



ABEBAW YIRGA ADAMU

Ethnic and Religious Diversity in
Higher Education in Ethiopia

The Case of Bahir Dar University



ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

To be presented, with the permission of
the Board of the School of Education of the University of Tampere,
for public discussion in the Paavo Koli Auditorium,

Kanslerinrinne 1, Tampere,
on May 22nd, 2014, at 12 o'clock.

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

ABEBAW YIRGA ADAMU

Ethnic and Religious Diversity in
Higher Education in Ethiopia

The Case of Bahir Dar University

Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 1939
Tampere University Press
Tampere 2014

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

University of Tampere

School of Education

Finland

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service in accordance with the quality management system of the University of Tampere.

Copyright ©2014 Tampere University Press and the author

Cover design by

Mikko Reinikka

Distributor:

kirjamyynti@juvenes.fi

<http://granum.uta.fi>

Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 1939

ISBN 978-951-44-9461-1 (print)

ISSN-L 1455-1616

ISSN 1455-1616

Acta Electronica Universitatis Tamperensis 1423

ISBN 978-951-44-9462-8 (pdf)

ISSN 1456-954X

<http://tampub.uta.fi>

Suomen Yliopistopaino Oy – Juvenes Print
Tampere 2014



Dedicated to my selfless mother Yirgedu Meshesha with love!

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Abstract	xi
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Background	1
1.2. Rationale and Purpose of the Study	4
1.3. Context of the Study	7
1.4. Significance of the Study	8
1.5. Delimitations of the Study	9
1.6. Structure of the Dissertation	9
2. Diversity in Ethiopia and its Higher Education	11
2.1. A Historical Overview of Diversity in Ethiopia	11
2.1.1. External influences on diversity in Africa	12
2.1.2. Diversity in the history of modern Ethiopia	13
2.2. Overview of Diversity in Ethiopian Higher Education	26
2.2.1. Development of higher education in Ethiopia	27
2.2.2. Diversity in Ethiopian higher education	30
2.3. Summary	33
3. Campus Climate for Diversity: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations	36
3.1. Understanding the Campus Climate for Diversity	36
3.1.1. Historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion	39
3.1.2. Compositional diversity	39
3.1.3. Psychological climate	40
3.1.4. Behavioral climate	40
3.2. Enhancing a Positive Campus Climate for Diversity	41
3.2.1. Structural diversity	44
3.2.2. Classroom diversity	45
3.2.3. Informal interactional diversity	48
3.3. Summary	50

4. Methodology	53
4.1. Qualitative Research	53
4.2. Case Selection.....	54
4.3. Data Collection	55
4.3.1. Sources of data.....	56
4.3.2. Data collection methods	58
4.4. Data Analysis	62
4.5. Trustworthiness.....	64
4.6. Ethical considerations.....	66
5. Student Diversity and Intergroup Relations	69
5.1. Student Diversity.....	69
5.1.1. Diverse student population	70
5.1.2. Ethnic composition.....	72
5.1.3. Religious Composition	85
5.2. Intergroup Relations	89
5.2.1. Friendships.....	89
5.2.2. Factors facilitating intergroup relations	94
5.2.3. Factors impeding intergroup relations.....	99
5.3. Summary.....	109
6. Ethnicity and Religion: Discussions, Tensions and Conflicts	111
6.1. Discussions about Ethnic and Religion-Related Issues among Students	111
6.1.1. Discussing ethnic-related issues on campus	112
6.1.2. Discussing religion-related issues on campus	116
6.2. Ethnic and Religious Tension and Conflict on Campus.....	118
6.2.1. Ethnic tension and conflict	119
6.2.2. Religious tension.....	125
6.2.3. Causes of ethnic and religious tension and conflict	142
6.3. Summary.....	156
7. Managing Diversity in the University	158
7.1. Strategies in Managing Diversity.....	158
7.1.1. Units working to address issues of diversity	159

7.1.2. Diversity programs and activities	166
7.2. Factors Impeding the Process of Managing Diversity	178
7.2.1. Lack of good strategies.....	178
7.2.2. Lack of implementation and institutional support	179
7.3. Summary.....	183
8. Conclusion	185
8.1. Summary and Conclusion.....	185
8.2. Implications	189
8.3. Limitations of the Study	193
References	194
Appendices	217
Appendix 1: Interview Guide.....	217
Appendix 2: Focus Group Guide	221
Appendix 3: Document Review Guide.....	222
Appendix 4: Informed Consent.....	223
Appendix 5: Percentage Distribution of Major Ethnic Groups in Ethiopia - 2007.....	226
Appendix 6: Population of Ethiopia by Religion - 2007	227

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 1. Regions/city administrations and their working languages.....	24
Table 2. Public universities in Ethiopia by region/city administration	30
Table 3. Overview of benefits of diversity in higher education.....	43
Table 4. Students placed in all public universities by region/city administration (2009/2010 - 2011/2012).....	75
Table 5. Students placed in BDU by region/city administration (2009/2010 - 2011/2012)	76
Table 6. Dominant ethnic group by region/city administration	77
Table 7. Population of regions/city administrations by religion	86
Table 8. Students from Amhara region placed in BDU by province and zone.....	88

Figures

Figure 1. Map of regional states and city administrations in Ethiopia.....	23
Figure 2. Elements influencing the campus climate for diversity.....	38
Figure 3. Criteria for selecting close friends in order of priority	94

List of Abbreviations

ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
APC	Apostle of Peace Club
ARPD	African Rally for Peace and Development
BDU	Bahir Dar University
CC	Cultural Center
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
EHEEE	Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Examination
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
EIASC	Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
ETV	Ethiopian Television
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GCO	Guidance and Counseling Office
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEP	Higher Education Proclamation
HSIU	Haileselassie I University
IGD	Intergroup Dialogue
MFA	Ministry of Federal Affairs
MoE	Ministry of Education
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
NNPD	Nations and Nationalities and People’s Day
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo People’s Democratic Organization
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples
SU	Students’ Union
TPLF	Tigray People’s Liberation Front
UCAA	University College of Addis Ababa
USDS	United States Department of State

Acknowledgements

During my journey to accomplish this dissertation, I have received various comments, support and encouragement from different people. First of all, I would like to express my special thanks to my supervisor, Professor Tuomas Takala. His keen interest in my research and appreciation for my effort and progress was always motivating and inspiring. Without his help in many regards this dissertation would not have been possible. I also wish to thank and convey my appreciation to the internal examiner Professor Marita Mäkinen (University of Tampere), and the external examiners Professor Emerita Rauni Räsänen (University of Oulu) and Senior Researcher Dr. Jana Zehle (Leipzig University) for their constructive feedback and invaluable comments. I would like also to thank Anna Rastas, Nelli Piattoeva, Vesa Korhonen, and Roger Chao for their critical comments at different stages of the research.

I have benefited greatly from participating in the doctoral seminars at the School of Education and Social Anthropology in School of Social Sciences and Humanities. I have also benefited from the informal discussions with other doctoral students in the School of Education. Thank you all for your valuable comments. I wish to thank the administrative staff at the School of Education, particularly Leena Pohjasmäki and Niina Nyysölä for being very helpful in various administrative issues.

Special thanks are due to the research participants without whose willingness to provide information the research could not have been carried out. In addition, a thank you to Petros Woldegiorgis, who provided me with some necessary documents which I was

not able to find in some institutions. Special thanks are also due to my Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Finnish friends in Tampere who have been very helpful in my social life.

During the past four years, I have received support from various institutions. I am indebted to the University of Tampere for its financial support granted through a postgraduate scholarship and employment. I am very grateful to the Nordic Africa Institute, which provided me with a study scholarship to spend one month in Uppsala using the Institute's library resources. I am also thankful to the School of Education, University of Tampere, the Network for Research on Multiculturalism and Societal Interaction, the University of Tampere Foundation, the Project on Youth and Political Engagement in Contemporary Africa (YoPo), and the Nordic Network of African Childhood and Youth Research (NoNACYR) for their financial support, which helped me to participate in different conferences and research seminars where I received feedback on my research from different people.

I would like to thank my wife, Aster Minwyelet, and my friend, Tilahun Bejital, who have been extremely supportive of my professional development. Their comments and encouragement make me proud of my achievements and inspire me to work and become more successful. Finally, I would like to thank my beloved wife and my sons Yonathan and Dagim for their endless love and support. Aster, I am blessed indeed to have a wonderful wife like you. I was doing my doctoral degree in a country (Finland) which is thousands of kilometers away from where my family live (Ethiopia). My sons' persistent question "when are you coming home?" has been a source of strength and determination throughout this long journey. Now, it is time to pick up the phone and tell them I am coming home soon, not for a vacation but to stay with them forever!

Above all, I thank you God, for giving me love, health, peace and strength!

Abebaw Yirga Adamu

Tampere, Finland

April 2014

Abstract

Multiculturalism is one of the guiding values that universities in Ethiopia promote and uphold in pursuance of their mission. Universities also aspire to create a campus climate in which everyone feels welcome, and which contributes to facilitate and improve students' personal and social development. The first step toward creating such an environment is to understand the campus climate for diversity in each university. The purpose of this study was to provide a better understanding of the campus climate for diversity in Bahir Dar University (BDU) by examining different elements of the campus climate with regard to ethnic and religious diversity. The study was guided by a framework for understanding the campus climate for diversity. The research design was a qualitative case study. Interviews were used to generate data from students, teachers, managers and staff. Focus groups and document review were also used to collect data from students and documents respectively. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The results show that BDU has an ethnically and religiously diverse student population, but there is a numerical dominance of one ethnic group which in turn contributed to a numerical dominance of one religious group. The campus community has generally a positive perception of diversity and diverse student population. The results also show that there are more positive relationships between members of different religious groups than between different ethnic groups. Students often ignore or avoid discussing religion-related issues with outgroup members. They also lack interest in discussing ethnic-related issues with ethnic outgroup members. There are also ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts on campus due to various reasons. Although BDU has identified promoting diversity as one of its core values, it lacks developing good strategies, implementing diversity-related plans, and supporting diversity-related programs and activities. To enhance a positive campus climate for diversity the University should provide more opportunities to create diversity awareness as well as to facilitate positive intergroup contacts and relations. The government of Ethiopia also should understand the impact of some of its policies, strategies and political system on the campus climate for diversity.

1

Introduction

1.1. Background

Human diversity is a salient and challenging issue in most countries. The term “diversity” has become one of the most frequently used words in social sciences. However, there is no single way to define diversity. Finding an agreed upon definition of diversity is rather challenging. In some studies, diversity refers to “differences between individuals on any attribute that may lead to the perception that another person is different from the self” (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004, p. 1008), or as a variation that exists within and across groups on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and social status (Banks et al., 2005). In general terms, diversity can be broadly conceived of as all the ways that people are different. This includes both visible and invisible differences that exist between people both at the individual and group level. However, the use of the term in this study is limited to ethnic and religious differences among students.

Diversity is not a new phenomenon; discussions on issues of diversity in higher education began in the 1950s following the Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America. At that time, the discussions were mainly focused on equal rights to access

higher education. Later, some scholars advocated various benefits of diversity in higher education based on social theories and assumptions. They tried to show the importance of having a diverse student population through affirmative action, “not only as a means of increasing access to higher education for greater number of students, but also as a means of fostering students’ academic and social growth” (Gurin, Day, Gurin, Hurtado, 2002, p. 330). Starting from the late 1990s, abundant research has shown the theoretical, practical, and empirical foundations for linking diversity with the educational and civic mission of higher education (Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2007).

Diversity is important at different levels of personal development, but it is thought to be significantly important during the university years because many students come to university in late adolescence and early adulthood, which is a critical stage of development in which individuals define themselves in relation to others and exercise various social roles before making permanent commitments to different issues including professions, close relationships, and social and political groups (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002). This makes higher education institutions (HEIs) an ideal context to enrich individuals’ personal and social developments. Therefore, “Institutions of higher education have an obligation, first and foremost, to create the best possible educational environment for the young adults whose lives are likely to be significantly changed during their years on campus” (Gurin, 1999, p. 36).

Many universities recognize the value of diversity and view diversity as an essential resource for optimizing learning and teaching (Maruyama, Moreno, Gudeman, & Marin, 2000). Diversity can support a broad range of learning outcomes including active thinking skills and intellectual engagement, and democracy outcomes such as perspective-taking, citizenship engagement and cultural understanding (Gurin et al., 2002). The research literature on diversity in higher education also identifies several benefits of diversity which can be grouped into three major categories based on beneficiaries. These categories include individual benefits, institutional benefits, and societal benefits (Gurin et al., 2002; Milem 2003; Terenzini, Cabrera, Colbeck, Bjorklund, & Parente, 2001). Milem (2003) describes these major benefits of diversity as follows:

Individual benefits refer to the ways in which the educational experiences and outcomes of individual students are enhanced by diversity on campus. *Institutional benefits* refer to the ways in which diversity enhances the ability of colleges and universities to achieve their missions - particularly as diversity relates to the mission of teaching, research, and service. [...] *Societal benefits* are defined as the ways in which diversity at colleges and universities affects lives, policies, and issues beyond the walls of the university (p. 129).

To these three, Milem (2003) added a fourth category - *economic and private-sector benefits*. This refers to “the ways in which diversity enhances the economy and the functioning of organizations and businesses in the private sector” (p.129). Looking at the benefits of diversity that are discussed in several studies, what Milem stated as economic and private-sector benefits can be included in societal benefits mainly for two reasons. First, unlike the other three benefits, which are general, economic benefits are specific benefits and can be included in societal benefits. Second, private-sector organizations and business firms are institutions ‘beyond the walls of the university’. Hence, they can be included and discussed under societal benefits by broadening what we mean by societal.

Although diversity has various benefits (see details in Chapter 3), it is not only an opportunity. “Diversity is one of the largest, most urgent challenges facing higher education today. It is also one of the most difficult challenges colleges have ever faced” (Levine, 1991, p. 4). Diversity can be source of challenges that leads to less cohesiveness, less effective communication, increased anxiety, and greater discomfort, tension and conflict among diverse groups (Cox, 2001). Research also indicates that when diversity is not properly addressed or is totally ignored, it can have negative effects, such as “increased egocentrism, and negative relationships characterized by hostility, rejection, divisiveness, scapegoating, bullying, stereotyping, prejudice, and racism” (Johnson & Johnson, 2000, p. 15). Its negative impacts often adversely affect campus community members as well as the broader society outside the university. This shows that even though the diversity in higher education is often regarded as a value based on the potential opportunities it provides, in reality, “diversity is not always a value” (Macedo, 2000, p. x).

As discussed above, literatures show the various opportunities and challenges of diversity in higher education. This indicates that diversity is a potential resource, but not a sufficient condition to result in desired benefits (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002; Milem, 2003; Zirkel & Cantor, 2004). It seems that the way diversity addressed in different contexts determines its impact (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). Therefore, managing diversity becomes one of the crucial tasks of HEIs.

To benefit from diversity as well as to avoid or minimize the negative impacts of diversity, HEIs need to create and sustain a positive campus climate for diversity. The phrase ‘campus climate for diversity’ has been used in several studies, and it generally refers to the campus climate in relation to issues of diversity. In this study, campus climate for diversity particularly refers to campus community members’ (students, teachers, staff, and managers) attitudes, perceptions, and experiences with regard to issues of diversity¹. According to Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen (1998; 1999), there are three main contexts of campus climate for diversity. These are the government/policy context, the sociohistorical context, and the institutional context. The institutional context comprises four dimensions. These are (1) historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion, (2) compositional diversity, (3) psychological climate, and (4) behavioral climate. Historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion includes the history of the institution with regard to underrepresented groups, particularly issues related to desegregation of higher education and the institution’s mission and policies related to student admissions. Compositional or structural diversity is the proportional or numerical representation of diverse groups on campus. The psychological climate includes perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about diversity. The behavioral dimension includes the nature of intergroup interactions, and involvement or experience in diversity-related programs and activities (see details in Chapter 3).

1.2. Rationale and Purpose of the Study

There is an enormous body of research addressing different elements of campus climate for diversity. The majority of earlier studies in this area have focused primarily on

¹ The study emphasizes students’ experiences regarding diversity issues.

campus climate for racial/ethnic diversity in universities and colleges in the Western countries, notably in the United States of America. This is not because non-Western countries are religiously or ethnically homogenous countries; diversity is a common phenomenon to all continents. For example, most countries in Africa have more ethnically diverse populations than countries on other continents (Van der Beken, 2012). Nor is it because diversity-related issues are of no concern to the universities of non-Western countries. Studies conducted in Africa indicate that, like most universities in the rest of the world, there are different diversity challenges in universities in Africa (Adamu & Zellelew, 2007; Africa, 2006; Cross, 2004; De Klerk & Radloff, 2010; Izama, 2013; Jinadu, 2006; Mdepa & Tshiwula, 2012; Van Vuuren, Van der Westhuizen, & Van der Walt, 2012). Despite the fact that they are faced with different challenges which need to be systematically addressed, issues of diversity in universities in Africa have not been given enough attention.

There is a clear lack of research on issues of diversity in African universities. Thus, in their attempt to deal with diversity-related problems and to take advantage of benefit of diversity, African universities seem dependent on research findings outside the continent. However, the tri-national (India, South Africa, and United States of America) project on issues of diversity in higher education indicates that “there can be no single universalizing model or conception of diversity that can work effectively in all contexts” (Cross, 2004, p. 390). Diversity is a phenomenon that is culturally, socially and historically formed and reformed (Metcalf & Woodhams, 2008), and thus we should study different elements of the campus climate for diversity within specific sociocultural, political and geographic regions in order to effectively address issues of diversity in a given context.

Ethiopia, which is the general context of this study, is one of the highly diverse Sub-Saharan African countries. Ethnic and religious-related issues have been the historic and prevalent questions of the Ethiopian society. Its modern history is also characterized by ethnic tension and conflict (Beshir, 1979; Keller, 2002). There are still several diversity-related problems among the Ethiopian society. HEIs have the responsibility of addressing the practical problems of the society as they are “the primary institution charged with the study of social problems” (Anthony, Milem, & Chang, 2012, p. 371). In a society where

ethnic and religious differences are prevalent and inevitable, the issue of diversity also becomes one of the central educational and civic missions of higher education (Hurtado, 2007). So far, presumably universities in Ethiopia have not properly addressed the challenges of diversity in their own context, let alone playing a vital role in addressing the diversity-related problems of the larger society. They seem to have ignored issues of diversity despite the fact they faced with several ethnic and religious diversity challenges. Diversity is not something that will go away through time or ignorance (Levine, 1991). So, as the main place where knowledge is constructed and the most enthusiastic and creative minds reside, universities should be up to the challenges of diversity to derive maximum benefits.

In order to understand and address issues of diversity, Hurtado et al. (1998; 1999) suggests that it is necessary to examine the different dimensions and elements of the campus climate for diversity. Although a few studies have examined ethnic and religious issues in different universities in Ethiopia (Adamu & Zellelew, 2007; Asmamaw, 2012; Habitegiorgis, 2010; Mekonnen & Endawoke, 2007; Semela, 2012; Zellelew, 2010), none have investigated various elements of the campus climate for diversity in a given university as suggested by Hurtado et al. (1998; 1999). They are not also sufficient to thoroughly understand and systematically address different issues of ethnic and religious diversity.

The Higher Education Proclamation (HEP) of Ethiopia states that multiculturalism is one of the guiding values that universities promote and uphold in pursuance of their mission (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia [FDRE], 2009). Universities also aspire to create a campus climate in which everyone feels welcome, and that contributes to enhance students' personal, social and academic development. The first step toward creating such an environment is to understand the campus climate for diversity in each university. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of the campus climate for diversity in Bahir Dar University (BDU)² by examining different elements of the campus climate with regard to ethnic and religious diversity. Ethnicity, religion, and language are the major aspects of diversity which characterize the

²It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the campus climate for diversity in all public university. Thus, the campus climate for diversity in BDU is selected as a case (see details in Chapter 4).

Ethiopian society (details are presented in Chapter 2). However, in the context of higher education, ethnicity and religion are found to be the pronounced aspects of diversity. To achieve the purpose, the study is guided by the following research questions:

- What are the perceptions of the campus community regarding diversity issues?
- How is structural diversity evident on campus?
- What experiences do students have in relation to diversity?
- How does the university manage diversity?

1.3. Context of the Study

BDU is one of the public universities in Ethiopia. It is located in the city of Bahir Dar, the capital of the Amhara National Regional State. It became a university in 2000 as a result of the merger of two HEIs - Bahir Dar Polytechnic Institute and Bahir Dar Teachers' College. The Bahir Dar Polytechnic Institute, which was commonly known as 'Poly', was established in 1963 under the technical cooperation between Ethiopia and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Bahir Dar University [BDU], n.d.). The Institute was established with the objective of training skilled technicians in agro-mechanics, industrial chemistry, and metal, textile and wood technologies. The Institute was renamed the Faculty of Engineering in 2000. The Bahir Dar Teachers' College, which was commonly known as 'Peda', was established in 1972 by the tripartite agreement of the government of Ethiopia, UNESCO, and UNDP. The general objective of the College at that time was "to train multipurpose primary education professionals capable of adopting primary education to rural life and rural development" (BDU, n.d.). The College was renamed Faculty of Education in 2000.

BDU has four colleges, three faculties, three institutes, and one school. In 2012, it has a population of about 1,300 academic staff, and about 41,000 students pursuing their undergraduate studies in regular, extension (evening), summer, and distance education programs. The total number of regular undergraduate students is about 16,000 (Bahir Dar University [BDU], 2012b). The extension (evening) program is open to all prospective students that meet the admission criteria, but it is often individuals who live in and

around Bahir Dar city and are unable to join the regular program for various reasons who join this program. The teaching-learning process in the extension (evening) program is conducted in schedules that do not affect the regular programs, i.e. in the evening and weekends. The summer program mainly targets people who are working in different government organizations. The program is conducted during the summer when regular students are not on campus. The distance education program targets individuals who are not able to attend one of the above face-to-face programs (regular, extension or summer).

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is significant in a number of ways. It has both theoretical and practical contributions. As mentioned in the rationale of the study, the majority of past studies on diversity issues in higher education have focused primarily on universities and colleges in Western countries where increased ethnic diversity often results from migration and (recently) internationalization of higher education. This study brings new insights and extends the existing body of knowledge in diversity in higher education by focusing on “indigenous ethnic diversity”³. Moreover, religious diversity is a current relevant social issue for several universities as well as the larger society across the world. Thus, by focusing on religious issues in higher education, this study contributes to a growing body of literature on religious diversity on campus and beyond.

This study also has the potential of enhancing policies and practices at institutional and national levels by providing empirical knowledge and in-depth information regarding issues of ethnic and religious diversity on campus. At institution level, for example, it provides information about the current campus climate for diversity which can be used as an input in designing policy, strategic and action plan, implementing different initiatives with regard to promoting diversity and creating a positive campus climate. At national level, it provides information about the potential impacts of different government systems, policies and strategies on the campus climate for diversity. For example,

³Indigenous ethnic diversity” refers to ethnic diversity resulted from native population or ethnic groups which are indigenous to a country, not from migration or internationalization.

understanding the structural diversity from the campus community's points of view is important to improve the student placement strategy.

The issue of campus climate for diversity across universities is also critical from a national perspective. This study adds substantially to our understanding of diversity issues in universities in Ethiopia, and it has the potential of inspiring different universities and serving as a springboard in assessing their campus climate for diversity. It also makes several noteworthy contributions to enhance academic, social and political discussions on diversity issues, and provide more insights to researchers on various diversity issues that need particular attention and extensive study.

1.5. Delimitations of the Study

A research that examines the campus climate for diversity can focus on student, teacher, staff or a combination of these. This study is, however, focused only on the student diversity. The study is also delimited to regular undergraduate students because they are the most diverse student population in the University⁴. Moreover, they live on campus and this provides an opportunity to better understand the issue understudy. From the four dimensions of the institutional context, this study is also delimited to examining elements of the campus climate which are categorized in the three dimensions (structure diversity, psychological climate, and behavioral climate). It does not examine elements of the campus climate which are related to the historical institutional legacy of inclusion or exclusion mainly because BDU does not select and admit its prospective undergraduate regular students⁵. Because of this, the University's legislation also does not address issues related to the admissions of regular undergraduate students.

1.6. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation comprises eight chapters. Chapter 2, the first literature review chapter, presents an overview of diversity in Ethiopia and its higher education. Chapter 3, the second literature review chapter, includes the theoretical and empirical foundations of

⁴The reasons are provided in Chapter 2.

⁵ Admissions and placement are carried out by the Ministry of Education (MoE) (see Chapter 2).

campus climate for diversity. Chapter 4 is a detailed account of the research methodology. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present the analysis and findings. Chapter 5 focuses on student diversity and intergroup relations among ethnically and religiously diverse students on campus. Chapter 6 includes the ethnic and religion-related discussions among students, and the ethnic and religious tension and conflict on campus. Chapter 7 addresses issues related to managing diversity in the University. Chapter 8 includes the conclusion of the study, implications of the study (policy, practice and research), and limitations of the study.

Diversity in Ethiopia and its Higher Education

This chapter provides information about the general research context in relation to issues of diversity. The current campus climate for diversity is highly related with the diversity issues outside the university. It is also directly and indirectly influenced by the diversity issues in the country both now and in the past. This chapter also provides an overview of diversity in Ethiopian higher education. In relation to this, it describes the development of higher education in Ethiopia, and factors contributing to increase student diversity in public universities.

2.1. A Historical Overview of Diversity in Ethiopia

Diversity is one of the most ubiquitous features of all societies (Van Vuuren, Van der Westhuizen, & Van der Walt, 2012). African countries are no exception. To better understand the diversity in Ethiopia, this section presents, first, external influences on diversity in Africa; then, aspects of diversity in Ethiopia, and overview of diversity in the course of the history of modern Ethiopia.

2.1.1. External influences on diversity in Africa

Ethnic and linguistic diversity were common features of most African countries even before the arrival of European colonizers. Nevertheless, European colonization influenced the ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of most African countries. Many African countries have culture, identity, and ethnic boundaries that resulted from European colonialism and their 'divide and rule' policy (Van der Beken, 2008). Many of Africa's colonial boundaries were drawn at the Berlin Conference 1884-85, which focuses on scramble for Africa. In this conference, European colonizers agreed to avoid a potential armed conflict in their struggle for conquest which includes natural resource, strategic advantage, market, and national glory (Keim, 1995). Most political boundaries that were drawn during the colonial period became the borders of African countries at the time of their independence.

The politically and economically motivated conquest (Gellar, 1995) and border demarcation by European colonizers divided ethnic groups that had lived together, merged ethnic groups that had never lived together, and even created new ethnic groups that had never existed. For example, the Bangala of Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo had not existed as ethnic group in the pre-colonial period (Gellar, 1995). European colonizers also imposed their languages on their colonies in Africa, despite the fact that Africans have several indigenous languages. Consequently, European languages such as English, French, and Portuguese became official or national languages of former European colonies. Although there was Christianity in some African countries such as Ethiopia and Egypt, it was introduced and spread in most African countries during the European colonial period through European Christian missionaries who had converted millions of native Africans to Christianity.

Unlike most African countries, the diversity in Ethiopia is not influenced by the colonial imperialist design (Van der Beken, 2008) because Ethiopia is one of the two African countries (the other is Liberia) that retained their sovereignty during the colonial era. The victory over Italy at the Battle of Adwa in 1896 secured Ethiopia's independent status during European scramble for Africa (Parker & Woldegiorgis, 2003; Tronvoll, 2000). At that time, "Although resistance to colonial conquest was widespread throughout the continent, Menelik II's success in preserving Ethiopian independence in

the face of European imperialism proved to be the exception rather than the rule” (Gellar, 1995, p. 138). Unlike most Western countries, the diversity in Ethiopia is not also influenced by international migration because Ethiopia is one of the poorest African countries that hardly attract international immigrants.

The arrival of Europeans in Ethiopia, however, had contributed to increased religious diversity. Christianity was introduced in Ethiopia in the early fourth century, while Islam was introduced in the seventh. Orthodox Christianity was the only Christian faith that existed in Ethiopia before the arrival of Europeans. Later, in the 16th century, when the strong Muslim army from Eastern Ethiopia led by Imam Ahmed (also known as Gragh Ahmed) destroyed many churches and threatened the complete destruction of Ethiopian Christendom, Emperor Libne Dingel requested help from the Portuguese to combat Gragh Ahmed. Following the arrival of a Portuguese fleet that helped the Ethiopian Christians in the fight against Gragh Ahmed, the King and Church of Portugal sent their own bishops and patriarchs to Ethiopia (Sundkler & Steed, 2000). This opened the door for the introduction of the Catholic religion in Ethiopia, which was first embraced by King Susinyos in 1622. Afterwards, many European Catholic missionaries came to Ethiopia in the name of other missions and taught the Roman faith. Protestantism was also introduced in Ethiopia in the early 19th century through European missionaries, but did not get a large number of followers until the end of the 20th century.

2.1.2. Diversity in the history of modern Ethiopia

Diversity-related issues in Ethiopia are rooted in the social and political history of the country. However, since early 1990s diversity has become a topic of discussion among Ethiopians both at government and societal levels. Ethiopia has been described as “a museum of peoples” (Beshir, 1979; Wagaw, 1999) whose population is characterized by a “complex pattern of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups” (Tronvoll, 2000, p. 6). These aspects of diversity are considered to be significant distinguishing features of the country.

Ethiopia has a population of about 90 million, which makes it the second most populous country in Africa⁶. It has more than 80 ethnic groups. Here it is necessary to describe how ethnic group is conceptualized in the context of Ethiopia. There are different markers of ethnic identity used in defining what we mean by ‘ethnic group’ in Ethiopia. Some of these include language, culture, history, and geographical boundary. The 1995 constitution defines ethnic group (nation, nationality or people) as “a group of people who have or share large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory”. Nevertheless, language is the major, but not the only factor in defining ethnic group or ethnic identity in Ethiopia. Although language is the major marker of ethnic identity, it is necessary to note that sharing the same language does not imply that one belongs to the same ethnic group (Patterson, 1980; Safran, 1999)⁷. To belong to an ethnic group individuals also need to have a shared sense of belonging, based on some of the above mentioned objective or subjective characteristics.

Out of the 80 ethnic groups, only 10 have a population of one million and above (see Appendix 5). The two ethnic numerical majority groups are the Oromo (34.5%) and the Amhara (26.9%). Although the Tigre ethnic group comprises about 6% of the total population, it has the political majority in the government since 1991 (Gashaw, 1993; Joseph, 1998; Mengisteab, 2001; Tronvoll, 2000). Hence, discussions that focus on ethnic ‘minority/majority’ groups in contemporary Ethiopia have to be seen from two points of view - political (power relations) and numerical (population). For the purpose of this study, the Amhara, Tigre, and Oromo are considered ethnic majority groups, and the other ethnic groups are considered ethnic minorities.

In Ethiopia there are more than 80 languages. Amharic is the working language of the federal government, and English is the *de facto* second language of the federal state. Six languages are used as working languages of different regional states. More than 20 languages are also used as the medium of instruction in primary education. English is

⁶ This is based on recent estimation (see CIA World Factbook). The 2007 population census shows that the total population is about 74 million.

⁷ Some authors arguably assert that “‘same language as a mother tongue’ seems to be a sufficient criterion for belonging to an ethnic group” (Ammon, 2010).

given as a subject starting from grade one and is used as a medium of instruction for secondary and higher education. There are also different religions in Ethiopia. The religions include Christianity (Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant), Islam, Judaism, and traditional religion⁸. The two largest religious faiths are Orthodox Christianity (43.5%) and Islam (33.9%) (see Appendix 6).

With the intention of better understanding of issues and challenges of diversity in Ethiopia, this sub-section focuses on the overview of ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity in the course of the history of modern Ethiopia. Accordingly, it presents and discusses diversity during (1) the Early Modern Ethiopia, (2) the Imperial Regime, (3) the Derg Regime, and (4) the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). In the discussion, emphasis is given to issues of diversity during the current and the previous two regimes which constitutionally declared diversity-related issues. This does not, however, mean that there was no a constitution at all prior to the imperial regime. Nahum (1997) argues that before 1931 Ethiopia had “a sophisticated traditional, unwritten constitution” which included “the ideal of the monarchy, and an imperial court system involving monarchy, church, and nobility in an intricate power relationship” (p.17). Literatures also indicate that the *Fetha Negest* (The Law of the Kings) served as the supreme law in Ethiopia until 1931.

Diversity during the early modern Ethiopia (1855 - 1930)

The history of modern Ethiopia begins in mid-19th century when Emperor Tewodros, born Kassa Hailu, initiated the first efforts to unify and modernize the country during his regime from 1855 to 1868 (Mengisteab, 1997; 2001; Van der Beken, 2007; Zewde, 2001). Tewodros, who was Orthodox Christian and Amhara, came to power as emperor of Ethiopia in 1855 by ending the decentralized ‘Zemene Mesafint’ (era of the princes) (Zewde, 2001). During his empire, Orthodox Christianity continued to be the dominant religion. Amharic, which was the official language of the Ethiopian state since 1270 (Haile, 1986; Wagaw, 1999), also continued to be the official written as well as spoken

⁸ Although it is not included in the population census, in addition to the mainstream Christianity, there are other Christian faiths (e.g. Jehovah’s Witnesses). There are about six thousand Jehovah’s Witnesses in Ethiopia (The United States Department of State, 2001).

language of the country (Pankhurst, 1992; Zewde, 2001). After the suicide of Emperor Tewodros, who chose a proud death over the humiliation of captivity by British soldiers, Emperor Teklegiorgis II (1868-1872) from the Amhara and then Emperor Yohannes IV (1872-1889) from the Tigre ethnic groups came to power. Yohannes was a committed Orthodox Christian (Haile, 1986) and a nationalist who continued in unifying Ethiopia. However, his ambition failed due to profound internal and external confrontations. Islam seemed to have no place in Yohannes's ideology. In 1878, at the Council of Boru Meda, he issued a decree that forced Muslims to convert and be baptized; or else they were obliged to surrender their land and property to his administration (Abbink, 2011; Ford, 2008; Loimeier, 2013; Zewide, 2001). Accordingly, some Muslims changed their religion. For instance, Mohamed Ali converted to Christianity, took a Christian name and became *Ras* (Head) and later King Michael of Wollo. Emperor Yohannes stood as his godfather at his baptism. The emperor was reported to be cruel toward Muslims who refused to convert their religion.

Following the death of Yohannes in 1889, Menelik II (1889-1913) from the Amhara ethnic group became emperor of Ethiopia. In the late 19th century, after defeating the Italians who sought to invade and colonize Ethiopia, Menelik expanded his empire to (some historians argue that he rather conquered) the southern part of Ethiopia (Tronvoll, 2000; Zewde, 2001) to integrate and create the modern state of Ethiopia. This incorporation made a significant contribution to the diversity in Ethiopia because the most ethnically and linguistically diverse region that comprises more than half of the languages and ethnic groups of the country was incorporated as a result of this expansion. Along with this powerful expansion, Orthodox Christianity, the Amharic language and the Amhara cultural values dominated the diverse ethnic groups of southern part of the current Ethiopia (Gudina, 2007; Van der Beken, 2008). The ethnic groups incorporated into the empire were believed to be treated as subjects, and their culture, language and identity were largely suppressed (Mengisteab, 1997).

After the death of Menelik, *Lij Iyasu* (1913-1916)⁹ - Menelik's grandson, Empress Zewditu (1916-1930) - Menelik's eldest daughter, and Haileselassie (1930-1974) -

⁹ It is believed that he had a positive attitude toward Muslims and this was one of the reasons for his overthrow.

Menelik's cousin came to power. All these rulers were also from the Amhara ethnic group and they were Orthodox Christians who claimed lineage to the Solomonic dynasty. The Solomonic dynasty is the traditional ruling class of Ethiopia that claims descent from King Solomon of Jerusalem and the Queen of Sheba of Ethiopia, who is said to have given birth to Menelik I of Ethiopia.

Diversity during the imperial (Haileselassie) regime (1930 - 1974)

In 1930, Haileselassie, born Teferi Mekonnen, was crowned emperor as Lion of the Tribes of Judah, Elect of God and King of Kings of Ethiopia. The Haileselassie regime claimed its descent from the Solomonic dynasty, and this is clearly stated in the 1955 constitution of Ethiopia - "the Imperial dignity shall remain perpetually attached to the line of Haileselassie I, descendant of King Sahle Selassie, whose line descends without interruption from the dynasty of Menelik I, son of the Queen of Ethiopia, the Queen of Sheba, and King Solomon of Jerusalem". Succession to the throne and crown of the empire was not by election, merit or other criteria that invite potential successors. It was rather constitutionally reserved to the line of Haileselassie (Turner, 1991) which requires a lineage of the Aksumite Kings and the perceived Solomonic dynasty. This implies that, as a principle, people from every ethnic group have a chance to become Head of State if they are able to claim a royal blood attached to the Solomonic dynasty (Haile, 1986). However, this clearly excludes Muslims as the royal blood essentially requires Christianity. Moreover, political power was assumed to be a divine will and the monarch had a divine right to rule (Balsvik, 1985; 1998; Milkias, 2011).

The imperial regime was a strong centralized state (Mengisteab, 1997; Tronvoll, 2000) that designated homogenization as the nation-building strategy that provided the best guarantee for state integration (Van der Beken, 2008). In pursuance of this policy of national integration, the regime wanted to create a national culture, language, and religion for all Ethiopians (Alemu & Tekleselassie, 2006). As a result of this policy, Amharic was the only local language used for media, court, education, and other publication purposes. It was not legal to teach, publish and broadcast languages other than Amharic and English (Boothe & Walker, 1997; Keller, 1988; Markakis, 1989). In practice, Amharic

served as “the language of administration as well as the language and culture of integration” (Tronvoll, 2000, p. 13). This was arguably “a defacto declaration of war on the others” (Hamesso, 1997, p. 2).

The spread of the dominant Amharic language and Amhara culture through administration and education had a negative impact on other languages and cultures (Van der Beken, 2007). The Amharic language hegemony was at the center of the “Amharization” process, and as part of the process, Amharic language proficiency was considered for political positions and economic resources of many kinds (Smith, 2008). It is believed that several people who joined the imperial army and bureaucracy had passed through the process of acculturation. As Marcus (1995) points out, “politically and socially ambitious people became Christian, took appropriate names [typical Amhara names], learnt Amharic, and began to dress and even to eat like Shoans [Amharas]” (p.194). This is apparently a process of acculturation that imposed the culture, language and religion of one ethnic group on all other ethnic groups (Keller, 1988; Levine, 2000).

Although Orthodox, Muslim, Catholic, and other religions existed, due to the policy of national integration, the 1955 constitution declared Orthodox Christianity to be the empire religion - “the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, founded in the fourth century, on the doctrines of St. Mark, is the Established Church of the Empire and is, as such, supported by the State. The Emperor shall always profess the Ethiopian Orthodox Faith”. Since the restored Solomonic dynasty, Amharic and Christianity were confirmed as integral parts of the imperial tradition dominating the government (Marcus, 1994). Due to the Orthodox Church supremacy, “the concepts of the Ethiopian state and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had been almost synonymous - both locally and internationally” (Friedman, 1989, p. 249).

The constitution did not mention the status of ethnic groups or languages other than Amharic, and religions other than Orthodox Christianity. Presumably the imperial regime had an assimilationist political system toward other ethnic groups, religions and languages. Compared to their predecessors, both Menelik and Haileselassie seem to have pursued a policy of tolerance towards the Muslims (Eide, 2000). Although the imperial regime seems tolerant toward Muslims by having allowed them to establish Islamic schools and retain Islamic courts to settle family disputes, it discouraged and alienated

them in several ways. For instance, there were no official Muslim holidays, and the teaching of Arabic, which was associated with Islam, was banned through time (Abate, 1991). The imperial regime did not officially impose Orthodox Christianity on other religions, but nurturing Ethiopian's identity with Christianity affected Muslims and others negatively. As a result of the regime's discriminatory state policy and nation building strategy, arguably Muslims "had no role in public life" (Markakis, 1989, p. 119). This indicates the political and social discrimination against Muslim (Braukamper, 2002).

During this period, the Amhara and Tigre, especially the Amharas, were considered as 'true Ethiopians' (World Bank, 1948). The 'true Ethiopian', allegedly, "was one who spoke Amharic, listened to Amharic music, believed in the Amhara-Tigray religion [Orthodox Christianity], and wore Amhara dress; to be 'authentic,' Ethiopians sometimes had to alter their names and hide their true identities" (Mekonnen, 1969, cited in Wagaw, 1999, p. 79). The Ethiopian national identity was also equated with the Amhara ethnic identity (Van der Beken, 2008; 2012), and "being Ethiopian has often been synonymous with being Amhara" (Mains, 2004, p. 342).

Dissatisfaction with the cultural assimilation and traditional political dominance of the monarchy resulted in the creation of several rebel groups (Habtu, 2004; Van der Beken, 2007). There were nationalist, ethno-nationalist and peasant oppositions across the country. The Eritrean liberation movement in the 1960s, the Woyane rebellion of Tigray in 1943, and the peasant rebellion in Bale in 1964 (Lakew, 1992), among others challenged the monarchy. Even more importantly, the movement of students and intellectuals worried the imperial regime. The students' movement raised substantial issues such as the land tenure system, poverty, cultural imperialism, education for the poor, class and problems of ethnicity (Tegegn, 2008). Finally, after 45 years in power, in 1974, the Haileselassie regime was overthrown by the Provisional Military Administrative Council which was well known as the 'Derg'.

Diversity during the Derg regime (1974-1991)

The Derg, a military government advocated Marxist-Leninist ideology, wanted to demolish the issue of land, ethnicity and religion, which were criticized by the majority

of the population for several decades and considered as a threat to the country's unity. At the beginning of its regime, in 1975, the Derg came with a land reform proclamation that mostly addressed the main historical criticism raised by several ethnic groups (Gudina, 2007). Later, in 1976, as part of building socialism in Ethiopia, and allegedly as a response to the demands of ethnic nationalism, the Derg came with the declaration of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). The NDR declared that "the right to self-determination of all nationalities will be recognized and fully respected. No nationality will dominate another one since the history, culture, language and religion of each nationality will have equal recognition in accordance with the spirit of socialism" (Provisional Military Administrative Council, 1976). The declarations of land reform, ethnic, religion, language and cultural equality seem to be a positive response to the many inequalities perpetuated under the previous regimes. However, their implementation was far beyond the expectation of the society.

In the 1987 constitution, the military government declared that its political system to be a unitary state in which all ethnic groups live in equality. The constitution also ensured the equality of Ethiopians before the law - irrespective of ethnic background, religion, sex, occupation, social or other status - and the equality, development and respectability of the languages of ethnic groups. It also declared that state and religion are separate. Despite these efforts, opposition based on ethnic, religion, and class interests continued because traits based on religion and ethnicity are deeply embedded and are not amenable to elimination by ideology alone (Abate, 1991). It requires practical implementation of constitutional rights and positive ideologies in which the Derg regime failed to succeed.

Some researchers argue that in addition to socialist ideology and centralized authority, the military government was also characterized by Amhara cultural and political domination (Clapham, 2002; Van der Beken, 2007). The Derg itself constitutionally affirmed its centralized political system. However, there is no foundation for the accusation that the Amhara dominated the Derg like its predecessor because the ruling group of the Derg was composed of Amhara, Oromo, Tigre, and other ethnic groups (Clapham, 1990; Gashaw, 1993; Haile, 1986; Lewis, 1993). This indicates that "the system is not ethnically exclusive" (Clapham, 1990, p. 222); rather attempted to dismantle the Amhara aristocracy and ethnic operation and broaden popular participation.

