ethiopia written during the previous regimes and rewrite them to reflect “the true history of the people in the new process of building a democratic system” (p. 55).

Both sets of the CEE textbooks underscored the point that citizenship rights and duties are the basis for the survival and/or success of the Federal state structure. This is clearly described in grade eight CEE textbooks as stated hereunder:

Citizens are the beauty of a country. If human and democratic rights of citizens are respected, they will be proud of and encouraged to carry-out their citizenship duties. This in turn has great contribution to develop patriotic sentiment of a person. If citizenship rights are not respected, a patriotic sentiment cannot develop. A person inferior to his/her citizenship status has no rest and satisfaction at all. He/she cannot be an active participant in the attempt to avoid poverty (pp. 55-56).

To sum up, upper primary CEE textbooks of the country analysed by the dissertation gave greater emphasis to citizenship duties over rights. Although citizenship rights found dispersed here and there, the last seven units of the textbooks – such as patriotism, responsibility, industriousness, self-reliance, saving, active community participation and pursuit of wisdom – were largely constructed to emphasize citizenship duties. Even in the first four units of the textbooks, such as building *democratic system, rule of law, equality and justice*, a significant proportion of their volume was devoted to citizenship duties. The other point is that with the intention to emphasize citizenship duties over rights, grade five CEE textbook also presented the commonly cited saying of the former American president [John F. Kennedy](#) “Rather than asking what my country has done for me, it is better to say what I have done to my country” (p. 63). The same quote was also presented on page 59 of grade seven CEE textbook. As to the citizenship duties, textbooks appear to reinforce the message that no citizen of this country can remain indifferent to any national issues. To be a patriot was presented as a citizenship duty so that the youth can take part in the country’s issues. If not, the rights and privileges of citizens can be overridden by the few.

4.4.3.5. Popular sovereignty

Conceptually, Ethiopian identity was defined in terms of identification with and belonging or attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Thus, the way this

political and cultural community treated by the textbooks could have significant impact on cultivating a sense of identification with and attachment to it among students. In the context of the FDRE Constitution and CEE and Social Studies textbooks, popular sovereignty has been interpreted in terms of the Nations, Nationalities Peoples of Ethiopia. Accordingly, content analysis was made to assess the place Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia in CEE and Social Studies textbooks. The fact is that this issue was significantly dealt with in CEE textbooks.

One of the basic principles of the FDRE Constitution has been the sovereignty of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. Both sets of CEE textbooks have attempted to give space for popular sovereignty. For instance, grade five CEE textbooks stated the constitutionally guaranteed sovereignty of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia as stated: “Ethiopia has its own constitution, which declares federal form of government. It also declares the supreme authority of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia (p. 13). Furthermore, the constitution was presented as an expression of the sovereignty of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia.

However, popular sovereignty was discussed in, relatively, better details in grade seven CEE textbooks. In these textbooks, popular sovereignty was conceptualized as follows:

Popular sovereignty implies that the people of a given country are sources and owners of all power. Political power emanates from them and resides in their hands. When the people have full rights of self-determination to elect their representatives and to depose public officials at their will, one can say there is popular sovereignty. The realization of popular sovereignty is the base for respecting all democratic and human rights (p. 6).

The textbooks maintained that the sources of all power in Ethiopia are the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. They go on to narrate that as ultimate political power resides in the people elected officials are given their power by the citizens of the country and are accountable to them. Grade eight CEE textbooks also presented the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia as the ultimate possessors of power in the country. On page 26, the textbooks stated that respecting the rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia is equal to respecting all types of rights of all citizens of the country.

To sum up, the FDRE constitution as an expression of the supreme authority of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia was frequently cited in many pages of the CEE textbooks. In both sets of CEE textbooks, respecting the equality and supreme authority of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia was presented as an expression of modern Ethiopian patriotism.

4.4.3.6. Constitutional supremacy

The literature suggests that the constitution symbolizes the minimum pledge by which a given political community agreed to live as a nation. By extension, the dissertation attempted to examine CEE and Social Studies textbooks for their treatment of the FDRE Constitution. In this regard, it is CEE textbooks which gave space to this content category of Ethiopian identity. Accordingly, grade five CEE textbooks characterize constitutions as:

Constitution is a basic document which states a country's economic, political and social principles. In other words, a constitution states basic rights and freedom of the people. It is the highest law of a country and the source of all other laws of the nation. All laws and procedures have to conform to a constitution of a country (p. 13).

After conceptualizing the term constitution, grade five CEE textbooks underlined the supremacy of both the Federal and Regional Governments constitutions. They maintained that Ethiopia has a Federal Constitution which serves as the supreme law of the country which enables citizens to enjoy their rights and discharge their responsibilities. As such, other laws, rules and regulations of the country are formulated on the basis of the Federal Constitution. In addition to the Federal Constitution, the textbooks narrated the presence of regional governments' constitutions which declared their right to self-administration. On grade six, the textbooks attempted to differentiate the boundary of the Federal Constitution and the regional governments' constitutions.

Grade seven CEE textbooks further consolidate the significance of the rule of law and constitutionalism. They communicated the message that law is an important instrument for the Ethiopian people to live together on the basis of tolerance and mutual understanding. By extension, the Constitution, which is treated in the textbooks as the highest law of the country and the source of all other laws of the country, can enhance unity and solidarity

among the Ethiopian political community. The same message was presented in grade eight CEE textbooks.

4.4.3.7. Common economy

The literature suggests that a political community would remain stable and united when it builds a common economy. As clearly stated in the Preamble of the 1995 FDRE Constitution, building one economic community has been taken as an expression of the common destiny of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. The Constitution stipulates that the new nation-building process has focused on ensuring common economic beneficiary and belonging among citizens of the country. Accordingly, economic community as an element of national identity may be conceptualized as how strongly Nations, Nationalities and Peoples feel belonging to economic infrastructures and projects found anywhere in their country. More specifically, it is about whether the mega-projects, economic infrastructures and natural resources found in one ethnic region of Ethiopia equally felt belonging to all by Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia in other regions. Accordingly, upper primary CEE and Social Studies textbooks were examined for their treatment of this content category of Ethiopian identity.

To begin with, probably the most thinly treated component of the content categories of Ethiopian identity may be the issue of common economy. In the CEE textbooks, almost no economic infrastructure or mega economic project was treated as equally meant to all citizens of the country. In Social Studies textbooks, the Ethiopian Airlines as it connects African capital cities and the capital cities of other African and the world's countries with Finfinee (Addis Ababa) was presented. Furthermore, in line with the efficiency the Ethiopian Airlines, grade seven Social Studies textbooks of Oromiya Region and Amhara Region stated that: "Ethiopian Airlines is one of the well-known and most famous airlines in Africa in terms of quality of service delivery and number of international and African destinations as well as in connecting African countries" (p. 42).

Social Studies textbooks of Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions also treated national parks and endemic mammals as commonly belonging to all Ethiopians. For instance, Oromiya Region grade five Social Studies textbooks maintained that: "Ethiopia has a very

rich wild life resource. Seven species of mammals are endemic to Ethiopia. Walia Ibex, Mountain Nyala, Gelada Baboon, and Semien Fox are the endemic mammals found only in Ethiopia” (p. 65).

Similarly, the Amhara Region grade five Social Studies textbooks described in detail the location, impressive topography, economic potential as well as the endemic mammals of Semien Mountains National Park. This was followed by a more detailed treatment of national parks in Ethiopia as stated below:

In Ethiopia, there are many national parks. They are dependable tourist attractions. Along with national parks, there are sanctuaries where animals and birds are highly protected. There are nine national parks in Ethiopia: Semien Mountains National Park, Abijatta-Shalla Lakes National Park, Awash National Park, Bale Mountains National Park, Gambella National Park, Mago National Park, Nechisar National Park, Omo National Park, and Yangudi-Rassa National Park (p. 67).

Tigray Region grade five Social Studies textbook also presented the names, specific locations and pictures of all the endemic mammals of Ethiopia (pp. 95-96). In grade six of the same textbook, Semien Mountains National Park and Bale Mountains National Park with their respective endemic mammals were presented (p. 84). Tigray Region grade eight Social Studies textbook added another economic project into the above stated economic infrastructure. The textbook discusses the potential of the waterfalls of the country for hydroelectric power generation and then it asked students to identify on which river the *Renaissance Dam* is being constructed (p. 126).

Even in CEE textbooks, the issue was only vaguely and thinly described. Grade five CEE textbooks described understanding, supporting and implementing the development policies of the FDRE Government as a citizenship duty and as an expression of modern Ethiopian patriotism. Agriculture lead industrialization and free market economy policies and strategies were expected to be supported by citizens of this country. More specifically, the textbooks stated:

The government of Ethiopia has created policies and strategies. To eradicate poverty in our country, it is the duty and responsibility of every citizen to learn and follow these strategies and policies for development and then to implement them in order to eradicate poverty. Citizens must work hard and bring development (p. 51).

Yet, as clearly stated in grade seven CEE textbooks students were encouraged not to blindly absorb and/ support government policies and strategies but most importantly to critically examine and suggest possible improvements on such policies and strategies. In line with this, the textbooks maintained that: “It is the responsibility of every citizen who claims to be patriotic to play his or her part in the eradication of poverty once and for all. For this, one has to examine development policies and strategies of the country and suggest improvements” (p. 58).

To sum up, the issue common economy as a possible content category of Ethiopian identity looks to be poorly treated by both Social Studies and CEE textbooks. In the Social Studies textbooks of Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions, Ethiopian Airlines, National Parks and their endemic mammals were treated to assume common economy. The Tigray Region textbooks added the Renaissance Dam into this content category of Ethiopian identity.

4.4.4. Self-imaginations

The way a political community imagines or defines itself is an important constituent of its identity. In the same vein, Social Studies textbooks portrayal of the Ethiopian political and cultural community’s self-imagination was assessed and the findings indicate that overall *heroism* and *religious tolerance* were the two main attributes emphasized in all textbooks of the three ethnic regions. First, we shall see the place of ‘*heroism*’ in Social Studies textbooks as symbolizing the Ethiopian political and cultural community. The textbooks portray Ethiopia as a sovereign country and this sovereignty is the result of the heroic struggle the country’s Nations, Nationalities and Peoples have made throughout its history and this was often symbolized by the Adwa Victory. For instance, Oromiya Region grade five Social Studies textbook stated that “While Africa [was] occupied by the European colonial powers, Ethiopia was an independent country” (p. 32).

Similarly, the Amhara Region grade five Social Studies textbook maintained that Ethiopians were the only people to keep their independence (p. 18). In the same vein, the Tigray Region grade five Social Studies textbook also amplified Ethiopia’s historical sovereignty, national pride and international recognition as symbolized by the Adwa Victory (p. 46). The textbooks further asserted that many Africans saw Ethiopia as a

symbol of their independence and this is verified by the fact that the offices of African Union and other organizations were founded in Ethiopia. Grade eight Social Studies textbooks of the three ethnic regions also gave significant coverage to the issue of Ethiopian 'heroism'.

As to '*religious tolerance*', Social Studies textbooks of the Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions have attempted to generally address the issue of accommodation of diversity. They treated Ethiopia as a nation of nations and nationalities and they displayed the pictures of the different nations and nationalities of Ethiopia with their unique cultural traits. But most importantly, Social Studies textbooks of the three ethnic regions gave particular emphasis to the issue of '*religious tolerance*'. They put forward that in Ethiopia '*religious tolerance*' was evident since the introduction of Islam in Ethiopia. The textbooks asserted that the introduction of Islam into regions and countries of the world was not welcomed by other religious societies and governments and it was only in Ethiopia that Islam had been peacefully introduced. They justified this claim by the fact that Nebyu Mohamed has prohibited Islamic jihad on Ethiopia (p. 14). The full story can be found in Tigray Region grade five Social Studies textbook as stated:

While it [Islam] was expanded to the rest of the world violently through jihad, Islam entered into Ethiopia peacefully. The Prophet sent some of the Muslims to Aksum. The Aksumite king gave them shelter and food. The rulers of Mecca tried to take back the Muslims and punish them. They sent their messengers with a load of gold as a present to the Aksumite king. But, the Aksumite king did not accept the present nor did hand over the Muslims to the rulers of Mecca. The Muslims felt very happy with the decision of the king. They lived in happiness with Christians of Ethiopia until they returned to Mecca. Thus Prophet Mohammed prohibited jihad against Ethiopia. From this time onwards, the religion of Islam spread in Ethiopia (p. 17).

This same story was told and retold in Oromiya and Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks. A more or less similar discourse on the historical continuity of the peaceful co-existence of Christianity and Islam in Ethiopia can be found in Amhara Region grade five Social Studies textbook as follows:

The Zagwe rulers had friendly relations with both Christian and Muslim states of the world. But the Zagwe period was the time when Muslims and Christians were at war. However, the Zagwe rulers did not take part

in the war. They had good relations with both sides. At that time a Muslim ruler at Jerusalem gave a piece of land to the Ethiopian Christians so that they could build a Church. This is another indication that Muslims and Christians in Ethiopia co-existed in peace at that time (p. 8).

The textbooks also tried to explain the peaceful co-existence among followers of Christianity and Islam today as manifested – among other things – through respecting one another, inviting one another during religious holidays, sharing foods and exchanging well-wishes. They treated this religious tolerance or co-existence as a very fascinating aspect of the culture of the Ethiopian people. Finally, the textbooks presented the task of preserving and strengthening such traditions of religious tolerance as a citizenship duty. The textbooks maintained religious diversity in the names of places and persons, religious holidays and religious sites in almost all the case studies and examples used to further enhance a topic.

As to CEE textbooks, it appears plausible to begin with the following quote taken from grade six CEE textbooks which give an insight to understanding the historical continuity of *religious tolerance* in Ethiopia: “Everybody is expected to co-operate and live in peace. Our country has a long history in respect of peaceful co-existence of various religions. This will continue in the future as well” (p. 29).

On page 7 of grade seven CEE textbooks, the pictures of Christian and Muslim students studying in pairs were portrayed. This was also supported by a case study illustrating how a close friendship among two Christian and two Muslim students started in a school compound extends to familial ties. This case study appears to emphasize ‘*religious tolerance*’.

Grade five CEE textbooks further illuminated on the current emphasis to build some commonly shared values and cultures which can be transferred to the coming generations as stated in the quotation below:

One of the attributes of democracy is the equality of culture. All Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia have the right to use and promote their own culture, language and history. The culture of any nationality should be respected by other peoples of nationality. The unity based on equality and mutual interest can enable us to build common cultural and

historical values, which can be transferred to the coming generation (pp. 32-33).

Identities have an ethical dimension because a person judges things as good or bad, right or wrong, and worthy or worthless in the context of his/her society. As such, grade five CEE textbooks exposed students to such ethical values as *respect for mother and father, respect for elders, keeping secrets, faithfulness, keeping promise, and honesty, loyalty and integrity*. Grade seven CEE textbooks also added such ethical values as giving up seats for elders and helping the needy. Grade eight CEE textbooks stated that “different languages, beliefs and cultures coexist through tolerating one another. So, tolerance is another ethic that is expected from students “(p. 15). Generally, on the values commonly shared by the Ethiopian people grade seven CEE textbooks stated that:

Some of the positive values shared by societies in our country include sociability, eating together, cooperating during joy and sorrow, helping the needy, mutual respect and respecting older people. Our society needs students to accept and apply these values. Students need to be committed and responsible citizens, furthermore, they need to respect work, love their country and people and respect the rights of others. Therefore, they are expected to follow and preserve these and other moral values (p. 28).

With regard to *heroism* (and national pride), grade seven CEE textbooks gave greater emphasis to Ethiopia’s contribution to the anti-colonial struggles in Africa and in international peace-keeping operations. They maintained that:

Ethiopia was...a model for the independence of African countries from colonialism. Moreover, the country contributed to the anti-colonial struggle of Africa by giving military training for freedom fighters and contributing soldiers and deciding immigration and asylum issues. Ethiopia contributed a lot to maintain peace in the continent of Africa. Ethiopia’s involvement in peacekeeping activities began in the Korean war of 1950’s where it accomplished a mission that became a pride for Africans. Its large-scale involvement in peacekeeping mission in the continent (Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Liberia under the UN peace-keeping mission) is an indicator of the country’s international recognition and commitment for the peace of Africa (p. 11).

On page 57, grade eight CEE textbooks underlined on the historical roots of heroism in Ethiopia “When we trace our history, our people have sacrificed in various battle fronts to maintain the sovereignty for the respect of national flags and to the love of state”. They

maintained that historically, all peoples of Ethiopia have not tolerated invasions which have come against their territorial integrity and sovereignty even in the event of unequal treatment by past political systems. Furthermore, with the intention to recite Ethiopian *heroism*, the processes and significance of the Adwa Victory was presented as a discussion exercise for students.

4.4.5. The interface between ethnic identity and national identity

In multicultural countries, like Ethiopia, accommodation of diversity has become an essential component of unity in diversity. Accordingly, the way textbooks treat the diversity that each Ethiopian citizen lives with has an implication for the unity and continuity of the nation. Thus, for the sake of understanding textbooks depiction of the diversities that Ethiopians live with – as co-existing or conflicting – the Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions Social Studies textbooks were examined. Both sets of the Social Studies textbooks in Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions define Ethiopia as a multiethnic, multi-religious, multi-linguistic and multicultural country. The textbooks treat Ethiopia as a nation of nations and they displayed the pictures of the different nations and nationalities of Ethiopia with their unique cultural traits.

They also tried to maintain diversity in the examples and case studies presented to students in terms of places and person's names, cultural traits, religious and gender characteristics. The textbooks also underlined the equality of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia as groups and as individual citizens. Moreover, they applaud the universality of citizenship rights and duties.

In the context of the Ethiopian education system curriculum, Social Studies have been understood as a combination of history and geography disciplines. But yet the largest proportion of the textbooks was devoted to geographical aspects with a slight touch on the history of Ethiopia, the Horn, the Eastern Africa Region, the African continent and then the world at large. As a result of such orientation of the textbooks, with the exception of religious tolerance presented above the issues of diversity in the Ethiopian context and/or the interface between ethnic and Ethiopian identity were not discussed in sufficient details.

As to the CEE textbooks treatment of the interface between ethnic and Ethiopian identity, they provide relatively sufficient coverage than the Social Studies textbooks. On unit one of grade five CEE textbooks, the picture of the various Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia was displayed. This was followed by the conceptualization of diversity and the necessity of ‘unity in diversity’ as follows:

Diversity refers to difference in colour of skin, age, sex, height, competence and it generally indicates that no person is totally similar to another. As there are many things that make us similar, there are also lots of things that make us different. But the basic thing to understand is that our similarities are dominant than our differences. The other important point is that diversity is natural and inevitable—we cannot avoid it. And our diversity is our beauty and this makes life interesting (p. 4).

The above quotation embodies not only the meaning but also the nature and significance of diversity which could enhance students’ understanding and appreciation of their differences. It appears to give significant emphasis for the necessity of ‘unity in diversity’ by capitalizing on the similarities the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia have over their differences. The textbooks underscored on the necessity of the values of tolerance and understanding to accommodate differences and for peaceful co-existence.

Unit three of the textbooks, further illuminated on the issues of accommodation of diversity in the Ethiopian context. Here, the textbooks underlined on the equality of all the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia as stated:

Ethiopia is a Nation of nations encompassing above 80 different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. On the basis of the Constitution, none of them is superior to another; all have equal right. For example, they have the right to self-administration, use their own language, promote their culture [and history], practice their religion, etc (pp. 26-27).

In addition to the attributes of equality inscribed in the quotation above, the textbooks further underlined on the right of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to equal access to education, equal job opportunity, gender equality as well as equality of the disabled persons. Here the textbooks gave greater emphasis for group rights. On the equality of all the languages of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, grade five CEE textbooks stated that:

As a means of communication all languages of Ethiopia are equal; no language is superior to any other language. There is no major or minor language. All languages are manifestations of that language user people's identity and the reflection of their culture. The right to use one's language is constitutionally guaranteed. The right to use one's language includes the right to speak or write and promote as well as using the language as a medium of instruction in the education system (p. 27).

Similarly on the equality of all the cultures of the different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia, the textbooks maintained that “There are diversifications of cultures in Ethiopia, which are different from place to place. No culture is superior to or inferior to any other culture“ (p. 32).

Grade five CEE textbooks also underlined the idea that Ethiopia has belonged to the different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples without any discrimination as stated:

The sovereign and internationally recognized state of Ethiopia is equally the home of all different Nations, Nationalities and peoples of the nation. As a result of these factors, Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia are living together with love, tolerance, mutual understanding and respecting one another (p. 56).

Grade six CEE textbooks underlined the message that building a democratic system is an essential requirement to accommodate differences and develop a culture of tolerance. Ethiopia is on the road to building a democratic system and as such the languages, history, cultures and religions of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples have got recognition and respect. They also capitalized on the naturalness of the various identity sets, including social identities. The textbooks contended that “People living in a democratic system believe that the differences that exist in religion, language, nation, nationalities and other social identities are natural” (p. 5).

On page six of grade six CEE textbooks, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia were symbolized by a picture depicting a tree with its several branches as the several branches of the tree representing the different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and the trunk of the tree signify their common country. This was followed by description of Ethiopia as a land of diversity where its people have different language, religion and other cultural values that they are proud of. The textbooks further asserted that:

Because of its diverse cultures, Ethiopia is said to be a museum of nations, nationalities and peoples. This is source of values for citizens. So, we have to preserve these great values of our country. In order to preserve this gift of nature, we should avoid hatred and conflicts by respecting each other. The Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia have recognized the existence of unity with difference (p. 6).

On unit three, the textbooks maintained that in Ethiopia Nations, Nationalities and Peoples are living cooperatively. To make their unity long lasting it is essential to respect their culture, values and dignity. This means that there should be no partiality with regard to their language, religion as well as other cultural features so as to secure peace and stability (p. 29).

On unit one of grade seven CEE textbooks the rights of minority groups was highlighted as a means to accommodate diversity in Ethiopia. On unit three, they portrayed the pictures of the different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia placed within the Map of Ethiopia in the same way as they depicted in their cover pages. On unit five of grade seven CEE textbooks, understanding and respecting the languages, cultures and histories of the different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia was presented as a manifestation of modern Ethiopian patriotism expected from students.

Grade eight CEE textbooks further consolidate the issues of accommodating diversity in Ethiopia already discussed in the earlier grade levels. On page 27, the textbooks depicted the map of Ethiopia embodying the pictures of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. They underscored the message that the existence of diverse languages and cultures in Ethiopia should be taken as a resource or beauty rather than as a problem or challenge to the unity of the country.

To sum up, the CEE textbooks appear to emphasize the point that respecting and tolerating diversity will help Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia to live in peace and harmony and with all humanity as well. They generally appear to emphasize group rights over individual rights. For instance, grade eight CEE textbooks stated that “Recognizing and respecting the rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples is equal to respecting all types of rights of citizens” (p. 26). The CEE textbooks maintain diversity in place names,

person's names, religious affiliation, etc. in many of the examples and cases used for further illustration. For instance, there are place and persons names from many ethnic and religious groups and places of the country. As such the textbooks seek to reinforce a positive interface between ethnic and Ethiopian identity.

4.5. Textbook Portrayal of Ethiopian Identity in Amhara Region

4.5.1. Introduction

As per the 1995 FDRE Constitution, Amhara Region is one of the nine ethnic regions of Ethiopia. The Region stands second in terms of population size next to Oromiya region and third in terms of total geographical size after Oromiya and Somali regions. According to the 2007 Population and Housing Census results, Amhara Region constitutes 23.3 percent of the total population of the country. By extension, the Region constitutes almost one-fourth of the total population of Ethiopia. In terms of the total percentage share of total surface area, Amhara region makes up 14.55 percent of the total geographical area of the country.

With regard to the percentage share of the Amhara Region in the country's total school system, it is better to resort to the Ethiopian MOE annual education statistics report. According to this report ([MOE, 2015](#)), the Amhara Region constitutes the second largest proportion of the country's school system next to Oromiya Region both in terms of the total number of primary and secondary schools and student populations. In the year 2014, the Region has a total student population of [4,585,688](#), of which [4,086,650](#) was enrolled in its primary schools and the rest [499,038](#) was enrolled in the federal secondary school system. As per the 1995 FDRE Constitution and the 1994 ETP, the overall management, teacher's training, financing, language of instruction and textbook production have been given to the Region.

This section of the dissertation was intended to see the regional variation in the depiction of some attributes of Ethiopian identity by Social Studies and CEE textbooks through content analysis. As such, before directly proceeding to present the findings of content analysis of the selected textbooks it appears better to give some hint to the context of textbook production in Amhara Region. Such approach could help us to know who and how

textbooks were produced and hence understand the context under which the dominant messages communicated through textbooks.

To begin with, the Amhara Region Social Studies and CEE textbooks were published by the Federal Ministry of Education. More than any other regions' textbooks, the Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks reflect more resemblance with the centrally produced textbooks. The authors and evaluators of the Region's Social Studies textbooks were more or less the same with those textbooks produced by the MOE. Furthermore, the Amhara Region Social Studies and CEE textbooks have equal number of chapters with similar content areas with the Oromiya and Tigray regions textbooks. However, Social studies textbooks of the Region appear to reflect some variation in terms of the specific content categories of Ethiopian identity and thus a separate treatment of the content analysis findings are presented hereunder.

4.5.2. Textbook portrayal of political and historico-cultural symbols

As clearly indicated in the previous sections of the dissertation, this content category of Ethiopian identity was presumed to include national flag and national anthem, national heroes/heroines, national holidays, and historico-cultural symbols. To this effect, Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks were examined for their treatment of these political and historico-cultural symbols and the findings are described below.

4.5.2.1. National flag and national anthem

Among the political symbols representing the identity of nations of the world, the national flag and anthem probably appear in the forefront of any other national symbols. Accordingly, with the intent to understand curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity, Amhara Region Social Studies and CEE textbooks were examined for their portrayal of the Ethiopian national flag and anthem.

Accordingly, all sets of Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks portrayed the Ethiopian national flag in their top center of the outer cover page and in their inside cover page. There was nothing said about the national flag and national anthem in the main body of all sets of Social Studies textbooks. Furthermore, the textbooks depicted and mentioned nothing

about the Regional flag and anthem at all. The Amhara Region CEE textbooks portrayal and treatment of the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem as well as the regional flags was, more or less, the same to the Oromiya and Tigray regions CEE textbooks.

4.5.2.2. National heroes/heroines

It is not uncommon to symbolize the identity of nations through its heroes and heroines. In this case, the Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks were examined for their portrayal and treatment of such heroes and heroines. Accordingly, grade five Social Studies textbook depicted six heroes and one heroine. The first hero treated by the textbook was *Doctor Yohannes Zeresenay*. He was treated as a famous Ethiopian archaeologist and scientist who discovered a fossil named Selam in Afar Region of Ethiopia. *Emir Nur Mujahid* was the second hero portrayed in the textbook for building a stone wall commonly called, Jegol Ghinb, in the old city of Harar. His treatment by the textbook lacks connection with the Ethiopian political and cultural community and as such it appears to represent ethnic or religious identity. The third and fourth heroes treated in the textbook were Kawo Tona (the last ruler of Walayta) and Tato Gaki Shrecho (the last ruler of Kaffa). The achievements of these heroes did not appear in the textbook. They were treated in the textbook to denote ethnic identity.

The fifth hero treated by grade five Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks was Emperor Menelik II. In relation to the Emperor, the textbook stated that: “The nineteenth and twentieth centuries had important contributions to the history of the peoples of Ethiopia. During these times, three main events took place in Ethiopia: unification, victory over foreign invasion and modernization” (p. 18).

In the light of these developments, the textbook portrays Emperor Menelik as a national or Ethiopian hero. The sixth hero described in the textbook was Emperor Haile Selassie I and he was treated by the textbooks as a national or Ethiopian hero for the continuation of modernization attempts began by his predecessors. For instance, the textbook praised him, among other things, for the beginning of the first electric service and modern military training centers in Ethiopia. Empress Taytu was the last (and the only) heroine portrayed in

the textbook. The textbook described Etege Taytu as a heroine for establishing the first hotel named after her and the development of tourism in Ethiopia.

No hero/heroine was presented in Amhara Region grade six Social Studies textbooks. In grade seven Social Studies textbook only *Emperor Menelik II* and *Etege Taytu* were presented as Ethiopian heroes. Both Emperor Menelik II and Etege Taytu have been portrayed in the textbook as Ethiopian heroes and heroines respectively in relation to the establishment of Addis Ababa as a capital city and subsequent developments.

Grade eight Social Studies textbook presented twenty-one heroes/heroines, among whom six were Ethiopian and the rest fifteen were international. The first local hero treated in the textbook was *Emperor Menelik II*. He was presented as a hero in line with the battle of Adwa as follows: “In 1893, Emperor Menelik cancelled the Treaty of Wuchale. He preferred war not to surrender the independence of his country. Then, Menelik marched northwards to fight the Italians at the command of 100,000 soldiers and achieved victory at Adwa” (p. 37).

The second local heroine described by the textbook was *W/ro Mulumbet Emiru*. She was treated as the first female pilot in Africa and “...became a well-trained pilot at the age of sixteen (p. 110). *Woizero Shewareged Gedle* was the third local heroine described in the textbook. She was treated as a war patriot or heroine who fought the Italian fascist forces along side with the Ethiopian male patriots. The textbook presented *Dr. Wudad Kidanemariam* as the fourth local heroine and she was treated as the first female medical doctor and praised for her service in Gandhi Memorial Hospital. *Dr. Abebech Gobena* and *W/ro Birnesh Asfaw* were the fifth and six Ethiopian heroines described in the textbook. *Dr. Abebech Gobena* was treated as a famous Ethiopian woman who changed the life of many Ethiopian children who lost their family for different reasons through her charity organization called *HOPE*. *W/ro Birnesh*, on the other hand, was described as the first female engineer in Ethiopia and she was praised for her service or contribution in the previous Ethiopian Road Authority and Survey and Design Department in different positions.

The international heroes described in the textbooks as heroes/heroines for their breakthrough contributions to the world community in various fields such as history, medicine, art, literature, science, etc. include the following. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus and Hippocrates were treated as the gifts of Ancient Greece civilization. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were considered as the fathers of philosophy whereas Herodotus and Hippocrates were described as the father of history and the father of medicine respectively. Five great persons like *James Hargreaves*, *James Watt*, *Michael Faraday*, *Alexander Graham Bell* and *Guglielmo Marconi* were treated as the gifts of the Industrial Revolution and praised for their new inventions that enabled the realization of industrial capitalism.

The rest five international heroes such as *Samori Toure*, *Harry Thuku*, *Nelson Mandela*, *Zaghlul Pasha* and *Habib Bourgiba* were treated as political figures. Samori Toure was presented in the textbook for building the largest Empire in West Africa and the struggle against French colonialism. The textbook portrayed the picture of *Samori Toure*. It treated *Harry Thuku* as the leader of the Young Kikuyu Association which struggled against British colonialism. The textbook portrayed the picture of Nelson Mandela as a leading personality in the struggle against Apartheid rule in South Africa. Finally, *Zaghlul Pasha* and *Habib Bourgiba* were treated in the textbook as the leading political figures in the struggle against colonialism in Egypt and Algeria respectively.

4.5.2.3. Historical and cultural symbols

The Amhara Region grade five textbook portrayed and described nine historico-cultural symbols which could represent the Ethiopian political and cultural community. The first four of them were fossils (such as *Ardi*, *Idaltu*, *Lucy* and *Selam*) which could symbolize Ethiopia as the origin of the first human ancestor in Africa. The Axumite obelisk was the fifth major historico-cultural symbol depicted and described in the textbook. The textbook stated that:

The obelisk symbolizes the civilization of the Axumite period. There are many obelisks of this type near the town of Aksum. But their sizes are different. The Axumite society (its territory included the regional states of Tigray, Amhara, Afar, Benishangul Gumuz and Southern Eritrea) built palaces, temples and obelisks. Aksumite monuments were cut out of

one solid big rock. Many of them are still standing. Today these obelisks are important tourist attractions in Ethiopia (pp. 10-11).

The six historico-cultural symbols treated in Amhara Region grade five Social Studies textbooks were the *Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela*. They are described in the textbook as wonderful churches built by the Zagwe rulers by carving from a single solid rock and today they found standing in the town of Lalibela and serve as one of the most important tourist attraction sites in Ethiopia. The *Castles of Gondar* constituted the seventh historico-cultural symbol described in grade five textbooks. The textbook stated that when Gondar was the capital city of the Christian Highland Kingdom, many of its kings built castles and today the Castles are the most important sources of tourism in Ethiopia.

The eighth and ninth historico-cultural symbols treated in the Amhara region grade five Social Studies textbook were the *Jegol Ghinb* and the *Victory of Adwa*. As to the Jegol Ghinb, the textbook maintained that: “In the 1560s, a stone wall was built around Harar. It was built to defend the city from enemies. Still the wall is found around the old city. It is called the *Jegol Ghinb*. This suggests that the textbook had failed to link the *Jegol Ghinb* with the Ethiopian politico-cultural community. On the other hand, the textbook treated the *Adwa Victory* as a symbol of independence, unity and pride for Ethiopians in the eyes of all the black people.

The Amhara Region grade six Social Studies textbooks presented seven historico-cultural symbols. The first and second historico-cultural symbols treated by the textbook were the *Axumite Obelisk* and the *Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela*. Students were asked to discuss on the economic, social and political advantages of the *Axumite Obelisk* and *Lalibela Rock-hewn Churches* to present day Ethiopia (p. 13). The third historico-cultural symbol portrayed and described in the textbook was the *Tiya Steale*. The treatment of the Steale in the textbook appears only loosely attached to the Ethiopian politico-cultural community as stated:

Tiya is a group of finely shaped monolithic monuments. The site of the monuments is located south of Addis Ababa, in Gurage zone of the SNNPR. The age of the monuments is estimated to be more than one thousand years. It is registered by UNESCO as a world heritage. The

Tiya site is fenced and well protected. Many foreign and domestic tourists visit the site annually (p. 13).

The *Konso Terraces* constitute the fourth historico-cultural symbol described in grade textbook. The textbook treated the *Konso Terraces* as manifestations of the hardworking culture of the Konso People and hence symbolize ethnic identity as stated hereunder:

Konso is a special Woreda in SNNPR. The Konsos are Kushitic people. Their territories are in arid highlands of south western Ethiopia. The Konso people are famous for their terracing practices. They dwell on intensive agriculture involving irrigation and terracing. In general the Konsos are hard working people (p. 24).

The last fifth, sixth and seven historico-cultural symbols treated in the Amhara Region grade six Social Studies textbooks were the Temple of Nubia, the Silver Nubian Crown, and the Pyramids of Meroe. The textbook portrayed the picture of all these historico-cultural symbols followed by a brief description of the corresponding ancient civilizations (pp. 6-7). This suggests that the textbook may intend to promote cosmopolitan identity. The only historico-cultural symbols portrayed and described in grade seven Social Studies textbook were the Pyramids of Egypt. The textbook portrayed the picture of the Ancient Egyptian pyramid as manifestation of Ancient Egyptian civilization and its contribution to the world at large.

Grade eight Social Studies textbook presented one local and three international historico-cultural symbols. The Adwa Victory was presented here to indicate the course of the war and as the anti-colonial struggle in Africa. The second, third and fourth historico-cultural symbols treated in the textbook include Parthenon, the Statue of Ancient Roman, and the Great Wall of China to indicate ancient civilizations in Ancient Greece, Roman Empire and Ancient China. The textbook also portrayed the picture of these historico-cultural symbols. It follows that the Region's grade eight Social Studies textbook appears to reinforce cosmopolitan identity.

To sum up, it is clearly observed in all sets of the Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks that when heroes/heroines and historico-cultural symbols brought for treatment as some content areas, they were simply described as they represent the respective hero's/heroine's and historico-cultural symbol's region or ethnic identity. On the other hand, when

heroes/heroines and historico-cultural symbols of Amhara origin appeared in the textbooks, they were simply treated as they represent Ethiopian identity.

4.6. Textbook Portrayal of Ethiopian Identity in Tigray Region

4.6.1. Introduction

As per the 1995 FDRE Constitution, Tigray Region is one of the nine ethnic regions of Ethiopia. Official statistical results of the 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia showed that Tigray Region constituted about 5.8 percent of the total population of the country (FDRE-PCCP, 2008). As such, in terms of population size, the region stands fifth after Oromiya (36.7 percent), Amhara (23.3 percent), SNNPR (20.4 percent) and Somali (6.0 percent) regions. The Region has a total surface area of 84,722 square kilometers and with this geographical size, it stands as the fifth largest region in Ethiopia.

As to its education system, Tigray Region makes up a significant proportion of the country's primary and secondary school system. According to the Federal MOE annual education statistics report (MOE, 2015), in the 2014 academic year, Tigray Region has a total of student population of 1,246,768, of which 1,057,109 was enrolled in the Region's primary schools and the rest 189,659 enrolled in the country's secondary school system. On the basis of the 1995 FDRE Constitution and the subsequent 1994 Education and Training Policy premise, the management, financing, teacher's training, the language of instruction and textbook production for its primary school system have been given to the Region.

In this section, the research project intended to examine the Tigray Region Social Studies and CEE textbooks portrayal and description of Ethiopian identity through qualitative content analysis of these textbooks. However, such an understanding of textbook portrayal of Ethiopian identity could be partly realized through an overview of the context of textbook production process. Such a brief analysis of who and how textbooks were produced would help us to understand whose knowledge and history has been presented in those textbooks and the place of the Region's Education Bureau in the textbook production process.

The Tigray Region primary school Social Studies and CEE textbooks were published by the Federal Ministry of Education. The Region's Social Studies textbooks appear originally written in Tigrigna language while its CEE textbooks appear more like translations into Tigrigna of the centrally produced textbooks. In terms of the number of units and general content areas covered in both sets of the Tigray Region Social Studies and CEE textbooks, overall no significant difference was observed with the centrally produced Social Studies and CEE textbooks by the MOE. But in the Region's Social Studies textbooks, some variations were observed in the treatment of some content categories of Ethiopian identity and as such the following section shall be devoted for a separate treatment of the Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks.

4.6.2. Textbooks portrayal of political and historico-cultural symbols

For the sake of guiding the content analysis of textbooks, one of the content categories of Ethiopian identity has been assumed to include the political, historical and cultural symbols. This content category was further operationalised to include national flag and anthem, national heroes/heroines, national holidays and historico-cultural symbols. In order to see the representation of each of these symbols, qualitative content analysis was made on Social Studies and CEE textbooks and the findings are presented hereunder.

4.6.2.1. National flag and national anthem

All sets of Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks portrayed the Ethiopian national flag at the top center of the front cover page and in the inside cover page of the textbook. The Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks also gave space to the treatment of the Ethiopian national flag in their main body of the texts. For instance, on page 3 of grade five Social Studies textbook, four national flags of the countries of the Horn were portrayed and then students were asked to identify the countries of the Horn symbolized by each flag. Again on page 4, the textbook portrayed the national flags of countries of the Horn (such as Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia) on the political map of Africa.

The Ethiopian national flag has also found some space in the main body of grade six Social Studies textbook. Accordingly, in addition to in its cover page, the textbook portrayed the Ethiopian national flag along with the national flags of Eastern African courtiers. The

textbook also depicted the national flag of Ethiopia along with the IGAD countries, countries of the Nile Basin and member countries of the Nile Basin initiative.

The Tigray Region grade seven Social Studies textbook depicted the Ethiopian national flag on its outer and inside cover pages. The textbook also portrayed the political map of Ethiopia displaying the regional states of Ethiopia along with their respective flags. The flag of the African Union was also depicted on page 164 of the textbook. Except in its outer and inner cover pages, grade eight Social Studies textbook did not treat the Ethiopian national flag in its main body of the text.

Finally, unlike Oromiya and Amhara regions CEE textbooks, the Tigray Region CEE textbooks depicted the regional flag at the top left corner of all pages of grade six and grade seven CEE textbooks and at the top right corner of all pages of grade five and grade eight CEE textbooks. As such, in the Tigray Region CEE textbooks the regional flag was portrayed 224 times in grade five, 226 times in grade six, 230 times in grade seven and 235 times in grade eight. This suggests that all sorts of flags (regional, national, sub-continental and continental) have been given significant coverage in all sets of the Tigray Region textbooks than in any other region textbooks.

4.6.2.2. National heroes/heroines

The Tigray Region grade five Social Studies textbook presented a very large number (25) of Ethiopian heroes/heroines. Some of these heroes mainly in the field of civilization, governance, empire building and military might include: (1) *King Kaleb*, (2) *Mera Tekla Haymanot*, (3) *King Lalibela*, (4) *Ahmed Gragn*, (5) *King Motalami*, (6) *Wolayita Mala*, (7) *Tato Gaki Shrecho*, (8) *King Fasiledes*, and (9) *Michael Sehul*.

The textbook also presented patriots of the Adwa Victory as Ethiopian heroes/heroines. In the selection of some of the heroes of the Battle of Adwa, the textbook seems to primarily underline the common sense saying that “*Unity is Strength*” and as such the Victory belonged to the different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. Some of these heroes/heroines include: (1) *Emperor Menelik II*, (2) *Etege Taytu*, (3) *Ras Mengesha Atkim of Amhara Saint*, (4) *Ras Wole of Yeju Oromo*, (5) *Fitawrari Gebeyehu of Gurage*, (6)

Basha Abuye of Hadiya, (7) Fitawrari Habte Giyorgis of Chebo Gurage, (8) Wagshum Guangul of Agaw Sekotta, (9) Fitawrari Tekle of Wellega, (10) Dejazmach Hagos Teferi, Dejazmach Sebhat Aregawi, Ras Mengesha Yohannes, Ras Alula Aba Nega, Basha Awalo of Tigray, (11) Ras Mekonnen W/Michael of Harar, and (12) Negus T/Haymanot of Gojjam. The textbook treated these great personalities in Ethiopian history as heroes/heroines of the Battle of Adwa. It tries to demonstrate how unity resulted in successful victories against the enemy forces. The textbook also tries to ration the achievements of the Battle of Adwa to the various Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia.

Grade five Social Studies textbook finally portrays the names of three great personalities, namely Emperor Tewodros II, Emperor Menelik II and Emperor Haile Selassie I. With regard to the first two Emperors, the textbook stated that the idea of modernization was first crystallized during Emperor Tewodros and finalized during the reign of Emperor Menelik. The textbook portrayed the pictures of Emperor Menelik II and Emperor Tewodros II. As to the last Emperor, the textbook presented him as a vanguard for the introduction of modern political and administrative systems and institutions. For instance, the textbook stated that: “He introduced some western modern political and administrative systems, such as modern schools, university, mistrial offices, Berhanena Selam Printing, General Wingate School, modern air and ground forces, parliament, etc” (p. 54).

The textbook also portrayed the pictures of the various modern institutions and technologies introduced by the Emperor. No hero/heroine was treated in Tigray Region grade six Social Studies textbooks. Grade seven Social Studies textbooks presented three international heroes but no national or local hero/heroine. Some of the international heroes depicted in the textbook include: King Menes, Mohammed Ali, and Robert Malthus. King Menes was treated as an Egyptian hero for building greater Egyptian kingdom and as a founder of Egyptian Pharaoh. Similarly, Mohammed Ali was described as a hero who advocated the idea of greater Egypt and annexed the Fuji Kingdom as part of Egypt. The textbook portrayed the picture of Mohammed Ali. Unlike the previous two heroes, Thomas Robert Malthus was presented in the textbook as a hero for initiating theories on balanced population growth rate. The textbook portrayed the picture of Thomas Albert Malthus.

Tigray Region grade eight Social Studies textbooks portrayed and described 36 international heroes in various fields, including literature, art, philosophy, scientific research and politics. The first eight of these heroes were presented as products of the Ancient Greece civilization such as (1) *Socrates*, (2) *Pluto & his academy*, (3) *Aristotalis*, (4) *Herodotus*, (5) *Socrates*, (6) *Pythagoras*, (7) *Homer*, and (8) *Thucydides*. The textbooks described Ancient Greece as the origin of art, literature, philosophy, and science and this was possible through its great formulators as mentioned here. It also portrayed the pictures of each of these early Greece philosophers and briefly discussed their achievements or contributions to the world.

The second group of heroes presented in the textbook were great personalities closely linked to the Ancient Roman civilization. Some of these include: (1) *Julius Cesar*, (2) *Augustus Cesar*, (3) *Cicero*, (4) *Vergil*, (5) *Horace*, (6) *Galan*, (7) *Ptolemy*, (8) *Copernicus*, (9) *Livy*, and (10) *Plutarch*. The textbook described Julius Cesar and Augustus Cesar as two famous leaders of the Great Roman Empire and it celebrated their glories. Cicero, Vergil and Horace were described in the textbook as Ancient Roman great personalities well-known in the field of literature. On the other hand, the textbook described Galan, Ptolemy, Copernicus, Livy and Plutarch as great personalities of the Ancient Roman Civilization well-known for scientific research in various disciplines.

In the third group of heroes, the textbook treated ten great personalities which made possible the Industrial Revolution through their scientific inventions. Some of these heroes include: (1) Thomas Newcommon, (2) Thomas Watt, (3) Robert Fulton, (4) George Stephenson, (5) Henry Besmear, (6) Michael Faraday, (7) Samuel Mors, (8) Thomas Edison, (9) Gotlihib Dymeler, and (10) Wilbur and Orville Wright.

Finally, in the fourth group of heroes, the textbook presented five great personalities in the anti-colonial struggle in Africa and some of these heroes include: (1) *Sekou Toure of Guinea*, (2) *Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana*, (3) *Julius Nyrere of Tanzania*, (4) *Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya*, and (5) *Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe*. The textbook portrayed the pictures of these patriots along with a brief description of their achievements in the anti-colonial struggle in the respective African countries. The textbook also presented the Chinese

philosopher, Confucius, the King of Inca (King Atahu Alpa) and John Stuart Mill, an advocate of the idea of liberalism in post-Industrial Revolution.