The separation of state and religion had ended the official status of Orthodox Christianity as the religion of the State. Islam was granted official standing, and Muslim holidays became official holidays in Ethiopia (Abate 1991; Abbink, 2011; Braukamper, 2002). The military regime also retained Islamic courts which were established during the imperial regime and allowed the establishment of Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) (Ahmed, 2006). The religious policy of the military regime was not clear because some of the declarations and official statements indicate its tolerance towards religion, but, in practice, it portrayed all religion as antinational constituent and most of its activities were suppressive that even attempted to eliminate religion from the country (Bonacci, 2000). The regime took “extreme measures against religion in general and separate religious groups in particular” (Friedman, 1989, p. 247). Christians and their institutions were greatly repressed by the Derg (Brown, 1981). For example, Christians had been accused of corresponding with the “imperialist West” counterpart and of being Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents. Churches were also adversely affected by the nationalization of land. On the other hand, Muslims felt that they were mistreated more severely than Christians (Moten, 1990, cited in Eide, 2000). In general, the military regime was considered repressive by all religious groups.

During the Derg regime, Amharic remained the official language of the state. On the other hand, the ban on printing and broadcasting languages other than Amharic and English was lifted. As a result, Oromiffa and Tigrigna languages were used for print media. Afar, Somali, Oromiffa, and Tigrigna languages were also used for radio broadcasting. In addition to Amharic and English, Oromiffa, Tigrigna, Afar, and Somali languages were used in the campaign called the “Development through Cooperation Campaign” (Smith, 2008). Fifteen indigenous languages, including Amharic, were also used in the National Literacy Campaign (Gashaw, 1993; McNab, 1990)¹⁰. However, Amharic continued as the only medium of instruction in the primary education.

The Derg was initially popular when it came to power under the slogan *Ethiopia Tikdem!* (Ethiopia First) and advocated *Meret le Arashu!* (Land to the Tillers)¹¹, and declared the right to self-determination and equality of all ethnic and religious groups.

¹⁰ The National Literacy Campaign that used 15 indigenous languages had won the 1980 UNESCO’s International Reading Association Literacy Prize.

¹¹Land to the Tillers was the most popular slogan of the student movement during the imperial regime.

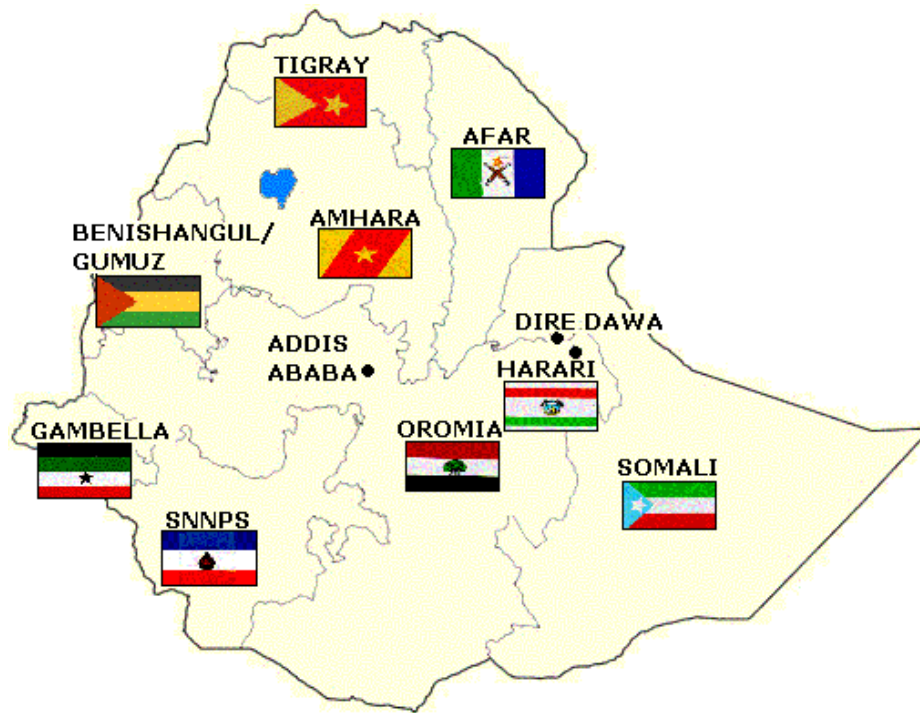
However, it soon became very unpopular because of its centralized policies, failed promises, and mass executions. Thus, several ethnic-based rebel groups such as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the Tigrian People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) intensified their assault on the military government. The military regime was overthrown in 1991 by the coalition of the ethno-nationalist movement mainly led by the TPLF. In 1995, the FDRE was formed by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

Diversity during the FDRE (1991-Present)

EPRDF is a coalition of ethnic political parties¹² and the ruling political organization of the FDRE dominated and led by TPLF (Mehretu, 2012; Parker & Woldegiorgis, 2003; Young, 1996; Van der Beken, 2012; Woldeyohannes, 2012). By understanding Ethiopia as an ethnically diverse country with a political history of ethno-linguistic domination (Zewde, 2004), the EPRDF-led government introduced an ethnic-based federal system that believed to accommodate and promote diversity. Consequently, ethnicity became the ideological basis of the EPRDF government's political organization and administration (Abbink, 1997; Parker & Woldegiorgis, 2003; Smis, 2008). Joireman (1997) argues that "Ethnicity can be a viable organizing principle for an insurgent group, but not for a political party which aspires to govern" (p. 407). As a result of the federal system, Ethiopia has become a federal polity with nine ethnic-based regional states and two chartered cities that constitute the federation (see Figure 1). According to the state policy, unity or Ethiopian national identity is based on the recognition of and respect for diversity (Van der Beken, 2008; 2012), and ethnic federalism is "understood primarily as a mechanism of conflict resolution" (Vaughan, 2003, p. 36). However, because of politicizing ethnicity, differences of ethnicity, language and culture has become more significant than citizenship.

¹²It comprises four major ethnic political parties: the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), the Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM), and TPLF. It also has many other allied ethnic-based political parties.

Figure 1. Map of regions and city administrations in Ethiopia



Source: Embassy of the FDRE, United Kingdom

The 1995 constitution affirms that state and religion are separate, and there is no state religion. The constitution also declared that everyone has the right to freedom of religion, and believers can establish institutions of religious education and administration in order to propagate and organize their religion. Unlike in many countries in Western Europe and North America, where religion is one of the basic dimensions of a political party (Reynal-Querol, 2002), in Ethiopia, the government prohibits the formation of political parties based on religion (United States Department of State [USDS], 2011). In the history of modern Ethiopia, Christians and Muslims have long lived peacefully and generally respecting each other's religious observances. However, since the mid-2000s, there have

been a series of interreligious conflicts in some part of the country that threatened the historic religious tolerance and stability in the country (USDS, 2007). There is also ongoing religious tension in which the EIASC blames the “Wahhabist” groups for exacerbating tensions between Christians and Muslims in the country (USDS, 2011).

The constitution also grants all ethnic groups the right to speak, write and develop their own language; to express, develop and promote their culture; and to preserve their history. With regard to language, all languages are declared equal, and Amharic has retained the status of the working language of the federal government. Regional states have been given the right to choose their own working language which is applicable within their own territories (see Table 2). Ethnic groups have the right to choose the language for primary education, but Amharic should be taught as a language of countrywide communication. Consequently, more than 20 languages are being used as the medium of instruction in the primary education in different regions.

Table 1. Regions/city administrations and their working languages

Region/City Administration		Working language
<i>Given Number</i>	<i>Name</i>	
Region 1	Tigray	Tigrigna
Region 2	Afar	Afar
Region 3	Amhara	Amharic
Region 4	Oromiya	Oromiffa
Region 5	Somali	Somali
Region 6	Benshangul-Gumuz	Amharic
Region 7	Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP)	Amharic
Region 8	Gambella	Amharic
Region 9	Harari	Harari, Oromiffa, and Amharic
City Administration	Addis Ababa	Amharic
City Administration	Dire Dawa	Amharic

Source: The author

It is believed that, despite the constitutional provisions that empower regional states to administer themselves, Ethiopia continued to function in practice like a unitary state (Mengisteab 2001). Moreover, although the constitution declared that all ethnic groups are equal, several studies indicate that politics in Ethiopia has been dominated by the EPRDF, which in turn led and dominated by numerical minority the Tigre ethnic group (Gashaw, 1993; Habtu, 2004; 2005; Joseph, 1998; Tronvoll, 2000; Záhóřík, 2011). It seems that the political domination of one ethnic group has continued, and therefore, “as the two previous regimes were largely identified with the Amhara, so the present government is widely perceived to be Tigrean” (Mengisteab, 2001, p. 24).

The constitution gives every ethnic group an unconditional right to self-determination up to secession. This right is assumed to result in unity in diversity, and the creation of an Ethiopian national identity through the respect for ethnic diversity (Van der Beken, 2008). There are people who consider the right to secession as a conclusion of centuries old ethnic domination in Ethiopia (Nahum, 1997). However, other people argue that it is a signal of disintegration of the historic and multiethnic state of Ethiopia, which endured various ups and downs for three millennia (Haile, 1996). Proponents of ethnic federalism support the system even at the expense of unity because they believe that it is the only means to promote freedom, ensure equality and peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups, and check tyranny. On the other hand, opponents argue that ethnic federalism tends to divide people rather than unite them. They also express their fears about the potential threat of state disintegration because of the division of the country along ethnic lines (Engedayehu, 1993; Gashaw, 1993; Mehretu, 2012; Ottaway, 1994). Some even considered the ethnic federalism in Ethiopia as “a ticking bomb that may railroad the country toward eventual Balkanization” (Milkias, 2011, p. 86). Although “there may be some cases where state disintegration lead to a more homogeneous and relatively more peaceful small states” (Shaw, 1994 cited in Mengisteab, 1997), “dividing states along ethnic lines is not feasible since ethnic groups often cohabit” (Mengisteab, 1997, p. 116).

It is argued that the ethnic-based federal system and its embedded political strategy reinforced ethno-national sentiments and segregation along ethnic lines. This, in general,

has facilitated and at times become a cause of several conflicts across the country because of controversies over ethnic boundaries and ethnic identities. Studies also show that there are several conflicts caused by conceptualized ethnicity in many parts of the country, and the current constitution somehow helped to stress instead of lessening the historically rooted divisive aspect of ethnicity (Záhořík, 2011). The Ethiopian Human Rights Council [EHRC], 2009) also indicates that:

By making ethnicity the sole organizing criteria without providing constitutional guarantees to minority groups, the Constitution has - perhaps unintentionally - led to discrimination, disenfranchisement and marginalization of minority ethnic groups in 'majority' regions, facilitated the revival of discriminatory and oppressive traditions under the guise of exercising cultural rights, and opened the way to frequent ethnic conflicts over contested boundaries, resources and political power (pp. 3-4).

These indicate that, many years after implementation of ethnic federalism, "Ethiopia remains mired in ethnic strife" (Mengisteab, 2001, P. 20), and contrary to the very problem it was intended to address, ethnic federalism in Ethiopia seems to have created more problems than it was intended to solve (Gudina, 2007; Haile, 1996; Maru, 2010). These events lead to the claim that implementation of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia is problematic and ineffective (Maru 2010), and it seems "a fragile and perilous experiment" (Habtu, 2004, p. 91) that poses a great challenge to the nation's unity in diversity.

2.2. Overview of Diversity in Ethiopian Higher Education

Before discussing diversity in Ethiopian higher education, it is necessary first to see how higher education is understood and developed in the Ethiopian context. Therefore, this section presents and discusses development of higher education in Ethiopia and diversity in Ethiopian HEIs.

2.2.1. Development of higher education in Ethiopia

Until the end of the 19th century, there was only traditional education, which was virtually monopolized by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Modern education in Ethiopia was introduced at the beginning of the 20th century when Emperor Menelik established the first secular public school in 1907. Emperor Haileselassie, who had recognized himself as the father of modern education in Ethiopia (Balsvik, 1985; Wagaw, 1999), expanded access to primary and secondary education. This created a demand for higher education in which the government responded by establishing the first HEI in the country.

The definition given to higher education varies from country to country. In many countries, higher education is understood as all types of postsecondary education. In Ethiopia, higher education is defined as education offered to undergraduates and graduate students studying on degree programs (FDRE, 2009). Although taking the authorization of granting degrees as a definite criterion for including or excluding institutions from the higher education system is debatable (Guri-Rosenblit, Sebkova, & Teichler, 2007), in Ethiopia, HEI includes institutions that provide undergraduate and graduate level degree programs.

Some scholars divide Ethiopian higher education into traditional and modern (Western-type). The traditional higher education system is believed to have existed many centuries before the introduction of modern higher education (Asgedom, 2005; Wagaw, 1990). The basis for this argument is the analogy made between the higher level of church education and the Western-type higher education structure¹³. However, several studies show that higher education in Ethiopia is a relatively new phenomenon that started in the mid-20th century. The first (modern) HEI in Ethiopia was founded in 1950 as University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA). Until this time, some Ethiopians were sent abroad on government scholarships for higher education study (Balsvik, 1985). In the following two decades, “half a dozen specialized technical colleges were established to address the training needs in agriculture, engineering, public health, and teacher education” (World Bank, 2003, p. 1). In 1961, the UCAA was renamed Haileselassie I

¹³The traditional higher education has four levels of education: *Zema Bet*, *Qine Bet*, *Aquaquam Bet*, and *Metsahift Bet*. Ge'ez, which is a liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, has been the medium of instruction.

University (HSIU) and the emperor became the first chancellor of the University. Following the overthrow of the imperial regime, HSIU was renamed Addis Ababa University in 1974. Addis Ababa University was the only university in the country until 1985, the year Alemaya College of Agriculture became Alemaya (now called Haramaya) University¹⁴.

The slow development of higher education in Ethiopia is similar to that in other African countries. The literature shows that there are many reasons, ranging from institutional to global, for the sluggish development of higher education in Ethiopia and in Africa in general, but the pressure of external forces, mainly development partners, has been identified as the major one (Adamu, 2012). For many decades, in developing countries, the World Bank along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), either directly through educational programs or indirectly through ‘Structural Adjustment Programs’ (SAPs), have been promoting policies of human capital development and economic efficiency across the education systems (Moutsios, 2009). The World Bank, which is the most important multilateral organization in shaping the policies of Africa’s higher education (Teferra, 2008) had a longstanding misconception about the contribution of higher education to Africa’s development. Particularly in the 1990s, it advocated basic education rather than higher education because of the belief that higher education had little role in promoting poverty reduction (Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2005), and the social rate of return to the resource invested in the former is higher than in the latter (World Bank, 1995). Expanding higher education in developing countries like Ethiopia was considered as a luxury by development partners (Teferra, 2007). This advocacy resulted in a shift of public funding from higher to the lower level of education (Carnoy, 1999) and crippled the development of higher education in Africa. Ethiopia is no exception.

Later, the World Bank and other development partners have come to understand that higher education is a significant contributor to all countries’ socioeconomic development. The Ethiopian government also adopted social and economic development strategies that perceived higher education as a sector with principal importance for the economic and social development of the country. These shifts (the attitudinal change of development

¹⁴ This excludes Asmara University, which is now in Eritrea.

partners toward the significance of higher education in developing countries and the change in Ethiopian government development strategy) contributed greatly to the expansion and development of higher education in Ethiopia which began in the late 1990s.

In the years 1999-2005, eight new universities were established by merging and/or upgrading existing colleges and institutes. Though the increase in number of universities resulted in an increase in student intake capacity, it was not able to respond to the rapidly growing educational needs of the society and to speed up economic growth, democracy and good governance in the country (Yizengaw, 2003). Thus, in 2003, the government began the greatest expansion in the history of Ethiopian higher education. Within a short period of time, 11 new universities were established. These new universities are located in six regional states and one city administration. In 2009, Ambo College of Agriculture, one of the oldest colleges in the country, became Ambo University. The expansion has continued and in 2011, nine new universities were opened in five regional states and one city administration. Overall, 21 universities were opened in less than a decade, and after more than six decades, there are now 31 public universities in Ethiopia (see Table 3)¹⁵.

¹⁵ In this study public university includes only government universities which are under the administration of the MoE. It does not include universities that are under the administration of other government organizations such as such as Ministry of Civil Service, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.

Table 2. Public universities in Ethiopia by region/city administration

Regional State/ City Administration	Number of University	University
Addis Ababa	2	Addis Ababa University and Addis Ababa Science and Technology University
Afar	1	Samara University
Amhara	7	Bahir Dar University, Debre Birhan University, Debre Markos University, Debre Tabor University, Gonder University, Woldia University, and Wollo University
Benishangul-Gumuz	1	Assosa University
Dire Dawa	1	Dire Dawa University
Oromiya	9	Adama University, Ambo University, Bule Hora University, Haramaya University, Jima University, Medewolabu University, Metu University, Mizan-Tepi University, and Wollega University
SNNP	6	Arba Minch University, Dilla University, Hawassa University, Wachemo University, Wolayita Sodo University, and Wolkite University
Somali	1	Jigjiga University
Tigray	3	Adigrat University, Aksum University, and Mekelle University

Source: The author

2.2.2. Diversity in Ethiopian higher education

Because of lack of data, it is difficult to know the ethnic and religious composition of university students in Ethiopia. However, referring to different language and historical literatures, Balsvik (1985) attempted to show the ethnic composition of students at HSIU.

[I]n the 1950s and 1960s more than half the university students were Amhara. The Tigre were also over represented in the university compared to their proportion of the total population. [...] The Oromo were underrepresented in the university, accounting about 10 percent of the students. A large number of other ethnic groups comprise almost 30 percent of the total population; with the exception of

the Gurage and the Harari, they were underrepresented or were not present at all at the university (p. 44).

The finding of another longitudinal study of 1,066 first-year students who entered HSIU in 1966 also shows the numerical dominance of Amhara, Tigre, and Orthodox Christians.

As far as ethnic background was concerned, 45 percent were Amharas, 26 percent Tigre, 10 percent Oromo, 4 percent Gurage, and 15 percent from other ethnic groups. Approximately 66 percent said that Amharic was their first language. Regarding religion, 83 percent were Orthodox Christians, 10 percent Protestants or Roman Catholics, and 7 percent Muslim (Giel & Van Luyk, 1970 cited in Wagaw, 1990, p. 154).

Although it is not methodologically sufficient to generalize, a survey of 500 students carried out in 1968 at HSIU also shows the significant numerical dominance of students from Orthodox Christian background. According to this survey, the representation of students from different religious groups at HSIU was as follows - more than 70% Orthodox, 10% Protestant, 6% Muslim, 5% Catholic, and 7% atheist (Pausewang, 1970 cited in Balsvik, 1985). The large number of students from Amhara and Tigre ethnic groups may be related to the domination of these ethnic groups, particularly the Amhara, in the history of modern Ethiopia including the Haileselassie regime. Orthodox Christianity has been the major religion of these ethnic groups. Therefore, based on the above data, it is possible to argue that there were more Orthodox Christian students than other religion followers. This can also be associated with the high Orthodox population in the country.

As far as my literature and document review is concerned, there is no statistical data which shows the numerical representation of students from different ethnic and religious background in public universities during the Derg and EPRDF regimes. However, the current 31 public universities seem to have a much more diverse student population than other settings such as schools, residences, and workplaces. Because of the diverse student population they have from every corner of the country, public universities are often considered “mini-Ethiopia” (Adamu, 2007; Adamu & Zellelew, 2007). There are two factors contributing to increase in student diversity in public universities. These are the

expansion of higher education in the country and the admissions and placement to higher education.

Expansion of higher education

The gross enrolment ratio for primary and secondary education went up from 51% and 10.3% in 1999/2000 to 96.4% and 46.5% in 2010/2011 respectively (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2000; 2011a). Compared to this significant change in access to primary and secondary education over the past years, the intake capacity of public universities was much less and not able to cope with the educational demand of the society. In order to alleviate this particular problem, the government has taken two significant measures - developing the infrastructure and human resources of existing universities to enhance their intake capacity, and create more new public universities. As mentioned above, the number of public universities increased from 10 in the early 2000s to 22 in 2010. As a result of this massive and rapid expansion, the regular undergraduate student enrolment in public universities increased from 22,564 in 1999/2000 to 209,133 in 2010/2011 (MoE, 2000; 2011a). This tremendous increase in the number of students has significantly contributed to an increase in diverse student population because it provides more students from diverse backgrounds with an opportunity to join one of the public universities in the country.

Admission to and placement in higher education

Public universities in Ethiopia are not entitled to select and admit their prospective regular undergraduate students. Student admissions and placement are carried out at a central level by the MoE based on the guideline for student placement at public universities (MoE, 2002). The main criterion to get admission to university studies is to take the Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Examination (EHEEE) and pass in four subjects at C level. The MoE, however, does not strictly follow this criterion. The pass mark varies from year to year based on the number of students taking EHEEE and the intake capacity of public universities. Therefore, the required grade point average varies from year to year. Besides, there is a supplementary admission criterion that provides an

opportunity for students from specified ethnic¹⁶ and social groups¹⁷ to gain admission to public universities with a lower mark than the pass mark set for a particular year. The placement criteria do not take into consideration students' ethnic and religious background. Thus, the admission to and placement in higher education is the major factor that contributes to increase the structural diversity on campus.

2.3. Summary

This chapter has presented the historical overview of diversity in Ethiopia which provides information essential in examining different elements of the campus climate for diversity. Diversity-related issues have been historically prevalent questions of Ethiopian society. The domination of Orthodox Christianity, Amharic language and Amhara-Tigre (mainly Amhara) ethnic groups started in the early modern Ethiopia. The reality of ethnic domination during the imperial regime is beyond dispute as the regime was led by the motto of one country, one religion, one people and one language. There was a clear ethnocentrism, and linguistic and religious discrimination based on the perception that the Amhara ethnic group, the Amharic language and Orthodox Christianity are superior to all other ethnic groups, languages and religions. The discrimination was not simply an individual bias, but rather an institutional one, and above all a state practice that denied equality among the diverse Ethiopian society.

During the Derg regime, the domination of the Amhara ethnic group was not as visible as it was during the imperial regime but government's high positions were filled by 'Amharaized' people, not merely Amhara. Although the military government allowed the use of some other languages in mass media and the national literacy campaign, Amharic continued as a dominant language in both administration and education. Ending the status of Orthodox Christianity as state religion was one of the positive measures taken by the regime. However, instead of establishing religious equality, its socialist ideology severely repressed all forms of religious expression. Compared to the imperial

¹⁶This includes students from the ethnic groups of Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, and Somali regional states.

¹⁷This includes students from pastoralist and semi-pastoralist areas found in Oromiya and SNNP regional states.

and the Derg regimes, the EPRDF-led government has empowered ethnic groups in many areas of linguistic, religious, and cultural aspects. Even though the ‘clear domination’ of one ethnic group has vanished, and the diversity and equality of ethnic groups are constitutionally ensured, there is still an implicit domination of one ethnic group – the Tigre ethnic group. What makes this domination different is that it does not promote cultural assimilation, which was the typical feature of the imperial regime. Its domination is more political than cultural.

Since the establishment of modern Ethiopia, those who came to power have made an attempt to address diversity-related issues in a way they thought is best to serve the interests of the country or their political ideology. In relation to issues of diversity, to date, Ethiopia has exercised two broad ideologies of state policy. The first state policy was a unitary system of government which was used until the downfall of the Derg regime in 1991. There were two phases of this system. In the first phase (until the overthrow of the imperial regime), the policy attempted to bring unity without diversity, and resulted in hegemony and suppression. In the second phase (during the Derg regime), the policy recognized diversity, but the implementation was far behind the policy, and thus failed to succeed. The second state policy is a federal system of government that has been used since 1991. It emphasizes and promotes diversity without balancing with unity, and this potentially threatens national unity and leads to tension, conflict and disintegration.

So far, Ethiopia has failed to properly deal with issues of diversity, but is striving to address these by maintaining a delicate balance between unity and diversity. It seems very difficult to realize such an effort unless the current government halts politicizing ethnicity including emphasizing ethnicity at the risk of citizenship and national unity, and manipulating historical interethnic grievances to evoke resentment, fear, and hatred toward the “other”.

This chapter has also presented an overview of diversity in Ethiopian higher education. The history of modern higher education in Ethiopia spans just over six decades. The first HEI was founded in 1950, and until 1985, Ethiopia had only one university for a population of about 41 million. There are not enough data which show the ethnic and religious diversity of the student population in universities in Ethiopia.

Available literature indicates large numbers of students from Amhara and Tigre ethnic groups as well as Orthodox Christians in the late 1960s. Now, there are 31 public universities which seem to have highly diverse student population. There are two major factors that have contributed to the increase in diversity - the expansion of higher education and admission to and placement in higher education.

3

Campus Climate for Diversity: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations

This chapter presents the theoretical and empirical foundations of the campus climate for diversity. The chapter includes two major sections. The first section focuses on the framework for understanding the campus climate for diversity. The second section discusses the strategies for enhancing the campus climate for diversity as well as the empirically demonstrated benefits of diversity on campus.

3.1. Understanding the Campus Climate for Diversity

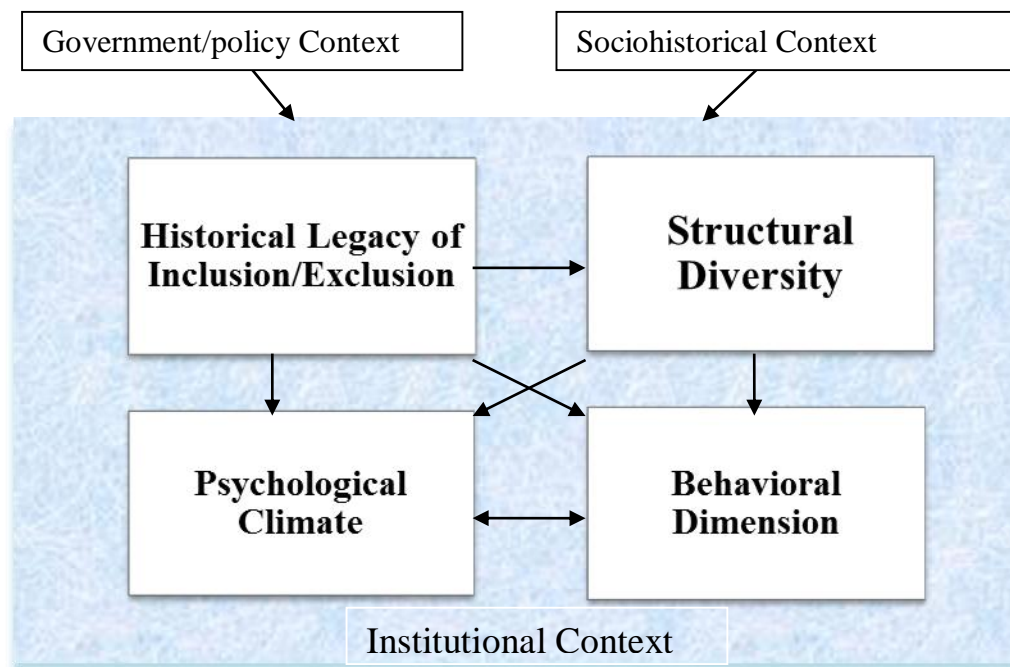
HEIs have the responsibility to advance social progress (Bowen, 1977) and prepare citizens for life and leadership in a diverse society (Gurin et al., 2002; Gurin et al., 2004; Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora, 2001). This brings diversity issues into the central educational and civic mission of higher education (Hurtado, 2007). As mentioned in the introduction, diversity poses different opportunities and challenges that HEIs must address. In order to overcome challenges and maximize the benefits of diversity, it is necessary first to understand the campus climate for diversity. However, until the late

1990s “there has been no common framework for understanding the campus racial climate in a way that helps develop policies and practices that can be used to enhance the campus climate” (Hurtado et al. 1998, p. 279). It was to alleviate this problem that based on years of empirical research, Hurtado et al. (1998; 1999) developed a framework for understanding the campus climate for diversity. Central to this framework is the notion that creating and maintaining positive learning and living environment requires understanding different contexts and elements that potentially affect the campus climate for diversity. The main strength of this framework is first, it is empirical, drawn from research outcomes on the impact of campus climate on student learning. Second, it “treats campus climate as a multidimensional phenomenon that is shaped by the interaction of internal and external forces” (Milem et al., 2005, p. 14). Moreover, it is easy to adopt and use to understand the campus climate in various geographic and diversity contexts. This framework has been widely used by researchers who investigate diversity issues in higher education as well as by universities that assess their own campus climate.

The framework for understanding the campus climate for diversity has three main contexts that are integrated in nature: a government/policy context, a sociohistorical context, and an institutional context (see Figure 2). The government/policy context and the sociohistorical context constitute elements that are external to and beyond the control of individual institutions. The government/policy context includes various factors such as governmental policies, strategies, programs, and initiatives. In countries like Ethiopia, where government often directly and indirectly influences the institutional activities, understanding the impact of this dimension on the campus climate for diversity becomes even more important in developing better policies and strategies. The sociohistorical context includes various issues or events in the larger society that potentially influence the way campus community members view diversity-related issues. These two external forces in the wider society influence the institutional context and different elements it comprises. I argue that there are also situations in which these two external forces interact with and influence each other. For example, as discussed in section 2.2, government’s political system can potentially influence the interaction and intergroup relations between different ethnic and religious groups which in turn influence the campus climate for diversity. Because of this it is sometimes difficult to easily identify whether it is the

government policy, strategy, program, and initiative or the sociohistorical forces that influence the campus climate for diversity. The institutional context comprises factors that are internal to and within the control of individual institutions. As mentioned in the introduction, the institutional context for diversity includes four dimensions (historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion, compositional or structural diversity, psychological climate, and behavioral dimension) which comprise different dynamic elements of the campus climate for diversity. These four dimensions are interconnected and influence each other.

Figure 2. Elements influencing the campus climate for diversity



Source: Hurtado et al. (1999)

3.1.1. Historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion

The historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion includes the history of the HEI with regard to underrepresented groups, particularly issues related to desegregation of higher education, and the institution's mission and policies regarding student admissions. A meta-analytic research on evaluating the value of campus climate assessment shows that the historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion is largely unaddressed in campus climate research, and this is because "it involves more in-depth study of norms that may be embedded in campus culture, traditions, policies, and historical mission" (Hurtado, Griffin, Arellano, & Cuellar, 2008, p. 206). In some studies, issues related to the historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion are discussed as an introduction or part of the structural diversity.

The framework for understanding the campus climate for diversity is developed based on several research conducted mainly in the context of higher education in the United States where there was inclusion and exclusion policy and practice in admissions. The framework assumes that the historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion continues to affect the campus climate for diversity. Therefore, in such a context, it is necessary to examine the impact of the historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion on the current campus climate. In the context of higher education in Ethiopia, however, it not possible to look at the historical legacy of HEIs with regard to inclusion or exclusion in admissions. This is because in the history of Ethiopian higher education, it was only during the imperial regime that a HEI had the right to make decisions regarding student admissions (Wagaw, 1990). Since then, public universities do not select their prospective undergraduate regular students.

3.1.2. Compositional diversity

Compositional or structural diversity is the composition or numerical representation of diverse groups on campus. It includes the admissions, placement, and retention of students from different backgrounds. It is the main factor that potentially diminishes or increases diversity. This indicates that structural diversity is an essential dimension of the campus climate which any institution needs to take into consideration. It is argued that

“Diversity nourishes the institutional climate in higher education much like water brings life to barren land” (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002, p. 55). Structural diversity is often considered “the first step that must be taken in developing an environment that fosters a positive climate and intergroup relations” (Hurtado et al., 2008, p. 207).

In the context of Ethiopian higher education, as discussed in section 2.2.2, the admissions and placement to higher education provide favorable conditions that potentially enhance the structural diversity in all public universities. However, enhancing structural diversity seems not to a deliberate action to maximize benefits associated with diversity.

3.1.3. Psychological climate

The psychological climate of the institutional context includes perceptions of discrimination, individuals’ views of group relations, attitudes toward people from different backgrounds, tension and conflict on campus, and thoughts about institutional commitment and responses to diversity (Hurtado et al., 1998; 1999). According to Gurin (1999), institutional commitment to diversity is demonstrated by institutions’ activities and responses regarding the three types of diversity - structural diversity, classroom diversity, and informal interactional diversity¹⁸. Individuals’ perceptions of diversity and attitudes toward others influence their intergroup interaction. These indicate that perceptions and attitudes are closely related to other elements of the campus climate for diversity which are found in the structural diversity and behavioral climate. Therefore, institutional attempts to create positive campus climate and intergroup relations need to consider campus community’s diversity experiences as well as perceptions of and attitudes toward diversity issues.

3.1.4. Behavioral climate

The behavioral climate often includes opportunities for and actual diversity-related experiences on campus (Hurtado et al., 1998; 1999). It involves interactions between

¹⁸Definitions are provided in the next section (Section 3.2.)

individuals from different backgrounds, the nature of intergroup relations, and exposure to diverse perspectives in curricular and cocurricular diversity such as diversity courses, pedagogical approaches, seminars, workshops and trainings. There is an extensive body of research on this dimension of the institutional context.

To these four, Milem et al (2005) added a fifth dimension of the campus climate in the institutional context which they call organizational/structural dimension. This dimension of the campus climate includes diversity of curriculum, tenure policies, decision-making policies, and budget allocations, and is reflected in “the curriculum; in campus decision- making practices related to budget allocations, reward structures, hiring practices, admissions practices, and tenure decisions; and in other important structures and processes that guide the day-to-day “business” of our campuses” (p. 18). The elements included in this dimension are not new as such. They may not be explicitly discussed but they are in one way or another included in the psychological climate and behavioral climate. For example, the diversity of curriculum is addressed in the behavioral climate which includes issues related to curricular and cocurricular diversity. Various institutional policies are also included in the psychological climate which includes institutional commitment. The institutional commitment is reflected in the mission, vision, policies, strategies, programs and activities of the institution. This can be studied by reviewing and analyzing the institution’s strategic plan and policy documents as well as obtaining campus community’s thoughts about institutional commitment and responses to diversity. Therefore, there is no need to add organizational/structural dimension to the existing four dimensions of the institutional context.

3.2. Enhancing a Positive Campus Climate for Diversity

It is argued that by enhancing a positive campus climate for diversity it is possible to minimize negative outcomes or challenges and maximize opportunities or benefits that potentially emerge from campus diversity. As indicated in the introductory chapter, benefits of diversity can be grouped into three major categories based on beneficiaries – individual benefits, institutional benefits, and societal benefits. Research evidence regarding the individual benefits of diversity shows that diversity considerably enhances

students' development in the cognitive, affective, and interpersonal domains (Milem, 2003). Individual benefits of diversity include greater openness to diversity (Flowers & Pascarella, 1999; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996), increased cultural knowledge and understanding of diversity (Antonio, 2001; Astin, 1993; MacPhee, Kreutzer, & Fritz, 1994), increased intellectual engagement and personal development (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Milem & Hakuta, 2000; Umbach & Kuh, 2006), developed complex and critical thinking (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2001; MacPhee et al., 1994; Pascarella et al., 1996), developed perspective-taking skills (Gottfredson, Panter, Daye, Allen, Wightman, & Deo, 2008; Gurin et al., 2004), developed problem-solving skills (Hurtado, 2001; Terenzini et al., 2001), reduced levels of stereotyping and ethnocentrism (Engberg, 2004; Milem, 2003), understanding self and other (Pascarella et al., 1996), growth in intellectual self-concept (Chang, 1999; Gurin, 1999) and academic skills (Gottfredson et al., 2008; Gurin, 1999; Milem, 2003; Milem & Hakuta, 2000), and better prepared for living and working in a diverse society (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002).

The institutional benefits of diversity are not as yet well studied. Nevertheless, emerging studies have shown that universities can benefit from the diversity they have. Diversity increases universities' creativity and innovation and improve their problem-solving ability (Milem & Hakuta, 2000). It also contributes to the richness of the institutional environment for teaching and research. Diversity in higher education has also "the potential to transform the institutional culture and pedagogical practices" (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002, p. 55) that drives universities toward excellence in teaching and learning. This, in turn, makes them competitive and able to attract students from different backgrounds.

Studies also indicate different societal benefits of diversity. Diversity is a powerful means of developing the intellectual energy that leads to greater knowledge (Chang, 1999) and mutual respect which is essential to civic society and effective functioning of democracy (Astin 1993; Chang, 1999). Campus diversity experiences help students to develop a capacity to understand the feelings of people from different backgrounds (Gurin, 1999) and influence the function of university graduates as citizens (Milem & Hakuta, 2000). It also motivates them for better participation in a diverse and complex

democracy and society (Gurin et al., 2002). Research indicate that “students who experienced diversity in classroom setting and in informal interaction showed the most engagement in various forms of citizenship, and the most engagement with people from different races/cultures” (Gurin, 1999, p. 46).

Table 3. Overview of benefits of diversity in higher education

<i>Individual benefits</i>	<i>Institutional benefits</i>	<i>Societal benefits</i>
ability to live and work in a diverse society	transforming institutional culture and pedagogical practice	mutual respect and understanding
complex and critical thinking	excellence in teaching and learning	democratic and multicultural society
academic skills	rich environment for teaching and research	civic participation
cultural knowledge	creativity and innovation	collaborative work
intellectual engagement		
intellectual self-concept		
less ingroup bias		
openness to diversity		
personal development		
perspective-taking skills		
problem-solving skills		
understanding of diversity		
understanding self and other		

Source: The author

Most research on diversity in higher education focus on the institutional context that comprises most elements influencing the campus climate for diversity. The external forces (the government/policy context and sociohistorical context) and the elements they constitute regarding diversity are often addressed as a side issue. Based on their major focus, past studies on diversity in higher education can be broadly classified into three major categories: structural diversity, classroom diversity, and informal interactional diversity (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002; Milem, 2003). These types of diversity are part of the compositional diversity, psychological climate, and behavioral climate of the

institutional context. They comprise various elements that potentially influence the way students think and behave with regard to issues of diversity (Gurin, 1999; Milem & Hakuta, 2000). Empirical evidence shows that addressing issues related to these types of diversity has a significant contribution to enhance a positive campus climate for diversity and thereby benefit from diversity.

3.2.1. Structural diversity

Campuses that have more diverse student population “tend to create more richly varied educational experiences that enhance students’ learning and better prepare them for participation in a democratic society” (Milem et al., 2005, p. 6). Studies show that universities that accommodate diverse student population potentially offer a social and intellectual atmosphere which is different from those which students know very well (Milem et al., 2005). This provides them with opportunities to learn more, and think in deeper and more complex ways (Gurin, 1999).

Increasing the representation of students from diverse backgrounds potentially leads to a wider range of thoughts, ideas, and opinions. It also has the potential of creating an enriched academic environment (Shaw, 2005). Research indicates that structural diversity increases the possibility of exposing students to a wider range of viewpoints on a particular issue (Milem et al., 2005). It also increases the likelihood of socializing with diverse groups and discussing various diversity-related issues (Chang, 1999; Gurin, 1999). This, in turn, contributes to developing mutual understanding and positive intergroup relations by challenging students to refine their way of thinking (Hurtado et al., 1999) and reducing prejudices toward outgroup members (Pettigrew, 1998). The presence of a diverse student population also provides opportunities for interaction among diverse students, which in turn creates opportunities for students to develop the skills and competencies necessary to live and work in a diverse society (Gurin, 1999).

Although research indicates the significant contribution of structural diversity to enhance the campus climate and benefits of diversity, it is necessary to note that the mere presence of diverse student population on campus does not guarantee to benefit from diversity as the outcome of increased diverse student population is not necessarily

positive. Scholars seem to agree that structural diversity is a necessary but not sufficient condition to improve the campus climate for diversity and maximize learning opportunities (Antonio, 2001; Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 1999; Milem, 2003; Pike & Kuh, 2006; Umbach & Kuh, 2006; Zirkel & Cantor, 2004). Moreover, structural diversity by itself seems to have no direct positive effect on students' personal and academic development. Its profound positive effects are indirectly through providing an environment in which there are lots of opportunities for increased level of learning and interactions among diverse group of students.

3.2.2. Classroom diversity

Classroom diversity is referred to as structured and purposefully programmed diversity-related initiatives that help students to engage in diversity (Gurin, 1999). However, exposing students to knowledge and awareness about diversity is not limited to curricular activities such as pedagogical approaches and diversity courses that take place in a classroom. There are various diversity-related initiatives that universities purposefully make available to increase students' knowledge and awareness about issues of diversity. Some of these activities include intergroup dialogues (IGDs), and diversity workshops, trainings and seminars that often take place outside a classroom. In order to avoid this limitation of the term classroom diversity, Denson (2009) refers these diversity-related initiatives as curricular/cocurricular diversity. I also prefer to use curricular/cocurricular diversity hereafter.

Curricular diversity involves courses designed with the intention of providing content knowledge about various diversity issues such as living in a diverse cultural context, valuing communalities, and accepting and respecting differences. Diversity-related courses such as multicultural education and citizenship education enable students to acquire the knowledge, values, and skills required to interact positively with people from diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds (Banks, 2007). Diversity-related courses such as citizenship education are important to teach multicultural societies about tolerance and recognition of cultural difference (Gutmann, 2004). Courses that provide information about history and historical injustices may also “arouse feelings of collective

guilt or moral indignation that can motivate more positive orientations and reductions in bias toward other groups” (Swim & Miller, 1999 cited in Dovidio, Gaertner, Stewart, Esses, ten Vergert, & Hodson, 2004, p. 257).

Research shows that diversity-related courses have positive effects on students’ cognitive development (Bowman, 2009), and they are effective in reducing biases, and developing skills to work with diverse others (Banks, 2001). By taking diversity courses, which can be further enriched through classroom discussion, students learn more about diverse others and develop a greater ability to understand diverse viewpoints (Gurin et al., 2002). Unlike other programs and activities such as IGDs and diversity training, diversity-related courses do not necessarily provide a quick approach for improving intergroup relations. However, they may have the greatest long-term impact on solving problems in intergroup relations (Bigg & Colesante, 2004).

Although diversity-related courses have several benefits, their strongest effects are “on complex thinking skills (attributional complexity), retention, cultural awareness, interest in social issues, the importance of creating social awareness, and support for institutional diversity initiatives” (Hurtado, 2005, p. 603). Because of their significance, nowadays, diversity-related courses have become required courses for undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs in several countries. For example, in the United States of America, diversity and multicultural education courses have become mandatory within many teacher education programs. This is partly because out of the 50 states “39 states require teacher education programs to prepare teachers to meet the needs of culturally, linguistically, ethnically, economically diverse (CLEED) classrooms” (Larke & Larke, 2009, p. 2).

Curricular diversity also involves pedagogical approaches that promote diversity. Students learn more from diverse peers when classroom discussions and intergroup interactions are facilitated in supportive environments. Thus, pedagogical techniques and learning activities that teachers use should consider diversity and provide opportunities for intergroup interactions (Hurtado, 2003). The outcome of diversity somehow depends on whether learning situations are structured individualistically, competitively, or cooperatively. As Johnson & Johnson (2000) note, “each type of interdependence teaches a set of values and creates patterns of interaction that will result in diversity being valued

or rejected” (p. 16). There are research findings that advocate the combination of cooperative and competitive learning strategy. Ediger (1996) argues that neither strategy in and of itself is good, because life in school and society consist of both. Thus, in order for students to benefit more, a properly balanced learning strategy that combines cooperation and competition is necessary (Attle & Baker, 2007; Ediger, 1996). However, several research findings indicate that cooperative learning contributes to higher academic achievement than individualistic or competitive learning does (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991; Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2002; Slavin, 1991; 1995). Although the primary objective of cooperative learning is to enhance students’ academic achievement (Slavin & Cooper, 1999), evidences confirm its effectiveness in improving positive interactions and intergroup relations among diverse students (Johnson et al., 1991; Slavin, 1995).

Cooperative learning is defined as “the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (Johnson et al., 1991, p. 3). It is important to note that all small group activities do not constitute cooperative learning (Slavin & Cooper, 1999). For a pedagogical strategy to be cooperative, the following five basic elements must be included: positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability, social skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Johnson et al., 1991; Johnson et al., 2002). The idea is that cooperative learning requires student cooperation and interdependence in order to accomplish a common goal and achieve learning objectives. Cooperative learning helps to develop more positive intergroup relationships than do competitive and individualistic learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). It also increases intergroup contact and reduces prejudice which helps to improve positive intergroup relations on campus (Slavin & Cooper, 1999).

Co-curricular diversity includes a wide range of activities organized by institutions or students themselves mainly with the intention of increasing students’ diversity awareness and skills. This includes diversity training, workshops, seminars, and campus-wide events. Research indicates that these diversity-related activities disrupt stereotypical attitudes and behaviors (Hurtado et al., 2008), and improve intergroup relationships on

campus and positively affect students' academic development and their overall satisfaction and involvement with their institutions (Smith et al., 1997).

In addition to campus-wide events and diversity training, workshops and seminars, research indicates that IGD, which can also be offered as curricular (a course or part of a course) or co-curricular activity, promotes positive campus climate for diversity. IGD is a facilitated face-to-face discussion between students from diverse backgrounds to share their experience and gain diversity-related knowledge. It provides a structured and supportive environment in which students discuss different issues that are considered politically or socially sensitive, and deal with issues and questions that may otherwise remain taboo or divisive (Tatum, 1997 cited in Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). Despite the differences on issues for discussions and approaches, IGD provides opportunities for discussants to share their perspectives, lived experiences, and listen to others' thoughts and experiences, which are all useful to develop sense of connectedness and friendliness (Nagda & Derr, 2004). Moreover, longitudinal studies indicate that participating in IGD has significant effect on students' perspective-taking skills (Hurtado, 2005; 2007) which is an important factor in creating emotional empathy that contributes to the reductions in bias (Dovidio et al., 2004).

3.2.3. Informal interactional diversity

Informal interactional diversity refers to the intergroup interactions among students in the broad campus environment. This involves interactions which are informal in nature and take place outside the classroom in different settings such as dormitories, cultural events, and social activities (Denson, 2009; Gurin et al., 2002). In some literature, this is described as 'diversity interaction' (Milem & Hakuta, 2000; Umbach & Kuh, 2006).

Intergroup interaction is an essential aspect of positive intergroup relations. Studies that investigate intergroup relations among people of diverse backgrounds indicate that exposure and interaction among members of diverse groups lessens intergroup prejudice and intergroup tension and conflict (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), promotes positive and tolerant attitudes toward outgroups (Shook & Fazio, 2008), and improves intergroup relations (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Schofield, Hausmann, Ye, &

Woods, 2010). However, this does not mean that all intergroup interactions result in positive outcomes. The effect depends on “the nature and quality of the interactions” (Pike & Kuh, 2006, p. 445), which in turn depends on the necessary conditions that need to be met to enhance positive effects of intergroup contact and thereby improve positive intergroup relations (Hurtado et al., 2003).

Allport’s seminal work, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), has served as the basis for the intergroup contact theory. The fundamental assumption of this theory is that when people from different backgrounds have the opportunity to be in contact with each other, they find it more difficult to hold prejudices against one another (Slavin, 1995). Contact potentially reduces prejudice by enhancing knowledge about outgroups, reducing anxiety about intergroup contact, and increasing empathy (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). In order to enhance the positive effects of intergroup contact and thereby improve positive intergroup relations, Allport (1954) suggests four necessary conditions that need to be met: (1) equal group status within the situation; (2) common goals; (3) intergroup cooperation instead of competition; and (4) institutional support (the support of authorities, law, or custom).

Based on the outcomes of various studies, Pettigrew (1998) suggests a fifth condition which is referred to as “friendship potential”. Pettigrew argues that in order to enhance the positive effects of intergroup contact, people from different backgrounds should get to know each other as friends, and “the contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends” (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 76). Cross-group friendship or friendship between people of different backgrounds invokes three of Allport’s optimal conditions (institutional support is the exception) for positive intergroup contact effects (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Cross-group friendship fosters a more positive attitude towards outgroups and develops a feeling of trust in relation to outgroups, and this in turn promotes positive intergroup relations (Tropp, 2008). Research indicates that having more outgroup friends leads to less prejudice and vice versa, but the effect of having more outgroup friends on lowering prejudice is greater than the effect of lower prejudice on having more outgroup friends (Pettigrew, 1997).

Students learn most from those who have very different life experience from their own (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). This implies that “the individual with whom one is

educated may be just as important as where one is educated” (Gurin et al., 2004, p. 101). This shows the importance of diverse student population on campus, which is also a necessary condition for informal interactions among diverse others. Informal interaction is a critical element of campus life (Astin, 1993). It is when students often interact and discuss with diverse others that they inevitably face new ideas, views, perspectives, and experiences. Interactions with individuals from different groups provide students an opportunity to examine and challenge their previously held ideas, beliefs, and world views. This increases students’ intergroup understanding, decreases their prejudicial and stereotypical attitudes toward other groups, and positively affects their academic success and intergroup relations (Smith et al., 1997).

Informal interactions among diverse peers foster students’ civic development including cultural awareness, acceptance of people of different cultures, and tolerance of people with different belief (Hurtado, 2001). It also contributes to develop positive perceptions of the campus environment (Chang, 1999; Gurin, 1999; Umbach & Kuh, 2006), and provides opportunities for students to learn and experience how to peacefully resolve conflict and practice democratic skills (Hurtado, 2005). In addition, the research literature shows a variety of positive effects of informal intergroup interactions on students. Some of the positive effects include greater openness to diversity (Flowers & Pascarella, 1999; Pascarella et al., 1996; Whitt et al., 2001), increased motivation and better participation in a heterogeneous and complex society (Gurin et al., 2004), higher level of critical thinking and ability to live and work in a diverse society (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002), increased intellectual engagement and personal development (Gurin et al., 2004; Milem & Hakuta, 2000; Umbach & Kuh, 2006).

3.3. Summary

This chapter presented a framework for understanding the campus climate for diversity. The framework is consisted of internal and external forces that potentially influence the campus climate for diversity. The internal force is the institutional context that comprised four dimensions which are interconnected. The external forces include government/policy context and sociohistorical context which influence the institutional context. Among the

three contexts, research seems to have emphasized on the institutional context which consists of most elements of the campus climate for diversity.

To enhance a positive campus climate for diversity and thereby benefit from the diversity, it is necessary first to understand the current campus climate for diversity. The various strategies for enhancing the campus climate for diversity, and benefits of diversity which are discussed in earlier studies can be categorized into three distinctive types of diversity in higher education. The three types of diversity are structural diversity, curricular/cocurricular diversity, and informal interactional diversity. Despite the strength of evidence which varies from one study to the other, mainly because of the research methods employed (e.g. difference in sampling and analysis approach); research findings have indicated a positive impact of the three types of diversity on improving the campus climate for diversity and thus maximizing benefits of diversity.

Of the three types of diversity, although structural diversity has been the topic of least empirical interest (Denson, 2009), it is considered as the first step toward improving the campus climate for diversity, and a fundamental resource to benefit from diversity. Intentionally providing different opportunities for students to learn about issues of diversity and diverse groups both inside outside the classroom is also found to have several positive impacts on improving the campus climate for diversity and thus benefits from diversity. Research findings seem to indicate that encountering students with diverse others in the broad campus environment (informal interactional diversity) contributes more to improving the campus climate for diversity and maximizing benefits of diversity than the mere presence of diverse student population on campus (structural diversity) and different diversity-related programs and activities (curricular/cocurricular diversity). However, informal interactional diversity cannot have more impact without greater structural diversity and engaging students with diversity through various diversity-related programs and activities. It is also true that diversity-related initiatives can be more influential on campuses that have greater structural diversity and provide opportunities for informal intergroup interactions.

As the impact of structural diversity and curricular/co-curricular diversity depend greatly on informal interactional diversity, the impact of informal interactional diversity also depends on structural diversity and curricular/co-curricular diversity. This shows that

although each type of diversity has positive effects by itself, their individual effectiveness increases when there is an integrated implementation of programs and activities from other types of diversity. This implies that the impact of each type of diversity increases when students exposed to the other types of diversity and the impact of each type of diversity diminishes in situations where the other types are less prevalent (Gurin, 1999; Hurtado et al., 1998; 1999; Milem & Hakuta, 2000).

4

Methodology

This chapter presents a detailed account of the research procedures. It mainly includes specific information regarding the assumptions of qualitative design, the design of the study, case selection, data collection and analysis procedures, trustworthiness of the study, and ethical issues.

4.1. Qualitative Research

There are two major methodological approaches in research – qualitative and quantitative. These two represent different paradigms which consist of assumptions that are distinct in nature. The choice of one of these paradigms depends on the purpose of the research at hand. The main purpose of this study was to provide a better understanding of the campus climate for ethnic and religious diversity in BDU from participants' point of view. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for achieving this purpose because it seeks to understand issues or phenomena such as people, events, institutions, and activities from the participants' point of view in context-specific settings (Flick, 2002; 2004; Hoepfl, 1997; Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 2002). Moreover, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, the campus climate for diversity in universities in Ethiopia is not well understood due to a lack of research on issues of diversity in higher education in the

country. In such a context, using qualitative research becomes very useful because it helps to better understand a phenomenon or a situation about which little is yet known (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Qualitative research is an umbrella term for research methodologies that describe and explain peoples' attitudes, perceptions, interactions, experiences, and social contexts. It is broadly defined as "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17). However, this does not mean numerical data have no place at all in qualitative research. They are usually used to substantiate non-numerical data.

From the various research designs or approaches that fit within the general framework of qualitative research, a qualitative case study was deemed appropriate for answering the research questions of this study. Case study is defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context" (Yin, 2009, p. 18). It is desirable when the researcher seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the case (Creswell, 2007), and when the research questions require an extensive and in-depth description of the phenomenon (Yin, 2009).

4.2. Case Selection

Every case study research requires at least one case to be studied. Merriam (1998) defines a case as "a thing, a single entity, [or] a unit around which there are boundaries" (p. 27). Based on this definition, the campus climate for ethnic and religious diversity in universities in Ethiopia is the case of this study. However, within the scope of this study, it is not feasible to examine the campus climate for diversity in all public universities. Therefore, I had to choose only one case. The campus climate for diversity in each public university can potentially be a case as each of them can provide opportunities to understand the phenomenon. However, I needed to select a case maximizing what could be learned and understood because a profound understanding of a phenomenon depends on choosing the better case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009).

There are different types of case study and identifying the type of case study that the study focuses on helps in choosing which case to study. Based on the intent of a study,

case study can be categorized into three - intrinsic case study, instrumental case study and collective case study (Stake, 2003). In intrinsic case study, the study is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases but because ‘in all its particularity and ordinariness’, the case itself is of interest. In instrumental case study, the main purpose is to provide insight into an issue. The study is undertaken to provide a general understanding of a phenomenon using a particular case, not because of the uniqueness or typicality of the case. Like instrumental case study, collective case study is also mainly conducted to provide insight into an issue (Stake, 2003). What makes it different is that it includes a number of cases. Based on the above elaboration, the present study used an instrumental case study because it focused on examining one case that helps to better understand the phenomenon. The selection of the case was not based on its uniqueness.

From the 31 public universities in Ethiopia, the campus climate for diversity in BDU was purposefully selected as a case. The selection was made because of my greater familiarity with issues of diversity in BDU than in any other universities in the country¹⁹. My familiarity with the issues and the context helped me, as a researcher, to get detailed information and to better understand what the participants were saying in their own terms. Moreover, my membership as a teacher and my close relationship with the campus community was an advantage to communicate with participants without seeking gatekeepers and to have easy access to official documents. Although this kind of pragmatic consideration of case selection may not provide a strong methodological justification, it is a legitimate factor pertaining to selecting a better case to understand the issue under study (Seawright & Gerring, 2008).

4.3. Data Collection

The data were collected between January and April 2012. Qualitative case study research requires providing detailed descriptions of the case using multiple sources of evidence, which requires different sources of data. In this study, the necessary data were collected from students, managers, academic and administrative staff, representatives of the

¹⁹ I was a student and a representative of the Students’ Union. I am also a faculty member (on study leave) at BDU, and worked as coordinator of the University’s Cultural Center.

students' union (SU) and the Apostle of Peace Club (APC), and documents. The data were collected using interviews, focus groups and document reviews.

4.3.1. Sources of data

Students

The purpose of the study was to provide a better understanding of the campus climate for ethnic and religious diversity in BDU, and student diversity was the focus of this study. Therefore, students were taken as the major sources of data. A total of 53 students from different ethnic (Afar, Amhara, Gambella²⁰, Gedio, Gurage, Gumuz, Oromo, Sidama, Somali, Tigre, Wolayita, and Mixed ethnicity) and religious (Catholic, Muslim, Orthodox, and Protestant) backgrounds participated in the study. This helped to understand the issue under study from different ethnic and religious groups' points of view. Students were second years and above because it was thought that they may have had more diversity experience on campus than would first-year students²¹. They were selected using purposeful and snowball sampling techniques. All students kindly accepted their nomination and agreed to participate in the research. However, some students did not show up for the interview and they did not explain their absence.

Managers

The term manager in this study refers to people working at the top levels of the University's administrative hierarchy. In this study, seven managers whose positions have a more direct relationship with issues of diversity were invited to participate in this study. However, one manager was excluded because he wanted to provide information in

²⁰Gambella is not actually an ethnic group. It is a region composed of different ethnic groups such as Nuer and Agnuak. However, the ethnic groups from this region were generally referred to as "Gambella" by participants including students from the ethnic groups found in Gambella. Therefore, in this study in relation to ethnic groups I used "Gambella" to refer to the ethnic groups from the Gambella regional state.

²¹BDU has three-year undergraduate programs except for certain others such as engineering, law and medicine, which take more than three years. Most students who participated in the study were enrolled in the academic years 2009/2010 and 2010/2012.

a situation which was not conducive to interview and against the data collection procedure developed for this study. Another manager politely declined to participate because he was only recently appointed (during data collection) and unable to provide detail information about the issue under study. In this case, another individual who was working in the same positions in the last five years was selected to participate in the research. In total, six managers were purposefully selected and participated in the study.

Academic and administrative staff

BDU's legislation broadly categorizes university employees as "academic staff" and "administrative support staff". Academic staff (hereafter teachers) includes members of the University employed as teaching and/or research staff. Administrative support staff (hereafter staff) includes all employees of the University except teachers. To obtain detailed data about the issue under study, eight teachers from five different ethnic backgrounds with at least five years of full-time work experience at BDU and three staff providing student services were purposefully selected.

Representatives of the SU and the APC

The SU was established to serve as a strong advocate for students at all administrative levels of the University. All regular undergraduate students of the University are members of the SU, and there is no membership fee. The SU participates in different decision makings and diversity-related activities. It is led by elected representatives, and one of the student representatives believed to provide better information was purposefully selected.

The APC was established by volunteer students in 2008, and by March 2012 it had 623 registered members (Apostle of Peace Club [APC], 2011). Members are required to pay a very small membership fee. The main objectives of the APC include enhancing tolerance and positive intergroup relations through interfaith and interethnic dialogue, creating a violent-free academic environment, and resolving misunderstandings and conflicts between students with their direct involvement (APC, 2011). The club works on peace building on campus in collaboration with the SU, the students' service office, and

regional and federal governmental and non-governmental organizations. In order to get more information about ethnic and religious issues from different perspectives, one of its representatives was purposefully selected.

Documents

The other data source used in this study was official and personal (unofficial) documents. Official documents include documents from the University such as the legislation, rules and regulations, strategic plan, database and minutes, and also documents from other institutions such as the population census, the regulation on implementing student placement, and the guideline to regulate worship, dress code, and food etiquette on campus. The only personal document used in this study was the graffiti collected from toilet walls by students for a course assignment. Graffiti is a means to express strong feelings, internal experiences, attitudes, and emotions safely by writing on public property (Şad & Kutlu, 2009). The interest in using graffiti as data source came from evidence from earlier research as well as my personal experience. A study that focused on conflict management in BDU also indicates that graffiti is such a rich data source to understand students' feeling and attitude toward ethnicity, religion, and politics (Zellelew, 2010). When I was a student in BDU a decade ago, I read several graffiti that students used to express their feelings and attitudes toward various social and political issues by writing on different places such as toilets and classrooms walls.

4.3.2. Data collection methods

Interview

Interview is one of the most important and widely used data collection instruments in qualitative research (Bryman, 2008). It provides direct access to individuals' perceptions and experiences. In this study, interview was used as the main data collection method. From the three types of interviews (unstructured, semi-structured, and structured), semi-structured interview was used to allow focusing on main issues that the study sought to

address, incorporating issues likely to arise during interview, and probing interviewees to elaborate on their original responses.

An interview guide was used to guide the interviews in a focused, yet flexible and conversational manner (Hoepfl, 1997; Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1990). The interview guide comprised the list of questions and major topics that need to be covered during interviews (see Appendix 1). Open-ended questions were used throughout the interviews because this allows interviewees to answer in their own words and provide detailed information including attitudes, feelings, experiences and understanding of the issue under discussion.

Interviews were conducted with students, teachers, managers, staff, and representatives of the SU and the APC. Among the 27 students participating in the interview, three of them were of mixed ethnicity. Interviews with 24 students were conducted in Amharic because they preferred Amharic to express their ideas proficiently. English was used to conduct interviews with three students who did not have sufficient Amharic proficiency²². The interviews with teachers, managers, staff, and representatives of the SU and the APC were also conducted in Amharic. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and took place in settings that were quiet and private so that there was no noise that might affect the quality of the tape recording, and interviewees did not have to worry about being overheard. During the interviews, students and teachers were asked about their ethnic and religious backgrounds because such information is useful for contextualizing their responses.

Focus group

Focus group is “a way of collecting qualitative data, which - essentially - involves engaging a small number of people in an informal facilitated group discussion (or discussions), focused around a particular topic or set of issues” (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 177). It provides valuable insights on how group participants view an issue with which they are confronted (Bryman, 2008; Wibeck, Dahlgren, & Öberg, 2007). It is an essential data

²² Amharic and English are the only two languages that I, as a researcher, can use to directly communicate with participants.

collection instrument for a study seeking to understand perceptions, ideas, thoughts, and experiences of different groups of peoples on a particular or focused issue (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1998).

In this study, the focus groups were conducted with students to elicit group perceptions and experiences on ethnic and religious-related issues on campus. In focus groups, participants need to have certain characteristic in common which is important to the topic of discussion or investigation (Hancock, 1998; Krueger & Casey, 2000). The criterion for selecting focus group participants should be homogeneity, not diversity. Heterogeneous groups are usually undesirable (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Participants' homogeneity in a focus group is particularly important when the topic of discussion is potentially sensitive. Participants' homogeneity in background, not attitude, contributes to make the group members more cohesive and open with each other. However, homogeneity of a group should be beyond demographic similarity or sharing certain characteristics relevant to the research questions, so that each participant feels safe in sharing information with other participants (Morgan, 1998; Sim, 1998; Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996). Accordingly, in this study, participants in each focus group had the same ethnic/religious background, and they knew each other before attending the focus groups. This increases participants' comfort during group discussions (Morgan, 1998). To achieve this, purposeful homogeneous and snowball sampling techniques were used (Patton, 2002). The first purposely selected student nominated another student from the same ethnic or religious background with whom he/she was comfortable discussing the issue being studied. This selection process continued until a reasonable number of participants was obtained.

A total of eight focus groups (four based on religion and four based on ethnicity) were conducted. The selection of ethnic groups was mainly based on the current ethnic majority-minority dichotomy, and information obtained from interviews and earlier studies about groups often involved in ethnic conflict. Based on these criteria, the Amhara, Gambella, Oromo, and Tigre ethnic groups were selected. The focus groups with Amhara, Oromo, and Tigre ethnic groups were conducted in Amharic, and the focus

group with Gambella students was conducted in English²³. The four religious groups participated in the focus groups were Catholic, Muslim, Orthodox, and Protestant. These are the common religious faiths within the student population.

There is no consensus among researchers on the ideal size of a focus group. The suggestions include 6-8 people (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1998), 6-10 people (Hancock, 1998), 6-12 people (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990), and 8-10 people (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). The main argument behind defining the number of participants is that the size of a focus group should not be too small to obtain diverse and detail information, and should not be too large so that each participant could have an opportunity to share his/her view in detail. In this study, each focus group consisted of 6-8 participants. About half of the focus group participants also participated in the interview. In order to cover the necessary topics and to keep the discussion on track while allowing participants to talk freely and spontaneously, a focus group guide was used. The focus group guide comprised open-ended questions and major topics to be covered during discussions (see Appendix 2).

Document review

Document review is a systematic way of collecting data by reviewing existing documents. It was used to collect data from official and personal documents. In order to focus on selected topics and collect relevant data, document review guide was used (see Appendix 3). The guide comprised major topics to be covered and required specific information. The required information was formulated in the form of open-ended questions. Document reviews were conducted both before and after conducting interviews and focus groups.

Data were collected until data saturation, whereby the collection of more data through the selected methods appears to have no new or relevant information to the study (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Mack et al., 2005; Sarantakos, 2005).

²³Gambella students preferred English as a medium of communication because they do not speak Amharic or are relatively more proficient in English than in Amharic.

4.4. Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis includes the process of “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 145). Qualitative data analysis methods include but are not limited to discourse analysis, content analysis, thematic analysis, narrative analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis, and grounded theory analysis. Despite the focus and strategic differences, there are features common to all qualitative data analysis methods. Choosing one of these methods depends on the purpose and focus of the analysis. As described above (Section 4.1), case study research requires extensive and in-depth description of the phenomenon to better understand the case under study. Thus the data analysis method to be employed should enable achieving this purpose. Accordingly, this study used thematic analysis which provides a rich and detailed description of the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is the most widely used data analysis method in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012).

Stake (1995) argues that “there is no particular moment when data analysis begins” (p. 71). This shows that it is not always the case that analysis begins only after completing data collection. Qualitative researchers often start (informal) analysis during data collection (Hoepfl, 1997). In this study, preliminary data analysis began while collecting data, and this facilitated shaping the ongoing data collection by including emerging issues and refining interview and focus group questions. Interview was the main data collection method, and thus in the analysis, the interview data were given more weight than were the focus group and the document review. The data analysis process included transcribing, translating, coding, categorizing (identifying themes), and reporting. As a procedure, first, I listened to the tape recordings of the interviews and focus groups, and transcribed selectively. Selective transcription was used to avoid including extraneous information which did not contribute to the purpose of the study because a useful transcription is the one that is made based on the purpose of the study

(Kvale, 1996). The relevant data from the transcribed document were translated into English and used for the final analysis.

After reading and rereading through the transcript, the data were coded by asking what each text is about and why it is important. The coding was done by assigning different words and short phrases related to the research questions. Then related codes were grouped together. Coding and grouping related codes helped to reduce the enormous amount of data by dividing it into meaningful and manageable pieces of data. After coding all the data and grouping and regrouping related codes, themes were developed from related coded data segments. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), “A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p. 82). Qualitative researchers tend to use inductive analysis approach in which themes and categories emerge out of the data (Hoepfl, 1997; Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005; Patton, 2002). This study also generally used an inductive analysis approach. However, it seems difficult to have a pure inductive analysis. For example, the interview and focus group topics and questions were prepared on the basis of the research questions and literature reviews, and this partly influenced the recurrence of issues and the major themes that emerged from the data. Srivastava & Hopwood’s (2009) argument support this claim. They argue that,

Patterns, themes, and categories do not emerge in their own. They are driven by what the inquirer wants to know and how the inquirer interprets the data based on subscribed theoretical frameworks, subjective perspectives, ontological and epistemological positions, and intuitive field understandings (p. 77).

After developing themes, the transcriptions were read again to reorganize and refine general themes that accommodate different issues contained in various data segments. This data analysis process also helped to develop sub-themes which helped to analyze different issues in detail, and to identify quotations that best described different issues while analyzing and interpreting. Although recurrence was a major criterion in selecting themes, there were also cases where themes were developed from issues that “capture something important in relation to the overall research questions” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During categorizing different issues into various themes and during analysis and

interpretation I consistently as why it is so. This helped me to develop strong data analysis and interpretation. At this point of the analysis process, the documents reviewed and coded were incorporated into the identified themes to substantiate information obtained from participants through interviews and focus groups. Finally, more detail analysis began after compiling data into a coherent and usable form.

4.5. Trustworthiness

Positivist concepts of validity and reliability widely used in quantitative research cannot be addressed in the same way in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). It is often considered inadequate and inapplicable to the qualitative research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Golafshani, 2003). Thus, qualitative researchers often focus on trustworthiness. By establishing trustworthiness, a researcher aims to persuade readers that “the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Establishing the trustworthiness of findings from qualitative research requires addressing four factors that are somehow interconnected. These factors are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility refers to whether the findings are based on and supported by the data collected. It can be established by employing different techniques including peer debriefing, prolonged engagement in the field, member checking, triangulation, and negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). To address credibility, this study employed triangulation which is a common strategy that is widely used for improving validity in qualitative research. The term triangulation refers to “the observation of the research issues from (at least) two different points” (Flick, 2004, p. 178). It is a strategy of substantiation, which helps the researcher to be more confident of the study findings and conclusion (Bowen, 2005).

Triangulation within a qualitative research can be attained in different ways. Denzin (1978) has identified four types of triangulation: data triangulation, theory triangulation, investigators triangulation and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation refers to the combination of data drawn from different sources or at different times or in different

places. Investigator triangulation refers to the use of more than one researcher (observers or interviewers) to generate and/or interpret data. This strategy helps to reveal and minimize biases coming from the individual researcher. Theory triangulation is the combination of different theoretical perspectives to explain or interpret a single set of data. It prevents researchers from sticking to their preliminary assumption and from ignoring alternative explanations. Methodological triangulation refers to the use of more than one method to study a single problem or phenomenon. In order to ensure credibility, the data collected from different sources and using different methods were triangulated. Hence, based on the above explanations, the study used data triangulation and methodological triangulation. The other technique used to ensure credibility was providing thick descriptions of the phenomenon under study including participants' own words when it is found necessary and appropriate.

Transferability refers to the applicability of the research finding to another context. It is up to the reader, rather than the researcher, to determine whether the findings are transferable or applicable to another setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, the researcher should provide the necessary information that enables readers to determine whether the findings are transferable. Thus, to address issues of transferability, this study provided thick descriptions of the phenomenon under study including background information. Dependability refers to the stability or consistency of the findings over time. Lincoln and Guba (1985) claim that there is a strong relationship between credibility and dependability, and “a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter” (p.316). In addition to ensuring credibility, detail descriptions about the data collection and analysis procedures were also provided to address issues of dependability.

Confirmability refers to objectivity or the extent to which the findings are shaped by the data and not researcher bias or interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In qualitative research, researchers are an important part of the research process, and they cannot separate themselves from the phenomenon they are studying (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Mehra, 2002; Patton, 2002). Moreover, qualitative researchers, as human beings, have certain opinions and beliefs about the topic, and it is a challenge for them to remain neutral or objective (Mehra, 2002). Although it is not possible to be totally unbiased and do research with an ‘open mind’, I attempted to reduce the effect of my (the

researcher's) bias on the study. This was done by suspending my own taken for granted beliefs and opinions about the topic at every step of the research process. I also used another technique that partially contributed to establishing confirmability. This was achieved by inviting a PhD student in another university, who has very good qualitative research skills, to evaluate the research process (data collection and analysis, findings, interpretations, and conclusions) and determine whether the findings, interpretations, and conclusions were based on and supported by the data.

4.6. Ethical considerations

Research participants often trust what researchers tell them before data collection, and they provide information which they may not share with others or in public. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the researcher to deal with ethical issues. For any researcher, the responsibility and obligation to be ethical is both professional and moral, and this should be considered even when research participants are less concerned about their privacy (Neuman, 2003). In general, when it is found necessary, ensuring privacy, anonymity and confidentiality must be researchers' top priority.

To comply with ethical issues, first, data collection permission was acquired from BDU's Office of the Vice President for Research and Community Service. Then an informed consent form was used, which is an "important feature of ethical considerations in any research involving human subjects" (Bowen, 2005, p. 214). The primary objective of obtaining informed consent was to ensure that individuals understand what it means to participate in the study and decide in a conscious and deliberate way whether they want to participate (Mack et al., 2005). This helped to protect the rights of individuals participating in the study and to conduct the research openly. As a procedure, a written information sheet was provided to potential participants before they participated in the interviews or focus groups. The information provided to potential participants included the purpose, methods, and significance of the study; what their participation in the research entailed; when the recorded data would be destroyed; confidentiality and anonymity; and the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw whenever and for whatever reason they wished (see Appendix 4).

Potential participants were given sufficient time to consider whether they wanted to participate in the research. Most of them agreed to participate in the research, but they were not willing to sign the written consent form (see Appendix 4). Participants did not see the importance of putting their name and signature on the consent form as long as they orally agreed to participate in the research. The request for written consent which requires the participant's name and signature was a new and undesirable thing for most participants. Despite the information provided about issues of privacy and the purpose of the study, it made participants suspicious about the use of the information as well as confidentiality. A few participants were hesitantly willing to comply with the request to sign the consent form. However, requiring participants' names and signatures in such a situation would have influenced the information they provided because they might respond differently if they thought that their privacy might be compromised. Therefore, in order to obtain authentic and better information, instead of written consent, oral consent was obtained from all participants. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity in direct quotations, participants were addressed using study codes which are abbreviations followed by numbers (Managers = MA1, MA2...; Staff = STA1, STA2...; Students = ST1, ST2...; and Teachers = TE1, TE2...). However, sometimes it was not possible not to disclose identifiable information about some participants because of the position they held. This issue was discussed and agreed with those participants.

One of the ethical principles in research is an obligation on the part of the researcher to respect participants' social and cultural values. Diversity-related studies require researchers to be sensitive and appropriate in their use of terms to describe people and their cultural identity. Therefore some terms that had been used some time ago and existing in different literatures but nowadays considered to be offending, insulting or taboo and politically incorrect were deliberately substituted. There have been also several shifts in terminologies since the current government came to power. The shift in terminologies is a deliberate attempt to rename or to revert to the original name and discard those names given by other ethnic groups because they have negative connotations from the name holder's ethnic perspective. Thus throughout this study some terms were chosen based on historical arguments, political interpretations, and above all

based on what the people themselves want to be called and what was the most appropriate term when this study was conducted.

Student Diversity and Intergroup Relations

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the analysis and findings. Although the study focuses on ethnic and religious diversity, issues related to ethnic diversity are more evident in the analysis and findings. This is mainly based on the data collected which appears to have been influenced by the significance of these two aspects of diversity in the political and social life of Ethiopian society in the past and at present. This chapter presents the intergroup relations between ethnically and religiously diverse students on campus, and the student diversity which focuses on diverse student population and ethnic and religious composition.

5.1. Student Diversity

Before discussing issues related to student diversity, it is necessary to define two concepts - ethnic or religious composition and diverse student population. The ethnic or religious composition on campus refers to the number of students in each ethnic or religious group compared to the number of students in other ethnic or religious groups. Diverse student population refers to the presence of students from different ethnic or religious backgrounds regardless of their proportional representation. This means that the presence of even one student from a different ethnic or religious group contributes to

increased diversity on campus, and the presence of diverse student population does not necessarily indicate the ethnic and religious composition on campus.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, student admissions and placement have been carried out at the central level by the MoE. As a procedure, the MoE asks universities about their intake capacity according to their available study programs. Then, in principle, based on the regulation on implementing student placement in public universities, the MoE places students in different universities and sends their name list and documents to the respective universities. The regulation for implementing student placement in public universities has seven placement criteria that can be categorized into three major groups; (1) *main criteria* (i) student's choice, and (ii) cumulative grade point average; (2) *special support* for (iii) female students, (iv) physically handicapped students, and (v) students with serious health problems; and (3) *special case* for (vi) students who completed their secondary education in schools that have characteristic of community school, and (vii) students who are not citizens of Ethiopia but have the right to get every benefit like an Ethiopian citizen (MoE, 2002).

As mentioned in Chapter 2 and as can also be seen in the above criteria, students' ethnic and religious backgrounds as well as place of residence are not taken into consideration during student placement in public universities. This potentially contributes to universities having a diverse student population coming from different parts of the country and from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. In the following three subsections, the diverse student population, the ethnic composition, and the religious composition in BDU are analyzed.

5.1.1. Diverse student population

BDU has students from different ethnic and religious groups that came from different parts of the country. For most students, university was a place where they started to live in a social context that represents the diverse society in the country in many respects. The presence of a diverse student population was perceived as an advantage by participants. They thought that a diverse student population provides students with an ideal

opportunity to learn from each other's cultures, languages, religions and experiences and also to develop skills that are important for their social lives.

When you live with students from different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, you have a chance to learn different oral traditions, history, and languages. You also have a chance to share your culture and experience with other students. I think diversity provides a very good opportunity to know the different ethnic groups in Ethiopia and their cultures. This is far better than reading a book about ethnic groups and their culture. (ST4)

If you look at universities in Europe, most of them have different exchange programs. The main reason for this is not seeking quality education in institutions outside their countries. It is rather for cultural exchange. In this country [Ethiopia], there is no best place like universities to learn different cultures and ways of life. The diversity in this university [BDU] provides students with an opportunity to develop different skills that are important for their academics and social life. (MA3)

Students also believed that the presence of diverse student population provides them with opportunities to develop tolerance, new problem solving skills, and the ability to live in a diverse context and with realities.

When we were there [in high school] we were relatively narrow-minded, but now we have got a lot of experiences. If you compare us with a person who did not get this chance, we are by far the better person in social life, because we have developed tolerance and we can live in other regions. Living in a diverse campus makes you patient, tolerant, and reflective. It totally changes your mind. (ST3)

Participants also thought that a diverse student population is an input to the nation-building process. Ethiopia is one of the African countries that are in an early stage of nation-building, and this requires harmony and cooperation among different groups in the country. Teachers mentioned that the presence of diverse student population can potentially contribute to the process of nation-building by providing students with various opportunities to know more about their country, think beyond their group, develop mutual understanding, advocate unity in diversity, perceive a shared national identity, and develop a sense of nationalism. Managers likewise had a strong belief in the positive contribution of a diverse student population in the process of nation-building. In relation

to this one manager stated that “the diversity in higher education is a bond that strengthens Ethiopian unity and contributes to the nation-building” (MA5).

Participants also perceived a diverse student population as an opportunity which contributes to enhancing the teaching-learning process. Students who come from different ethnic and religious backgrounds have different worldviews, ideas, perceptions, understandings, and ways of looking at life. Managers and teachers considered these as inputs that contribute to the knowledge construction by enhancing classroom discussions and group works.

Although a diverse student population on campus is often perceived as an advantage, some participants’ responses indicated that it is not always the case. Students claimed that ethnic and religious differences and issues that accompanied the differences could lead to tension and conflicts.

We came from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Both as an individual and as a group we have our own needs, attitudes, views, and experiences. This may be different from other individuals’ or groups’ needs, attitudes, views, and experiences. If we do not understand and respect these differences or tolerate and focus on our similarities, they lead us to unwanted situations and conflict. (ST12)

It is good to live with diverse students, but it is also difficult. There are many annoying things that we hear and experience in relation to ethnicity. We need to be very tolerant to disregard such situations; otherwise we will be in trouble. (ST7)

The above excerpts corroborate the claim that diversity is not always an opportunity or a resource. It can also be source of challenges (Cox, 2001; Gurin et al., 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Macedo, 2000; Milem et al., 2005).

5.1.2. Ethnic composition

Despite the increased number of students enrolled in the University, participants reported that in recent years, the numerical representation of students from different ethnic backgrounds on campus had decreased compared to previous years. Participants mentioned that since the academic year 2009/2010 the number of students from the

Amhara ethnic group had increased. The following responses from three students make this clear.

We can see and easily understand the ethnic composition in this university. Particularly in our batch [year 2009/2010], most of us came from Amhara region and most of us are Amhara. When we discuss about this with senior students, they told us that it was not like this in their batch and before. They were surprised by our batch's ethnic composition. (ST1)

From my high school, there were 130 students that passed the entrance exam to higher education. Out of this number, only 15 students were placed in other universities. The rest of us were placed here [BDU]. ...In our first-year dormitory there were 32 students and we all are from the Amhara ethnic group. (ST5)

There are many Amhara students, maybe more than you can imagine. ...The number of students from several other ethnic groups is very small. This is obvious and every student knows about that. [Signifying the numerical dominance of Amhara students], Students say that, 'if you throw three pebbles at a time in the cafeteria or auditorium, two of them will hit Amhara students every time you throw'. (ST2)

One of the examples that students used to show the ethnic composition in the University was ethnic groups' representation in events such as the Nations and Nationalities and People's Day (NNPD). When BDU celebrate the NNPD, students from different ethnic groups wear and show their cultural dresses and artifacts to the event attendees. According to students, in this event, some ethnic groups were represented by students from other ethnic groups because there were no students from those ethnic groups. This may not, however, in itself provide sufficient information regarding the ethnic composition in the University. The absence of students to represent certain ethnic groups in events like NNPD also does not necessarily imply the absence of students from those ethnic groups in BDU because there are students who mentioned that they did not want to represent their ethnic groups in such events for at least two reasons. The first reason was related to religion. There were protestant students from different ethnic groups in southern Ethiopia who did not want to represent their ethnic group for religious reasons. They wanted to show their cultural dresses and artifacts, but the activities in the NNPD often involve showing ethnic dance, which they do not do because of their faith. The

second reason was related to politics. There were students who considered the celebration of NNPD as a strategy that the ruling party used to show the alleged equality between ethnic groups in the country. These students did not want to support this strategy by participating in the event because they thought that there was no equality among ethnic groups. Moreover, although it is interesting and good for the University to have students from each ethnic group in the country, this is not viable for various reasons. For example, the population size of the Qewama and She ethnic groups is 298 and 320 respectively (Central Statistics Agency [CSA], 2008). Thus, it is not surprising not to have students from these ethnic groups in BDU. Moreover, the admissions and placement strategy does not necessarily support this.

Teachers and managers had also noticed the recent change in student placement which resulted in numerical dominance of one ethnic group. Teachers did not need to refer to statistical data when they described the numerical dominance of students from the Amhara ethnic group because they experienced it in many of their classes.

Nowadays the diversity in classroom is becoming homogeneous. In my class, I sometimes ask if there are students that come from a certain place or region in order to get more explanation about the topic of discussion from their lived experience. One day, I asked students that came from the South [SNNP] or Oromiya to raise their hands. Shockingly, there were none. How can there not be at least one student from South [SNNP] or Oromiya? I don't consider this a matter of chance, because it is not only in one class that this happened. I also discussed this issue with colleagues in other departments, and they also had the same experience. (TE1)

In order to better understand the structural diversity with regard to ethnic composition, it was necessary to cross-check participants' claims with the numerical data about the ethnic composition in BDU. Actually, the University does not have data which shows students ethnic backgrounds. The available data shows only the region or city administration, zone, and district where students came from. These data were important although it made the analysis somewhat complicated. At least five academic years (2007/2008-2011/2012) data, showing where students came from were deemed necessary, but the University has complete data only starting from the academic year

2009/2010²⁴. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, students placed in BDU in three academic years (2009/2010-2011/2012) by region/city administration were used. For a better analysis and understanding, it was also necessary first to see the total number of students qualifying for higher education studies and placed in all public universities by region/city administration. This particular data provided information about what the ethnic composition in BDU looks like compared to the total number of students from different regions/city administrations qualifying for higher education studies and placed in all public universities.

Table 4. Students placed in all public universities by region/city administration (2009/2010 - 2011/2012)

Region/City Administration	Academic Year						Total	
	2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Addis Ababa	11341	15.4	13763	17.5	15699	16.6	40803	16.5
Afar	575	0.8	383	0.5	675	0.7	1633	0.7
Amhara	19198	26.0	20471	26.0	25603	27.1	65272	26.4
Benishangul-Gumuz	763	1.0	762	1.0	932	1.0	2457	1.0
Dire Dawa	989	1.3	709	0.9	712	0.8	2410	1.0
Gambella	142	0.2	122	0.2	321	0.3	585	0.2
Harari	487	0.7	400	0.5	418	0.4	1305	0.5
Oromiya	20810	28.0	21858	27.8	26627	28.2	69295	28.1
SNNP	10506	14.2	10860	13.8	12612	13.4	33978	13.8
Somali	812	1.1	715	0.9	1059	1.1	2586	1.0
Tigray	8357	11.3	8539	10.9	9762	10.4	26658	10.8
Total	73980	100	78582	100	94420	100	246982	100

Source: Computed from various statistical documents of the MoE on students placed into universities.

²⁴ Participants claimed that a visible numerical dominance of one ethnic group has existed since 2009/2010. However, because of lack of data before the academic year 2009/2010, it was not possible to make a comparative analysis.

Table 5. Students placed in BDU by region/city administration (2009/2010 - 2011/2012)

Region/City Administration	Academic Year						Total	
	2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Addis Ababa	317	5.8	699	17.1	591	21.2	1607	13.0
Afar	2	0.1	11	0.3	10	0.4	23	0.2
Amhara	4371	80.5	1928	47.2	1219	43.7	7518	61.1
Benishangul-Gumuz	34	0.6	33	0.8	5	0.2	72	0.6
Dire Dawa	21	0.4	39	1.0	25	0.9	85	0.7
Gambella	8	0.2	6	0.1	6	0.2	20	0.2
Harari	13	0.2	40	1.0	22	0.8	75	0.6
Oromiya	340	6.3	705	17.3	428	15.3	1473	12.0
SNNP	207	3.8	375	9.2	265	9.5	847	6.9
Somali	7	0.1	10	0.2	19	0.7	36	0.3
Tigray	110	2.0	236	5.8	199	7.1	545	4.4
Total	5430	100	4082	100	2789*	100	12301	100

Source: BDU database and information center (BDU, 2012d)

*This number did not include students who came later in mid-semester. (The data obtained from office of the registrar show that the total number of students in the academic year 2011/2012 was 4031).

One could expect more students from Oromiya and Amhara regions in BDU taking into consideration the following three issues: (1) the number of students that qualified for higher education studies and placed in all public universities from each region/City Administration, (2) the criteria for student placement in public universities, and (3) participants' information about the student composition in previous years. However, as indicated above in Table 5, most students of BDU came from the Amhara region (61.1%) followed by the Addis Ababa City Administration (13%). These data were very necessary but not sufficient to understand the ethnic composition in the University. Where students

came from does not necessarily indicate their ethnic background because for many reasons people move from one place to another and complete their preparatory school in a region which does not represent their ethnic background. Therefore it was necessary to look at the ethnic composition by region/city administration at national level. For this particular purpose, only the dominant ethnic groups in each region/city administration were identified.

Table 6. Dominant ethnic group by region/city administration

Region/City Admin.	Total population	Dominant ethnic group		
		<i>Ethnic group</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%</i>
Addis Ababa	2,738,248	Amhara	1,288,306	47.1
Afar	1,411,092	Afar	1,251,103	88.7
Amhara	17,214,056	Amhara	15,747,800	91.5
Benishangul-Gumuz	670,847	Berta	173,743	25.9
Dire Dawa	342,827	Oromo	157,991	46.1
Gambella	306,916	Nuwer	143,189	46.7
Harari	183,344	Oromo	103,421	56.4
Oromiya	27,158,471	Oromo	23,846,380	87.8
SNNP	15,042,531	Sidama	2,908,491	19.3
Somali	4,439,147	Somali	4,314,657	97.2
Tigray	4,314,456	Tigre	4,165,749	96.6

Source: Summary and statistical report of the 2007 population and housing census (CSA, 2008).

Although most students placed in public universities were from the Oromiya and Amhara regions (see Table 4), BDU had more students from the Amhara region and Addis Ababa City Administration (see Table 5). In terms of population, the Amhara ethnic group is dominant in both the Amhara region and the Addis Ababa City Administration (see Table

6). Thus, when most students came from Amhara and Addis Ababa, it is very likely that BDU had more students from Amhara ethnic group.

The numerical dominance of students from one ethnic group in BDU was unexpected and regarded as unusual by all participants. Studies indicate that this was also the case in other public universities. For example, in Adama University, which is geographically located in Oromiya region, there is a numerical dominance of students from the Oromo ethnic group (Habitegiyorgis, 2010). These provide enough bases to argue that student placement has been carried out based on geographic proximity, which is not among the criteria listed in the regulations on student admissions and placement.