4.6.2.3. Historical and cultural symbols

Tigray Region grade five Social Studies textbook portrayed and described ten historico-cultural symbols as manifestations of the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Some of these symbols include: (1) *Lucy*, (2) *Selam*, (3) *Axumite Obelisks*, (4) the *Rock-Hewn Church of Lalibela*, (5) the *Castle of Gondar*, (6) the *Terraces of Konso*, (7) *Jegol Gimb*, (8) the *Oromo Gada System*, (9) the *Sidama Gada System*, and (10) the *Battle of Adwa*. *Lucy* and *Selam* are fossils depicted in the textbook to illustrate Ethiopia as the origin of mankind. The textbook portrayed the fossil of *Lucy*. The *Axumite Obelisks*, the *Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela*, the *Castles of Gondar*, the *Jegol Gimb* and the *Terraces of Konso* were described in the textbook as historical and cultural heritages of Ethiopia which could reflect the achievements of past generations. The textbook portrayed the pictures of all these historical and cultural heritages. The Gada System was described in the textbook as a cultural democratic political organization of the Oromo and Sidama peoples. Finally, the textbook treated the Battle of Adwa as a symbol of unity and strength among Ethiopians. It state that “Adwa derived all Nations, Nationalities and Peoples from all corners of the country and defeated the fascist [invading Italian forces] at Adwa. This led to our sovereignty” (p. 96).

Tigray Region grade six Social Studies textbook presented 19 historico-cultural symbols, out of which two were international heritages while the rest seventeen were domestic heritages. The international heritages depicted in the textbook were: (1) *the Pyramids of Ancient Egypt* and (2) *the Temple, Pyramid and Silver Crown of Nubia or Kush*. The textbook portrayed the pictures of Egyptian Pyramids and Pharaohs as well as the pictures of the Temple, Silver Crown and Pyramid of Nubia to describe Ancient Egypt and Nubia as some of the ancient civilizations flourished along the Nile Valley and their achievements and/or their greatest legacies.

Among the domestic heritages treated in the textbook, (1) *Axumite Obelisks*, (2) *the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela*, (3) *the Castles of Gondar*, and (4) *the Temple of Yeha* were

treated as some of the most magnificent heritages or artifacts of Ethiopia registered by UNESCO as world heritages. On the other hand, (1) *the Monastery of Derbre Damo*, (2) *Negash Mosque*, (3) *Axum Tsion Mariam Church*, (4) *Wukro Cherkos Church*, (5) *Zarema Giyorgis Cave*, (6) *Michael Amba Church*, (7) *Medhanielem Adikosho Tseada Amba*, (8) *Abraha Watsebaha*, and (9) *Debre Tsion Enda Abune Abrham* were described in the textbook as some of the many churches, temples, caves, castles and other cultural heritages found in the Tigray Regional State. The textbook depicts the picture of some of these temples, churches, caves and castles.

On the other hand, (1) *the ruins of the Palace Queen Sheba*, (2) *Tissat Falls*, (3) *Tiya Steale*, and (4) *the Mosque of Harar* were described in the textbook as cultural and historical resources of Ethiopia which express Ethiopian identity and hence should be protected and preserved by the present generation. The textbook portrayed the pictures of the ruins of Palace Queen Sheba, Tissat Falls, the Mosque of Harar and Tiya Steale.

Tigray Region grade seven Social Studies textbooks portrayed and described no local or national historical and cultural symbol or heritage. However, they presented five international historico-cultural heritages. Some of these include: (1) *the Egyptian Pyramids*, (2) *Sphinx*, (3) *the Monument of King Ramses II*, (4) *Hieroglyphics*, and (5) *the ruins of the Ancient City of Cartage*. The first four historico-cultural symbols were described in the textbook as some of the manifestations of the earliest and long lasting ancient civilization of Egypt. The textbook also described the Ancient civilization of Egypt as the age of pyramids. On page 25 and 26, the textbook portrayed the pictures of the pyramids. The textbook also depicted the *ruins of the Ancient City of Cartage* to indicate that the Mediterranean coast of present day Tunisia was one of the earliest civilizations in the world. The textbook portrayed the ruins of the ancient city of Cartage.

Grade eight Social Studies textbook portrayed and described five international historical and cultural heritages. Some of these include: (1) *Parthenon*, (2) *the Ancient Roman Architectures*, (3) *the Great Wall of China*, (4) *the Palace of Mayan*, and (4) *the Pyramids of Inca*. The textbook treated these world heritages to illuminate on the contribution of Ancient Greece, Ancient Roman, Ancient Chinese, and Central and Southern American

ancient civilizations to the world at large. The textbook portrays the picture of the above world heritages along with a brief description on each of these heritages.

Generally, from any other regions Social Studies textbooks considered for this study, the textbooks of Tigray Region have devoted more volumes for the treatment of national, regional, sub-regional and continental flags. They also provide a more detailed treatment of local, national, continental and international heroes/heroines in various fields. Once more, Tigray Region Social studies textbooks also presented and described a large number of local, national and international historical and cultural symbols and/or heritages. But yet, the Region's textbooks have more of international rather than national orientation in the depiction of heroes/heroines and political and historico-cultural symbols. They also appear too bulky for students and teachers to cover their contents. Still the Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks gave better space for the region's political and historico-cultural symbols than the Amhara and Oromiya regions textbooks.

Although Ethiopia has significant number of national holidays being celebrated by the Ethiopian mass, unfortunately neither of the textbooks gave any room for the treatment of such holidays. For instance, the country has very recently declared to celebrate the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day, the National Flag Day, etc. Had they been treated in the textbooks in some details, national holidays would have significant contribution in building a sense of belonging and identity with the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CROSS-REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOK PORTRAYAL OF ETHIOPIAN IDENTITY

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, an attempt was made to explore and describe the place of Ethiopian identity in the three ethnic regions of Ethiopia through the analysis of primary school Social Studies and CEE textbooks of each region separately. Here a cross-regional analysis of primary school Social Studies and CEE textbooks has been made to understand curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity at the national primary education system curriculum context. As such, the inter-regional analysis of textbook portrayal of Ethiopian identity draws data inductively from the separate cases presented in chapter four. First, it appears plausible to describe the general nature of both sets of CEE and Social Studies textbooks so that we can understand their commonalities and differences at the most generic level.

5.2. General Description of Primary Education CEE Textbooks

The CEE textbooks of the primary schools of the three ethnic regions reflect the same content areas and lesson objectives. All CEE textbooks at all grade levels have eleven chapters which dealt with: (1) *Democratic system*, (2) *The rule of law*, (3) *Equality*, (4) *Justice*, (5) *Patriotism*, (6) *Responsibility*, (7) *Industriousness*, (8) *Self-reliance*, (9) *Saving*, (10) *Active community participation*, and (11) *The pursuit of wisdom*. As the textbooks at all grade levels (grade five upto grade eight) have been nationally produced with the participation of well-known professionals drawn from various disciplines, Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions simply translated them into their language (vernacular) of instruction without any significant adaptations made to reflect their specific social, political, economic and cultural contexts. For instance, the primary schools of the Amhara Regional State simply apply the textbooks which appear centrally produced (including Addis Ababa city Administration).

When we see the specific details of each textbook, in unit one of grade five CEE textbooks, under the heading “*Building Democratic System*”, students were introduced to the concepts

of democracy, human rights and democratic rights, diversity, democratic government, necessity of democratic system, federal government, city administration, and foreign relations and its policies. Under a sub-heading “*Unity in Diversity*” the textbooks emphasized the values of tolerance and understanding for peaceful co-existence or to promote what is commonly called ‘unity in diversity’. They generally underlined the idea that diversity should not be taken as a threat to unity and social cohesion; rather it is an essential resource which makes life interesting. This idea is clearly reflected on grade five unit one of Oromiya Region CEE Textbook as stated: “As there are many things that make us similar, there are also lots of things that make us different. But the basic thing to understand is that our similarities are dominant than our differences” (p. 4).

On unit two, under a heading “*The Rule of Law*”, students were introduced to the concepts of constitution and its importance and other laws and regulations, obeying to the rule of law, equality before the law, the meaning of authority and power, the meaning of ethics, keeping secrets, and the meaning and scope of corruption. The textbooks presented the rule of law as “...an important instrument for people to live in together on the basis of tolerance and mutual understanding” (p. 14). The Constitution was treated as the supreme law of the country and all other laws and regulations remained subservient to it. In the unit, the textbooks underlined the idea that all citizens, from ordinary persons to the highest political authorities or government officials, are equal before the law and it is only through the rule of law that living in harmony and/ or peaceful co-existence can prevail in the country.

Under a unit heading “*Equality*”, students were exposed to the meaning of equality, the equality of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia, gender equality, equality of culture, the meaning of physical disability and support mechanisms for the physically disabled. The unit concludes with introducing students to the meaning of the right to religion. Unlike unit two which emphasized obeying the rule of law and equality of all citizens before the law, on unit three the textbooks underlined the equality of opportunity mainly among the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. As such their right to self-administration, use their own language, promote their culture, and practice their religion have been underscored. Furthermore, the right of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to equal access to education and equal job opportunity as well as gender equality

and equality of the disabled have been underlined. Overall, in this unit the textbooks appeared to emphasize the idea that ‘unity in diversity’ could be possible only through equality and mutual interest.

On unit four, grade five CEE textbooks, under a unit heading “*Justice*”, exposed students to the meaning, necessity and the procedures of justice. The unit also introduced students to the main judicial bodies, possible ways of violations of justice, the meaning of social institutions, and finally the meaning of tax. In this unit, the textbooks gave particular emphasis to the ideas of fairness and impartiality in decisions or judgments as a basic instrument for positive and balanced relationships among the nation’s citizens. They underlined the role of the family, schools, living places and work places for promoting justice in the country. Moreover, the textbooks attempted to socialize students to some modern justice institutions (such as *kebele* social courts, police station and courts) and some traditional judicial bodies (like elderly persons, religious fathers and respected people) around them.

Unit five, under the heading “*Patriotism*”, has introduced students to the meaning of patriotism and its manifestations in the context of multicultural Ethiopia. For instance, in the textbooks the term patriotism was conceptualized as loving one’s country and such love to the nation has been expressed through pride in the country, working hard for its development and respect for diversity. In addition to this, protection of common properties, respect for rules and laws, fighting poverty and backwardness, active participation in humanitarian services, and respect for the national flag and anthem were considered as some of the manifestations of Ethiopian patriotism.

Unit six is about “*Responsibility*”. Under this unit, the textbooks introduced students to the meaning and necessity of promise and responsibility, the meaning of honesty, loyalty and integrity, the meaning of natural resources and historical heritages and the mechanism to preserve them, and the meaning of HIV/AIDS and its main ways of transmission. In this unit, the textbooks appear to communicate the message among students that there is utmost need to discharge responsibilities by self-initiative. To this end, students were required to embrace such values as honesty, loyalty and integrity. The textbooks also depicted

historical heritages as the expressions of the history and identity of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples and therefore they should be protected and preserved.

In unit seven, the textbooks introduced students to the idea of “Industriousness”. Under this unit heading, students were exposed to the meaning of and necessary conditions for job creativity, the meaning of the right to work, and profession and professional ethics. The textbooks underlined the idea that work is the only way to progress and every work is equal, no work is inferior or superior. Work is an essential condition for the self and country. The other point emphasized in the textbooks is that every Ethiopian citizen has the right to work and that every work should be backed by knowledge and professional ethics.

Unit eight is about “*Self-Reliance*”. Accordingly, the textbooks introduced students to the meaning of self-reliance, self-confidence, self-esteem, wrong self-conception, self-competence and the readiness to learn from others. The textbooks underscored the idea that students should develop such values which could enable them to do things by themselves through their own initiative and capability without resorting to find help from others. And this would enable them to be self-reliant, whom are not dependent on others. Self-reliance in turn leads to self-confidence which could ultimately enable students to be strong citizens who work for their country’s development and overall progress.

On unit nine, under the heading “Saving”, textbooks exposed students to the meaning and objectives of saving, planning for living, and some anti-saving practices at family level. The textbooks conceptualized the term saving as living on the basis of one’s economic capacity. They also underlined the idea that saving is an essential requirement for improving personal life and national development. The textbooks also exposed students to anti-saving practices which may be categorized into *personal anti-saving practices* (such as addiction, gambling, and smoking) and *traditional anti-saving practices* like unnecessary feasting and celebration of holidays. The textbooks finalize the unit with the message that it is the duty of each citizen to plan his/her living so that significantly contribute to the development of his/her country.

Unit ten is about “*Active Community Participation*”. In this unit, the textbooks exposed students to the meaning, types and necessity of active community participation, and civic organizations. To this effect, they encouraged students to get actively involved in community projects by self-initiation for the common good. The textbooks treated such active participation by students at two levels as school level participation and community level participation. At school level students were required to take active participation in electing monitor, endorsing school regulations, school meetings, class sanitation, and taking care of school and class properties on the basis of self-initiation. At the community level, on the other hand, the textbooks drew students’ attention to collective efforts to help their society and themselves through membership in civic organizations and significantly contribute to build democracy, peace and common progress in their country.

On unit eleven, the textbooks deal with the “*Pursuit of Wisdom*”. Accordingly, they introduced students to the meaning and significance of knowledge, methods of gathering and analyzing information, combating backward thinking and attitude, the culture of reading, and methods of studying. In this unit, it appears that the textbooks intended to develop critical thinking among students because overall it was underlined that knowledge can be gained from various sources and subsequently it is the duty of students to hunt desirable knowledge and to combat harmful understandings and opinions.

To sum up, the above eleven major content areas of the CEE textbooks remain the same throughout primary, secondary and tertiary education in Ethiopia. They only vertically expand in depth and coverage in terms of specific contents. The textbooks also presented their major content categories chiefly in terms of citizenship rights and duties. The other important point which deserves consideration is that the CEE textbooks appeared well designed to maintain diversity in place names, person’s names, religious affiliation, etc. in many of the examples and cases used for further illustrations. For instance, there are place and persons names from many ethnic groups and places of the country.

5.3. General description of Social Studies Textbooks

The Social Studies textbooks in all the three regions have four chapters with the same content areas and more or less similar lesson objectives. The four chapters include: (1) *The*

people, location and settlement, (2) The earth and its surroundings, (3) our environment, and (4) public agenda. Under such similar chapter headings, the Regional States have attempted to adapt the textbooks to their specific social, political and cultural contexts. But yet Social Studies textbooks exhibited significant commonalities which deserve consideration.

Accordingly, on unit one of grade five Social Studies textbooks, students were introduced to the names and the relative location of the Horn countries. The textbooks stated the relative location of Ethiopia as it is situated to the south of Eritrea, to the north of Kenya, to the north west of Somalia, to the south west of the Red Sea, to the west of Djibouti and to the east of Sudan. This was accompanied by Ethiopia's depiction as being the largest country in the Horn of Africa. The textbooks also portrayed Ethiopia as being a nation of diverse nations, nationalities and peoples who settled in the country since ancient times. Ethiopia was also treated in the textbooks as the origin of the first human ancestor and students were introduced to the major archeological sites and findings in Ethiopia. The textbooks also discussed the introduction of Christianity and Islam into the Horn of Africa with greater emphasis on Ethiopia. They depicted Ethiopia as a multi-religious country. It appears that the main message intended to communicate to the students is the idea that religious tolerance is not a new phenomenon in present day Ethiopia. As such the historical root of the peaceful introduction of Islam into Ethiopia and the co-existence of both Christianity and Islam in the country was emphasized.

Finally, under unit one of grade five Social Studies textbooks, early states of Ethiopia and the ideas of modernization and unity were introduced to the students. The textbooks portrayed Ethiopia as one of the few places where state formation began at the earliest. Accordingly, students were introduced to the several ancient states of Ethiopia and their achievements. The textbooks also treated the significance of unity and modernization for the consolidation of centralized Ethiopian state and students were introduced to the modern institutions. The unit concludes with the discussion of settlement patterns and livelihood in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

On unit two of grade five Social Studies textbooks, students were introduced to the continents and major water bodies of the earth. The textbooks also presented the major landforms of Eastern Africa Region, including its major mountains, the rift valley system, water resources and their economic uses, and the different layers of the earth's atmosphere. The unit concludes with introducing students to the conventional symbols and signs used on maps. Unit three of grade five Social Studies textbooks deal with what it says "*Our Environment*". As such students were introduced to natural vegetation and wildlife in Eastern Africa and the factors that affect their distribution, human interference on the environment, methods of water and soil conservation, and finally the significance of national parks in Ethiopia and Eastern Africa. Finally, in unit four of grade five Social Science textbooks students were introduced to some population issues such as harmful traditional practices, orphanage and street life, HIV/AIDS, population growth, good governance, child rights and safety.

In unit one of grade six Social Studies textbooks, the same content areas were treated with a vertical expansion to include the Eastern African Region. As such students were introduced to the relative location of Eastern African Region and the names of member countries, the ancient civilizations and heritages of the region, as well as the distributions and settlement patterns of the people of the Eastern Africa Region. In unit two, the textbooks discussed such issues as the continents, major water bodies, the major landforms and water resources of Eastern Africa, the economic use of water in Eastern Africa. Finally, the unit treated the layers and components of the earth's atmosphere as well as the colours, conventional signs and symbols used on maps.

In unit three, the Social Studies textbooks discussed the types and distribution of natural vegetation and the major factors that affect the distribution of natural vegetation and wild animals in Eastern Africa. They also presented the causes and consequences of human intervention on the environment and the methods of water and soil conservation. In addition to this, the major national parks and their importance in Ethiopia and Eastern Africa were presented. Finally, in unit four of the textbooks students were exposed to such issues as coping mechanisms of HIV/AIDS, the impacts of rapid population growth, the concepts of child rights and their violation and escaping mechanisms in Ethiopia, and

mechanisms to avoid accidents. The unit concludes with introducing students to the issue of partnership and sub-regional organizations in Eastern Africa such as Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), IGAD Capacity-Building Programme Against Terrorism (ICPAT), the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), East African Community (EAC), and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESSA).

In unit one of grade seven of Social Studies textbooks, students were exposed to the size, shape, location, super language families, major ancient civilizations (Egypt and Carthage), and pre-colonial states of Africa (Zimbabwe, Mali, and Fuji). The textbooks also depicted the historical role of the long distance trade in connecting or mixing the people of Ethiopia. The concepts of latitudes and longitudes were also introduced to students. The unit finally presented the major factors that affect the distribution, settlement patterns and livelihood of the people of Africa. On unit two, students were introduced to the concept of map, how to use a map, cartography and map sketching. The unit also discusses the layers of the earth, compositions of the crust, rock types and their formation as well as their economic importance.

Unit three is about *“The Eco-System and its Challenges”*. Under this unit students were exposed to such issues as the distribution and importance of natural vegetation and the factors that affect natural vegetation and wild animals in Africa, the threats to environmental resources (water, soil and air) and the conservation methods for natural resources. Finally, in unit four, under the heading *“Public Agenda”*, students were exposed to the socio-economic impacts of HIV/AIDS and rapid population growth, child rights and safety measures, examples of lack of good governance in Africa, as well as the names, member states and targets of regional organizations in Africa such as COMESSA, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), NBI, and Organization of African Unity/African Union (OAU/AU).

In unit one of grade eight Social Science textbooks, under the heading *“The World We Live in”*, students were exposed to the location and main features of continents and major languages of the world, major achievements of ancient civilizations of the world, the distinction between densely and sparsely populated areas of the world, industrial revolution

and its impacts, the causes and consequences of the two world wars, and the history of African people's struggle against colonialism. On unit two, under the title "*The Forces that Change the Surface of the Earth*", the textbooks exposed students to issues such as internal and external forces that change the earth's surface and their effects on human beings, and measurement of distance and area on a map.

Unit three covers issues related to "*Human Intervention in the Eco-System*". As such, it gave students some hints about the causes and consequences of damage to natural resources, major types of pollutants and some preventive measures, and the causes and consequences of global warming. Finally, on unit four under the heading "*Public Agenda*", the textbooks exposed students to such issues as combating HIV/AIDS, population policy and poverty reduction, gender equity, avoiding delinquency, and the purposes and guiding principles of the United Nations (UN) as well as its satellite organs such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and the International Court of Justice. The textbooks concluded the unit by introducing students to the concept of globalization.

To sum up, from the above general description of Social Studies textbooks, we can infer that although the textbooks draw content areas from various fields, they largely cover those contents directly derived from history and geography. Moreover, Social Studies textbooks have devoted much of their volume for the treatment of geographical contents much more than history.

5.4. Interregional Analysis of Social Studies Textbooks Portrayal of Ethiopian Identity

5.4.1. Introduction

In section 4.3 above an attempt was made to simply describe the areas of emphasis each region's Social Studies textbooks primarily gave. The fact is that the Social Studies textbooks across the three ethnic regions showed significant variations only on the first content category of Ethiopian identity, i.e., political and historico-cultural symbols. They, more or less, remain the same in terms of their treatment of constitutional patriotism, Ethiopia's politico-cultural community self-imaginings and accommodation of diversity.

As such, the cross-regional analysis of primary school Social Studies textbooks in Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions was made on the basis of textbook depiction of the first dimension of Ethiopian identity which includes national flag and national anthem, national holidays, national heroes/heroines, and historical and cultural symbols.

5.4.2. National flag and national anthem

The primary school Social Studies textbooks of Oromiya Region portrayed the regional flag along with the Ethiopian national flag. They depicted the regional flag at the left top corner and then the Ethiopian national flag at the right top corner of their cover page. However, except the placement of both the regional flag and national flag, there was nothing said about them in the main body of the text. Yet merely from the placement of the Regional flag and then the Ethiopian national flag in the Region's Social studies textbooks, it appears that the intention was to reinforce among students primarily identification with their ethnic group and then with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. But such placement of the Regional flag and the Ethiopian national flag was exactly reversed in all sets of the Afaan Oromo version of the CEE textbooks of Oromiya Region.

On the other hand, the Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks portrayed only the Ethiopian national flag with no mention of the respective regional flag both in its cover page and in the main body of the text. By extension, such treatment of the Ethiopian national flag and regional flag by the Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks leads to the assumption that students were primarily expected to identify with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Unlike the Amhara Region textbooks, the Tigray Region Social Studies and CEE textbooks gave better coverage for the Ethiopian national flag than the Amhara Region – and even the Oromiya Region textbooks. The Ethiopian national flag was treated in significant details in the main body of grade five upto grade seven Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks.

Another significant feature of the Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks was that, in addition to the Ethiopian national flag and the flags of ethnic regions, they gave significant coverage to regional and sub-regional flags. Accordingly, they portrayed and described the Ethiopian national flag along with the flags of the Ethiopian ethnic regions, and the

national flags of countries of the Horn and Eastern Africa Region. By extension, the textbooks appear to develop a sense of identification and attachment with regional and sub-regional communities beyond Ethiopia as well.

Moreover, the Tigray Region primary school CEE textbooks portrayed the regional flag in each page of the main body of all sets of textbooks (grades 5 to 8). Accordingly, the Regional flag appears 915 times in the main body of all sets of the Tigray Region CEE textbooks (that is, 224 times in grade five, 226 times in grade six, 230 times in grade seven and 235 times in grade eight). By extension, the Region's CEE textbooks appear to cultivate, among students, primary identification with the Region's ethnic community and then with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Such treatment of the Regional flag by the CEE textbooks of Tigray Region was the only deviation from Oromiya and Amhara regions CEE textbooks. Regional, national, sub-continental and continental flags were treated in more details in Tigray Region textbooks than in the Oromiya and Amhara regions textbooks. [Table 5.1](#) below presents regional variations in the portrayal and treatment of national and regional flags by the Social Studies and CEE textbooks.

Table 5.1: Portrayal and description of national and regional flags by the Social Studies and CEE textbooks of ethnic regions

Ethnic Region	Grade level	Number of flags	Description as		
			Ethnic	Ethiopian	Other flags
Oromiya	5	18	15	3	-
	6	18	15	3	-
	7	18	15	3	-
	8	19	15	4	-
	Total	73	60	13	
Amhara	5	15	9	6	-
	6	15	9	6	-
	7	15	9	6	-
	8	16	9	7	-
	Total	61	36	25	
Tigray	5	236	224	9	3
	6	253	226	8	19
	7	257	248	7	2
	8	242	235	7	-
	Total	988	933	31	24

Note that the figures under the column which says “Ethnic” also includes other ethnic regions flags as displayed in CEE textbooks of all regions. However, for Tigray Region the figure includes the flags of the nine ethnic regions of Ethiopia as displayed within the political map of Ethiopia in the main body of grade seven Social Studies textbooks.

Unlike the Oromiya and Tigray regions, the Amhara regional flag was portrayed nowhere in its primary school Social Studies and CEE textbooks. The Regional flag appears only at the back cover of CEE textbooks along with other regions flags intended to socialize students to the federal arrangement of the country. In both the Region’s Social Studies and CEE textbooks only the Ethiopian national flag was treated. Merely from such treatment of the national flag by the Amhara Region Social Studies and CEE textbooks it appears that students were expected to primarily identify with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Finally, the treatment of the Ethiopian national anthem was exactly alike in all regions CEE and Social Studies textbooks.

5.4.3. National heroes/heroines

The portrayal and description of heroes/heroines showed significant variation across the three ethnic regions Social Studies textbooks. For instance, when we see grade five Social Studies textbooks in the three ethnic regions, the Oromiya Region textbook depicted and described only one regional hero where as the Amhara Region textbook portrayed and described seven heroes/heroines, among whom four heroes/heroines were described as belonging to the Ethiopian politico-cultural community and the rest heroes as belonging to their ethnic community.

Similarly, Tigray Region grade five Social Studies textbook depicted and described a relatively greater number of heroes/heroines than the rest two regions. The Region’s textbook treated as many as twenty five heroes/heroines, among whom only four heroes treated as they belong to their ethnic community and the rest twenty-one heroes/heroines symbolize the Ethiopian politico-cultural community. Interestingly, the textbook underlined the message that “unity is strength” as manifested by the Adwa victory. In order to show the victory of Adwa as the achievements of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia, the textbook attempted to maintain a relatively proper balance in the selection and description of heroes/heroines from the nations and nationalities of Ethiopia.

No hero/heroine was portrayed in grade six Social Studies textbooks of all the three ethnic regions. Such uniformity in the depiction of heroes/heroines might appear due to the corresponding similarity in content dimensions of their grade six Social Studies textbooks which deal with the Eastern Africa Region and beyond with greater emphasis on physical geography.

There was no such significant variation in the number of heroes/heroines portrayed and described in grade seven Social Studies textbooks. The Oromiya and Amhara regions textbooks portrayed the same two Ethiopian heroes/heroines but with a different description of them. The two heroes/heroines portrayed in these sets of textbooks were Menelik II and Etege Taytu. In both regions' textbooks these two persons were described as heroes/heroines in relation to the establishment of Addis Ababa as a national capital and later development attempts in the country. But, in the Oromiya Region grade eight textbook, Menelik II was also treated as an oppressive dictator who annexed and ruled the various Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia by mere force. As to the Tigray Region grade seven Social Studies textbooks, there was no Ethiopian name or hero/heroine portrayed. All the three heroes portrayed and described in the textbook were international heroes who could reinforce cosmopolitan identity.

Probably the second greater variation in the number and description of heroes/heroines by Social Studies textbooks of the three ethnic regions appeared in grade eight of their textbooks. In terms of number, Tigray Region textbook portrayed the largest number of heroes/heroines followed respectively by the Amhara and Oromiya regions (see [Table 5.2 below](#)). The names of persons portrayed in the Oromiya and Amhara regions textbooks were exactly alike. But the difference appears in the degree of attachment and belonging of these heroes/heroines to the Ethiopian political and cultural community made by the textbooks. Both sets of textbooks attempted to make some kind of attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. However, in Oromiya Region textbooks the degree of attachment and belonging of these heroes/heroines to the Ethiopian political and cultural community appears only loosely defined.

On the other hand, Tigray Region grade seven Social Studies textbook portrayed a large number of heroes/heroines with a complete absence of any Ethiopian hero/heroine. Such international orientation in the portrayal and treatment of heroes/heroines in the Tigray Region Social Studies textbook probably emerged from the fact that most of the great personalities we know them in Ethiopian history were already treated in the Region's grade five Social Studies textbook. [Table 5.2](#) below provides an outline of regional variations in textbook portrayal of heroes/heroines. The other point which may deserve consideration, at this juncture, is that the Tigray and Amhara regions textbooks have also some international orientation in the treatment of heroes/heroines and, by extension, they appear to cultivate cosmopolitan identity as well.

Table 5.2: Portrayal and description of heroes/heroines by Social Studies textbooks of ethnic regions

Ethnic Region	Grade level	Number of heroes/heroines	Description as		
			Ethnic	Ethiopian	Cosmopolitan
Oromiya	5	1	1	-	-
	6	-	-	-	-
	7	2	-	2	-
	8	6	-	6	-
	Total	9	1	8	
Amhara	5	7	3	4	-
	6	-	-	-	-
	7	2	-	2	-
	8	21	-	6	15
	Total	30	3	12	15
Tigray	5	25	4	21	-
	6	-	-	-	-
	7	3	-	-	3
	8	36	-	-	36
	Total	64	4	21	39

To sum up, the treatment of heroes/heroines as a symbol of the ethnic, cosmopolitan as well as the Ethiopian political and cultural community shows significant variations across the three regions Social Studies textbooks selected for this study. In terms of number, Tigray Region, Amhara Region and Oromiya Region textbooks presented, respectively, 64, 30 and 9 heroes/heroines. Accordingly, Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks presented a

relatively better number and composition of heroes/heroines who may symbolize the respective ethnic group as well as the Ethiopian and international community. On the other hand, Oromiya Region Social Studies textbooks portrayed a comparatively small number and composition of heroes/heroines only loosely attached to the respective ethnic group and the Ethiopian politico-cultural community.

5.4.4. Historical and cultural symbols

In order to see regional variations in the portrayal and description of historical and cultural symbols in the primary education system of the country, the Social Studies textbooks of three ethnic regions were examined. Accordingly, the Social Studies textbooks of Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions exhibited significant differences in the number, composition and description of historical and cultural symbols. As such, in terms of the number of historical and cultural symbols portrayed in each region textbooks, all sets of Oromiya Region, Amhara Region and Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks portrayed and described seventeen, twenty-one and thirty-eight historico-cultural symbols respectively, which represent some ethnic community, the Ethiopian political and cultural community and even the world community as a whole (see [Table 5.3 below](#)).

When we see such regional variation by grade level, Oromiya Region grade five Social Studies textbook depicted eleven historico-cultural symbols and described as some belonging to an ethnic community and some others to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Accordingly, four of the historico-cultural symbols were described as they symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community and the rest, seven, were treated as they represent the respective ethnic and religious community.

Similarly, the Amhara and Tigray regions grade five Social Studies textbooks portrayed and described nine historico-cultural symbols each. The Amhara Region textbook described eight of them as belonging to the Ethiopian political and cultural community and only one symbol was treated as it symbolized the respective ethnic and/or religious community. In the same vein, the Tigray Region textbook described eight of these symbols as representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community and only one symbol as belonged to an ethnic community. But this does not mean that the portrayal and treatment

of historico-cultural symbols by the two regions grade five Social Studies textbooks was exactly alike. The fact is that as precisely put in chapter four of this dissertation some of the symbols portrayed and treated as representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community and the respective ethnic communities by the two regions textbooks are somehow different.

As to grade six Social Studies textbooks, Tigray Region textbook portrayed and described relatively larger number of historico-cultural symbols respectively followed by the Amhara Region and Oromiya Region textbooks. In terms of composition, the Tigray Region and Amhara Region textbooks described the historico-cultural symbols as representing the respective ethnic, Ethiopian and international community. It is only in the Oromiya Region that the historico-cultural symbols depicted in its textbooks were described as they belonged and/ or attached to the Ethiopian political and cultural community alone.

Very little space was given to the portrayal and description of historical and cultural symbols in grade seven and grade eight Social Studies textbooks of the three ethnic regions. However, relatively the Tigray and Amhara regions textbooks have devoted some of their volumes for the depiction and treatment of international historical and cultural symbols which may subsequently reinforce cosmopolitan identity (identification with the international community) among students. [Table 5.3](#) below depicts regional variations in the treatment of historico-cultural symbols by Social Studies textbooks.

Table 5.3: Portrayal and description of historico-cultural symbols by Social Studies textbooks of ethnic regions

Ethnic Region	Grade level	Number of historical and cultural symbols	Description as		
			Ethnic	Ethiopian	Cosmopolitan
Oromiya	5	11	4	7	-
	6	6	-	6	-
	7	-	-	-	-
	8	1	-	1	-
	Total	18	4	14	
Amhara	5	9	1	8	-
	6	7	2	2	3
	7	1	-	-	1
	8	4	-	1	3
	Total	21	3	11	7
Tigray	5	9	1	8	-
	6	19	9	8	2
	7	5	-	-	5
	8	5	-	-	5
	Total	38	10	16	12

To sum up, Social Studies textbooks portrayal of the main attributes of constitutional patriotism and images or self-projections are almost similar across the three ethnic regions considered for this study. But, the difference primarily lies on the portrayal and treatment of the political and historico-cultural symbols by these textbooks. A closer look at the treatment of these symbols by the Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks showed that identification and attachment to the ethnic and the Ethiopian politico-cultural community as well as the international community at large was underlined. In the Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks, despite some international orientation, the main emphasis appears to rest on cultivating students' sense of belonging and attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. On the other hand, although many of these symbols are portrayed in the textbooks of Oromiya Region, they largely lack a thread which can attach them to the Ethiopian politico-cultural community. As such, many of the symbols portrayed in the Oromiya Region textbooks remained largely detached both from the ethnic community and the Ethiopian political community at large. The attributes were very loosely defined.

5.5. Commonly Shared Heroes/Heroines and Historico-Cultural Symbols

In multi-cultural, multilingual, multiethnic and multi-religious societies like Ethiopia, it is the intersection of values, symbols and traditions which can constitute its national identity. So far, we attempted to show regional variations in textbook portrayal of national heroes/heroines and historico-cultural symbols. Therefore, in the following section a brief description of the extent to which the heroes/heroines and historico-cultural symbols transcend ethnic boundaries as portrayed and described in the three ethnic regions Social Studies textbooks shall be presented. Note that the values, symbols, beliefs and traditions portrayed and described by CEE textbooks were equally shared by the three ethnic regions.

5.5.1. Commonly shared heroes/heroines

An attempt was made to assess Ethiopian heroes/heroines portrayal and description in the three ethnic regions Social Studies textbooks as they can transcend ethnic boundaries. However, only two persons (Emperor Menelik II and Empress Taytu) were described as Ethiopian heroes/heroines across the Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions Social Studies textbooks and thus transcend ethnic boundaries. The level of textbook portrayal of the shared national heroes/heroines may be better understood when commonality has been assessed across grade levels. Accordingly, grade five Social Studies textbooks of Amhara and Tigray regions commonly shared Emperor Menelik II, Empress Taytu and Gaki Serecho as Ethiopian heroes/heroines. In the same grade level, the Oromiya Region textbook portrayed only *Nigus Ibssa* as an Oromo hero.

In grade seven Oromiya and Amhara regions Social Studies textbooks, Emperor Menelik II and Empress Taytu were portrayed as commonly shared Ethiopian heroes/heroines. There was no depiction of a single hero/heroine in grade seven Tigray Region Social Studies textbook. The Oromiya and Amhara regions grade eight Social Studies textbooks exactly shared five Ethiopian heroines, namely: *Mulumbet Emiru*, *Shewareged Gedle*, *Wudad Kidanemariam*, *Abebech Gobena* and *Birneshe Asfaw*. On the other hand, the Tigray Region grade eight textbook did not portray any Ethiopian hero. But yet when compared with the Amhara and Oromiya regions textbooks, the Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks portrayed the largest number of Ethiopian heroes/heroines. Generally, the Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions Social Studies textbooks depiction of commonly shared

Ethiopian heroes/heroines appears insignificant. Surprisingly, we found no intersection in the depiction of heroes/heroines by the three ethnic regions Social Studies textbooks within equivalent grade levels across the three regions Social Studies textbooks.

5.5.2. Commonly shared historico-cultural symbols

The three ethnic regions Social Studies textbooks portrayal of the commonly shared historico-cultural symbols was examined across grade levels. Accordingly, in all sets of grade five Social Studies textbooks four commonly shared historico-cultural symbols such as the Axumite obelisks, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, the Castles of Gondar and the Adwa victory were portrayed. The Axumite obelisks and the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela were also depicted in all sets of grade six Social Studies textbooks as they symbolize the Ethiopian political and historical community. But there were no historical and cultural symbols commonly shared by all sets of grade seven and grade eight Social Studies textbooks. [Table 5.4](#) below depicts the intersection of the Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions Social Studies textbooks in the portrayal of historical and cultural symbols.

Table 5.4: Textbook portrayal of commonly shared historico-cultural symbols

Grade level	Number of historico-cultural symbols	Description as	
		Ethiopian	Cosmopolitan
5	4	4	-
6	2	2	-
7	-	-	-
8	-	-	-
Total	6	6	

Above all, Social Studies textbooks portrayal of commonly shared Ethiopian historico-cultural symbols appeared very poor. There were only four historical and cultural symbols commonly shared by all sets of the Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions Social Studies textbooks as manifestations of the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Although they symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community, all the rest historical and cultural symbols portrayed in each of the three regions Social Studies textbooks as manifestations of Ethiopianness were limited to only one or at most to two of these regions. Practically, whether such historical and cultural heritages symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community could be better understood in the latter phases of this study.

CHAPTER SIX

6. LOOKING FURTHER INTO CURRICULUM RESPONSES TO ETHIOPIAN IDENTITY

6.1. Introduction

Having understood regional education system curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity in the previous chapters, this chapter critically analyses national education system curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity through content analysis of lower secondary and upper secondary education level History and CEE textbooks and students' and teachers' evaluation of the national and regional education system curriculum.

In the current landscape of Ethiopian education system, the Social Studies which have been given in the primary schools of the country would give way to History at the level of secondary education. On the other hand, the CEE has been offered as a course from upper primary education up to tertiary education with no interruption. The chapters and/or thematic areas which began at the beginning of upper primary education system curriculum would continue up to tertiary level education with a correspondingly increasing depth or vertical integration. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to get a somewhat complete understanding of the national education system curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity. For this purpose, first a thorough analysis of secondary education system curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity has been made through qualitative content analysis of History and EEE textbooks. This is followed by presentation of preparatory education level graduate students' and upper primary and secondary education level teachers' evaluation of curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity.

6.2. History textbook portrayal of Ethiopian identity

The four dimensions of Ethiopian identity identified to guide content analysis of textbooks were portrayal of political and historico-cultural symbols, constitutional patriotism, self-imaginings, and interface among the various identity sets an individual lives with, particularly between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity. In this case, the dissertation's deeper investigation of the themes and specific contents of the country's secondary education History textbooks showed that among these four dimensions of Ethiopian

identity, the second dimension – constitutional patriotism – appears missing. As such, the findings of content analysis of lower and upper secondary education History textbook presented hereunder include the rest three dimensions.

6.2.1. Political and historico-cultural symbols

Under this heading, History textbooks portrayal of the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem, national heroes/heroines, national holidays, and historical and cultural symbols was examined and the findings are presented hereunder.

6.2.1.1. National flag and national anthem

All sets of lower and upper secondary History textbooks of the country did not give space for the treatment of the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem. Except stating that “The Emperor [Haile Selassie I] was raising the Ethiopian flag in Addis Ababa on May 5, 1941”, on [page 255](#) of grade twelve history textbook, nothing was stated in all sets of the textbooks.

6.2.1.2. National heroes/heroines

Grade nine History textbook presented nine heroes, of which five were Ethiopians and the rest four were international. The local heroes portrayed and described in the textbook include: (1) *Tao Gaki Serecho*, (2) *Kawo Tona*, (3) *Abba Jifar II*, (4) *Kumsa Morada*, and (5) *Emir Abdullahi*. The textbook presented the glories or achievements of each of these heroes in line with their ethnic communities. But yet the textbook failed to connect them to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. For instance, regarding Tao Gaki Serecho and Kawo Tona the textbook maintained that Kaffa and Walayta were one of the independent states in the southern region who defended their sovereignty from Oromo pressure and, in line with this, it treated these two great personalities as the last kings of Kaffa and Walayta respectively. Similarly, Abba Jifar was described in the textbook as a ruler who made Jimma as the strongest of the five Ghibe Oromo states. Kumsa Morada and Emir Abdullahi were also treated as the last ruler of Leqa Naqmta and the last Emir of Harar respectively.

In addition to the local heroes, grade nine textbook also presented four international heroes such as (1) *Oliver Cromwell*, (2) *Thomas Jefferson*, (3) *George Washington*, and (4) *Napoleon Bonaparte*. The textbook portrayed the picture of Oliver Cromwell as a leader of the first England Republic and as one of the heroes who led Britain to a limited government or democracy. The textbook also portrayed the picture of *Thomas Jefferson* and appreciated his contribution in drafting the “Declaration of Independence”. Regarding George Washington, the textbook stated that the Americans became successful in the wars against the British and this victory was largely the result of the leadership qualities of George Washington. The textbook portrayed the picture of George Washington as a symbol of the struggle for independence. Finally, Napoleon Bonaparte was treated in the textbook as a hero who became “the master of France” at the age of 30 and built a European Empire and then spread the democratic ideas of the French Revolution (civil equality) in Europe. That is “He took to Europe the ideas of individualism, secularism, religious tolerance, abolition of serfdom and civil equality” (p. 181). The textbook portrayed the picture of Napoleon the Emperor.

Grade ten History textbook portrayed and described 57 heroes and heroines, of whom 24 were Ethiopians and the rest 33 were international. The Ethiopian heroes/heroines described in the textbook include: (1) *Emperor Tewodros II*, (2) *Emperor Yohannes IV*, (3) *Emperor Menelik II*, (4) *Abba Jifar II*, (5) *Emir Abdullahi*, (6) *Kao Tona*, (7) *Tao Gacki Serecho*, (8) *Ras Alula Engida (Alula Aba Nega)*, (9) *Empress Taytu*, (10) *Lij Eyasu*, (11) *Ras Tafari*, (12) *Ras Imiru Haile Selassie*, (13) *Dejazmach Abera Kassa*, (14) *Asfawossen Kassa*, (15) *Dejazmach Balcha Safo*, (16) *Ras Abebe Aregay*, (17) *Dejazmach Fikremariam*, (18) *H/Mariam Mamo*, (19) *Geresu Duki*, (20) *Bekele Woya*, (21) *Belay Zeleke*, (22) *Amoraw Wubineh*, (23) *Abune Petros*, (24) *Moges Asgedom*, (25) *Abraha Debotch*, (26) *W/ro Shewareged Gedle*, and (27) *Meles Zenawi*.

The Ethiopian heroes/heroines portrayed in the textbook and listed above could be categorized in different fields. *Emperor Tewodros II*, *Emperor Yohannes IV*, *Emperor Menelik II*, *Lij Eyasu*, *Ras Tafari* and *Meles Zenawi* were treated in the textbook in line with empire building and reformation. Similarly, *Emir Abdullahi*, *Kao Tona*, and *Tao Gacki Serecho* were treated in the textbook as heroes who tried to defend their sovereignty

and *Abba Jifar II* for his peaceful submission to Menelik's forces. On the other hand, the textbook portrayed and described the rest of the heroes/heroines listed above as patriots and/or leaders of the patriotic resistance.

The international heroes/heroines portrayed and described in the textbook include: (1) *Giuseppe Garibaldi*, (2) *Count Camilo Cavour*, (3) *Otto von Bismarck*, (4) *Abraham Lincoln*, (5) *Samori Toure*, (6) *Mohammed Ahmed ibn Abdallah*, (7) *Harry Thuku*, (8) *Habib Bourgiba*, (9) *Abd el-Kerim*, (10) *President Roosevelt*, (11) *Prime Minister Churchill*, (12) *Mao Tse-tung*, (13) *Ho Chi Minh*, (14) *Joseph Broz Tito*, (15) *Jawaharlal Nehru*, (16) *President Sukarno*, (17) *Gamal Abdel Nasser*, (18) *Ahmed Ben Bella*, (19) *Sekou Toure*, (20) *Kwame Nkrumah*, (21) *Gamal Abdul Naser*, (22) *Mwalimu Julius Nyerere*, (23) *Jomo Keyatta*, (24) *Robert Mugabe*, (25) *Joshua Nkomo*, (26) *Kenneth Kaunda*, (27) *Hastings Kamuza Banda*, (28) *Patrice Lumumba*, (29) *Joseph Kasavubu*, (30) *Albert Luthuli*, (31) *Oliver Tambo*, (32) *Nelson Mandela*, and (33) *Walter Sisulu*.

For the sake of convenience, the above international heroes may be categorized into three broader categories as *revolutionaries*, *war patriots*, and *progressives*. The textbook described *Giuseppe Garibaldi* and *Count Camilo Cavour* (in Italy), *Otto von Bismarck* (in Germany) and *Abraham Lincoln* (in USA) as heroes for their contribution in the unification of their country and the transition to a democracy or republic. Similarly, *Samori Toure*, *Mohammed Ahmed ibn Abdallah*, *Harry Thuku*, *Habib Bourgiba*, *Abd el-Kerim*, *Ahmed Ben Bella*, *Sekou Toure*, *Kwame Nkrumah*, *Gamal Abdul Naser*, *Mwalimu Julius Nyerere*, *Jomo Keyatta*, *Robert Mugabe*, *Joshua Nkomo*, *Kenneth Kaunda*, *Hastings Kamuza Banda*, *Patrice Lumumba*, *Joseph Kasavubu*, *Albert Luthuli*, *Oliver Tambo*, *Nelson Mandela*, *Walter Sisulu*, and *Ho Chi Minh* were described by the textbook as great personalities or patriots who struggled and/ or lead their country to independence from European colonialism in their respective countries.