Assumptions about the current student placement

Three major suppositions were made in relation to student placement based on geographic proximity. The first supposition was the placement was made based on students' choices. This implies that most students from the Amhara region had chosen BDU as their study destination. In relation to this, one manager stated that "there is a numerical dominance of one ethnic group, but I am not clear about how this happens. It could be based on students' choice which is one of the main criteria for student placement in public universities" (MA4). A study indicates that because of the ethnic conflicts in different public universities, parents want their children to be placed in a university where they can avoid potential attack from other ethnic group students and the surrounding majority ethnic group (Asmamaw, 2012). Parents' security concern was also mentioned by students participated in this study; "My family thinks that there are a lot of problems in universities. So they want me to study in Gonder University because we live in Gonder and if there is a problem, I can easily go home (ST1).

One of the possible options to minimize the level of risk seems to be choosing a university which is geographically located close to their home town/city and/or in the region where their ethnic group is dominant. This shows that security is one of the factors that students take into consideration when they choose a university, but it is not the only one. According to students, availability of programs which they want to study and popularity of the university are the two major factors which they took into consideration when they chose a university. They also consider level of difficulty to graduate from,

facilities (accommodation and health), and social life both inside and outside the university. The Amhara students who participated in this study mentioned that BDU was not one of their top three choices mainly for two reasons. First, it was related to the difficulty of study programs at BDU compared to many other public universities. This was based on the information students got from students who had graduated from different public universities including BDU. Second, they wanted to experience different cultures in a broader and different context than the one they knew and in which they grew up. Moreover, students from the Amhara and other ethnic groups firmly believed that the numerical dominance of one ethnic group was not the result of students' university choices. Teachers also thought that the student placement was neither randomly nor based on students' choices.

I am really surprised at the number of students from this region [Amhara region]. I don't know the government's intention, but whatever the reason might be, it is pointless. Imagine, in a diverse country like Ethiopia, in a country where diversity is a key feature of political ideology, and in a state university, how come most of our students are from one region and ethnic group? I don't know why, but I am sure it is not randomly or based on students' choices. (TE5)

The other argument that potentially disproves this supposition is that if the ethnic dominance were because of students' choices, it would have happened in previous academic years. So, based on the above information, it is very difficult to claim that BDU was the choice of most students from the Amhara ethnic group.

The second supposition was that students were placed in universities close to where they came from for economic reasons. From informal discussions with people from the MoE, some managers were informed that economic issues were the Ministry's rationale for placing students on the basis of geographic proximity. This was on the reasoning that placing students in a university close to their home town/city minimizes cost of transportation, and this enables them to visit their families in holidays and in case of illness. Refuting the economic reason, one manager said,

The University provides food and accommodation to all students. Most students visit their parents in mid-semester and at the end of academic year. Therefore, the economic rationale is not convincing, and it is against the higher education proclamation which encourages multiculturalism. (MA5)

Teachers stated that economic related issues are one of the factors that students may consider when they choose a university, and also one of the factors that MoE may take into consideration during student placement. However, they doubted that it was the major and the only reason for placing students according to geographic proximity.

The third supposition was related to political matters. The HEP states that the centralized student placement in public universities will continue until direct selection of student admissions by public universities becomes desirable and feasible, but until that happens, the MoE should consult public universities concerning student placement (FDRE, 2009). However, managers reported that they were not informed about the current student placement, and they still did not clearly know the reason for placing most students in universities that are geographically located close to where the students came from. MoE's failure to clearly communicate with the University before placing students based on what seems 'new criterion' made teachers and students think about other possible reasons. Teachers supposed that it is a political strategy used to avoid potential ethnic-related problems on campus.

In recent years, the government is placing more students from the region even zones which are close to where the University located. I think this is related to government's political interest and policy. This might be a strategy used by the government to avoid conflicts among ethnic groups. The government may assume that there will be no or fewer ethnic-related problems in the University when students are more or less ethnically homogenous. (TE2)

Although managers did not associate the student placement with political issues, some of them also thought that student placement in universities located close to where students came from may be used as a strategy to minimize potential conflicts between ethnic groups. Students associated the placement, mainly in the academic year 2009/2010 (in which 80.5% students were from the Amhara region), with the 2010 general election in Ethiopia. This in turn was associated with the highly contested 2005 general election in the country. In the 2005 general election, opposition parties rejected the provisional results of the election which was announced by the National Election Board of Ethiopia because of alleged voting irregularities and other reasons. Following the controversial result, there was unrest in most parts of the country. Three weeks after the election date,

Addis Ababa University students mounted the first public protest over the general election resonating opposition parties' complaints. This was against the government's ban on demonstrations. Immediately students in many other universities and secondary schools across the country also protested on their campuses and in their schools against the election result. The government seemed not to have a pre-designed strategy to stop the united and emotional protests of the students. Therefore it took different measures including persecuting, beating, and imprisoning students, which was regarded an excessive force in dealing with student protests on campuses.

Beside the protests, there were conflicts between protestors and government supporters in many universities. In BDU, for instance, the differences in political ideologies between different groups led to ethnic conflicts both during and after the 2005 general election (Zellelew, 2010). Students thought that the government had taken lessons from what happened in public universities in the 2005 general election, and they presumed that the 2009/2010 student placement strategy was made based on that lesson.

There is no one who knows the exact reason for placing most students in one of the universities in their region. The rumor circulating among the students is that it was because of the 2010 election in the country. I think the government thought that if most students are from same region and ethnic group, it is easier to control any protest that might have resulted from the election like in 2005. (ST5)

It is difficult to know the actual reason for the high number of Amhara students in the University. ...I don't know the main source of the information, but I heard that it is because of the election which was held when we were first-year students [in 2010]. (ST6)

A recent study that investigated the impact of ethnicity on student relations in BDU supported students' and teachers' assumption about the politically related reason for student placement. According to this study, which used interviews and focus groups to collect data, the main reason for placing students in universities located in "their own region" is to avoid ethnic conflicts (Asmamaw, 2012).

University students have been involved in Ethiopian politics since the Haileselassie regime. The Ethiopian student movement in the 1960s and early 1970s had played vital roles in the struggle against the imperial regime. Since the founding of higher education in Ethiopia, the most important opposition, resistance, and threat to any government in

Ethiopia came from the civilian left (Balsvik, 2007). Notably students were the influential group in voicing the social and political problems in the country. Some of the ruling party elites including the late Prime Minister and chairperson of the EPRDF were among the university students who protested against the imperial regime, and latter interrupted their studies to fight against the military regime. These indicate that the government is well aware of the influence of students in Ethiopian politics. Hence, even though there is lack of strong evidence, it is difficult to rule out the assumption of political reasons for the recent student placement. Moreover, government's unwillingness or failure to publicize the reason for the student placement, which increased the numerical dominance of one ethnic group, strengthens the supposition about the political implications of placements. Students and teachers assumed that if it was not for political reasons, the government would inform stakeholders before or after the placement.

According to the SU representative, most public universities worried about the numerical dominance of one ethnic group on their respective campuses. As it was also indicated by other studies, this clearly shows that the numerical dominance of one ethnic group is not an issue only in BDU. The SU representative further mentioned that the issue of student placement was raised and discussed among participants in the national forum on higher education which was held in the 2011 at Adama²⁵. In this forum, the MoE promised to improve the composition of ethnic groups in public universities. It was not possible to identify whether MoE has kept its promise to improve the ethnic composition in public universities because the data for this study was collected before the promised implementation which was in the academic year 2012/2013. Even before 2012/2013, compared to the academic year 2009/2010, the numerical representation of students from the Amhara region significantly decreased in the next two consecutive academic years (see Table 5). This seems to support students' supposition which associated the academic year 2009/2010 student placement with the 2010 general election.

²⁵ The participants include higher officials from the MoE and universities, and representatives of the SU from different universities.

Factors that contribute to further decrease in ethnic composition

Besides the student placement strategy, there are two factors that could potentially further decrease the ethnic composition of the student population. These are transfer requests to other universities and lack of academic support for students benefiting from the affirmative action in admission to higher education. The university has been receiving several transfer requests from non-Amhara students wishing to transfer to universities geographically located in or around the place where they come from.

Every year we receive a number of transfer requests. For instance, last year [2010/2011], we received 80 transfer requests to Wollega University, and 67 transfer requests to Aksum University. When we check their backgrounds, most students who requested transfer to Aksum University are Tigre students, particularly from Aksum and its surroundings, and those who requested transfer to Wollega University are Oromo students and most of them are from Ambo and its surrounding. (MA5)

Although there are no studies explaining why students want to transfer to other universities, managers were sure that it was not because of institutional discrimination and dissatisfaction with the study programs or the service provisions at BDU. One of their justifications for this was that most students submitted transfer requests immediately after registering at the University. There were cases where students requested a transfer due to health problems or some family related problems. There were also a few students who mentioned language as a reason for their transfer request although the medium of instruction and the working language in BDU is not different from other universities. Economic problem was also the dominant reason mentioned in the transfer request letters, and this seems to support one of the three suppositions for student placement in universities located geographically close to where students came from.

We did not conduct research and I don't have detailed information about why students request a transfer, but when we cross-checked, most students from Wollega and its surroundings requested transfer to Wollega University not to Jimma or Haramaya or Adama University which are also universities in the Oromiya region. This indicates that their reason, to some extent, is economic. They [students] say that 'my family is poor and I don't have money for transport.

So I want to go to my vicinity'. But we don't accept this reason because even if you help them to solve their economic problems, most of them still may want to go. (MA5)

This shows that even if students mentioned economic issues in their transfer request, the University doubted that it was the main reason. When students described their criteria for choosing a university where they want to study, they did not mention geographic proximity or economic issues. Moreover, if the main reason was economic, for instance, some students from other ethnic groups who came from Wollega and its surrounding places would have also requested a transfer to Wollega University. The same arguments can be made about geographic proximity. These also indicate that economic issues are not at least the main reason for the transfer requests. Rather, the data obtained through interviews and focus groups indicated that the main reason for the transfer requests was related to ethnicity. Students preferred a transfer to a university to which they supposedly have more sense of belonging because the university they sought is located in a region and a place where their ethnic and sub-ethnic groups are also located. Based on this, it seems that unlike the manager's argument in the above excerpt, the preference for a transfer to a university close to where students came from is not necessarily related to economic reasons. It is rather related to one's sub-ethnic group affiliation²⁶. For example, in the abovementioned case, the Wollega Oromo students may prefer to study in Wollega University, and a Jimma Oromo student may prefer to study in Jimma University.

The other factor that could potentially contribute to further decreasing the ethnic composition of the student population is lack of academic support for students benefiting from affirmative action policy. The policy for admissions to higher education partly contributed to increased student ethnic diversity by providing opportunities for students from specified ethnic and social groups to get admission to public universities with a lesser mark than the pass mark set for a particular year (see Section 2.2.2). BDU had students that came through affirmative action in admission to higher education. These students are believed to be less prepared for higher education compared to other students. Yet, in BDU, they seem to be considered academically equal with other students, and

²⁶ Within an ethnic group, students often categorize themselves into some sub-ethnic groups.

there is no academic support provided by the University. Students, however, did not think likewise.

Most of us who came from developing regional states are not academically equal with students that came from other regions such as Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya, and South [SNNP]. Because of this, the University has to provide us some academic support. At least, they [university officials] have to ask if we want tutorial classes or some kind of educational support. Unfortunately, so far, there are no such things. They just teach us with other students and do not provide us any support. (ST16)

The university provides educational and other supports for female students, and I am benefiting from that. I feel bad for male students who came from developing regions because I knew that most of them need educational support. Educational support should not be only based on gender. (ST17)

The University has no plans to provide academic support for this group of students. It did not even know which students came through the affirmative action admission system. Students from developing regions thought that the absence of academic support was one of the major reasons for their lower academic achievement and failure including dismissal. The latter, in turn, affects the ethnic composition and the University's effort to maintain diversity.

5.1.3. Religious Composition

BDU does not have data on students' religious backgrounds. Participants stated that compared to previous years there were more students from Orthodox than other religious backgrounds. This is associated with the numerical dominance of Amhara students who are predominantly Orthodox Christian. In order to better understand the religious composition in the University, I took the data on student placement in the University, and the population of regions/city administration by religion.

Table 7. Population of regions/city administrations by religion

Region/ City Admin.	Total pop. in number & %	Christian			Muslim	Tradition al	Others
		<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Protestant</i>			
Addis Ababa	2,738,248 100	13,185 0.5	2,044,481 74.6	212,806 7.8	443,821 16.2	1,375 0.1	22,580 0.8
Afar*	1,411,092 100	989 0.07	54,675 3.93	9,344 0.7	1,324,050 95.3	439 0.03	185 0.01
Amhara	17,214,056 100	4,270 0.02	14,208,067 82.5	30, 240 0.2	2,952,775 17.2	5,667 0.03	13,037 0.07
Benishang ul-Gumuz	670,847 100	4,191 0.6	221,168 32.9	90,272 13.5	304,432 45.4	47,478 7.1	3,306 0.5
Dire Dawa	342,827 100	1,461 0.4	87,629 25.6	9,583 2.8	243,188 70.9	242 0.08	724 0.2
Gambella	306,916 100	10,356 3.4	51,454 16.8	215,092 70.1	14,919 4.8	11,682 3.8	3,413 1.1
Harari	183,344 100	524 0.3	49,704 27.2	6,311 3.5	126,488 69.0	152 0.08	165 0.09
Oromiya	27,158,471 100	122,700 0.4	8,269,813 30.5	4,818,842 17.7	12,886,961 47.5	895,251 3.3	164,904 0.6
SNNP	15,042,531 100	362,229 2.4	2,995,555 19.9	8,346,046 55.5	2,118,977 14.1	992,699 6.6	227,025 1.5
Somali	4,439,147 100	1,297 0.03	27,893 0.7	2,635 0.06	4,369,426 98.5	2,659 0.07	35,237 0.9
Tigray	4,314,456 100	15,616 0.4	4,123,087 95.5	3,635 0.08	171,219 4.0	164 0.00	735 0.02
Special Enumerati on Areas	96,570 100	9 0.01	4,600 4.8	1,981 2.0	89,294 92.5	136 0.1	550 0.6
Total	73,918,505 100	536,827 0.73	32,138,126 43.5	13,746,787 18.60	25,045,550 33.9	1,957,944 2.63	471,861 0.64

Source: Computed from the summary and statistical report of the 2007 population and housing census (CSA, 2008).

* The total population size of Afar and that of the country total includes the estimated population of eight rural *kebeles*²⁷ (21,410) in the Afar region. But the population of Afar by religion and that of the country total does not include this estimated population.

²⁷*Kebele* represents the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia.

The above data shows that there is religious diversity in all regions/city administrations. It also shows that there is one significantly dominant religion in most regions/City Administrations. Because of the dominant religion, people often associate regions with religion; for example, Amhara and Tigray as Orthodox; Afar, Dire Dawa, Harari, and Somali as Muslim; and SNNP and Gambella as Protestant. As indicated in Table 5, most students of BDU came from the Amhara region and Addis Ababa City Administration. As can be seen in Table 7, the majority of the population in the Amhara region and Addis Ababa City Administration are Orthodox Christian, 82.5% and 74.6% respectively. Thus, based on where most students of BDU came from and the dominant religion in that region/City Administration, it is possible to argue that Orthodox is the numerically dominant religious group in BDU. Students and teachers reported that most students from the Amhara region came from Gojjam province²⁸. In relation to this, one teacher said,

What surprised me about the recent student placement is that most students came not only from one region, but also from one province, at least on the main campus. I noticed this in my classes. Before I mentioned examples from some parts of the country, I asked if there were students who came from those places. Instead of responding to my question, they started laughing. I asked why they are laughing, and they told me that most of them are from Gojjam. (TE3)

According to students, even within the Amhara region, most students came from zones that have nearly all Orthodox population.

I am Muslim and I am from this [Amhara] region, but most students from this region came from places where all the people are Orthodox. For example, there were 32 students in our first-year dormitory [in 2009/2010]. Except me, all of them were Orthodox who came from East Gojjam. (ST1)

If you know that most students are from Amhara region, you expect more Orthodox students. Because most people in Amhara region are Christian and the majorities are Orthodox. Moreover, most of us [2009/2010 entrants] are from East Gojjam, which is an Orthodox dominant zone. (ST5)

²⁸The administrative units in Ethiopia include region and city administration, zone, district, and sub-city/*kebele*. However, many people use 'province', which is an administrative unit that was used in the previous regimes. At that time, the Amhara region constituted four provinces. These include Gojjam, Gonder, Wollo, and Shewa. Currently, the term 'province' and 'region' are often used interchangeably. Based on this categorization, BDU is located in Gojjam.

This implies that the placement of most students from one region and specific province and zones within the region have contributed to the numerical dominance of Orthodox Christians on campus. As can be seen in Table 8 below, most students from the Amhara region (67.7%) came from Gojjam, mostly from East and West Gojjam. This supports participants' claims that most students came from one province and specific zones. However, because of lack of data on religious composition by province and zone, it was not possible to understand whether such a placement has more influence on the religious composition on campus as was claimed by students.

Table 8. Students from Amhara region placed in BDU by province and zone

Province	Zone	Academic Year						Total	
		2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Gojjam	Awi	345	7.9	398	20.6	155	12.7	898	11.9
	Bahir Dar	201	4.6	179	9.3	186	15.2	566	7.6
	East Gojjam	1280	29.3	216	11.2	86	7.1	1582	21.0
	West Gojjam	1406	32.1	414	21.5	223	18.3	2043	27.2
	Total	3232	73.9	1207	62.6	650	53.3	5089	67.7
Gonder	North Gonder	490	11.2	201	10.4	215	17.6	906	12.0
	South Gonder	344	7.9	218	11.3	176	14.5	738	9.8
	Total	834	19.1	419	21.7	391	32.1	1644	21.8
Wollo	North Wollo	69	1.6	68	3.5	35	2.9	172	2.3
	South Wollo	89	2.0	119	6.2	75	6.1	283	3.8
	Waghemra	9	0.2	5	0.3	1	0.1	15	0.2
	Oromiya	5	0.1	8	0.4	5	0.4	18	0.2
	Total	172	3.9	200	10.4	116	9.5	488	6.5
Shewa	North Shewa	133	3.1	102	5.3	62	5.1	297	4.0
Total		4371	100	1928	100	1219*	100	7518	100

Source: BDU database and information center (BDU, 2012d)

*This number does not include students who came later in mid-semester.

5.2. Intergroup Relations

The presence of diverse student population on campus seems an ideal situation where the five conditions that enhance positive effects of intergroup contact could be met and students could develop positive intergroup relations (see Section 3.2.3). This is so because a university provides an environment where students are generally considered to be of equal status regardless of their backgrounds; students are expected to work cooperatively to achieve common goals; cross-group friendships are viable; and higher officials and university legislation, rules and regulations are supposed to promote diversity and provide an environment in which intergroup interactions occur.

As mentioned in Section 5.1.1, students generally have positive perceptions of diversity and attitude toward outgroups and developing positive intergroup relations. In relation to this, one student said that “wherever we go, we live and work with diverse people. This is inevitable. So, we need to develop positive relationship with people from different ethnic groups” (ST5). Students seem to understand that diversity is a reality not a passing fad, and they want to live in harmony with others both inside and outside the university. Students’ actual experiences with regard to intergroup relations depend on how different issues in the context affect the conditions that enhance positive effects of intergroup contact. In order to understand students’ experience regarding the intergroup relations, this section analyzes and discusses first friendship, which is an essential component of intergroup relations, and then the factors that facilitate and impede positive intergroup relations among ethnically and religiously diverse students in a university context.

5.2.1. Friendships

Despite the numerical dominance of one ethnic group, BDU has a diverse student population that provided rich opportunities for friendships among students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Students reported that they have casual friends from different ethnic and religious outgroup members. Nonetheless, they were more choosy and serious in selecting close friends. In this study, close friendship refers to a friendship between people who confidently and trustfully share their deepest and personal feelings,

thoughts and activities. Casual friendship refers to a friendship between people who know, greet and help each other, but do not share their deepest and personal feelings, thoughts and activities. The major difference between the two types of friendship is the degree of trust, loyalty, and reliance. Moreover, compared to casual friendship, there is a relatively high frequency of interaction or contact in close friendship. These definitions were given to the students during interviews and focus groups.

People use several criteria to select their friends. The criteria include both changeable attributes such as behavior and attitude, and non-changeable attributes such as ethnicity and gender. In the present study, students stated that they often make friends with individuals from different ethnic and religious backgrounds on the basis of similarity of attributes. The friendships were often based on a combination of two or more attributes which include language, gender, behavior, attitude, ethnicity, religion, and place of residence (where students come from), among others. Among these attributes, similarities in behavior and attitude were the main criteria that students used in selecting and potentially being selected by others as close friends. Based on these criteria, one could expect close friendship both within and across one's own group regardless of gender, ethnicity, and religion. However, in addition to behavior and attitude, students reported the growing importance of ethnicity in friendship selection.

You can make friends with different students, but you need to decide first what kind of friendship you want to have with them. Is it to say *selam* [hi] and *chaw* [ciao] or to have a close friendship? If it is to say *selam* and *chaw*, you can make friends with many students, but if you are looking for close friendship you have to select those who understand you better and have a positive attitude toward you. Nowadays, many students prefer to have a close friend from their own ethnic group. (ST25)

If a person has similar behavior and attitude with me, I think we can be good friends through time. For me, both ethnicity and religion are not so important, and I don't consider them when I make friends. But many students prefer to make friends from their own ethnic group; Amhara with Amhara, Oromo with Oromo, Tigre with Tigre, Gambella with Gambella. You can ask any student you want, they will tell you that this has become very common. There are several reasons for this, but don't ask me because I think you know more than I know. (ST21)

Moreover, according to students and teachers, it became evident that there is an increased ethnic preference in friendship selection if one takes a look at whom students often spend their spare time with. One case that participants used to illustrate this claim was walking around campus at night. It seems a common activity to walk around the campus at night in a group with friends. Students and also teachers who live on campus noticed that students usually walk around campus with their fellow ethnic group members, and they mentioned that it was not difficult to identify from which ethnic group they are because of the language they speak²⁹.

One of the good habits that we have in this campus is walking around campus usually after dinner. There are students who do that alone or with their boyfriend or girlfriend, but most students walk in group with their friends. This friendship is based on ethnicity. You can easily understand that from the language they speak. (ST14)

When I come from downtown, I usually see students walking around the campus in groups. I realized that most of the time they walk with someone from their own ethnic group. On my way to home, I may pass by first a group of students who are speaking Oromiffa, then after some meters a group of students who are speaking Tigrigna, then Amharic, then another language. Sometimes it is difficult to know from which ethnic group they are unless you know the language they speak. (TE5)

These findings are consistent with a recent quantitative study in Hawassa University which indicated that though students make friends with individuals from other ethnic groups, a majority of them tend to select friends from their own ethnic group (Semela, 2012). Research in Western countries has also found ethnicity as a major criterion in friendship selection (Louch, 2000; McPherson, Smith-Loving, & Cook, 2001). Using ethnicity as a criterion to select friends is not a new phenomenon. Teachers mentioned that ethnicity was also one of the criteria they used to select friends when they were university students many years ago. However, it was not as important as it is now and described by students. This raises a question, ‘why has ethnicity become so important nowadays?’

²⁹ This may not include a group of students speaking Amharic because those students may not be necessarily all from the Amhara ethnic group.

There are two reasons for increased ethnic preference in selecting close friends. The first reason is the direct and indirect influence of the government administrative and political system. The way that the ethnic-based federal system has been implemented seems to have increased ethno-national sentiment and decreased national sentiment and unity among different ethnic groups. Nowadays, it is becoming more and more evident that many people's first allegiance is to their ethnic group, and "their country is a poor second" (Milkias, 2011, p. 58), and university students are no exception. This contradicts with the ethnic and national sentiments of university students in Ethiopia in the late 1960s. At that time students had a strong national identity and less ethnic and regional affiliation (Balsvik, 2007; Young, 1997). Studies and reports also indicate that the ethnic-based federal system increased differences among ethnic groups in Ethiopia (International Crisis Group, 2009), and facilitated division along ethnic lines (Engedayehu, 1993). These appear to have contributed to the development of what is described in the literature as key elements of close friendship such as self-disclosure, loyalty, trust, and emotional support (Way, Gingold, Rotenerg, & Kuriakose, 2005) within one's own ethnic group.

Moreover, for their own political reasons, the ruling party emphasizes historic interethnic grievances and negative relations, and opposition parties stress the current unfair ethnic power dynamics in the government. This has influenced people's attitudes toward some ethnic groups and their languages, and exacerbated ethnic competition and grievance (Valfort, 2007). Study also shows that

With regard to ethnicity [...] in current Ethiopia differences rather than similarities, past misdeeds rather than positive contributions and achievements, are emphasized by political groups, civic associations, and mass media, which would result in the creation of ethnic prejudices and antagonistic feelings (Mekonnen & Endawoke, 2007, p. 65).

In the context of campus climate, such issues seem to have a negative impact on intergroup cooperation and ethnic preference in selecting close friends which influences intergroup relations among students from different ethnic backgrounds.

The second reason for increased ethnic preference in selecting close friends is related to language. Amharic is a lingua franca that most Ethiopian people from different

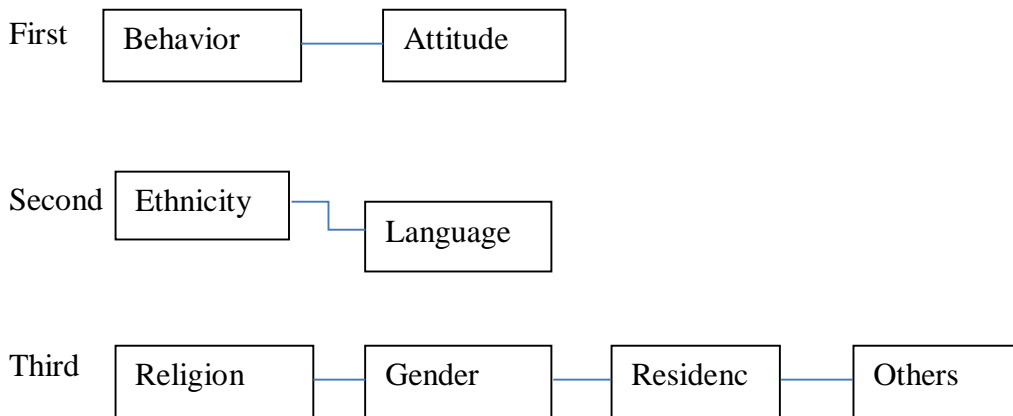
linguistic backgrounds use to communicate with each other (Cohen, 2007). It is also the working language of the country, and has been adopted as a language of countrywide communication. Although it is taught as a subject in primary and secondary education, there are university students who have little or insufficient Amharic language skills. This concurs with a study that showed problems of communicating using Amharic language among students in Hawassa University (Semela, 2012).

The importance of a common language in friendship is unarguable, because it is difficult to establish friendship if people are not able to communicate and understand each other because of a language barrier. Although Amharic is a lingua franca for most Ethiopians, there are students who have difficulty in sustaining lengthy discussions with students outside their own linguistic or ethnic group. These students tend to prefer discussing and making friends with individuals who speak the same language. In most cases, these individuals are from one's own ethnic group because in Ethiopia there is high congruence between ethnicity and language, and most, if not all, ethnic groups have distinct languages and/or dialects (Young, 1997). In such cases, language becomes one of the main reasons for making close same-ethnic friendships. However, there were also students who mentioned language as the main reason for preferring close friendship with students from their own ethnic group despite the fact that they speak Amharic almost fluently (during the interview and focus group). This shows that sometimes language has been apparently considered as the main reason for ethnic preference in selecting close friends even when it was not the actual reason. In such cases, it seems that students' ethnic preferences in friendship selection are influenced by their ethnic orientation rather than language-related problems.

Although more religious students may prefer same-faith friendship, religion was not among the main criteria that students use to choose their close friends. This seems to be the case not only in BDU because a study in another public university also found that the majority of students have no religious preference in friendship selection (Semela, 2012). This could be associated with the harmonious and peaceful coexistence of religious groups for centuries. Although the gender-based dormitory allocation could potentially facilitate same-gender close friendship, like religion, gender was not among the main criteria that students used to select close friends. Therefore, in order of priority, religion,

gender, and other attributes that students may take into consideration while selecting close friends belong to the third domain (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Criteria for selecting close friends in order of priority



Source: The author

5.2.2. Factors facilitating intergroup relations

As discussed above (see Section 5.1) students have positive perceptions of diverse student populations, and this can be considered as an input to facilitate positive intergroup relations among ethnically and religiously diverse students. In this study, factors that facilitate intergroup relations include situations that contribute to meeting some of the necessary conditions to enhance effective positive intergroup contacts and thereby improve positive intergroup relations. Social bonds arising because of reasons like intergroup marriage, socialization, and living together have been found to contribute to positive intergroup relations.

Multigroup membership

In the Ethiopian context, individuals who belong to the same ethnic group may have different religious backgrounds, and individuals who belong to the same religious group

may have different ethnic backgrounds. This shows that in Ethiopian society ethnic and religious identities are not mutually exclusive. Because of this, the same students who are perceived as different based on one social identity can be similar based on another³⁰. For example, let us take four students: (S1) Oromo and Orthodox; (S2) Oromo and Muslim; (S3) Amhara and Muslim; and (S4) Tigre and Muslim. In this example, S2, S3 and S4 are similar in religion, but different in ethnicity. S1 and S2 are similar in ethnicity, but different in religion. According to students, this is one of the factors that facilitate the intergroup contact, cross-group friendship, and positive intergroup relations among ethnically and religiously diverse students. The following response from one student validates this assertion.

I am Oromo and my two close friends are also Oromo. They are in Poly [Engineering Campus]. We often visit each other on the weekend. ...My friends here [on the main campus] are from Amhara, South [SNNP] and also from other ethnic groups. I met most of them in the [Orthodox] church program organized for new students. We usually go to church together and help each other in our academic and social lives. (ST12)

Although there may be situations where more than one social identity becomes simultaneously salient, in most situations individuals do not often activate multiple social identities simultaneously (Roccas & Brewer, 2002) because social identities are context dependent (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). In the BDU context, in situations where ethnic conflict is an issue, one's ethnic identity becomes more salient than other identities. Similarly, in situations where religious tension is an issue, one's religious identity becomes more salient than other identities. This helped students to sustain their membership in different groups. What seems different from earlier studies is that although ethnic and religious identities may not be equally important in one context, there are several cases where one influences the effect of the other.

Last year [2011] there was a conflict between Amhara and Tigre students, but I did not participate. I have two reasons for that. First, even if we are from different ethnic groups who may have different political perspectives, from Tigre students there are individuals whom I know very much in the church. How can I fight with

³⁰ Social identity is defined as a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

these students? Second, I heard that the university is merciless if you are found guilty of participating in such conflicts. So, I do not also want to take that risk. (ST19)

The first reason provided in this excerpt shows that students' multigroup membership contributes to lessening conflicts which, in turn, helps to enhance and maintain positive intergroup relations.

The other issue raised in relation to multigroup membership was intermarriage. Marriage across ethnic lines is very common among Ethiopian society, and it is one of the features that cement Ethiopia as a multinational state by making ethnicity less relevant. Marriage between different ethnic groups has created a large number of mixed ethnic populations. This has resulted in mixed ethnic student groups in higher education, and this is true in BDU as well. Participant students from mixed ethnic backgrounds claim membership in more than one ethnic group. The following responses from two students make this clear.

It is difficult for me to identify myself in relation to a particular ethnic group. My father is Oromo and my mother is Amhara. I don't have a special affiliation to either of these ethnic groups. I just feel that I am both Amhara and Oromo. ...It doesn't matter what ethnic group I belong to, because we are all Ethiopian. (ST8)

I don't want to and also cannot say I belong only to this ethnic group because I am a mixed ethnic person. I grew up in the Amhara culture and my friends considered me Amhara, but the truth is I have Amhara, Sidama and Wolayita ethnic background. I can't erase this reality. I usually prefer to say that I am an Ethiopian without connecting myself to one ethnic group. (ST21)

These excerpts indicate that in addition to claiming multigroup membership, mixed ethnic identity facilitated the perception and development of a common identity which makes students see one another as members of the same group (Ethiopian). Such a common ingroup identity helps students to emphasize similarities rather than differences. It also helps to reduce intergroup bias such as prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination by developing a more inclusive group membership (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). This in turn helps students to establish positive intergroup cooperation and develop cross-group friendships which are necessary conditions to

enhance intergroup contact and improve positive intergroup relations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Dormitory allocation

The first-year is the most challenging year for university students with respect to different issues on campus. Among several others, the social life that requires students to share dormitories with individuals they never knew before is the main challenge. In BDU, the dormitory allocation is generally based on gender. Dormitories are shared between 2 to 32 students. Before 2009, the dormitory allocation was both random and based on students' preferences. Students were randomly assigned when they did not find or were not able to choose their roommates. This kind of dormitory allocation was very common among first-year students because they often do not know each other when they came to the University. However, second-years and above students usually chose their roommates because they know each other. They chose roommates based on different criteria such as friendship, ethnicity, religion, and place of residence³¹. In BDU, female and male students live in different buildings.

According to a staff member and a manager, this kind of dormitory allocation was problematic. From an administrative point of view, regardless of the number of students the University usually provides one room key for each room. In one dormitory, there were often students from different departments who had different class schedules. This was considered inconvenient to properly use the room key. It was also considered as a contributing factor to problems related to larceny. The dormitory allocation was also not good from an academic point of view. The university had no rooms reserved for group work. Students used classrooms (often at night) and their rooms for group discussions and assignments. Using dormitories for group discussion and assignment was not convenient because there is not enough space, chairs and tables. Moreover, students in one room were often from different departments, and this was not convenient for group

³¹ A previous study indicates that five decades ago, ethnicity was one of the main criteria on the basis of which HSIU students chose their roommates: "at the end of the 1960s almost half the dormitory rooms were occupied by students on the basis of ethnic connections" (Woldemikael 1971 cited in Balsvik, 1985, p. 280).

studies because those doing group work disturb other students doing something else or wanting to take a rest³².

In order to alleviate the abovementioned problems, the University developed a new dormitory allocation arrangement³³. In this dormitory allocation, students are assigned to a room based on their department at first and then alphabetically by name. They do not have the right to choose roommates. This dormitory allocation is supposed to increase the probability of students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds living together. Although there are ethnically homogeneous dormitories because of the numerical dominance of one ethnic group, staff and students indicated that the new dormitory allocation provided students more opportunities to live with individuals from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in the same room.

A previous study indicates that interethnic roommate contact contributes to reduce ethnic prejudice and negative stereotypes and increase interethnic interactions (Van Laar, Levin, Sinclair, & Sidanius, 2005). When students do not choose their roommates and instead are assigned to live for a year or more with people they do not already know, there is also a possibility for more negative outcomes such as increased disagreement and tension. However, according to staff, there appears to be no significant difference in the number of complaints and in the magnitude of ethnic and religious tensions as a result of the new dormitory allocation system. Students mentioned that the dormitory allocation has provided them with an opportunity to live and interact with students from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds and to develop good relationships with diverse students.

I am not sure about its psychological impact, but I believe that it provides more opportunities to interact [with diverse students] and closely know different cultures and languages. I think it also helps us to develop tolerance and good relationships with students from different religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. (ST13)

³² This implies that if students are from the same department this problem will be solved. However, taking the number of students and their diverse interests into consideration, this assumption seems not necessarily true.

³³ The new dormitory allocation has special criteria that give priority to medical students, students with physical disabilities, and students with health-related problems.

It is good to get rooms based on department and alphabet. For me, one of the good experiences of campus life is sharing rooms and living with people from different ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds. It provides us with a very good opportunity to know about others' cultures and make friends with people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. You don't get this chance in other places. (ST21)

These excerpts indicate that the dormitory allocation strategy created a contact situation that provided students with an opportunity to know more about and establish friendship with members of other groups. This finding shows that aside from its main objective, the new dormitory allocation strategy seems to provide opportunities for students to develop positive intergroup attitudes, and cross-group friendships, which is essential for positive intergroup relations (Pettigrew, 1998). According to students, the new dormitory allocation seems to have failed to achieve its main objective which is solving some administrative (room key) and academic (group work and study) related problems.

5.2.3. Factors impeding intergroup relations

Factors that impede intergroup relations include situations or issues which in one way or another have negative influences on attaining one of the necessary conditions to enhance effective positive intergroup contact. Religion-based new student reception, the government system, policy, and strategy which are related to ethnic federalism, political membership, language, and student placement are found to have a negative effect on the intergroup relations among ethnically and religiously diverse students.

Ethnic and religious composition of students

As mentioned in Chapter 5, similar to other public universities, BDU has students from different ethnic and religious groups that come from different parts of the country. However, participants mentioned that there was a numerical dominance of the Amhara ethnic group in the three academic years 2009/10 – 2011/12 (see Section 5.1). The numerical dominance of one ethnic group, which influenced the religious composition on campus, appears to decrease opportunities to meet and interact with students from diverse

ethnic and religious backgrounds and establish cross-group friendships. This affects the extent to which students socialize with people from other groups (Chang, 1999). It also affects the intergroup contact somewhat, because the impact of contact varies depending on the numerical composition of the groups involved (Hayes, McAllister, & Dowds, 2007). Moreover, because of the numerical dominance of an ethnic group from the region where the University is geographically located, students from some ethnic groups have a low sense of belonging. This somehow created a feeling of “their” and “our” university and negatively affected the intergroup cooperation that would have facilitated intergroup relations.

New student reception by religious groups

In collaboration with the SU, BDU prepares orientation programs for new students, but there is no organized new student reception at institutional level. In this context “reception” refers to pick-up services and tutoring first-year students. A decade ago, new student reception was based totally on personal relationships. Senior students welcomed and tutored new students whom they knew in some way; they might be their high school friends, their relatives or they were asked by someone they knew. Since 2002, religious groups have been actively participating in new student reception. In the previous dormitory allocation in which students could choose their roommates, religious groups advised and even grouped their members to be in the same dormitory. This shows that the religion-based reception has influenced first-year students’ roommate choice and the religious composition in dormitories. This reduced the opportunity to live with students from different religious groups, which would potentially contribute to establishing interreligious friendships and intergroup relations.

Students also mentioned that the religion-based reception excluded students not belonging to any of the religious groups. Although this kind of reception appeared to be useful in helping new students to adapt to their new study environment and student life, students tended to emphasize its pronounced negative effects.

Religion-based reception is not good for the future relationships between students from different religious groups. Why should I care about the religious background

of a person who is willing to help me? I don't mind if he is Muslim, Orthodox or Pente³⁴. I rather think that this kind of moments give us an opportunity to know each other and establish good relationships with students from different backgrounds. (ST6)

I don't support welcoming students based on religion because you feel grouping from there. What about if I am not a religious person? (ST3)

The reception based on individuals' religious affiliations does not have any significance for both the individual and the religion. It is rather very divisive. I was stunned when senior students asked me my religion at the bus station because I did not expect that at all. Generally, I don't see its relevance, and I am not willing to participate in such things. I know there are students who like doing this kind of thing, but they have to understand that the main rationale for new student reception is humanity. If they have a religious agenda, they can do it later after students get settled. (ST10)

Students' responses indicate that the religion-based reception is a point where segregation along religious lines has been instigated. In the focus groups, students also mentioned that the religion-based reception has created unnecessary competition and animosity between religious groups. This seems to affect the intergroup relations because it creates more competition than cooperation between members of different religious groups. As indicated in the literature, intergroup cooperation is one of the necessary conditions that need to be met to enhance positive effects of intergroup contact and intergroup relations (Allport, 1954).

Based on several individual complaints, the SU has investigated the impacts of religion-based reception and found that the reception somehow affects intergroup relations and contributes to religious tensions on campus. Therefore, at the beginning of the academic year 2011/2012, the SU called upon religious groups to stop new student reception, and took the responsibility for organizing new student reception. This has been done through volunteer students. The SU's decision has been commended by many students.

³⁴ Among most Ethiopian society "Pente", which is a short form of "Pentecostal", usually refers to non-Orthodox Christians.

The new student reception should be free from religion. So, I totally support the SU's decision to stop reception based on individuals' religious affiliation, and I was one of the volunteers who participated in receiving and tutoring new students this year [2011/2012]. (ST17)

I appreciate what the SU has started this year. New student reception should never be based on religion. What I want to say here is that we should make a distinction between religion and humanity. Helping new students is all about humanity. (ST10)

This strategy seems to be effective in overcoming problems related to new student reception based on religious affiliation. However, it was criticized for being rigid because it does not allow students to welcome their family, relatives or old friends. Some students were able to welcome their friends and relatives covertly, but those who were caught were warned by the SU. Students wanted the SU to continue new student reception by volunteers, and also to allow them to welcome their family members, relatives, and friends. In relation to this, one student said "I appreciate what the SU is doing in relation to new student reception, but they should be flexible in some way so that we can also welcome students that we knew before or asked by a family or relatives for help" (ST2).

As the SU representative stated, it is difficult to know exactly who is honestly welcoming his friend, family or relative and who is covertly helping students only from his/her religion. It was not possible to get further information on this issue as the SU has not yet looked at students' complaints at the time of the data collection. It seems necessary for the SU look at this case and find some ways in which students can welcome and tutor their family members, relatives, and friends because it may be illogical and beyond its mandate to deny what is considered to be an individual right.

Based on several individual complaints, the SU has investigated the impacts of religion-based reception and found that the reception somehow affects intergroup relations and contributes to religious tensions on campus. Therefore, at the beginning of the academic year 2011/2012, the SU called upon religious groups to stop new student reception, and took the responsibility for organizing new student reception. This has been done through volunteer students. The SU's decision has been commended by many students.

The new student reception should be free from religion. So, I totally support the SU's decision to stop reception based on individuals' religious affiliation, and I was one of the volunteers who participated in receiving and tutoring new students this year [2011/2012]. (ST17)

I appreciate what the SU has started this year. New student reception should never be based on religion. What I want to say here is that we should make a distinction between religion and humanity. Helping new students is all about humanity.

Language and ethnic-based friendships

BDU students live on campus, share dormitories, socialize and attend classes with students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. This provides them with many opportunities for developing cross-group friendships and positive intergroup relations. However, the responses from students and teachers indicated the growing tendency towards same-ethnic friendship. As mentioned above (see Section 5.2.1), language-related problems are one of the main reasons for this.

The language-related problems emanated from students' low or insufficient proficiency in Amharic which has been adopted as a language of countrywide communication. The potential reason for insufficient proficiency in the Amharic language is related to students' lack of interest in learning the language at school. The lack of interest is associated with students' perception of Amharic as a language only of Amharas, not as the working language of the federal state and the language of countrywide communication. Their attitude towards Amharic as a language of acculturation, assimilation, and dominance also negatively influenced their interest in learning Amharic. Studies indicate that insufficient attention paid to Amharic in schools, and teachers' lack of competence in teaching Amharic as a second language are also factors that affect students' proficiency in the language (Benson, Heugh, Bogale, & Mekonnen, 2012).

Although other indigenous languages (e.g. Oromiffa) can be used as additional alternative languages for countrywide communication, they do not play this role at this time. The other language which could potentially be used for countrywide communication is English, because it is taught as a subject from primary school onwards

and used as a medium of instruction starting in secondary school. However, students do not use English to communicate with each other because they have low proficiency in the language. Only some students from Gambella, Somali, and Benshangul-Gumuz use English to communicate with students from other ethnic groups because the first group does not speak Amharic or because they are more proficient in English than in Amharic. One of them said,

I do not speak Amharic. So I use my language [the Nuer language] to communicate with students from my ethnic group, and English to communicate with other students. As you know, most students use Amharic, not English, to communicate with each other. So it is a big challenge for us to communicate, discuss and socialize with most students at the University and also with people outside the University. (ST4)

The effect of language-related problems was also reflected in group formation for academic purposes. Students stated that they usually prefer to form a group with roommates or individuals whom they think are clever or have better knowledge in the subject. But sometimes they also consider individuals who speak the same language to effectively communicate on and discuss the group work or assignment.