The third groups of heroes are those who tried to counteract colonialism through the Non-Aligned Movement and able to secure economic and technical assistance from both the eastern and western blocs without threatening their sovereignty. Some of the leading personalities behind the Non-Aligned Movement as portrayed in the textbook were

presidents: *Joseph Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Sukarno of Indonesia, and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt*. Finally, the textbook described *President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill* as two great persons who initiated the foundation of the UNO. The textbook also credited *Mao tse-Tung* as a forerunner of the Chinese Communist Revolution which led China to development.

Grade eleven History textbook depicted twenty-nine heroes and heroines along with a brief description of their glories and/or achievements. Among these only five were Ethiopians and the rest twenty-four were international. The Ethiopian heroes portrayed in the textbook include: (1) *Negus Lalibela*, (2) *King Kaleb or El-Esabna*, (3) *Marara or Marra Takla Haymanot*, (4) *Fasiledes*, and (5) *Emperor Tewodros II*.

The international heroes and heroines displayed by the textbook include: (1) *Job Ludolf*, (2) *King Thutmose III*, (3) *King Hammurabi*, (4) *King Nabopolassar*, (5) *Nebuchadnezzar II*, (6) *Leonardo da Vinci*, (7) *William Shakespeare*, (8) *Nicolaus Copernicus*, (9) *Galileo Galilei*, (10) *William Harvey*, (11) *Robert Boyle*, (12) *Queen Elizabeth I*, (13) *King William III*, (14) *Queen Mary*, (15) *Thomas Jefferson*, (16) *George Washington*, (17) *Napoleon Bonaparte*, (18) *Savry*, (19) *Newcomer*, (20) *James Watt*, (21) *Sante Anna*, (22) *Francisco Miranda*, (23) *Simon Bolivar*, (24) *San Martin*, and (25) *Bernardo O'Higgins*.

Grade twelve History textbook portrayed heroes and heroines in various fields. The textbook presented and briefly described twenty four Ethiopian and local heroes/heroines. Some of these include: (1) *Tao Gaki Shrecho*, (2) *Kawo Tona*, (3) *Abba Jiffar II*, (4) *Kumsa Moroda*, (5) *Jote Tullu*, (6) *Emir Nur*, (7) *Emir Abdullahi*, (8) *Sahle Selassie*, (9) *Emperor Tewodros II*, (10) *Emperor Yohannes IV*, (11) *Emperor Menelik II*, (12) *Empress Taytu*, (13) *Ras Alula Engida*, (14) *Ras Mengesha Yohannes*, (15) *Empress Taytu*, (16) *Lij Iyasu*, (17) *Emperor Haile Selassie I*, (18) *Blatta Takala Hawaryat*, (19) *Belay Zeleke*, (20) *Bitwaded Negash Bezabeh*, (21) *Blatta Haile Mariam Radda*, (22) *the Two Neway brothers*, (23) *Tilahun Gizaw*, and (24) *Meles Zenawi*. Added to this list are a number of resistance movement patriots. On the basis of their treatment in the textbook, among this long list of great personalities in Ethiopian history, the first eight persons assumed an ethnic identity while all the rest carried Ethiopian identity.

The textbook also depicted twenty-seven international great personalities in various fields. The first group of persons who led the unification of their country include: (1) *Giuseppe Mazini*, (2) *Giuseppe Garibaldi*, (3) *Count Camillo Cavour*, (4) *Victor Emanuel*, (5) *Otto von Bismarck*, and (6) *Abraham Lincoln*. *W. Wilson* was portrayed in the textbook as an American president who realized the establishment of the League of Nations. *V. I Lenin* and *Leon Trotsky* were treated as famous figures who transformed the Russian Bourgeois Revolution into a purely socialist revolution. The textbook described *Joseph Stalin*, *F.D. Roosevelt* and *W. Churchill* as leading architects of WWII who planned the Allied Strategy. On the other hand, *General D. Eisenhower*, *General Charles de Gaulle*, *General Bernard Montgomery*, and *Marshall Zhukov* were treated in the textbook as prominent military leaders of the Allied Forces and as heroes of the Second World War. The last group constitutes those patriots who led the independence struggle against European colonial powers. Some of these include: (1) *Mahatma Gandhi*, (2) *Jawaharlal Nehru*, (3) *V. Patel*, (4) *Mohammed Ali Jinnah*, (5) *Sukarno*, (6) *Ho Chi Minh*, (7) *Nnamdi Azikwe*, (8) *Kwame Nkrumah*, (9) *Ferhat Abbas*, (10) *Ben Bella*, (6) *Agostino Neto*, (11) *Eduardo Mondlane*, and (12) *Jomo Kenyatta*.

Generally, from the long list of heroes and heroines presented above along with their achievements from all sets of History textbooks, we can extract two important findings. First, as the textbooks give space for local, national and international heroes/heroines, they tend to develop ethnic, Ethiopian and cosmopolitan identities. Second, due to the ideological orientation of textbook writers principal nation-builders of Ethiopia did not attain the status of similar nation-builders with almost comparable approaches in Italy and Germany. The national oppression thesis advocated by the incumbent government seems to blur the achievements of Ethiopian historical nation-builders.

6.2.1.3. National holidays

Grade ten History textbook presented and described two national holidays in Ethiopia. The first national holiday, according to the textbook, is *Liberation Day*. The textbook stated that the British forces entered Ethiopia and controlled Addis Ababa on 6 April 1941 and Emperor H/Selassie re-entered the national capital on 5 May 1941 and “officially hoisted the Ethiopian Flag” (p. 153). Then, the textbook raises a question for discussion to students

about which day to be commemorated as a *Liberation Day*, 5 April or May 5? Why? The second national holiday described by the textbook is *May 28*, in which “EPRDF forces made their advance into Addis Ababa from different directions and controlled the capital on 28 May 1991”.

Grade twelve History textbook depicted five national holidays. The first national holiday treated by the textbook was *1 March 1896 or the Adwa Victory*, where Ethiopians smashed the invading fascist Italian forces and scored complete victory. The second national holiday depicted in the textbook was *6 April 1941*, when the British Army under General Cunningham and the patriotic forces drove fascist troops out of Addis Ababa. The third national holiday was *5 May 1941* as the day when Emperor Haile Selassie re-entered Addis Ababa, restored his imperial power, took control of the government and Ethiopia became fully liberated from five years of Fascist rule. The fourth holiday treated by the textbook was *March 1978* when all Somali invading forces were drove out from the country and total victory was achieved. Finally, the textbook presented *28 May 1991* as a national holiday when the EPRDF victoriously entered Addis Ababa and brought to an end to Mengistu’s military dictatorship. The textbook described the overthrow of the communist military dictatorship and the coming into power of the EPRDF as “the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Ethiopia” (p. 287).

Generally all sets of History textbooks portrayed four national holidays, namely: the Adwa Victory (1st of March 1896), Liberation Day (5th of May 1941), victory over the invading Somalia forces (March 1978) and May 28 (the Downfall of Dergue). All these four national holidays presented in History textbooks seem to reflect Ethiopian patriotism against foreign aggression and national oppression.

6.2.1.4. Historico-cultural symbols

Grade nine History textbook portrayed and described four historico-cultural symbols, such as (1) *Lucy*, (2), *Axumite obelisks*, (3) *Lalibela Rock-Hewn Churches*, and (4) *the Fasiledes Castle*. The textbook used Lucy to show Ethiopia as the origin of the first human-being and described Lucy’s fossil as the most complete so far found. It also lists other parts of Ethiopia (such as the Omo valley, Melka-Kimture, Konso-Gardula, Middle Awash, and

areas around Dire Dawa) to portray Ethiopia as the origin of early human beings. Axumite obelisks, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela and the castles of Fasiledes were described in the textbook as manifestations of the civilizations or architectural developments in the respective periods of Ethiopian history.

Grade ten History textbooks depicted and described two historical symbols such as the Battle of Adwa and the Black Lion Organization. With regard to the Battle of Adwa, the textbook described the course of the war, and its consequences to Ethiopia and the black people as a whole. The textbook treated the Battle of Adwa as a manifestation of a high degree of courage and unity of Ethiopians and as a symbol of black dignity and self-rule (p. 75). The textbook further asserted that the Adwa victory guaranteed the political independence of Ethiopia, the opening of European legations in Addis Ababa, and the delimitation of Ethiopian international boundaries. As to the Black Lion Organization, the textbook stated that it was formed in 1936 and engaged in the patriotic resistance struggle against Fascist occupation.

Grade eleven History textbook portrayed eleven historico-cultural symbols, of which six of them found in Ethiopia while the rest four are international heritages. Some of these historico-cultural heritages and/or symbols include: (1) *Lucy*, (2) *the Temple of Yeha*, (3) *Obelisks of Axum*, (4) *the rock-hewn Churches of Lalibela*, (5) *the Fasiledes Castle*, (6) *the Oromo Gada system*, (7) *Egyptian pyramids*, (8) *Babylon's famous Hanging Gardens*, (9) *the Temple of Marduk*, and (10) *Taj Mahal*. The textbook treated the first five, except the Oromo Gada System, as historico-cultural symbols of the Ethiopian politico-cultural community and the next four as world heritages but reflecting the civilizations of the respective countries. The Adwa victory and the Black Lion Organization were also the main historical symbols treated in grade twelve History textbook.

6.2.2. Self-projections

Though not yet identified the common Ethiopian traits transcending the ethnic, religious, linguistic cultural and other boundaries, grade nine History textbook recognized the long established interactions and interconnections of the different nations and nationalities of Ethiopia in their historical past as stated below: “The people of Ethiopia are made up of

nations and nationalities that have been interconnected and interacting in their historical past. The Ethiopian peoples and state are the results of the historical development of these interconnections and interrelations” (p. 25).

Grade nine History textbook also capitalized on the historical roots of religious tolerance in Ethiopia as stated below:

The introduction of Islam to Ethiopia and the Horn was peaceful with no jihad and this was mainly because of the favour that the Axumite kingdom had done for the early Muslim refugees. Mohammed sent a small group of his followers including the prophet’s daughter, Rukiya, to the kingdom of Axum in 615 A.D. The warm reception and good attitudes of the king of Axum towards the Muslim refugees moved Mohammed not to conduct jihad against the Ethiopian region. After the returning back of all the Muslim immigrants to Arabia safely around 628 A.D the Prophet continued to maintain closer links with the kingdom of Axum. As a result Mohammed exempted the kingdom of Axum from jihad in the future (p. 52).

Grade ten History textbook depicted Ethiopian heroism as stated “It was only in Ethiopia that successful resistance against the European colonial conquest was carried out during the period of colonial occupation of Africa” (p. 22). In other words, the textbook displayed Ethiopian heroism through the lens of the Adwa victory.

Grade eleven History textbook provided a more refined operationalization of the images or projections of the Ethiopian political and cultural community which would transcend ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural, gender, racial, etc boundaries. Consequently, Ethiopians define themselves as those cultural communities who are characterized by such norms and values as *respect for elders, hospitability, faithfulness and modesty* as provided hereunder:

Ethiopia is a mosaic of peoples that is characterized by socio-cultural diversity. However in spite of their different cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identities, the Ethiopian people share a number of common things. Ethiopians in most cases share similar moral and ethical values and norms, such as respect for the elders, hospitality, faithfulness, modesty and the like. In addition, there is also a culture of assisting one another in times of difficulties without regard to religious, linguistic or ethnic differences. This culture of cooperation for mutual benefit and development for common good signifies the basic characteristics of the Ethiopian peoples (pp. 83-84).

Grade eleven History textbook attempted to defend the culture of religious tolerance in Ethiopia as stated: “...although they are different in religion, the Ethiopian Muslims and Christians share important values like pride in their country, cooperation for the common good and willingness to defend their country from external aggression” (p. 83).

Grade twelve History textbook illuminated on Ethiopian heroism or patriotism. For instance, on page 47, the textbook stated that “By 1900, with the exception of Ethiopia, Morocco (until 1912) and Liberia, the whole continent of Africa was virtually under European colonial rule” (p. 47). And then it added that “Ethiopia was the only African country which succeeded in warding off European colonialism” (p. 48). Furthermore, the textbook asserted that “Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as one of the very few independent nations in Africa. Liberia didn’t fight any war of independence as Ethiopia did” (p. 84). All these three quotations directly taken from the textbook underlined the idea that it is logical for Ethiopians to imagine themselves as heroes/heroines.

6.2.3. The Interface between ethnic and Ethiopian identity

Grade nine History textbook described Ethiopia as a “multi-national state” (p. 21). It further explained that despite the nations and nationalities of the country have different cultures and speak different languages, they have had many common experiences which helped them to live side by side in peace and unity.

Grade eleven History textbook treated Ethiopia as a nation of nations and also stated that there are commonalities within diversities which enable the country’s political and cultural community to live together as stated:

Ethiopia is a nation composed of people from diverse ethnic groups, having different languages, religions, traditional values and life styles. However, in spite of their different cultural, linguistic and ethnic identities, the Ethiopian peoples share a number of common things (p. 83).

The textbook further asserted that despite greater social, cultural and linguistic diversities observed in the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples, they all “share many common values of which the most important one is their identification of themselves as Ethiopians” (p. 84).

Generally, as History textbooks were not produced by the World Bank Project (GEQIP), they did not share some common features of other subject areas textbooks. For instance, the background colours of the cover pages of all the rest textbooks were made to reflect the respective traditional colours of the Ethiopian national flag and the colour of the emblem at the center. However, this element, among other things, was missed in History textbooks. The other point is that, in terms of content areas, in all the available sets of History textbooks the history of the Northern Ethiopian Christian Highland Kingdom has been told and retold in larger parts of their volumes. In the context of most Ethiopian history discourse, it is not something unusual to find the dominance of the highland Christian north. The other major gap in the existing sets of History textbooks was that although they portrayed some political and historico-cultural symbols, they failed to create some kind of attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community so that cultivate a sense of attachment and belonging among students.

The other limitation of History textbooks, which deserves consideration, may be that much of their volumes have been devoted to the treatment of African and world history. Such retreat to world and African history at the expense of domestic affairs seems to emerge from the apparent failure to document a clearly articulated history of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples. Probably, the most obvious gap in History textbooks is that Ethiopian history has been presented as a set of fixed and monolithic “fact” to be absorbed and memorized by students rather than as interpretation of socially constructed and even deconstructed and contested historical events. As a result of this, students seem to have no any role in the construction, reconstruction and/ or deconstruction of the national history. The paradox is that in the post-1991 Ethiopia ‘new’ nation-building process the ‘past’ remains very controversial. In all sets of History, Social Studies and CEE textbooks and in the Preamble of the 1995 FDRE Constitution it was reported that by bringing historical inequalities and injustices into perspective the past, in its political sense, could not be used as a legitimizer of the post-1991 ‘new’ nation-building process.

6.3. CEE textbooks portrayal of Ethiopian identity

When compared with history textbooks, the CEE textbooks of lower and upper secondary education portrayed all the four dimensions of Ethiopian identity identified to guide content analysis of textbooks as presented hereunder.

6.3.1. Political and historico-cultural symbols

The specific content categories used to operationalize the political and historico-cultural symbols denoting Ethiopian identity and employed to guide content analysis of textbooks include the Ethiopian national flag and anthem, national heroes/heroines, national holidays and historico-cultural heritages, each of which are presented below.

6.3.1.1. National flag and national anthem

All sets of secondary education (grade nine upto grade twelve) CEE textbooks portrayed the Ethiopian national flag both in their front and back cover-pages. They also depicted the Ethiopian national anthem in their front inside cover-pages. The textbooks also portrayed the flags of the regional governments of Ethiopia as found encircling the Ethiopian national flag at their back outer cover-pages. In their inside back cover-pages, regional fags are portrayed according to Art. 47 of the FDRE Constitution.

When we see the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem treatment of each set of CEE textbooks, in grade nine CEE textbook the meaning of the national flag and the emblem sketched in a blue background were presented. The textbook described the Ethiopian national flag as representing the history and culture of its people and as a source of pride and unity of purpose and the emblem on the flag reflects the hope of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples as well as religious communities of Ethiopia to live together in equality and unity. On page, 76, the textbook portrayed the picture of the Ethiopian national flag flying high on the sky. On page 91 also, it depicted the picture of students on Ethiopian flag raising ceremony at a school compound as part of their citizenship responsibility. In short, the textbook wanted to communicate the message that “...the name Ethiopia and its flag are synonymous” (p. 76). In addition to the Ethiopian national flag, the textbook also portrayed the picture of the flags of Communist China and the USA as

having contrasted economic systems (command versus free market economic system respectively).

Grade ten CEE textbook appears mainly to emphasize the history and the need to give respect to the Ethiopian national flag. As such, it asserted that the Ethiopian flag, in green, yellow and red tricolor, is the oldest of all flags in Africa and many African countries adopted the tricolors of the Ethiopian national flag in one way or another for they considered it as a symbol of independence. Furthermore, the textbook stated that:

For the Ethiopians the choice of the colours in the flag has a very long history. The Ethiopian flag, among other things, symbolizes the commitment of the people to preserve the independence of the country. So, the flag of Ethiopia is a national symbol of sacrifice, pride and unity for its peoples. The national flag represents the country at the international arena and is known across the world. Thus due respect for the national flag increases one's patriotic feeling (p. 77).

Grade eleven CEE textbook further consolidated on the history of the Ethiopian national flag and the need to give respect to it. The textbook described the origin of the Ethiopian national flag and its subsequent historical developments in terms of colour and outline from the 10th century A.D to the present. On the origin of the Ethiopian national flag, the textbook has the following to say: “The flag in Ethiopia has a long history. It extends well over a thousand years. Some give a religious interpretation and trace the origin of the existing flag to a rainbow which appeared after the biblical flood” (p. 60).

The textbook traced the official utilization of the present tricolor Ethiopian national flag to the reign of Empress Zewditu in 1918 and its first constitutional recognition to 1955. Then it described the meaning of the three colours and the emblem in blue background as per the 1995 FDRE Constitution. Finally on page 61, the textbook portrayed the pictures and outlines of the Ethiopian national flag from the period of the last emperor upto the present.

Grade twelve CEE textbook treated the Ethiopian national flag as a symbol of national pride. It stated that the national flag has a long history and today it served as an instrument of unity and national pride and as a stimulus to deal with some political, social and economic problems. Finally, there was nothing stated in the main body all sets of CEE textbooks (grade nine through grade twelve) about the national anthem of Ethiopia.

6.3.1.2. National heroes/heroines

Grade nine CEE textbook portrayed and briefly described eleven great personalities – seven local and four international heroes/heroines. The local heroes include: Tirunesh Dibaba and Derartu Tulu in the field of athletics; Ras Abebe Aregay and W/ro Shewareged Gedle from the battlefield; Dr. Aklilu Lemma in the field of medicine; and Abebech Gobena and Zewdu Getachew in the field of volunteering were treated as national/Ethiopian heroes/heroines. The textbook also described Kofi Annan (peace negotiator in the Kenyan 2008 election crisis), Nelson Mandela (Nobel Prize winner for his struggle for justice); and Henry Ford and Warren Stanley (as successful entrepreneurs) as international heroes.

Grade ten CEE textbook portrayed and described twelve great personalities from various fields such as politics, athletics, literature, art, education, science. Among these, eight persons were from the Ethiopian politico-cultural community and the rest four were from the international community. The four international heroes described in the textbook were (1) Mahatma Gandhi, (2) Rabindranath Tagore, (3) Albert Einstein, and the Chinese People. They were described in the textbook as heroes or role-models for their contribution to social justice, poetry, knowledge and hardworking culture respectively.

Similarly, the Ethiopian heroes/heroines treated in the textbook include: (1) *King Lalibela*, (2) *Emperor Tewodros II*, (3) *Emperor Yohannes IV*, (4) *Emperor Menelik II*, (5) *Tirunesh Dibaba*, (6) *Tibebe Meko*, (7) *W/ro Asegedech Assefa*, and (8) *Paulos Gnogno*. The textbook capitalized on the contribution of these Ethiopian heroes and heroines to architecture, modernization, athletics, volunteering, and journalism. The textbook treated the three Ethiopian emperors as the empire-builders of the nineteenth century Ethiopia who “played a significant role to bring back and unite some of the ancient parts, consolidate, and expand Ethiopia to its present form” (p. 21). The textbook displayed the pictures of these emperors including Emperor H/Selassie I. But, the last Emperor (Haile Selassie I) was, at the same time, treated by the textbook as oppressive.

Grade eleven CEE textbook portrayed and described six great personalities from various disciplines, such as athletics, volunteering, politics and science. Among these heroes and

heroines, three of them were Ethiopians – such as *Tirunesh Dibaba*, *Dr. Belay Abegaz* and *Berhane Kelkay* – and the rest three were international – including *Barrack Obama*, *Galileo* and *Alexander the Great*.

Similarly grade twelve CEE textbook depicted seventeen local and international heroes/heroines. Ethiopian heroes/heroines displayed in the textbook include: (1) *Tirunesh Dibaba*, (2) *G/Hiwot Baykedagn*, (3) *Emperor Haile Selassie I*, (4) *Professor Aklilu Lemma*, and (5) *Metier Artist Afework Tekle*. The international heroes and heroines include: (1) *Thomas Jefferson*, (2) *President Sekou Toure*, (3) *Kwame Nkrumah*, (4) *Jomo Kenyatta*, (5) *Abdul Nasser*, (6) *Rosa Parks*, (7) *Martin Luther King Junior*, (8) *Mohandas Gandhi*, (9) *Nelson Mandela*, (10) *Charlotte Gilman*, (11) *Alexander Graham Bell*, and (12) *Franklin Roosevelt*. With the exception of the founding fathers of the OAU (such as Emperor Haile Selassie I, President Sekou Toure, Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, and Abdul Nasser) and Thomas Jefferson who were mainly politicians, all the rest local and international heroes/heroines depicted in the textbook were renowned personalities in their civic duties, mainly athletics, literature, science, art and social justice.

6.3.1.3. National holidays

Grade nine CEE textbook did not treat any national holiday. Grade ten CEE textbook treated the Ethiopian New Millennium Celebration. The textbook portrayed two pictures of Millennium celebrations. The first picture showed celebrations by the wider public and the second picture depicted millennium celebrations by the teenagers having flying the Ethiopian national flag.

Grade eleven CEE textbook emphasized on the role of national holidays, festivals and sporting events in encouraging communication and cultural exchanges and consequently enabling peaceful co-existence among the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. In line with this, the textbook capitalized on the role of the Nations and Nationalities Day, National Flag Day, sport events and festivals as stated below:

Working together on common problems is a peaceful means of resolving conflict. Furthermore, identifying the commonly shared values, interests and goals are also a means of conflict prevention and resolution. Therefore, it is important to identify these commonly shared values,

interests and goals, which are quite useful to bring about national consensus and create stability. These can be done through encouraging communication among different groups and through cultural exchanges such as Festivals, Nations and Nationalities Days, National Flag Days, Sport Events and similar communal activities (p. 24).

Probably, national holidays were one of the least represented Ethiopian identity attributes in all sets of CEE textbooks. For instance, grade ten and grade twelve CEE textbooks did not give space for the portrayal and description of the Ethiopian national anthem. Even what was presented in grade nine and grade eleven CEE textbooks was not as such clear and specific.

6.3.1.4. Historico-cultural symbols

Grade nine CEE textbook portrayed and described eight historico-cultural symbols/heritages. These symbols or heritages include: (1) the Konso settlements, (2) the Battle of Adwa, (3) the Monuments of Axum, (4) the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, (5) the Castles of Gondar, (6) the Caves of Sheik Hussien, and (7) Parthenon. Among these, the first six were Ethiopian in origin and described by the textbook as symbolizing the Ethiopian political and cultural community and the last one historico-cultural symbol was treated to symbolize cosmopolitan identity.

Grade ten CEE textbook presented nine historico-cultural symbols which include: (1) the Church of Lalibela, (2) the Monuments of Axum, (3) the Castles of Gondar, (4) Victory Monument at Arat Kilo, (5) Debre Damo Church, (6) Abba Jeffar's Palace, (7) Sof Omar Cave, and (8) the Ethiopian calendar. The textbook described all these historico-cultural symbols or heritages as they symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community and hence they portray Ethiopian identity.

Grade eleven CEE textbook portrayed four historico-cultural symbols/heritages of Ethiopia. These include: (1) the Tiya Stones, (2) Yeha, (3) the Susenios Castle, and (4) the churches of Lalibela. The textbook portrayed the pictures of the Tiya Stones, Yeha and Lalibela rock-hewn churches as some of the historical heritages of Ethiopia. Furthermore, in line with these heritages the textbook maintained that:

Cultural artifacts and historical heritages, such as obelisks and monuments have to be preserved as these are links between the generations of the past, present and future. They are living testimonies to the history and culture of the people who had once lived on the land (p. 84).

Grade twelve textbook also presented only two historico-cultural symbols or heritages, such as the Victory of Adwa and the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela as they depict the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Generally, in all sets of secondary education CEE textbooks many of the political, historical and cultural symbols portrayed in the textbook were treated as they symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community and thus reinforce Ethiopian identity. This may be attributed to the fact that in the current Ethiopian formal education landscape secondary education level is the responsibility of the federal government.

6.3.2. Constitutional patriotism

The specific attributes of constitutional patriotism assumed to guide the content analysis of textbooks were textbook depiction of common territory, common laws and institutions, legal equality of citizens, common legal rights and duties, popular sovereignty, constitutional supremacy, and common economy as presented below.

6.3.2.1. Common territory

Although it did not trace the origin of the current Ethiopian territory, grade nine CEE textbook portrayed the political map of Ethiopia with its nine ethnic regions and city administrations. In grade ten CEE textbooks, in addition to portraying the political map of Ethiopia, the names of the nine regional governments of Ethiopian and city administrations was presented. One step further, the textbook stated that: “In Ethiopia, there are over eighty cultural groups having different languages and ways of life. Although they have different cultures, they have only one homeland that they share in common with others” (p. 16).

But yet, the what of that ‘homeland’ and how it was historically evolved into its present form has not been sufficiently described in the textbook. Grade eleven and grade twelve CEE textbooks stated nothing about issues related to common territory of the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

6.3.2.2. Common laws and institutions

The common laws and institutions presented in grade nine CEE textbook include: (1) FDRE Constitution, (2) the Parliament, (3) Courts, (4) House of Federation, (5) Human Rights Commission, (6) the Ombudsman, and (7) Jaarsummaa. The first six laws and institutions were described in the textbook as they belong to and govern the Ethiopian political and cultural community. On the other hand, Jaarsummaa – a court of elders for conflict resolution among the Arsi-Oromo – was described as it belongs to and governs an ethnic community. The textbook also depicted such common international and regional institutions as European Union, United Nations, African Union and World Bank, which may reinforce cosmopolitan identity.

Similarly, grade ten CEE textbook portrayed and described some common laws and institutions of Ethiopia such as the FDRE Constitution, Parliament, Courts, Human Rights Commission, Office of the Ombudsman, Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, National Army, House of Federation, and House of Peoples’ Representatives. The textbook described these common laws and institutions as they belong to or govern the Ethiopian political and cultural community. It also portrayed the picture of the National Army with a caption: “Defending the motherland is the duty of all” (p. 98).

Grade eleven CEE textbook treated such common laws and institutions as the FDRE Constitution, Courts, House of Peoples Representatives’, House of Federation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ethics and Anti – Corruption Commission, League of Nations, United Nations, OAU/AU and the Non-Aligned Movement. Grade twelve CEE textbook also described the Judiciary in Ethiopia, Houses of Parliament in Britain, White House, League of Nations, UNO, OAU/AU and UNESCO. Such treatment of common laws and institutions appear to reinforce Ethiopian, regional and global citizenship.

6.3.2.3. Legal equality of citizens

All sets of CEE textbooks appear to underscore the legal equality of all Ethiopian citizens both as individuals and groups. They underlined the point that there is equality within diversity. But more weight appears to be given to the issue of group equality than individual equality. For instance, with regard to individual equality grade nine CEE

textbook stated that irrespective of ethnicity, language, religion, age, sex, and other cultural traits, all citizens are equal before the law and have equal political and economic opportunities. But most importantly, the textbook devoted more volumes for the treatment of group equalities, such as the equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, equality of cultures, religious equality, and gender equality. In line with the equality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, the textbook stated that: “Today, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia are equal and have the constitutional right to promote and develop their cultural identity. It means accepting all cultural groups as equal and gives equal opportunity for development” (p. 13).

Grade ten through grade twelve CEE textbooks further consolidate the legal equality of citizens as individuals and as groups. For instance, grade ten CEE textbook defined equality as “similar rights, benefits and opportunities as well as burdens” enjoyed by citizens of the country (p. 49). The textbook treated equality as a means to peace, accelerated development and national consensus. In Grade eleven textbook, the issue of legal equality of citizens was treated as a means of undoing past inequalities or injustices. The textbook further maintained that:

Ethiopia is a multicultural and multiethnic country with over 80 ethnic groups inhabiting its territories. Today they are classified as Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. They have constitutionally protected rights of equality. No one group is superior, as no group is inferior. All, big or small, have equal rights to protect, advance and promote the development of their cultural distinctions (p. 40).

Grade eleven added another dimension of group equality that is the equality of disabled persons. Regarding the legal equality of citizens, grade twelve CEE textbook devoted much of its volume for the equality of opportunity (the distribution of benefits and burdens). The textbook underlined on the message that all the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia contribute to the development of their country as much as they can and hence sharing the benefits and burdens fairly will create a sense of belonging to the country.

6.3.2.4. Common legal rights and duties

Grade nine CEE textbook first described common legal rights and then citizenship duties. The common legal rights portrayed in grade nine CEE textbook were broadly categorized

into two as human and democratic rights. The textbook described human rights as those rights and privileges citizens enjoy for merely being human beings and these include the right to life, security, liberty and privacy. On the other hand, democratic rights are those enjoyed by persons for being citizens of the country and these rights include the right of thought, opinion and expression, freedom of association, movement, rights of nationality, etc. To sum up, the textbook communicated the message (to students) that: “As citizens of Ethiopia, you have the constitutional protection to use these rights. It is important for you to know about these rights so that you can defend and use them properly” (p. 8).

As to citizenship duties or responsibilities, grade nine CEE textbook first underlined on the point that there is no limitless right without a corresponding obligation or duty. Then the textbook went on to communicate the main citizenship duties such as respecting diversity, fighting corruption, struggling against injustices, paying taxes, being a modern patriot, volunteering, respect for work and work ethics, being self-reliant (avoiding dependency), saving, active community participation and looking for knowledge and truth. More specifically, pride in the country, respect for national symbols, promoting the common good (public interest), defending the country’s sovereignty, fighting poverty and backwardness, respect for the laws of the land, tolerance of diversity, knowing the true history of the country, tolerating diversity, protection and preservation of natural resources and historical heritages, and keeping state secrets were treated in the textbook as patriotic duties (pp. 74-79).

Grade ten CEE textbook discussed the long list of rights and duties embodied in the FDRE Constitution. The textbook appears to emphasize the Ethiopian traditional patriotism as stated hereunder: “Ethiopians fought many battles against external enemies in order to defend their country. This is what we have to do today, and in the future when enemies invade our country. This is our obligation as citizens” (p. 51).

Grade ten CEE textbook underlined the message that civic duties are the responsibilities of all citizens. Such civic duties include: being hardworking, tolerant, compromising, open-minded and loyal to democratic principles and values, and obeying the law and respecting the rights. They are treated as part of the constitutional responsibilities of citizens.

Common legal rights and duties have been given more coverage in grade eleven and grade twelve CEE textbooks as well. In addition to the citizenship duties presented in the preceding grade levels, grade twelve textbook appears to reinforce global citizenship as stated below:

We need to contribute to the national and global community through fighting against terrorism, genocide, and illegal trade such as drug trafficking. We have to defend the security of our country, as citizens of Ethiopia, and defend international security as global citizens (p. 75).

Grade twelve CEE textbook also communicated the message that understanding, evaluating and supporting government policies and strategies is a patriotic citizenship duty. But interestingly, it tends to cultivate constructive criticism and as such rejected unjustified and/or blind attachment or support and criticism to government policies and strategies. The textbook portrayed the picture of Gebre Hiwot Baykedagn along with a short description of him as critical (patriotic) citizen.

Generally, there is boundary maintenance in all sets of CEE textbooks on the status of human and democratic rights in different government systems of Ethiopia. The textbook asserted that human and democratic rights were not respected by the previous governments of Ethiopia and it is only now that these rights have been respected.

6.3.2.5. Popular sovereignty

Grade nine CEE textbook appears to communicate the message that in present day Ethiopia all sovereign power resides on the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples and the FDRE Constitution is an expression of their sovereignty; and as such they are the sources of all power in the country. Grade ten CEE textbook also documented that the Constitution bestowed political power to the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. Grade eleven CEE textbook added that as people are the sources of power elected officials are accountable to the people and thus the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia have the mandate to inspect them. The same idea was further consolidated in grade twelve CEE textbook.

6.3.2.6. Constitutional supremacy

With regard to the FDRE Constitution, grade nine CEE textbook underlined the message that citizens, government bodies and all other laws, rule and regulations are subordinate to the basic principles of the Constitution. More specifically, the textbook stated that:

You and your parents and people whose mother or father is Ethiopian, are citizens of Ethiopia. You, your parents, government officials like police, judges, teachers, directors and all other people living in the country have rights, duties and responsibilities which are clearly written in the Constitution. Therefore, everyone living in the country must respect and act according to the Constitution (p. 32).

Grade ten CEE textbook described the constitution as a source of all laws in the country. It added that as the Constitution is the fundamental law of the country, the Nomenclature of the State, the basic organs (legislative, executive and judiciary) and structure of the FDRE Government are established and defined by the Constitution.

Grade eleven CEE textbook stressed constitutional supremacy as one of the basic principles of the FDRE Constitution. The textbook stated that “Every citizen, irrespective of social status, ethnic or religious background, is subject to the laws of the country” (p. 23), among which the Constitution is the most fundamental one. It also communicated the idea that the Constitution is the basis for the prevalence of rule of law.

The main issue underlined in grade twelve CEE textbook was ‘constitutionalism’. The textbook defined constitutionalism as “an ideology, which advocates that everything in a state and every action of the government should be in accordance with the constitution (p.8). It describes the constitution as a supreme law of the land and as such it defines government policies as well as the legal relationship between the state and its citizens.

6.3.2.7. Common economy

Grade nine CEE textbook portrayed and described Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority and the National Bank of Ethiopia as common economic institutions of the Ethiopian politico-cultural community. Grade ten CEE textbook described only the resourcefulness of Ethiopia and its potential for national development. In the textbook, such common economic institutions as the Ethiopian Airlines, National Bank of Ethiopia

and Yekatit 12 Hospital were treated. Similarly, grade eleven CEE textbook depicted and described the Ethiopian National Bank, Ethiopian Airlines and Tekeze Hydroelectric Power Plant. It further treated such regional, continental and international organizations as IGAD, COMESA, UNECA, IMF and the World Bank. Finally, grade twelve CEE textbook dealt with the National Bank of Ethiopia, IGAD, NEPAD, ECA, IMF, WTO and the World Bank.

6.3.3. Self projections

Grade nine ECC textbook maintained that respecting elders is the value of the Ethiopian society as stated: "...although it is not written in law, respecting elders is a valuable part of the Ethiopian society" (p. 64). The other values shared by the Ethiopian society, as manifested by the textbook include: honesty, hospitality and national pride. "The peoples of Ethiopia have developed a common identity in their long history. They share common cultural identities such as honesty, hospitality and national pride" (p. 77).

The issue of national pride was also dealt with in greater detail in grade eleven CEE textbook. The sources of national pride as stated in the textbook include: (1) Ethiopia is the only country in Africa that was never colonized; (2) It joined the League of Nations before any other African country; (3) It is the founding member of the UNO; (4) It contributed to the UN peace-keeping mission more than any other country in Africa; (5) it pioneered the establishment of the OAU; (6) It played a significant role to end colonialism in Africa; and (7) Ethiopia is one of the pioneers in the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement and some regional groupings in Africa. Grade twelve CEE textbook added to these attributes that Ethiopia has an ancient history and a symbol of African independence.

6.3.4. Interface between ethnic and Ethiopian identity

Grade nine textbook underlined the idea that Ethiopia has greater ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity. That is, the country has different languages, religions, customs, and traditions and respecting diversity enables its people to live in harmony. The textbook, in short, communicates the message that identities are co-existing as stated: "A country with cultural diversity is as beautiful as a painting made up of different colours" (p.

13). Such treatment of the country's diversity continues in grade ten CEE textbook. The textbook stated that

Ethiopia is a land of diversity. We Ethiopians speak different languages and generally have different cultures. We live in different parts of the country and are engaged in different economic activities. But we all have similar opinions about some important issues. For example, we have a national consensus on building the unity of Ethiopia based on the will and mutual respect of its peoples (p. 52).

Grade eleven CEE textbook has provided a further elaborated treatment on 'unity in diversity'. The textbook considers tolerance as a societal value used to unify differences among ethnic, religious, linguistic and political groups. It considers the Ethiopian ethnic-federalism as a true response to respecting diversity which leads to unity. The textbook intends to communicate the message that it is only when we appreciate diversity that unity and peace can prevail in Ethiopia. To demonstrate the practice of unity within diversity in Ethiopia the textbook provided the response of Ethiopians from diverse backgrounds to the flood victims of the Omo Basin as a case in point. "This national response to flood victims shows a spirit of unity and care for humans in Ethiopia".

Grade twelve CEE textbook tends to treat diversity as a factor of development by opening up different options. It further stated that unity is strength which will help the Ethiopian people to promote its common interests in a better way. The textbook stressed on the need create a common political and economic community and join hands to fight common enemies within the apparent greater linguistic, religious, ethnic and cultural diversities.

6.4. Students' and teachers' evaluation of curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity

In addition to qualitative content analysis of textbooks and other curriculum documents, the dissertation has tried to understand curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity through the lens of students' and some selected subject areas and grade levels teachers. It is widely accepted among scholars in the field that the effective implementation of any educational program primarily relies on teachers. It follows that – in addition to via students' perspectives – it appears logical to understand curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity

through the perspectives of the principal practitioners of the curriculum designed in accordance with the stated objectives of education or more specifically the textbooks.

Accordingly, 20 preparatory school complete students selected mainly on the basis of regional and ethnic diversity and 18 Social Studies, CEE and History teachers from the primary and secondary education system of the country were interviewed. Students and teachers evaluation of curriculum portrayal of the values, symbols and traditions representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community includes whether the Ethiopian national and regional education system in general has contributed to Ethiopian and ethnic identity development and the contribution of some specific subject areas such as Social Studies, CEE and History for the same. The students and teachers evaluation of curriculum depiction of Ethiopian identity are presented in separate sections hereunder.

6.4.1. Student perspectives

Under this heading, students were asked to assess the contribution of their formal education – particularly CEE, Social Studies and History education – to shaping their ethnic and Ethiopian identity. Although it appears difficult to find clearly defined thematic categories in students’ conceptualization of curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity and ethnic identity development, the following themes have been surfaced in students’ interview and FGDs responses.

6.4.1.1. Tolerance of diversity as representing Ethiopian identity

Students’ assessment of the national and regional education system curriculum response to ethnic and Ethiopian identity development showed that some academic subjects have a role in their Ethiopian identity development through nurturing and appreciating differences. In line with this, some students assert that CEE has contributed a lot to understanding and appreciating ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversities in Ethiopia. One student reflected:

CEE helped me to recognize the equality of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia in terms of language, culture, religion, and other dimensions. Such an understanding cannot be found from my families, peers and religious institutions. Most importantly, CEE also helped me to appreciate diversities and hence I do not feel differences as

potential challenges to Ethiopia. Thus, CEE contributes to my ethnic and Ethiopian identity development.

Another student considered diversity as a resource rather than a threat to political unity and stability when he said:

More than any other subjects I had learned in my primary and secondary education, CEE significantly contributed to understanding the different ethnic groups, cultures and religions in Ethiopia. Now, I understand that being different is a beauty not a challenge. For instance, I cannot tell you what I feel when I see and attend the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day celebration where many Ethiopian peoples of various ethnic background come together as one political community. Therefore, CEE helped me to develop both my ethnic and Ethiopian identity.

Similarly, another student further advanced the above assertions by amplifying the inherent interdependence which existed among the various nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia as stated:

My CEE and Social Studies education in my primary and secondary school years helped me to understand that Ethiopia is the sum total of its nations, nationalities and peoples and the presence of one ethnic group is relevant to the presence of the other ethnic group. In this context, particularly CEE helped me to feel both an Ethiopian as well as my ethnic group.

To sum up, depicting Ethiopia as a land of diversity where differences have not only recognized but also appreciated appears to dominate students' perspectives. Students believe that particularly their CEE has helped them to develop such an understanding. Accordingly, CEE seems to have some contribution to the students' knowledge of ethnic, religious, cultural, regional differences and even appreciation of it.

6.4.1.2. Citizenship as representing Ethiopian identity

Many students appreciated the role of CEE in helping them to understand their citizenship rights and duties. In the words of a student:

Definitely CEE helped me to know what my duties and responsibilities as well as what my rights and freedoms are. From my CEE course, I have gained a lot on the importance of discharging responsibilities as a good citizen of this country. I was also familiarized with such concepts as democracy, federalism, constitution, constitutionalism and the like. In this case, CEE helped me to strengthen my ethnic and Ethiopian identity.

Some students also underlined on the contribution of CEE in their Ethiopian and ethnic identity development through the transmission of such values as equality, equity and social justice. In line with this, a student reflected:

I believe that although the harmonious relationship among the different nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia has been the result of the sacrifices of some brave Ethiopians, especially CEE contributed a lot to preserve the values of the dead heroes (i.e. equality, equity and justice). In this case, education played a very important role in my ethnic and Ethiopian identity development.

Still a student underscored the contribution of CEE to understanding the equality of the various nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia as stated:

I believe more than any other subject, it is CEE which helped me to understand the equality of all nations, nationalities and peoples and to subsequently feel confident that my ethnic group is equally belonging and contributing to Ethiopia. Thus CEE helped me to develop both my ethnic and Ethiopian identity.

Under this thematic category, students assert that the Ethiopian national and regional education system curriculum, mainly CEE, has helped them to understand the basic principles of democracy, constitution and constitutionalism. In this way, CEE has contributed to students understanding of the significance of standing for the common good and/ or discharging responsibilities while enjoying their citizenship rights. It follows that CEE has contributed to develop the students' Ethiopian and ethnic identity.

6.4.1.3. Heroism and hospitability as representing Ethiopian identity

Some students reflected on the cumulative contribution of CEE, Social Studies and History education in their Ethiopian identity development. In this regard, a student has the following to say:

From CEE, Social Studies and History education of my primary and secondary school years, generally I have learned about the sacrifices of past generations to us. Parallel to the heroic struggle of our forefathers, I also learned the hospitability of the Ethiopian people. This helped me to develop confidence and love in my country.

Another student added:

Education has helped me to understand the historical and deep-rooted respect and tolerance which existed among the Ethiopian people.

Particularly from my CEE course I know that Ethiopians are peace-loving peoples and hence they are always respecting each other and other peoples. Of course I have learnt about this since childhood through my family also.

Some students also assert that their History and Social Studies education have contributed to develop patriotic feeling through communicating the sacrifices of the previous generations to safeguard the sovereignty of their country. In line with this, a student mentioned:

History and Social Studies education helped me to understand that Ethiopia has been kept independent and given to us through the heroic struggle of the previous generations. This created a sense of patriotic feeling on me. Of course, I understand that patriotism is not only expressed through struggle against foreign invaders. Now, working hard to defeat poverty and protection for historical and cultural heritages are also the manifestations of patriotism.

In view of students' depiction of *heroism* and *hospitality* as the main socio-cultural values representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community, it was '*heroism*' largely reflected in student values. On the other hand, '*hospitality*' as a socio-cultural value of the Ethiopian political and cultural community was only marginally surfaced in the students perspectives.

6.4.1.4. Curriculum as developing strong ethno-nationalistic sentiments

Some students were critical about the contribution of CEE, Social Studies and History education to their ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity. For instance, one student mentioned:

I think the topics covered in CEE, Social Studies and History textbooks could help to develop my ethnic and Ethiopian identity. For instance, topics like responsibility, patriotism, equality, justice and the like emphasize both Ethiopian and ethnic identity. But as portrayed in the textbooks, the historical inequalities and the unfair treatment of nations, nationalities and peoples by some groups makes me to be more inclined to my ethnic community.

Some students assert that most of the contents dealing with interethnic relations, as portrayed in CEE and Social Studies textbooks, often develop ethno-centric attitudes among students. In the word of a student:

Most of the points presented in the textbooks were fabricating differences and amplifying as if there were extreme historical inequalities and injustices rather than unity and fraternity. I think these things have been widening the gap between those in the so called exploited and exploiters camp. It seems due to this reason that there is hatred and mistrust among students of different ethnic and religious groups.

Still some students also went to associate the ethnic-based conflicts in the educational institutions of the country with the education system itself. One student maintained that “The main reason behind ethnic-based clashes in the school systems of Ethiopia is that some subjects, mainly CEE, are spreading differences and hatreds among students”.

Some other students assert that the experiential curriculum has been promoting hatred and ethnocentric feelings among students. For instance, a student associated the weaknesses of CEE, Social Studies and History education in developing their Ethiopian identity to the instructional process than to textbook design as stated:

The contribution of CEE, Social Studies and History education in my ethnic and Ethiopian identity is very poor. The reason is that those teachers who taught these subjects largely focused on oral traditions rather than what was presented in the textbooks. By doing so they create ethnic competition rather than cooperation and unjustified hatred by one region over the other.

To sum up, some interview participant students believe that both the planned or official curriculum and the experienced curriculum have been echoing on differences and unfair relations as if there were no any strong commonalities and fraternities among the various nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia throughout their history.