The low or insufficient Amharic proficiency of some groups of students and the low English proficiency of most students brings the language policy and its implementation to the center of communication problems among university students from different ethnic backgrounds. Instead of developing and sustaining common language(s) which people from different linguistic/ethnic backgrounds can use to communicate with each other, “the current language policy [and its implementation] appears to produce citizens that will find it hard to communicate with each other” (Negash, 2006, 50). Communication problems affect contacts between different groups, which is the backbone of Allport’s intergroup contact theory. Moreover, the growing tendency toward ethnic-based friendship decreases intergroup contact and opportunities to establish cross-group friendships, which are important in reducing prejudice and improving positive intergroup relations (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). As mentioned earlier (see Section 5.2.1), religion was not among the main criteria that students use to choose their close friends.

Therefore, unlike same-ethnic friendship, there is no same-faith friendship as such which affects the intergroup relations among students.

Prejudice, stereotypes and ethnocentrism

Before students came to BDU, they had different information about the University, the city and the surrounding community. This information seems to have influenced students' (particularly first-year students') perceptions and attitudes toward the University, the city and the surrounding community. Students got the information from different sources including family members, people who lived in or visited Bahir Dar, former BDU students, and films and literary works about campus life. Some of the information they got included - BDU is one of the difficult universities to graduate from; BDU is situated in a beautiful city where there are the biggest lake and river in the country; and the Amhara people are not very modernized.

In the focus groups, students noted that their preconceived judgments about outgroups sometimes negatively influenced the relationship between them and outgroup members, mainly during the first-year. Students' prejudicial and stereotypical attitudes are often reflected in tense heated debates between members of different groups and in graffiti on classroom and toilet walls. Most derogatory graffiti targeted different ethnic and religious groups and their motives are contempt, hatred, hostility and political rivalry. In the focus groups, students referred to graffiti to show the negative attitudes of certain ethnic groups toward their or other groups. Although there are several stereotypes and prejudices mentioned by students, in order to illustrate their impact on intergroup relations, I took only social prejudices that focus on the Amhara ethnic group. The most common ones include considering Amharas as magicians and *buda* (evil-eyed).

When I told my family and relatives that I am placed in Bahir Dar University, one of my relatives advised me to take care of myself from Gojjames³⁵ because they have evil eyes. Since I also heard about it from some music and from friends in high school, I didn't argue. But, I asked him what it exactly meant and how I was supposed to know them. He did not have the answers, but continued to advise me.

³⁵ Gojjame refers to people who live in the former Gojjam province which is now part of the Amhara National Regional State. BDU is geographically located in the former Gojjam province.

Even after I came here, some students told me about it, but practically, I live with them and I haven't seen anything like that in the last two years. (ST17)

I have heard bad things about the Amharas. For example, some people say that they are evil-eyed and magicians. Although I lived with some Amharas before I came here, I was a little bit worried when I thought that I am going to the place where all what has been said about the Amhara happens. ... Since I have this thing in my mind, in the first-year first semester, I was suspicious and not very close to Amhara students mainly those who came from rural places. But later on, I realized that there is nothing like that and now I have some good friends from Amhara. (ST2)

Students who came with such preconceived judgments were reluctant to establish friendship with Amharas, who are considered evil-eyed. They were not free to share materials with Amharas fearing the so-called magic that allegedly causes academic failure and health problems. Although these students had the experience of attending the same school with some Amhara students, the information they got from different sources make them believe that the evil-eyed ones are found in Gojjam.

Although such kinds of prejudices and stereotypes decrease when students start to live and spend more time together, they are common among some first-year students and they exert a negative influence on intergroup contacts and intergroup relations. This strengthens the argument that intergroup contact influences prejudice and likewise prejudice influences intergroup contacts and intergroup relations, though the former has more impact than vice versa (Petigrew 1997; Schofield, Hausmann, Ye, & Woods, 2010; Van Dick et al., 2004).

Ethnocentrism is a universal phenomenon which is not limited to certain groups or cultures (Lewis, 1985). This implies that every person is ethnocentric to some degree (Triandis, 1994). Yet, in this study, students' ethnocentric behaviors and attitudes toward outgroup members went to the extent of affecting their intergroup relations. Students stated that when they discuss issues related to ethnicity and religion, ethnic majority students tend to evaluate others' cultures in terms of their own culture. This is because ethnic groups which are culturally, numerically, and politically dominant tend to believe and show they are better than others. The study also indicates that "attitudinally, ethnocentric groups see themselves as strong and superior, while viewing outgroups as

inferior and weak” (Neuliep, Chaudoir, & McCroskey, 2001, p. 138). Because of this, usually members of ethnic or religious groups who are considered inferior to others decrease or avoid discussing ethnic or religious-related issues with outgroup members (see Chapter 6), and this in turn decreases intergroup contact and thereby impairs positive intergroup relations on campus. Among some ethnic groups, ethnocentric attitudes and behavior sometimes even become one of the main reasons for interethnic conflict.

The kinds of prejudices and stereotypes mentioned in the above excerpts are influenced and associated with the tradition, history and politics in the country. Traditionally, the Amhara have been perceived as evil-eyed by different ethnic groups. In Amhara society, the Gojjames are considered evil-eyed, and even among the Gojjame, the Weyto community is considered evil-eyed. The Weyto community is not known by many Ethiopians, and thus in music and literary works, the Amhara in general and the Gojjame in particular are mentioned as evil-eyed. Historically and politically, the Amhara was the dominant ethnic group until the overthrow of the imperial monarchy. Besides, in its political propaganda, the TPLF-led government repeatedly portrayed the Amhara ethnic group as the oppressor and all the non-Amhara ethnic groups as the suppressed. Such labeling is believed to influence members of different ethnic groups to develop prejudicial and stereotypical attitudes toward the Amharas (Tefera, 1996).

Equal group status within the situation and cross-group friendship are some of the main conditions that need to be met in order to facilitate positive intergroup contact and intergroup relations (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). Yet students’ ethnocentric, stereotypic and prejudicial attitudes and behaviors challenge the equal status of different ethnic and religious groups and make cross-group friendship difficult, and this mostly impedes the intergroup relation among students.

Political party membership

In relation to membership of the ruling political party, students can be categorized into three - committed members, uncommitted members, and non-members. Committed members are those students who became members mainly believing in the mission and vision of the ruling party. Uncommitted members are those students who became members of the ruling party mainly to get job easily after graduation, not believing in the

mission and vision of the party. Non-members are either members of one of the opposition political parties or not members of any of the political parties. Students mentioned that although there are some students who are members of different opposition parties, they do not let others know about their membership. They often share this information only with their close friends. Therefore, in terms of political party membership, students usually identify themselves as members or non-members of the ruling party.

Students and teachers stated that most students at BDU are members of EPRDF, which is the ruling political coalition in Ethiopia. According to students, the main reason for joining the ruling party is related to future job opportunities. One of the unwritten requirements for ruling party membership seems to be identifying or affiliating oneself with an ethnic group because all major and allied political parties of EPRDF are ethnic-based. Mixed ethnic students stated that they have difficulties in choosing one of the ethnic-based political parties because they belong to more than one ethnic group.

Nowadays, becoming a member of EPRDF is *yewudeta gideta* [a willing obligation] if you want to get job in government institutions. I did not want to take a risk. So I became member of ANDM although I belong to different ethnic groups. Choosing one of the [political] parties was not as easy as I am telling you now. (ST21)

I became a member of EPRDF last year, but it was not easy for me to choose between ANDM and OPDO. I chose ANDM because most of my friends are members of this party. If it was possible to be a member of EPRDF without associating myself with an ethnic group, I would choose that. Before I became a member [of ANDM], some students considered me an Oromo and some others considered me an Amhara, but after I became a member, Oromo students felt that I changed my ethnic identity and our relationship is not as good as it once was. (ST24)

This indicates that ethnic-based political party membership dismantles individuals' mixed ethnic background and obliges them to identify themselves as members of a certain ethnic group. This left mixed ethnic students without any alternatives but to choose one ethnic group to which for various reasons they have more affiliations.

There were students who have been members of EPRDF since high school. When these students came to BDU, they participated in the welcome programs outside the University which are organized by different EPRDF political parties. Students also participate in different meetings and workshops organized by these political parties for their respective members. This kind of welcome programs and meetings seem to facilitate ingroup contact and same-ethnic friendship. Teachers also stated that ethnic affiliated political membership increases ethnic differences and segregation along ethnic lines. They also stated that such membership creates competition rather than cooperation among students from different ethnic backgrounds. These show that the ethnic-based political party membership decreases intergroup contact and impairs intergroup cooperation and cross-group friendship, which are some of the basic conditions that need to be met to enhance positive intergroup relations (Allport, 1954).

5.3. Summary

This chapter has analyzed the numerical representation of ethnic and religious groups on campus. Participants generally have positive perceptions of the diverse student population. Acknowledging its challenges, they mentioned various individual, societal and institutional benefits of diversity. The HEP values and promotes diversity, and this encourages BDU to have a diverse student population. However, like other public universities, BDU does not have the right to select and admit its prospective undergraduates, and student placement is made by MoE. Although BDU has a diverse student population, in three academic years (2009/2010-2011/2012), there was a numerical dominance of students from the Amhara ethnic group. This has influenced the religious composition on campus because most Amhara people are Orthodox Christians. Participants were not happy about this kind of student placement. Teachers and managers mentioned that there was no such a clear numerical dominance of one ethnic group in BDU before the abovementioned academic years. Participants were not sure about the exact reason, but they thought that it might be because of students' choices or economic or political issues. Managers mentioned that BDU would have strongly opposed if it had been informed about the placement strategy that brought most students from one region.

The other topic that this chapter analyzed was the intergroup relations among ethnically and religiously diverse students on campus. Students have a positive attitude towards outgroups and developing positive intergroup relations, but this has been challenged by different past and present situations in the country. Friendship is an essential component of intergroup relations. Although students used different criteria to select close friends, similarities in behavior and attitude were found to be the main criteria for selecting and potentially being selected by others as close friends. Besides, there was an increasing tendency toward selecting close friends based on ethnicity. The increasing ethnic preference in selecting close friends was because of the direct and indirect influence of government administrative and political system, and also issues related to language. Religion was not among the main criteria for selecting close friends. Generally, in order of priority, (1) attitude and behavior, (2) ethnicity and language, and (3) religion, gender, residence, and others were the criteria that students used to select close friends.

This study has identified different factors that facilitate and impede the positive intergroup relations between ethnically and religiously diverse students. Student multigroup membership which results from marriage between different ethnic groups, and dormitory allocation based on students' department and the alphabet have contributed to developing positive intergroup relations among students. On the other hand, ethnic and religious composition of students, religion-based student reception, language and ethnic-based friendships, political party membership, and prejudice, stereotyping and ethnocentrism have affected positive intergroup relations among students.

Chapter 6

Ethnicity and Religion: Discussions, Tensions and Conflicts

This chapter presents the ethnic and religion-related discussions, tensions, and conflicts on campus. The chapter contains two major sections. The first section focuses on the discussions about ethnic and religion-related issues on campus. The second section analyzes and emphasizes ethnic and religious tension and conflict on campus. This section presents different factors contributing to and causing ethnic and religious tension and conflict on campus.

6.1. Discussions about Ethnic and Religion-Related Issues among Students

As mentioned in the preceding chapters, ethnic and religious issues have been one of the historic and prevalent questions of Ethiopian society for centuries. After the ethnic-based federal system introduced into the country, ethnicity has become the pillar of the political, social and economic discussions among not only politicians but also the people as a whole. Following an increasing religious fanaticism worldwide, in Ethiopia religious issues have become a greater concern for the government and a point of discussion among politicians, religious leaders, and society at large more than ever before. As places where potential leaders and citizens who determine the future and take responsibility for

the nation are prepared (Brown, 2004; Hurtado, 2005), universities need to provide an environment in which meaningful ethnic and religion-related political and social discussions can take place among students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. In relation to this, the presence of a diverse student population in the University is a potential resource as it increases the likelihood of diversity related issues being discussed (Chang, 1999, Gurin, 1999) that serve to reveal more about other ethnic and religious groups and enhance positive intergroup relations.

6.1.1. Discussing ethnic-related issues on campus

In BDU, students generally discuss ethnic issues with both ethnic ingroup and outgroup members. However, the data indicate that their interest, confidence, and freedom to discuss ethnic-related issues depend on whom they discuss with. Based on the ethnic backgrounds of students, the discussions about ethnic-related issues on campus can be categorized into three major groups - discussion among members of the same ethnic group, discussion among members of a trust-based group, and discussion among members of a diverse group.

Discussion among members of the same ethnic group - This involves students who prefer to discuss ethnic-related issues with ingroup members. Students mentioned that the political sensitivity of ethnicity in the country and the potential conflict that may arise because of differences in views and perspectives among members of different ethnic groups are the main reasons for delimiting the ethnic background of individuals with whom they want to discuss.

I usually discuss different issues with students from different ethnic backgrounds. However, ethnicity is a very sensitive issue among students as well as in society. It is not an issue that I can comfortably discuss with someone from other ethnic groups. I usually discuss with individuals from my own ethnic group because I feel free and secure, and I can say what I want to say without worrying about how others understand or interpret it. (ST6)

If I want to know or discuss ethnic-related issues, I prefer to ask or discuss with individuals from my own ethnic group. This is not because I hate discussing with other ethnic groups or I am narrow-minded. I can discuss with them about other

social issues. The reason that I don't want to discuss ethnic-related issues with members of other ethnic groups is very clear. It is just to avoid unwanted conflict that may arise because of misunderstanding, disagreement, or lack of tolerance. (ST9)

Discussion among members of a trust-based group - This group comprises students from different ethnic backgrounds who know, trust and understand each other. Members of this group confidently share different information and ideas with each other. They also discuss ethnic-related issues without fearing the political implications of their opinions and views.

I have good friends from different ethnic backgrounds whom I trust very much. With these friends, we discuss several issues including ethnicity from political or social viewpoints. Even though there are disagreements on some issues, the discussions are always heated and interesting. It helps us to know more about different ethnic groups and their culture, and also to broaden our political views and thoughts. (ST12)

Nowadays, because of the political situation in the country, it is difficult to discuss ethnic-related issues with someone that you don't know very closely. Of course, you may discuss, but you don't feel comfortable and you may not say what you think or want to say. The discussion in this kind of situation is not interesting. You discuss only for the sake of discussion or not to disappoint the other people. I usually discuss ethnic-related issues with students that I know and trust very much. Though we are from different ethnic groups, we understand each other well. The understanding goes to the extent of sharing some ethnic jokes which one cannot usually tell if there is someone from the ethnic group that you tell the jock about. (ST14)

Discussion among members of a diverse group - This group is similar to the trust-based group in its ethnic composition. The difference between the two groups is that the discussion among members of a diverse group is not based on knowing, trusting or understanding each other. It is also often incidental rather than planned, and it takes place in a more self-censored and restricted manner. According to students, this is mainly because of ethnocentrism and the political sensitivity of ethnic issues.

I told you that I prefer to discuss with individuals from my own ethnic group. I don't want to initiate any discussion on ethnic-related issues with people from

other ethnic groups, but if they start to discuss with me, I have no problem with that. But I will be very careful about what I am saying because you never know how some students interpret or understand what you say. (ST6)

To tell you the truth, I don't want to discuss something related to ethnicity at all because I have seen that many students see things only from their ethnic group and political viewpoints. I don't think that I will learn something from discussing in this kind of situation. But when you live and learn with people from different ethnic backgrounds, you cannot totally avoid discussing about ethnic-related issues. There are situations that force you to involve yourself in discussions. In those situations, as much as possible, I will be very careful in what I say and try to make the discussion very short. I don't think it is necessary and proper to discuss about something in-depth and for long when you are not feeling comfortable. (ST11)

When I discuss ethnic-related issues with students from other ethnic groups, I become mistrustful because there are political cadres and government spies among us. It is difficult to discuss ethnicity with these students who are obstinate and see everything only from their political viewpoints. If I strongly argue based on what I think and believe, the next day I may get a warning call from a certain political office. I know this happened to my friend the year before last. (ST23)

In terms of number, it seems that there are more participants in the first group than in the other two groups. This seems to be related to a sense of belonging, a growing tendency toward ethnic-based friendship, and also confidence to freely express one's ideas and views on politically sensitive issue. Because of the politicization of ethnicity in Ethiopia, it is not easy to find ethnic outgroup members with whom one can freely and confidently discuss ethnic-related issues. This affects the number of participants in discussions about ethnic-related issues among trust-based group. The number of participants in a diverse group seems the least. This can be related to lack of trust and confidence, and imagined as well as practical outcomes of discussing ethnicity-related issues with ethnic outgroup members.

From the focus groups, it was possible to understand that ethnicity-related issues are more frequently discussed in the same ethnic group than in the other two groups. The discussion in this group is often based on what the ingroup members know and assume about their own and other ethnic groups regarding ethnicity issues. Their assumptions and the conclusions they draw about other ethnic groups may contradict what other groups

think and believe about themselves or actually they are. This may influence individuals to value and judge others based on assumptions rather than facts, and contribute to the development of prejudicial, stereotypical, and ethnocentric attitudes and behaviors. This makes the discussions less significant to enhance meaningful interactions that can facilitate positive intergroup relations.

The ethnic composition of participants in discussions among trust-based group seems to provide opportunities for raising various essential ideas and perspectives that enrich the discussion and making cross-group friends, which facilitates positive intergroup relations. Students mentioned that due to the mutual trust and confidence among members of this group, different ethnic-related issues were raised and discussed in detail. They also stated that the discussion provided them with opportunities to learn more about the history and culture of different ethnic groups, and to develop a common identity, mutual understanding, and tolerance. This shows that the discussion in a trust-based group is more effective and meaningful than in the other two groups.

Similar to a trust-based group, the ethnic composition of the members of a diverse group seems to provide opportunities for raising various essential ideas and perspectives that enrich the discussion and making cross-group friends, which facilitates positive intergroup relations. However, students stated that the discussion in this group is not as such meaningful and constructive. It is rather often superficial because of a lack of trust and confidence among the participants. In contrast to the other two groups, the discussion in this group is sometimes tense and leads to verbal and physical assaults, for example, when one of the participants knowingly or unknowingly uses ethnic epithets.

The above discussions generally indicate the political sensitivity of ethnic issues in Ethiopia, and the lack of trust, tolerance and a culture of discussion among members of different ethnic groups. As a result of this, students seem to prefer to either avoid discussing ethnic-related issues or select individuals with whom they can discuss in confidence. The following excerpt from a student substantiates this assertion.

I personally prefer not to discuss ethnic-related issues with students from other ethnic groups because there are many annoying things. For example, when I discuss ethnicity with students from some ethnic groups, they keep nagging and telling me that we [Amharas] were autocrats, oppressors, and so on. I understand

that Amhara was a dominant group in the past, but what can I do about it now? How can I discuss with individuals who are obsessed with talking about misdeeds and keep blaming me for what my ancestors and great ancestors might have done. ... Sometimes I become very emotional and start to defend myself and perhaps my ethnic group in a way that offends members of other ethnic groups. I know this is not good. So, to avoid such things, it is better not to discuss ethnic-related issues at all or to discuss only with someone whom I feel comfortable with. (ST19)

Research shows that at the earliest stage of interaction between individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, such minor conversational disruptions can intensify discomfort (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002), and may lead to disengagement from further intergroup interactions (Pearson West, Dovidio, Renfro, Buck, & Henning, 2008). Nonetheless, if students understood that individuals can be negatively labeled simply because they are members of a particular ethnic or religious group (Cushner, McClelland & Safford, 2009), they might not become very emotional and rush to distance themselves from further intergroup interactions, which is absolutely essential for developing positive intergroup relations.

6.1.2. Discussing religion-related issues on campus

BDU does not allow any formal religious forum for discussion to be held on campus. There was also a lack of interest among students to discuss religion-related issues. Unlike ethnic issues, students do not often discuss religious issues from political and social perspectives. The discussion usually focuses on religious philosophies, doctrines, and creeds. Because of this, the discussion about religion-related issues on campus is usually among ingroup members. Students also mentioned other reasons that contributed to limiting discussing religion-related issues among ingroup members. The first reason is associated with the common saying *hager yegara new; hayimanot yegil new*, which literally means “a country belongs to all; a religion is a private affair”. Although this basically emphasizes the freedom to profess a religion of one’s own choice, it has been blamed for a lack of interest in discussing religious issues particularly with religious outgroup members. The second reason is related to time and place for discussing religious issues. Students mentioned that in campus life, religious issues are not like other

issues which they can discuss any time and everywhere. They often discuss religious issues on the way to and at religious places, after attending religious services or programs at churches or mosques, and during religious gatherings such as group prayer and religious festivals.

From my experience, we usually discuss religion-related issues when we go to church and after we attend some religious programs. But there are also some situations which invite to discuss religion-related issues, for example, news reports on television, but I don't think that many students do that. (ST20)

I am here to study and I prioritize discussing my studies and social issues related to campus life. This does not mean that I am not interested in discussing religion-related issues. I often do that with my friends when we have a small religious gathering or when we go to church. (ST25)

In all the above mentioned situations, students are usually with individuals from their own religious group, and this implies that the discussions are only with ingroup members. The third reason is related to the objective of the discussion, high values to one's own religion, and students' emotional, rigid, and ethnocentric behavior.

I know most students do not want to discuss religion, especially if you are from a different religious background. When I was a freshman, I did not agree with this idea, and I usually tried to discuss and tell them what the Bible says. But now I understand that it is difficult to do that because many students are emotional and they insult and even threaten to beat you. So I have decided not to discuss unless the initiative first comes from them. (ST11)

There are students who are religious fanatics. Discussing religious issues with these students is very difficult because they want you to be only a listener. When I try to tell them about my religion or what I feel about their religion, they belittle or say something very annoying about my religion. This happened to me many times. So, what is the need to discuss religious issues with someone from another religion? To get more angry? Or to lose friendship? Or to get into trouble? It is better not to discuss religious issues with students from other religious groups because I don't know who is interested not only to tell about his religion but also to listen about my religion. (ST17)

We all believe that our religion is the right one and that is why we are members of that religion. I don't see the need to discuss about religion-related issues with

people from different religious groups because I know they are not going to accept what I say and I am not going to accept what they say. (ST25)

The above excerpts indicate that when students discuss religious-related issues with outgroup members, their main objective seems to be to preach or show that their religion is the right one or the better one. Everyone believes that his or her religion is the right one, and trying to tell someone otherwise makes them very emotional and leads the discussion in unwanted directions. In the focus groups, students mentioned different situations in which the religious discussions between more religious students or fanatic members of different religious groups became contemptuous and created religious tensions. Such situations seem to have created an unfavorable environment for frequent and meaningful religion-related discussions among students from different religious backgrounds.

In order to avoid problems that arise from religion-related discussions and maintain positive intergroup relations, students often deliberately avoid or ignore discussion of religion-related issues with outgroup members. Research indicates that “mutual ignorance of the exact religious ideas of the other faith” is one of the factors contributing to the positive relationships between Muslims and Christians in Ethiopia (Abbink, 2011, p. 259). This shows that avoidance and ignorance have been the norms or strategies used by the wider Ethiopian society. When students discuss religion-related issues with religious outgroup members, they limit the discussion to general facts that do not require or invite to further explanation.

6.2. Ethnic and Religious Tension and Conflict on Campus

There are contexts in which the terms tension and conflict are used interchangeably. Although there is a point where these terms intersect, they are not necessarily the same. In this study, tension refers to emotions and acts of great disagreement between individuals or groups that range from abusive remarks to verbal assault. On the other hand, conflict refers to outright confrontation that usually involves physical assaults between individuals or groups. Tension is a situation that potentially but not necessarily

leads to conflict. In this study, ethnic conflict refers to a situation in which one of the individuals or groups involved in the conflict described the issue in ethnic terms regardless of the actual cause of the conflict (Wolff, 2006).

Conflict is inevitable in any society throughout the world. However, ethnically diverse society is widely regarded as more conflict prone than other societies. Several authors acknowledge the potency of ethnicity as a source of conflict, but they argue vehemently that ethnic diversity does not necessarily lead to conflict (Ryan, 1995). In countries like Ethiopia, whose modern history is characterized by internal conflicts (Keller, 2002; Valfort, 2007) and where ethnicity is at the center of the administrative and political system, ethnic diversity can potentially become a platform for ethnically motivated conflicts (Abbay, 2004.)

6.2.1. Ethnic tension and conflict

Research indicates that Ethiopia is one of the countries where the “most important tensions in the world could be found” (Reynal-Querol, 2002, p. 29). Despite the introduction of an ethnic-based federal system that intends to address ethnic and other longstanding political and societal problems, there are several ethnic conflicts in different parts of the country because of ethnic boundaries, ethnic identities, scarce resources and power rivalry (Aalen, 2011; African Rally for Peace and Development [ARPD], 2008; EHRC, 2009; Weldemariam, 2009; Teferi, 2012). Universities are one of the contexts where ethnic tensions and conflicts occur. Study indicates that although it was rare, ethnic tension and conflict among university students in Ethiopia started in the late 1960s at HSIU (Balsvik, 1985). But now there are several ethnic tensions and conflicts among students in public universities (Adamu & Zellelew, 2007; ARPD, 2008; Asmamaw, 2012; Habitegiyorgis, 2010; Mekonnen & Endawoke, 2007; Zellelew, 2010).

BDU is one of the public universities in Ethiopia where ethnic tension and conflict have been occurring. Because of the ethnic conflicts in the University, teaching-learning was interrupted, University property was damaged, and students were physically assaulted, suspended and expelled from the University. Both documents and conflict

stories from participants indicated that most ethnic conflicts in BDU are between three ethnic groups – Amhara, Oromo, and Tigre.

If I correctly remember, ethnic conflicts have been occurring in this university since the early 2000s. There may have been ethnic conflicts between different groups that were not reported and significantly affected the University's activities, but those which became public and required the intervention of the University management and board or the federal and regional police were between Amhara and Tigre, or Oromo and Tigre, or Amhara and Oromo. (TE2)

In this university conflict among students occurs at different times. For instance, this year we have dealt with several small conflicts between different ethnic groups. When we look at the major conflicts, they are usually between Tigre, Amhara and Oromo. However, in the last two years, Gambella students have also been involved in ethnic conflicts. (STA2)

Most ethnic-based conflicts are between Amhara, Tigre, and Oromo. From ethnic minorities only Gambella students are involved in this kind of things. The other groups have never participated in ethnic conflict, and I don't think they even thought about it. (ST3)

As individuals that come from different cultural backgrounds, disagreements on different issues are anticipated and these may sometimes lead to tension and conflict between individuals. Research shows that the rare ethnic tension and conflict among university students in the 1960s was between Amhara and Tigre “who harbored the strongest antagonism toward each other, rooted in the fact that the Amharas had won the historical struggle for political supremacy” (Balsvik, 1985, p.281). Students and staff indicated that although there are several individual disputes in which ethnic minority students are involved, they are not involved in ethnic conflicts. The only exception to this is Gambella students. After getting this information, I was interested to know why the major ethnic tensions and conflicts on campus are often between Amhara, Oromo, and Tigre students. The answer to this question is not simple and direct, but in one way or another it is related to Ethiopian history and the political system.

For most of the modern history of Ethiopia, the Amhara was the cultural and political dominant ethnic group. This has changed and since 1991 the Tigre has become the political dominant ethnic group. This indicates that the Oromo has been a political

minority ethnic group although it is numerically the largest ethnic group in the country. This has created a politically motivated superior/inferior dichotomy, and high polarization among these ethnic groups (Mengisteab, 2001). Ethiopia is one of those countries in the world which rank high in the Ethnic Polarization index (Montalvo & Reynal-Querol, 2005). The ethnic federalism seems to have facilitated ethnic polarization and a politically motivated superior/inferior dichotomy, which in turn increased ethnocentric attitudes among some ethnic groups. The ethnic polarization has also facilitated the ethnicization of Ethiopian politics, which generated increasing grievances among ethnic groups (Valfort, 2007). Students mentioned that the ethnic polarization and the political rivalry between Amhara, Oromo, and Tigre is one of the major factors that contributed to the ethnic tensions and conflicts between students from these groups.

There are different things which create disagreement between us [students]. When we fail to peacefully resolve those disagreements, we may fight. I think fighting among students who come from different backgrounds and live together is not unusual. But what I have noticed here [in BDU] is that even minor fallouts between Amhara, Tigre, and Oromo students immediately become an ethnic issue. I think there is no reason for this other than the clear political rivalry between these ethnic groups. We know that there is a historical rivalry between these groups which has increased since the current government assumed power. (ST22)

Teachers also mentioned that the administrative and political system in the country is the main reason behind the ethnic tensions and conflicts between Amhara, Oromo, and Tigre students.

I have been teaching in this university for more than 20 years. More than ever before, now it is almost common to hear ethnic conflict between students. As I told you earlier, the conflicts in this university are usually between Amhara, Tigre, and Oromo students. The conflicts may start because of something very trivial and personal problems, but they immediately become ethnic issues. This is what students have unknowingly learned from this government. (TE5)

Before this government came to power in 1991, I was a university student and also a teacher. During my time as a student at Addis Ababa University, there were several conflicts between students, but I don't remember even one conflict which was labeled as ethnic. Surprisingly enough, since this government came to power, ethnic tensions and conflicts among university students have become very

common particularly between Tigre, Amhara, and Oromo. This shows that the current problem [ethnic tensions and conflicts] is because of the government's ethnically divisive political system. (TE6)

Representatives of the SU and the APC stated that it is easy to resolve individual conflicts among ethnic minorities or between ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities because the reasons for the conflicts are not usually complicated and politicized. However, even though the main cause of the conflict is similar, it is not easy to resolve individual conflicts between ethnic majority students because they usually become complicated and politicized, and involve other members of the ethnic groups in conflict. This indicates a catalyst that changes the main rationale for the conflicts and makes it an ethnic group issue. Based on the historical relationship among these ethnic groups, the current political system in the country, and participants' responses, it seems possible to argue that the ethnic politics in the country is the main catalyst for the ethnic tensions and conflicts among the three groups.

The other group which involved in ethnic conflicts is Gambella. Participants stated that this is a new occurrence which is growing. A decade ago, let alone to fight with other students, the presence of Gambella students was not well noticed because of their small number in the University. Teachers and managers noted that the number of Gambella students has increased in the last ten years. As indicated in Chapter 2, this is as a result of an increase in access to higher education and an affirmative action policy that allows students from specific ethnic and social groups to get admission to higher education with a lesser mark than the pass mark set for a particular year. Staff stated that since 2010, they have received several complaints and reports about ethnic conflicts in which Gambella students were involved. A manager said that "some of them [Gambella students] feel that they are undermined and marginalized because of their [skin] color, which is not true" (MA1). According to this manager, there is not enough and specific reason for Gambella students to fight with other students in the University. Although fighting should not be taken as a solution to any problem among students, Gambella students insisted that they had good reason to fight and that was marginalization. They

felt that they are marginalized by students from other ethnic groups for two reasons. The first reason is their skin color³⁶.

When we go in a group, they [other students] stare at us as if we are completely different people. When we talk in our language, they also say that ‘what are these people talking’ or something like that. I didn’t hear them saying this, but I can feel it from the way they react immediately after they look at us. I think all this is because of our [skin] color because that is the only thing which makes us a bit different from them. (ST4)

There are students who consider us as strangers. We want to establish friendship with different people, but most of them [students from other ethnic groups] are not interested in that. If they are honest and tell you the truth, all this happens only because of our [skin] color; otherwise we are all Ethiopians with different languages and cultures. (ST22)

Students from other ethnic groups explained that it is not difficult to identify Gambella students based on a combination of different characteristics such as skin color, height and hair, but they outrightly refuted the accusations by Gambella students and blamed them for isolating themselves and creating problems merely based on what they think, not what students from other ethnic groups think, believe, and do.

I have a very good friend from Gambella, but most Gambella students do not easily interact and make friends with other students. They think that we marginalize them because of their [skin] color but that is not true. That is what they think not what we do. (ST5)

I know what most Gambella students think about their relationship with other students. They feel that they are marginalized, and it is because of their skin color. I don’t know why they think like that. Skin color is not an issue in Ethiopia. It is for the first time that I heard an Ethiopian complaining about discrimination based on skin color in Ethiopia. (ST20)

The above data shows that the Gambella students’ assumptions about others and how others perceive them seem to have negatively influenced their interactions and

³⁶Racially, all Ethiopians are black, but the society has its own category of color based on skin complexion. This includes *key* (red), *yekey dama* (light red), *teyim* (light/chocolate brown), *tikur* (black/dark), and *betam tikur* (deep black/dark). Based on this, the Gambella falls in the last category.

socialization and at times led to conflicts. The second alleged reason for marginalization according to Gambella students is a sense of inequality. Gambella students thought that students from other ethnic groups do not consider them equal because they entered higher education came through the affirmative action admission system. This supposition is refuted by managers and students from other ethnic groups because, first, students did not know which individual students in BDU benefited from the affirmative admissions to higher education. Second, it was not only Gambella students, but also students from other ethnic and social groups who are qualified to benefit from the affirmative action admissions. Third, coming from Gambella region did not necessarily indicate that all students benefited from the affirmative action admissions because there are Gambella students whose EHEEE scores are enough to get admission based on the regular pass mark set by MoE. One manager regarded this as a baseless allegation and stated that this is what the beneficiaries themselves thought about.

We have never received any complaint about marginalization based on the admission criteria. This is a completely fabricated rumor. There are very few students who benefit from affirmative action admission, and students do not exactly know the individual beneficiaries. I also don't know who benefited from that unless I see the individuals' records. I think associating admission with inequality is something that the beneficiaries themselves think and also believe that other students think likewise. (MA4)

Students from other ethnic groups associated the conflict with language problems and Gambella students' names and behavior. With regard to language, a student said, "When we talk with our friends about something which makes us laugh, they think that we are laughing at them. This is may be because they do not understand Amharic" (ST8). Communication misunderstandings that result from language can be a source of conflict, but this has not been mentioned as a source of conflict among other ethnic groups even if they do not understand Amharic or have very low Amharic proficiency. The other reason which is related to laughing was Gambella students' names. Laughing at one's name is very disrespectful and offensive, and at times it may become a cause of conflict. Even though students from other ethnic groups refuted Gambella students' accusations about marginalization because of their skin color, they accepted that there are few students who laugh at Gambella students' names, which they considered funny.

They may think that we [students from other ethnic groups] hate and marginalize them. They may also think we laugh at them because of their [skin] color. All this is far from the truth. But I want to tell you that there are students who laugh when they hear some names of Gambella students. They think that they are funny. (ST6)

Gambella students are aware of this, and they are offended by this action.

We all are Ethiopian, but we have our own culture and language which makes us different from the others. Our culture is reflected in our language, dress, way of life, and names. As far as I know, in most cultures people give names to their children for different reasons. This is not different in our culture. Every name has its own origin and meaning. What is saddening here is that there are students who laugh when they hear our name. Our name is different from their name, but it is not laughable. (ST 22)

The ethnic conflict between Gambella students and students from other ethnic groups was also associated with the behavior of the former. Students and managers described Gambella students as “hot tempered” and “aggressive”. According to a manager, “most students that come from Gambella region do not behave well. ...they often go in groups and attack other students especially when they get drunk. ...they are very hot tempered in their behavior” (MA1). Although all the above mentioned reasons seem to have contributed to the ethnic conflicts between Gambella students and students from other ethnic groups, Gambella students’ assumption about how other students perceive them seems to stand out from the others.

6.2.2. Religious tension

Although there have been very infrequent conflicts between different religious groups, relatively they have peacefully coexisted throughout the history of modern Ethiopia. Different Ethiopian arts, mainly music and literature, have also echoed the noteworthy relationships and mutual understanding among different religious groups, which goes to the extent of celebrating each other’s religious holidays together. Yet there is a concern among students that this may not be the case in the future because of the rising religious extremism in the country. Reports also indicate that since the mid-2000s, there have been

some serious religious tensions and conflicts in the country (USDS, 2007; 2011; Weldemariam, 2009), and the tension has been exacerbating since 2011. This was seen as “a wholly new phenomenon and a threat to the peace, stability and independence of the country” (Medhane Tadesse quoted in Integrated Regional Information Networks, 2003). Religious issues were not problems in universities in Ethiopia in the past, but nowadays, they become one of the problems that universities are dealing with.

In BDU, participants mentioned that so far there is no confrontation among students which is considered as religious conflict. They also stated that religious tension was almost non-existent in the University until recent years. In spite of students’ positive perceptions of mutual understanding, respect and relationships between different religious groups, the religious tension on campus is increasing because of the religious tension in the country. The two major factors contributing to the growing religious tension on campus are issues related to religious practices and activities on campus, and the guideline to regulate “worship, dress code, and food etiquette” in higher education and vocational training institutions.

Religious practices and activities

There are several group religious practices and activities in BDU. For example, Orthodox students have different monthly religious programs and other activities on religious holidays. Muslim students have a group prayer program every day. Other religious groups such as Catholics and Protestants do not have regular religious practices on campus. When students describe their campus experiences in relation to religion, they have mentioned different religious practices and activities which somehow seem to have created disagreements and competitive relationship, which in turn contributed to the religious tension on campus. Some of the religious practices and activities on campus are the following.

Religious festivals

There are several major religious festivals held in Ethiopia among different religious groups. BDU acknowledges religious holidays that have official recognition from the government³⁷, but it does not involve itself in celebrating religious festivals except for providing special meals³⁸ on some of the Muslim and Christian holidays. Christians celebrate different religious holidays on campus particularly Christmas and Easter. In these holidays, the University provides special meals for all students at least at lunchtime. However, there are students who end fasting and eat after church service at about 3 a.m. For these students, the University provides the food stuffs, but it does not provide services (cooking and serving) because it is outside regular working hours. Therefore, these students cook and serve themselves. According to students, although it is only Orthodox students who participate in cooking and serving the food, students from other religious groups such as Protestants also participate in the early morning feast. There has been disagreement between Orthodox and other Christians on this kind of celebration. Although Orthodox students understand that Christmas and Easter are holidays for all Christians, they argue that the morning celebration and feast is more “theirs” than “others”.

They [non-Orthodox Christians] may think that we are greedy or something like that, but the main issue is not about food. The early morning feast is part of our religious celebration. In this celebration, we have short religious education, group prayer, and group singing. They don't participate in all these things. They just come to eat and after that they leave the hall or seat and laugh in our religious activities. That is why I don't want them to come. I know as a Christian they also celebrate Christmas and Easter, but it is not in the way we celebrate. (ST20)

Protestants do not fast the way we do and the early morning feast during religious holidays is not what they do when at home. If you look at the Protestants outside the University, they do not eat at 3 a.m. but Orthodox people do that. This is part of our religious culture. That is why we cook and serve ourselves. If we are not

³⁷ The religious holidays which are considered as national holidays include *Meskel* (Finding of the True Cross), Christmas, Epiphany, Good Friday, Easter, Moulid (the Prophet's Birthday), Id Al Adaha (Arafa), and Id Al Fitr (Ramadan).

³⁸ Special meal refers to a meal which is different from the regular menu and provided to students only during different religious feasts.

doing this, they will never do it because they don't have this kind of celebration in their religion. The morning feast is not religious for them. They come to eat and annoy us. (ST19)

In the focus groups, Orthodox students even went to the extent of claiming that Christmas and Easter holidays are more “theirs” than “others”, and they mentioned different historical accounts and the Orthodox calendar to justify their claim. They argued that Christmas, Easter and other Christian holidays have been celebrated among Orthodox Christians since the fourth century according to Orthodox rituals and practices. In addition, the Christian holidays in Ethiopia are celebrated according to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church calendar, which is different from the days on which Western Christians (Protestants/Lutherans) celebrate Christmas and Easter³⁹. On the other hand, Protestants argued that both Christmas and Easter are Christian holidays, and as Christians they have the right to participate in the celebration of these festivals which are sponsored by the University.

First of all, I want to tell you that I do not participate in the early morning feast. But they [Orthodox] should not think that we don't have the right to participate or it is only their program. The food is prepared from our common budget. It is not covered by the Orthodox Church. If they think that it is religious, why do they do that in the cafeteria? They should do that in the church or somewhere else outside the University. (ST11)

The SU representative also stated that on Christian holidays there are problems between members of Orthodox and Protestant religious groups, and this is increasing over time. One of the incidents mentioned by the SU representative is the 2011 Easter festival. That day, there were heated arguments and exchanges of verbal abuse between Orthodox and Protestant students when some of the early morning feast organizers prevented Protestant students they knew from entering the cafeteria. Although this problem was resolved immediately, students mentioned that it is still a point of contention between members of the two religious groups.

³⁹ Ethiopia has its own calendar which has 12 months of 30 days each, plus five or six days (in leap year) which is known as *Pagume* (sometime it is also known as the 13th month). There is seven/eight years difference between the Ethiopian and the Gregorian calendar. The Ethiopian New Year begins on September 1 (September 11 in the Gregorian calendar).

Problems related to religious festivals are not only between different religious groups, but also within one religious group. According to the SU representative and staff, since 2011 there has been disagreement between two Muslim groups over the celebration of Moulid (the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed). One group argued that Muslims should not celebrate Moulid because there is nothing in the Holy Quran which states that it should be celebrated. The other group argued that it is not a new thing for Ethiopian Muslims to celebrate Moulid. The opposing group asked the SU to stop any activities related to the celebration of Moulid on campus. But the SU was not able to do so because it is one of the religious holidays recognized by the government, and it has been celebrated on campus among Muslim students for several years.

Display of religious quotes

The other religious activity that was considered as a factor contributing to the religious tension on campus is posting religious quotes on the cafeteria walls. During religious festivals such as Christmas and Easter, Orthodox students usually actively participate in different activities such as assisting cafeteria workers in cleaning the cafeteria, arranging chairs and tables, and decorating the cafeteria. As part of these activities, they also post various religious quotes on the cafeteria walls. Although most of the quotes are related to the religious holiday, some of them embodied Orthodox Christianity and are points of difference between Orthodox and other Christian faiths. Protestants were not happy to see these quotes in the cafeteria. In response they started posting quotes which are often referred to as the main differences with the Orthodox Christian faith. Orthodox students argued that posting religious quotes is part of decorating the cafeteria for the religious holiday and it is up to the organizers to choose which quotes to post. They considered the Protestants' reaction to be jealousy.

Based on the information that we had from former graduates and cafeteria workers, it has been Orthodox students who decorate the cafeteria and post religious quotes, and we are doing the same. It is not a new thing. But now, Protestants are jealous of this and they also want to do that. If they want to do that, they have to also participate in cleaning and other works we do. (ST6)

On the other hand, Protestant students argued that Orthodox students deliberately post religious quotes which are not common to all Christians. Therefore, they started posting quotes which Orthodox students do not like because of the differences in the doctrines of the two religions. Protestant students considered this as exercising religious equal rights.

Both Christmas and Easter are Christian holidays. Therefore, it is our [Protestant's] holiday and also their [Orthodox] holiday. Who gave the right to post quotes only to them? We know they are numerically dominant, but religious right is not about number. We both have equal rights. Thus, they can post quotes which they think are good for them as Christians, and we can also post quotes which we think are good for us as Christians. (ST11)

The above excerpts indicated that both groups opted to take extreme positions rather than discussing and finding a solution to their differences. This activity created heightened debate among members of Orthodox and Protestant students. The SU tried to negotiate with the two groups and put an end to the debate, but it was not possible. Thus, in consultation with representatives of religious groups on campus, the SU banned posting religious quotes at any time including religious holidays, and took the responsibility for posting impartial religious holiday greetings such as "Happy Christmas" and "Happy Easter". Against what has been agreed, students from both groups continued posting religious quotes during holidays. Nevertheless, the SU representatives immediately removed all quotes regardless of their contents.