6.4.1.5. Curriculum as having little effect on group identity development

Some students challenged the contribution of CEE, Social Studies and History education in developing their ethnic and Ethiopian identity. For instance, a student stated that:

I believe the contribution of CEE, Social Studies and History education in Ethiopian identity development is very weak. Relatively, History education was better because it creates a sense of patriotism by presenting some heroes. But yet History education largely covers the history of African and other countries other than Ethiopia. On the other hand, the contents of CEE and Social Studies largely biased towards the

present political system. In this sense, CEE, Social Studies and History education did not as such contribute to my ethnic and Ethiopian identity.

Another student mentioned:

Definitely education, particularly CEE and Social Studies, helped me to understand the fact that Ethiopia is a nation of different nations and the harmonious relationship which exists between being Ethiopian and being an ethnic group. But the contents of education about Ethiopia (mainly in History, CEE and Social Studies) are more biased towards some groups.

Another student added:

I think there is a very wide gap between our society and its education system. That is, the textbooks did not reflect the values, cultures, and beliefs of the Ethiopian society. They largely devoted their coverage for African and global issues. I believe this is the reason that most young people in Ethiopia have only loose attachment with their country.

The gap between theory and practice was the other dimension reiterated by students. Some students assert that what they have learned in their primary and secondary level education appears largely a dream which cannot be interpreted into practice. In the words of a student:

What I had learned in my primary and secondary education level largely contradicts with what I practically saw in my society. There were very important issues like democracy, equality, equity, justice, rule of law, patriotism, etc I had covered in my CEE and Social Studies education. But neither of them had been practiced in our country. In this case, I often question the relevance of learning these things if they have no practical relevance to me and my society. Therefore, education had no relevance for my ethnic and Ethiopian identity development.

Many students have seriously challenged the relevance of History and Social Studies in nation-building through ethnic and Ethiopian identity development from the point of view of the lack of representation of their history. For instance, a student commented:

I found nothing about my ethnic community's history, culture and identity in Social Studies and History education. In this context, how can I feel the history of Ethiopia as my history? I believe Social Studies and History textbooks could not develop my ethnic and Ethiopian identity.

Another student further echoed the above assertion:

Even long before I learned about Ethiopian history in my primary and secondary level education, I knew the biases towards some groups.

When I practically came across the textbooks, I really wonder how the books deserve the name 'Ethiopian history'. Any ways, my History education rather eroded my feeling towards Ethiopia and strengthened my ties towards my ethnic community.

In a similar fashion, another student said:

To tell you the truth, I do not exactly know what History education had contributed to my ethnic and Ethiopian identity development. If you tell me what I remember from the course, I can only mention battlefields and some warriors. I think these things are irrelevant. Still I have no answer when I ask myself about the need to learn wars and warriors again and again.

Yet another student claimed:

To be honest I was one of those students who did not like to attend History classes. I think the problem with History textbooks was not only inclusivity. They also present large volumes of facts we were expected to absorb them. As I was not good at memorizing persons' and places' names with their exact dates of occurrence, History education did not give me sense as such. Moreover, they presented historical facts only little about Ethiopia and even this history was representative of one or two groups. In this case, it is difficult to decide whether History education develops my ethnic identity or Ethiopian identity or both.

Some students challenged the lack of criticality even in CEE textbooks. A student reflected:

Some issues often debated in the society were not brought to our primary and secondary level education and we had not got the chance to discuss on them. Issues like whether ethnic federalism is relevant to Ethiopia or not; and Article 39 of the FDRE Constitution which legitimizes secession are cases in point.

When we look back to students reflections on the contributions of the regional and national education system curriculum to nation-building through Ethiopian identity development, students reported that particularly CEE helped them to understand the equality of nations, nationalities and peoples in terms of language, culture, religion, etc and as all are equally relevant for the sustainability of the country's political community. Accordingly, CEE and Social Studies helped them not to fear differences as parochial to national unity. Students further stated that CEE and Social Studies also helped them to identify their citizenship rights and duties as well as the hospitability of the Ethiopian people and the importance of working for the common good. They also assert that the treatment of historical inequalities in the textbooks also make them more sensitive to their ethnic identities. In view of this,

students believe that CEE and Social Studies have contributed in some sense to their ethnic and Ethiopian identity development.

Students also challenged the practical relevance of CEE, Social Studies and History education to nation-building. They contend that the textbooks concentrate on broader continental and global issues and leave little space for national issues. The other problem reiterated by students was that their CEE, Social Studies and History education lacked criticality. Textbooks did not bring some contested issues on which students to reflect. Students also assert that their Ethiopian history education had been biased towards some groups. The gap between theory and practice and particularly CEE and Social Studies textbooks bias towards the present political system were reported by students as one of the gaps of the Ethiopian education system curriculum to contribute to nation-building through Ethiopian identity development. Finally, students challenged the relevance of the Ethiopian education system curriculum to nation-building from the perspective of their teachers' bias towards oral traditions rather than what was presented in the textbooks during the instructional process.

6.4.2. Teacher perspectives

With the intention to understand textbooks portrayal of the Ethiopian political and cultural community, in-depth interviews were conducted with purposefully selected upper primary and secondary education level teachers from three subject areas – such as – Social Studies, CEE and History education – in the three ethnic regions of Ethiopia (Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray). Teachers' responses have been coded and then analysis and interpretation of data was made in line with data categorization. Although it appears difficult to find clearly defined thematic categories, the following themes seem to emerge from teachers' responses.

6.4.2.1. Curriculum as lacking contextualization

Many teachers insisted on the contribution of CEE textbooks for understanding and appreciating diversity in Ethiopia. They also commented that although CEE textbooks help students to understand the cultural resourcefulness of Ethiopia they also generally fail to reflect practical local contexts. For instance, in the words of one teacher:

CEE textbooks are well designed to help students to understand the historical, cultural and natural resourcefulness of their country. But yet as the textbooks were designed to reflect totally broader national and global issues, the sensitivity of the contents of the textbooks with the regional and local contexts in which students live is very poor. In this case, it is only little that CEE can contribute to both ethnic and Ethiopian identity development.

Similarly, some teachers contend that the specific contents of textbooks have been directly copied from the developed western countries and hence they could have little impact in the students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity development. For instance, a teacher reflected:

The contents of CEE textbooks largely focus on broader issues such as federalism, constitution, democracy and the like at global level and in some cases at continental level. But they did not broadly reflect national and local contexts. The same is true to History and Social Studies textbooks. The contents of these textbooks seemed to directly copied from the developed countries. Therefore, I think education does not significantly contribute to the ethnic and Ethiopian identity of students.

Many teachers consider the international orientation of the national education system curriculum at the expense of national issues as the main challenge to develop a sense of Ethiopianness among students. They contend that such international orientation of textbooks may lead students to look for other countries than their own. In line with this a teacher mentioned:

In the courses I teach, an attempt was made to internationalize the contents of the textbooks with a slight coverage of the Ethiopian issue. Inculcating some global issues into the textbooks is not bad. But the problem is that such international orientation of the contents of education could not inspire students to be sensitive to the national issues. Rather this situation leads students to think of other countries than their own (Ethiopia). As such, social science – History, CEE and Geography – textbooks should be revised to reflect our [national] issues. Of course, not only social sciences but other subject areas textbooks should also reflect Ethiopianness through examples and case studies.

In view of the above problems some teachers insisted on the need to bring Ethiopian values into textbook portrayal and classroom discourse. For instance, a teacher asserted that:

As we all know Ethiopia has a very long history of nationhood and its nations, nationalities and peoples have rich cultural records which should be brought to classroom discourse so that students can learn a lot from them. But the textbooks, particularly Social Studies and History

textbooks, did not give adequate space for these values. In this case, it is difficult to bring Ethiopianness among students through formal education.

Many teachers comment that the textbooks do not present a clearly defined Ethiopianness. Some teachers also commented on history textbooks for their content coverage as well. For instance, a teacher asserted that:

Just like Social Studies textbooks, and even more than that, History textbooks devote much of their volume for African History and World History. Only little has been covered about Ethiopian history. The textbooks do not also present a clearly identified and defined Ethiopian identity and even I myself do not exactly know what constitutes Ethiopianness. In such context, it is difficult to expect citizens who show significant commitment to their country.

Another teacher continued to say:

Textbooks often cover large volume of facts or information we are expected to finish them on the specified time period. Accordingly, irrespective of students' progress, we are always in a hurry to cover all contents included in the textbooks. Therefore, in order to help students truly understand the contents included in the textbooks and inculcate them into their value systems, the textbooks should be selective to present facts, principles and theories.

When we look at teachers responses above, textbooks lack contextualization at two levels: local and national. At the local level, some primary education level teachers reported that particularly CEE textbooks have failed to inculcate some relevant cultural, ethnic, political, economic and environmental issues of a particular region. Instead, they devoted much volume for the treatment of broader national and global issues. At national level, Social Studies and History textbooks reported to have continental and global orientation leaving aside some relevant national issues. Added to these gaps are the voluminous nature of textbooks and their failure to bring relevant societal values and beliefs into perspective.

6.4.2.2. Curriculum as a medium for understanding diversities and citizenship rights and duties

Some teachers insist on the contribution of CEE to help students to develop a multicultural understanding and recognize their citizenship rights and duties. For instance, one teacher mentioned:

To be honest, CEE textbooks are well designed to help students to recognize ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural, gender, etc diversity in Ethiopia. Most importantly, the textbooks help students to understand their citizenship duties and rights. Now, students are aware of the importance of discharging their citizenship responsibilities. Therefore, CEE contributes to the students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity development.

Many teachers capitalized particularly on the contribution of CEE in understanding and recognizing diversities (ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, gender, etc) among the Ethiopian Nations, nationalities and Peoples. They went on to assert that students are well aware of the pros and cons of differences.

6.4.2.3. Curriculum as an instrument of exclusion and ethno-centric perspectives

While appreciating CEE and Social Studies textbooks design to accommodate diversities and help students to understand their citizenship rights and duties, some teachers also expressed their concern about the emphasis given to differences over commonalities. In line with this, a teacher commented:

The CEE, Social Studies and History textbooks are not designed in a way to help students to appreciate and love their Ethiopianness within their diversities. Particularly, CEE and Social Studies textbooks largely emphasize differences and devote little for commonalities. In this manner, CEE and Social Studies develop the students' ethnic identification only. Therefore, there is a need to balance between diversity and unity.

In the same manner, another teacher claimed:

From the CEE and Social Studies textbooks presentation and discussion of the historically unfair relations and from the relevance of ethnicity, culture and language amplified in the textbooks, I believe students can better develop their ethnic sensitivity and identity rather than a sense of belonging to the Ethiopian political community.

Another teacher further consolidated the above assertion as:

I think the main problem in the current context of primary education system curriculum in Ethiopia is that although schools draw students from diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, the curriculum forces us to concentrate on a particular region's ethnic community culture. In this way students of other ethnic and cultural background would be excluded. I believe that in such contexts it is difficult to

develop a sense of Ethiopianness among students. These students may rather be ethnically sensitized by their feelings of exclusion.

Many teachers have reflected on the lack of inclusivity in the existing History textbooks. In line with this, a teacher has the following to say:

The so called Ethiopian history is not the history of all nations, nationalities and peoples. The contents congested in History textbooks do not deserve the name 'Ethiopian history'. It is better to say the history of 'Northern Ethiopia' [the researcher purposely avoided the names mentioned by the teacher]. History education should be revised to be more inclusive and sensitive to national issues and practical realities. Then it should be given as a common course from primary through university education so that students' would have a shared understanding of their history and commitment to their country.

Many teachers suggest that the ethnic dimension of students' identity should be left to families and the Ethiopian identity set to schooling. In this regard, a teacher contends that:

I believe that family has a lion's share in developing both the ethnic and Ethiopian identity of students. Yet education has some contribution to creating a sense of commitment to the students' respective ethnic group and to the Ethiopian community. But formal education should concentrate mainly on the Ethiopian identity set because in the context of apparent diversity in almost all regional states schools setting, it is problematic to teach about the ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural characteristics of one ethnic group only. Therefore, there is a need to have nationally uniform curriculum and textbooks for all subject areas at all levels of education which concentrate on Ethiopian issues.

From teachers' evaluation of the national and regional education system curriculum presented above, we can infer that Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks have disproportionately emphasized differences over commonalities and applaud historical inequalities and injustices. Some teachers also reported that the non-inclusive nature of Ethiopian history and primary level education in general would ethnically sensitize students through feelings of exclusion.

6.4.2.4. Experiential curriculum as contradicting with out of school experiences

Some teachers reported that textbooks have attempted to communicate relevant issues to students. Yet they considered the lack of interface between theory and practice as the main

curriculum challenge to develop Ethiopian identity on students. For instance, a teacher reflected:

There are very interesting issues on the textbooks but even 50% of them have not been put into practice. That is to say there is a contradiction between what we are supposed to teach to students and the actual practice in the country as a whole. The lack of congruence between what students see on the ground and what we teach them in classroom discourse has been creating tension between some textbook contents and students. As a result of this, it is challenging to teach CEE in the secondary schools of Ethiopia today.

Some teachers also reported that it is not uncommon to label CEE teachers as ardent proponents of the existing political order by students and even by some other subject areas teachers. It seems due to this reason that some CEE teachers resort to openly declare to their students that they do not believe in the contents portrayed in the CEE textbooks or simply in what they teach. Some CEE teachers tell their students that they simply did it for the purpose of survival. This appears to suggest that there are some gaps in the purpose of teaching CEE among students and teachers themselves.

6.4.2.5. Textbooks as instrumental to particular ideology

It was some teachers' belief that schooling in Ethiopia often influenced by particular government ideologies than prevailing learning theories and practices. They even went to comment on the ideological orientation of the current CEE, Social Studies and History textbooks. For instance, one teacher maintained that:

As different government systems of the country wrote sources which reflect their ideological orientation rather than the histories and identities of their people, I believe it is difficult to develop a sense of Ethiopianness among students. Even the current curriculum mainly reflects the existing dominant economic and political system.

Some teachers also commented that textbooks do not fairly present the mistakes and achievements of successive governments in Ethiopia and let students to reflect on. In line with this, a teacher has the following to say:

The existing CEE and Social Studies textbooks applaud the historical injustices committed by previous governments with no recognition to some of their achievements. This could create ethnic tensions rather than harmony. Therefore, instead of applauding past injustices textbooks should fairly present the reality so that students have a fair

understanding of the ups and downs their country have experienced across historical times.

Similarly, another teacher reflected

If revised and properly designed, History education has a very crucial role in nation-building through creating a sense of Ethiopianness among students. I believe citizens would love their country only if they properly know the history of their country. Currently, we are creating citizens who do not even know about the Adwa Victory.

Another teacher further advanced this idea as stated:

Ethiopian history is presented in the History, Social Studies and CEE textbooks as simple facts and students are expected to simply memorize rather than critically scrutinizing them for relevance. I think all the contesting discourses (good and bad) of Ethiopian history we often hear from the media, community and peers should be brought to classroom discourse so that students can develop a shared understanding of Ethiopian history through common dialogue.

When we see teachers' reflections on curriculum responses to nation-building through Ethiopian identity development, many teachers reported that the Ethiopian education system curriculum, particularly CEE, has been contributing to help students to understand the historical, cultural, religious and natural resourcefulness of their country (Ethiopia). They further maintained that CEE helps students to develop multicultural understanding. That is, it helps students to appreciate the ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, linguistic, etc. diversity of the Ethiopian people. Teachers further assert that CEE and Social Studies also contribute for students understanding of their citizenship rights and duties.

Similarly, teachers contend that the contribution of the Ethiopian education system curriculum to nation-building through Ethiopian identity development has been challenged by a number of factors. Some of the challenges reported by teachers include textbooks orientation towards broader global issues, textbooks emphasis for differences over unity, textbooks lack of inclusivity in historical grand narratives and the cultures of ethnic minorities, ideological influences across historical periods, the gap between theory and practice, textbooks orientation on content memorization and the voluminous nature of textbooks which often pose a challenge for teachers to cover them and lead students to memorization to pass examination rather than adapt them into their value systems.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON ETHIOPIAN IDENTITY

7.1. Introduction

After having explored and analyzed curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity through content analysis of some selected subject areas textbooks and students' and teachers' reflections, the dissertation assesses the values, symbols and traditions portraying Ethiopian identity in student values or perspectives. To this effect, in-depth interviews were conducted with a purposefully selected 20 preparatory school graduate students of diverse ethnic, religious, regional and gender backgrounds. This could help us to understand how students individually construct their being Ethiopian and the main attributes used to symbolize Ethiopianness.

Furthermore, the assessment of individual construction of Ethiopian identity by each student through isolated interview sessions was supplemented by three focus group discussion sessions. Students were brought to the FGDs sessions with their individual or isolated construction and understanding of the main attributes of Ethiopian identity. In the FGDs sessions, students have been expected to construct a commonly shared understanding of Ethiopian identity through common dialogue, discussions, negotiations and/ or consensus. In this chapter, the dissertation attempted to analyze the construction of Ethiopian identity attributes by students both individually and through group dialogue, discussion and negotiation.

7.2. Students' definition of the meaning of being Ethiopian

Under this heading, the dissertation attempts to understand student perspectives on the meaning of being Ethiopian as manifested through some selected symbols, values and traditions which could transcend ethnic boundaries. Here it is important to note that as the theoretical framework of the study suggests, student perspectives were intended to be captured not in terms of merely stating the values, symbols and traditions portrayed in textbooks and presented to them through their teachers. Rather the dissertation went further to examine how students get attached to the identified attributes (values, symbols and

traditions) through a subjective interpretation, construction (and of course deconstruction) of the texts.

The initial phase qualitative content analysis of textbooks reveals that the meaning of being Ethiopian could be understood in terms of political and historico-cultural symbols, constitutional patriotism and self-projections or images. As such, it appears logical to analyze students' subjective interpretations of the meaning of being Ethiopian by using these content categories. But yet it is important to note that the specific attributes of Ethiopian identity identified through qualitative content analysis of textbooks were not directly imposed on students. The values, symbols and traditions identified from textbooks as manifestations of the Ethiopian political and cultural community were presented to students just after they exhausted Ethiopian identity attributes through their subjective interpretations of what they have learned so far from the Ethiopian national and regional education system curriculum and beyond.

7.2.1. Student perspectives on political, historical and cultural symbols

The political, historical and cultural symbols identified through content analysis of textbooks to portray Ethiopian identity mainly include national flag, national anthem, national heroes/heroines, and historical and cultural heritages. Accordingly, student values on these specific attributes of Ethiopian identity have been secured through in-depth interviews and FGDs with some purposefully selected study participants as presented below.

7.2.1.1. Student values on the Ethiopian national flag

Under this theme, the dissertation captures students' identification with and attachment to the Ethiopian national flag through a subjective interpretation of the same. Accordingly, although some students consider national symbols as mere inventions instrumental to the state only, many students feel that the Ethiopian national flag has been symbolized by *national pride, Ethiopian patriotism, love and sacrifice* to the country.

Some students assert that the Ethiopian national flag most importantly symbolizes *national pride*. In accordance with this position, one student underscored:

When I see the Ethiopian national flag, I remember the sacrifices our forefathers had done for us. They shed their blood for their country as symbolized by the Ethiopian national flag. This made me to have strong attachments with the Ethiopian national flag. Even I have a plan to tour the whole country carrying the Ethiopian national flag. Therefore, I am very happy and proud for being Ethiopian.

Another student also added:

The Ethiopian national flag remembers me the commitments of our forefathers to defend their country. They sacrificed their energy and most importantly their life for the good of their people. The national flag is an expression of selfless service to the country. This leads me to think of Ethiopia being and would be the greatest nation in the world.

Some students also consider the Ethiopian national flag as a manifestation of the long and rich history of the country as preserved by its people. For instance, one student stated:

Ethiopia has a very long and decorated history maintained by its people. The Ethiopian national flag symbolizes this rich historical achievement of its people. It is due to this fact that immediately after their independence many African countries had borrowed the tri-colours of the Ethiopian national flag. This makes me to feel happy and proud for being Ethiopian.

Still some students describe the Ethiopian national flag as a manifestation of sovereignty and unity of the Ethiopian people. In line with this, a student reported:

It is the heroic struggle and sacrifice of our people against colonialism which made Ethiopia a sovereign and independent country when most African countries fell under colonial rule. Our sovereignty was made possible through the unity of the Ethiopian people, which is symbolized by the national flag. Therefore, no word can express my feeling for the Ethiopian national flag. When I see the national flag displayed, I feel emotional and my tears get burst.

Yet some students strongly challenged the relevance of the Ethiopian national flag for symbolizing the Ethiopian political and cultural community. A student contends:

I think it is under the banner of the national flag that different governments of the country exploited their people. Such things as national flag, national anthem, national hero, holidays and the like are purposefully invented by the government only to deceive and win the heart of the people. What matters most is practice. For instance, treating all people equally and allow people to use their rights is more relevant than the flag.

Another student added:

I feel the barriers to our [Ethiopians] freedom now are those symbols such as national flag, national anthem, etc which are only instrumental to the ruling classes to exploit the people. I am happy if I answered your question; sorry, I have nothing to say more on this issue.

Generally, in view of students' subjective interpretation of the Ethiopian national flag as a manifestation of their identification with and attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community, *national pride and love, unity, sovereignty, commitment or sacrifice for the common good (Ethiopian traditional patriotism) and rich history* have been the most frequently cited by students. Yet it seems also imperative to note that some students reported that they have no feeling to the Ethiopian national flag.

7.2.1.2. Student perspectives on the Ethiopian national anthem

Before directly delving deep into the exploration and explanation of the subjective interpretations of the Ethiopian national anthem and regional anthem by students, the dissertation explores whether students can exactly know and jot down the Ethiopian national anthem and their respective regions regional anthem. It was found out that – despite some variations – many students were able to exactly write down the Ethiopian national anthem but not their respective regional anthem. This was particularly evident among Amhara Region and the SNNPR students. Only those students from the Oromiya Region displayed better to write down their regional anthem rather than the Ethiopian national anthem. Most Tigray Region students were able to exactly write the regional anthem and the Ethiopian national anthem.

Next, the dissertation has tried to examine the subjective interpretations of what the Ethiopian national anthem displays. Many students considered the Ethiopian national anthem as a symbol of love, dignity and dedication to the nation (the Ethiopian political and cultural community). In line with this, one student stated:

“I believe that the Ethiopian national anthem is an expression of our love to the country and hence when I heard the Ethiopian national anthem I feel very much delighted. Sometimes when accompanied by the Ethiopian national flag display I feel emotional and burst in tears”.

Another student added:

I have no word to express what I feel when I hear the Ethiopian national anthem. The Ethiopian national anthem inspires me to remember the sacrifices our forefathers had paid to defend the sovereignty of their country. As such, when I hear the national anthem sometimes I cannot control myself and I feel shocked.

Some students also consider the Ethiopian national anthem as an expression of unity, equality and strength. In line with this, one student has the following to say: “The Ethiopian national anthem reminds me the fact that Ethiopia has been built by its nations, nationalities and peoples; and hence when I hear the national anthem I feel the unity, equality and strength of the Ethiopian people”.

Another student reflected:

In my view, the message communicated through the national anthem is very interesting. It praises the equality of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples commitments to live in love, peace and unity. Therefore, when I hear the Ethiopian national anthem, my attachment and commitment to my country has been inspired.

Yet some students appear to remain indifferent to the Ethiopian national anthem. In the words of a student:

Frankly speaking, I feel nothing new when I hear and participate in the national anthem and national flag display. I think it is not the national anthem or national flag which matters most but how you are treated as equal citizen in your country. Of course I can descant or chant the Ethiopian national anthem and I understand its meaning, but it has nothing to inspire my feeling.

Another student goes on to say:

The Ethiopian national anthem is nothing more than a political discourse we often hear and watch from government media. In this case, hearing or knowing or descanting the Ethiopian anthem does not give me sense. The important thing is your freedom to exercise your rights as human beings.

Another student also mentioned: “To be honest, I do not exactly know the meaning of the Ethiopian anthem and I cannot descant it....In this case, how would you expect to know what my feeling is about the Ethiopian anthem?”

Students were also asked to compare and contrast their identification with and attachment to their regional anthem and the Ethiopian national anthem. Many students reported their primary identification and attachment to the Ethiopian national anthem. For instance, a student stated:

Definitely, I feel the Ethiopian national anthem gives me more meaning and significance when I hear and descant the national anthem accompanied by the Ethiopian national flag display. But this does not mean that the regional anthem and regional flag have no significance to me. In fact, they are all relevant.

Another student underlined the idea that:

It is the Ethiopian national anthem, along with the national flag display, which exactly reflects the true meaning of Ethiopianness. The world community also identifies us through our national anthem and national flag. Moreover, it is the national anthem and the Ethiopian national flag which represent the sacrifices of our forefathers to defend their country from foreign invasion. The regional anthem and regional flag have no such power. Therefore, I feel strongly attached with the Ethiopian national anthem and national flag.

Some students also feel that they are equally attached to the Ethiopian national anthem and their respective regions' regional anthem. In line with this view, a student reflected:

Both the regional anthem and the Ethiopian national anthem are relevant to me. They remind me the sacrifices of the dead heroes for their country's development and democratic order. I exactly know the meaning of the Ethiopian national anthem and the regional anthem and I feel attached to them equally.

Yet some students gave precedence to their ethnic regions' regional anthem and flag and the Ethiopian national anthem and national flag next. For instance, a student claims that: "It is the regional anthem and regional flag which exactly reflects my identity, culture and the achievements of my people; and I feel the Ethiopian anthem and flag are far from me. Moreover, I do not exactly know the Ethiopian anthem".

In the open-ended questionnaire, many students clearly jot down the Ethiopian national anthem while only few students were able to jot down their regional anthem only. SNNPR students exactly know and jot down the Ethiopian national anthem. Surprisingly, there was no student from SNNPR who exactly know and jot down the regional anthem. It appears

skeptical whether students descant the regional anthem in their primary education level. This deviation from other regions students may be associated with the fact that due to the greater ethnic diversity of the region's population the primary education system curriculum of the SNNPR may be designed to reflect commonalities rather than specific local contexts. Or probably, they opt for commonalities rather than differences due to the significance it has to their survival. Moreover, due to greater ethnic and cultural diversity, group identification in the SNNPR would be largely geographic or territorial in character rather than primordial as it does in the largely ethnic dominant populations such as Oromiya, Amhara, Tigray, Afar, Somali and Harari regions.

Overall, the most frequently cited subjective interpretations of the Ethiopian national anthem by students include the following. The first manifestations of the Ethiopian national anthem reiterated by students were *pride* for being Ethiopian and *contentment*. Many students expressed that the national anthem has been inspiring them to love their country. The second most frequently cited expressions of the Ethiopian national anthem by students were *love, sacrifice and service to the political nation*. The third most frequently reiterated manifestations of the Ethiopian national anthem by students were *unity, equality and strength*. Generally, students reported that they feel Ethiopian when they hear the Ethiopian national anthem. At this juncture, it appears important to note that there were also students who consider the Ethiopian national anthem as a sign of dismay.

7.2.1.3. Ethiopian heroes/heroines of students

It is not uncommon to symbolize a political and cultural community through its heroes and heroines. Thus, under this heading students were asked not only to simply list down the names of their Ethiopian heroes/heroines but also to justify their choice through a subjective interpretation of their achievements. In line with this, one of the students took Emperor Tewodros as an Ethiopian hero. The student justified his choice of the Emperor as a hero as:

Emperor Tewodros is my Ethiopian hero because he had strong commitment for the love of the country and the unity of the Ethiopian people. He is the only Ethiopian king to begin modernization. Moreover, he committed suicide for the pride of his people and country.

Another student considered Emperor Tewodros as his Ethiopian hero and explained his choice as follows:

Emperor Tewodros is my Ethiopian hero because he introduced the idea of modernization and centralization to Ethiopia. He was able to bring modernization to his country. Atse Tewodros also attempted to build Sebastopol and defend his country from external invasion. Finally, he committed suicide in order not to fall in the hands of his enemy and preserve the dignity of his people.

Similarly, another student identified Emperor Tewodros as her Ethiopian hero and she justified her position as: “There may be many heroes in Ethiopia. If you ask me to choose one of them, truly Emperor Tewodros becomes my Ethiopian hero because he is the first Ethiopian political figure to bring an end to the Zemene Mesafint and attempted to unify the country under one state”.

Some students took Emperor Yohannes IV as their Ethiopian hero and students exclusively justified their position in line with his commitment to decentralization and his sacrifice for the love of his country and people. This is clearly visible in the word of a student as stated:

Although there are also many other Ethiopian heroes, Emperor Yohannes is my Ethiopian hero because he was the only king in Ethiopia to give recognition to self-administer the different regions under his jurisdiction. In this case, Emperor Yohannes was the first to begin federalism in Ethiopia. Therefore, he is my Ethiopian hero because Emperor Yohannes was a modern person who knew democracy even at that period.

Another student further strengthened the above idea when he said:

From several Ethiopian heroes, I appreciate Emperor Yohannes and he is my Ethiopian hero. The Emperor gave precedence to his country and people than to his dominium – office power or rule. That is why he opted to march and fight the invading Sudanese forces and gave up his precious life bravely than to vanquish Emperor Menelik and remain in power for long. I think no one did this in the history of Ethiopia rather than Emperor Yohannes.

Some students consider Emperor Menelik as their Ethiopian hero mainly in view of Ethiopian unity, modernization and traditional patriotism. For instance, a student underscored: “Although many Ethiopians contributed to the process, the emergence of Ethiopia as a unified sovereign state has been the result of the heroic struggle of Emperor

Menelik. He also introduced different modern institutions to Ethiopia. Therefore, Emperor Menelik is my Ethiopian hero”.

Another student further echoed:

When the Invading Italian forces invaded Ethiopia, Emperor Menelik led the Ethiopian forces and won the battle at Adwa. He was the first black leader to defeat white colonizers in Africa. Therefore, he is not only an Ethiopian hero, but also a hero of Africa and all the black people worldwide.

A student also considered Empress Taytu as her Ethiopian heroine. The student provided the following justifications for choosing Empress Taytu as her Ethiopian heroine:

For me, Empress Taytu is an Ethiopian heroine because even in the period when gender inequality was rampant, she successfully led the Ethiopian forces against the Italian invading forces and she decisively won the battle. I also appreciate her confidence and achievements in politics. Therefore, Empress Taytu is my model.

Some students took the former Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, as an Ethiopian hero. For instance, a student stated her justification for choosing the late Prime Minister as an Ethiopian hero as follows: “*The former Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, is my role model because he was the first to lay the foundation of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. I also appreciate him especially for his struggle to protect the rights of women*”.

The late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, was also chosen by another student as an Ethiopian hero and the justification for his choice has been presented as follows: “*Although there are many heroes and heroines, his Excellency, Meles Zenawi is my Ethiopian hero because he was the first Ethiopian political leader to accept that Ethiopia is a nation of nations in which all of them live with equality, dignity and tolerance*”.

Another student added:

[The Late] Prime Minister Meles Zenawi is my Ethiopian hero because he brought democracy to Ethiopia. He also established different political and civic institutions which can protect our human and democratic rights and freedoms. Moreover, Meles is the only Ethiopian hero dare to construct the renaissance Dam on the Abay River. Therefore, Meles Zenawi is my legend.

Another student further underscored:

For me, a hero is the one who died working hard for his country and people. In this case, there is only one hero in Ethiopia and his name is [the late] Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. He was the most intelligent person working hard throughout his life to help improve the destiny of his people and the people of Africa as well. Therefore, he is my legend and the pride of Africa and the world.

Students also considered some of the prominent figures in the struggle against the Dergue regime as their heroes/heroines. Students echoed the names of Major General Hayelom Araya, Abay Tsehaye, Seyoum Mesfin, Sebhat Nega and the rest dead heroes/heroines and veterans of the armed struggle against the military regime (Dergue) as their Ethiopian heroes/heroines. But among such great personalities, the name of Major General Hayelom Araya was echoed by many students.

Still some other students consider the current Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, as their Ethiopian hero. Many students reiterated that he is their source of pride and dignity. One student asserted: “Being born from a rural poor family, he reached to the level of being Prime Minister of the FDRE and Chairman of the African Union. In view of this, his Excellency, Ato Hailemariam Desalegn is a source of pride and dignity for me and the Ethiopian people”.

Another student also justified his reason for choosing Hailemariam Desalegn as his Ethiopian hero as stated:

Hailemariam Desalegn is more democratic and he is leading the country on the will of the Ethiopian people. More than any Ethiopian leader, he is respecting the demands of the people. He never does anything without the consent of the people. He is truly a son of Ethiopia.

Some students also consider Beyene Petros, one of the leading opposition figures, as their Ethiopian hero. For instance, a student justified his choice as:

Professor Beyene Petros is a decent Ethiopian who, at the rank of professor, has committed his time and even life to help other Ethiopians improve their life. He is a visionary Ethiopian hero who struggles to build an educated and democratic society in Ethiopia.

Yet some students consider General Waqo Guto as their hero. One student justifies for selecting the General as his hero as follows:

When the neftegna regime exploited the Oromo people, it was General Waqo Guto who organized and led the Bale people struggle and scored successful victories. His victory inspired the Oromo people and other oppressed people in the neighborhood to fight the old regime. Therefore, General Waqo Guto is my hero. But Menelik and Haile Selassie are not my heroes.

Some other students took Balcha Safo and Abdissa Aga as their Ethiopian heroes. In line with this, a student mentioned:

Ethiopian history is highly biased. The space given to Balcha Safo and Abdissa Aga in Ethiopian history can be a case in point. A lot has been said about other people who have a much lesser role in the battlefield than Balcha Safo and Abdissa Aga. But in reality Balcha Safo was the leading patriot in the struggle against the Italians Occupation. He was also a veteran of the Adwa Victory. Similarly, Abdissa Aga's sacrifice and suffering under the enemy forces is unforgettable and regretting. In this case, Abdissa Aga and Balcha Safo are my best heroes ever.

Another student justified his labeling of Abdissa Aga as his hero as follows: "My hero ever is Abdissa Aga because no other black person did what he did in history. He is the only hero who escaped from enemy prison and executed bravely at the center of Rome. Abdissa Aga is a good role model of commitment for the goal one stands for".

A student also considered Mohammed Abdinur as his Ethiopian hero. The student justified his labeling as:

Mohammed Abdinur was a hero who led the struggle of his people against injustice and oppression caused by the then feudal rulers. It was under his effective leadership that the Somali people inflicted greater damages on the forces of the then oppressive government. Therefore, Mohammed Abdinur is my Ethiopian hero.

Some students again treated *Abraham Deboch* and *Moges Asgedom* as their Ethiopian heroes. A student justified his choice by stating that "They are Ethiopian heroes who fuelled up the resistance movement against the invading Italian forces". Another student added that "They practically displayed their commitment to their country and people by sacrificing their unrivaled life". A significant number of students also took the veterans of the Resistance Movement against Italian Occupation, such as Garasu Dukhi, Agari Tulu

and Tadesse Biru, as their heroes. Students appreciated their determination to fight the invading enemy forces.

Still some students consider Emperor Haile Selassie I, Dejazmach Belay Zeleke and even Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam as their Ethiopian heroes. Dejazmach Belay Zeleke was taken as students' hero mainly in line with his place in the traditional Ethiopian patriotism – that is, his achievements in the battle field. Students considered Emperor Haile Selassie as an Ethiopian hero in line with modernization and largely introducing the country to the international community. In the word of a student, Colonel Mengistu is considered as an Ethiopian hero because “He defended the unity of his country and he often called Ethiopia as my motherland instead of this country...and this makes me happy and proud”.

Some students applaud the name *Abebech Gobena* as an Ethiopian heroine for her contribution for humanity. For instance, a student stated that “*Abebech Gobena* is not only the mother of Ethiopians but also is the mother of all humanity. She is my untold Mother Teresa”. Although they did not specifically mention their names, a significant number of students consider those Ethiopians who defended and who are ready to defend the sovereignty of their country as their Ethiopian heroes/heroines. Some even further went to assert that all the Ethiopian people are their heroes and heroines because they successfully defended their country several times from foreign aggression.

Some students also took Ethiopia's renowned athletes as their Ethiopian heroes/heroines. For instance, many students consider athletes such as Abebe Bikila, Haile G/Selassie, Kenenissa Bekele, Derartu Tulu, Terunesh Dibaba, and Meseret Defar as their Ethiopian heroes/heroines for they displayed the Ethiopian national flag at the international stage in the face of the international community. In short, when we look into students' identification of their Ethiopian heroes and heroines and the justifications for their choice, it seems that their responses have been more diffused. Students tend to identify their heroes and heroines along their respective ethnic lines. It was only the late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, and the current Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, who could transcend the students' ethnic and religious boundaries.

7.2.1.4. National holidays

In an attempt to assess the place of national holidays – as one attribute of Ethiopian identity portrayed in textbooks – in student values or perspectives, in-depth interviews were conducted with purposefully selected ethnically diverse students. During the interview session, many students resort to identify and/ or attach with religious holidays rather than those portrayed in the Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks as manifestations of the Ethiopian political and cultural community. For practical reason, the dissertation here presents only those student reflections about national holidays which could define the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

Although highly diffused, relatively some student reflections concentrate on the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day, the Adwa Victory, National Flag Day, and May 28. Among these attributes of Ethiopianness, one student reported that he has special attachment with the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day as stated hereunder:

The fact is that Ethiopia belongs to all nations, nationalities and peoples and no one is above them. They are ultimate decision-makers in the fate of the country. Therefore, I feel that the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day is by far greater than any other national holidays in Ethiopia.

Another student further strengthened the above position. She tried to associate the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day with peaceful co-existence and economic development when she asserted:

Until very recently, Ethiopia was characterized by poverty and protracted civil wars. But now Ethiopia is a peaceful and economically flourishing country in Africa. This achievement is attributed to the power given to the nations, nationalities and peoples to decide on their own affairs. Therefore, I believe that the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day is more important than any other national holidays in Ethiopia.

Another student still expressed the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day as a symbol of unity and natural beauty. He reflected:

When I see the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day celebration on a TV screen I wonder how colorful and beautiful we, Ethiopians, are. Moreover, the Day symbolizes the unity of our people despite differences in language, ethnicity, religion and region. I believe the Nations,

Nationalities and Peoples Day represents an exact display of what Ethiopia looks like to any observer. As such I have a special place for the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day.

The *National Flag Day* was the second main attribute reiterated by many students as symbolizing the Ethiopian political and cultural community. They often associated the National Flag Day with a national pledge to give allegiance to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. In this regard, a student asserted:

The National Flag Day remembers me those who died for the dignity of the national flag. It is a symbol of our commitment to serve our country and people. Sometimes I cannot control myself when I see the Ethiopian national flag display during some special events. Therefore, I believe that the National Flag Day is above any other holiday in Ethiopia.

Further building on this assertion, still another student reflected:

I think the National Flag Day stands above any other national holidays in Ethiopia. This is because it is as a result of our commitment to the national flag that all of us live harmoniously as one political community. Many Ethiopian heroes also died for the dignity of the Ethiopian flag.

Many students also show their sense of attachment and allegiance to the Adwa Victory as a true display of Ethiopian patriotism. For instance, a student reflected:

The Adwa Victory has a special meaning and significance to me. It remembers me the sacrifices of the previous generations to defend their country and people from external invasion. The Adwa Victory Day celebration makes me feel proud for being Ethiopia.

Some other students associate the Adwa Victory with selfless service to the country and people. A student asserted that “*The Adwa Victory has a great lesson to me. It tells me to give allegiance to the country and people (the common good) before self*”. Another student added “*It appears difficult to give your life for the betterment of others but the Adwa Victory teaches us the meaning of living and sacrificing for fellow Ethiopians*”. Some students still treated the Adwa Victory as a symbol of unity and sovereignty for, not only Ethiopians, but for the black people as a whole and as such they feel proud for being Ethiopian.

The final national holiday reiterated by many students as an attribute symbolizing the Ethiopian political and cultural community was *May 28 (Ginbot Haya)*. Some students

considered the last date of the downfall of the Dergue regime as a symbol of equality and feeling Ethiopian. As one student reflected:

It is May 28 which gives equality and belongingness to all Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples. It is due to the fruits of May 28 that all Ethiopians have begun to think of equality with their fellow Ethiopian citizens and exert all the necessary efforts to contribute to their common country. Thus, May 28 makes me feel truly Ethiopian.

The same idea was reiterated by another student:

Thanks to the dead heroes, May 28 marks the end of misery, torture and backwardness. It brings the beginning of hope and prosperity. Economic infrastructures and mega projects heading Ethiopia to prosperity and change the life of many Ethiopians are the results of May 28. Therefore, I have special commitments to May 28.

Another student added that: “May 28 reminds me of the sacrifices all brave or courageous Ethiopians did for democracy and national development. It is because of their selfless services which gave to their people that we all are now living a better life. As such May 20 has a special place in my life”.

Overall, during the interview session, student reflections on national holidays as one of the main attributes of Ethiopian identity were much more diffused. It was only during the FGDs sessions that student values/perspectives began to cluster around some national holidays which may symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community. In this regard, students often reiterated the Ethiopian *Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day*, *National Flag Day*, *the Adwa Victory*, and *May 28* as the holidays they often felt attached to them. Yet the most contested attribute was the Victory of Adwa. For some students, the Victory’s association with some political figures and even patriots was disliked. Otherwise, almost exclusively students gave strong allegiance to the Victory of Adwa as conceived only in terms of the victory of all the Ethiopian people (as they called it nations, nationalities and peoples).

7.2.1.5. Student values on historico-cultural symbols

Another dimension identified through content analysis of textbooks to portray the Ethiopian political and cultural community was historical and cultural symbols. But in order to avoid restricting student responses to such historico-cultural symbols portrayed in

the textbooks only, the researcher has attempted first to explore any historical and cultural symbols which may represent the Ethiopian political and cultural community from the students' views. It was only then that the researcher attempted to examine the students' identification and level of attachment to the historical and cultural symbols through a subjective interpretation of each of these symbols.

In this case, students from diverse ethnic and cultural background were interviewed to understand their identification with and attachment to the historical and cultural heritages and/ or symbols which may represent the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Accordingly, students feel a sense of attachment to many historico-cultural symbols. In connection with this, one student noted: "There are many historical and cultural heritages, which symbolize the ancient civilization of Ethiopia and the achievements of the previous generations of the country. In this case, I believe the Axumite Obelisks are the most magnificent of all".

Similarly, one student reflected: "I think Ancient Ethiopia was one of the most civilized states in the world. Among the most important indicators of this civilization were the Axumite Obelisks....I have visited these obelisks and other objects built by the Axumites and I really felt proud of being Ethiopian".

Still another student further elaborated that:

Ethiopia is a historically and culturally rich country in the world and this is confirmed by its several historical and cultural heritages. Among these, the most important ones are the Axumite Obelisks, the Rock-hewn Churches of Lalibela, the Castles of Gondar, Tiya Stones, and the Palace of Abba Jiffar. I really feel proud and attached to all of these historical heritages.

Some students reiterated the historical significance of many historical and cultural heritage sites. In line with this, a student stated: "Ethiopia has several historical sites which indicate the technological achievements and civilization of its people. For me, the most important of these historical and cultural sites have been the Axumite Obelisks, the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela and the castles of Gondar".

Another student mentioned:

I believe the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela and the Axumite Obelisks are the most wonderful of all the historical and cultural heritages in Ethiopia. They are one of the world's heritages registered by UNESCO and this makes me proud of in the achievements of our forefathers.

Some other students stressed on the terraces of Konso as the most important cultural heritages in Ethiopia. In line with this, a student has the following to say: “I know Ethiopia has many historical and cultural heritages. But very little was said and known among Ethiopians about the Terraces of Konso. For me, they are one of the most wonderful cultural heritages in Ethiopia which indicate the civilization of the Konso people”.

Some students consider the Wall of Harar and Dirre Sheik Hussein as the most wonderful historical heritages in Ethiopia and the world. In the words of a student: “*I think from the heritages I know so far, Dirre Sheik Hussein and the Wall of Harar are the most amazing and famous historical heritages in Ethiopia and the world*”. Still some students consider Lucy as the historical heritage who portrayed the Ethiopian political and cultural community. For instance, a student underlined:

Historically, Ethiopia is the origin of all humanity and such history in the origin of human ancestor is symbolized by Lucy, the oldest ever human ancestor found in Ethiopia. That is why she was displayed for the public in different parts of the United States of America. This makes me feel proud for being Ethiopian.

Generally, student perspectives on historical and cultural heritages or symbols as manifestations of the Ethiopian political and cultural community were one of the most diffused. However, in the FGDs sessions, despite some variations, student values on such symbols relatively seemed to cluster around the Axumite Obelisks, the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Abba Jiffar Palace, the Terraces of Konso, the Wall of Harar, Dirre Sheik Hussein, Lucy and Adwa. Of course, this last attribute (historico-cultural symbols) will be further corroborated through the subsequent quantitative study.

7.2.2. Student values on constitutional patriotism

Under this theme, students were asked to express their sense of attachment to some of the basic principles of the 1995 FDRE Constitution. In this extended interview with students,

the dissertation concentrates on such principles as constitutional supremacy, popular sovereignty and equality and common economy as manifestations of students' identification with and attachment to the Ethiopian political community. With regard to the supremacy of the constitution, many students stated that the FDRE Constitution is the ultimate source of their rights, freedoms and duties. In line with this, one student reflected that:

The [FDRE] Constitution is the source of our equality, freedom, rights and duties. I believe it is the constitution and constitutional principles which made Ethiopia a peaceful country in the Horn of Africa. Therefore, I always give strong allegiance to the principles of the FDRE Constitution.

Some other students reiterated their commitment to the FDRE Constitution for it paves the way to democracy. For instance, a student stated:

I owe special commitment to the Constitution because it prevents to assume political power by force so that protects us from oppression and exploitation by those who would assume political power. It restricts the activities of the government not to act as it wishes. As such, it lays the foundation for democracy to prevail in our country.

Many students associated their allegiance to the FDRE Constitution because they feel that it guarantees the supremacy of nations, nationalities and peoples beyond everyone and everything in this country. This sentiment has been voiced by a student as:

Before the 1995 FDRE Constitution, all the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia were not considered as equal. There were historical inequalities caused by the previous governments. Now, it is the FDRE Constitution which guaranteed all the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia as the ultimate sources of power, beyond equality. Therefore, it is because of the Constitution that all of us have been living in unity and fraternity.

Yet some students were more critical about their allegiance to the basic principles of the 1995 FDRE Constitution. One of the students went further to assert that: "The basic principles the FDRE Constitution stand for are really interesting. If properly implemented by the Government, the Constitution could help us to live harmoniously. I think the main problem arises with its practical implementation".

Another student mentioned:

I believe allegiance to a constitution and constitutional principles is a good thing. It is also expected from citizens to be abided by a constitution. But when we come to Ethiopia, the Constitution exists only in name. Therefore, I feel nothing important to show commitment to the Constitution.

Lastly, students from different ethnic regions were interviewed to reflect their sense of attachment to the major economic infrastructures and resources as a manifestation of students' sense of one economic community. Accordingly, some students reiterated that they have a sense of attachment to economic infrastructures and resources found all over the country. For instance, one student reflected: *"I feel all economic infrastructures found in other regions of Ethiopia as equally belong to me. As long as we live in the same country under one government, I believe all resources belong to all of us and from which one could benefit in one way or another"*.

Another student also stated:

Whether in Tigray, Oromiya, Amhara or any other regions of Ethiopia, I feel all the infrastructures and resources found in Ethiopia belong to all of us. Take for instance the Great Renaissance Dam being constructed in Benishangul Gumuz Regional State. The Dam is under construction by the money collected from all of us and we will benefit from it on equal terms.

But here it is important to note that when the researcher attempted to list down some specific economic resources and infrastructures, students' exhibit significant differences in their identification and attachment to them. Student views began to cluster around some economic infrastructures and resources found only in their respective regions. It is also imperative to remember that in the content analysis of textbooks, common economy as an attribute of Ethiopian identity was a missing piece in almost all sets of textbooks. Yet many students demonstrated a relatively strong sense of attachment to the Great Renaissance Dam under construction. The fact is that in the context of only the Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks gave some space for the treatment of the Dam, students allegiance may be aroused by their day to day experiences and/ or exposures to different sources beyond the school frontier.

7.2.3. Students' projection of the Ethiopian politico-cultural community

Under this theme, students from various ethnic groups were interviewed to reflect on the basic attributes which may symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community. *Pride and dignity, heroism, unity in diversity, tolerance, hospitability, love, peace, beauty, mother, original civilization, and sacrifice for the common good or living for others* were some of the attributes reiterated by students to define the meaning of being Ethiopian. For instance, regarding Ethiopian heroism, one student asserted: "From the sacrifices our forefathers, mothers, brothers and sisters did to defend their country, I have learnt that being Ethiopian means being a hero to preserve its sovereignty and stand for the common good".

Another student further echoed on the above idea as stated:

When I hear the name of Ethiopia I often feel heroism and sovereignty. Because of the sacrifices of the patriots, our country has been considered as a symbol of independence in Africa. Therefore, when we think of Ethiopia I remember the selfless services the patriots gave to us, including sacrificing their life.

In addition to heroism and sovereignty, still many students associated the meaning of being Ethiopian to tolerance of diversity and unity. In line with this, one student reflected:

Ethiopia has the most diversified society in Africa. It has several nations, nationalities and peoples. Despite this fact, we are able to maintain peace and stability in the volatile Horn of Africa Region mainly because we, Ethiopians, can accommodate differences in ethnicity, religion and culture than any other people.

Another student further stated that:

For me, being Ethiopian means understanding and tolerating differences and living peacefully with all fellow Ethiopians of different ethnic and religious background. Now, all of us understand the fact that Ethiopia is made up of different nations, nationalities and peoples and it belongs to all of us on equal terms.

Still another student mentioned:

We have a historically rooted culture of tolerance and trust between Ethiopian Christians and Muslims. Take for instance, I am Christian and my friend is Muslim. To be honest, neither of us yet thought religion as a barrier to our friendship. We share almost everything except prayer.

In the FGDs sessions, students also reiterated that *hospitality* is another signifier of Ethiopianness. For instance, a student reflected that “We, Ethiopians have a welcoming culture to people from other areas such as local guests and foreigners. This distinguishes us from most other countries in the world”. Another student added: “It is because of our friendly culture that most tourists prefer to visit our country”. Still another student further stated that “It is our culture to respect and give priority for those people who came from other areas and cultures”. Here it is important to note that ‘*hospitality*’ as an attribute of Ethiopian identity was imposed for students’ reflections just after the students themselves exhausted their imagination of the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

7.3. Interface between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity

The fact is that Ethiopia has several nations, nationalities and peoples who – more or less – live in peace and harmony for extended historical times. A lot has been said about the co-existence of such greater diversity. But, very recently the country witnessed some incidents of interethnic and religious conflicts. Although it appears natural to expect some narrow ethnic and religious interests to override national interests leading to conflicts, which may sometimes endanger the life of the Ethiopian political and cultural community, some scholars associate the incident with the recently instituted ethnic-based federal arrangement as a fundamental organizing principle of the Ethiopia state.

With the understanding that the meaning of being Ethiopian is strongly influenced by this issue, ethnic students were asked to reflect on whether their ethnic identity strengthens or undermines their Ethiopian identity. Although it appears too early to reach to the conclusion that ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity are co-existing, surprisingly this study found out that all students responded positively to this very question. The next phase quantitative study will prove or disprove this finding. Now, the dissertation tries to present individual student reflections on the interface between ethnic and Ethiopian identity.

In line with this, some students consider Ethiopian identity and their ethnic identity as one which cannot have existence without the other. For instance, a student reflected:

Definitely my ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity are co-existing because for me both my ethnic identity and my Ethiopian identity are

relevant. Moreover, Ethiopia is the sum total of the different nations, nationalities and peoples [ethnic groups] inhabiting the country.

Another interviewee has also similar sentiment as stated:

Ethiopian identity and ethnic identity are two sides of a coin. For me, identification with my ethnic community is also similar to identification with Ethiopia,...but not vice versa. Therefore, it is difficult to separate ethnic identity from Ethiopian identity and vice versa. If you asked me to choose between them I think I may choose Ethiopian identity. But yet both are relevant.

Some other students went further on the issue and asserted that Ethiopian identity and ethnic identity do not only co-exist but also inseparable. In line with this, one student stated: “I think my being Ethiopian and my membership and identification with my ethnic community do not only co-exist but also they are inseparable. If you asked me to choose between my ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity, I cannot separate between them”.

Some students reiterated that although identification with their ethnic community and with the Ethiopian political community is possible and essential, the association is conditional. In this case, one student has the following to say:

When other nations, nationalities and peoples accept and recognize my ethnic identity, I feel I am valued and as such I will be proud of being Ethiopian. Therefore, there will be no Ethiopianness without Tigreness, Amharaness, Oromoness, Gurageness, Wolayitaness, etc but not vice versa.

At this juncture, it appears imperative to note that student values or perspectives became more diffused when the dissertation went further to examine their primary identification and/ or to choose between the two identity sets. Some students gave primary allegiance to their ethnic community while some other students feel primarily attached to the Ethiopian political community. Still some students maintained that they cannot separate the two identity sets.

The dissertation went further to examine the students’ sensitivity to establish friendship along ethnic, religious, culture, gender, locality, and other markers of diversity. Many students felt that they are ready and happy to establish friendship with students of other ethnic groups, religions and cultures. In line with this, one student reflected:

Ethiopia has different nations, nationalities and peoples. All of us are now living as sisters and brothers. Take, for instance, in my dormitory there are students from four ethnic backgrounds. All of us are close friends. I believe, let alone establishing friendship, if I got the chance, I am very much interested to visit their families.

Another student also further strengthened the above assertion as stated:

I feel that the criterion to establish friendship is not region, religion or ethnicity. What I think more important is common understanding and choice. If there is any student from any region, ethnic group or religion who understands me and shares my feeling, I have no problem with establishing friendship with him/her. For example, my friends at this university are from other ethnic groups.

Still another student asserts:

All students around me are Ethiopians. In this country, all of us share the ups and downs as brothers and sisters. We are matured and educated people and therefore we should understand that we have many things in common. For instance, the nation (Ethiopia) itself is our common project to which all of us expected to contribute. Therefore, let alone with my batch in the university, I am happy to establish friendship with any Ethiopian as long as s/he understands me and shares my feeling.

Above all, on the interface between ethnic identity and identification with the Ethiopian political and cultural community, three perspectives appear to emerge among students. Almost all students have the sentiment of their being Ethiopian and identification with the respective ethnic communities are co-existing. The second perspective may be that some students consider Ethiopian identity and their respective ethnic identity are not only co-existing but also inseparable in a sense that one could not have any existence without the other. The last perspective may be that some students consider Ethiopian identity and their respective ethnic identity are co-existing but yet the alliance between the two identity sets has not been unconditional.

7.4. Sources of students Ethiopian (and ethnic) identity

In the previous section, the dissertation attempted to understand students' identification with and attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community through in-depth interviews and FGDs. Under this heading, the dissertation presents students' sources of

their Ethiopian and ethnic identification through individual interviews and open-ended questionnaire items. From the dissertations preferred theoretical framework, it was clearly visible that students could construct a sense of who they are – their ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity – and their place in the social world both individually and in group interactions. In the process, there are various mediums which could shape the students' ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity construction process.

It is firmly established in the literature that formal education – particularly CEE, Social Studies and History – can significantly shape students' sense of identification with and attachment to their national political community and their local communities. Of course, their impact is significantly determined by how the contents of education have been organized and delivered. In this study, in-depth interviews conducted with ethnically diverse students revealed that parents, peers, media, political parties, religious institutions and formal education have been important channels to communicate and influence students' sense of Ethiopianness and ethnic identification.

Students associate their ethnic and Ethiopian identity development with various sources. For instance, a student mentioned:

My ethnic identity is primarily shaped by the media, political parties, peers and formal schooling. Government media, political parties, and Civic and Ethical Education and Social Studies Education have helped me to understand my ethnic background and equally recognize the identities of other ethnic groups in Ethiopia. My peers have also helped me to further refine my ethnic identity. On the other hand, my families and religion have influenced very much on my Ethiopian identity development.

Another student elaborated on the place of CEE and Social Studies on his ethnic identity development:

Of course there are different sources for my Ethiopian and ethnic identity development such as media, family, peers and religion. The media, peers, CEE and Social Studies helped me to understand the historical injustices on the relation among the different nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. This makes me to be more sensitive to my ethnic identity.

Still some students consider CEE as instrumental to both their ethnic and Ethiopian identity development. In the words of a student:

There are various actors in my ethnic and Ethiopian identity development. Definitely formal education has a contribution to my Ethiopian and ethnic identity. For instance, CEE helped me to recognize my ethnic identity and the identities of other ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Through this, CEE helped to develop a culture of tolerance of diversities. Now, I understand that Ethiopia is a nation of several nations, nationalities and peoples. Therefore, CEE helped me to develop both my ethnic and Ethiopian identity. But most importantly, it is History Education, my family and religion which helped me to develop a sense of Ethiopianness.

Most importantly, students underlined on the contribution of CEE (and even Social Studies) on developing their civic patriotism. A student reflected:

Although there may be different channels which contribute to my understanding of citizenship rights and duties, the role of CEE is paramount. CEE introduced me to the principles of equality, equity, justice and above-all to the necessity of constitutional principles and constitutionalism in Ethiopia. Social Studies also partly helped me to know my rights and duties.

Some students applaud the contribution of their families, religion and History Education in their Ethiopian identity construction and development. In the words one student:

My Ethiopian identity is primarily shaped by my families, my religious institution and to some extent by History education. My family and my religious institution often cultivate my sense of commitment to my country (Ethiopia). History education also helped me to develop a shared understanding of Ethiopianness by exposing me to the sacrifices our forefathers had made to their country.

Similarly another student went on to assert that:

I have developed a sense of Ethiopianness mainly from my family and History education. Since childhood, my family socialized me to love my country just like them by telling me different narratives which glorify the achievements of past generations. History education also helps me to exactly know the common symbols which could portray Ethiopianness.

Today, the emergence of such social media as e-mail, Facebook, twitter, Skype, etc has been making our communication easier whenever and wherever we are. Some students also emphasized on the contribution of the recent information revolution in Ethiopia as their

primary sources of ethnic identity development. For instance, a student said: “I think today I am easily communicating with my peers through *facebook* and discuss any issue we liked to talk. If you asked me its role in terms of Ethiopian and ethnic identity development, definitely *facebook* contributes to my ethnic identity”.

Another student also added:

More than any other media such as newspapers, radio, TV, etc, the internet plays a key role in my identity development. I get everything I want about my ethnic community and Ethiopia from the internet. I often use e-mail, facebook and Skype to communicate with my friends. Therefore, the internet contributes to my ethnic and Ethiopian identity development.

After having understood students’ assessment of the sources of their ethnic and Ethiopian identification, the dissertation went further to ask students to rank the contribution of family, media, peers, religion, political parties and formal education on the basis of their relative degree of influence in shaping their ethnic and Ethiopian identity. Accordingly, a student reflected:

Comparatively, my Ethiopian identity has been cultivated largely by my family and religion. History education has also contributed to my Ethiopian identity. But my ethnic identity has been developed by peers, media and political parties. CEE also has relatively fostered my ethnic identity.

In the same fashion, another student mentioned:

My family, religion and to some extent History education have contributed better to my Ethiopian identity development. On the other hand, my peers, media, and political parties have relatively shaped my ethnic identity. Of course, CEE has also contributed to my ethnic and Ethiopian identity development.

Yet some students gave precedence to schooling as their source of ethnic and Ethiopian identity development because they believe that more than any other sources formal education provides the most institutionalized knowledge about their ethnic and Ethiopian community. In line with this, a student insisted: “I believe the role of education in my ethnic and Ethiopian identity development is greater than any other sources. Because I often accept what my teachers said and what I read from textbooks rather than what my families, peers and media said”.

To sum up, students identification with the Ethiopian political community and with their respective ethnic community was influenced most importantly by their family, religion, education, media, peers, and political parties. During the interview session, many students reiterated that comparatively their ethnic identity has been shaped by their peers, media and political parties whereas their identification with the Ethiopian political community was largely fostered through their families and religious institutions.

In view of the relative importance of CEE, Social Studies and History education in shaping the students' group identity, most of the study participants reiterated that the first two subject areas have largely contributed to their ethnic identity development while the latter to their identification with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. But one important area of greater disparity in the process of exploring the relative contribution of the students' Ethiopian and ethnic identification was their evaluation of the role of History education (textbooks) in shaping their Ethiopian identity. While some regions students' consider History education as an important source of their Ethiopian identity, such assertion was rejected or considered as irrelevant by some other regions' students. It could be safely stated that although formal education has a role in the students' ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity, the contribution of family, religion, peers, media and political parties seems overriding.

PHASE II: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

CHAPTER EIGHT

8. STUDENT ATTACHMENT TO ETHIOPIAN IDENTITY

8.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to assess the level of attachment students have with some basic attributes of Ethiopian identity. The main attributes which may be used to symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community and the national and regional education system curriculum expected to portray and communicate them to students were not clearly identified by previous scholarship. As such, in the first phase qualitative analysis, the dissertation explored and analyzed the national and regional education system curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity in the ongoing new nation-building process through in-depth assessment of the contents of upper primary and secondary education level Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks and related policy and strategic development documents. The findings of content analysis of textbooks and some policy and strategic development documents were supplemented by in-depth interviews and FGDs with some selected students and teachers. By doing so, the dissertation derives the main attributes (values, symbols and traditions) which may symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

In this second phase quantitative analysis, the dissertation examines the level of attachment students have with the values, symbols and traditions derived from the first phase qualitative study. As its theoretical framework suggests rather than simply stating the values, symbols and traditions identified to represent Ethiopian identity, the researcher went further to examine how students attached to them and their perspectives. This second phase quantitative study accessed a relatively larger number of student population from diverse ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds from a correspondingly diverse geographical environment. Accordingly, the dissertation was able to secure access to 400 students drawn from different ethnic regions of the country. This could help us to gain multiple – and yet more inclusive – perspectives on Ethiopian identity and understand it in a multicultural developing country context.

In this chapter, the researcher examines the extent students identify with and get attached to the values, symbols, beliefs and traditions treated in some selected upper primary and secondary education level textbooks of the country as representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community. This is because the mere presence of values, symbols, beliefs and traditions in the textbooks does not sufficiently lead us to the conclusion that the issue of Ethiopianness has been adequately addressed through the country's national and regional education system curriculum. Thus curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity could be better understood when, in addition to textbook portrayal, we assess whether students attach meaning and significance to these values, symbols and traditions depicted in the curriculum.

For this purpose, questionnaire survey was conducted with randomly selected secondary education level graduate students drawn from different ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural background. After being filled in by students who participated in the survey, the items of the questionnaire were presented along some pre-defined categories on which subsequent statistical analysis and interpretations have been made.

8.2. Presentation of survey items

There were 39 questionnaire items constructed to measure the level of individual student identification and attachment with the respective ethnic community and the Ethiopian political and cultural community. For the sake of convenience for analysis, the whole questionnaire items have been presented under five categories. In the first group, there were seven questionnaire items intended to capture student background variables such as age, sex, religion, region, ethnic group, language (mother tongue) and stream. In the second group, there were 8 questionnaire items (questions 8 – 15) constructed to measure the interface between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity in students' values or perspectives in terms of strength of attachment and pride in one's ethnic group and in being Ethiopian.

In the third group, 6 questionnaire items (questions 16 – 19 and 33 – 34) were designed to measure students' identification and attachment with some major political and historico-cultural symbols. Seven questionnaire items (questions 20, and 27 – 32) intended to measure a sense of one economic community among students constitute the fourth group.

The final group of the questionnaire items intended to measure students' constitutional patriotism incorporates five items (questions 22 – 26).

In addition to the above groups of questions, there were also some items of the questionnaire survey constructed to determine the sources of students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity development as well as their patriotic feeling towards their political and cultural community. The questionnaire items also include item categories which could further corroborate the contribution of CEE, Social Studies and History education in the students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity development.

In the next subsections, the dissertation attempts to understand the level of attachment student values have with the various sets of values, symbols and traditions representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community through a statistical analysis of students' responses to the questionnaire survey items as grouped above. This begins with the presentation and analysis of the background information of the study participants hereunder.

8.3. Biographical data of research participants

The students who participated in the survey were drawn from 17 Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. Some of these include: Oromo, Amhara, Tigre, Sidama, Walayita, Hadiya, Gurage, Dawro, Agaw, Kambatta, Konso, Gedeo, Gamo, Silti, Kafficho, Derashe and Ari. In terms of sex, 209 (57.4 percent) of the study participants were males and the rest 152 (41.8 percent) were female students. The remaining 3 (0.8%) of the students who participated in the survey did not state their sex.

By religious affiliation, 179 (49.2%) of the study participants were Orthodox Christians, 91 (25%) Protestants, 63 (17.3%) Muslims, 19 (5.2) Catholics, 4 (1.1%) Adventists and the remaining 8 (2.2%) students did not state their religious identification. In terms of stream, 216 (59.3%) students who participated in the survey were in the natural science stream and the remaining 142 (39%) were in the social science stream during their preparatory education level. Yet 6 (1.7%) survey participants did not mention their stream. Tables 8.1.1

and 8.2.1 depicted the regional and ethnic identification of students who participated in the survey (see attachment).

8.4. Interface between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity

The existing literature suggests that human beings are living with several competing sets of identities. Among these identity categories, ethnic and national identities are reported as the most competing sets of group identification. The available literature has reflected a mixed image on the interface between ethnic and national identities. While some scholars consider the two identity sets as co-existing still some scholars treat them as conflicting.

Under this theoretical context, the researcher attempted to understand the interface between identification with and attachment to an ethnic group and a corresponding identification and attachment with the Ethiopian political and cultural community in students' values. In order to understand the place of each of these identity sets in students' values or perspectives, eight survey items were constructed and filled in with students themselves. The items mainly measure attachment and pride in or belonging to an ethnic community and pride in being Ethiopian or belonging to the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

For the purpose of expediency for statistical treatment through SPSS, '*strong and 'very proud*' were coded as 3, '*moderate*' and '*fairly proud*' as 2, and '*weak*' and '*not proud at all*' as 1 separately. Table 8.3 below depicts the students' strength of attachment to their respective ethnic community or ethnic group along the three-point Likert scale.

Table 8.3: Students attachment to their respective ethnic community

Scale	Percent	Mean	Standard deviation
Strong	43.3	2.21	0.786
Moderate	34.1		
Weak	22.6		
N=358			

As clearly shown in Table 8.3 above, the relative percentage of students who exhibited *strong* attachment to their respective ethnic community is greater than those who have *moderate* and *weak* attachment to the same. However, the mean score of students in the Likert scale falls in the category of ‘*moderate*’. By extension, it could be asserted that students have, more or less, *moderate* attachment to their ethnic community.

The students’ strength of attachment to their respective ethnic group presented and described above was further corroborated by measuring their extent of pride in being a member of an ethnic community. Table 8.4 below portrays the study participants’ level of pride in being an active member of their respective ethnic community as measured through the three point Likert scale.

Table 8.4: Students pride in being a member of their ethnic community

Scale	Percent	Mean	Standard deviation
Very proud	59.8	2.51	0.654
Fairly proud	31.4		
Not proud at all	8.8		
N=363			

As we infer from Table 8.4 above, the relative percentage of students who feel ‘*very proud*’ in identification with their ethnic group is greater than those who feel ‘*fairly proud*’ and ‘*not proud at all*’ in their ethnic identity combined. But yet the mean score of students on the Likert scale for pride in being a member of their corresponding ethnic community is only slightly greater than *moderate* (*fairly proud*).

The dissertation also attempted to assess the students’ attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community and pride in being Ethiopian. First, we shall see the students’ strength of attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community as presented in Table 8.5 below.

Table 8.5: Students attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community

Scale	Percent	Mean	Standard deviation
Strong	38.0	2.09	0.815
Moderate	33.0		
Weak	29.0		
N=355			

Simply looking into the students' scores on the three point Likert scale, one may easily reach the conclusion that the majority of students have '*strong*' attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. But still a significant proportion of students have '*moderate*' and '*weak*' attachments to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Even the combined proportion of students which fall in the domain of '*moderate*' and '*weak*' (62%) is by far greater than the proportion of student responses which lie in the category of '*strong*' on the Likert scale. Beyond the relative percentages, the mean score of students on the Likert scale also approaches to '*moderate*'.

Table 8.6: Students' level of pride in being Ethiopian

Scale	Percent	Mean	Standard deviation
Very proud	46.5	2.21	0.786
Fairly proud	34.9		
Not proud at all	18.6		
N=361			

In terms of relative percentage, a larger proportion of student responses on the Likert scale fall within the category of "*very proud*". Accordingly, it could be stated that the majority of students have demonstrated pride in being Ethiopian. But, yet more than half of the study participants respond '*fairly proud*' and '*not proud at all*' to the same question. Moreover, in view of the students mean score on the three point Likert scale, they are only '*fairly proud*' in being Ethiopian.

An emerging trend is that just like the students' score on the Likert scale for pride in ethnic group, the students score for pride in being Ethiopian is greater than their strength of

attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Here it is important to note that the intention is not to draw a clear boundary between pride and strength of attachment because one may subsequently lead to the other.

After having described students' attachment and pride in their respective ethnic community and in the Ethiopian political and cultural community above, now let us compare the students mean score in the two sets of group identity. For the purpose of convenience for statistical treatment through SPSS, the scales used to measure pride and strength of attachment to an ethnic community and the Ethiopian political and cultural community have been coded synonymously. Accordingly, '*strong* and '*very proud*' were synonymously coded as 3, '*moderate*' and '*fairly proud*' as 2, and '*weak*' and '*not proud at all*' as 1.

When the students mean score on the Likert scale about strength of attachment and pride in being an active member of a corresponding ethnic community combined, it becomes 2.35 which almost lies in the category of '*moderate*' on the three-point Likert scale. It exceeds the absolute value of '*moderate*' on the Likert scale only by 0.35. Similarly, when we combine the students' mean score on the Likert scale about their strength of attachment with the Ethiopian political and cultural community and their pride in being Ethiopian, it becomes 2.20 which, more or less, falls in the domain of '*moderate*'. The students' mean score exceeds the absolute value of '*moderate*' on the Likert scale by only 0.20 (Table 8.7).

Table 8.7: Comparison of Students attachment and pride in their respective ethnic community and the Ethiopian political and cultural community

	Combined mean	Standard deviation
Ethnic identity	2.35	0.530
Ethiopian identity	2.20	0.742

Only a mixed image persists on the literature about whether identification with and pride in one's ethnic community strengthens or undermines a corresponding identification with and pride in a national political community. Despite this theoretical debate, the above finding displayed in Table 8.7 may lead us to the assumption that students have only *moderate*

attachment and pride in identification with their respective ethnic community and the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Furthermore, it could be stated that students have, more or less, equal sense of attachment with and pride in their ethnic group and the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

Besides comparison of students' attachment and pride in ethnic group and the Ethiopian political and cultural community, the dissertation went further to examine their choice of either of the two identity sets, if required. Table 8.8 below depicts the students' responses as computed in simple percentages.

Table 8.8: Students' choice between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity

	Frequency	Percent
Ethnic identity	119	33.15
Ethiopian identity	109	30.36
Difficult to choose	131	36.49

N=359

As presented in Table 8.8 above, if they had to choose, almost 33% of the students would like identification with their ethnic community whereas 30% choose to identify with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Comparatively, the majority of students (36.5%) feel that they could not choose between their ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity. This finding suggests that although prioritizing either of these identity sets could not automatically lead us to the conclusion that they are *compatible* or *incompatible*, at least the decision not to choose between them could indicate that ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity appear co-existing in the students' values.

8.5. Student attachment to political and historico-cultural symbols

The other manifestation of students' identification with the Ethiopian political and cultural community was their attachment to the Ethiopian political symbols and historico-cultural heritages. For this purpose, six questionnaire items were constructed and distributed to and filled in by students. In the questionnaire items, such political symbols and historico-cultural heritages as the Ethiopian national flag, national anthem, national holidays, *Jegol*

Wall and *Tiya Steale* were included. For the sake of clarity, we shall treat student attachment to the major political symbols and historico-cultural heritages in separate subsections hereunder.

8.5.1. Political symbols

Now let us consider the students' primary identification with and attachment to each of the major political symbols such as the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem. Table 8.9 below shows the relative frequencies of students' identification and levels of attachment to the Ethiopian national flag and their respective region's flag.

Table 8.9: Students identification and attachment to the Ethiopian national flag and regional flag

Flag	Frequency	Percent
(Ethnic) Region only	95	26.7
Ethiopia only	170	47.8
Ethnic Region & then Ethiopia	41	11.5
Ethiopia & then (Ethnic Region)	50	14.0
N=356		

National flag is probably the most powerful and easily distinguishable political symbol which often represents a political community. With such assumption, the dissertation attempted to determine the students' primary identification with and attachment to the Ethiopian national flag. The findings indicate that about 48% of the study participants identified themselves and get attached to the Ethiopian national flag only. On the other hand, about 27% of the students who participated in the survey get attached to and identify with their respective regional government's flag only. In terms of primary and secondary identification, 14% of the study participants primarily identified with the Ethiopian national flag and their respective regional government's flag second and vice versa was demonstrated in the rest 11.5% of the students who participated in the survey. By extension, almost 62% of the students primarily identify with and get attached to the Ethiopian national flag and the remaining 38% prefer primary identification and attachment with the regional flag (Table 8.9).

Another political symbol often used to represent a political community is the national anthem. There is a very close association between national flag and national anthem. National flag displays in major national and international events are often accompanied by a national pledge often embedded in the national anthem. Accordingly, the students primary identification with and attachment to the Ethiopian national anthem was assessed and the results have been presented in Table 8.10 below.

Table 8.10: Students identification and attachment to the Ethiopian national anthem and regional anthem

Anthem	Frequency	Percent
(Ethnic) Region only	83	23.1
Ethiopia only	173	48.2
Ethnic Region & then Ethiopia	45	12.5
Ethiopia & then (Ethnic Region)	58	16.2
N=359		

Looking back into Table 8.10 above suggests that just like the national flag the relative proportion of students who identify with and get attached to the Ethiopian national anthem only was higher than those who solely identify with their regional government's anthem. While 48% of the students who participated in the survey exclusively identify with the Ethiopian national anthem, a correspondingly 23.1% prefer to identify and associate themselves with their respective regional government's anthem only.

In terms of prioritizing identification and attachment, 16% of student survey participants demonstrated primary identification with the Ethiopian national anthem and secondary identification with their respective regional government's anthem and the reverse happened in the remaining 12.5% of the students who participated in the survey. The table further shows that 64.4% of students would like to primarily identify with and get attached to the Ethiopian national anthem and the remaining 35.6% primarily identify with and associated to the regional anthem.

The third national symbol considered in the study to represent the Ethiopian political community was national holiday. In the questionnaire survey, the students who participated in the study were provided with six national holidays widely celebrated and, some of which, significantly dealt with by Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks to demonstrate their level of attachment and the findings are depicted hereunder in Table 8.11.

Table 8.11: Students identification and attachment to the national holidays

National holidays	Frequency	Percent
Nations, Nationalities & Peoples Day	138	38.0
Adwa Victory	84	23.1
National Flag Day	68	18.7
Downfall of Dergue (28 May 1991)	65	17.9
Victory over Somalia (March 1978)	6	1.7
Arrival of the Emperor from exile (5 May)	2	0.6
N=363		

In terms of relative proportion, students who participated in the survey better identify with and attached to the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day (38%), the Adwa Victory (23%), National Flag Day (18.7%) and Ginbot Haya (17.9%). Student survey participants identify only little with and attached to such national holidays as Victory over Somalia Forces (1.7%), and Arrival of the last Emperor from exile (0.6%). This indicates apparent fragmentation in students' values about national holidays. It is worth noting that only one fourth (23%) of the students have attachment to the Adwa Victory and less than one fifth (18%) of the students associate themselves with the May 28 National Holiday (the Downfall of the Dergue Regime).

On the basis of students' attachment to each of the national holidays displayed in Table 8.11 above, it appears logical to rank them in terms of their role in representing the Ethiopian political community as Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Day, Adwa Victory, National Flag Day, Ginbot Haya (the Downfall of Dergue), Victory over Somalia Forces, and Arrival of the last Emperor from exile.

8.5.2. Historical and cultural heritages

Before directly delving into the specific historical and cultural symbols or heritages students have been expected to demonstrate, one generic question was asked to students whether they have better attachments to those historico-cultural heritages found in Ethiopia, in their respective region and the world at large. Accordingly, 37% of the students feel attached to those found in Ethiopia as a whole while 35.5% of the students' demonstrated attachment to those found in their respective ethnic region only. Still, 25.5% of the students feel attached first with those found in (Ethnic) Region and then in other regions of Ethiopia. Those students who identify with and attached to those historical and cultural heritages found in the world over constitute about 2% only. It appears that 61% of the students would like to primarily attach themselves with those historico-cultural heritages found in their ethnic region (see Table 8.12 below).

Table 8.12: Students attachment to historical and cultural heritages

	Frequency	Percent
Those found in (Ethnic) Region only	128	35.5
First those found in (Ethnic) Region and then in other regions of Ethiopia	92	25.5
Those found in Ethiopia as a whole	134	37.1
Those found in the world over	7	1.9
N=361		

Further looking into students' identification and attachment with some specific historical and cultural heritages found in some regions or localities of Ethiopia reveals even a more diffused response rate. The student survey participants' level of attachment and sense of belonging to some specific historical and cultural heritages or symbols is presented in Table 8.13 below.

Table 8.13: Students attachment to some specific historico-cultural heritages found in some regions or localities

Heritage	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Jegol Wall (in Harari)	350	2.27	1.055
Tiya Steale (in SNNPR)	354	2.60	1.184

The students' level of attachment to the historical and cultural symbols displayed in Table 8.13 above was measured through a four-point Likert scale which ranges from a high of '*very strong*' to a low of '*very weak*'. Accordingly, 57.3% of the students for the Tiya Steale and 42% of the students for the Jegol Wall have demonstrated '*strong*' to '*very strong*' level of attachment and the remaining 42.7% and 58% of the students demonstrated '*weak*' to '*very weak*' attachment respectively to the Tiya Steale and Jegol Wall (see Table 8.13.1 and Table 8.13.2 in the attachment).

In terms of mean score, the students' level of attachment to the Jegol Wall almost flatly falls within the category of '*weak*' ($x=2.27$) in the Likert scale. Students attachment to the Tiya Steale only slightly approaches strong ($x=2.60$) on the Likert Scale. Standard deviations computed for the two heritages shows that students scores appear highly dispersed along the four point Likert scale. Overall, the relative percentage and mean score of students' attachment to historical and cultural heritages appears more fragmented which could not enable to imagine a cultural or historical community.

8.6. Student attachment to the Ethiopian political community

As clearly discussed in the literature review and theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, constitutional patriotism has been taken as one of the manifestations of identification and attachment with the Ethiopian political community or Ethiopian identity. Accordingly, in order to measure the attachment students have with the Ethiopian political community five questionnaire items were constructed and distributed to a randomly selected ethnically, religiously and linguistically diversified students.

The thematic areas of questionnaire items constructed for this purpose include common laws and institutions, common rights and duties, legal equality of Ethiopian citizens,

supremacy of the FDRE Constitution and the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. The survey participant students' commitment to each of these attributes of constitutional patriotism was measured through a four-point Likert Scale which ranges from a high of '*very important*' to a low of '*not important at all*'. For the purpose of convenience for statistical analysis on SPSS, each of the four-point Likert Scale values was coded numerically. Accordingly, 4 = *very important*, 3 = *fairly important*, 2 = *not very important*, and 1 = *not important at all*.

Accordingly, the students' response to each of the manifestations of constitutional patriotism on the four-point Likert scale is depicted in Table 8.14 below. In terms of mean score, students' response on the Likert scale appears to fall between '*fairly important*' and '*very important*'. The aggregate mean of the students' level of attachment to some of the basic principles of the FDRE Constitution was about 3.37. The study participants score on some attributes – such as respect for the sovereignty of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples and adherence to the legal equality of citizens – even approaches to '*very important*' (see Table 8.14 below).

Table 8.14: Survey participant students' level of constitutional patriotism

Constitutional patriotism variables	No.	Mean	Std
Adherence to common laws and institutions	361	3.09	1.039
Enjoying common rights and duties	363	3.46	0.755
Adherence to legal equality of citizens	363	3.60	0.598
Respect for the supremacy of FDRE Constitution	362	2.99	1.089
Respect for the sovereignty of Nations, Nationalities & Peoples	364	3.72	0.591

In addition to mean score, the students' level of constitutional patriotism was also computed in terms of simple percentage. Accordingly, about 73% of the students agreed with the importance of adherence to the common laws and institutions of the country (Ethiopia). Similarly, 88% of the students expressed their position on the importance of enjoying common rights and discharging common duties. With regard to adherence the

legal equality of Ethiopian citizens, an overwhelming majority (96.5%) of the students demonstrated its utmost importance. A comparable 94.8% of the students have showed agreement on the importance of respecting the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. Again 66% of the students believed that to be truly Ethiopian respecting the supremacy of the FDRE Constitution is important. Generally, given the above mean scores and simple percentages, it could be asserted that students' values or perspectives on being Ethiopian centered more on constitutional patriotism.

8.7. Student attachment to the Ethiopian economic community

In the conceptualization of Ethiopian identity, a sense of attachment with the country's economic infrastructures and projects was taken as one manifestation of Ethiopianness. In order to determine the students' association with economic infrastructures, projects and natural resources, one generic and six specific questionnaire items were constructed and distributed to students and filled in by the same.

For the sake of expediency for statistical analysis through SPSS, the scales used to measure the degree of attachment such as '*very strong*', '*strong*', '*weak*' and '*very weak*' were coded respectively downward from 4 to 1. As portrayed in Table 8.15 below, students sense of belonging and attachment to economic infrastructures found in any part of Ethiopia approaches to strong and this is exemplified by their mean score ($x=2.84$) in the scale. Comparatively, while 67.5% of the students responses falls in the range of '*strong*' to '*very strong*' attachment to economic infrastructures and projects found anywhere in Ethiopia, the rest 32.5% fall within the category of '*very weak*' and '*weak*'. By simply taking these figures one can assert that the majority of students have strong attachment to economic projects, infrastructures and natural resources found in every corner of the country but yet it fails to approach an economic community.

Table 8.15: Students sense of belonging to economic infrastructures or resources found in other regions equally as those found in their region or locality

Scale	Percent	Mean	Standard deviation
Very strong	28.3	2.84	0.964
Strong	39.2		
Weak	21.1		
Very weak	11.4		

N=360

As clearly shown in the analysis above, the majority (67.5%) of the students seem to have, more or less, significant attachment to the economic projects, infrastructures and natural resources found throughout the country. This result appears to reflect that spatial dimension is not affecting the majority of students' level of attachment to economic infrastructures and natural resources. However, the remaining one third (32.5%) of the students have demonstrated a weak sense of attachment to economic infrastructures and resources found in other regions of the country.

Still, students' attachment began to fragment or disperse when some specific economic resources and/or projects with regional identification were presented to them. Table 8.16 below portrays students' responses to the four-point Likert scale (as above) employed to measure the level of their attachment to some specific economic projects or resources. The aggregate mean of the students' sense of attachment to some specific economic infrastructures and natural resources was about 2.52. The mean score of students on the Likert scale approaches '*strong*' only for the Renaissance Dam followed respectively by Gilgel Ghibe HEP and Tana Belles HEP. Yet individual student level of attachment to the HEP projects and natural resources appears highly dispersed, which might be inflated by extreme values in students' responses.

Table 8.16: Students sense of belonging to some specific economic infrastructures or resources found in some regions or localities

Infrastructures	No.	Mean	Std
Tekezze HEP (in Tigray)	354	2.30	1.154
Gilgel Ghibe HEP (in Oromiya)	351	2.62	1.175
Tana Belles HEP (in Amhara)	355	2.53	1.165
Renaissance Dam (in Benishangul Gumuz)	358	2.96	1.087
Salt Mine Project (in Afar)	348	2.20	1.064
Nech Sar National Park (in SNNPR)	351	2.49	1.151

In addition to mean and standard deviation, simple percentages were also computed for students' level of attachment to the above mentioned economic projects and/ or resources as measured by the four point Likert scale. Accordingly, the relative percentage of students who have strong attachment with Tekezze HEP, Gilgel Ghibe HEP, Tana Belles HEP, Renaissance Dam, Afar Salt Mine, and Nech Sar National Park was 45.5%, 55.2%, 52.1%, 71.5%, 34.8%, and 50.5% respectively. The rest have only a *weak* attachment to the corresponding HEP projects and natural resources.

Looking specifically into students level of attachment to each of the above specific economic projects and natural resources reveals that students feel better attached respectively with the Great Renaissance Dam, Gilgel Ghibe HEP, Tana Belles HEP and Nech Sar National Park. The relative better attachment of students to these three HEP projects and the Nech Sar National Park could be brought about by the correspondingly higher proportion of the students drawn from the regions where these HEP projects and the national park are found, except the Renaissance Dam.

Here it is important to note that although the relative percentage of students attachment to some economic projects and natural resources seemed to be above average (50%), it is not sufficient to justify an economic community. Even for some economic projects and natural resources, students level of attachment drops below average. Thus, it could be safely stated

that in view of one economic community, students' level of attachment to economic infrastructures and natural resources yet remained to be poor.

8.8. Student attachment to the Ethiopian cultural community

In the conceptualization phase of the study it was asserted that self-imagination is an important component of national identification. The literature suggests that every society has something to imagine about itself and such self-imagination or self-characterization could be gradually communicated and get imprinted in the minds of every citizen.

With such an understanding, the dissertation first attempted to explore such values from the Ethiopian regional and national education system curriculum through qualitative content analysis of some selected subject areas textbooks. Here the dissertation attempts to understand whether or not such values portrayed in Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks have been embedded in the value systems of students. Accordingly, a questionnaire item designed for this purpose has been filled in by students who participated in the survey and the findings are presented in Table 8.17 below.

Table 8.17: Students' imagination of the Ethiopian political and cultural community

Socio-cultural values	Number	Percent
Heroism	56	15.8
Religious tolerance	29	8.1
Hospitability	23	6.5
All of the above	247	69.6
N=355		

As clearly portrayed in Table 8.17 above heroism, religious tolerance and hospitability were Ethiopian values surfaced in students' perspectives. Accordingly, nearly 70% of the students who filled in the questionnaire item respond that *heroism*, *religious tolerance* and *hospitability* are the main attributes which can characterize Ethiopia as a cultural community. Only few students considered such attributes as manifestations of being Ethiopian disaggregatedly. That is, the combined proportion of students who choose among

the three attributes above separately is as small as almost 30%. For instance, the proportion of students who chose only *'heroism'* as Ethiopian value is around 16%.

8.9. Students sources of ethnic and Ethiopian identity development

In its conceptualization and theoretical review, the dissertation attempted to justify that identities are constructed rather than something given and remain fixed. Accordingly, the students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity could be constructed from their exposure to and interaction with the social environment in which they live in. With such theoretical assumption, here the dissertation identifies and describes the social actors or institutions involved in students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity development.

Accordingly, questionnaire items intended to measure the contribution of some social institutions in students ethnic and Ethiopian identity construction process have been constructed and distributed to be filled in by randomly selected secondary education level complete students. The contribution of each of the social institutions in students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity development was expressed through a five-point Likert Scale which ranges from 'very strong' to 'very weak'. For the purpose of convenience for statistical analysis, each of the scales has been coded numerically. Accordingly, 4 = Very strong, 3 = Strong, 2 = Weak, 1 = Very weak, and Indifferent = 0.

Now let us see the contribution of each of the social institutions in students' ethnic identity development. As clearly depicted in Table 8.18 below, although their contribution varies along the Likert scale students ethnic identity construction has been influenced by all of the eight institutions (such as family, education, media, government, political parties, civic society, religious institutions and peers). The mean score of each of these institutions along the five-point Likert scale as evaluated by the students who participated in the survey is shown in Table 8.18. Accordingly, comparatively peers, political parties and family have a mean score of approaching to *'strong'*, implies that these institutions have, more or less, a *'strong'* role in students' ethnic identity construction process. On the other hand, the mean score of religious institutions, education and civic society approaches to *'weak'* and thus it follows that the contribution of these institutions in students' ethnic identity development is relatively *'weak'*.

Table 8.18: Major sources of students' ethnic identity development

Agents	No.	Mean	Std
Family	355	2.54	1.219
Education	356	2.18	1.302
Media	359	2.42	1.317
Government	355	2.43	1.299
Political parties	353	2.64	1.240
Civic society	349	2.20	1.381
Religious institutions	350	2.16	1.357
Peers	353	2.64	1.309

Simple percentages were also computed to measure the relative contribution of the above social institutions in students' ethnic identity construction process. Thus the proportion of students who respond '*very strong*' to '*strong*' on the five-point Likert scale for the contribution of family was 58.8%, for education 41.8%, for media 54%, for government 54%, for political parties 63.7%, for civic society 44.9%, for religious institutions 44.9%, and for peers 63.8%. Generally, peers, political parties, family, media and government have a relatively significant role in students' ethnic identity construction process.

The dissertation also measures the contribution of family, education, media, government, political parties, civic society, religious institutions and peers on students' Ethiopian identity development along the five-point Likert scale. Despite some variations, the data obtained through questionnaire survey indicate that all these social institutions have a role in the students' Ethiopian identity construction process. When we look into Table 8.19 below, comparatively religious institutions and family have played a much larger role in the students' Ethiopian identity development than any other social institutions in the list. The mean score along the five-point Likert scale given for religious institutions and family by students who participated in the survey falls, on the average, within the domain of '*strong*'. The remaining social institutions considered for treatment have a mean score of, more or less, '*weak*', which means that their contribution for students' Ethiopian identity development is *weak*.

Table 8.19: Major sources of students' Ethiopian identity development

Agents	No.	Mean	Std
Family	356	2.88	1.227
Education	357	2.30	1.270
Media	356	2.37	1.314
Government	356	2.17	1.352
Political parties	357	2.23	1.298
Civic society	351	2.17	1.341
Religious institutions	352	3.28	1.030
Peers	357	2.16	1.320

A more clear revelation on the contribution of the aforementioned social institutions for students Ethiopian identity development could also be obtained from computation of the study participants responses along the five-point Likert scale in simple percentages. Accordingly, the relative proportion of students who rated the contribution of each of the social institutions treated in the survey between '*strong*' and '*very strong*' on the five-point Likert scale include 73% for family, 47.3% for education, 50% for media, 43.5% for government, 43.7% for political parties, 44.4% for civic society, 87.5% for religious institutions and 43.4% for peers. Overall, the students' Ethiopian identity development is influenced by religious institutions, family, media, education, civic society, political parties, and peers. However, comparatively speaking, among these social institutions, religious institutions and family have played a much better role in the students' Ethiopian identity construction process.

8.10. Social Studies, CEE and History education contribution for students' ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity development

As clearly described in section 8.9 above, students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity has been shaped by various social institutions. As part of such analysis, it was attempted to describe the contribution of formal education in general in the students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity construction process. Yet it is imperative to understand that although formal education has a role in students' ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity development, mainly

due to the nature of the thematic areas they covered some academic subjects have a much larger influence than other subject areas. The available literature suggests that Social Studies, CEE and History have significant influence on students' ethnic identity and national identity development.

With such premise, in order to understand the contribution of Social Studies, CEE and History education on the students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity construction process disaggregatedly, a questionnaire survey was conducted with sample Ethiopian secondary education level completed students and their responses have been described along a five-point Likert Scale which ranges from a high of '*very strong*' to a low of '*very weak*' and then computed in terms of mean, standard deviation and simple percentages.