Use of notice boards

Orthodox students often use notice boards around the cafeteria and students' lounge when they want to notify their group members about some religious issues. Protestants also use these notice boards, but they often use their contacts to announce some religious issues to their members. Muslims have a separate cafeteria, and they have been using the notice board inside the cafeteria. Since 2010, however, Muslims also started using the notice boards around the cafeteria. Students reported that sometimes members of one religious group remove or tear the notices of other groups or post their notices on top of the notices

of other groups. Christian students considered this as deliberate provocation to upset them and create religious tension on campus.

They [Muslims] have the right to use whichever notice board they want, but we should ask the intention behind that. I think the best place for Muslims to post religious notices is their own cafeteria because every Muslim uses that cafeteria. No disrespect to our Muslim friends, what they are doing in relation to this is unnecessary competition which creates division and tension between Christian and Muslim. (ST14)

But Muslim students argued that the reason to use the notice boards around the cafeteria is to reach non-cafe⁴⁰ Muslim students.

I don't know about the previous practice, but the reason why we want to use the notice board outside the cafeteria is to reach non-cafe [Muslim] students. I don't know why some [Christian] students see this as a strange. By the way, I want to mention that there is no notice board reserved for religious purposes or for a certain religious group. We can use which we think is good for us. (ST10)

This seems a minor problem which religious groups can resolve through peaceful discussion. Discussing such issues in detail can help them understand each other's perspective and reach agreement on how to best use notice boards. However, as mentioned earlier (Section 6.1.2), there is lack of a culture of discussion on religion-related issues and this seem to have contributed to students' failure to solve minor problems which potentially contribute to religious tensions on campus. During the data collection period, the SU were discussing with representatives of these religious groups to address the issue.

Group singing and prayer

There are more religious holidays and thus religious activities in Orthodox than in other religions in Ethiopia. One of the religious activities that Orthodox students have is group singing. They often sing in groups during major religious holidays such as the Finding of the True Cross, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, and several annual celebrations of Saints,

⁴⁰Non-cafe students are students who do not use the university's meals service.

Martyrs, and Holy People. On these days, students sing religious songs in groups all the way from church to the University. They also often sing inside the University compound. This has been practiced for several years, but now students from other religious groups are not happy about it. Some Orthodox students also did not see the need to do that on campus, and they considered this activity unnecessary and superficial. By understanding the situation and its potential consequences, the SU has prohibited group singing and told students to finish every spiritual part of religious holidays outside the campus. However, the group singing has continued during the religious holidays celebrated while the data for this study was being collected.

As discussed above, most religious practices and activities on campus seem to have contributed to the religious tension on campus in different ways. However, there is one religious practice which does not belong to this. This is group and individual prayer which students repeatedly mentioned as an example to show the mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance among different religious groups. BDU does not provide rooms or places for religious purposes. Thus students have to find dormitories or places by themselves and this entails the goodwill and cooperation of students from different religious and non-religious backgrounds. According to students, this is not a problem because there is a mutual understanding and respect among different religious group members. For instance, Muslim students have allocated places around dormitories for group prayer. These places are recognized and respected by members of other religious groups.

We [Christians and Muslims] have our own religious life and usually we do not interfere with each other's religious affairs. I think we are more cooperative in this regard. ...There are two places that Muslims use for group prayer. One of these is found very close to our apartment. Even if it is a common space, as they [Muslims] are using it for religious purpose, we do not cross this place or do anything else there. I am not sure if we can call it a religious place, but it is a place reserved for religious purposes. (ST5)

We [Muslims] have a positive relationship with Christians. We are living very peacefully and respectfully, and this is reflected in many ways. For example, when we pray in groups, Orthodox, Protestant and also other students who pass by that area keep quiet not to disturb us. This is not something that we discussed and

agreed on. They do it because of the mutual understanding and the respect that they have for us and for our religion. (ST26)

In the focus groups, Muslim students mentioned that they prefer to pray outside dormitories for two reasons. First, in Islam, although prayer can be in a group or in an individual manner, group prayer is preferred. However, almost all dormitories lack space for group prayer. Second, the place and mat for prayer need to be neat and clean, but most students do not properly clean their dormitory and this makes it difficult to pray in dormitories. However, when individuals miss the group prayer for various reasons, some of them pray in their dormitories. As students and staff stated, in dormitories that accommodate more than two students, it is not possible to find students who are all Muslims. Therefore, in order to pray in dormitories, Muslim students need to get the consent of their roommates who are from different religious and non-religious backgrounds. Muslim students stated that often this is not a problem. In relation to this, one Muslim student said that “We do not usually pray in the dormitory, but when we do, Orthodox and Protestant students understand our case. If possible, they leave the room for us. If not, they keep quiet until we finish our prayer” (ST26).

Similarly, when Orthodox students have some religious practices, Muslims and other Christian students are cooperative in different ways. The monthly religious program in the name of Saints, Martyrs or Holy People is one of the group religious practices among the Orthodox students. This religious program is usually practiced among students living in the same flat or building. The hosting responsibility rotates among members of that particular group. As there is no designated room or place that can be used for this purpose, the program is organized in different dormitories which are more convenient. Students mentioned that their first choice is dormitories where all students are Orthodox. If this is not possible, they look for a dormitory where there are only few students from other religions.

In our group, we monthly celebrate St. Michael’s day. The program includes group prayer, religious education, and group singing. It takes one to two hours. The dormitory that we choose for this program depends on the religious composition of students in dormitories. We usually prefer a dorm where most students are Orthodox. But it is usually not a problem if there are Protestant or

Catholic or Muslim students because they understand us and are willing to cooperate. (ST14)

When one of my Orthodox roommates organizes a religious program in our dormitory, I leave the dorm and go to the library or space⁴¹ or somewhere until they finish their program. ...I believe that as long as we live here, we have to cooperate with each other, and also appreciate and respect religious activities which are part of our campus life. (ST2)

When Orthodox students carried out the monthly programs, the group prayer and singing are easily heard by students living in the neighboring dormitories. However, according to staff and students, there is no complaining from students about this. Although it is not practiced by many Orthodox students, they also had mealtime group prayer when they pray with low voices not to disturb other students. Protestants also have mealtime individual prayer, but they pray silently. Muslim students were not able to comment on this activity because, as mentioned earlier, Muslims and Christians use different cafeterias. There is also individual prayer among Christian students, but they do not need the consent of students from other religious groups because they usually pray silently on their beds without disturbing others and without using common spaces in dormitories.

The university did not give any official recognition to the above mentioned group religious practices and activities on campus. This does not, however, mean that it is not aware of the religious practices and activities which are taking place openly both in and outside dormitories. All managers knew about it, but so far, they are not dealing with it.

We know that there are different group religious practices in the University, but this is common in all public universities. Although there are some attempts, so far, there has been no major action taken in relation to religious-related activities. But now we are ready to deal with that after we soon get the new guideline approved by the University board. (MA2)

Another manager also said “I think the best solution [to address religion-related activities] will be the expected guideline. Without that, it is very problematic to deal with religious-related activities on campus” (MA1). In the next section, the proposed guideline

⁴¹In this context, the term ‘space’ refers to classrooms that students use to study during the night.

to regulate worship, dress code, and food etiquette in higher education, and participants' view on the guideline is discussed.

The MoE guideline to regulate worship, dress code, and food etiquette

With the purpose of ensuring peaceful learning and teaching in higher education and vocational training institutions and restraining illegal activities taking place in the guise of religion, the MoE has developed a guideline to regulate worship, dress code, and food etiquette in higher education and vocational training institutions (MoE, 2011b). In order to achieve this objective, the guideline stated several issues that should be taken care of on campus. Some of these include:

- Higher education and vocational training institutions have the obligation to enhance religious equality, culture of trust and respect, and positive relations among students.
- Students cannot wear clothes that have pictures or writings that denounce or denigrate the glory and honor of other religions.
- For security related reason female Muslim students are not allowed to wear niqab, but they can wear hijab⁴².
- Students cannot ask HEIs a place for any kind of religious activities, and it is not allowed to use HEIs' premises for religious purpose.
- No events in HEIs should be related to religion.
- Religious festivals and programs are not allowed in HEIs.
- Any kind of religious group practices and activities in HEIs are not allowed. This includes group preaching, group singing, group prayer and worship.
- It is not allowed to distribute religious related print and electronic sources for religious publicity.
- Students cannot ask compensation or money for the food budget which they were not able to use because of fasting and prayer.

⁴² Niqab is a veil for covering the hair and face except for the eyes. It can also cover the eyes if the material is transparent. Hijab is a headscarf for covering the hair and neck, but not the face.

- Mealtime group prayer is not allowed in the cafeteria.

The guideline does not mention any religious group in relation to religious practices and activities, dress code, and food etiquette that are not allowed in higher education and vocational training institutions. The only exception to this is the one which refers to female Muslim students. However, it is not difficult to infer which statement refers to which religious group. For instance, according to the religious practices and activities in BDU, Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses are not allowed to distribute religious related printed materials. Orthodox students are not allowed to organize different monthly religious programs in dormitories, to pray in groups during (before and after) mealtimes, and to sing in groups which they often perform during religious holidays. Muslims are not allowed to pray in groups, and female Muslim students are not allowed to wear niqab. The guideline was discussed among university officials at national level. It was also discussed among the campus community (student, teachers and staff) in BDU at different times.

Participants' views about the purpose of the guideline

Participants of this study have various views about the guideline both supporting and opposing its objectives and some of the justifications. Muslim students are the ones who strongly opposed the guideline and questioned the motives behind it. In the focus group, they argued that there is not even a single religious conflict in the University that requires the government to deal with and develop such a strict guideline. They stated that if the government really wants to address some of the problems among students, it should develop a guideline in relation to ethnicity not religion. They also argued emphatically that their group prayer does not affect the campus community and the University's activities. For them, ruling out group prayer, which is their daily religious practice, was unjustifiable and totally unacceptable in any way.

Muslim teachers also argued that the government did not understand or deliberately ignored the religious values of and reasons for group prayer and wearing niqab. Explaining the reason for wearing niqab, one Muslim teacher said that "females wear niqab because of positive attitude toward modesty" (TE1). For different reasons, most

students from other religious groups, and also some Muslim students did not oppose the ban on wearing niqab. According to Christian students, it is difficult to easily identify and socialize with individuals who wear niqab. They also stated that it is difficult and uncomfortable to have personal and academic discussions with someone whom they cannot properly see. According to some Muslim students, wearing niqab among Ethiopian Muslims is not very common and as such a religious issue. These students also considered niqab as a sign of modesty, which seems more personal interest than religious obligation. Based on this perspective, they did not oppose banning wearing niqab on campus. However, they firmly contended the security reasons mentioned in the guideline for banning wearing niqab on campus. Both Muslim teachers and students reasonably argued that there is no single case in the history of Ethiopian universities that supports the government ban on wearing niqab on the basis of security concern. They also argued that if wearing niqab is considered a security threat, then the government should officially ban wearing niqab across the country, not only in the universities.

Muslim students and teachers thought that the government is interfering in religious affairs and exacerbating the situation. They also thought that the guideline is a strategy targeted to weaken and jeopardize Islam.

Generally, the guideline has antireligious sentiment that develops a sense of atheism, and it particularly weakens Islam. ...I am not against secularism, but we should take into consideration our country's history and the current reality in relation to religious issues. In our country's context, I think the concept of secularism should be a platform in which all religious groups perceived and treated equally. It should not be abandoning one's religious practices and weakening the religion. (TE1)

We cannot live without religion. When we live with our religion, we should strictly follow what is stated in the Holy Quran. Muslims are encouraged to pray in a group and in mosque because it has more spiritual and social benefit than praying alone and outside mosque. The mosques are far from the University, and it is very difficult to go there and come to campus because we have classes almost the whole day. The only option that we have is to pray in a group here [on campus]. Obliterating this is against the religious freedom and against the constitutional right of religious groups. Such decisions systematically distance Muslims from their religion, weaken and it may even gradually exterminate Islam from the country. (ST26)

In the focus group, Muslim students stated that the guideline affects Muslims more than Christians. Their justification in relation to this claim was, first, Muslims pray five times a day at defined times. Some of the prayers are at mid-day and at that time they cannot go to mosque because they usually have class and the mosques are not near to the University. However, most Christian students often pray early in the morning and late in the afternoon. So they can go to church without worrying about missing classes. Second, group prayer is a daily routine for Muslims, but not for Christians unless there is a religious program or event. On the other hand, Orthodox students argued that the guideline bans more religious practices and activities in their religion than in other religions. They mentioned that they will be affected almost by all abolished religious practices and activities except the dress code which particularly refers to female Muslim students. These include mealtime group prayer, monthly religious programs, religious festivals and celebrations in the cafeteria, and group singing during religious holidays. Although they are unhappy about the guideline, they thought that it is not biased or intended to weaken one religion and strengthen the other. They understood that the guideline targeted religious practices and activities on campus in general, not certain religious groups and their practices and activities.

I don't think there are religion-related problems that require the enforcement of such a strict guideline. If the University considers that there are some problems that need to be dealt with, it can address that by discussing with students and using its rules and regulations. Such a strict measure by the government is not good either for us or the University. ... I don't see any bias in the guideline because it indiscriminately bans religious activities on campus. (ST12)

Managers also stated that the guideline is impartial, and its main intention is to ensure secularism in HEIs and create a peaceful learning environment for all. They further argued that the guideline has no malicious intent towards a specific religion.

I read the guideline and also participated in the discussion forums. Every member of the University community has the right to criticize the guideline, but judging as biased is not fair and justifiable. You can look at the guideline. It does not focus on a particular religion and its followers. (MA5)

Protestant and Catholic students are not so much concerned about the guideline as their Orthodox and Muslim counterparts. This is not because the guideline favored or protected their religious practices and activities. It is rather because they have almost no religious practices and activities on campus. Protestants mentioned that they appreciate and tolerate some of the religious practices and activities of other religious groups, but some of the practices and activities are disturbing and annoying and they want them not to be exercised on campus.

We tolerate all religious practices by Orthodox and Muslim students though sometimes they disturb and affect our time management. For example, one day I want to sleep early in the evening and wake up at midnight to study when it is very quiet. But when my dorm mate told me that it is his turn to organize a religious program, I have to leave the dorm. This is not because I like or believe in the program. It is rather because of our social life on campus. If the University bans this kind of religious practices, I think it will not be disastrous. (ST17)

There are many religious practices that Orthodox students perform on campus. I don't want to criticize those practices from a religious viewpoint. But group singing should not be allowed because although they are often religious, some of the songs are used to criticize other religions. I have noticed that they [Orthodox students] do not sing these songs on their way from church to the University. They deliberately sing them in the university so that we hear them. (ST11)

In the focus group, Protestants stated that religious practices and activities either should not be allowed at all or all religious groups or should have equal rights to practice as they want. This includes organized preaching and group prayer in a certain place. Muslim and Orthodox students do not seem to favor totally banning religious practices and activities. They rather tend to suggest what religious practices and activities should be allowed and should not be allowed. In relation to this, one student, who is against banning all religious practices and activities, mentioned that the best solution is to identify and address religious practices and activities that create problems on campus.

We cannot deny that there are some problems related to religious practices and activities on campus, but banning all of them is not a good solution. It is like when there is an infection in your finger you don't cut off your hand. First, you try to treat the infection. If it is not curable and dangerous to other parts of your body, you decide to cut off your finger. Therefore, together with the University

managers, we need first to identify religious practices and activities that create problems, and try to find a solution for them. (ST9)

From what they see and hear from their students, teachers understood that there is unnecessary religious competition between different religious groups, and this is increasing year after year. Thus, regardless of the government's main intention and justification, they, except the Muslim teachers, argued that no group religious practices and activities should be allowed on campus because it negatively affects intergroup relations and somehow affects their studies. The staff also welcomed the guideline, and they are looking forward for its approval and implementation. They mentioned that the guideline will help them to deal with different problems which they were inconsistently and subjectively addressing as there were no specific rules or regulations in relation to religious practices and activities.

Managers stated that several reports have been made to student service providers and the SU about unnecessary religious competition, and religious tension on campus. They firmly believed that the guideline will bring these to an end and contribute to create an environment in which all students feel equal and focus on their studies. They also argued that even if it is not through this guideline, the University has the responsibility to effectively address its problems in some ways.

First, I want to tell you that this is a government institution and we are guided by and should implement government policies. This does not mean that we want to implement the guideline because it is only a government policy. We want to implement it because we believe that it helps addressing some of the problems in our university. It is the University's responsibility to address any problem that potentially affects the learning and teaching and students' campus life. (MA2)

The SU considered the guideline as a positive action that makes universities more secular. The APC also backed the general objective of the guideline which is to create a peaceful learning and teaching environment. However, it did not fully support the implementation strategy that disregards the contextual realities of universities. The APC argued that so far religious group practices and activities in BDU do not affect the learning and teaching activities and they are not a threat to peace and security on campus. Based on this argument, the APC was opposed to totally banning religious practices and

activities on campus without reviewing the contextual considerations and implications. It stated that emphasis should be placed on contextual implementation, and requested the University to study its own context before implementing the guideline.

In the focus groups, students argued that the religious practices and activities are not the main cause of the religious tension on campus. They rather considered the unnecessary competition between religious groups as reflections of the religion-related problems outside the University. Teachers and managers also tend to associate the religious tension on campus with the situation in the country.

What necessitated developing the guideline?

Based on participants' views regarding the guideline, and what is stated in the guideline, it seems that the guideline intends to regulate religious-related practices and activities in HEIs indiscriminately. However, as mentioned in the focus groups, arguably what worried and urged the government to develop the guideline does not seem to be the problems related to religious practices and activities in universities. It is perhaps the religious tension and conflict in the country. It is evident that religious tension is mounting in Ethiopia. At different times, the government stated that the main cause of religious tensions and conflicts in the country is religious extremism, which is supported by people aspiring unconstitutionally to government power, and external organizations such as the Arab Wahhabi missionaries, mainly from Saudi Arabia with plans to establish an Islamic republic in Ethiopia. According to Abbink (2011), who studied the emerging Muslim-Christian polemics in Ethiopia, this is "a new and potentially problematic dynamic [...] which may challenge mainstream believers, their inter-group social relations, and Ethiopian state policy" (p. 253). In order to deal with this problem, the government has developed short and long-term strategies. One of the long-term strategies includes introducing a new law concerning religious affairs that focuses on different public places. Referring to the public relations of the Ministry of Federal Affairs (MFA) plan, Abiye (2012) reported that,

In order to establish an orderly organized system of religious practice in the country and to promote smoother relations among diversified religious and racial

[ethnic] groups, the Ministry is considering a new guideline and proclamation that governs the public display of any religious pictures and proverbs and playing of hymn in public transportation outside religious sites. [...The new proclamation and guideline] bans any religious songs, pictures as well as proverbs from public place in a bid to deter causes of religion-based conflicts (p.3).

The report further stated that the MFA had organized a committee to study the situation and consider the possibilities of enacting the law. After the committee finishes its task, there will be detailed discussion and consultation among various stakeholders on the draft bill (Abiye, 2012). From this report, it is possible to understand and argue that this major strategy cannot be an immediate response to the gradually rising religious tension in the country. Therefore, the government seems to have sought other short-term strategies. One of these includes taking measures against people and institutions directly or indirectly involved in what the government considered to be a problem. Regardless of their significances in addressing religion-related problems in the country, some of the measures taken by the government include banning civic organizations which are accused of engaging in ‘illegal religious activities’, prosecuting 29 Muslim protest leaders for planning to commit terrorist activities or engaging in terrorism in the country, and airing a documentary titled *Jihadawi Harekat* (Holy War Movement) on state television with the purpose of showing the presence and threat of religious extremism in the country. The other measure that the government took to address the mounting religious tension in Ethiopia is banning different religious practices and activities in HEIs. Although most of the religion-related tensions and conflicts occurred outside the HEIs, previous experiences showed that students are very active in echoing societal activities and problems. The government is well aware of this, and it seems it wants to halt any potential religion-related tension and conflict on campus by enforcing a guideline⁴³.

6.2.3. Causes of ethnic and religious tension and conflict

In the above sub-sections (6.2.1 and 6.2.2), although emphasis has been given to factors contributing to ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts on campus, some causes of

⁴³ In 2013, the University implemented the guideline, and following that several Muslim students left the University in protest at not being allowed to hold group prayer and related issues.

ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts have also been partly discussed. This subsection focuses exclusively on different issues which are considered major causes of ethnic and religious tension and conflict on campus.

Ordinary disputes between individuals

Different ethnic conflict stories occurring at different times in the University indicated that individual disputes among members of different ethnic groups turn into ethnic conflicts. The stories showed that although the conflicts have an element of ethnic differences, at the beginning, they did not basically occur because of ethnic differences *per se*. It was often because of other causes, mainly ordinary disputes between individuals who have different views, attitudes, interests, and experiences. There are different conflict stories which illustrate this assertion, but I took only one case. This case was a conflict which started because of an ordinary dispute between two drunken and two other students. I selected this case because it was known and mentioned by most interviewees because of the physical and property damage it caused and its supposed political implications.

The following narration about the conflict is mainly based on the information obtained from managers, teachers, and documents. The conflict occurred in 2009, and it was initially between two Tigre and two Amhara freshmen students. The drunken Tigre students came to campus around 10 p.m. and started insulting the Amhara students who were on their way to dormitory. The Amhara students responded by insulting the Tigre students. This happened inside the campus close to the main gate of the University where campus police were on duty. When the campus police officers went to stop the confrontation, it was already involving other students from the two ethnic groups. Meanwhile, one of the two Tigre students tried to snatch the gun from the campus police officer. The campus police officer defended himself and hit the student with the butt of the gun. Then other campus police officer came and took the student. The campus police officers were from the Amhara ethnic group, and the Tigre students accused them of supporting students from their ethnic group. That evening, Tigre students met and discussed this issue. The next day it became a very complex ethnic issue that involved

many students from both ethnic groups. The University tried to calm down the situation through notification and discussion with students from both groups, but the tension escalated and went beyond the control of the University. Thus the University allowed the federal police to come in and calm the situation.

Although the conflict started because of an insult which is not related to ethnic differences, one manager said that the issue later became more complicated involving ethnicity and politics.

When we investigated the issue, we found that the conflict included an attitude of being superior to others which I think had some political implications. For example, Tigre students tend to think that ‘we are superior’. We got this information from the campus police officers, and individuals who understand Tigrigna language and attended the meeting held among Tigre students on the evening of the day that the conflict started. In the meeting, they were repeatedly saying that ‘we should show and confirm our superiority’. I don’t know how they developed such an ethnocentric attitude. I am not sure whether they came with that kind of thinking or developed it here. They also thought that ‘there is no one who had the confidence to penalize us because we had a backup from government’. On the other hand, the other group [Amhara] thought that ‘there is no government body that protects us’. We understood this from the reflections on the measures [suspension and dismissal] taken by the University against students who were found guilty. Some campus community members said ‘where did the University get the confidence to take this measure’ [to penalize Tigre students]. (MA6)

The above information clearly shows how ordinary disputes between individuals turn and become causes of ethnic conflict. In spite of the abovementioned and several other serious measures taken by the University, students continued to ethnicize personal disputes and fight each other. Teachers also stated that ethnicizing different issues has become a norm among students, and they seemed to believe that the ethnic-based federal and political system contributed to students’ misconceived ethnic and political orientation, which resulted in their ethnicizing various issues that affected the intergroup relations among students and also led to conflict. According to a teacher this is generally the consequence of “unhealthy ethnic politics” in the country.

When students from different backgrounds live and learn together, for different reasons there were, there are, and there will be disputes. This is inevitable. But nowadays, everything is seen through ethnic eyeglasses. Here, we should ask why students turn into an ethnic conflict scapegoat. For me, the answer is very simple. It is because of the unhealthy ethnic politics which emphasizes the difference and creates competition between ethnic groups. ...If we see the age of these [university] students, they are 18-21 years old. It has been 21 years since this government came to power. Therefore, these students grow up in this government's social and political system, and listening to ethnic differences and seeing ethnic tensions and conflicts. So what do we expect from this generation? ...In one way or another, the government should be blamed for the ethnic conflicts in the University. (TE6)

The conflict stories indicate that most conflict incidents first involve and become destructive to immediate individual participants and then to bystanders from the conflicting ethnic groups. Within a few hours, several students from the conflicting ethnic groups become involved in the conflict. Managers and teachers noted that once the ordinary dispute between individuals became ethnicized, the other students involved in the conflict do not ask or critically examine the rationality of the cause for the dispute. They just align with their group and participate in the conflict. This indicates students' lack of rationality and tolerance and their sensitivity to ethnic issues.

Prejudice, ethnocentrism, and stereotyping

As discussed in Section 6.1, there is not much discussion about ethnic and religion-related issues among students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Some of the reasons for this are associated with students' prejudicial, stereotypical and ethnocentric attitudes toward outgroup members. Students mentioned that when they discuss past or present ethnic and religion-related issues in the country, there are students who judge other groups and their members based on preconceived beliefs or from the perspective of their own ethnic or religious culture. There are also students who wanted to show that their religion is the right one or their ethnic group is better than the others in many ways. This infuriates students from the other groups, and it changes the useful discussion into irrational and out of focus arguments. Such prejudicial and ethnocentric

attitudes intensify emotional situations and lead to tension and at times to conflict. Students mentioned that although most tensions and conflicts that resulted from prejudicial and ethnocentric attitudes started incidentally during discussion, some of them are deliberately started by ethnic nationalist and religious fanatic students.

Last year, in our dormitory we were discussing how and when different religions were introduced to Ethiopia. The discussion was very interesting until one Pente disturbed us. First, he said ‘Orthodox people are proud of the history of their religion, but history cannot take people to the kingdom of heaven’. Though it was offensive, we ignored this comment and continued our discussion. He again said ‘religion is not about which one was introduced first to this country. Even though Orthodox is the first religion introduced to Ethiopia, some of its doctrine and teaching is out of what is stated in the Holy Bible and you have to think about that.’ We knew that he was saying this purposely to irritate us. At that time, one of our friends became furious and insulted him. He even wanted to fight with him. (ST7)

From this excerpt we can understand that in addition to prejudicial and ethnocentric attitudes, lack of tolerance and a culture of discussion among members of different groups also lead to and intensify tension and conflicts on campus.

Political stereotypical attitudes towards ethnic outgroup members were also mentioned as one of the causes for ethnic tension and conflict on campus. Political parties in Ethiopia including both the ruling party and most opposition parties are organized along ethnic lines (see Chapter 3). This provided a fertile ground for stereotyping an ethnic group to a certain political party. Labeling Oromo students who are not members of EPRDF as OLF⁴⁴, and labeling all Tigre students as TPLF/EPRDF are some of the examples mentioned by students. There are students from different ethnic groups who are not members of EPRDF. These students are not necessarily members of some opposition parties or other political organizations which the government has declared to be terrorist groups. They may not even be members of any political party at all. However, Oromo students who are not members of EPRDF argued vehemently that this correlation does not work for them. They asserted that if someone is Oromo and not a member of

⁴⁴ OLF was one of the rebel groups struggled to overthrow the Derg regime and established the Transitional Government of Ethiopia. In 1992, OLF withdrew from the government, and in 2011 the government of Ethiopia declared OLF one of the five terrorist entities.

OPDO/EPRDF, he/she is automatically considered to be a member of OLF. In the focus groups, non-Tigre students stated that it is difficult to find a Tigre student who is not a member of EPRDF. They thought that Tigre students have a stronger attachment with the government than any other ethnic group in the country. They presumed that this is because of the political dominance of their ethnic group. One of the conflict stories related to such stereotyping is the following.

I have faced different problems because of my ethnic identity and political view. Let me tell you one thing which happened this year [2012]. One day, after we watched a report about terrorism in Ethiopia on ETV [Ethiopian television], we started discussing the same topic. It was a heated discussion because of the differences that we have on the issue. There were two Tigre students who argued that there is terrorism in Ethiopia and it is a threat to national security. In all their arguments, their source of evidence is ETV and the government. I told them that ETV and the government are two sides of the same coin, and I argued that I doubt if there is a problem that could be categorized as terrorism. I also argued that even if there is something like that, it is exaggerated and the government is using terrorism for its own political purposes. By the way, there were also students from other ethnic groups who argued supporting this idea, but I was the one who was arguing very much. As the discussion continued, they [Tigre students] became very annoyed and started to associate our stance with our ethnic group and some political parties. One of them pointed at me and said 'I know why you are talking like this. You have your own problem'. When I asked him what problem I have, he said 'you are OLF that is why you support terrorism. We don't know what you are doing here now'. When he said like that, I was not able to control myself, and I spit in his face. Then, he came to fight with me but other students separated us. Since then, I am feeling a bit scared and I wanted to change my dorm, but I was told that it is not possible. Now, I am not comfortable talking with any Tigre student. They all are the same. They want every one of us to bow to them, to accept all that they said as true, to support the Woyane⁴⁵ tyranny, and to blindly appreciate all that the government is doing. (ST26)

In this excerpt, the Tigre student labeled the Oromo as a member OLF and a terrorist although there are also students from other ethnic groups with the same stance on the topic as the Oromo student. The Oromo student also labeled all Tigre students as pro-government without concrete evidence. In this particular case, the discussion on terrorism

⁴⁵Woyane is the shortened form of *Hizbawi Woyane Harnet Tigray*, which is the Tigrigna translation of TPLF.

was a flashpoint incident that uncovered students' stereotypical attitude which is politically cultivated. Such stereotyped views of other ethnic groups are also common among students in other public universities. For example, in Addis Ababa University, there is a tendency "to see all Oromos as followers of OLF, and identify all Tigrean students with the TPLF, while the Amharas were identified with Imperial Feudal rule" (Balsvik, 2007, p. 132). The above case indicates a lack of appreciation and respect for difference in opinions and views among students. It also shows a lack of space for non-members of political parties. Moreover, it indicates how ethnic and political stereotyping negatively affects intergroup relations and causes tension and conflict.

BDU's students' discipline guideline states that though a student has a right to freely express his/her ideas, the way he/she uses to express his/her political or religious views should not create or potentially create unrest. If it does, he/she will be suspended from the University for 2-3 years (BDU, 2012a, p. 11). However, students do not seem to be well aware of the guideline, and there is also a failure to effectively addressing issues as stated in the guideline. There are several students who violated the abovementioned rule and got away without punishment. Students stated that although there are several similar cases, they do not often report them to the University. This is mainly because of a lack of trust in the measures that the University takes. Students tend to believe that the University often penalizes all who participated in the confrontation although the accuser may be penalized less than the accused.

Students' stereotypical attitudes are often unveiled in emotionally driven discussions and in graffiti. Graffiti is one of the main sources of prejudice, ethnocentrism, and negative stereotyping in BDU. According to Weisel (2002), there are four major types of graffiti: gang, tagger, conventional, and ideological graffiti. She defined the four types of graffiti as follows.

Gang graffiti [is] often used by gangs to mark turf or convey threats of violence, and sometimes copycat graffiti, which mimics gang graffiti. Tagger graffiti [includes those] ranging from high-volume simple hits to complex street art. Conventional graffiti [is] often isolated or spontaneous act of "youthful exuberance," but sometimes malicious or vindictive. Ideological graffiti [includes different graffiti] such as political or hate graffiti, which conveys political messages or racial, religious, or ethnic slurs (p. 3).

In BDU, the students' discipline guideline prohibits writing in any of the University's properties in general (BDU, 2012a). However, students' toilet walls are full of written graffiti which can be categorized as ideological graffiti based on the above definitions. Some of the graffiti are entertaining and educational, while most others are offensive. Most derogatory graffiti targeted different ethnic, religious, and political groups. It is necessary to illustrate here how the graffiti are presented, but it is not ethically appropriate to present them as they are. Thus, I purposefully excluded the target ethnic and religious groups. In the following graffiti, "X" represents ethnic groups and "Y" represents religious groups.

- "X and donkey are fetched from one river".
- "X is milk, X is yogurt, X is butter; so X is a cow!"
- "X is the main racist"⁴⁶.
- "X is a slave and will continue to be a slave".
- "I hate X".
- "X is a dog and barks like a dog".
- "No one knows where X comes from".
- "Be careful! X is evil-eyed".
- "X is a terrorist group".
- "We all should stand against X and destroy them".
- "I prefer to die rather than being Y".
- "Y is a tradition not a religion".
- "We should drive out Y from this university".
- "Y is a terrorist".

These kind of derogatory graffiti are full of prejudice, ethnocentrism, negative stereotypes, and they use terms which are taboo, politically incorrect, offensive, and ethnically and religiously insulting and somewhat inciting. Participant students had different opinions regarding entertaining graffiti, but they are all opposed to any kind of offensive graffiti.

⁴⁶Racism in Ethiopia often refers to discrimination based on ethnicity not race.

I don't like graffiti at all and I usually try to avoid reading them, but it is not possible because in every toilet in whichever direction you turn your face there is graffiti. As university students, we are not expected to write on toilet walls or tables and chairs. If they [students] have some entertaining ideas or something which they think is good to share with others, they have to use other options such as posting them on the notice boards or presenting them at the Literature Night⁴⁷. ...I don't know what to say about other graffiti which show contempt and insult different religious and ethnic groups. It shows the attitude of a certain group towards other groups. The only thing that one can learn and develop from these kinds of graffiti is hatred, resentment, and revenge. (ST11)

It is interesting to read those funny and educational graffiti. When I go to the toilet, I always look if there are some new graffiti. I have learned a lot from quotes, sayings, and proverbs written in the toilet. However, it is very annoying to read insulting graffiti which potentially cause conflict between different groups. These graffiti show the contempt and hatred between different groups. I don't really know the point of writing those disgraceful things. It is not something pleasant. I always think about what kind of minds those students have. How do they get happiness or satisfaction from insulting a certain ethnic or religious group? They must be insane. I think there are students who do this like their job because I have seen same graffiti with same handwriting in different toilets. (ST21)

Like other factors mentioned in this study, graffiti may not be one of the root causes of tensions and conflicts on campus, but they are one of the major factors that intensify tensions and conflicts through negatively affecting the relationship between different religious and ethnic groups on campus.

Ethnic epithets

Ethnic epithets disparage individuals or groups because of their religion, culture, ethnicity, nationality or race (Herbst, 1997). It is one of the factors that affects positive intergroup relations and causes tensions and conflicts on campus. Students often use ethnic epithets in graffiti, but they also use them in emotionally driven discussions and

⁴⁷Literature Night is a program where different literary works, music, drama and other entertainments are presented to students. It is organized by the University's Cultural Center. Details are presented in Chapter 7.

debates. The ethnic epithets that students use in graffiti were considered more as one of the factors that intensify ethnic tensions and conflicts on campus. On the other hand, the ethnic epithets that students use in emotionally driven discussions and debates were considered as one of the factors that cause ethnic tension and conflicts, and this section focuses on these ethnic epithets. There are various ethnic tension and conflict stories that students reported in which ethnic epithets are the causes of conflicts. Among these stories, I took the conflict between Amhara and Oromo students in 2005. This conflict story was repeatedly mentioned as an example by teachers and managers during interviews. It was also well described in the study on conflict management in BDU (Zellelew, 2010).

The conflict between the Amhara and Oromo students in 2005 is one of the major ethnic conflicts in the history of the University. The conflict was initially between an Oromo student and Amhara waitress working in the students' lounge. In the middle of an argument over loud music, the waitress used an ethnic epithet that offended and irritated the student. When other Oromo students, who were watching television in the lounge, heard what the waitress said, they became very angry and tried to beat her up. Although, the waitress left the campus immediately after the incident, the Oromo students were not able to control their anger and emotions. They fiercely responded, first by insulting, and then physically attacking Amhara students. During the night, the conflict reached its climax and there were a lot of physical attacks in which students used small arms such as knives. One student narrowly escaped death after his throat slit with knife (Zellelew, 2010). There was also high frustration and insecurity among students when the outside community tried to intervene after they heard what happened to the Amhara student in the University.

This conflict story shows how ethnic epithets cause conflict between different groups on campus and also create unrest outside the campus. It also shows that the source of tension and conflict on campus is not always a poor relationship among students. Campus community members' lack of multicultural awareness and sensitivity can also be source of tension and conflict.

Music and religious song

Staff stated that the number of students who play music or religious songs in and around dormitories has increased. The main reason for this is an increase in access to technology. A decade ago, students did not have electronics such as iPod, mobile phone, and laptop. Only a few students had radio, and cassette and compact disc players. But now, almost all students have mobile phones and there are also students who have iPods and laptops which they can use to play music and religious songs. The students' discipline guideline clearly states that playing loud music and religious songs in and around dormitories is strictly forbidden (BDU, 2012a). But, according to staff, playing music or religious songs is very common and it is one of the problems in dormitories where there are students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Students stated that the problem in relation to music and religious songs is not only about the sound volume, but also differences in religion and ethnicity.

In our dormitory there are ten students and eight of them are Orthodox. There is one student who usually plays Orthodox songs in the dormitory. I am not Orthodox, but as a Christian I have no problem listening to some of the songs. However, I noticed that she repeatedly put some songs which she thought that I do not like because of my religion. When I knew this, I also started to play Protestant songs from my mobile. At that time, she and also others were very uncomfortable and told me to stop playing the song. Although I told them that we all have equal rights, they did not want to listen to me, and the situation became tense and went in an unwanted direction. (ST17)

Last year, there was one Tigre student in our dormitory. He usually listened to Tigrigna music without using earphones. It was very disturbing, particularly in the morning while some of us were asleep. We repeatedly told him to use earphones or stop playing music in the dormitory, but he did not want to do that. Rather he ethnicized the issue and accused us of being racist. He thought that we don't want to listen to Tigrigna music. The truth is not about the type of music. If it were Amharic or English music, I would tell him to stop playing. (ST14)

Staff also stated that there are complaints by students about loud music, ethnic music, and religious songs in dormitories. In relation to ethnic music, the complainants are often Amhara, Oromo, and Tigre students, and sometimes students from other ethnic groups. Students associated this with the political rivalry between these ethnic groups. In relation

to religious songs, members of different religious groups complain about Orthodox and Protestant songs, and there is no complaining about Islamic song. Students stated that Muslims almost do not play religious songs in the dormitory. Staff also mentioned some cases where problems related to music became an ethnic problem, and they have to change the dormitories of two students because of continuous complaints, tension, and physical assault.

Problems outside the University

The data show that it is not always the situations within the University but also the situations outside the University that cause tensions and conflicts among students. Students are part of the larger society and they are active in mirroring ethnic, religious, and political related problems of society. Participants mentioned that the religious tension in BDU is a new phenomenon, but religious practices and activities have been there for several years without creating any problems among students. As discussed in Section 6.2.2, there is now a growing religious tension on campus. As participants indicated, the main cause of the religious tension on campus is the religious situation in the country. Students argued vehemently that although religious practices and activities on campus have contributed to the religious tension, they are not the main cause of the religious tension on campus. Ethnic-related problems in the country are also one of the causes of ethnic tension and conflict in the University. For example, there was ethnic tension and conflict between supporters of different political groups during and after the 2005 general election in Ethiopia. This is what Zellelew (2010) described as “election fever” on campus. In this particular situation, the tension and conflict in BDU was mainly between Tigre and non-Tigre students, and the root cause of this was problems related to the result of the general election in the country (see Section 5.1.2).

Besides, major ethnic or religion-related problems that occurred in one of the universities in the country were easily and immediately transmitted to other universities and became a cause of tension and conflict. Although students are geographically placed in different places, because of technology, in particular the mobile phone, they can easily communicate with their friends in other universities. This makes it possible to know what

is going on in other universities and to easily pass on information among group members. In BDU there were ethnic and religious tensions because of the ethnic and religion-related problems in other public universities. When students hear about some problems, for example a physical attack on their fellow ethnic members in other universities, regardless of the credibility of the information and rationality of the cause, they usually want to respond to it by physically attacking members of the ethnic group that attacked their fellow ethnic members. Other universities also experienced similar problems because of the conflict that started in BDU. In relation to this one manager said,

Universities should think and worry about what is going on in other universities, because the problem in one university has become a problem to other universities. For example, there was an ethnic conflict in our university in 2009, and a manager from Haramaya University called me to ask how we are dealing with the problem. After we discussed about the situation, he said ‘please try to solve this problem in the best possible way, otherwise it will come to us soon’. (MA6)

The data indicates that public universities have been facing this challenge at different times. As one manager mentioned, BDU alone cannot solve this problem, and there should be cooperation among universities. Such kinds of common problems of public universities should be also a concern to MoE, and it needs to take part in addressing such problems.

Government’s political interests

In principle and as stated in several government documents such as the HEP, the Education and Training Policy, and the guideline to regulate worship, dress code, and food etiquette in higher education and vocational training institutions, the government and its institutions are expected to provide a peaceful learning environment. According to students and teachers, although this is usually the case, sometimes government’s political interests became causes of and intensified ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts on campus. They stated that this was usually through government political cadre students, mass media, and alleging students’ academic or social-related questions with ethnicity and politics.

We have seen what this government is doing in the last 21 years. It does not want to see a united Ethiopian society or a united and strong student community. Therefore, it keeps them divided because that is crucial to sustaining its power. We know the potential of university students in bringing change in political ideology and leadership. We have witnessed that in the history of our country. But now we have reached the moment in time when university students do not contribute to the social and political development of their country. The government uses its cadre students to divide students along ethnic lines and make them blame and fight each other. These cadre students may do this knowingly or unknowingly. (TE6)

We have several problems in this university, for example food quality and shortage of books. But the government has never taken our questions as real and serious. It thinks that there are some politically interested groups behind the questions or it is a strategy that we used to intentionally create a problem in the University. Sometimes the government depicts our question as questions of a few students from a certain ethnic or religious group who have a hidden agenda or interest. This divides us along ethnic or religious lines and makes us fight each other forgetting our main question. This has other consequences such as suspension and expulsion from the University. Although we feel that we have the right to ask, I don't think that now we have the motivation to do that. There is no option other than murmuring until we graduate and leave the University. (ST23)

Another study also showed that the government labels different students' demands and actions as an ethnic issue, and when it feels that students are united, it infiltrates its agents to divide students along ethnic lines, which is part of its divide and rule strategy (Asmamaw, 2012). Balsvik (2007) also states that "It was considered important for the government to prevent the formation of united independent student unions across ethnic boundaries" (p. 181). Teachers, students, and some managers also stated that insensitive and unfair media coverage of ethnic and religion-related issues, which the government is using for its political consumption, is also contributing to the tensions and conflicts on campus. They mentioned that some of the ethnic and religion-related news and programs broadcast in public media are divisive, undermine and decrease intergroup trust and relations, and increase intergroup prejudices.

6.3. Summary

This chapter has focused on two major topics - discussing ethnic and religion-related issues, and ethnic and religious tension and conflicts on campus. Students discuss ethnic-related issues on campus, and the frequency, depth and meaningfulness of the discussion depends on the ethnic backgrounds of students. Although there was more discussion among students from the same ethnic background, the discussions were not as meaningful as those among members of trust-based group. Students were least inclined to discuss ethnicity-related issues with ethnic outgroup members. There are various reasons for the lack of interest in discussing ethnic-related issues with students from different ethnic backgrounds. The main reason seems to be the political sensitivity of ethnicity in the country. The other reasons include lack of tolerance, trust and a culture of discussion among different ethnic groups.

Students do not often discuss religion-related issues. When they do, it is usually with members of the same religious group. Among members of different religious groups, there is a lack of interest and capacity to proactively and positively engage in discussions that focus on religion-related issues. The main reasons for this seem to be first, that students tend to believe that it is not so necessary to discuss religion-related issues with outgroup members. Second, the focus, objective, and outcome of the discussion are not motivating and positive. The infrequent discussions between members of different religious groups tend to focus on the doctrine and creeds of different religions. The main objective is also often to tell about their religion or convince others that their religion is the right one. Unlike ethnic issues, students do not often discuss religious issues from political and social viewpoints. The discussions between members of different religious groups are also often contentious and not as such helpful to know more about other religions.