As we can see from Table 8.20 below, Social Studies, CEE and History have some contribution in the students' ethnic identity construction process. In terms of mean score on the Likert scale, only the contribution of CEE in the students' ethnic identity development slightly approaches to '*strong*'. The mean score of Social Studies and History on the Likert scale, more or less, lies in the domain of '*weak*', implies that their contribution in the students ethnic identity construction process is almost weak.

Table 8.20: The contribution of Social Studies, CEE and History education in the students' ethnic identity development

Subject areas	No.	Mean	Std
Social Studies	351	2.21	1.317
CEE	356	2.62	1.307
History	352	2.10	1.297

In terms of simple percentages, the proportion of students who rated the contribution of Social Studies, CEE and History from '*strong*' to '*very strong*' on the Likert scale in their ethnic identity development was 43.4%, 63.8% and 41.2%, respectively. Looking back into its mean score and relative percentage, comparatively CEE has a much better role in the students' ethnic identity development than Social Studies and History.

This study also attempted to describe the contribution of Social Studies, CEE and History education in the students' Ethiopian identity construction process along the same Likert scale. The mean score of student responses along the five-point Likert Scale for each subject area was computed and presented in Table 8.21 below. Accordingly, the combined mean score (2.27) of the three academic subjects on the Likert scale falls within the category of '*weak*', implies that the contribution of Social Studies, CEE and History in the students' Ethiopian identity construction process is, more or less, *weak*.

Table 8.21: The contribution of Social Studies, CEE and History in the students' Ethiopian identity development

Subject areas	No.	Mean	Std
Social Studies	352	2.20	1.230
CEE	357	2.29	1.214
History	356	2.33	1.203

When we see the proportion of students who expressed the contribution of Social Studies, CEE and History education between '*strong*' and '*very strong*' was 42.6%, 45.1% and 45.9% respectively. Although the contribution of these three academic subjects in the students' Ethiopian identity construction appears very poor, comparatively the contribution of History education was slightly greater than Social Studies and even CEE.

Generally, in this chapter, students' identification with and attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community and their respective ethnic group has been expressed through descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and in simple percentages. In addition to this, the key social institutions presumed to contribute to the students' ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity construction processes have been examined. Further looking into curriculum responses to nation-building through Ethiopian identity development in the students' values, the contribution of Social Studies, CEE and History was examined. In the next chapter, these findings have been combined with the initial qualitative analysis findings so that subsequent conclusions and implications could be made.

CHAPTER NINE

9. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

9.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand the post-1991 new nation-building process in developing a pan-Ethiopian identity through the national and regional education system curriculum and students' values or perspectives about the contribution of the curricula in shaping group identity. The meaning of being Ethiopian and the main attributes which may symbolize it were almost absent in the available Ethiopian scholarship and government policy documents. Some of the available scholarship related in some way to the issue largely remained an elite discourse – at the expense of public and/ or individual opinions. To this end, exploratory sequential design was adopted by the dissertation as an appropriate research strategy to explore and understand how the national and regional education system curriculum has intended to develop Ethiopian identity and the resulting meaning the students attached to what it means to be an Ethiopian and the values and symbols they associate with.

Accordingly, in the first phase qualitative study the main attributes (values, symbols and traditions) used to define the Ethiopian political and cultural community have been explored through qualitative content analysis of textbooks and in-depth interviews and FGDs with students. Then in the second phase quantitative study, the dissertation attempts to understand the level or status of attachment students have with the values, symbols and traditions identified through the first qualitative study as representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

The preceding chapters (Chapters 4 – 8) presented the findings of both the qualitative exploration and quantitative survey separately. However, a fuller understanding of the issue could be found through the integration of major findings of the two phases of the study. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to integrate and discuss the findings of the first qualitative study and the subsequent second phase quantitative survey findings in relation to the basic research questions and the theoretical proposition of the study vis-a-vis the available Ethiopian and international scholarship. The discussion of major findings of the

study on the post-1991 new nation-building process through Ethiopian identity has been presented and discussed under two broader themes: curriculum responses and student perspectives. Then the chapter concludes with a brief summary of the study's major findings in the light of the available literature.

9.2. Curriculum portrayal and student attachment to Ethiopian identity

Curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity have been assessed through content analysis of some selected subjects and through students and teachers evaluation of the national and regional education system curriculum. Broadly speaking, there were some attempts to portray and communicate a sense of Ethiopianness by almost all sets of textbooks considered for content analysis – Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks. For instance, unlike the previous sets of textbooks, all the new textbooks have been produced under the close supervision of the FDRE Ministry of Education. Furthermore, the background colours of the cover pages of all sets of the present textbooks were intentionally selected by the MOE to reflect the traditional tri-colours of the Ethiopian national flag (green, yellow and red) and the blue colour and all textbooks were made to carry the Ethiopian national flag in their outer and inner cover pages along with the FDRE-MOE. In addition to this, all CEE textbooks carry the political map of Ethiopia in their front cover pages.

Generally, from qualitative content analysis of upper primary education level Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions Social Studies and CEE textbooks and national secondary education level CEE and History textbooks the dissertation found out that Ethiopian identity has been presented in terms of attachment to some political, historical and cultural symbols, socio-cultural values or images, and constitutional patriotism. Then students' identification with and attachment to each of these attributes has been secured through subsequent interviews, FGDs and questionnaire survey with sample study participants. In the next sub-sections, the findings of each of these data instruments are combined and discussed in the light of the available scholarship as follows.

9.2.1. Political and historico-cultural symbols as representing Ethiopian identity

The textbooks presented some major political, historical and cultural symbols as representing Ethiopian identity. The Ethiopian national flag, national anthem, national

holidays and some Ethiopian heroes/heroines have surfaced during the content analysis phase as the major political symbols representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community. In the latter interview, FGDs and questionnaire survey phases of the study, though diffused, student values tend to show some sense of attachment to the political and historico-cultural symbols.

With regard to the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem, all sets of textbooks on which content analysis has been made portrayed the Ethiopian national flag some on their cover pages only and some on both their cover pages and in their main body of the text. It was only in CEE textbooks that the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem have been significantly portrayed and communicated in the main body of the text. The CEE textbooks presented the Ethiopian national flag as a symbol of sovereignty, dignity, independence, heroism, sacrifice, unity and national pride. Similarly, the national anthem was portrayed as a symbol of popularity, uniqueness, and natural and historical endowments. But here it is important to bear in mind that comparatively speaking the Ethiopian national anthem was only marginally surfaced in the CEE textbooks. Respect for the national flag and national anthem was presented as a patriotic citizenship duty and a sign of love for the people and country (or an expression of the new Ethiopian nationalism) expected from students as citizens.

At this juncture, it seems also important to indicate that there was regional variation in the portrayal of the Ethiopian national flag by Social Studies and CEE textbooks. As frequency of occurrence could indicate its relative importance – in addition to the Ethiopian national flag – the portrayal of regional flags by the Oromiya and Tigray regions textbooks appears to equally emphasize identification and attachment of students with their respective ethnic community. By extension, as the Amhara Region textbooks did not portray the regional flag, they could mainly reinforce identification with the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

On the other hand, student interview and FGDs findings on the subjective interpretations of the meaning of the Ethiopian national flag include: *national pride, sacrifice for the common good, rich history, unity and sovereignty*. Similarly, students treated the Ethiopian

national anthem as an expression of *love, sacrifice, unity, equality, and strength*. Questionnaire survey findings indicate that most students also would like to identify with and get attached to the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem.

As per the ongoing nation-building discourse, students have been expected to first identify with their respective ethnic community (and its attributes) and then with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. But interview, FGDs and questionnaire survey with students indicate that the political nation (Ethiopia) as portrayed through the national flag and national anthem appears to have a hegemonic position in the students' values. This could be exemplified by the fact that the majority of the students have showed primary identification and attachment with the Ethiopian national flag (62%) and national anthem (64.4%). However, this could be the case because the majority of questionnaire survey participants were from the SNNPR, where ethnic values appear loose due to greater diversity. For instance, in the open-ended questionnaire, SNNPR students could not correctly jot down the regional anthem. Comparatively, the textbooks on which qualitative content analysis have been made also devoted some volume for the treatment of the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem. But yet more than one third of the students have demonstrated primary identification with their regional flag and regional anthem. Moreover, about one fourth of the students prefer to identify with and associate themselves with the respective regional flag and regional anthem only.

Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks also presented some heroes/heroines and national holidays as symbolizing Ethiopian identity. Kawo Tona, Abba Jiffar, Tato Gaki Serecho, Nigus Ibssa, Kumsa Morada, Emir Abdullahi, etc have been treated in the textbooks as some of the state-builders and heroes of the pre-20th century Ethiopia from the south, southeast and southwest. Principal nation-builders of the 19th and 20th century such as Emperor Tewodros II, Emperor Yohannes IV, Emperor Menelik II, Empress Taytu, Emperor Haile Selassie I and Meles Zenawi seem to have been presented as Ethiopian heroes/heroines. The textbooks also portrayed some Ethiopian heroes/heroines in the field of traditional patriotism (struggle against colonialism for the sovereignty of their country), athletics and civic duties.

But yet interregional analysis of commonly shared heroes/heroines among the Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions Social Studies textbooks revealed that only Emperor Menelik II and Empress Taytu could transcend ethnic or regional boundaries. Moreover, the textbooks have failed to exhaustively present all the good deeds and faults, if there are any, of these persons from whom students could have the opportunity to choose as their Ethiopian heroes/heroines by critically scrutinizing their personal traits and/ or achievements.

Similarly, interview and FGDs findings indicate that students have a highly diffused interpretation of Ethiopian heroes/heroines. In the open-ended questionnaire and in the interview session, students often resort to name their Ethiopian heroes/heroines along their ethnic lines. For instance, some students consider Emperor Tewodros II, Emperor Menelik II, Empress Taytu, Emperor Haile Selassie I, Dejazmach Belay Zeleke, etc as their Ethiopian heroes/heroines while some other students rejected some of these persons and instead consider Abba Jiffar, General Waqo Guto, Balcha Safo, Abdissa Aga, Mohammed Abdinur, Garasu Dukhi, Agari Tulu, and Tadesse Biru as their Ethiopian heroes. Still some other students take the recent political and military leaders such as Meles Zenawi, General Hayelom Araya, Abay Tsehaye, Seyoum Mesfin, Sebhat Nega, etc as their Ethiopian heroes.

It was only during the FGDs session that the two recent political leaders of Ethiopia such as the late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, and the current Prime Minister, Haile Mariam Desalegn, were able to transcend the students' ethnic boundaries as Ethiopian heroes. These two political leaders were not significantly treated in the textbooks as Ethiopian heroes, but such attachment could be forged by the students' out of school experiences.

The highly diffused student values on the selection of their Ethiopian heroes and heroines appear to emerge from the students' lack of exposure to the complete traits or characteristics of those persons in the country's historical evolution. Except mentioning some names of Ethiopians who, in one way or another, contributed to nation-building and state-building, the textbooks did not fairly exhaust their achievements and failures and thus

unable to give students the opportunity to critically evaluate and select their heroes/heroines on the basis of merit rather than ethnic or regional allegiance only.

National holidays were very loosely and scarcely presented in the textbooks as significant manifestations of Ethiopian identity. For instance, with the exception the Adwa Victory, no national holiday has been portrayed as a manifestation of Ethiopian identity in all sets of upper primary Social Studies and CEE textbooks. Some sets of the country's secondary education level CEE and History textbooks presented such national holidays as the Adwa Victory Day (1 March), Liberation Day (5 May), May 28 (Ginbot Haya), Victory over Somalia, Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day, and National Flag Day as representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community. It was only the Adwa Victory Day which, more or less, received significant coverage in almost all sets of primary and secondary education system textbooks. Despite such shallow treatment by textbooks, interview and survey findings indicate that students would like to identify with and get attached to some of the major national holidays as representing the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Some of these include: the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day, Adwa Victory, National Flag Day, and May 28 (Ginbot Haya).

Similarly, some historico-cultural symbols and/ or heritages such as palaces, obelisks, castles, temples, churches, mosques, etc were also portrayed in the textbooks to represent the Ethiopian political and cultural community. However, interregional analysis of the Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions Social Studies textbooks portrayal of the commonly shared historico-cultural symbols or heritages revealed that only four historical and cultural symbols, such as the Axumite Obelisks, the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, the Castles of Gondar and the Adwa Victory, could transcend ethnic or regional boundaries.

In-depth interviews and FGDs findings also show that students have some sense of attachment to some of the above and other historico-cultural symbols – some of which portray ethnic identity and some others Ethiopian identity. The Tiya Stones, the Palace of Abba Jiffar, the Terraces of Konso, the Harar Wall, Dirre Sheik Hussein, Lucy and Adwa have been among the historico-cultural symbols reflected in the students' values or perspectives. However, questionnaires survey findings indicate that students have a weak

sense of attachment to the historico-cultural heritages of Ethiopia. It was found out that only 37% of the students feel a sense of attachment to those historical and cultural symbols found all over Ethiopia. The proportion of students who feel primary attachment to those historico-cultural symbols found in their ethnic region was 61%, of whom 35.5% associated themselves with those found in their ethnic region only. This shows that there is a very low level of students' attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community as manifested through historico-cultural symbols.

At this juncture, it is important to note that the textbooks attempted to present some political, historical and cultural symbols as manifestations of the Ethiopian political and cultural community but yet they failed to logically associate them with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. That is, they did not adequately deal with these symbols in sufficient details so that students could have the opportunity to assess their practical relevance and then develop a sense of attachment with them. For instance, in the Oromiya Region Social Studies textbooks, some of the political symbols and historico-cultural heritages treated in other regions' textbooks were there but they were, more or less, detached both from the ethnic community and the Ethiopian political and cultural community. They simply remained floated in between the ethnic region's community and the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Students could develop a sense of attachment to the political and historico-cultural symbols only when they have adequate information about these symbols and heritages.

The Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks tend to give attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community often for those political and historico-cultural symbols found in the region. Those political symbols and historico-cultural heritages found in other regions of Ethiopia have been treated as they belong to the ethnic community of the respective regions. Such portrayal of political and historico-cultural symbols by the Amhara Region Social Studies textbooks may not develop a sense of attachment with the Ethiopian political and cultural community among students.

With regard to the Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks treatment of political and historico-cultural heritages, they attempted to associate these symbols with both the ethnic

community and the Ethiopian political and cultural community. They particularly attempted to maintain diversity in their portrayal of Ethiopian heroes and heroines by taking many persons from some nations, nationalities and peoples. The Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks also uniquely devoted some space for the treatment of many of the region's political symbols and historico-cultural heritages which are not found in other regions textbooks. But yet more than any other regions textbooks, they portrayed many heroes/heroines and historico-cultural symbols from Africa and other countries of the world. It follows that the Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks attempted to create, among students, a sense of attachment to the ethnic community, the Ethiopian political and cultural community and the international community at large.

Generally, in the questionnaire survey, about one fourth of the students in most cases prefer to identify with ethnic attributes only. That gets higher when students were asked to make a choice. For instance, about 33% of the students prefer to identify with their ethnic group only. Again, the proportion of students who identify with and associated themselves only to the regional flag and regional anthem constituted about 27% and 23% respectively. Similarly, about 35% of the students demonstrated a sense of attachment to those historical and cultural symbols found in their respective region only. Students primary or secondary identification with Ethiopian identity and ethnic identity attributes could not matter as such. Instead, what matters most in the context of this study is whether or not students identify with the Ethiopian identity attributes at all.

If properly planned, the national education system curriculum can contribute to nation-building by portraying and communicating to the students some of the nation's preferred values, symbols and traditions. This assertion has both theoretical and empirical validation. For instance, in his Article entitled "*Curriculum as an Expression of National Identity*", [Reid \(2000\)](#) maintained that as a national curriculum is unique to its context, it has been expected to develop a sense of identification and belonging to that particular nation. At a broader level, [Reid](#) considers a national curriculum as a "cultural artifact" which could not be considered as comparable across nations in the world ([p. 113](#)).

In line with this, interviews with teachers revealed that Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks largely lack contextualization. Rather than exhausting national issues, they largely treat continental and global issues directly copied from Western developed countries. This was also evident during the content analysis session. It was evident that particularly those contested issues on which students have been expected to reflect seems to be intentionally removed from textbook narratives. They portrayed and attempted to communicate to the students the taken-for-granted grand narratives about Ethiopian history on which nothing to reflect through critical examination; but to simply absorb the facts as they appear. Such approach of textbooks organization could produce citizens who become ideological captives of the prevailing taken for-granted-narrative rather than being critical consumers of information presented to them.

The danger is that, as some scholars insisted (see for example, Ahonen, 2001; Trofanenko, 2008; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008), one line of historical narrative often represents the dominant group while it ignores others. Trofanenko contends that “...understanding history has not always meant the abandonment of oppositional narratives and representations requires examining how events are presented over time” (p. 595). In the same vein, Zembylas and Bekerman (2008) assert that bringing historical mistakes or what they called ‘memories’, into historical narratives through education is not dangerous, it is the practice of “remembering” which could make it dangerous. Ahonen (2001) also maintained that a history curriculum could be socially and politically inclusive and create a historical community when it gives space for alternative narratives of the past.

9.2.2. Socio-cultural values as representing Ethiopian identity

Various sources indicate that there had been a sense of association among the different nations and nationalities of Ethiopia throughout their history. Such sense of attachment and unity was largely brought about by continuous interactions. Levine (1974) proposed three factors which could serve as the foundations of Ethiopian unity: (1) *a continuous process of interaction of the differentiated Ethiopian people with one another*; (2) *the existence of a number of pan-Ethiopian cultural traits*; and (3) *a characteristic mode of response to the periodic intrusion of alien peoples and cultures* (p. 40). Most importantly, Levine considered Ethiopia as a ‘relational network’, where although it has different nations and

nationalities, they should not be considered as they have been living as discrete isolated units. Its people have been in continuous interactions through trade, warfare, religious ceremonies, population movements, and intermarriages.

Having the above background, [Levine \(1974: 21\)](#) contends that Ethiopia should not be treated as a “mosaic of distinct peoples” because such assertion neglects their commonly shared socio-cultural traits and the long-lived relationships each of these groups have had throughout their history. He continued to assert that in practice, the different groups in Ethiopia did not live a self-sufficient and independent life even long before the conquest of Menelik II in the late 19th century. In Levin’s words: “In sum, the image of Ethiopia as a collection of distinct peoples neglects what these peoples have in common, how they interact, and the nature of Ethiopian society as a whole” (p. 21). In conclusion, [Levine](#) stated that this ‘relational network’ may be thin or strong, but never absent in their history.

A more or less similar assertion about the significance of the historical interactions which existed among the different peoples of Ethiopia for latter political unity was made by Bahru Zewde. [Bahru \(2002\)](#) particularly concentrates on the political significance of the long distance trade routes in Ethiopia. He insisted that one of the main bases for the unification of Ethiopia in the late nineteenth century was the long distance trade route which connected northern Ethiopia with southern Ethiopia. In line with the continuous interactions among the different peoples of Ethiopia, in the north and south, [Bahru](#) seems to join [Levine’s](#) assertion as stated: “...northern and southern Ethiopia did not exist in mutual isolation” (p.21).

The economic, social and political significance of the continuous interactions among the different nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia was also presented in the Ethiopian national and regional education system Social Studies and History textbooks. In the textbooks, the long distance trade has been taken as an important instrument for the intermingling of peoples of different social, cultural, ethnic, religious, regional, etc backgrounds. It brought the various groups of Ethiopia in direct contact via local and regional markets which could gradually evolve into strong interethnic relations or dependencies. The long distance trade was also a major source of income for rulers to

strengthen their economic and political power which latter evolved into the emergence of modern state institutions. In terms of exchangeable items, in addition to goods, people also exchange views and ideas.

Generally, in the above paragraphs, [Bahru](#), [Levine](#) and the textbooks jointly notify that the long distance trade played an important role in creating a sense of attachment and unity among the peoples of Ethiopia. It follows that there were continuous interactions and interdependencies among the various peoples of Ethiopia which latter evolved into a sense of attachment and unity even long before the introduction of the modern state apparatus. Such networks of relationships among the various peoples of Ethiopia for centuries could enable them to produce some socio-cultural values which could, more or less, transcend their group and individual identities.

In view of the above empirical (and theoretical) background, it is not uncommon to symbolize national identity in multicultural contexts through socio-cultural symbols. Obviously there are some cultures specific to a particular ethnic community while there are some general cultures which could transcend ethnic, religious, gender, racial, regional and linguistic boundaries. In the Ethiopian national and regional education system textbooks on which qualitative content analysis has been made, *heroism*, *religious tolerance* and *hospitality* were presented as the main manifestations of the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks presented these socio-cultural attributes of Ethiopian identity in some details. Furthermore, during the interviews and FGDs sessions, *heroism*, *religious tolerance* and *hospitality* were reiterated by almost all students as manifestations of the meaning of being Ethiopian. Questionnaire survey findings also show that student values were significantly attached to these socio-cultural attributes of Ethiopian identity.

Looking further into each of these attributes, the first most frequently cited socio-cultural manifestation of Ethiopian identity in textbooks and student perspectives was *heroism*. Although some students understood patriotism beyond one's readiness and commitment to defend his/her country from foreign aggressors – like fighting poverty, care and protection for public property, preserving historical and cultural heritages, etc – the overwhelming

majority reiterated *heroism* in terms of Ethiopian traditional patriotism. During the interview and FGDs sessions, students often reiterated the legacies of the previous generations almost exclusively in terms their commitments to fight foreign invaders and defend the independence of their country. For instance, the amazing architectural developments left over by the previous generations of Ethiopia – such as, the obelisks, the churches, palaces, mosques, and the like – recorded by UNESCO as world heritages – were not voiced by students in the whole interview and FGDs process.

The textbooks also have similar orientation. They celebrated Ethiopian *heroism* largely in terms of Ethiopians commitment to defend the sovereignty of their country by extensively portraying wars of conquests by European colonizers and the Ethiopian response to the same. That is why most of the great personalities portrayed in the textbooks were war heroes and heroines. Theoretically, the textbooks maintained that what has been required from students in the ongoing nation-building process is modern patriotism which centered at civic and citizenship duties. But in practice, the textbooks almost exclusively devoted their emphasis for the treatment of traditional patriotism rather than modern patriotism and the same orientation has surfaced in the students' values. This appears to deviate from the ongoing nation-building discourse in Ethiopia.

In view of the existing literature, it appears logical to consider 'heroism' as one of the main socio-cultural attributes which could symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community. In both the international and Ethiopian literature, Ethiopian heroism has been well documented. For instance, among international scholars, [David Levine \(1974\)](#) presented 'heroism' as one of the conventional images of Ethiopia. He depicted Ethiopia as "a bastion of African independence" ([pp.12-14](#)). Levine traced such image of Ethiopia to the period of antiquity and gave religious roots. He continued to assert that although the image of Ethiopia as a free independent people had been witnessed long before the Axumite civilization in the 4th century A.D, such image of Ethiopia became widely known to the world community in the late 19th century when Ethiopians witnessed successive victories over Egypt in the 1870s, over Sudanese Mahdists in the 1880s, and over Italians in the late 1890s. Particularly, the last victory at the Battle of Adwa in 1896 made the

country's image well known across the world and inspired freedom and independence movements among Africans and African-Americans.

[Bahru Zewde \(2000\)](#) also wrote extensively on Ethiopian 'heroism' as portrayed in the Bible and the victory at Adwa. With regard to the outcome of the Adwa victory, [Bahru](#) asserted that Adwa had a racial significance as it was the victory of back peoples over the whites. In Bahru's words: "To the blacks of these countries [Southern Africa and the United States of America], victorious Ethiopia became a beacon of independence and dignity" (p.81). Turning to the Biblical origin and/ or depiction of the country, Bahru asserted that "The biblical Ethiopia, which already inspired a widespread movement of religious separatism known as Ethiopiansim, now assumed a more cogent and palpable reality" (p.81-82). He also attempted to describe the eternal nature of identification with Ethiopia as exemplified by a church in the United States of America identified as 'the Coptic Ethiopian Orthodox Church of Abyssinia'. In view of this, [Bahru](#) asserts that such sense of attachment and identification with Ethiopia is not limited to its time of grandeur only. In such theoretical and empirical contexts, it seems possible to take 'heroism' as one socio-cultural attribute of Ethiopian identity.

The second socio-cultural attribute of Ethiopian identity portrayed in the textbooks and in students' values was *religious tolerance*. From the textbooks selected for content analysis it was found out that in Ethiopia historically there has been a culture tolerance of diversity. The textbooks presented Christianity and Islam as the two dominant religions in Ethiopia. They maintained that Islam was introduced peacefully and, unlike in other regions of the world, it witnessed a welcoming gesture by the then rulers and peoples of Ethiopia. Since its first introduction to Ethiopia, followers of Christianity and Islam as well as other religious groups live peacefully and this could be manifested through respecting one another, cooperation, inviting each other in religious holidays, exchanging well-wishes, sharing foods, etc. Most importantly, the textbooks maintained that preserving and promoting the culture of religious tolerance as a patriotic citizenship duty or simply as an expression of the new Ethiopian nationalism, if there is any. But yet the textbooks treated religious tolerance in view of the relationship between Christians and Muslims; and other religious groups and sects appear to have been overlooked.

Similarly, student interviews and survey findings indicate that religious tolerance has been one of the main socio-cultural attributes of Ethiopian identity. Student interview findings indicate that students of different religion have been sharing almost everything except prayer. Questionnaire survey findings have also the same orientation. Many students chose ‘religious tolerance’ as one of the socio-cultural manifestations of Ethiopian identity. Many students no longer consider religious difference as a potential threat for national unity and integration.

Pointing a slight cursor into the existing literature, Pew Research Center findings and students main source of Ethiopian identity could justify this finding. The [2015 Pew Research Center](#) Survey on Global Attitudes findings indicate that Ethiopians are the first people in the world who give religion a very important place in their lives. Furthermore, student survey findings indicate that religion has been taken as the leading institution in the students’ Ethiopian identity development. In the light of the above empirical evidence, it appears logical to take *religious tolerance* as one of the socio-cultural values of the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

The third socio-cultural attribute of Ethiopian identity depicted in the textbooks and reflected in students’ values was *hospitality*. The textbooks presented such social values as sociability, eating together, cooperating during joy and sorrow, helping the needy, mutual respect and respect for elders as common attributes shared by the Ethiopian people. Student interview and survey findings also indicate that *hospitality* could be taken as one of the socio-cultural attributes used to symbolize the Ethiopian imagined community.

Although Ethiopian identity is largely conceptualized as self-defined, sometimes what others define Ethiopia is also relevant. In line with this, [allafrica.com](#) presents Ethiopia as the most generous and hospitable country in Africa. It honors Ethiopian hospitality in terms of hosting and treating refugees. It continues to report that Ethiopia hosts more than 700,000 refugees by the end of June 2015 which makes it the largest refugee hosting country in Africa; and Ethiopians have long been mutual trust and strong relationships and sharing the little they have with their fellow brothers and sisters who happened to be refugees. Similarly, the [International Water Management Institute \(IWMI, n.d\)](#) treated

Ethiopians as hospitable and those who would like to entertain friends in their home and an invitation to a private home is considered as an honor. Once again, as posted on 13 January 2016 on the [Ethiopian News Agency](#), EU Commissioner, Mr. Christos Styliandes, also hails Ethiopia as a hospitable nation and home for refugees from neighboring countries.

Such imagination of the Ethiopian political and cultural community may be related to their ‘religious tolerance’. As religion is a very important component in the life of Ethiopians, it could be straightforward to imagine Ethiopians hospitality to fellow citizens and foreigners. Religious teachings assumed to concentrate on morality, ethics and integrity and such ethos could necessarily lead citizens to selfless service and devotion for the common good. Furthermore, it is a day to day media discourse that tourists prefer Ethiopia and they often feel at home because the Ethiopian people has showed them a welcoming gesture. Of course, only very little was written about this attribute and as such it needs further systematic examination.

The literature (see for instance, [Ahonen, 2001](#); [Msila, 2007](#); [Saldana, 2013](#); [Witte, 2000](#)) suggests that formal education is instrumental to nation-building by instilling the society’s shared values, symbols and traditions into the students’ value system or perspectives. For instance, in her study of the contribution of Social Studies curriculum to nation-building, [Wyse \(2010\)](#) found out that Malawian identity was, among others, portrayed in terms of socio-cultural traditions and values. Similarly, [Tumwine \(2009\)](#) found out that in Tanzania a strong national identity has been made possible through a value-oriented education system.

The literature suggests that national identity has an ethical dimension and thus citizens judge things as good or bad, right or wrong, and worthy or worthless in view of his/her society’s values. By extension it appears logical to portray the Ethiopian political and cultural community along such socio-cultural values as *heroism*, *religious tolerance* and *hospitality*. In line with this, [Parekh \(1997\)](#) was right to insist that collective life necessarily to be lived in imagination. Further building on [Anderson \(1991\)](#), [Parekh](#) asserted that political communities are ‘*imagined communities*’ built and lived by imaginations which encompass unseen millions with whom one’s fate and destiny closely

tied up and for whom one can ready to scarify even without seeing and knowing one another.

This justifies that *images* can be taken as one of the dimensions of identification for a political and cultural community. For instance, the British identify themselves as fair, decent, entrepreneurial, and at their best when their back is against the wall, etc. Similarly, Americans see themselves as the manifest destiny, the land of liberty, and the idea of equal opportunity (Parekh, 1997: 529 - 530). Images are not simple fictitious designations picked up and painted in the heart of any political community. They definitely have historical roots. Moreover, as political communities define themselves in terms of such values, they will live up to them and feel guilty when they fail to adhere to them. This suggests that if systematically examined and selected, self-imaginings (*heroism, religious tolerance and hospitality*) can serve as important attributes of national identity or as a solid base of unity in multicultural societies like Ethiopia. .

9.2.3. Common citizenship as representing Ethiopian identity

One political and economic community could be possible only when citizens recognize the legitimacy of shared institutions and laws and demonstrate a sense of belonging to a common state and society. Furthermore, the available scholarship clearly demonstrated that effective integration into a political community could be realized when citizens accept and contribute to the functioning of state institutions and laws. With this assumption, the dissertation attempted to assess textbooks portrayal and students' sense of attachment to common citizenship laws, institutions, duties and responsibilities. Content analysis findings indicate that the issue of constitutional patriotism has been covered in the Social Studies and CEE textbooks. Of course, Social Studies textbooks gave a comparatively slight coverage to citizenship rights and duties. The major citizenship duties treated in these textbooks include: protection of natural resources and historico-cultural heritages, eradicating poverty and backwardness, fighting HIV/AIDS and harmful traditional practices, and checking rapid population growth. As to citizenship rights, they portrayed some group rights such as child rights and gender equality.

However, the issue of constitutional patriotism has been significantly dealt with in both the national and regional education system CEE textbooks. The textbooks attempted to give coverage to such commonly known attributes of a democratic political community as *common territory, constitutional supremacy, common laws and institutions, popular sovereignty, legal equality of citizens, common legal rights and duties, common economy, separation of state and religion, conduct and accountability of government*, and the like.

Regarding the *common territory*, all sets of textbooks – Social Studies, CEE and History – devote some space for the treatment of territoriality. The textbooks attempted to present the internationally recognized territorial extension of Ethiopia through portraying its political map and geographical location. As any country has been primarily identified by its internationally recognized sovereign geographical location and boundary it appears logical to portray and communicate the Ethiopian political map and territorial extents to students. It follows that Ethiopian identity has a spatial dimension. This finding that has also significant support in the literature. For instance, scholars (like Miller, 1995; Parekh, 2000; Smith, 1991; Sumara, Davis & Linda, 2001) demonstrated that territoriality has been an essential attribute in national identification. Parekh (2000) suggests that a nation's collective identity primarily emanates from its territory which integrates its citizens. Similarly, Miller (1995) maintained that national identity connects a national population with a particular geographical location. But yet the textbooks have failed to make significant connections with a historical land. Probably, due to the non-inclusive nature of the 'Promised Land' that the textbooks intentionally ignored some contested historical narratives. However, the existing literature suggests that leaving or taking contested issues from textbook narratives could hamper the students' value development.

The textbooks attempted to communicate the *common laws and institutions* of the country from Kebele administration (the lowest administrative unit in Ethiopia), police stations, courts, etc. up to the FDRE Constitution. Regional and Federal constitutions, House of Peoples' Representatives, House of Federation, Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman, etc with their general functions have been presented in the textbooks. One of the essential requirements for a well functioning democracy has been the availability of common laws and institutions on which

citizens enjoy their rights and discharge their citizenship duties. Thus, this orientation of the textbooks appears commendable.

Furthermore, citizens develop a sense of attachment and belonging to a national political community only when they feel as they are equal citizens of this country who enjoy opportunities and share its burdens. In view of this, the textbooks underlined on the significance of the equality of nations, nationalities and peoples, languages, cultures, and religions. They also communicate the significance of gender equality, equality of the disabled and equality of opportunity. The textbooks conceptualized equality in terms of enjoying similar rights, benefits and burdens for a viable democratic society. Most importantly, they underscored on the idea that equality before the law is a necessary condition for co-existence and national unity.

However, the textbooks devote a larger part of their volume for the treatment of group equality. Individual equality was marginally treated. Such orientation could emerge from the EPRDF's Revolutionary Democracy. It is important to note that the ethnic-based federal structure adopted since 1991 mainly emerges from the EPRDF's "national oppression" thesis. As the only way out from this historical inequalities and oppression, the FDRE Constitution brought the nations, nationalities and peoples at the heart of every strategic and policy decisions. In view of this political background, it was believed that respecting the equality of nations, nationalities and peoples could automatically guarantee a corresponding individual equality. For instance, on page 26 of grade eight CEE textbook, it was reported that respecting the rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples is equal to respecting all types of citizens' rights. Furthermore, respecting the equality of nations, nationalities and peoples has been presented as an expression of the new Ethiopian patriotism expected from all citizens, including students.

As citizenship denotes a legal contract between citizens and the state, there emerges a give and take principle in such relationships. In other words, citizenship brings with it clearly defined rights and duties which often considered as two sides of a coin. It was underlined that respecting the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples is equal to respecting the rights of all citizens of the country. Overall in the CEE textbooks the message that no

citizen can remain indifferent to the national issue was underlined. Moreover, discharging citizenship duties and responsibilities has been presented as a manifestation of the new Ethiopian nationalism (patriotism) expected from all students as citizens.

Content analysis findings of CEE textbooks also show that the sovereignty the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples, supremacy of the FDRE Constitution and one economic community have received significant coverage. The textbooks portrayed the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples as the ultimate sources of power and thus elected officials are accountable to them. *Popular sovereignty* was treated as a basis for respecting human and democratic rights. Similarly, the textbooks presented the FDRE Constitution as the ‘supreme law’ of the land and all other laws emanate from but subordinate to it. Constitutional supremacy is presented as a fundamental aspect of national unity and solidarity.

Probably, the least addressed Ethiopian identity attribute in Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks was ‘one economic community’. Although the textbooks slightly touch the necessity of one economic community for a well functioning democratic society, they did not identify specific attributes to be communicated to students. Even among the current huge economic projects thought to mobilize the populace and expected to transform the country, the Grand Renaissance Dam finds some space only in the Tigray Region Social Studies textbooks. Questionnaire survey findings also show that more than one third of the students have weak attachment to economic infrastructures and natural resources found in other regions of the country.

A more or less significant congruence appeared to surface between the Ethiopian national and regional education system textbooks portrayal and treatment of ‘constitutional patriotism’ and student values on the same. Interview and survey findings also indicate that students have a relatively better sense of identification and attachment with the attributes used to define constitutional patriotism. The great majority of the students have expressed the importance of the above attributes of common citizenship. They underscored on the importance of adherence to the basic principles of the FDRE Constitution. But the ‘one political community’ envisaged by the new leadership of the country appears not yet to

come. This could be exemplified by the evidence that it was only 66% of the students have agreed on the importance of respecting the supremacy of the FDRE Constitution. Here it is important to note that during the qualitative study of their identification and attachment to constitutional patriotism, students often resorted to practice rather than the relevance of the basic principles of the constitution. According to [Parekh \(1997: 529\)](#), for any political community the Constitution represents the minimum basis of unity and it is the platform where any disagreement, including the Constitution itself would be solved.

Looking into the literature, the role of Social Studies, CEE and History education in the formation of national identity in multicultural contexts has been largely recognized. For instance, in multicultural countries – like the United States and Canada – [Hardwick, Marcus and Isaak \(2010: 253\)](#) found out that the Social Studies curriculum serves as “the primary vehicle for creating citizens who share a common national identity”. In their empirical comparative study of the role Social Studies play in nurturing national identity in Canada and the United States, they found out that, despite slight differences in dimension, in both countries civics classes serve as a forum for the reproduction and dissemination of social values to the new generation so that they ensure continuity of culture, society and nation. Similarly, [Darr \(2011\)](#) found out that History education has been used in China to develop Chinese national identity and state legitimation.

Even here in Africa, empirical research findings indicate that formal education has contributed to developing the students’ sense of identification and belonging to their national or political community. For instance, in Malawi the Social Studies curriculum was found to be developing a Malawian national identity as represented through language, citizenship and socio-cultural traditions and values ([Wyse, 2010](#)). Similarly, on his study of national identity in Tanzania and Uganda in a comparative context, [Tumwine \(2009\)](#) found out that, among other things, the value-laden education in Tanzania has led to a high level of national identity (a united, peaceful and stabilized society) in multicultural contexts. Likewise, [Dawit and Haftu \(2012\)](#) reported that university students identified ethnic identity development as one of the major contributions of Social Studies and CEE textbooks.

Here it also appears worth mentioning the position of the new political leaders of Ethiopia on the issue of one political and economic community. In an exclusive interview with Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) and Zami FM 90.7 (a local private FM radio) broadcasted on 18 October 2015, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, [Hailemariam Desalegn](#), spoke about the conceptualization of one economic community and constitutional patriotism in the Ethiopian context. With regard to the issue of one economic community, the Prime Minister stated that Ethiopia has been on the road to building one economic community. He further asserted that one economic community would be created only when those economic projects and resources found in the northern tip of Tigray are equally felt belonging and attachment by people in the southern tip of South Omo and vice-versa. His further speech seems to claim that this sense of belonging and attachment to economic resources and projects found anywhere in Ethiopia has been already created among citizens of the country. The Prime Minister stated that “it makes you happy when you hear of the voices of those in the northern tip of Tigray and those in the southern tip of South Omo about the Renaissance Dam”.

The Prime Minister also commented on the need to create constitutional patriotism (political community) as an essential instrument to bring national consensus. He stated that national consensus on other issues may come step by step, but first there should be national consensus on the Constitution. Other consensuses are simple additions to this. But this does not mean that we all agree on each and every article of the Constitution; rather consensus on the basic principles of the Constitution has been required. The Prime Minister further noted that if we fail to do so, we will be disintegrated and as such cannot compete in the world. It is only when united we can be greater and influence others. He maintained that: “The competition is not between Tigray and South Omo; it is not among us”. This suggests that in Ethiopia unity and solidarity has been considered as an important means to cope with globalization and global competitiveness.

Similarly, in an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald English version daily newspaper on the occasion of the preparation for the 35th Anniversary of the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the ANDM Central Committee Office Head, [Alemnew Mekonnen](#), stressed on the need to have what he called “democratic nationalism”

for national economic and political development. He asserted that “...we have given special emphasis to democratic nationalism in the ongoing celebrations of the Movement [ANDM]. Democratic nationalism ensures tolerance towards pluralism and unity in diversity”.

What was called “democratic nationalism” in Alemnew’s speech also appears to reflect attachment with the state and state institutions. Accordingly, citizens are expected to show loyalty and adherence to the laws and institutions of the country. They are also expected to discharge their citizenship duties and responsibilities and enjoy their rights. In this context, it was civic identity implicitly and explicitly reflected in both the Prime Minister’s and Alemnew’s speeches.

To bring the above speeches into perspective, the one economic community project envisioned by the new leadership of the country appears not yet interpreted into the formal education system curriculum or textbooks and students’ values. This study found that the ‘one political and economic community’ communicated by the above political leaders seems to remain a long journey to be realized. Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks gave low emphasis for the treatment of ‘one economic community’ and students have a diffused sense of attachment to economic projects and natural resources of the country. The relative percentage of students who showed a sense of attachment to some economic projects and natural resources (for instance, Tekezze HEP and Afar Salt mine) drops below 50%. Despite some attempts through CEE textbooks to portray and communicate about constitutional patriotism and students also demonstrate a comparatively better sense of attachment to the basic laws and institutions of the country, a sense of one political community appears not yet to come.

The commitment of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples to a set of political values upon which they could live in harmony and unity as one political and economic community has been underlined starting from the Preamble of the 1995 FDRE Constitution to the subsequent national development strategy and policy documents of the country. The civic dimension of Ethiopian identity mainly advocated by constitutional patriotism bases its assumption on the idea that all members of the Ethiopian political community accept

common public institutions and laws and have a shared sense of belonging to a common state and society. At least theoretically, this could create space for distinct identities such as ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, gender, etc. to remain recognized.

Here it sounds relevant to bring the ethnic, civic and multicultural dichotomy of a nation and national identity into perspective. Croucher and Smith wrote extensively on the civic and ethnic typology of a nation. According to [Croucher \(2004\)](#) and [Smith \(1991\)](#) civic nations refer to those political communities or association of free individuals with a common commitment to a set of political institutions and laws. On the other hand, they define ethnic nations as those cultural communities with a common ancestor or descent. As such, while membership into a civic nation is primarily defined by using subjective criteria, membership in an ethnic nation is primarily based on objective criteria. By extension, space and time have no relevance for membership in an ethnic nation. Yet these two scholars suggest that such dichotomy of a nation is largely analytical or descriptive, prescriptive and normative; and accordingly, the civic and ethnic models of a nation can exist simultaneously – only one of which may appear dominant based on situations. When either of one feels undermined, the other dimension could be aroused.

But most importantly, [Brown \(2000\)](#) contends that in strict sense both ethnic and civic nations are non-inclusive. He goes on to assert that as ethnic nations primarily demand citizens to get assimilated into an ethnic core and civic nations require primary identification with the state and fail to treat ethnic groups in state policies and institutions, both the civic and ethnic model of a nation are irrelevant in present day multicultural contexts. Instead, as Brown suggested, under multicultural contexts the multicultural model which considers a nation as a community equal ethnic groups is more relevant than the ethnic and civic models.

Looking back into the Ethiopian national and regional education system textbooks portrayal of Ethiopian identity through the lens of the above three models of a nation, it appears that the multicultural model has been significantly surfaced. This could be clearly demonstrated by the emphasis the textbooks gave to group rights and duties over individual rights and responsibilities. Moreover, the textbooks communicated that it is nations,

nationalities and peoples – not individuals as in liberal democracies – who hold the ultimate power in the country. The FDRE Constitution too was presented as the guarantor of the sovereign power of nations, nationalities and peoples. The Preamble of the Constitution also begins by the phrase: “We the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia... (p.1). It follows that both in the textbooks and the FDRE Constitution, Ethiopia has been presented as a nation of nations, nationalities and peoples each of which has given an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession ([Article 39 \(1\)](#)).

The definition of a nation as a voluntary association of individuals (in the liberal sense) and nations, nationalities and peoples (in Ethiopia) appears to reflect a civic nation or civic identity. The difference lies on the prime focus on individuals (as in western liberal democracies) and on nations, nationalities and peoples (as in Ethiopia) to constitute a nation. Otherwise, both in Ethiopia and the western democracies subjective criteria have been used to conceptualize a nation and national identity (such as common territory, laws, institutions, rights and duties). In this sense, it could be stated that Ethiopia has been constituted by the free will of nations, nationalities and peoples but not by individual choice as in the western democracies. Such dichotomy of civic nationalism between Ethiopia and the West has also been found in [Kymlicka \(2006\)](#). He asserts that although there are many differences in the nature of constitutional principles between Ethiopia and the West, many of these differences arise from the perspective of actual implementation rather than principles. But yet the most obvious difference lies on the weight given to individual citizens and groups in constituting the respective state structure. It is in Ethiopia that ethno-national groups have given the right to self-determination up to secession and all sovereign power resides on them. In the Western democracies, such rights and powers have been granted to individuals.

But yet as rightly explained by [Brown \(2000\)](#), civic nations (community of equal citizens) have remained blind to ethnic uniqueness in state policies and institutions and as civic nations also demand primary loyalty or commitment to the state, it appears to contradict the FDRE Constitution. In the current context of Ethiopian political discourse, ethnicity has been institutionalized to serve as an umbrella for the current state structure. Accordingly, it

is through their primary identification with their respective ethnic communities that citizens could be directly involved in state politics. Ultimately, the Ethiopian nation can be defined as a community of peoples – called nations, nationalities and peoples – in multicultural contexts with commonly shared commitments for political institutions and basic laws.

Above-all, through content analysis of some selected subject areas textbooks and student values or perspectives this study found out that Ethiopian identity has been presented in terms of political and historico-cultural symbols, civic identity and what Parekh (1997) called images or self-projections. Civic identity implies a voluntary association, mutual interdependence and common commitments of citizens to the major laws and institutions of the country. This indicates a sense of attachment to the state (Pakulski & Tranter, 2000). The socio-cultural dimension of Ethiopian identity is also found in Miller's (1995) 'public culture' and, more or less, in Pakulski's and Tranter's (2000) 'ethno-national identity'. Parekh conceptualizes images as an attribute of a nation from the perspective of self-definition – how a political and cultural community defines itself.

Miller's 'public culture' was understood as a sense of belonging to some commonly shared characteristics emerged from historically continuous interactions of various groups of a national community. Miller attempted to guard his 'public culture' against exclusion. Pakulski and Tranter define ethno-national identity as a sense of attachment to a nation with specific and commonly shared culture, traditions and customs which emerge from a specific ways of living. In such conceptualization full membership and belonging requires, among other things, birth and or at least living long enough with the national community to absorb these attributes of a nation. As such it appears less open or more impermeable than the civic attribute of a nation. But Pakulski and Tranter yet understood nation in its primordial character and as such it could not directly correspond with our understanding of socio-cultural attributes of Ethiopian identity.

9.3. Emphasis on diversity rather than 'unity in diversity'

Up to the researcher's knowledge, existing scholarship could not yet produce a universally accepted and/ or agreed up on epistemology on the interface between ethnic and national identification. There are only competing perspectives attempted to crystallize the relation

between these two identity sets. Two of the most dominant and yet competing perspectives on the issue under treatment include the *melting-pot perspective* and the *ethnic pluralism* or *multicultural perspective* (Sidanius et al, 1997). In the *melting-pot* model, the interface between one's identification and attachment with his/her ethnic community and a corresponding identification and attachment with the national political community has been presented as polar opposites. That is, ethnic identification and loyalty could undermine national identification and loyalty and thus what is required of all citizens is to drop other commitments and show absolute loyalty to the national community only (Parekh, 2005; Sidanius et al 1997). On the other hand, the *ethnic pluralist model* assumes a positive interface between the two group identities and thus one's identification with and loyalty to an ethnic community and the national political community is co-existing and complementary.

In the post-1991 Ethiopia new nation-building and state-building process ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, etc diversities have been boldly recognized (and appreciated) in the 1995 FDRE Constitution and the ensuing government policy and strategic development documents of the country as well as in every day government media discourse. Moreover, in the current political context of the country where ethnic identification has been institutionalized as a founding political principle, it appears difficult to clearly understand what constitutes Ethiopianness and the level of attachment students could have with the Ethiopian political and cultural community without examining the interface between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity in curriculum materials and students' values.

'Unity in diversity' could be possible only when the identity bearers (citizens) believe that identification and attachment with their respective ethnic community co-exists with a corresponding identification and attachment with the Ethiopian political and cultural community and vice versa. Because, such an understanding of the co-existence of multiple identity sets by textbook writers and ethnically diversified students could enable to derive attributes which bridge ethnic boundaries and consequently serve as a unifying factor within the apparent diversity.

In view of Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks treatment of the interface between ethnic and Ethiopian identity – despite significant variations – it could be safely stated that almost all sets of these textbooks recognized and communicated diversities in some way. To begin with, the textbooks portrayed Ethiopia as a multi-ethnic, multicultural, multi-linguistic and multi-religious – to state some but not all – country. All sets of CEE textbooks appear to give significant coverage for the issue of diversity in Ethiopia. They presented Ethiopia as a nation of nations, nationalities and peoples. In the textbooks, appreciating and respecting diversity has been presented as a prerequisite to state-building and nation-building. Furthermore, understanding and respecting the diversities of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples have been presented as an expression of modern Ethiopian patriotism (nationalism) expected from students.

While appreciating diversity, the textbooks also underlined the need to maintain ‘unity in diversity’. Such social and democratic values as equality, equity, tolerance, respect, love and mutual understanding have been presented as instrumental to addressing ‘unity in diversity’. In view of the FDRE Constitution and subsequent national development documents such as GTPs, ESDPs and ETP, textbooks portrayal of diversity appears, more or less, commendable. But yet the weight given to diversity is by far greater than commonality. Only very little was communicated by the textbooks about the necessity of ‘unity in diversity’. It is only marginally and vaguely addressed in textbook narratives. Moreover, although the textbooks underscored, in some sense, on the necessity of ‘unity in diversity’, how and which attributes transcend ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural boundaries and gravitate each student citizen towards a common nation (destiny) remained obscured.

Besides content analysis of some selected textbooks by the researcher, students and teachers also evaluated the contribution of the Ethiopian national and regional education system curriculum for nation-building. Accordingly, students and teachers evaluation of the contribution of Social Studies, CEE and History education to understanding and appreciating diversity was, more or less, similar to content analysis findings. It was found out that particularly CEE could significantly contribute to understanding and respecting the apparent diversity among the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. CEE was

reported as it could help to understand the equality of all nations and nationalities and the apparent interdependence among them. It follows that diversity (ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, etc.) has been considered as a resource and beauty rather than a parochial force to Ethiopian unity.

However, it was also pointed out that Social Studies and CEE textbooks have given more emphasis to differences over commonalities among the various nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. In addition to the unbalanced emphasis given to ethnicity, language, religion and culture, the textbooks amplified historical inequalities and unjust treatments of some groups of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples by some other groups. Such portrayal of unfair relations among the people of the country coupled with the imbalance between diversity and unity could lead to the emergence of some parochial ethno-nationalistic attitudes by sensitizing the ethnic domain. But this does not mean that historical facts – if there were historical injustices – should not be portrayed in textbook narratives and should not be brought to classroom discourse. The argument is that every fair and unfair relations and treatments the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples have historically passed through should be brought to the formal education curriculum textbooks and classroom discourses with their real contexts so that students could make a subjective interpretation of such historical events and ultimately develop a balanced value to the political nation.

Student values or perspectives approached through in-depth interviews, FGDs and questionnaire survey also supported the above findings. In-depth interviews and FGDs findings indicate that students have some understanding of ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity. The study found out not only the co-existence but also the inseparable nature of ethnic and Ethiopian identity in many students values. Survey data findings also showed that attachment to and pride in one's ethnic group and attachment to and pride in being Ethiopian were more or less equally important for students. Here it is important to note that student values began to diffuse when choosing between their ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity was added on to the interface variable. In terms of choice, three positions surfaced from student values: (a) identification with ethnic community, (b) identification with the Ethiopian political and cultural community, and (c) the inseparability of ethnic

identity and Ethiopian identity. Although the students' responses appear fairly distributed across these three categories, comparatively speaking, the majority (36.5%) of the students reported that their ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity cannot be separated. Interview results also reveal that in many students' views their ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity are inseparable. As individuals have multiple co-existing identities, "either...or" is definitely a false choice.

In line with the prevailing political discourse in the country, although the textbooks attempted to crystallize and reinforce, among students, primary identification with their respective ethnic community and then with the Ethiopian political and cultural community, it was found out that some students would like to primarily identify with Ethiopia and then with their ethnic group. Still some other students felt difficulty in prioritizing between identification with their ethnic community and the Ethiopian political and cultural community. This suggests that in view of the questionnaire survey findings, formal education has contributed only very little in the students' ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity development.

In the event of exposure to the same curriculum materials (textbooks), such disparity in student values corresponds with the constructivist theory of knowing and knowledge construction. Although the students who participated in the study were exposed to the same subject areas and textbooks, their perspectives appear to diverge on the same issue mainly due to their prior experiences and exposure to other sources in and outside the school frontier. It seems due to this fact that constructivist theorists emphasize on the lone subject and social construction of knowledge through subjective interpretation and meaning making. For instance, [Glaserfeld \(1991\)](#) noted that textbooks contain only language or words assembled by textbook writers. In this case, it is only barely, if any, to find ready-made knowledge or meaning in textbooks. It appears due to this assumption [Tabler \(2011\)](#) stated that students' exposure to the same standard curriculum, textbooks and learning experiences will in the end result in a personal knowledge and meaning-making on the basis of their prior exposure to different sources.

It follows that students develop such perspectives or values on the interface between their ethnic and Ethiopian identity not by merely absorbing the information portrayed in the textbooks but most importantly by critically scrutinizing and interpreting the texts and assimilating with their prior experiences gained from within and outside the school compound both individually and through interactions with the teacher and among themselves.

In view of the existing literature and the theoretical assumption adopted for the study on the interface between one's identification or attachment to his/her ethnic group and his/her identification and loyalty to the national political community, this finding supports the perspective that these two group identities are co-existing. The main pillars of the ethnic pluralist or multicultural model of a nation include ethnic distinctiveness, equality of all ethnic groups without domination and subordination, and dual commitment to the ethnic group and the nation. To further substantiate this perspective, [Sidanius, et.al. \(1997\)](#) quoted General Colin Powell's writing from his autobiography, *My American Journey* (1995: 534-535), on the issue of race and American society as stated: "My blackness has been a source of pride, strength and inspiration, and so has my being an American" ([pp. 104-105](#)).

Such perspective appears to correspond with the current political discourse and/ or nation-building process in Ethiopia. Mainly during the interview and FGDs sessions, it was found out that in some students' view although there exists a positive interface between ethnic loyalty and commitment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community, there would be no Ethiopian identity without a corresponding ethnic identity. But yet many students appear to emphasize the inseparability of the two identity sets and some even gave precedence to their Ethiopian identity. As students have only a 'moderate' sense of attachment to their ethnic community and the Ethiopian political cultural community, it appears difficult to assert that strong identification and loyalty with the former directly leads to strong identification and loyalty with the latter.

In the post-1991 Ethiopia new nation-building process, 'unity in diversity' has emerged as the most romanticized concept in the voices of government officials, government institutions and in every day media discourse. In multicultural countries like Ethiopia, the

necessity of ‘unity in diversity’ has both theoretical and empirical validation. For instance, [Hall \(2006\)](#) noted that the future of multicultural societies primarily depends on their potential and practical orientation to live with or accommodate diversities. But, a big difference appears to exist between the current Ethiopian political discourse and the available scholarship mainly on the balance of unity and diversity. Some Ethiopian and foreign scholars and political commentators contend that the institutionalization of ethnic identity and the utmost emphasis on differences rather than commonalities could not bring ‘unity in diversity’.

The balance between diversity and unity in multicultural contexts has been taken by [Coexistence International \(2009\)](#) as a cross-cutting issue in education policies of countries. It is important for citizens in a diverse democratic society to maintain attachments to their cultural communities as well as to participate effectively in the shared national culture. However, up to the researcher’s knowledge, it was Banks who extensively and convincingly wrote about the need to maintain ‘unity in diversity’. [Banks \(2011\)](#) contends that multicultural countries could remain strong and united as long as they maintain adequate balance between unity and diversity. He insisted that as excessively privileging unity could lead to discontents and conflicts excessive reliance on diversity ends in ‘balkanization’. As both extremes lead to disintegration, multicultural countries should keep a delicate balance between unity and diversity. Students and teachers reported that the CEE textbooks emphasized more on diversity and that little was discussed about the ‘unity in diversity’ matters. This could put in question the intention of the ongoing nation-building or the Constitution to build one political and economic community.

As we all know, Ethiopia has more than eighty ethnic groups. The available scholarship suggests that a political community could remain viable only when we maintain a proper balance between unity and diversity. But content analysis of textbooks and students and teachers evaluation of the national and regional education system curriculum shows that there has been an overt emphasis for diversity over commonality. Yet no citizen wishes to challenge the unity and solidarity of its people. Probably with the intention to challenge the assimilationist perspective which governed nation-building exclusively in the pre-1991 period that primary and secondary education system textbooks and government documents

largely emphasize diversity over commonality. However, citizens' value for diversity could not automatically lead to understanding, appreciating and respecting unity.

9.4. Contributing factors to students' Ethiopian identity development

The available literature suggests that there are various institutions involved in the students' group identity (ethnic and national) construction process. For the purpose of understanding the relative contribution of formal education in the students ethnic and Ethiopian identity construction process, content analysis of some selected textbooks and extended interviews with students and teachers were conducted. This was further corroborated by student surveys.

From content analysis of textbooks, it was found out that definitely the national and regional education system of the country has some contribution to nation-building through helping students in their ethnic and Ethiopian identity construction process. The textbooks attempted to communicate some selected political and historico-cultural symbols, some socio-cultural values and common citizenship. They also partly help to understand diversity and cultivate ethnic consciousness among students. The textbooks portray Ethiopia as a nation of various nations, nationalities and peoples and underlined the long-lived culture of tolerance of diversity. Student interviews and FGDs results also revealed that diversity is now considered by almost all students as a blessing rather than a curse or potential threat to nation-building.

In order to exactly determine the place of the national and regional education system curriculum in the ongoing new nation-building process through helping students in their Ethiopian identity construction, a questionnaire survey was conducted with students of diverse ethnic and regional background. In the questionnaire survey, there were eight social institutions presented to students to evaluate their relative contribution in terms of the students' ethnic and Ethiopian identity construction process. Hierarchically, education stands only 7th in the students' ethnic identity development and 4th in the Ethiopian identity construction process. Student and teacher interview findings and survey results showed that education has a minor role in the ongoing new nation-building process through Ethiopian

identity development among students. Furthermore, the contribution of formal education in the ethnic identity development of students was also poor.

Questionnaire survey findings indicate that religion and family have been playing a very important role in nation-building through helping students in the process of Ethiopian identity construction. These two social institutions respectively stand 1st and 2nd in reinforcing, among students, identification with and attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. This finding has some theoretical and empirical validation.

In the literature, a mixed image persists as to the contribution of religious institutions in national consciousness. For instance, [Parekh \(2008\)](#) asserted that religion plays a divisive rather than a constructive role in nation-building in terms of national identity or commonality in a nation's political and cultural community. Similarly, by taking faith-based schools as a case in England, [Faulks \(2006\)](#) contends that religious teachings could undermine a culture of shared understanding and tolerance in multi-religious societies. Yet it appears that with the intention to magnify the role of formal education in nation-building through national identity development, some of these scholars undermine the contribution of religious institutions in nation-building.

But most importantly such theoretical assumptions have been nullified by a recent empirical study on the importance of religion in the daily lives of the world's community. The 2015 Global Attitudes Survey by [Pew Research Center](#) revealed that religion has an important role in the lives of the people of mainly developing countries. The survey attempted to assess how people throughout the world feel about their religion. Accordingly, the Research Center found out that almost all Ethiopians (98 percent) consider religion as a "very important" part of their lives. This makes Ethiopia the first ranked country in the world where religion has undisputed role in the lives of its people. Figure 9.1 below shows the relative importance of religion in the lives of people across the globe.

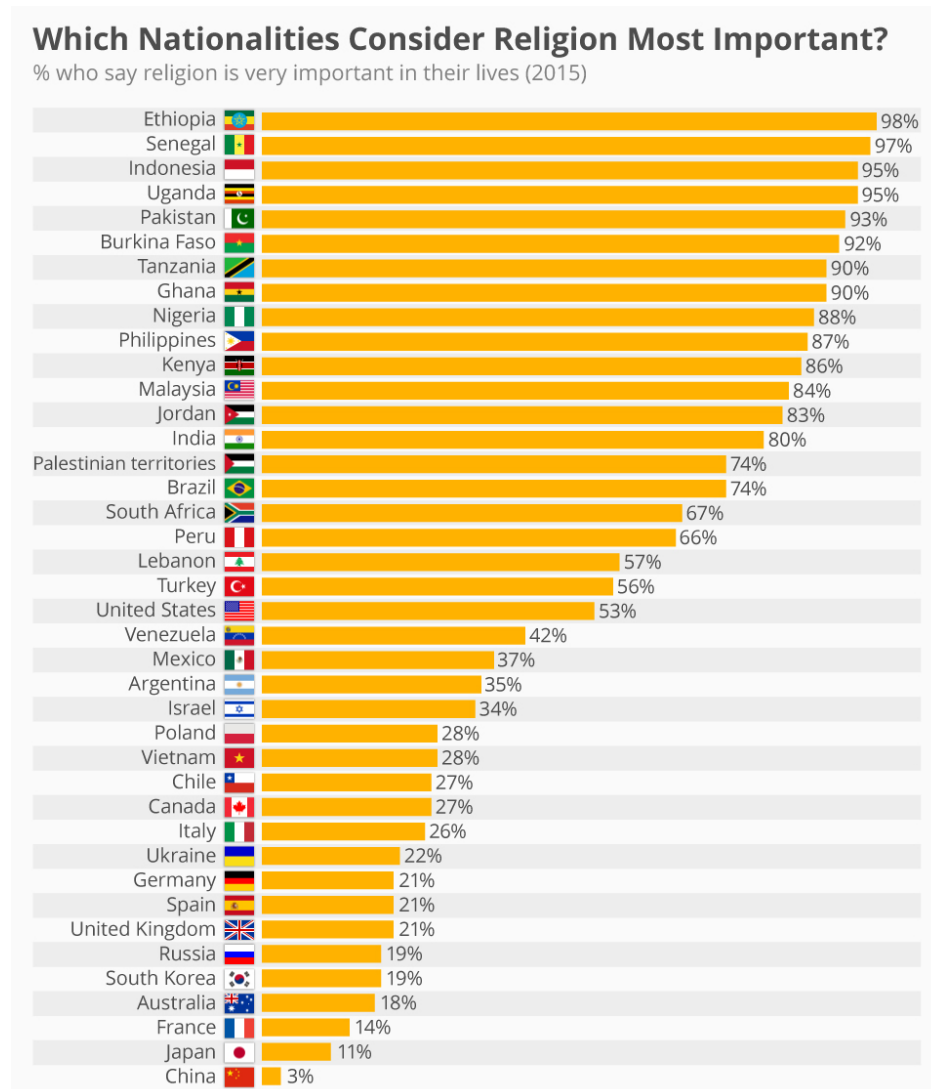


Figure 9.1: The Importance of Religion in World's Peoples Life

Source: *Pew Research Center (www.pewforum.org)*

Gimpel et al (2003) also assert that religious teachings mainly focus on the transmission of moral values or selfless service to society or the common good and hence promote social participation. In an empirical study, they found out that in the United States Judaism has been instrumental to political knowledge, efficacy and common citizenship.

In addition to this empirical and theoretical backup, in Ethiopia loyalty to the state and country has religious roots. The state and country had been defended on Biblical and Quranic grounds. Historical sources indicate that the name “Ethiopia” has been told and

retold more than 50 times in the Holy books of Bible and Quran. The Holy books place high value to the country and state, which subsequently direct their followers to show unreserved loyalty and commitment to the state and their country. Similarly, the elders of each religion could direct their children and youth to embrace such moral values and practices embraced by themselves.

Most importantly, the national and regional education system curriculum on which qualitative content analysis has been made communicated the peaceful introduction of Islam to Ethiopia and the peaceful co-existence of the followers of these two major religions in Ethiopia. The textbooks portrayed Ethiopia as the only place on earth where Islam had been welcomed by its kings and the populace throughout its history and the friendly relations and the long-lived culture of peaceful co-existence among followers of different religion. Furthermore, even in student interviews, FGDs and surveys it was found out that '*religious tolerance*' was one of the main attributes of Ethiopian identity. By extension, it appears logical to expect that religious teachings could give some space for the role of Ethiopia in the life of their followers.

But yet, against the above background, it may be also contended that the Orthodox Christian thesis considers Ethiopia as "an island of Christianity" and as comparatively Orthodox Christian students constitute the majority (49%) of all religious groups participated in the survey, the result may be inflated in their favour. By extension, as such depiction of Ethiopia by followers of Orthodox Christianity fails to include all religious groups into the Ethiopian political and cultural community, religion could also play a parallel nation-destroying role and even in the disintegration of the multination state of Ethiopia.

As to the contribution of family in the students' Ethiopian identity development, it was found out that family stands second just after religion. As students who participated in the study only very recently separated from their family and joined the University (AAU), it appears logical to expect a very close social distance which could exist with their families. In view of the existing scholarship, it is not difficult to expect and accept such findings. Among the various agents of socialization, most socialization research outcomes give

precedence to family in terms of orienting children to social values, norms, attitudes and beliefs (see for instance, Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Fagerlind & Saha, 1989; Gimpel et al, 2003; Havighurst & Davis, 2013; Saldana, 2013).

For instance, Knight et al (2011) found out that Mexican-American families play an important role in the ethnic identity development of their children. But yet it is imperative to note that most of the existing literature skewed towards the characteristic features of the developed western society where parents spent little time with their children due to longer working hours. It appears due to such orientation that family has been given a minor role by some of the available scholarship in citizens' national identity construction process.

9.5. Curriculum challenges to nation-building

When we see students and teachers' reflections on curriculum responses to Ethiopian identity, while the textbooks help students to recognize diversity, to understand their rights and duties and hence to discharge their responsibilities, correspondingly eight problems appear to emerge as the main curriculum challenges to nation-building through Ethiopian identity development. The first challenge may be the orientation of textbooks towards global and continental issues and subsequently overlooking essential national and local realities which could have practical relevance to nation-building. For instance, students and teachers reported that History and Social Studies textbooks devote much of their volumes for global and continental historical, cultural and geographical issues and proportionally only a slight portion was left for the Ethiopian or national and local contexts. Similarly, CEE textbooks also cover broader content areas such as federalism, democracy, constitution and the like without contextualizing them to reflect the Ethiopian context. In the content analysis phase of the study, it was also found out that almost all textbooks largely cover broader global and regional issues with little space left to reflect the Ethiopian context.

The second curriculum challenge to nation-building through Ethiopian identity construction as reflected by students and teachers may be the unbalanced emphasis given to differences over commonalities. For instance, with regard to CEE textbooks students and teachers contend that students were made to be more sensitive to differences by selectively

applauding the historical injustices the country had witnessed across historical periods. They believe that although the purpose of CEE is to create citizens who imagine a shared understanding of their political community and strive for a common destiny, practically the existing CEE textbooks communicate ethnic sensitization and hence ethnic identity rather than common citizenship. The same applies to Social Studies textbooks. Even the unbalanced representation of the different nations, nationalities and peoples in Ethiopian history may not lead students to develop a shared understanding of Ethiopianness. Similarly, in the content analysis of textbooks it was observed that the issue of diversity was considered seriously. The diversity of the Ethiopian people was largely emphasized particularly in the CEE and Social Studies textbooks. But yet there were attempts to communicate to students the message that both ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity are not only possible but necessary.

The third curriculum challenge to nation-building through Ethiopian identity development as reflected during students' and teachers' interview was related to the issue of inclusivity in textbooks narratives. Teachers posit that as the primary education system curriculum is a regional mandate, textbooks have been produced to reflect the respective region's ethnic, linguistic, cultural and other social background and no space would be left for ethnic minorities in that particular region. Such exclusion in textbook representation of some portions of the citizens of this country could create tension rather than common belonging or harmonious relationship among all citizens of the country as one political community. In line with this, in his discussion of some of the limitations of ethnic-based federalism in Ethiopia, [Assefa Fiseha \(2006\)](#) contends that ethnic minorities and other citizens of the country who inhabit in the ethnically dominated regions could be economically and politically marginalized.

The fourth curriculum challenge to Ethiopian identity development among students may be the absence of a shared belonging or representation in the country's historical narratives. Many students and teachers contend that History and Social Studies textbooks have been designed in the way to reflect the historical achievements of the Highland, Christian and Northern Ethiopia while overlooking the respective Lowland, Non-Christian and Southern, Southeastern and Southwestern Ethiopia. Students and teachers insisted that the absence of

a commonly shared historical understanding portrayed in textbooks could not bring a sense of community and common belonging among students. When we look into the contents of History textbooks, despite some attempts to incorporate the south, the textbooks largely presented the history of the northern Christian highland kingdom.

Generally, the answer for the question: *'whose history has been presented as Ethiopian history?'* may be also found from History and CEE textbooks themselves. The issue of inclusivity in the country's grand historical narrative was seriously considered in History and CEE textbooks. The textbooks boldly underlined that the historical narratives presented as Ethiopian history have not been inclusive of all the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. They also communicated the lack of objectivity in Ethiopian history presented in them. This can be precisely observed in the opening pages of Grade 11 History Textbook and Grade 9 CEE Textbook.

As clearly presented in Grade 11 History Textbook, Ethiopian history has several limitations. The first gap indicated in the textbook was the imbalance of sources. Many writers were interested in the study of the northern part of the country where they could get a variety of sources. That is why, until the establishment of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) in the early 1960s at the then Haile Selassie I University College, Ethiopian studies focused only on the northern part of the country. The textbook mentioned the following as the comparative advantages of northern Ethiopia over the south:

(1) The north had been in contact with the outside world since the ancient times. As a result, Arab, Greek, and Roman writers had left important information for the study of its history; (2) The north had a written language that served to keep records and so, many chronicles of the Christian kings are available; (3) Since the Christian Highland Kingdom had maintained strong contact with the Egyptian Coptic Church, several sources on the Kingdom are available in Egyptian archives; and (4) Since the archaeology of Northern Ethiopia is well studied it also provided an auxiliary source for the study of the history of the Region (pp. 3-4).

The second problem with Ethiopian history maintained by Grade 11 History Textbook was its lack of comprehensiveness. Even those historical studies in Northern Ethiopia merely focused on political histories and overlooked the social, economic and cultural history of

the country. The third problem mentioned in the textbook was related to lack of objectivity of the sources and writers. That is, there is a gap among those who wrote Ethiopian history not only in identifying the significant facts but also in presenting all the facts or information without bias for or against. Historical sources were the chronicles of the Christian kings and the scholars who wrote Ethiopian history were biased by their attachment to the ruling dynasties. The fourth problem presented in the textbook was the lack of sufficient and reliable sources on the political, social and cultural life of the people.

The lack of objectivity in Ethiopian history is also described in Grade 9 CEE Textbook. On a chapter heading entitled “Patriotism”, the textbook stated that most writers of Ethiopian history were more inclined to magnify the role of the ruling elites (kings) and gave less attention to the contributions of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. The textbook continued to assert that some writers of Ethiopian history exaggerated the contribution of their own ethnic and religious group and undermined the rest. In view of this, the textbook communicated the message that as Ethiopian history should be the history of all people of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural background, it is a citizenship (or patriotic) duty to rewrite Ethiopian history.

In addition to textbooks portrayals, many scholars also commented on the non-inclusive nature of Ethiopian history. For instance, one of the leading figures in the opposition camp and a professor of Political Science at Addis Ababa University, Merera Gudina, has the following to say:

The political, economic and socio-cultural domination by one ethnic group [Shewan-Amhara] over a multitude of others meant that the history of the dominant group was portrayed as the authentic history of the whole country (Merera, 2006: 119).

Merera underscores on the fragility of Ethiopian history for different groups have different and even contradictory interpretations. He identified three ‘ethno-nationalist’ perspectives on the interpretations of Ethiopian history: *the nation-building perspective, the national oppression perspective and the colonization perspective*. Those who advance the ‘nation-building’ thesis consider the whole empire-building process as a ‘reunification’ or ‘unification’ and thus they give blessings to all empire-builders. Those who advocate the

‘national oppression’ thesis, on the other hand, recognize historical inequalities or exploitations but yet propose rectifying past injustices as the only available remedy within the framework of greater Ethiopia. Those who advocate the ‘colonial thesis’, according to Merera, uphold separation as the only available option. Merera also associated each of these perspectives to some specific ethno-nationalist groups.

But it is important to note that the aim is not to provide a critique of Ethiopian history as it is presented through the textbooks and communicated to students. The intention is to identify the attributes surfaced in each of these textbooks and how they are presented to reinforce a sense of Ethiopianness among students. Yet how a national history presented as non-inclusive of some students and their family’s history could enhance a common historical consciousness remained skeptical. At least in the way it is now presented, students could not appreciate and love their History education. Moreover, a national historical narrative treated by the textbooks themselves as *fictitious*, *biased* and *non-inclusive* could hardly be attractive to any student and subsequently it contributes only little to help students to identify with the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

The fifth curriculum challenge to develop a sense of Ethiopianness among students as reported by students and teachers may be the ideological orientation of the contents of textbooks across historical periods. The contents of particularly social science subjects’ textbooks were not selectively derived from the histories and cultures of the nations, nationalities and peoples of the country. Instead the specific contents of education expected to be communicated through textbooks were those written by the different government systems of Ethiopia, which amplify their ideological orientations and overlooked the histories and identities of the populace. This scenario inevitably led to frequent changes in the contents of education with a corresponding change in state ideologies and hence the absence of a commonly shared historical understanding or consciousness.

Under chapter one and chapter two, the dissertation attempted to show how the Ethiopian education system curriculum was affected by different government ideologies. The textbooks also appear to reflect the students’ and teachers’ assertion. They significantly covered government policies and strategies and students commitment to implement them is

presented as citizenship duties. Even some political messages were directly quoted from government owned print media. Moreover, the production of the most ideologically sensitive subject areas textbooks currently in use in the primary and secondary education system of the country such as History, Social Studies and CEE did not follow the same path with other areas textbooks. These three subject areas textbooks were not given to international publishers. CEE and Social Studies textbooks were produced or written by those purposefully selected by the MOE. On the other hand, in the Ethiopian secondary school system the old version of History textbooks have been used mainly due to some controversies on the contents of History textbooks between the MOE and scholars.

The six curriculum challenge to nation-building through Ethiopian identity development as reflected in students' and teachers' interviews may be that out of school experiences often contradict with the school or planned or taught curriculum and learning. That is, there is contradiction between what was portrayed in textbooks and communicated to students and the actual practice at the ground. Such lack of congruence between what they learn in formal schooling and what they observe the practice in their communities often lead students to question the relevance of their education. This is particularly the major challenge in teaching CEE in the Ethiopian primary and secondary levels of education today. Rather than clarifying the purpose of their CEE learning to their students, CEE teachers further exacerbate the problem by declaring in front of students as they do not believe in the contents of their teaching.

The seventh curriculum challenge for nation-building as reported by students and teachers was textbooks' focus on content memorization as a pre-requisite to pass examinations offered at the different levels of education. Particularly, History textbooks have been highly voluminous congested with mere historical facts and narratives with little room left for contesting discourses on which reflections, deliberations and/ or discussions to be made by students. Teachers further contend that as the criteria for successful performance has been content coverage rather than relevance or what they practically help their students, they all work to finish up the lessons before the end of the academic year. In the context of absence of alternative perspectives and mere memorization of one line of historical narratives, it appears difficult for students to develop a shared understanding of Ethiopianness from what

they learned in classroom discourse. Despite some differences in terms of the volume of information in each region's textbooks, students and teachers have been expected to cover huge volumes in the academic year. The assessment system and teachers' evaluation mechanism also suggest a prime focus on memorization of simple facts as an instructional strategy rather than deliberation or reflection.

The selected textbooks – particularly History textbooks – present concrete facts to be absorbed by the students rather than controversies open for critical scrutiny and consequently help students to develop alternative perspectives on an issue.

Probably the eighth curriculum challenge to nation-building through Ethiopian identity development could be the effect brought about by the experiential curriculum. Students reported that on their discussion of Ethiopian issues teachers often resort to oral traditions as major evidence bases rather than the specific content areas presented in the textbooks. Social Studies, CEE and History teachers often overlook the official curriculum in classroom discourse. Such approaches could deny other groups or citizens of the country and even promulgate ethnic and sometimes religious tensions which could be potential dangers to national unity.

CHAPTER TEN

10. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The “national question”, propagated in the late 1960s and early 70s Ethiopian students’ movement in a university compound – Addis Ababa University – has been institutionalized as the foundation of the current state apparatus. Almost 27 years have elapsed since the adoption of largely “ethnic”-based federalism into the Ethiopian state politics and the subsequent regionalization of primary education in Ethiopia. The effectiveness of this new experiment has been accompanied by a mixed assessment and reflections among Ethiopian and international scholarship and political commentators. This dissertation looked into the progresses made and students’ reactions to the new nation-building process in developing a pan-Ethiopian identity through the lens of the national and regional education system curriculum and students’ values. More specifically, it tries to understand how students as citizens view or reconcile their competing sets of national, regional, ethnic, religious, etc identities and how the curriculum portrays the same.

In the preceding chapters, the dissertation attempted to explore, describe and explain some of the main attributes of Ethiopian identity and the sense of attachment students have towards some symbols, values and traditions. In this chapter, it is intended to forward some concluding remarks and subsequent implications of the major findings of the study.

To begin with, it is believed that textbook production process and ownership could have its own implication for regional versus national sensitivity of the specific contents portrayed in and communicated through textbooks. Interviews with experts of REBs indicate that they do not have a strong sense of ownership of the textbooks currently used in their respective primary schools. REBs respondents believe that they were invited in the textbook production by the MOE only to give blessings to what it did but not to practically influence the process of curriculum development and its outcome. On the other hand, officials and experts of the MOE reported that textbook production was solely made by regions and the Ministry has been playing nothing more than facilitating the process.

Notwithstanding the differences on the part of the MOE and REBs, content analysis findings showed that there is significant similarity in the contents of the three regions

(Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray) CEE textbooks. It appears that regional states had simply translated those centrally produced CEE textbooks – rather than adapting them to suit to their specific contexts. The specific objectives and contents of CEE textbooks are very much similar across the three regions considered in the study. Moreover even some regional states have shared the same sets of textbooks for some subject areas. A slight difference was observed in the contents of the three regional states Social Studies textbooks. Thus, one major conclusion of the study is that the power of REBs in curriculum development and textbook production has been reduced to the translation of contents and learning outcomes that are centrally developed and approved by the federal MoE. This is mainly true for the CEE textbooks.

Another major finding of this study is the contribution of the national and regional education system curriculum in developing a multicultural knowledge and competence among students. Content analysis findings showed that particularly CEE textbooks have significantly covered the issue of diversity and differences among the Ethiopian nations and nationalities. The textbooks intensively communicated the relevance or importance of language, ethnicity, culture, religion and region in developing a sense of identity among students. Moreover, appreciation or respect for diversities was conceptualized and presented in the textbooks as a new form of Ethiopian nationalism expected from students as Ethiopian citizens.

In the same vein, students' responses appear to show that students who passed through the Ethiopian primary and secondary education level curriculum have exhibited a relatively good understanding of diversity as a result of the teaching of mainly CEE and Social Studies textbooks. Students reported that they consider diversity as a blessing which could not, in any way, hamper national unity and solidarity. Thus, on the basis of the content analysis and students' responses, it can be concluded that the textbooks have contributed in developing understanding of diversity and to some degree appreciation of it as well as students sensitivity to ethnic, religious, cultural and regional identity.

Various sources indicate that Ethiopia is a multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious country. It has several nations, nationalities and peoples. The robustness of

the current political experiment, which bases its foundation on ethnic allegiance, largely depends on the interface between ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity in citizens' values. The literature indicates that these two competing sets of identities have posed a challenge even for the long-established democracies. Quebec in Canada, Catalonia in Spain and Scotland in the UK are cases in point. Textbooks' content analysis findings indicate that ethnic identity is believed to be instrumental to Ethiopian identity. That is, a strong sense of the meaning of being Ethiopian develops within ethnic identification and loyalty and thus ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity are presented as co-existing in textbooks narratives. Correspondingly, three perspectives appear to develop among students who passed through these textbooks regarding the interface between their ethnic identity and their being Ethiopian. Some students largely advance the distinct but co-existing perspective; some other students dwell on the inseparable and co-existing perspective; and still some other students stressed on the co-existing perspective in a conditional context. In all the above three perspectives held by students, these two major group identity sets have been considered co-existing. Thus another major conclusion of the study may be that ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity have co-existed in textbooks narratives and students' values. But whether – or not – Ethiopian identity practically develops within strong ethnic identity and allegiance needs to be further studied.

The other major finding of this study is textbooks emphasis for diversity rather than 'unity in diversity'. The textbooks have failed to find and clearly articulate the intersection of diversities. Even as pointed out by teachers, as Social Studies textbooks were produced with reference to the respective region's ascribed characteristics or cultural traits, those students outside the ethnic core often feel ignored and such sense of exclusion could not develop a sense of community among students of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Such gap is also clearly evident in the 1994 ETP. The policy premise mandated regional states to manage their primary level education, leaving aside the fate of minorities mainly in the ethnically dominant regions. Moreover, students and teachers reported that on top of the emphasis on group differences rather than shared values, symbols and traditions among ethnic groups, the textbooks tendency to consistently spell out historical inequalities and injustices may have contributed in the development of very strong ethno-nationalistic

sentiments. Thus, the Ethiopian regional and national education system curriculum has contributed much in strengthening feelings of differences among students and the tendency to dwell on past historical events of the country.

Many scholars insist that if properly designed and practiced, bringing '*dangerous memories*' or simply historical injustices into textbook narratives and actual classroom discourse could make Social Studies, CEE and History curricula more inclusive or open for pluralistic interpretations of the past which could create a historical community. However, it seems that they were simply brought to the above subject areas curriculum (textbooks) to legitimize the struggles against the previous Military Government and the deviation from the previous nation-building approaches without critically weighing their consequences. We can evaluate the relevance of this position through the lens of Abera's findings on the intergroup relations among the three ethnic students discussed under chapter one of this dissertation. Unless the curriculum is designed to produce a deeply thinking and inward-looking citizen, group antagonism seems to continue despite policy interventions. Even in the context where there are three competing perspectives on Ethiopian history: (1) nation-building thesis, (2) national oppression thesis, and (3) colonization thesis (Merera, 2006), it is debatable to bring the national oppression perspective as the only legitimate claim. Therefore, utmost care should be taken by curriculum developers, textbook writers, teachers and other concerned parties that bringing historical injustices into the curriculum and actual classroom discourse should not lead students to dwell on past inequalities and injustices rather than looking the way forward. Whatever subject matter content brought to the curriculum, its consequences should be critically evaluated.

As rightly put by some scholars (see Banks, 2011; Parekh, 2000) unbalanced emphasis for diversity could lead to disintegration in the same way as unbalanced emphasis for national unity ultimately ends in discontents and conflicts. *Unity* is our loyalty to the overarching state, our positive identification with the institutions, common citizenship and symbols of the state while *diversity* is manifestation of sub-state identity that people enjoy at state or local government level. As the recent protests (late 2015 and early 2016) demonstrate, unregulated ethno-nationalism focusing on building sub-national identity at the expense of overarching symbols of the state and common citizenship nurtured over the years seems to

generate a weak ‘we’ belong feeling, and sets a fertile ground for conflict and fragmentation. Nor is insistence on unity and territorial integrity alone as we did during the imperial period and the military government a healthy one. Therefore, there appears a need to balance between diversity and commonality in textbooks narratives. ‘Unity in diversity’ demands the integration of various forms of diversities beyond the recognition and accommodation of the same. Thus, if we maintain a delicate balance between ‘diversity and unity’ during curriculum development, textbook writing and classroom discourse, the students’ sense of attachment or identification with and loyalty to the Ethiopian political and cultural community and the subsequent realization of the one political and economic community project envisaged for the multinational state Ethiopia could be a realistic vision.

Current discourses on how much has been done in developing a sense of one political and economic community among Ethiopians even after 25 years the “New” Ethiopia has been envisaged by the incumbent government may illustrate the education of the youth needs some reconceptualization or reform in relation to developing a pan-Ethiopian identity. Here care must be taken that education in relation to identity is not reduced to what is formally stated in the textbooks. The operational curriculum and the education by the parents, religious institutions, political parties, civic society and the media equally play an important role in that direction.

Thus, Ethiopian identity can be broadly thought as a set of values, traditions, beliefs and symbols which navigate through ethnic, gender, religious, linguistic and cultural boundaries. It could be possible to think of Ethiopian identity along a multicultural perspective. As clearly articulated in the existing literature, understanding Ethiopian identity in a multicultural perspective could avoid the apparent skepticism that national identities remain blind to differences in gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, language and other attributes and as such alienate minorities from the nation’s political, economic and social life.

Another major finding was the representation of Ethiopian identity in terms of some selected *political and historico-cultural symbols, socio-cultural values, and common citizenship*. The political symbols that represent the Ethiopian political and cultural

community in the textbooks include: national flag, national anthem, national holidays, and heroes/heroines. The Ethiopian national flag and national anthem have received significant coverage particularly in the CEE textbooks and students also demonstrated their sense of identification and attachment with these symbols. On the other hand, national holidays and national heroes/heroines have been only shallowly treated in the textbooks. However, some students would like to identify and attach with some of the national holidays presented to them and this implies that their identification and sense of attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community is also influenced by sources outside the school horizon.

Probably the most disputed political symbol portrayed in the textbooks and reflected in the students' values or perspectives was the who of Ethiopian heroes/heroines. The textbooks simply presented some war patriots and political leaders without making significant reference to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Students' choice of Ethiopian heroes and heroines tends to cluster along ethnic lines. That is, their choice and attachment to Ethiopian heroes and heroines depends on the ethnic identity of the persons rather than their defining traits or deeds. Students identify as a hero or heroine a person that belongs to their ethnic group. This could lead us to the conclusion that neither the textbooks have sufficiently presented the heroes and heroines as symbols of Ethiopian identity nor the students have developed strong attachment to the same.

It is evident that there are a number of great Ethiopians who devoted their time, energy and even sacrificed their life to make Ethiopia a better place for its citizens. Intragenerational and intergenerational continuity of the good traits and achievements of these great personalities could be possible only when Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks fairly present their good deeds and failures, if any, in significant details. In this way, students would like to identify with Ethiopian heroes and heroines not for being a member of their corresponding ethnic group or religious group but most importantly by their defining traits or characteristics through critically examining their achievements and failures.

The textbooks also presented some of the major historical and cultural heritages as manifestations of the Ethiopian political and cultural community. They portrayed some obelisks, palaces, churches, mosques, etc most of which have been recorded by UNESCO

as world heritages. Sociological theories suggest that identity is primarily the sum total of what we perceive about ourselves and what other's perceive about us. As such, though there exists a theoretical debate between nation as a 'self-defined' and as 'other-defined' (Ozkirimli, 2000), it appears logical to present Ethiopian identity in terms of political symbols as well as historical and cultural heritages inscribed on the world list of heritages by UNESCO as a symbol of the Ethiopian political and cultural community.

But the textbooks did not exhaust the historical and cultural connections between these symbols and the Ethiopian political and cultural community. The textbooks treat some of these heritages as they belong to an ethnic group or region only and in some cases they attach them neither to an ethnic group nor to the Ethiopian political and cultural community. As such, some of the historical and cultural heritages portrayed in the textbooks found suspended in between an ethnic region's community and the Ethiopian political and cultural community. It appears due to this fact that students demonstrate a very diffused and loose sense of attachment with the historical and cultural heritages. But this does not mean that students' values have been shaped by the textbooks alone. Thus, it can be concluded that the textbooks only loosely defined the historical and cultural symbols as Ethiopian identity and students have not developed a strong sense attachment to the historical symbols and cultural heritages.

In the quantitative study, about one fourth of the students in most cases prefer to identify with ethnic values and symbols only. That gets higher when they have a choice to make. These students have not yet developed a, more or less, shared understanding and consensus on the values, symbols and traditions representing Ethiopian identity. Some students even went further to take instrumentalist portrayal of some of the symbols and institutions representing Ethiopian identity in textbooks narratives. They maintained that political symbols have been intentionally created by the state to advance its own interest under the pretext of Ethiopian identity. This suggests that the one political and economic community envisioned by the incumbent government has not been thoroughly developed by the students and formal education does not appear to have contributed much towards this end for different reasons that are mentioned above and some more.

For formal education to contribute to the ongoing nation-building process, the textbooks should fairly present information associated with the major political and historico-cultural symbols which could represent Ethiopian identity. It is only when textbooks provide adequate and fair information about these symbols that students could make informed value judgments whether to identify and associate with them through a critical examination of their defining traits or characteristics. Textbooks should create open space for students' reflections on the good and bad aspects of associating with those political and historico-cultural symbols rather than indoctrinating the value judgments and expecting students to absorb them as they are. The country's formal education curriculum should help to navigate ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, gender, etc boundaries so as to significantly contribute to create a pervasive psychology or belief among students that being a member of an ethnic, religious, or some specific cultural group does not necessarily contradict with their identification with and attachment to the values, symbols and traditions representing the multinational state Ethiopia.

Another manifestation of Ethiopian identity portrayed in the textbooks and reflected in students' perspectives was socio-cultural values. Some of these include: *heroism, religious tolerance and hospitality*. Ethiopian '*heroism*' has been well depicted and communicated by the textbooks. It was largely presented in terms of Ethiopian's commitment to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the political nation across generations. In this sense, Ethiopian heroism was portrayed as a manifestation of traditional patriotism. Of course, CEE textbooks have also attempted to communicate the relevance of modern patriotism in the current political discourse such as respecting diversity and equality, fighting poverty, etc.

The textbooks also treated *religious tolerance* as a distinct Ethiopian value by making historical connections on the introduction and peaceful co-existence of different religious groups in Ethiopia across history. Of course, the textbooks gave significant coverage on the origin of Islam and its relationship with Christianity. Such orientation of the textbooks in the treatment of religious tolerance seems to emerge from the assumption of numerical significance. Available sources indicate that Christianity and Islam are the dominant religious groups in Ethiopia. Unless other religious groups feel overlooked in textbook

narratives, the historical relationship and peaceful co-existence among followers of these two religious groups appears to vividly manifest ‘religious tolerance’ as a distinctively Ethiopian socio-cultural value.

Though loosely defined and communicated, *hospitality* was also presented in the textbooks as one the distinct socio-cultural values in Ethiopia. The issue of hospitality as a distinctive Ethiopian value also emerges, in one way or another, from religious tolerance and the value religion has secured in the life of most Ethiopians. As religious teachings often emphasize selfless service and even sacrifices for others sake or the common good, Ethiopians could often feel hospitable for other peoples. It is also a day-to-day media discourse that Ethiopians have a welcoming gesture to strangers and outsiders coming from within and outside their country. The long-rooted interactions and interdependencies among the various nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia even before the emergence of the modern state apparatus and the subsequent introduction of modern political institutions could produce such culture of hospitality for people around them and beyond.

However, whether this is true in view of recent conflicts and the experiences of the last 25 years that people are being treated as outsiders when living in various ethnic regions of the country need to be further studied. The current Prime Minister also stated that higher education staffs and leaders in one region of Ethiopia treat academic and supportive staffs who come from other regions of Ethiopia as outsiders.

A more convincing evidence on whether socio-cultural values have the power to represent national identities in multicultural contexts may be systematically studied by anthropologists. Until that the depiction of Ethiopian identity in terms of some selected socio-cultural values – such as *heroism*, *religious tolerance* and *hospitality* – suggests that, if systematically and properly identified and presented, attributes beyond civic or political values could, in some way, symbolize national identity in multicultural societies.