Students perceived that there is a positive relationship, mutual understanding and respect among different religious groups. Although this seems generally true, because of the religious tension in the country, which is on the increase, the religious tension on campus is also increasing and this threatens the positive intergroup relations among different religious groups. The two major factors contributing to the religious tension on campus are the religious practices and activities on campus and the guideline proposed to

regulate worship, dress code, and food etiquette in higher education and vocational training institutions. The different religious practices and activities on campus include religious festival, religious quotes, use of notice boards and group singing. Although some students and the APC representative considered the religious programs and activities of different groups as spiritual zeal and exercising religious freedom and equality, managers, staff, teachers, the SU representative and most students considered them as unnecessary religious competitions that lead to tensions.

There have been several ethnic conflicts in BDU. Most of these conflicts did not basically occur out of ethnic differences *per se*. It is often because of ethnicized ordinary disputes between individuals. The other major causes of ethnic and religious tension and conflict on campus include prejudice, ethnocentrism, and stereotyping, ethnic epithets, music and songs, problems outside the university, and government's political interests.

Managing Diversity in the University

This chapter focuses generally on the process (plan and practice) of managing diversity at BDU. The chapter is organized into two main sections. The first section elucidates the contribution of different units of the University and diversity programs and activities to achieving a positive campus climate for diversity. The second section discusses the major factors impeding the process of managing diversity at BDU.

7.1. Strategies in Managing Diversity

As indicated in the introductory chapter, a diverse student population on campus can potentially be either a source of opportunities that enrich individual, societal, and institutional development or a source of challenges that lead to negative outcomes such as tension and conflict. Universities have a special role to play in ensuring that a diverse student population and the differences between individuals become sources of strength rather than a problem (Musil, Garcia, Hudgins, Nettles, Sedlacek, & Smith, 1999). In order to achieve this, universities need to plan and design different approaches, and thus managing diversity becomes one of their important duties (Liu, 1998). Managing diversity can be defined as “the process of creating and maintaining a positive environment where the differences of all personnel are recognized, understood and valued, so that all can achieve their full potential” (Lumadi, 2008, p.8). In this study managing diversity is likewise conceived of as a continuing process which intends to

create and foster a positive learning and living environment on campus that benefits all individuals and groups regardless of their ethnic and religious differences.

Recognizing and including diversity in the mission of a university should be the first step in the process of managing diversity because the plans and activities of a university emerge from its mission (Hurtado, 2005; 2007; Lumadi, 2008). Moreover, a university needs to have aspirations to improve the campus climate for diversity and this should be included and reflected in its policies, strategic plans, programs, and activities (Brown, 2004). Including issues of diversity in an institutional strategic plan guides a university to intentionally accomplish diversity (Milem et al., 2005). Diversity is not clearly and specifically mentioned in BDU's mission, but in the five-year strategic plan (2011/2012-2015/2016), "promoting diversity" has been identified as one of the seven core values that contribute significantly to achieving the University's mission and vision (BDU, 2011).

There are different strategies or approaches that universities can adopt in the process of managing diversity and this may vary from institution to institution based on their own context and priorities. Thus each institution needs to carry out self-evaluations of their campus climate for diversity. However, the most common and general strategies include increasing structural diversity, developing curricular and co-curricular initiatives and activities, and creating opportunities for intergroup dialogue, contact and interaction in the broad campus environment. Each of these strategies can be implemented separately, but they are likely to be more effective when they are integrated, planned, structured, systematically carried out, and institutionally supported. Although it is not explicitly indicated in any of the University's documents, in BDU, the process of managing diversity generally involves promoting diversity and addressing issues of diversity through different units and providing different opportunities for campus community members to develop their knowledge about issues of diversity and skills that are necessary to live, learn and work in a diverse environment.

7.1.1. Units working to address issues of diversity

BDU has no office or unit that organizes and follows up various diversity-related issues in the University in a structured and coordinated manner despite promoting diversity as

one of its core values. However, there are different units that partially or exclusively deal with promoting and addressing diversity-related issues. These include the Cultural Center (CC), the Guidance and Counseling Office (GCO), the SU, and the APC.

The Cultural Center

Students, managers and teachers perceived that the CC, which was established in 1997, contributed significantly to promoting diversity and enhancing positive intergroup relations among students. The major program of the CC is the Literature Night at which various ethnic music, poems, plays, dialogues, and other cultural activities are presented. These works are carried out by volunteer students and some individuals from outside the University who have a great interest in the CC's programs. Students applauded the efforts of the CC and its multicultural activities which help them to learn about each other's cultures, appreciate differences, and enjoy together.

Most of the programs show and promote the beauty of diversity. The poems, the plays, and the dialogues are all entertaining and educative. They also speak about unity and cooperation in a very interesting way. ...When students from different ethnic groups dance and enjoy together, I feel more togetherness. (ST20)

At the Literature Night, usually there are ethnic dances in which you can participate even though you don't know how to dance. When you dance, you are showing your interest in others' culture and this makes students from that particular ethnic group happy, which is good for developing positive relationships. (ST6)

The CC seems to make a positive contribution to unity in diversity and enhancing positive intergroup interactions by providing an interesting context in which students interact with diverse others and appreciate differences and value communalities. Managers also acknowledged the positive contribution of the CC, and considered its programs as one of the University's approaches in promoting diversity and creating a positive living and learning environment. However, except for a small room which is used for multiple purposes (e.g. storing, training, and meeting), the CC does not have a proper office. The CC also has no full-time staff. The coordinator is a teacher with a few

teaching hours exemption. Except for some musical instruments (keyboard and sound system), cultural clothes and artifacts which were bought a decade ago, it has no materials needed for different programs and activities. It has no financial support from the University. Documents indicated that the CC had several times submitted annual budget requests for its activities, but there was no positive response from the University. The CC is not also located in the administrative structure of the University. It is often unclear under which office it works. It was first under the Students' Dean's Office, then the Administrative Vice President's Office, and now the Information and Strategic Communications Vice President's Office. This makes it difficult for the CC to get the attention and support of higher officials. This shows that the positive contribution of the CC is mainly a result of students' great interest and active participation in its programs rather than the institutional emphasis and support given to the CC. But, as students stated, the CC cannot continue to function without due recognition and support from the University. A student with a position of responsibility in the CC noted that,

The cultural center is doing a great job, more than what the University expects. However, it cannot continue like this because it has almost no support from the university. ... Unless the University seriously considers its support and attitude toward the center, I fear that the day when the University will miss all the good works of the cultural center is not far. (ST5)

The Guidance and Counseling Office

Managers and teachers considered the guidance and counseling service as one of the potential resources to create a positive living and learning environment and alleviate tension and conflict on campus. The guidance and counseling officer also stated that theoretically the office is supposed to provide multicultural counseling which in some way contributes to enhancing a positive living and learning environment. In order to create awareness about the value of guidance and counseling and encourage students to use its services, every year, the GCO distributes pamphlets and also briefs new students at orientation days. Despite these efforts, there are students who actually did not know of the existence of the GCO or the services it provides. According to the guidance and counseling officer, even among those who know about the services, the culture of using

the multicultural counseling service is not well developed. This may be partly because of students' perceptions and attitudes towards guidance and counseling services, but the main reason was the inadequate services provided by the GCO.

The University's legislation states that students have the right to receive guidance and counseling services (BDU, 2012c), but until 2011, for more than 15,000 students, the University had only one officer who did not seem to have the necessary academic qualifications. According to the officer, services are provided mainly on the basis of knowledge acquired from related fields and life experiences. Moreover, the officer is also the coordinator of the student disciplinary committee and the leader of the University's football club. Because of these additional responsibilities, the officer is not available in his office when students seek service. The officer stated that being coordinator of the disciplinary committee also has a negative impact on the guidance and counseling services.

As a counselor, students want to approach you as a close friend or as a father. But if they associate you with something negative, it definitely affects your work as a counselor. That is what is happening now here [in BDU]. Most students know me as the coordinator of the student disciplinary committee. I am not sure, but many students who want to get guidance and counseling services may hold back on their interest in the services when they know it is me who is the counselor. (STA1)

The officer's responsibility as coordinator of the student disciplinary committee is contradictory to the GCO's objectives and the services it provides. The relationship between students and guidance and counseling officers is principally formed upon trust and caring (Merrill-Washington, 2007). In BDU, the officer's responsibility as coordinator of the student disciplinary committee may erode students' trust in the officer despite the strict respect for anonymity and confidentiality in service provision. Because students may feel that if their issue in case goes to the disciplinary committee, the information they provided will be used by the officer who is also the main person on the disciplinary committee. This seriously affects the limited services provided by the GCO. Facilities related to office and equipment are also one of the factors affecting the provision of guidance and counseling services which contribute to creating a positive living and learning environment and alleviate tension and conflict on campus. The GCO

has a very small and unequipped office which is located in a place not suitable for counseling services. For example, as the officer mentioned, some students are not comfortable discussing some issues in the office because they fear that they could be overheard by people who pass by the office because the windows cannot be fully closed.

In the five-year strategic plan, BDU has planned to establish new guidance and multicultural counseling centers staffed with professionals in all campuses of the University (BDU, 2011). Accordingly, in 2011, it assigned three additional guidance and counseling officers to its three campuses. However, these individuals are full-time teachers without proper educational background and experience in guidance and counseling. Moreover, during the period of data collection, it was more than six months since they have been assigned, but they did not have offices and had not started providing services. The above discussion indicates that in spite of the University's legislation and strategic plan, which emphasize the importance of multicultural counseling, in practice, little emphasis is given to the guidance and counseling services that potentially contribute to managing diversity.

The Students' Union

A SU may be inclusive or exclusive. An inclusive SU represents all groups and works to address the interests of all students regardless of their differences. An exclusive SU such as one based on ethnicity or religion represents a particular group and works to address the interests of students from that particular group. Studies indicate both positive and negative effects of the prevalence of ethnic SUs on campus. On the positive side, ethnic SUs "seem to offer minority students a sense of safety" (Sidanius, Van Laar, Levin, & Sinclair, 2004, p. 108) and a platform for cultural expression and advocacy (Museus, 2008). On the negative side they hamper the development of a common identity, increase isolation and a sense of ethnic victimization, and tend to create division instead of unity (Sidanius et al., 2004).

BDU's legislation clearly states that it is not possible to form an SU based on ethnicity and religion, and no student association may deny membership to students based on ethnic, religious, regional, linguistic or other similar discriminatory grounds

(BDU, 2012c). In the University there is only one SU that works to promote the interests of all students and represents them at different administrative levels. A representative of the SU stated that in order to create a peaceful living and learning environment, the SU works closely with students and the University management. For example, in collaboration with the representatives of religious groups it has dealt with several religion-related problems emerging within and between different religious groups; in collaboration with the University management it organized the celebration of the NNPD, which somehow provided an opportunity to experience diversity (see Section 7.1.2); and in collaboration with different units (offices), it has also resolved several disagreements and tensions between individuals and groups that could have led to ethnic conflict.

Students tend to consider the SU as one of the administrative wings of the University with considerable power. This potentially affects the relation between students and their representatives, and also the perceived positive contributions of the SU in managing diversity. According to the SU representative, students developed this attitude because of some of the previous SU representatives' affiliations with the University. The University management had thought that the SU could effectively and efficiently accomplish its duties and responsibilities if some of the representatives were full-time employees. Consequently, the University employed and appointed some individuals as student representatives. This includes the president of the SU. According to managers, this was based on the experience of an Austrian university and the procedure and regulation prepared by the University management which is supported by students. The SU representative, however, argued that this was a wrong decision made by the University management without taking the BDU's context into consideration and consulting students. Managers strongly defend the University's decision to employ and appoint individuals as the SU representatives because the individuals had been elected by students to lead the SU when they were students of the University.

The University's legislation clearly states that the SU has the right to govern itself in accordance with its regulations, members of the SU should be only regular students, the representatives should be democratically elected, and an individual who is not a registered student of the University cannot be a member and representative of the SU (BDU, 2012c). Nevertheless, those individuals who were employed and worked as the

SU representatives were not registered students. The University management can assign administrative staff who can assist with the work of the SU, but its decision to appoint administrative staff as SU representatives seems unacceptable and against the University's legislation. Students were not happy to be represented and led by people who were not students. Based on students' complaints and the performance evaluation of the employed SU representatives, the University decided to halt the representation of students by individuals who are not registered students of the University. During the data collection period, all the SU representatives were elected regular students. However, there are students who still doubt the credibility and independence of the SU. The SU representatives noted this problem, and they are working to regain students' trust. This seems essential to encourage students to actively participate in different diversity programs and activities organized by the SU as well as other units in collaboration with the SU.

The Apostle of Peace Club

The ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts on campus is one of the factors that led to the formation of the APC by volunteer students in 2008. The APC aims at creating a peaceful and harmonious academic environment where students of diverse backgrounds live interdependently (APC, 2011). The representative of the APC stated that initially, students were not interested in using the services that the APC provides. They often preferred the SU and the students' service office to look at their cases. This was assumed to be because the APC is not one of administrative units of the University, and the services it provides are also by volunteer students, teachers and staff, not experts in peace building or conflict management. The APC has used different strategies including new student orientation days, Literature Nights, and pamphlets to inform and motivate students to use its services. According to the representative, now there are several students who are using the APC's services, and compared to the SU and the students' service office, the APC provides fewer but effective services on conflict management. The representative further stated that,

In resolving tensions and conflicts, we [APC] are becoming students' number one choice because we have a peace committee that all the time tries to bring peace in a win-win approach. If students take their cases to other offices, it may go through the normal administrative disciplinary process which takes their time, and there may be also disciplinary actions. ...Our service is a kind of support and our decision is not a final one from the University's point of view.

In addition to its win-win approach that has successfully resolved several tensions and conflicts between individuals and groups, the APC has also participated in different diversity programs and activities. These include organizing training on conflict management, facilitating the discussion on religious issues on campus in collaboration with the University management, and preparing Literature Night that focuses on peace and peace related issues. BDU vows to encourage the formation of student associations that work in line with the values and objectives of the University (BDU, 2012c). However, the APC are not getting financial assistance from the University despite its positive efforts to create a peaceful learning environment which significantly contributes to the process of managing diversity. Its activities depend on small membership fees and the very limited financial assistance it seldom gets from non-governmental and governmental organizations outside the University. The APC representative mentioned that financial and other problems such as lack of a capacity development program for its core members are impeding the achievement of its objectives.

7.1.2. Diversity programs and activities

One of the strategies in promoting and managing diversity in higher education is providing various opportunities for students that help them acquire knowledge about and experience diversity (Engberg, 2004; Umbach & Kuh, 2006). BDU has positioned "promoting diversity" as a core management initiative that helps to achieve its mission. Different programs and activities contributing to promoting diversity are also included in the University's five-year strategic plan. The programs and activities include (a) developing a system that enables students to become individuals who have good ethical and social values and are capable of respecting and promoting diversity, (b) developing and delivering courses on diversity and gender assertiveness to undergraduate students,

(c) establishing a graduate program in multicultural studies, (d) creating a sense of belonging and a culture of participation and responsiveness, (e) encouraging students to participate in different co-curricular activities, (f) providing relevant continuous professional development training for teachers, (g) organizing seminars or conferences or panel discussions on ethics, social values and diversity issues, and (h) organizing major cultural events at institutional level (BDU, 2011). Although it is not mentioned in the strategic plan, managers also articulated the need to provide opportunities for students to learn Ethiopian languages other than Amharic. Instead of evaluating all these programs and activities, this section focuses on analyzing the contribution of currently available programs and activities in managing diversity. These include maintaining structural diversity, providing diversity-related courses, organizing diversity training, workshops and seminars, and diversity events.

Maintaining structural diversity

The presence of a diverse student population on campus is a necessary condition to maximize the potential benefits of diversity (Antonio, 2001; Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2007). Increasing the proportional representation of the diverse student population is also seen as the first step to improving the campus climate for diversity (Skelly, 2004). Thus enhancing and maintaining the numerical representation of students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds becomes a necessary condition and an important area of managing diversity. As a public university, BDU is not entitled to select and admit its prospective regular undergraduate students (see Section 2.2.2). Therefore it has no role in enhancing the structural diversity during admissions. It can, however, employ different strategies to maintain the representation of students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, which have been decreasing in recent years (see Section 5.1).

As mentioned in Chapter 5, there are two major issues that potentially challenge maintaining the numerical representation of students from different ethnic backgrounds. The first issue is transfer requests to other universities. Students who request transfers usually want to go to a university that is geographically located in a region where their ethnic group is dominant (e.g. Tigre students to Mekelle University or Aksum

University). Managers doubted but do not know the main reasons for students' transfer requests. Instead of studying the issue and proposing solutions based on the findings, the University seems to have chosen to block transfer requests as a strategy to maintain the existing student diversity. The only exception is a transfer request which is based on medical or other genuine reasons that can be proved and accepted. This strategy seems to be effective in maintaining the structural diversity in the University. However, students whose transfer requests are rejected may have a low sense of belonging and perceive the University as less hospitable. Such perception influences students' overall satisfaction with the University and this may lead them to feel alienated, which, in turn, affects their interaction and relationship with diverse others.

The second issue that potentially challenges maintaining the numerical representation of students from some ethnic groups is lack of academic support for students who joined the university through the affirmative action in admission to higher education. Some of the groups who benefited from such affirmative action include students from the ethnic groups of Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, and Somali. The numerical representation of students from these ethnic groups in BDU is very small. Students who benefited from the affirmative action want to get academic support in the University. However, the academic support available in BDU does not consider this group of students. According to students, the absence of academic support is one of the reasons for academic failure including academic dismissal of students from this group, which in turn affects the numerical representation of students in the University. There is no study or statistical data which supports this claim or shows the correlation between absence of academic support for this group of students and their academic achievement. However, a study conducted in the United States indicates that the affirmative action admissions process should not be the end and universities "must provide the supports necessary to succeed academically and socially once students are on campus" (Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 266).

Increasing and maintaining teacher diversity is also another strategy used by the University to maintain student diversity. Managers stated that students are happy to see teachers from their ethnic or religious group. They assumed that this increases students' sense of belonging and overall satisfaction with the University, which in turn contributes

to maintaining student diversity. The University is trying to enhance and maintain teacher diversity by ensuring non-discriminatory employment opportunities and working environment. However, research indicates that there is a tendency for teachers from other regions to leave the University and for teachers from the region where the University is geographically located to come to the University, and this decreases teacher diversity (Adamu & Zellelew, 2007; Zellelew, 2010). Managers noted this trend and argued that the driving forces are external to the University. Because of the political and administrative system at national level, there seems to be a growing tendency towards working in one's own region. Yet, in the case of BDU, this is not the only reason as there are teachers who left because of diversity-related problems in the University (Adamu & Zellelew, 2007). Although increasing and maintaining teacher diversity is a commendable strategy to maintain student diversity, BDU perhaps is not so successful in achieving this.

Diversity-related courses

Banks et al. (2005) state that “students should learn about the complex relationships between unity and diversity in their local communities, the nation, and the world [...] and the ways in which people community, nation, and region are increasingly interdependent with other people around the world” (Banks et al., 2005, p. 5). This can be achieved through intentionally and consistently providing them with opportunities to learn about diverse groups. Providing diversity-related courses is one alternative because they help students to know about diverse others, reduce prejudice and stereotypes, and challenge inequalities and injustices (Banks, 2001; Bell & Griffin, 1997; Bennett, 1999). There are various diversity-related courses that universities can adopt according to their context. To date, however, BDU hardly offers any courses that provide content knowledge on diversity issues. When students were asked if they had taken diversity-related courses, a few students mentioned one course – “An introduction to civic and ethical studies”. However, most students mentioned that they had taken no diversity-related courses despite the fact that the introductory course is offered to all students.

One of the objectives of this course is to enable students to “recognize the value of multiculturalism and tolerance for mutual understanding, peaceful co-existence and accommodation of diversity”⁴⁸. As indicated in the course description, the course mainly deals with democracy and good governance, society, state and government, constitution, and federalism in light of the contemporary socioeconomic, legal, ethical and political transformations in Ethiopia. The course contents also focus on the constitution, good governance, democracy, ethics, and citizenship. Students’ reflections on the course also indicate that the course is not so helpful in imparting knowledge about different ethnic and religious groups and reducing prejudice and stereotyping. Although it is difficult to evaluate the course solely on the basis of the main contents listed in the course description and some students’ reflections, arguably the absence or little emphasis on issues related to diversity seems to be the reason for students to consider the course less effective or not to consider it a diversity-related course.

To the best of my knowledge there are no studies evaluating the contribution of this course to students’ social and cultural knowledge development, particularly in relation to diversity-related issues. Without systematic evaluations, it is impossible to make informed decisions about the effectiveness of the course to achieve one of its intended objectives in relation to diversity. However, participants’ general response shows that there is a lack of courses and course contents dealing with diversity-related issues. One manager also said that “except courses that may include diversity-related issues by their nature, we do not provide diversity courses. I wish we could have at least one course that promotes diversity” (MA5). Here it is necessary to mention again that the need for developing and providing diversity-related courses is stated in the strategic plan, but it has not yet been implemented.

Diversity workshops and seminars

Diversity workshops and seminars are some of the interventions that universities can use to create and improve positive campus climate for diversity (Engberg, 2004). BDU

⁴⁸ Source: The course outlines for an “Introduction to Civic and Ethical Education”, Faculty of Social Sciences, Bahir Dar University.

arranges hardly any seminars, workshops or panel discussions on diversity-related issues. A relatively recent activity that one manager recalled was the forum arranged in 2006 by the Dean of Students with the purpose of creating diversity awareness and developing mutual respect and tolerance among students.

In 2006, we invited two guest speakers at different times to deliver speeches on various diversity-related issues. The guest speakers emphasized and discussed cultural diversity, differences, mutual respect, and tolerance. The participants were students and the feedback we got from them was very positive and encouraging. (MA6)

The University did not continue organizing similar forums despite the positive effects of discussion on diversity-related issues. This indicates that carrying out such an activity is an individual effort rather than an institutional strategy and practice. BDU seems to have recognized the importance of diversity workshops and seminars in promoting diversity and creating a peaceful learning environment. As indicated in the strategic plan, it intends to organize seminars or conferences or panel discussions on ethics, social values, and diversity issues. Managers stated that the University has already started creating discussion forums on diversity-related issues. As an example they mentioned the discussions between students, teachers, and staff on religious issues in HEIs which were held in 2012.

I know there is so much work to do in relation to diversity. As you can see in the strategic plan, the University has taken that into consideration. ...This year [2012], we have started organizing discussion forums on diversity-related issues. The recent discussions that we held with students, administrative staff, and teachers on religious issues are good experiences. (MA2)

Students, however, argued that the University did not initiate the discussion to create diversity awareness or religious tolerance. They considered the discussion to be a government initiative intended to let them know what the government decided to do in relation to religious issues on campus.

I have participated in what the University calls discussion on religious issues. I personally do not consider that as a discussion because they don't want to listen to our thoughts and suggestions. They just came to tell us about government's

decision. If they don't consider and understand our thoughts and suggestions, it cannot be called a discussion. For me, that was no different from an information session. (ST10)

The data obtained from the focus groups also showed that the main purpose of the discussion was to let students know about the guidelines on worship, dress code, and food etiquette which aims to ensure peaceful learning and teaching and restrain illegal activities taking place in the guise of religion. One manager confirmed that the government initiated the discussion to be held in all public universities. The manager further said,

It would be nice if we were the initiators, but we are not and I don't see that as a problem. We all agree that we need to promote diversity. If we are not practically doing that and the initiation comes from the federal government, why should we oppose that as long as it is in line with our objective to promote diversity? ... We need to ask if those students who opposed the discussion really want to have this kind of forum at all, I doubt it. If they wanted to discuss religious issues in the University, they would not ask who initiated or organized it. They would rather use the opportunity. What would those students say if this forum were initiated by the University? They would say we are living peacefully and we don't want this forum. They are against it not because it came from the federal government; it is because they don't want to discuss such issues. (MA4)

Here the manager has a point because, as discussed in Chapter 6, students often avoid religious discussions and tend to portray interreligious relations positively in spite of the unnecessary competition and tension among religious groups. In a university where there is lack of discussions on religious-related issues, the intent of the discussion seems more important than who set up or proposed the discussion forum. Students mentioned that there are lots of informal discussions on religious issues between students from different groups after the formal discussion organized by the University. This shows that although the University may not have seriously considered students' thoughts and suggestions, the discussion forum has provided an opportunity for students to share their perceptions and experiences in relation to religious issues both on and off campus. It also provided them with an opportunity to discuss religious issues from political and social perspectives, which was not the case in most religion-related discussions as indicated in Chapter 6.

Teachers acknowledged the significance of diversity workshop, seminars and panel discussions in creating diversity awareness, developing tolerance, enhancing multiculturalism, and strengthening unity. However, they stated that this is not an academic culture in BDU, and there is no opportunity for them to participate in workshops or seminars that focusing on diversity-related issues. Teachers tend to assume that organizing diversity workshops and seminars is the responsibility of managers. Managers are expected to coordinate and support such plans and activities, but it is not only their task. Departments, faculties, and other units can also organize such discussion forums. It is such cooperative activities that help to enhance diversity awareness which is found to be low among the University community (Zellelew, 2010).

Diversity training

There are two types of diversity training, awareness-based and skill-based (Agocs & Burr, 1996). Awareness-based diversity training focuses on providing knowledge about diversity-related issues, while skill-based diversity training focuses on developing skills intended to improve managing diversity in different ways. In BDU there is no planned and continuous training intended to create diversity awareness or develop the skills of its community in relation to promoting and managing diversity. However, a few training sessions that focus on conflict management skills have been conducted. These were organized by the students' service office and the APC and provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations. The training organizers noted positive effects of the trainings in developing participants' skills in pre- and post-conflict management. In relation to this, one manager said "there is evidence which shows that the capacity building [the training] has helped in resolving problems that may cause conflict" (MA1). A representative of the APC also said "we have got positive feedback from students and staff who participated in the training. They told us that the training was very helpful in developing their skills for successful conflict management". This shows the positive contribution of diversity training to managing diversity on campus. However, the students who are participants of this study stated that they did not get an opportunity to participate in diversity training. This is simply because they were not among the students

who participated in the above mentioned training. This indicates that, similar to diversity workshops and seminars, diversity training should also be provided constantly because there are always new students coming to the University and some of the staff participating in the training may change jobs or leave the University.

Staff, mainly those who provide direct services to students, contribute to managing diversity by dealing with diversity-related issues on campus and through developing and implementing various programs and activities conducive to a positive campus climate for diversity. In order to achieve this, they need first to be aware of the potential opportunities and challenges of diversity in higher education and equipped with the skills required to build a positive and integrated campus environment. So far, except for a one-off training session on conflict management, they did not have an opportunity to participate in diversity training. The staff who participated in this study reported that they often address diversity-related issues mainly based on the rules and regulations of the University and also based on what they personally think is good for the students.

Teachers also play a significant role in creating a positive campus climate for diversity. A study conducted in the United States indicates that the benefits of diversity increase apace with the teachers' efforts to use diversity to enrich their classes (Maruyama & Moreno, 2000). Thus, "Helping faculty develop a pedagogy that makes the most of the diverse perspectives and student backgrounds in their classrooms can foster active thinking, intellectual engagement, and democratic participation" (Gurin et al., 2002, p. 362). Teachers can contribute to promoting and managing diversity through conducting research, incorporating issues and topics related to diversity into the curriculum, and employing pedagogical approaches that provide opportunities for students to interact and develop positive intergroup relations. These skills can be developed through pre-service or in-service pedagogical training. Most teachers in BDU got no training in pedagogy and methodology of teaching in their prior education. Pedagogical and methodological knowledge and skills likewise are not among the requirements for novice university teachers (Minwyelet, 2013). In order to alleviate this problem, BDU has established an Academic Development and Resource Center which is now called the Center for Capacity Building Program. The center provides professional

development training that mainly focuses on building up teachers' skills in teaching methodology, assessment, and self-reflection.

The teachers who had participated in this professional development training stated that the training did not address the pedagogy and methodology of teaching diverse students. They also stated that they lacked the theoretical knowledge and pedagogical skills required to address issues of diversity, and they hardly used teaching and learning approaches that promote diversity and facilitate intergroup relations both inside and outside the classroom. The study indicates that in order to effectively deal with diversity in the classroom and prepare students for life and work in a diverse context, teachers need to acquire more knowledge and develop skills pertaining to issues of diversity (Adamu, 2007). Despite a lack of the knowledge and skills necessary to teach diverse students, teachers used what they considered a culture sensitive pedagogy. This is appreciable because they need to be sensitive to their students' cultural and other differences. However, this kind of individual effort needs to be improved through professional development programs because, in order to be sensitive, it is important to know how to be sensitive to different instances that may occur in and outside classrooms influenced by a range of cultural differences. If teachers lack the knowledge or skills to apply the acquired knowledge, they may unwittingly become insensitive to issues of diversity. A case in point is the issue raised by a Muslim student.

I don't want to say and generalize that most teachers are subjective or irresponsible toward religion. But there are some teachers who are insensitive toward religious issues. Let me give you one example. Last year, one teacher scheduled a makeup class on Ramadan eve. It may be nothing for him and he may not did that on purpose, but we [Muslims] found it very offensive because no one schedules a makeup class on the eve of a Christian holiday. (ST23)

The eve of officially recognized religious or public holidays in Ethiopia is a working day and the teaching learning schedule continues as usual. Thus there is no problem if teachers conduct classes on the eve of religious holidays. However, students usually discuss and may agree with teachers to cancel or postpone such eve classes. In the case of makeup classes, teachers usually discuss with students to find a time which is convenient to all or to most students. The eves of religious holidays are days that most students enjoy

by taking a break from their studies. It is therefore highly unlikely to schedule a makeup class on such a day. If teachers do so without the consent of students, it shows their religious insensitivity and lack of cultural responsiveness. An assertion made by one manager seems incongruous with this case. The manager said,

It is difficult to say that teachers do not have knowledge about other peoples' culture or religion. By living together, they know about each other's cultures. Muslims know about Christians and Christians know about Muslims. They have also passed through university life which gave them an opportunity to experience living with people from diverse culture, religion, and ethnic groups. ...So far, there have been no complaints about teachers' lack of awareness about others' culture or religion. (MA4)

It is true that teachers can learn about others' cultures from their social/life experiences, but knowledge acquired in this way may not be enough to competently deal with diversity-related issues. Moreover, for different reasons, students may not complain about every problem they encountered during their stay in the University, but this seems to have been taken as one indicator of a positive campus climate for diversity and teachers' cultural competence in teaching diverse students.

Diversity events

In relation to promoting diversity, BDU has planned to organize major cultural events. So far, the celebration of the NNPD seems to be the only cultural event in the University. At national level, the NNPD is considered a day that celebrates unity in diversity and strengthens the relationship among various ethnic groups. The NNPD has been celebrated on 9 December across the country every year since 2006. Public universities have joined the celebration by organizing different activities including cultural shows, ethnic music, and panel discussions on campus.

In the focus groups, there were heated discussions about the celebration of NNPD on campus. Opponents argued that in the name of unity in diversity, the government is using the event as a pretext to maintain power. This group of students believed that there is no equality among ethnic groups which is worth celebrating, and participating in the event is

no different from supporting the oppressive ruling party's political agenda. They also stated that the celebration of NNPD is politically motivated and universities should not support and participate in the event in any way. On the other hand, proponents argued that the event helped students from different ethnic backgrounds to know and appreciate their differences and strengthen their unity. They also stated that the event has facilitated learning about each other's cultures and promulgating their own cultures through ethnic music, dance, and cultural dress. Managers also considered the celebration of the NNPD in the University as a factor that contributes to promote diversity by uniting students from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Trotting out diversity in higher education "only during special occasions for public display" (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002, p. 55) can be considered a political strategy. Nevertheless, the political implication of celebrating NNPD is one thing and its contribution to promoting diversity is another. Aside from its arguably political implications, the celebration of NNPD at the University seems somehow to contribute to promoting diversity on campus. As indicated above and also in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.1.2), there are students who do not want to participate in the celebration of the NNPD for political and religious reasons. It is clear that one event or program cannot address the interests of all students from different backgrounds. This shows the need for more diversity programs and events on campus. A teacher stated that in previous years there were different social events that enhance positive campus climate for diversity.

When I was a student in this university, there were different social events which I think helped to enhance multiculturalism, positive intergroup relations and create unity among students from different backgrounds. For example, there was an interdepartmental sports competition and also a kind of carnival which was usually organized by the graduating class. Based on the information that I had, these events do not exist now. I am not sure whether this is because students have lost interest in such activities or there are no facilities and support from the University. (FA3)

The presence of different social and cultural events on campus would provide more opportunities for students to participate in different activities according to their interests and skills and also to experience diversity in different situations.

7.2. Factors Impeding the Process of Managing Diversity

As discussed above, there are various activities and programs that contribute to promoting and managing diversity in BDU. But there are also various issues that impeded the process of managing diversity in the University. These issues and instances can be categorized into two major factors – lack of good strategies, and lack of implementation and institutional support.

7.2.1. Lack of good strategies

BDU lacks good strategies to effectively deal with diversity-related issues. Some of the strategies that the University used for managing diversity include guidelines and rules and regulations. The students' discipline guideline (BDU, 2012a) lists different activities which are not allowed on campus and the potential disciplinary measures that will be imposed on students failing to obey the rules and regulations. The guideline on worship, dress code, and food etiquette in HEIs (MoE, 2011b) also states what is and is not allowed in relation to religious issues. Effectively applying guidelines and rules and regulations could contribute to the process of managing diversity, but they are not as such good strategies to achieve a positive living and learning environment and deal with diversity-related issues before they cause problems. Unlike other strategies such as diversity-related courses and diversity training, they are less educative and their effects are not long-lasting. However, as students mentioned, BDU depends more heavily on regulations and disciplinary measures than on education and training in addressing ethnic and religious-related diversity issues.

There are different situations which indicate that regulations and disciplinary measures alone are not good strategies in managing diversity. For example, the students' disciplinary guideline strictly prohibits writing on the university's property, and students who are found doing this will be given six months' to one year's suspension (BDU, 2012a). Despite such harsh disciplinary measures, students keep writing on chairs and toilet and classroom walls. In the BDU context, it is even difficult to follow up and find

students who deface University property. The other situation which indicates that regulations and disciplinary measures alone are not good strategies in managing diversity is the ethnic conflicts and the increasing religious tensions on campus. Teachers stated that instead of developing and implementing strategies that help to manage ethnic and religious tensions, the University tends to deal with problems after they have escalated and erupted into conflict. According to one manager, this weakness was recognized and a strategy was proposed to address this problem, particularly after the 2011 major ethnic conflict on campus.

In 2011, there was a committee formed to investigate the ethnic conflict between two groups [Amhara and Tigre]. After the committee completed its task, the University Senate designated the committee to continue working to identify factors which are supposed to be sources of ethnic conflicts and other related problems. The main objective of this was to solve problems before they cause conflict and also to resolve conflicts in a better way. However, as far as I know, the committee was not functional after that incident. (MA6)

This shows a lack of priority and concern about conflict management strategies. Conflict is inevitable and it occurs at different times for different reasons. Thus conflict management needs to be done continuously because it is a process that requires examining the campus environment each time (Zellelew, 2010). Participants also mentioned several instances in which conflicts got out of control and the University asked for help from the regional government and federal police to calm the situation. When the situation returned to normal, the University took different measures against the perpetrators. Such military and disciplinary measures may stifle but not solve the problem at its roots. This is like covering a fire with ash so that the fire cannot be seen though everyone knows it is there. Such a strategy is not effective and long-lasting in conflict management because when a wind of conflict comes from inside or outside the University, it will blow away the ash and the fire will flare up.

7.2.2. Lack of implementation and institutional support

In the strategic plan, BDU has identified different programs and activities that contribute to promoting diversity. Planning programs and activities is necessary, but far from

sufficient to achieve goals and objectives related to promoting diversity. The programs and activities need to be effectively implemented according to the plan. It is clear that lack of implementation causes even the best strategies to fail (Tarasco, 2012). BDU's strategic plan also indicates the administrative offices and units that are responsible for implementing different objectives. Yet managers seem to have failed to communicate with units and individuals and make sure that there are people who are responsible and accountable for implementing identified programs and activities. Consequently, even three years after the University endorsed the five-year strategic plan, most programs and activities intended to promote diversity have not yet been implemented according to the plan. This shows a lack of institutional priority on the part of the University management to implement programs and activities that contribute to promoting and managing diversity. This is a drawback to promoting and managing diversity because without proper hands-on management, no plan can be implemented successfully (Tarasco, 2012). Moreover, although the University community is expected to participate in and contribute to managing diversity, more than anyone else, managers need to believe in and support diversity initiatives. This is mainly because no initiative intended to promote diversity can be achieved without the strong support and commitment of the higher officials of an institution (Norris, 2000).

There may be different factors impeding the implementation of diversity-related programs and activities, and providing institutional support to different units dealing with diversity-related issues. But, according to participants, the major factor seems to be managers' behavior, confidence, and skills. Teachers stated that managers have the ambition to bring positive changes, but they questioned the approaches taken. One of these is ignoring the contribution of students, teachers, and staff in managing diversity. Teachers stated that managers tend to listen to their own thoughts and what the government says, but they do not often listen to the University community. Teachers also criticized managers for failing to take criticism without taking it personally or associating it with something unconstructive.

As far as I understand, all university members have the responsibility to create a positive learning environment. The difference is who does what. But managers do not think like that. I noticed several instances where managers ignored the

contribution of other members of the University. For many years, I have seen different managers doing that. I think it is how the system works which makes them behave like that. (FA5)

Now, it becomes difficult to talk or comment on problems and activities in the University. When you criticize something which you think is wrong or needs improvement, they [managers] consider it as a personal attack or character assassination, or label it as defaming the University. (FA3)

Teachers also mentioned that managers lack confidence to deal with issues of diversity on campus mainly because of the political sensitivity of ethnic and religious issues in contemporary Ethiopia.

Managers do not have the freedom and confidence to do what they think is good for the University, particularly related to issues of diversity. In most cases, the main reason for this is fear of the political implications of diversity-related issues. By the way, it is not only managers, but also we [teachers] try to avoid discussing and dealing with diversity-related issues in classroom because of its political sensitivity. (FA5)

As an academic institution, the University is expected to facilitate forums for academic discussions on diversity-related issues. Even though managers believe in the benefits of such discussions, I don't think they have the confidence to do that because of the political situation. I am not saying that I would do that if I were a manager. I am just telling you the current reality. (FA8)

As higher officials of a state university, managers have the responsibility to implement government policies and strategies. But they also have a responsibility to facilitate and support plans and programs designed to achieve the University's mission and objectives. As teachers stated, if managers lack the confidence to deal with diversity-related issues, it significantly affects the whole process of managing diversity on campus. In relation to this, one manager said that there may be managers who lack confidence to deal with issues of diversity, but he emphasized that what is more important and what most managers seem to lack is diversity management skills. Managers in BDU have positive perceptions of diversity, but teachers and managers themselves stated that managers lack diversity management skills.

There may be some managers who have diversity management skills, but I don't think that most managers, including myself, have those necessary skills. This becomes noticeable particularly when we try to address different diversity-related problems on campus. (MA6)

Managers have a high commitment to managing diversity, but I cannot say that managers have the necessary skills for managing diversity. I am not sure about the skills of other managers, but I don't feel that I have the skills required to manage diversity. I am not trained to manage diversity. I usually use my pedagogical background, the articles that I read about multiculturalism and my little work experience as an input when I deal with diversity issues. (MA5)

Managers need to develop different skills such as multiculturally sensitive communication skills which help to properly manage diversity. In order to develop such skills, they are not necessarily expected to have an academic background in management or communication. They can develop diversity management skills in different ways, for example through diversity training and workshops. Teachers mentioned that working as a manager for a considerable time is also an important factor in developing diversity management skills through time and practice. In five years (2007-2011), BDU has had three Presidents, five Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, four Vice Presidents for Business and Development, four Deans of Students, and two Executive Directors of Academic Affairs. This shows that people do not stay long in a given managerial position, and according to teachers' suppositions, this contributes to a lack of diversity management skills because they did not work as a manager for long enough to get opportunities to develop their diversity management skills. But this does not mean that in order to develop diversity management skills people should not change their managerial position (e.g. from Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs to President).

Students were not able to comment on managers' diversity management skills, but they mentioned that they are not satisfied with the University's commitment and response to diversity issues. They stated that even though there is no institutional discrimination in any form, the University could have done better in managing diversity by creating different diversity-related initiatives and supporting different activities that promote diversity. Teachers also mentioned that, compared to previous years, there are now fewer

ethnic conflicts. However, they argued that this is because of severe disciplinary measures and political issues rather than successful diversity management strategies.

7.3. Summary

This chapter discussed the various strategies that BDU used for managing diversity, and the major factors that impede the process of managing diversity in the University. BDU has identified promoting diversity as one of the seven core values that significantly contribute to achieving its mission and vision. It also developed different diversity related programs and activities that potentially contribute to promoting and managing diversity. However, most of the programs and activities have not yet been implemented. The University does not have an office which organizes and follows up diversity related plans, programs, and activities. But it has units which are partially or exclusively working to address diversity-related issues on campus. These units are the CC, SU, APC, and GCO. Except for the SU, other units have different problems which affect their positive contributions in relation to promoting and managing diversity.

There are also programs and activities which potentially contribute to promoting and managing diversity. These include diversity-related courses, diversity workshops and seminars, diversity training, diversity events, and activities for maintaining student diversity. There is a clear lack of courses for increasing students' knowledge about diversity and contributing to positive intergroup relations in different ways. The University has provided an opportunity for some of its staff and students to participate in diversity workshops, seminars, and training which were found to be effective in developing their knowledge about diversity issues and skills for managing conflicts on campus. However, so far the diversity workshops, seminars, and training have been one-off activities. The other activity in managing diversity was maintaining student diversity. This was mainly carried out by blocking students' transfer requests, which potentially affects the structural diversity, and enhancing and maintaining teacher diversity by ensuring non-discriminatory employment opportunities and working environment.

The other major issue discussed in this chapter is factors that impede the process of managing diversity in BDU. One of the major factors that impede the process of

managing diversity in BDU was found to be a lack of good strategies. In managing diversity, the University seems to depend on guidelines and rules and regulations which are necessary but not good pre-emptive strategies for addressing diversity-related issues. The other major factor that impedes the process of managing diversity in BDU is lack of implementation and institutional support. The University has identified several programs and activities that potentially contribute to the process of managing diversity, but most of the programs have not yet been implemented according to the plan. There are also units partially or fully dedicated to addressing diversity-related issues on campus, but there is lack of institutional support for these units. Managers' behavior, confidence, and skills are thought to be behind the failure to implement the various diversity-related programs and activities identified in the strategic plan and supporting units dealing with diversity-related issues.

Conclusion

This final chapter of the dissertation presents the major findings, implications (policy, practice, and research) and limitations of the study.

8.1. Summary and Conclusion

Effectively addressing diversity issues in higher education entails understanding different elements of the campus climate for diversity within specific sociocultural, political, and geographic regions. The purpose of the present study was to provide a better understanding of the campus climate for diversity in BDU by examining different elements of the campus climate with regard to ethnic and religious diversity. The study was guided by the following research questions: What are the perceptions of the campus community regarding diversity issues? How is structural diversity evident on campus? What experiences do students have in relation to diversity? and How does the university manage diversity?

This study has shown that BDU has an ethnically and religiously diverse student population coming from all regional states/city administrations. The student admissions and placement strategy, which is carried out at a central level by the MoE, is the major factor contributing to the diverse student population at BDU. The campus community

often perceived a diverse student population as an input that potentially provides opportunities to benefit from diversity. Some of the perceived benefits of a diverse student population are institutional and societal and most of them are individual.

The study has also shown that there is a numerical dominance of the Amhara ethnic group on campus since the 2009/2010 academic year, which in turn affected the numerical representation of religious groups on campus in which the Orthodox Christian has become more dominant. In BDU, no one knows the exact reason for the increased numerical dominance of students from one ethnic group and thereby one religious group. Nor is there any official document which explains the change in student placement which significantly affected the structural diversity on campus. Yet, based on a simple but strong assumption, it can be argued that the MoE has used additional criteria which are not included in the official guidelines for student placement in higher education. The assumption is that unless the MoE used new criteria the numerical representation of students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds could not be drastically changed as explained by participants and indicated in the statistical data. The numerical dominance of one ethnic group in BDU had several undesirable consequences ranging from dissatisfaction to affecting the religious composition and positive intergroup relations among students.