The third attribute of Ethiopian identity presented in the textbooks and reflected in students’ values was *common citizenship* or *constitutional patriotism*. CEE textbooks addressed the relevance of the existing political order, basic state institutions, basic laws,

citizenship rights and duties. They also presented respecting laws, institutions, rights and duties as a manifestation of the new Ethiopian patriotism expected from students. Here it appears worth mentioning that the textbooks often conceptualize laws, institutions, rights and duties more in view of ‘groups’ (nations, nationalities and peoples) rather than the individual in a liberal sense. In Ethiopia, nations, nationalities and peoples constituted the core of the current political system in the same way as the individual comes at the hub of the political system in liberal democracies. Students also, more or less, reflect the importance of basic laws and institutions as well as the necessity of enjoying citizenship rights and discharging responsibilities as a manifestation of the new Ethiopian nationalism (patriotism).

The other major finding of the study was that comparatively formal education contributes only little to the students’ ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity construction process. Although their responses appear to be diffused, students reported that their group identity (ethnic and Ethiopian) have been shaped by several institutions such as family, religion, peers, education, media, government, political parties, and civic society. Despite such variations in the study participants’ response, religion and family were found to have strong influence in shaping the students Ethiopian identity. Interestingly participants of the study indicated that religion and family play a significant role in shaping their Ethiopian identity.

In view of the emerging trends of political, social and economic developments in Ethiopia and existing theoretical perspectives, it appears worth considering whether family and religion can be reliable and sustainable sources of nation-building through Ethiopian identity development. It could be argued that religion may also be a strong force to either create or destabilize the political order if students depend largely on religion as a form of developing Ethiopian identity. As religion operates within the wider political landscape, when religious groups feel uncomfortable with the system they can easily mobilize their adherents and resort to destabilize the system. Furthermore, it appears skeptical whether the boundary between culture and religion has been clearly demarcated in most Ethiopian religious institutions. As religious teachings often lack inclusivity ([Parekh, 2008](#)), the gradually growing religious consciousness and the separation of culture and religion could hardly make religion to contribute to Ethiopian identity development. Previous empirical

research findings indicate that Ethiopians give higher value to religion than any other citizens in the world.

Similarly, at least from the long hours of a day students spend on schooling and the short hours of a day students spent with their families, due to long working hours including moonlighting (at least in the urban centers), it appears logical to consider schooling as an important venue for Ethiopian identity construction. It is evident that the information presented to students could be more acceptable when it comes from their teachers and textbooks rather than from many other sources. But, it is only when the national education system curriculum bridges ethnic, religious, linguistic, etc boundaries and cultivates a sense of political and cultural community among students that the ongoing new-nation-building process could be materialized. As families may continue to be a source of Ethiopian identity development among students, educating families on values that promote ethnic identity and Ethiopian identity is useful so that what is learned in schools formally through the official curriculum is complemented by the informal education happening at home. To this end, the different literacy campaign programs designed for Ethiopian adults should inculcate some aspects of CEE. Otherwise, if the informal education erodes what has been portrayed and communicated through the official curriculum, the contribution of the formal education curriculum could be either zero sum game or even negative as it will supply the raw-material for polarized informal learning among family members.

Ethiopian identity is primarily depending on the robustness of the wider political context because all social actors or institutions (such as family, religion, education, media, civic society, etc) operate within the limits of the political landscape. Although the wider political process has such a major role, formal education can serve as a medium to nation-building by fusing the Ethiopian society together. Even as rightly put by [Fagerlind and Saha](#), formal education can equally determine the nature of the political system in the same way as the political system determines the nature of education required for the Ethiopian political and cultural community. Therefore, formal education should have its due place in the ongoing nation-building process through Ethiopian identity development. Yet as it appears difficult to reduce nation-building to a school compound or classroom discourse,

the wider political process could also be reflected in the level of the students' Ethiopian identity development.

Currently, although formal education contributes to understanding diversity and citizenship rights and duties in some sense, it has been entangled with several challenges to help students develop a sense of identification and attachment with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. First, the textbooks largely devote their volumes for global and continental issues. For instance, much of the volume of History textbooks has been devoted to African and world history. Such retreat to world and African history, at the expense of domestic issues, seems to emerge from the failure to document a clearly articulated history of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples. Similarly, in the CEE textbooks some broader issues such as democracy, federalism, rule of law, human rights, democratic rights, constitutionalism, etc were not sufficiently contextualized to reflect the national context. Except vertical repetition of similar content areas, CEE textbooks did not bring some critical and controversial national issues on which students to reflect. It is only when critical and contested national issues brought to textbooks narratives and actual classroom discourse that we can create open space for students to reflect on and develop critical thinking skills or become critical beings.

Second, the textbooks currently used in the national and regional education system of the country have lacked inclusivity in two ways: First, in view of the 1994 ETP premise, as textbook production is a regional mandate, at least theoretically, textbooks contents are expected to reflect the respective region's ethnic and cultural traits which in turn results in the exclusion of students from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Even at the education policy level, students that do not belong in that particular region in terms of ethnic lines are being marginalized through the education system. They are forced to learn and know about the culture and language that do not belong to them rather than their own. In view of the wider political context, this finding has an implication on how regional states manage minorities.

Second, for different reasons some nations, nationalities and peoples have been excluded from the country's historical narratives. History textbooks were designed to reflect the

traditional Highland Christian North and almost overlooked the corresponding Lowland Non-Christian South, Southwest and Southeast Ethiopia. In this case, two contradictory messages have been presented in the History textbooks themselves to justify the non-inclusivity of Ethiopian history. On the one hand, it was asserted that the textbooks are designed in their current form mainly because the North has, among other things, recorded history whereas the South has not. Thus, it appears logical to present largely the history of Northern Ethiopia as Ethiopian history. On the other hand, it was also reported that Ethiopian history lacks inclusivity and thus it does not, in any way, represent the history of nations, nationalities and peoples. In fact, History education as it is now presented in the textbooks appears to resonate to the traditional Northern Christian Highland Kingdom of the country.

If we all agree that History education contributes to nation-building through bridging the historical connections across generations of a national community, it has to be inclusive. But in the way it is currently organized and presented in the curriculum, History education may hardly contribute to nation-building through creating a sense of identification and attachment with the national (Ethiopian) political and cultural community. Moreover, in the context where the history of the country being offered in its national education system has been labeled by History and CEE textbooks themselves as “fictitious”, “biased” and “non-inclusive”, it appears difficult to imagine that History education significantly contributes to the ongoing new nation-building process through Ethiopian identity development.

A “non-inclusive” national history could play more of a nation-destroying rather than a nation-building role. Such orientation of History education could divide the Ethiopian national political and cultural community horizontally along “we” and “the other” in national self-definition. It is only those represented in the national historical narrative would ascribe the “we” and treat those omitted or excluded from such narratives as “the other”. As a result, History education could lead to ethnic competition instead of cooperation or a sense of community among the country’s population, and hence it could challenge its unity. Thus, it appears that History education should be conceptualized as a way of looking forward rather than a platform to dwell on past events and drain students mind only on past events and forget about the future.

Third, due to their ideological orientation across history the textbooks did not derive their contents from the histories and cultures of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. The specific contents portrayed in the textbooks and communicated to students had been selectively written as they reflect the respective government's ideological orientation without reference to the histories, cultures and values of the wider public. Thus frequent changes in government system and specific contents of education could lead to the absence of a shared historical consciousness and identity as a stable political community. To cope with this challenge, among other things, historians, educators, curriculum developers and other stakeholders should convene to rewrite a shared and, more or less, representative history of the country as it reflects the social, economic and political history of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples.

Fourth, the experiential curriculum promotes hatred and ethnocentric attitudes among students. Students reported that Social Studies, CEE and History teachers often resort to teach contents grounded on oral traditions rather than what was presented in the official curriculum. In view of the historical nation-building attempts reviewed under Chapter one of this dissertation, three currents of thought appear to exist on the present generation of Ethiopians including teachers: (1) those who advocate and give blessings to strong pan-Ethiopiansim and its values; (2) those who advance the values of narrow ethno-nationalism; and (3) those who give blessings to the values of moderate ethno-nationalism within loosely defined Ethiopia. These three groups of Ethiopians have different and even conflicting definitions or interpretations of Ethiopian identity. Thus, among others, the current formal education system curriculum is expected to address these three divergent views and portrayals of Ethiopian identity so that it could help to build a unified political and cultural community through building consensus within these divergent and conflicting views of nation-building.

Teachers are enlightened members of the wider Ethiopian society and their values could not have an exception to these conflicting interpretations of the meaning of being Ethiopian. The attitude and behaviour of students could be significantly shaped by their teachers' disposition than the actual textbooks orientation because teachers often hold the ultimate authority to legitimize the kind of knowledge practically communicated to

students. It is evident that much of our actions in life have been determined primarily by what we believe than what we know. Moreover, students could read and grasp textbook contents simply to pass examinations whereas those learning experiences brought into classroom discourse by teachers could be used to shape their life orientation, including their sense of attachment to the Ethiopian multinational state. This has an implication on teachers' training. Teachers could have some gaps in curriculum implementation which would be resolved through pre-service and in-service training on curriculum implementation. Teachers' training should give adequate focus particularly on how to approach some contested social or national issues.

Fifth, out of school experiences often challenge classroom discourse. Textbooks did not largely bring some critical social and cultural values into classroom discourse on which students to reflect. If formal education to serve society for which it stands, essential social issues should be considered during curriculum development, textbook writing and actual classroom discourse on which students to reflect and develop social values so that the society feel ownership of its education system. As clearly stated in [John Dewey's](#) 'Democracy and Education' as well as 'Experience and Education' and reflected in the constructivist school of thought every transmission has an aspect of transformation. Therefore, conceptualizing CEE and Social Studies as a way of learning about the culture of other people in the form of experience sharing among students of different nations and nationalities while students are at primary school level needs to be considered.

Moreover, students often face contradictions between their theoretical education at school and the real practice outside the school frontier, which makes CEE a disputed subject. Such a unidirectional – instead of reciprocal – view of the relationship between formal education and society could emerge from the textbooks' bias itself. Rather than orienting students that their country is not yet a democracy – or at best on a transition to democracy – and it is their citizenship duty to work for it, CEE textbooks portrayed the post-1991 Ethiopia as a fully fledged democracy where all injustices, inequalities and overall undemocratic practices have been once and for all removed. It seems such exaggerated portrayal of the political nation has led students to expect a far different and unrealistic correspondence between their schooling and the political and socio-economic environment in which they

are living in. It follows that students have been misguided by curriculum developers, textbook writers and their teachers as well. Therefore, it is better to orient students that Ethiopia is not a democracy, or at best in a transition to democracy, and thus it is their citizenship duty to actively involve in the democratization process of their country. Such portrayal of the political nation (the new Ethiopia) could open space to practically engage students in nation-building and in writing the history of their country.

Moreover, formal education in general and CEE in particular should be considered as an agent of social change rather than as a mere instrument designed for maintaining the status-quo. Thus rather than expecting CEE and Social Studies to align with real social and political practices, it is better to help students to conceptualize formal education as an agent of social change which prepares them in this direction. As such, the purpose of teaching and learning particularly CEE in the secondary schools of the country should be communicated to students and even for CEE teachers themselves. This finding has an implication on how CEE, Social Studies and History education have been given particularly in the secondary schools of the country. It appears that teaching these subjects does not practically engage students to deal with relevant social, economic, political and environmental issues or problems and come up with alternative coping mechanisms.

Sixth, textbook design often focuses on content memorization which could only help students to simply absorb it and pass examinations. It is evident that textbooks are voluminous crowded with mere facts and narratives which often leave little room for alternative narratives or contesting discourses for reflections, deliberations or discussions. Particularly, History textbooks presented Ethiopian history as a fixed and monolithic fact to be simply memorized rather than as an interpretation of past events so that students practically engage in deconstructing and constructing their country's history.

In the context of the above challenges, it appears difficult for the national and regional education system curriculum to significantly contribute to the ongoing new nation-building process through shaping the students identification and attachment with the Ethiopian political and cultural community. In line with this, [Fagerlind and Saha](#) were right when

they asserted that in the developing countries – including Ethiopia – formal education has a greater burden in socializing students towards a political nation.

Education can contribute to both state building and nation building. It can support state building through the training of elites and those professionals who run the state machinery (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989). Education also contributes to nation-building by shaping the students values towards the political nation. All sets of CEE and Social Studies textbooks appear to give prime focus for state-building. The corresponding nation-building process seems overlooked by the national and regional education system curriculum. This tendency was observed particularly in the CEE textbooks where cultivating students to be good and committed citizens who sacrifice or stand for the common good has been their major objective. Only those values such as *heroism*, *hospitality*, and *religious tolerance* which may symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community were treated in some areas of the Social Studies, CEE and History textbooks. However, theoretical and empirical evidences show that for a viable political and cultural community the two processes should be balanced.

Ethiopian identity in the context of multicultural perspective appears to significantly symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community. It is a pervasive psychological mindset in which the fact of nation could not be contradictory with multinationality and vice versa. As rightly stated by Brown, attempts to solely conceptualize Ethiopian identity through a western civic attribute which defines Ethiopia in terms of liberal democratic and individualistic ideals would ultimately reject ethnicity from the Ethiopian nation-building equation. Civic nationalism appears a newly romanticized concept in the voices of the country's top government officials. But in the context where ethnicity emerges as the principal factor in building the Ethiopian multination state, how civic nationalism alone could definitely bring national unity remains obscured.

It is doubtful whether state driven civic nationalism alone could serve as a unifying force for the culture-based Ethiopian society. By extension, it is difficult to think of Ethiopia only in terms of a political community. It is evident that the Ethiopian people have been living as a cultural community long before the emergence of the modern Ethiopian state

and the establishment of modern political institutions. Even in the current Ethiopian political discourse the civic conception of nation-building (Ethiopian identity) is not the exact replication of the Western civic values. Therefore, along with the civic dimension of Ethiopianness, it appears imperative to inculcate some values, symbols and traditions representing the Ethiopian cultural community into the formal education curriculum. Consequently, the wider Ethiopian society could feel ownership of its education system and as if its children protected from alien cultures and values.

Moreover, the literature shows that the process of nation-building solely through a civic conception of the nation is a ‘top-down approach’ often imposed by the political elite or state. The addition of the cultural dimension of Ethiopian identity into the civic model suggests a ‘bottom-up’ perspective of nation-building. It could be safely stated that most of the civic values upon which the Ethiopian political community institutionalized have been largely derived from Western democracies. On the other hand, the socio-cultural values and images attempted to symbolize the Ethiopian political and cultural community have been largely emerged from the Ethiopian people ways of life itself. It is true that Ethiopia has several nations, nationalities and peoples with diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, etc characteristics. But this does not mean that the various nations and nationalities of the country have no common and/ or overlapping socio-cultural elements (values, traditions, and symbols). Ultimately, Ethiopian identity can be taken as a construct always negotiated between the state and Ethiopian citizens. Accordingly, along with citizenship values, Ethiopian identity could also be represented by using some socio-cultural values as well as some major political and historico-cultural symbols. In line with this, [Kymlicka and Norman \(2000\)](#) were right to assert that a well functioning constitution and institutions are necessary but not sufficient conditions for building a stabile and sustained society; and as such the sense of solidarity and belongingness among citizens is equally relevant.

Of course, there is no silver bullet as to which type of national identity exactly leads us to ‘unity in diversity’. Practical situations could provide the answer to such questions. But at least in view of the deep-rooted socio-cultural interactions which existed among the various nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia throughout history and the immature democratic principles and institutions to legitimately control the minds of most Ethiopians,

it appears difficult to define Ethiopian identity in terms of civic attributes only, at least now.

In sum, education appears a ‘two-edge sword’: if properly planned and managed, it can contribute to nation-building; and if manipulated, it can equally contribute to nation-destroying as it does in Rwanda, Pakistan and some other countries. In the context of its major findings, it could be more consensually concluded that in Ethiopia formal education has been playing both a ‘nation-building’ and ‘nation-destroying’ role. While it has been contributing to the ongoing new nation-building process by presenting and communicating such values related to respecting diversity, tolerance, constitutionalism, basic principles of the FDRE Constitution, etc. among students, education has also played a parallel nation-destroying role by excluding some groups from the country’s historical narratives and by developing some narrow ethno-nationalistic sentiments among students, which could jeopardize the new nation-building and state-building (one political and economic community) process envisaged by the Constitution or the incumbent government. Students of ethnic minorities in ethnically dominant regions have been excluded at the policy level and in practice through textbook narratives and actual classroom discourse.

Official [MOE](#) statistical reports indicate that today more than 27 million students have been enrolled in the Ethiopian formal education system, which is greater than one fourth of its total population. As this huge human resource base could have a critical role in nation-building (and nation-destroying as well), teaching CEE, Social Studies and History is imperative for the incumbent government to gain support for the envisioned sustainable state-building and nation-building. The today’s students could be tomorrow’s Ethiopian top political leaders on whom the fate of the country could primarily depend on. If not properly educated, students could be easy prey to parochial attitudes that could destabilize the robustness of the Ethiopian political and cultural community. The incumbent government has also identified narrow ethno-nationalism as one of the major challenges of the post-1991 “new” nation-building and state-building process.

The specific contents of education offered in the country’s school system should primarily focus on engaging students to be active and committed citizens of their country.

Indoctrinating the current state of affairs and some selected and unexamined historical events as they happen to be could not produce citizens who have a solid base of political, social and historical commitments for the common good. As many critical educators say, such orientation of the national and regional education system curriculum could be open for social control and manipulation.

The country's formal education system curriculum should be planned in the way which produces citizens who can deeply examine the political, historical and cultural symbols as well as the basic laws and institutions of the land portrayed in the textbooks and who practically love and ready to sacrifice to the multinational state Ethiopia. Thus, the merits and demerits of the ethnic-based federal arrangement, some contested articles of the 1995 FDRE Constitution, alternative narratives of Ethiopian history, the good deeds and failures, if any, of national heroes/heroines and some other contested national issues students could get exposed to from other sources should be brought to the formal education system curriculum and actual classroom discourse on which students to discuss and critically examine them.

Mere descriptions of the success story and merits of ethnic federalism, the undisputed principles and aspects of the FDRE Constitution, the functions of the state from the top ministerial to the bottom local government level, the good deeds of heroes/heroines, one line of national historical narrative, etc. could not create open space for students to deeply examine and reflect on substantive matters. Such orientation of the formal education system curriculum could ultimately produce citizens who are ideologically captive and hence act to maintain the status-quo (loyal to political elites and their institutions) than committed critical citizens who always stood against the wind regarding the common good (the interests and destiny of their people). All these and other aspects should be presented in the formal education curriculum with their real contexts on which students to discuss and reflect on them; and the value judgments should be left for students.

However, if practically the ideals of Revolutionary Democracy (EPRDF's ideological tool) constitute the understandings, beliefs and value systems of the wider Ethiopian society, it appears logical for the curriculum to actually share this dominant ideology of the populace

to students which could prepare them to actively involve in the political economy of their country. But it seems too early to assert – particularly in view of recent conflicts – that EPRDF’s Revolutionary Democracy actually constitutes the beliefs and value system of the Ethiopian society. The challenge is that unless the values of “ethnic”-based federalism and its ideological basis are inculcated into the curriculum on which students to reflect on, it appears difficult to create one political and economic community. In this case, the Ethiopian education system curriculum could present the values of “ethnic”-based federalism but it should also enable students to openly question and critique these established ways of social understanding. Generally, the formal education system curriculum should expose students to critical national issues which could enable them to live harmoniously in an increasingly diverse and pluralistic Ethiopian society.

In the current context of the Ethiopian political discourse, regional development has been anticipated within the umbrella of one political and economic community. Accordingly, it is not meant to help regional states to ultimately attain the status of autonomous political nations as completely detached from and act independently of the Ethiopian political apparatus. Under this perspective, education bureaus and teachers of regional states should recognize and respect ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversities within their own region. Thus as the country’s school system mostly draws students from different communities, the national and regional education should address diversities even within a particular region. Textbooks should create open spaces for students to learn other communities’ cultures and their own so that a common sense of belonging to the Ethiopian multinational state could be gradually created through intercultural exchanges and understanding. Curriculum development and textbook contents should maintain the nexus between regionalism and centrism. That is, they should find the middle point between addressing specific local realities and broader national issues. In addition to this, the challenge posed by the experiential curriculum on the official or the planned curriculum could be minimized by drawing primary and secondary school academic and supportive staffs from different communities in that particular region and beyond.

Areas for future research. Due to the political sensitivity of the issue at least today and the focus and direction of its basic research questions, this study could not address variations in the students' level of identification with and attachment to the Ethiopian political and cultural community by such attributes as ethnicity, religion, region and other traits. The researcher believed that – particularly in view of recent conflicts – any attempt to measure and declare students' value or level of attachment to the political nation, particularly by ethnic group and loyalty, could inflame the situation. Yet the study of the status of Ethiopian identity among the different sections of the society could help to identify specific targets for intervention.

Another area of future research could be the instructional aspect of the issue. This study primarily focuses its direction of inquiry on the what aspect of the curriculum. But sometimes, the intended or planned curriculum could not be adequately translated into actual classroom discourse for different reasons. For instance, even though the curriculum and textbooks have been properly designed sometimes teachers could not effectively translate them into actual classroom practice. On the other hand, although the curriculum and textbooks have been defective and intended to be rigidly followed in the school system of the country, sometimes competent teachers could transform this defective curriculum into effective teaching and learning during the actual classroom discourse.

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ADDENDUMS

Addendum 1: Textbook Content Analysis Guide

Content Analysis Coding Sheet for National and Regional Education System Textbooks

Textbook Information

- *Cover page portrayal*
- *Authors*
- *Editor*
- *Publisher*
- *Year of publication*
- *Total page number*
- *Number and list of chapters*

Part I: Politico-Cultural and Historical Heritages and Symbols

- Ethiopia has a long history of statehood. It has also very rich historical and cultural heritages which could create a shared sense of belonging among its citizens. In this study, the values and symbols which could create such common or shared sense of belonging among Ethiopians is believed to include the following content categories: (1) *national flag and anthem*, (2) *national heroes*, (3) *national holidays*, (4) *historical and cultural heritages and symbols*.

Table 1.1: Curriculum Representation of National and Regional Flag and Anthem

No.	Flag & anthem	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Table 1.2: Curriculum Representation of National Heroes/Heroines

No.	Heroes or heroines	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Table 1.3: Curriculum Representation of National Holidays

No.	National holidays	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Table 1.4: Curriculum Representation of Historical and Cultural Symbols

No.	Historical and cultural symbols	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Part II: Constitutional Patriotism

Ethiopia constitutes one of the most diversified populations in Africa and as such it is often described as the “museum” of nations, nationalities and peoples. The international experience shows that in a multilingual, multi-religious, multiethnic and multicultural context national identities have been more and more leaning towards the civic dimension. Moreover, scholars like Bhikhu Parekh suggest that the constitution symbolizes the minimum requirement and pledge which holds diverse societies together. Accordingly, *constitutional patriotism* as one component of Ethiopian identity is operationally defined to include – but not limited to – the following content categories: (1) *a well-defined common territory*, (2) *common laws and institutions*, (3) *legal equality of citizens*, (4) *popular sovereignty (Nations, Nationalities and Peoples)*, (5) *constitutional supremacy*, (6) *common legal rights and duties*, (7) *common economy*, etc.

Table 2.1: Curriculum Representation of a Common Ethiopian Territory

No.	Common territory	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Table 2.2: Curriculum Representation of Common Laws and Institutions

No.	Common laws and institutions	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Table 2.3: Curriculum Representation of Legal Equality of Citizens

No.	Legal equality of citizens	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Table 2.4: Curriculum Representation of Popular (*Nations, Nationalities and Peoples*) Sovereignty

No.	Popular sovereignty	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Table 2.5: Curriculum Representation of Constitutional Supremacy

No.	Constitutional supremacy	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Table 2.6: Curriculum Representation of Common Legal Rights and Duties

No.	Common rights and duties	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Table 2.7: Curriculum Representation of Common Economy

No.	Common economy	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Part III: Ethiopia's political and cultural community self-imaginings

A political and cultural community's self-projections often emerge from its long history and unique contribution to the world at large. Ethiopia has a rich source of history and culture. This historical and cultural wealth could enable the Ethiopian political and cultural community to gradually develop some imaginings about itself as distinct from other societies. Some of the specific attributes of Ethiopian identity symbolized by the Ethiopian political and cultural community's self-projection embedded in *myths and images* were operationally defined to include – but not limited to – the following content categories: (1) *heroism*, (2) *hospitability*, (3) *religious tolerance*, (4) *faithfulness*, etc.

Table 3.1: Curriculum Representation of Images and myths

No.	Images and myths	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Part IV: The Interface between Ethnic and Ethiopian Identity

In the modern multicultural societies individuals hold multiple identities. It is boldly stated in both the international and local literature that Ethiopia constitutes one of the most ethnically, religiously, linguistically and culturally diverse societies in Africa. Unity in diversity could be possible only when these differences intersect at some – but not at all – point. This in turn depends on whether these diversities are believed to be co-existing or conflicting by the identity bearer. In this context, the dissertation intends to assess whether primordial attachments (ethnic identity) of citizens leads to a corresponding attachment to the country.

Table 4.1: Curriculum Representation of the Interface between Ethnic Identity and National Identity

No.	Specific areas of interface	Grade level	Subject	Chapter	Page no.	Page proportion	Frequency	Representation as Ethnic/Ethiopian	Summary or justifications (quote a statement)

Addendum 2: Interview Guide for Students

- 1) We all agree that students, like you, are the hopes of future generations. They will be educators, researchers, peace advocates and future political leaders whose role has the power to decide the fate of the country. To this effect, today there are several questions need to be raised and answered by this generation. One of which may be related to the issue of identity. Thus, who is _____ (name of the interviewee)? Or simply, how would you introduce yourself to someone you don't know?
- 2) Ethiopia has several nations, nationalities and peoples. To one of which may you identify with? And to what extent are you proud of being (the interviewee's ethnic group)?
- 3) How do you conceptualize Ethiopianness? Through content analysis of textbooks, I have found out that Ethiopian identity have been portrayed through: (a) politico-cultural and historical symbols such as: (i) *national flag and anthem*, (ii) *national heroes/heroines*, (iii) *national holidays*, and (iv) *some historico-cultural heritages – such as Lucy, Adwa victory, Axumite Steale, rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, castles of Gondar, Dirre Sheik Hussien Shrine, Jegol Gimb, Tiya Steale, Konso Cultural Landscape, Sof Omar Caves, etc;* – (b) citizenship identity as symbolized by *common legal rights and duties, common laws and institutions, and common economy*; (c) self-imaginings such as *heroism, religious tolerance, hospitability, etc.* do you agree with? Why?
- 4) How much attached are you to those symbols, values, traditions, etc (listed in question number 3 above) depicting Ethiopian identity? And why?
- 5) What meaning and significance being Ethiopian has for you? How?
- 6) Who is/are your Ethiopian hero/heroes? Why?
- 7) Can you explain your feeling to the Ethiopian national flag and national anthem? What about the regional flag and regional anthem? Why?
- 8) How do you assess the contribution of the Ethiopian formal education system curriculum (regional and national) in exposing and developing the symbols, values, traditions, etc – we have discussed so far – representing Ethiopian identity?
- 9) What kind of Ethiopian identity [civic or ethnic] largely reinforced in the Ethiopian education system curriculum? How?

- 10) I think there are several subjects you took from your primary through secondary school education. How do you assess their role in your:
- a. ethnic identity development?
 - b. Ethiopian identity development?
 - c. both ethnic and Ethiopian identity development?
 - d. cosmopolitan identity
- 11) What do you feel about the role of the Ethiopian education system curriculum in cultivating your Ethiopian identity?
- a. The primary level curriculum or education
 - b. The secondary level curriculum
- 12) How do you evaluate the Social Studies, History and Civic and Ethical Education courses you covered in your primary and secondary education in cultivating your Ethiopian identity? How do you see the interface between ethnic and Ethiopian identity in these courses?
- 13) What do you think is the relation between your ethnic and Ethiopian identity? Do you think they are co-existing or conflicting? To one of which do you give strong allegiance?
- 14) How do you see the contribution of your families, religion, mass media, peers, political parties, civil society and government policies, in a comparative perspective, in shaping your:
- a. ethnic identity?
 - b. Ethiopian identity?
 - c. both your ethnic and Ethiopian identity?
 - d. cosmopolitan identity?
- 15) What are the challenges to create a strong sense of Ethiopianness among students?
- 16) What should be done to create a strong sense of Ethiopianness among students?

Addendum 3: Focus Group Discussions Guide for Students

- 1) Which attributes (values, symbols and traditions) do you think exactly represent Ethiopian identity?
- 2) Which sources or institutions significantly shaped or influenced your Ethiopian (and ethnic) identity development? How? Can you put them in order?
- 3) How do you assess the contribution of the Ethiopian education system curriculum (both regional and national) in developing your ethnic and Ethiopian identity? How Social Studies, CEE and History shaped your ethnic and Ethiopian identity?
- 4) What do you think about the interface between your ethnic and Ethiopian identity? Are they co-existing or conflicting? How?
- 5) What do you think are the challenges of the Ethiopian education system to develop a sense of Ethiopianness among students? And what do you think are the solutions to such challenges?

Addendum 4: Interview Guide for Teachers

- 1) Can you tell me your level of certification, the subject area and grade level you are currently teaching and for how long have you been in teaching profession?
- 2) How do you conceptualize Ethiopian identity? Through content analysis of textbooks, I have found out that Ethiopian identity have been portrayed through: (a) politico-cultural and historical symbols such as: *(i) national flag and anthem, (ii) national heroes/heroines, (iii) national holidays, and (iv) some historico-cultural heritages – such as Lucy, Adwa victory, Axumite Steale, rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, castles of Gondar, Dirre Sheik Hussien Shrine, Jegol Gimb, Tiya Steale, Konso Cultural Landscape, Sof Omar Caves, etc;* – (b) citizenship identity as symbolized by *common legal rights and duties, common laws and institutions, and common economy;* (c) self-imaginings such as *heroism, religious tolerance, hospitability, etc.* do you agree with? Why?
- 3) How do you evaluate the subject area you are currently teaching in exposing and cultivating Ethiopian identity among students? How do you see the interface between ethnic and Ethiopian identity in your course?
- 4) What type of identity [civic or ethnic] does the subject area you are currently teaching try to reinforce? How?
- 5) I think there are several subjects offered for students from primary through preparatory school education. How do you assess their role in students':
 - a. ethnic identity formation?
 - b. Ethiopian identity formation?
 - c. both ethnic and Ethiopian identity formation?
 - d. Cosmopolitan identity formation?
- 6) To what extent does the Ethiopian formal education system curriculum (Grade 5 upto Grade 12) reinforce the symbols, values, traditions, etc – as listed in question number 2 above – represent Ethiopian identity?
- 7) How do you evaluate the relation between the ethnic and Ethiopian identity of students? Do you think they are co-existing or conflicting? To one of which do students often give strong allegiance in day-to-day classroom discourse and out of class activities?

- 8) How do you see the contribution of families, religion, mass media, peers, political parties, civil society and government policies, in a comparative perspective, in shaping the students':
- a. ethnic identity?
 - b. Ethiopian identity?
 - c. both ethnic and Ethiopian identity?
 - d. cosmopolitan identity
- 9) What are the challenges to create a strong sense of Ethiopianness among students?
- 10) What should be done to create a strong sense of Ethiopianness among students?

Addendum 5: Interview Guide for Experts of the MOE and Regional Education Bureaus

- 1) Can you tell me the general context of education in Ethiopia?
- 2) What purpose(s) should education in Ethiopia serve?
- 3) Who designed the national and regional education system curriculum and syllabus; and how? How can you describe the participation of regions during each phase of curriculum development and syllabus design?
- 4) Can you tell me the national and regional education system textbook writing process? Who was primarily responsible in writing primary school textbooks in all regions?
- 5) Was there any intention to infuse the issue of Ethiopianness among students during curriculum development, syllabus design and textbook writing?
- 6) In the Ethiopian education system, what purposes do Social Studies, CEE and History education supposed to serve?
- 7) Can you exactly tell me the regions capacity to produce their own textbooks?
- 8) What could be the reasons for the similarity, if there is any, in the specific contents of primary school textbooks in ethnic regions?

Addendum 6: Questionnaire Survey (To be filled by Students)

Dear study participant:

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to gather pertinent information about the status of Ethiopian identity in student values or perspectives, which might contribute significantly to understanding curriculum responses to the new nation-building process through Ethiopian identity construction. Your cooperation in providing genuine and timely response to each question would be of great contribution to the success of this research project. Therefore, you are kindly requested to fill out each item in the questionnaire honestly and responsibly. The research project is purely academic and therefore, in no way affects you personally and institutionally. Furthermore, please feel free that all your responses will be kept confidential.

The questionnaire has three parts. Part one incorporates some questions about your biographical data and part two embodies questions assessing your level of identification with and attachment to the nation. Finally, you are requested to give additional comments under part three. All questions raised have equal importance to attain the objective of the study.

General Direction:

- No need to write your name or Id No.
- Please complete all questions carefully.
- Follow specific instructions strictly.
- Whenever you need any further explanation, you can contact the researcher through the following address:

email: demasiraw@gmail.com OR Mobile: +251-911-98-20-50)

Thank You in Advance for Your Unreserved Cooperation!

Part I: Biographical Data about Study Participants

Instruction. This section of the questionnaire contains 7 items, all of which deals with the general background information about the study participants. Please write your answers on the space provided.

- 1) Age (in years) _____
- 2) Sex: _____
- 3) Religion _____
- 4) Ethnic group _____
- 5) Language (mother tongue) _____
- 6) Region (Kilil) _____
- 7) Stream during your preparatory level education (Grade 11 and Grade 12) _____

Part II: Ethiopian Identity Survey Items

- 8) How would you like to identify yourself?
 - A. (Ethnic group) only
 - C. (Ethnic group) and then Ethiopian
 - B. Ethiopian only
 - D. Ethiopian and then (Ethnic group)
- 9) Which of the following statements apply most to you?
 - A. I consider myself only as Ethiopian
 - B. I consider myself only as (Ethnic group)
 - C. I feel more (Ethnic group) than Ethiopian
 - D. I feel more Ethiopian than (Ethnic group)
 - E. I feel as much Ethiopian as (Ethnic group)
- 10) If you had to choose, which one best describes the way you think of yourself?" (Choose one!)
 - A. Ethiopian
 - C. Difficult to choose
 - B. (Ethnic group)
 - D. Other (write in) _____
- 11) Some people consider themselves as (Ethnic group) while other people do not. If you feel an (Ethnic group), how strong is this feeling?
 - A. Strong
 - B. Moderate
 - C. Weak
- 12) How proud are you to be (Ethnic group)?
 - A. Very proud
 - B. Fairly proud
 - C. Not proud at all

- 13) Some people consider themselves as Ethiopian while other people do not. If you feel an Ethiopian, how strong is this feeling?
- A. Strong B. Moderate C. Weak
- 14) How proud are you to be Ethiopian?
- A. Very proud B. Fairly proud C. Not proud at all
- 15) How proud are you of Ethiopia's history?
- A. Very proud B. Fairly proud C. Not proud at all
- 16) To one of which flags you strongly identify and/ or attached with?
- A. (Ethnic) Region only C. (Ethnic) Region & then Ethiopia
B. Ethiopia only D. Ethiopia & then (Ethnic) Region
- 17) To one of which anthems you strongly identify and/ or attached with?
- A. (Ethnic) Region only C. (Ethnic) Region & then Ethiopia
B. Ethiopia only D. Ethiopia & then (Ethnic) Region
- 18) To one of which national holidays you strongly identify and/ or attached with?
- A. Adwa Victory (March 1st) D. The downfall of Dergue (28 May)
B. Arrival of the Emperor (5 May 1941) E. National Flag Day
C. Victory over Somalia (March 1978) F. Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day
- 19) To which of the historical and cultural heritages or symbols (such as obelisks, palaces, castles, caves, churches, mosques, etc) you most likely feel attached to?
- A. Those found in (Ethnic) Region only
B. Those found in Ethiopia as a whole
C. First those found in (Ethnic) Region & then in other regions of Ethiopia
D. Those found in the world over
- 20) How do you express your feeling about the major economic projects or infrastructures and economic resources found in other regions of Ethiopia as equally important and belonged to you in the same way as those found in your ethnic region?
- A. Very Strong C. Very weak
B. Strong D. Weak

- 21) Which of the following exactly explain Ethiopian values? (You can choose also only two of them)
- A. Heroism
 - B. Religious tolerance
 - C. Hospitability
 - D. all of the above
 - F. Others, if any
- 22) To be truly Ethiopian, how important do you think is to adhere to the common laws and institutions of the country?
- A. Very important
 - B. Fairly important
 - C. Not very important
 - D. Not important at all
- 23) To be truly an Ethiopian citizen, how important do you think is to enjoy common legal rights and discharge common duties?
- A. Very important
 - B. Fairly important
 - C. Not very important
 - D. Not important at all
- 24) To be truly Ethiopian, how important do you think is to adhere to the legal equality of Ethiopian citizens?
- A. Very important
 - B. Fairly important
 - C. Not very important
 - D. Not important at all
- 25) To be truly Ethiopian, how important do you think is to respect the supremacy of the FDRE Constitution?
- A. Very important
 - B. Fairly important
 - C. Not very important
 - D. Not important at all
- 26) To be truly Ethiopian, how important do you think is to respect the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples?
- A. Very important
 - B. Fairly important
 - C. Not very important
 - D. Not important at all

27) The following table depicts the infrastructures natural resources and historico-cultural heritages found in different parts of Ethiopia. Please try to express your degree of attachment and belonging to each of these infrastructures, natural resources and historico-cultural heritages by using “X” mark in each box to answer the questions.

No	Infrastructures	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak
1.	Tekezze HEP (in Tigray)				
2.	Gilgel Ghibe HEP (in Oromiya)				
3.	Tana Belles HEP (in Amhara)				
4.	Renaissance Dam (in Benishangul-Gumuz)				
5.	Salt Mine Project (in Afar)				
6.	Nech Sar National Park (in SNNPR)				
7.	Jegol Ghimb (in Harari)				
8.	Tiya Stelae (Guraghe Zone of SNNPR)				
9	Others, if any				

28) How do you evaluate the contribution of the following institutions in shaping your (Ethnic group) identity?

No	Institutions	Very strong	Strong	Indifferent	Weak	Very weak
1	Family					
2	Education					
3	Media					
4	Government					
5	Political parties					
6	Civic society					
7	Religious institutions					
8	Peers					
9	Others, if any					

29) How do you evaluate the contribution of the following institutions in shaping your Ethiopian identity?

No	Institutions	Very strong	Strong	Indifferent	Weak	Very weak
1	Family					
2	Education					
3	Media					
4	Government					
5	Political parties					
6	Civic society					
7	Religious institutions					
8	Peers					
9	Others, if any					

30) How do you evaluate the contribution of the following subjects in shaping your (Ethnic group) identity?

No	Subject areas	Very strong	Strong	Indifferent	Weak	Very weak
1.	Social Studies					
2.	CEE					
3.	History					

31) How do you evaluate the contribution of the following subjects in shaping your Ethiopian identity?

No	Subject areas	Very strong	Strong	Indifferent	Weak	Very weak
1.	Social Studies					
2.	CEE					
3.	History					

Part III: Additional Comments

Direction: Attempt the following

1. Please write the Ethiopian national anthem and the (Ethnic) Region anthem

2. What do you feel when you hear the Ethiopian national anthem?

3. What exactly is your feeling when you see the Ethiopian flag flying high on the sky?

4. Who is/are your Ethiopian heroes/heroines? Why?

5. What does being Ethiopian mean to you? What are its manifestations?

6. How do you see the interface between your (Ethnic group) identity and Ethiopian identity? Are they co-existing or conflicting?

7. How do you evaluate your Social Studies, History and Civics and Ethical Education courses you have taken so far in cultivating your (Ethnic group) identity and Ethiopian identity?

8. What specific experiences or contents do you think are most important in shaping your (Ethnic group) identity and Ethiopian identity, if at all?

9. What are the challenges of the Ethiopian education system to develop your Ethiopian identity?

- i) _____
- ii) _____
- iii) _____
- iv) _____
- v) _____

10. Any additional comment you may want to suggest about the issue of Ethiopian identity.

Thank you for your cooperation!!

Addendum 7: Consent Form

First of all, I would like to thank you for your willingness to devote your time and the willingness to participate in my study. I am studying the contribution of the Ethiopian national and regional education system curriculum to nation-building through shaping the students' attitudes and behaviour as they give value to the nation and show significant attachments towards it. The study is being conducted as a requirement to get PhD degree in Curriculum Design and Development and thus it does not serve any political or ideological purposes.

You are absolutely free to choose to participate or not to participate in this study. When you feel discomfort, you can stop your participation at any time. Your participation may take you a maximum of three hours. There will be no financial compensation for your participation in the study. Your identity will be kept confidential. If the results of the study get published, they will not give any identifiable references to you, such as name, Id No., etc. In the whole course of your participation in the study you will be asked to give information genuinely.

If you have any further question about this study, please call me at: +251-911-98-20-50 or email me at: demasiraw@gmail.com

I have read and understand the contents of this consent form. I am willing to participate in this study.

Participant Signature _____

Date _____

Addendum 8: Regional and Ethnic Identification of Students

Table 8.1: Regional and ethnic background of the study participants

No.	Region	Ethnic group	Number of students	Percent
1	Oromiya	Oromo	56	
		Amhara	9	
		Sidama	4	
		Gurage	3	
		Tigre	2	
		Kafficho	2	
		Silti	1	
		Unstated	11	
		All	88	100
2	Amhara	Amhara	48	
		Agaw	8	
		Oromo	7	
		Tigre	2	
		Gurage	1	
		Walayita	1	
		Unstated	13	
		All	80	100
3	SNNPR	Sidama	19	
		Walayita	15	
		Hadiya	13	
		Dawro	12	
		Oromo	11	
		Amhara	9	
		Kambatta	8	
		Konso	7	
		Gurage	6	
		Gedeo	6	
		Tigre	4	
		Gamo	4	
		Derashe	2	
		Silti	2	
		Ari	2	
		Kafficho	1	
		Unstated	14	
		All	135	100
	Tigray	Tigre	34	
		Amhara	5	
		Agaw	3	
		Unstated	3	
		Total	45	100
	Addis Ababa	Oromo	4	

		Amhara	4	
		Gurage	2	
		Tigre	1	
		Sidama	1	
		Konso	1	
		Unstated	3	
		Total	16	100
All Regions		Grand Total	364	100

Table 8.2: Study participants' ethnic identification

No.	Ethnic group	Number	Percent
1	Oromo	78	
2	Amhara	75	
3	Tigre	43	
4	Sidama	24	
5	Walayita	16	
6	Hadiya	13	
7	Gurage	12	
8	Dawro	12	
9	Agaw	11	
10	Kambatta	8	
11	Konso	8	
12	Gedeo	6	
13	Gamo	4	
14	Silti	3	
15	Kafficho	3	
16	Derashe	2	
17	Ari	2	
18	Unidentified	44	
All		364	100

Addendum 9: Presentation and Analysis of Additional Survey Items

Table 8.13.1: Students level of attachment to the Jegol Gimb (Harari Region)

Heritage	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak
Jegol Wall (in Harari)	53(15.1)*	94(26.9)	96(27.4)	107(30.6)
N=350	*Numbers in parenthesis refer to simple percentages			

Table 8.13.2: Students level of attachment to the Tiya Steale (in SNNPR)

Heritage	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak
Tiya Steale (in SNNPR)	107(30.2)*	96(27.1)	53(15.0)	98(27.7)
N=354	*Numbers in parenthesis refer to simple percentages			

Addendum 10: Member Check Comment Sheet

No.	Study participant	Study participant comments	Action taken
1	Student A	You interpreted my responses very well and thus it needs no improvement	No change
2	Student B	Everything is right. It reflects my position	No change
3	Student C	It is a good interpretation but some points seem highly polarized	Needs to go through the data
4	Student D	It seems more biased towards the existing political experiment and prevailing biases	Needs to go through the data
5	Student E	My perspectives only loosely presented	Needs to go through the data
6	Student F	It is a very nice interpretation of my response	No change
7	Student G	Nothing wrong I found in your interpretation.	No change

Addendum 11: Biographical Sketch of the Researcher

Mr. Siraw Demas was born on 1st May 1977 and completed his primary education in 1992 and his secondary level education in March 1996. He sat for the ESELCE in March 1996 and joined Bahir Dar University (the then Bahir Dar Teacher's College) in September 1996 and graduated with Bachelor of Education (BED) degree in 'Geography and Environmental Studies' in 2000.

Upon graduation, he was recruited by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education as a high school teacher at Gore Senior Secondary School, Illuababora Zone of Oromiya Region. There he taught Geography for a year. Mr. was also participating in the First Ethiopian Agricultural Census Enumeration conducted for the first time by the CSA as a field Supervisor and Wereda Coordinator at Kaffa Zone where he had additional exposure to different cultures.

Mr. Siraw had joined Defense University in 2002 and he has been working at different positions and responsibilities. He pursued his graduate study in Addis Ababa University from September 2005 to July 2006 and graduated with MA Degree in Geography and Environmental Studies with special emphasis on Regional and Urban Development. He has taught Geography and Environmental Studies, Civic and Ethical Education and Research at graduate and undergraduate level. He has been also advising and evaluating research papers for graduate and undergraduate students.

Mr. Siraw has been also heading the Curriculum Development and Quality Assurance Unit and Social Science Department of Major General Hayelom Araya Military Academy for three years. Currently, Mr. Siraw is head of Research and Publication Department at Command and Staff College, Defense University.

Addendum 12: Declaration Sheet

Hereunder, I verify that this dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university. I also make sure that all the source materials used in this dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Submitted to: Department of Curriculum and Instruction

The Dissertation had been submitted with my approval as University advisor.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____