It was also shown that there is no institutional discrimination in any way based on one's ethnic or religious backgrounds. Even Gambella students who felt marginalized because of their skin color, and Muslim students who perceived the University as becoming less hospitable in terms of religion, did not mention any institutional bias. In spite of this, there are several transfer requests often to universities geographically located in the regions where the applicant's ethnic group is dominant. Despite the economic issue, which was the common reason that students mentioned in their transfer request application, detailed analysis has shown that ethnic-related issues are the main reasons for most transfer requests.

The study revealed that students often make friends with individuals from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. But, in selecting close friends, one's ethnic identity has become more important than it was a decade or so ago, and this is associated with the politicization of ethnicity in the country. One of the more significant findings to emerge

from this study is that despite students positive perception of diversity and attitude toward outgroups, the intergroup relations among students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds is gradually deteriorating. The study has shown important insights about factors that challenged students' positive attitude toward ethnic and religious outgroups and negatively affected their need to develop positive intergroup relations. These factors include ethnic and religious composition of students, religion-based student reception, language and ethnic-based-friendships, political party membership, and prejudice, stereotype and ethnocentrism. The result has also shown that multigroup membership and dormitory allocation are factors that provided opportunities for enhancing intergroup contact and positive intergroup relations among students.

Compared to the relationship among students from different ethnic groups, there is a more positive and strong relationship among students from different religious groups. This is strongly associated with the longstanding harmonious relationship between religious groups for most of the modern history of the country. However, this positive relationship did not provide opportunities for students from different religious backgrounds to have frequent and meaningful religion-related discussions. The result shows that avoiding and ignoring discussing religion-related issues with outgroup members is the main strategy that students used to maintain their positive intergroup relations. Avoiding discussing ethnic issues with students from different ethnic backgrounds or selecting individuals whom they can confidently discuss with is also another strategy that students used to peacefully live on campus with students from different ethnic groups. In addition to the political sensitivity of ethnicity, lack of tolerance, trust and culture of discussion has contributed to students' lack of interest to discuss about ethnic-related issues with ethnic outgroup members.

This study has found that in spite of the positive relationship and mutual understanding among different religious groups, religious tension on campus is increasing. The various religious practices and activities on campus and the guideline proposed to regulate religion-related issues in HEIs, occasioned by the religious tension mounting in the country, were identified as the major factors contributing to the religious tension on campus. So far, there are no incidents that could be regarded as religious conflict on campus. But there are lots of ethnic tensions and conflicts in the University,

and this was mostly between ethnic majority groups – the Amhara, Oromo and Tigre ethnic groups. The ethnic politics and polarization in Ethiopia and the political rivalry between these groups are the main reasons for most ethnic tensions and conflicts to occur between them. The result also shows the increasing involvement of Gambella students in ethnic conflicts mainly because of perceived marginalization. The result of this study also provides important insights about factors that cause ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts on campus. These factors include ordinary disputes between individuals, prejudice, ethnocentrism and stereotype, problems outside the university, ethnic epithets, music and religious song, and government's political interest. The study has found that generally most of the factors that affected the positive intergroup relations among different ethnic groups and contributed to the ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts on campus are related to the ethnic-based administration and political system, which in different ways instilled difference than unity. This was facilitated through and emphasized by mainly mass media and the ruling and opposition political parties' political indoctrination.

Although managing diversity in higher education is a daunting task (Garcia & Hoelscher, 2008), the University has a responsibility to address diversity issues on campus in all possible ways. The campus community's positive perception of diversity becomes essential input in the process of promoting and managing diversity and thereby creating and maintaining a positive learning and living environment. The University has recognized promoting diversity as one of its core values, and aimed at implementing various programs and activities that contribute to develop campus community's knowledge and skills which are necessary for learning, living and working in diverse context. It also has different units which are partially or fully working to address diversity-related issues on campus. However, the result shows that the University lacks good strategies and implementing diversity-related plans. The institutional support to the units and existing diversity-related programs and activities is not encouraging. This shows the less emphasis put on diversity issues and the incongruence between the strategic plan and the daily functioning of the University regarding diversity issues on campus. Based on the results of this study, it can be generally concluded that in a country like Ethiopia, where diversity related issues are at the center of government's

administrative and political system, managing diversity in higher education become even more complicated and challenging.

8.2. Implications

Policy and practice

The study has shown that the ethnic and religious composition of students and language problem are some of the factors that affected the intergroup relations among students from different backgrounds. Taken together, these results suggest that the government should reconsider the student placement strategy as well as the educational language policy and implementation. With regard to this, the University should discuss with the MoE as it significantly affects its core value – promoting diversity, and students overall satisfaction with the University. The University managers' plan to provide some Ethiopian language courses is commendable, but it will be more effective if it starts at the primary or secondary than higher education. Therefore, it is necessary for the policy makers to consider the contribution of providing additional Ethiopian language courses (particularly for students whose first language is Amharic) in widening the opportunity for intergroup contacts and intergroup relations. This should be in addition to enhancing the effective provision of Amharic and English languages both at primary and secondary schools. With regard to placement, it was also shown that there are several students who want to study in one of the universities that found in a region where their ethnic group is dominant. Taking the administrative and political situations into context, this suggests that if universities carried out student selections and admissions, it was very likely that they would encounter ethnically homogeneous student population. Therefore, the result of this study supports the strategy of student placement by the MoE provided that the student placement guideline promotes student diversity.

One of the specific objectives of the education and training policy in Ethiopia is “to provide education that promotes democratic culture, tolerance and peaceful resolutions of differences and that raises the sense of discharging societal responsibility” (FDRE, 1994, p. 10). But, the results of this study indicate that there is lack of diversity-related courses in the University. This urges the University to provide diversity-related courses as

explained in its strategic plan. In addition to creating awareness and providing knowledge about diversity, the provision of diversity-related courses could motivate students to raise and discuss various diversity issues which are essential to learn, live and work in a diverse environment.

As indicated in several studies, providing various opportunities for intergroup contact and interactions is one of the strategies that contribute to improve positive intergroup relations and thereby creating positive campus climate for diversity. In the BDU context, providing opportunities for students to discuss about ethnic and religion-related issues would be one alternative, but as the result shows, there are almost no planned and organized discussions. Above all, students lack interest to discuss ethnic and religion-related issues because of political sensitivity, lack of tolerance, trust and culture of discussion. HEIs in Ethiopia have the obligation to enhance religious equality, culture of trust and respect, and positive relations among students (MoE, 2011), and BDU is no exception. Therefore, it should organize discussions including IGDs. The evidence from this study indicates that students who participated in the discussion on the guideline to regulate worship, dress code, and food etiquette in HEIs were motivated and continued discussing religion-related issues from social and political points of view which they did not often do. An implication of this is that by providing more opportunities, it is possible to motivate students to participate in planned diversity-related discussions, which create diversity awareness and enhance intergroup contacts and intergroup relations.

The result shows that teachers are hardly contributing to the process of promoting and managing diversity. One of the viable strategies to participate them in this process could be by creating diversity awareness and then providing them pedagogical and methodological training required for teaching diverse students. Besides equipping teachers with required knowledge and skills to teach diverse students, such training would inspire teachers to include diversity issues in their teaching and to conduct diversity-related research in their area of expertise. The result of this study also shows the risk that sometimes staff unknowingly becomes source tension and conflict on campus. The evidence from this study suggests that providing diversity training, workshops and seminars significantly contributes to create diversity awareness and improve staff's skills

of managing diversity. The University can achieve these in different ways, but it should not be a one-off activity.

There are various strategies or guidelines for managing diversity in HEIs, but there is no complete and proved recipe available. Therefore, it would be the task of BDU first to identify and then address the challenges using the best possible strategies to its context. This basically requires carrying out empirical studies. With regard to this, though not based on research, BDU has identified various programs and activities that could contribute to promote and manage diversity in different ways. Implementing these programs and activities, and providing institutional support to units that deals with diversity issues should be a priority for the university management. Managers are key resources who play significant roles in initiating and realizing any plan regarding promoting and managing diversity on campus. Thus, they should develop their confidence and skills in managing diversity. But it is necessary to emphasize that managing diversity in higher education is not the responsibility of only managers. It requires the concerted efforts of managers, teachers, staff, students, and government institutions outside the university. Therefore, in the process of managing diversity, managers need to mobilize available human resources, acknowledge the contribution of each campus community members, and make sure that all stakeholders feel ownership. When the University community feels that their contribution is overlooked or often negatively criticized, they may start to retreat from implementing and actively participating in different issues that would potentially contribute to managing diversity in different ways.

The results of this study indicate that the ethnic-based administration and political system has in one way or another affected most elements of the campus climate for diversity. This implies that among the three main contexts of the theoretical framework for understanding the campus climate for diversity (a government/policy context, a sociohistorical context, and an institutional context), in BDU, the government/policy context is more influential than the other contexts. In most previous studies, the impact of government/policy context was also noted, but not as it is pronounced in this study. These should encourage the government to understand the impacts of its policies, strategies and political system on the young generation who are the future of the country. Taken all

together, these results suggest that there should be strong relationship between universities and other government institutions such as MoE and the MFA to promote a positive campus climate for diversity.

Further research

This study was conducted in BDU, one of the public universities in Ethiopia. Although all public universities have a diverse student population, the emphasis put on and strategies used to address diversity issues may vary from institution to institution. Further research should therefore include other universities for better understanding of the campus climate for diversity and develop better strategies for addressing diversity issues in Ethiopian higher education settings. In doing so, it would be interesting to include and compare the campus climate for diversity at universities that are located in different regions/city administrations. For comparison purposes, at least one of the universities should be in a region where other than Amhara are the dominant ethnic group, or in Addis Ababa city which does not officially belong to any ethnic group.

Since including students from different ethnic and religious groups as much as possible contributes more information about diversity issues from different perspectives, it makes sense to use questionnaire in further research data collection, but this should be in addition to other methods such as interview and focus group which are essential in qualitative research. There are some issues which are pertinent to understand the campus climate for diversity, but campus community members were not well aware of why some of them happened in the way they are now; for example, the student placement that resulted in the numerical dominance of one ethnic group. Further research could alleviate this problem by incorporating individuals outside universities who have intimate knowledge about an issue under study.

The results of this study show the impacts of ethnic-based federalism and political system on campus climate for diversity. If the debate is to be moved forward, a better understanding of the effects of government policies, strategies and political system on various elements of the campus climate for diversity needs to be developed. The guideline to regulate worship, dress code, and food etiquette in HEIs was not approved during the data collection period of this study. It was implemented later at the beginning

of 2013. Thus, further research is needed to determine the influences of this guideline on religious-related issues on campus. While this study looked at the perceptions and experiences of campus community regarding diversity, future research may also go a step further by looking for the influences of various diversity issues on student learning.

8.3. Limitations of the Study

This study has different limitations. First, most of the review literature on diversity in higher education focuses on Western countries that have social, cultural and political contexts which are different from the general context of this study, Ethiopia. This is mainly due to a lack of research on diversity issues in Ethiopia and other at least moderately similar settings. Second, the fact that only students from certain ethnic and religious backgrounds participated in the study might be seen as a limitation. Because of this, the study result cannot be generalized to ethnic and religious groups that have not participated in this study because they may have different views and experiences about the issues addressed in this study. Third, the study did not include participants outside the university community, and this limited the potential to get more information on policies and strategies that affects the campus climate for diversity.

References

- Aalen, L. (2011). *The politics of ethnicity in Ethiopia: Actors, powers and mobilization under ethnic federalism*. Leiden: Brill.
- Abate, Y. (1991). The society and its environment. In T. P. Ofcansky & L. Berry (Eds.), *Ethiopia: A country study* (pp. 88-155). Washington, DC: Federal Research Division.
- Abbay, A. (2004). Diversity and state-building in Ethiopia. *African Affairs*, 103(413), 593-614.
- Abbink, J. (1997). Ethnicity and constitutionalism in contemporary Ethiopia. *Journal of African Law*, 41(2), 159-174.
- Abbink, J. (2011). Religion in public spaces: Emerging Muslim-Christian polemics in Ethiopia. *African Affairs*, 110(439), 253-274.
- Abiye, Y. (2012, September 29). Ethiopia sees a new rule to ban religion-oriented messages at public places, *The Reporter*, 18(838), p. 3.
- Adamu, Y. A. & Zellelew, B. T. (2007). Higher education institutions as pavilions of diversity: Opportunities and challenges: The case of Bahir Dar university. *Ethiopian Journal of Higher Education*, 4(1), 49-68.
- Adamu, Y. A. (2007). Pre-service teachers' awareness about cultural diversity in educational settings and their readiness to teach culturally diverse students: The case of Bahir Dar University. *Ethiopian Journal of Education*, 27(2), 91-115.
- Adamu, Y. A. (2012). Internationalization of higher education in Africa: Introducing credit accumulation and transfer system. *International Journal of Public Policy*, 8(4/5/6), 199-213.

- Africa, H. (2006). Challenges and prospects for achieving diversity: The case of South Africa. In W. R. Allen, M. Bonous-Hammarth, & R. T. Teranishi (Eds.), *Higher education in a global society: Achieving diversity, equity and excellence* (pp. 311-328). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- African Rally for Peace and Development [ARPD]. (2008). *Baseline study on violent conflicts in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*. Retrieved from [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/F1D70F09138C38B5C125760E00401F9C/\\$file/Conflict-Study-Ethiopia.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/F1D70F09138C38B5C125760E00401F9C/$file/Conflict-Study-Ethiopia.pdf)
- Agocs, C., & Burr, C. (1996). Employment equity, affirmative action and managing diversity: Assessing the difference. *International Journal of Manpower*, 17(4/5), 30-45.
- Aguirre, A. & Martinez, R. (2002). Leadership practices and diversity in higher education: Transitional and transformational frameworks. *The Journal of Leadership Studies*, 8(3), 53-62.
- Ahmed, H. (2006). Coexistence and/or confrontation? Towards a reappraisal of Christian-Muslim encounter in contemporary Ethiopia. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 36(1), 4-22.
- Alemu, D. S. & Tekleselassie, A. A. (2006). Instructional language policy in Ethiopia: Motivated by politics or the educational needs of children? *Planning and Changing*, 37(3&4), 151-168.
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Ammon, U. (2010). Regional perspectives in the study of language and ethnic identity: Western Europe. In J. A. Fishman & O. Garcia (Eds.), *Handbook of language and ethnic identity* (Vol. 1, 2nd ed., pp. 207-220). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Anthony, A. L., Milem, J. F., & Chang, M. J. (2012). Approaching diversity work in the university: Lessons from an American context. In W. R. Allen, R. T. Teranishi, & M. Bonous-Hammarth (Eds.), *As the world turns: Implications of global shifts in higher education for theory, research and practice* (pp. 371-401). Bingley: Emerald.
- Antonio, A. L. (2001). Diversity and the influence of friendship groups in college. *The Review of Higher Education*, 25(1), 63-89.

- Apostle of Peace Club [APC]. (2011). Bahir Dar University Apostle of Peace Club regulation. Bahir Dar: Author.
- Asgedom, A. (2005). Higher education in pre-revolution Ethiopia: Relevance and academic freedom. *Ethiopian Journal of Higher Education*, 2(2), 1-45.
- Asmamaw, A. T. (2012). *The impact of ethnicity on student relations in Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Tromso, Tromso.
- Astin, A. W. (1993). Diversity and multiculturalism on the campus: How are students affected? *Change*, 25(2), 44-49.
- Attle, S. & Baker, B. (2007). Cooperative learning in a competitive environment: Classroom applications. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 19(1), 77-83.
- Bahir Dar University [BDU]. (2011). *The five-year strategic plan (2011-2016) of Bahir Dar University*. Bahir Dar: Author.
- Bahir Dar University [BDU]. (2012a). *Bahir Dar University students discipline guideline*. Bahir Dar: Author.
- Bahir Dar University [BDU]. (2012b). *Facts and figures*. Retrieved from <http://www.bdu.edu.et/index.php/facts-a-figures>
- Bahir Dar University [BDU]. (2012c). *Senate legislation of Bahir Dar University*. Bahir Dar: Author.
- Bahir Dar University [BDU]. (2012d). Student enrollment statistics by address. Bahir Dar: Author.
- Bahir Dar University [BDU]. (n.d.). *Background information*. Retrieved from <http://www.bdu.edu.et/about-us/background>
- Balsvik, R. R. (1985). *Haile Sellassie's students: The intellectual and social background to revolution, 1952-1977*. Michigan: African Studies Center, Michigan State University.
- Balsvik, R. R. (1998). Student protest: University and state in Africa 1960-1995. *Forum for Development Studies*, 25(2), 301-325.
- Balsvik, R. R. (2007). *The quest for expression: State and the university in Ethiopia under three regimes, 1952-2005*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.

- Banks, J. A. (2001). *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Banks, J. A. (2007). *Educating citizens in a multicultural society* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Banks, J. A., Banks, C. A., Cortes, C. E., Hahn, C. L., Merryfield, M. M., Moodley, K. A., ... Parker, W. C. (2005). *Democracy and diversity: Principles and concepts for educating citizens in a global age*. Seattle: Center for Multicultural Education.
- Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (1997). Designing social justice education courses. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A source book* (pp. 44-58). New York: Routledge.
- Bennett, C. I. (1999). *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Benson, C., Heugh, K., Bogale, B., & Gebreyohannes, M. A. (2012). Multilingual education in Ethiopian primary schools. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, & K. Heugh (Eds.), *Multilingual education and sustainable diversity work: From periphery to center* (pp. 32-61). New York & London: Routledge.
- Beshir, M. O. (1979). *Diversity, regionalism and national unity*. Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.
- Biggs, D. A & Colesante, R. G. (2004). The moral education of citizens: Explorations and outcomes with college students. In W. G. Stephan & W. P. Vogt (Eds.), *Education programs for improving intergroup relations: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 152-168). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bloom, D., Canning, D. & Chan, K. (2005). *Higher education and economic development in Africa*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1982). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bonacci, G. (2000). *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the state 1974-1991: Analysis of an ambiguous religious policy*. London: Center for Ethiopian Studies.
- Boothe, K. & Walker, R. (1997). Mother tongue education in Ethiopia: From policy to implementation. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 21(1), 1-19.

- Bowen, G. A. (2005). Preparing a qualitative research-based dissertation: Lessons learned. *The Qualitative Report*, 10(2), 208-222.
- Bowen, H. R. (1977). *Investment in learning: The individual and social value of American higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bowman, N. A. (2009). College diversity courses and cognitive development among students from privileged and marginalized groups. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 2(3), 182-194.
- Braukamper, U. (2002). *Islamic history and culture in southern Ethiopia: Collected essays*. Hamburg: Lit Verlag.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brown, J. (1981). Religion and revolution in Ethiopia. *Religion, State and Society*, 9(1), 50-55.
- Brown, L. I. (2004). Diversity: The challenge for higher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 7(1), 21-34.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carnoy, M. (1999). *Globalization and educational reform: What planners need to know*. Paris: UNESCO, International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Central Statistical Agency [CSA]. (2008). *Summary and statistical report of the 2007 population and housing census*. Addis Ababa: FDRE Population Census Commission.
- Chang, M. J. (1999). Does racial diversity matter? The educational impact of a racially diverse undergraduate population. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(4), 377-395.
- Clapham C. (1990). Conclusion: Revolution, nationality, and the Ethiopian state. In M. Ottaway (Ed.), *The political economy of Ethiopia* (pp. 221-231). New York: Praeger.
- Clapham, C. (2002). Controlling space in Ethiopia. In W. James, D. Donham, E. Kurimoto & A. Triulzi (Eds.), *Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and after* (pp. 9-30). Oxford: James Currey.

- Cohen, G. (2007). Mother tongue and other tongue in primary education: Can equity be achieved with the use of different languages? In H. Coleman (Ed.), *Language and development: Africa and beyond: Proceedings of the 7th International Language and Development Conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 26-28 October 2005* (pp. 62-75). Addis Ababa: British Council.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London & New York: Routledge.
- Cox, T. (2001). *Creating the multicultural organization: A strategy for capturing the power of diversity*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, W. J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cross, M. (2004). Institutionalizing campus diversity in South African higher education: Review of diversity scholarship and diversity education. *Higher Education*, 47(4), 387-410.
- Cushner, K, McClelland, A., & Safford, P. (2009). *Human diversity in education: An integrative approach* (6th ed.). Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill.
- De Klerk, V. & Radloff, S. (2010). Measuring the effect of diversity interventions at a South African residential university. *The International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations*, 10(2), 25-45.
- Denson, N. (2009). Do curricular and co-curricular diversity activities influence racial bias? A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(2), 805-838.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-17). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., Kawakami, K., & Hodson, G. (2002). Why can't we just get along? Interpersonal biases and interracial distrust. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology* 8(2), 88-102.
- Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., Stewart, T. L., Esses, V. M., ten Vergert, M., & Hodson, G. (2004). From intervention to outcome: Processes in the reduction of bias. In W.

- G. Stephan & W. P. Vogt (Eds.), *Education programs for improving intergroup relations: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 243-265). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ediger, M. (1996). Cooperative learning versus competition: Which is better? *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 23(3), 204-300.
- Eide, O. M. (2000). *Revolution and religion in Ethiopia: The growth and persecution of the Mekane Yesus church, 1974-85*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Embassy of the FDRE, United Kingdom. (n.d). *Regional states*. Retrieved from http://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/about_us/regional_states.htm
- Engberg, M. E. (2004). Improving intergroup relations in higher education: A critical examination of the influence of educational interventions on racial bias. *Review of Educational Research*, 7(4), 473-524.
- Engedayehu, W. (1993). Ethiopia: Democracy and the politics of ethnicity. *Africa Today*, 40(2), 29-52.
- Ethiopian Human Rights Council. (2009). *Parallel report submitted to the committee on racial discrimination*. Addis Ababa: Author.
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia [FDRE]. (1994). *Education and training policy*. Addis Ababa: Author.
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia [FDRE]. (2009). Higher education proclamation (No. 650/2009). *Federal Negarit Gazeta*, 64, 4976-5044.
- Flick, U. (2002). *An introduction to qualitative research* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Flick, U. (2004). Triangulation in qualitative research. In U. Flick, E. Von Kardorff, & I. Steinke (Eds.), *A companion to qualitative research* (pp. 178-183). London: Sage.
- Flowers, L. & Pascarella, E. T. (1999). Does college racial composition influence the openness to diversity of African American students? *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(4), 405-417.
- Ford, P. F. (2008). Christian-Muslim relations in Ethiopia: A checkered past, a challenging future. *Reformed Review*, 61(2), 52-70.
- Friedman, G. S. (1989). Religion and the Marxist state in Ethiopia: The case of the Ethiopian Jews. *Religion, State and Society*, 17(3), 247-256.

- Gaertner, S. L., Dovidio, J. F., Anastasio, P. A., Bachman, B. A., & Rust, M. C. (1993). The common ingroup identity model: Recategorization and the reduction of intergroup bias. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 4(1), 1-26.
- Garcia, J. E. & Hoelscher, K. J. (2008). *Managing diversity flashpoints in higher education*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Gashaw, S. (1993). Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Ethiopia. In C. Young (Ed.), *The rising tide of cultural pluralism: The nation-state at bay?* (pp. 138-157). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Gellar, S. (1995). Colonial era. In P. M. Martin & O. Patrick (Eds.), *Africa* (3rd ed., pp. 135-155). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-603.
- Gottfredson, N. C., Panter, A. T., Daye, C. E., Allen, W. A., Wightman, L. F., & Deo, M. E. (2008). Does diversity at undergraduate institutions influence student outcomes? *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1(2), 80-94.
- Gudina, M. (2007). The problematic of democratizing a multi-cultural society: The Ethiopian experience. *Conference on Immigration, Minorities and Multiculturalism in Democracies*, 24-27 October 2007, Montreal, QC, Canada.
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gurin, P. (1999). Selections from the compelling need for diversity in higher education, expert reports in defense of the University of Michigan. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 32(2), 36-62.
- Gurin, P., Day, E., Gurin, G., & Hurtado, S. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(3), 330-366.
- Gurin, P., Nagda, B. A., & Lopez, G. E. (2004). The benefits of diversity in education for democratic citizenship. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60(1), 17-34.
- Guri-Rosenblit, S., Sebkova, H. & Teichler, U. (2007). Massification and diversity of higher education systems: Interplay of complex dimensions. *Higher Education Policy*, 20(4), 373-389.

- Gutmann, A. (2004). Unity and diversity in democratic multicultural education: Creative and destructive tensions. In J. A. Banks (Ed.), *Diversity and citizenship education: Global perspectives* (pp. 71-96). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Habitegiyorgis, T. T. (2010). *Ethnic diversity and campus students from multicultural perspectives: Learning and cross-cultural experiences*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag.
- Habtu, A. (2004). Ethnic pluralism as an organizing principle of the Ethiopian federation. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 28(2), 91-103.
- Habtu, A. (2005). Multiethnic federalism in Ethiopia: A study of the secession clause in the constitution. *Publius*, 35(2), 313-358.
- Haile, G. (1986). The unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 24(3), 465-487.
- Haile, M. (1996). The new Ethiopian constitution: Its impacts on unity, human rights and development. *Suffolk Transnational Law Review*, 20(1), 1-84.
- Hamesso, S. Y. (1997). The language of education in Africa: The key issues. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 10(1), 1-13.
- Hancock, B. (1998). *Trent focus for research and development in primary health care: An introduction to quality research*. Nottingham: Trent Focus.
- Hayes, B. H., McAllister, I. & Dowds, L. (2007). Integrated education, intergroup relation and political identities in Northern Ireland. *Social Problems*, 54(4), 454-482
- Herbst, P. H. (1997). *The color of words: An encyclopedic dictionary of ethnic bias in the United States*. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press.
- Hoepfl, M. C. (1997). Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education researchers. *Journal of Technology Education*, 9(1), 47-63.
- Hurtado, S. (2001). Linking diversity and educational purpose: How diversity affects the classroom environment and student development. In G. Orfield (Ed.), *Diversity challenged: Evidence on the impact of affirmative action* (pp. 187-203). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Publishing Group.
- Hurtado, S. (2003). *Preparing college students for a diverse democracy: Final report to the U.S. department of education, OERI, Field Initiated Studies Program*. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education.

- Hurtado, S. (2005). The next generation of diversity and intergroup relations research. *Journal of Social Issues*, 61(3), 595-610.
- Hurtado, S. (2007). Linking diversity with the educational and civic missions of higher education. *The Review of Higher Education*, 30(2), 185–196.
- Hurtado, S., Dey, E. L. Gurin, P. Y., & Gurin G. (2003). College environments, diversity, and student learning. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 18, pp.145-90). London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Hurtado, S., Griffin, K. A., Arellano, L., & Cuellar, M. (2008). Assessing the value of climate assessments: Progress and future directions. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1(4), 204-221.
- Hurtado, S., Milem, J., Clayton-Pedersen, A., & Allen, W. (1998). Enhancing campus climates for racial/ethnic diversity: Educational policy and practice. *The Review of Higher Education*, 21(3), 279-302.
- Hurtado, S., Milem, J., Clayton-Pederson, A., & Allen, W. (1999). *Enacting diverse learning environments: Improving the climate for racial/ethnic diversity in higher education*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 26 (8). Washington, DC: The George Washington University.
- Integrated Regional Information Networks. (2003). *Ethiopia: Religion “new breeding ground for conflict”*. Retrieved from <http://www.irinnews.org/report/43642/ethiopia-religion-new-breeding-ground-for-conflict>
- International Crisis Group. (2009). Ethiopia: Ethnic federalism and its discontents. *Crisis Group Africa Report* (nos.153-4). Brussels: Author.
- Izama V. SK. (2013). *Managing diversity in African universities: Living and challenging difference on four Ugandan campuses*. Pluralism Working Paper Series. Paper no. 11. Utrecht: Pluralism Knowledge Programme.
- Jinadu, L. A. (2006). Nigerian universities and the problem of cultural diversity: Policy responses and consequences. In W. R. Allen, M. Bonous-Hammarth, & R. T. Teranishi (Eds.), *Higher education in a global society: Achieving diversity, equity and excellence - Advances in education in diverse communities: Research, policy and praxis* (pp. 7-32). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2000). Cooperative learning, values, and cultural plural classrooms. In M. Leicester & C. Modgil (Eds.), *Classroom Issues: Practice, Pedagogy and curriculum* (15-28). London & New York: Falmer Press.
- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T. & Holubec, E. (2002). *Circles of learning: Cooperation in the classroom* (5th ed.). Edina, Minn.: Interaction Book Co.
- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. A. (1991). *Cooperative learning: Increasing college faculty instructional productivity*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 4. Washington, DC: The George Washington University.
- Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. B. (2004). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Joireman, S. F. (1997). Opposition politics and ethnicity in Ethiopia: We will all go down together. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35(3), 387-407.
- Joseph, R. A. (1998). Oldspeak vs newspeak. *Journal of Democracy*, 9(4), 55-61.
- Kaplan, B. & Maxwell, J. A. (1994). Qualitative research methods for evaluating computer information systems. In J. G. Anderson, C. E. Aydin and S. J. Jay (Eds.), *Evaluating Health Care Information Systems: Methods and Applications* (pp. 45-68). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Keim, C. A. (1995). Africa and Europe before 1900. In P. M. Martin & O. Patrick (Eds.), *Africa* (3rd ed., pp. 115-134). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Keller, E. J. (1988). *Revolutionary Ethiopia: From empire to people's republic*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Keller, E. J. (2002). Ethnic federalism, fiscal reform, development and democratization in Ethiopia. *African Journal of Political Science*, 7(1), 21-50.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews*. London: Sage.
- Lakew, W. G. (1992). Behind the news: Revolution in Ethiopia. *Capital and Class*, 46(92), 7-25.
- Larke, P., & Larke A. (2009). Teaching diversity/multicultural education courses in the academy: Sharing the voice of six professors. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 3, 1-8.

- Levine, A. (1991). The meaning of diversity. *Change*, 23(5), 4-5.
- Levine, D. N. (2000). *Greater Ethiopia: The evolution of a multiethnic society* (2nd ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lewis, H. S. (1993). Ethnicity in Ethiopia: the view from below (and from the South, East, and West). In C. Young (Ed.), *The rising tide of cultural pluralism: The nation-state at bay?* (pp. 158-178). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Lewis, I. M. (1985). *Social anthropology in perspective* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hill, CA: Sage.
- Liu, G. (1998). Affirmative action in higher education: The diversity rationale and the compelling interest test. *Harvard Civil Rights–Civil Liberties Law Review*, 33(2), 381-442.
- Loimeier, R. (2013). *Muslim societies in Africa: A historical anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Louch, H. (2000). Personal network integration: Transitivity and homophily in strong-tie relations. *Social Network*, 22(1), 45-64.
- Lumadi, M. W. (2008). Managing diversity at higher education and training institutions: A daunting task. *Journal of Diversity Management*, 3(4), 1-9.
- Macedo, S. (2000). *Diversity and distrust: Civic education in a multicultural democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mack, N., Woodsong, C., Macqueen, K. M., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide*. Carolina: Family Health International.
- MacPhee, D., Kreutzer, J. C., & Fritz, J. J. (1994). Infusing a diversity perspective into human development courses. *Child Development*, 65(2), 699-715.
- Mains, D. (2004). Drinking, rumor, and ethnicity in Jimma, Ethiopia. *Journal of the International African Institute*, 74(3), 341-360.
- Marcus, H. G. (1994). *A history of Ethiopia*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Marcus, H. G. (1995). *The life and times of Menelik II: Ethiopia 1844-1913*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Read Sea Press.

- Markakis, J. (1989). Nationalities and the state in Ethiopia. *Third World Quarterly*, 11(4), 118-130.
- Maru, M. T. (2010). Federalism and conflicts in Ethiopia. *Conflict Trends*, 1, 36-45.
- Maruyama, G., Moreno, J. F., Gudeman, R. H., & Marin, P. (2000). Introduction. In G. Maruyama, J. F. Moreno, R. H. Gudeman, & P. Marin (Eds.), *Does diversity make a difference? Three research studies on diversity in college classrooms* (pp. 1-7). Washington, DC: American Council on Education and American Association of University Professors.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McNab, C. (1990). Language policy and language practice: Implementing multilingual literacy education in Ethiopia. *African Studies Review*, 33(3) 65-82.
- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 415-444.
- Mdepa, W. & Tshiwula, L. (2012). Student diversity in South African higher education. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 13, 19-33.
- Mehra, B. (2002). Bias in qualitative research: Voices from an online classroom. *The Qualitative Report*, 7(1). Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR7-1/mehra.html>
- Mehretu, A. (2012). Ethnic federalism and its potential to dismember the Ethiopian state. *Progress in Development Studies*, 12(2/3), 113-133.
- Mekonnen, D. & Endawoke, Y. (2007). Causes of conflict and conflict resolution styles among Bahir Dar university students. *Ethiopian Journal of Development Research*, 29(1), 35-70.
- Mengisteab, K. (1997). New approaches to state building in Africa: The case of Ethiopia's ethnic-based federalism. *African Studies Review*, 40(3), 111-132.
- Mengisteab, K. (2001). Ethiopia's ethnic-based federalism: 10 years after. *African Issues*, 29(1/2), 20-25.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- Merrill-Washington, V. (2007). *Counselors' role in a changing, diverse society*. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED498819.pdf>
- Metcalf, B. D., & Woodhams, C. (2008). Critical perspectives in diversity and equality management. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 23(6), 377-381.
- Milem, J. F. (2003). The educational benefits of diversity: Evidence from multiple sectors. In M. Chang, D. Witt, J. Jones, & K. Hakuta (Eds.). *Compelling interest: Examining the evidence on racial dynamics in higher education* (pp. 126-169). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Milem, J. F., & Hakuta, K. (2000). The benefits of racial and ethnic diversity in higher education. In D. J. Wilds (Ed.), *Minorities in higher education 1999-2000: Seventeenth annual status report* (pp. 39-67). Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Milem, J. F., Chang, M. J., & Antonio, A. L. (2005). *Making diversity work on campus: A research-based perspective*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Milkias, P. (2011). *Ethiopia (Africa in focus)*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E., Alexander, L. (1990). *In-depth interviewing: Researching people*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.
- Ministry of Education [MoE]. (2000). *Education statistics annual abstract 1999/2000*. Addis Ababa: Author.
- Ministry of Education [MoE]. (2002). *The guideline for implementing students placement in public universities*. Addis Ababa: Author.
- Ministry of Education [MoE]. (2011a). *Education statistics annual abstract 2010/2011*. Addis Ababa: Author.
- Ministry of Education [MoE]. (2011b). *A guideline to regulate "worship, dress code, and food etiquette" in higher education and vocational training institutions*. Addis Ababa: Author.
- Minwyelet, A. (2013). *Communities of university teachers as a basis for professional development*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Vrije University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

- Montalvo, J. G. & Reynal-Querol, M. (2005). Ethnic diversity and economic development. *Journal of Development Economics*, 76(2), 293-323.
- Morgan, D. L. (1998). *The focus group guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moutsios, S. (2009). International organizations and transnational education policy. *Compare*, 39(4), 467-478.
- Museus, S. D. (2008). Understanding the role of ethnic student organizations in facilitating cultural adjustment and membership among African American and Asian American college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 59(6), 568-586.
- Musil, C. M., Garcia, M., Hudgins, C. A., Nettles, M. T., Sedlacek, W. E., & Smith, D. G. (1999). *To form a more perfect union: Campus diversity initiatives*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Nagda, B. A. & Derr, A. S. (2004). Intergroup dialogue: Embracing difference and conflict, engendering community. In W. G., Stephan, & W. P. Vogt (Eds.), *Education programs for improving intergroup relations: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 133-151). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Nagda, B. A. & Maxwell, K. E. (2011). Deepening the layers of understanding and connections: A critical-dialogical approach to facilitating intergroup dialogues. In K. E, Maxwell, B. A, Nagda, & M. C. Thompson (Eds.), *Facilitating intergroup dialogues: Bridging differences, catalyzing change* (pp.1-22). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Nahum, F. (1997). *Constitution for a nation of nations: The Ethiopian perspective*. Lawrenceville and Asmara: The Red Sea Press.
- Negash, T. (2006). *Education in Ethiopia: From crisis to the brink of collapse*. Stockholm: Nordic Africa Institute.
- Neuliep, J. W., Chaudoir, M., & McCroskey, J. C. (2001). A cross-cultural comparison of ethnocentrism among Japanese and United States college students. *Communication Research Reports*, 18(2), 137-146.
- Neuman, W. L. (2003). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (5th ed.). New York: Allyn & Bacon.

- Norris, B. (2001). Transformation, diversity and organizational change within institutions of higher education. *South African Journal of Education*, 21(4), 219-222.
- Ottaway, M. (1994). *Democratization and ethnic nationalism: African and Eastern European experiences*. Policy Essay No. 14. Washington, DC: Overseas Development Council.
- Pankhurst, R. (1992). *A social history of Ethiopia: The Northern and central highlands from early medieval times to the rise of Emperor Tewodros II*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.
- Parker, B. & Woldegiorgis, A. (2003). *Ethiopia: The background, the issues, the people* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxfam.
- Pascarella, E. T., Edison, M., Nora, A., Hagedorn, L. S., & Terenzini, P. T. (1996). Influences on students' openness to diversity and challenge in the first year of college. *Journal of Higher Education*, 67(2), 174-195.
- Patterson, O. (1980). Language, ethnicity and change. *Journal of Basic Writing*, 3(1), 62-73.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pearson, A. R., West, T. V., Dovidio, J. F., Renfro, S. P., Buck, R., & Henning, R. (2008). The fragility of intergroup relations: Divergent effects of delayed audio-visual feedback in intergroup and intragroup interaction. *Psychological Science*, 19(12), 1272-1279.
- Pettigrew, T. F. (1997). Generalized intergroup contact effects on prejudice. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23(2), 173-185.
- Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). Intergroup contact theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 65-85.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(5), 751-783.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2008). How does intergroup contact reduce prejudice? Meta-analytic tests of three mediators. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 38(6), 922-934.

- Pike, G. R., & Kuh, G. D. (2006). Relationships among structural diversity, informal peer interactions and perceptions of the campus environment. *The Review of Higher Education*, 29(4), 425-450.
- Provisional Military Administrative Council. (1976). *National democratic revolution program*. Addis Ababa: Author.
- Rankin, S. & Reason, R. (2008). Transformational tapestry model: A comprehensive approach to transforming campus climate. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1(4), 262-274.
- Reynal-Querol, M. (2002). Ethnicity, political systems, and civil wars. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 46(1), 29-54.
- Roccas, S., & Brewer, M. B. (2002). Social identity complexity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 6(2), 88-106.
- Ryan, S. (1995). *Ethnic conflict and international relations* (2nd ed.). Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing.
- Şad, S. N., & Kutlu, M. (2009). A Study of graffiti in teacher education. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 36, 39-56.
- Safran, W. (1999). Nationalism. In J. A. Fishman (Ed.), *Handbook of language and ethnic identity* (pp. 77-93). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social Research* (3rd ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schofield, J. W., Hausmann, L. R., Ye, F. & Woods, R. L. (2010). Intergroup friendships on campus: Predicting close and casual friendships between White and African American first-year college students. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 13(5), 585-602.
- Seawright, J. & Gerring, J. (2008). Case selection techniques in case study research: A menu of qualitative and quantitative options. *Political Research Quarterly*, 6(2), 294-308.
- Semela, T. (2012). Intergroup relations among the Ethiopian youth: Effects of ethnicity, language, and religious background. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 28(3), 323-354.
- Shaw, E. J. (2005). *Researching the educational benefits of diversity*. College Board Research Report No. 2005-4. New York: College Board.

- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2), 63-75.
- Shook, N. J. & Fazio, R. H. (2008). Roommate relationships: A comparison of interracial and same-race living situations. *Group Processes Intergroup Relations*, 11(4), 425-437.
- Sidanius, J., Van Laar, C., Levin, S., & Sinclair, S. (2004). Ethnic enclaves and the dynamics of social identity on the college campus: The good, the bad and the ugly. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(1), 96-110.
- Sim, J. (1998). Collecting and analyzing qualitative data: Issues raised by the focus group. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 28(2), 345-352.
- Skelly, MEA. (2004). *Campus climate and diversity issues: Listening to students*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Montana State University, Montana.
- Slavin, R. E. (1991). Synthesis of research on cooperative learning. *Educational Leadership*, 48(5), 71-82.
- Slavin, R. E. (1995). Cooperative learning and intergroup relations. In J. Banks & C. M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 628-634). New York: Macmillan.
- Slavin, R. E., & Cooper, R. (1999). Improving intergroup relations: Lessons learned from cooperative learning programs. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(4), 647-663.
- Sleeter, C. E. & Grant, C. A. (1994). *Making choices for multicultural education. Five approaches to race class and gender* (5th ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Smis, S. (2008). Ethiopia and the right to secession in international and comparative law. In E. Brems & C. Van der Beken (Eds.). *Federalism and the protection of human rights in Ethiopia* (pp. 107-125). Zurich: Lit.
- Smith, D. G., Gebrick, G. L., Figueroa, M. A., Watkins, G. H., Levitan, T., Moore, L. C., ... Figueroa, B. (1997). *Diversity works: The emerging picture of how students benefit*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Smith, L. (2008). The politics of contemporary language policy in Ethiopia. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 24(2), 207-243.
- Srivastava, P. & Hopwood, N. (2009). A practical iterative framework for qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), 76-84.

- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (2003). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed., pp. 134-164). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stewart, D. W. & Shamdasani P. N. (1990). *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Sundkler, B., & Steed, C. (2000). *A history of the Church in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tarasco, J. A. (2012). Lack of implementation-The no. 1 obstacle to success. *PA Practice Management Forum*, pp. 5-7. Retrieved from <http://www.accountantsadvisory.com/pdf/LackofImplementationMay2012.pdf>
- Tefera, S. (1996). Attempts at educational reform in Ethiopia: A top-down or a bottom-up reform? *Ethiopian Journal of Education*, 16(1), 1-37.
- Teferi, L. (2012). The post 1991 'inter-ethnic' conflicts in Ethiopia: An investigation. *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution*, 4(4), 62-69.
- Teferra, D. (2007). Building research capacity in Ethiopian universities: The realities and the challenges. Speech prepared for a conference on "*Higher Education in Ethiopia: Future Challenges*". United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 15-16 December 2007.
- Teferra, D. (2008). The international dimension of higher education in Africa: Status, challenges, and Prospect. In D. Teferra, & J. Knight (Eds.), *Higher Education in Africa: The International Dimension* (pp. 44-79). Accra/Boston: Association of African Universities/Centre for International Higher Education.
- Tegegn, M. (2008). Power politics: Kinijit in the 2005 elections. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 24(2), 273-306.
- Terenzini, P. T., Cabrera, A. F., Colbeck, C. L., Bjorklund, S. A., & Parente, J. M. (2001). Racial and ethnic diversity in the classroom: Does it promote student learning? *The Journal of Higher Education*, 72(5), 509-531.
- Triandis, H. C. (1994). *Culture and social behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Tronvoll, K. (2000). *Ethiopia: A new start?* London: Minority Rights Group International.
- Tropp, L. R. (2008). The role of trust in intergroup contact: Its significance and implications for improving relations between groups. In U. Wagner, L. R. Tropp, G. Finchilescu & C. Tredoux (Eds.), *Improving intergroup relations: Building on the legacy of Thomas F. Pettigrew* (pp. 91-106). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Turner, J. W. (1991). Historical setting. In T. P., Ofcansky & L. Berry (Eds.), *Ethiopia: a country study* (pp. 27-87). Washington, DC: Federal Research Division.
- Umbach, P. D., & Kuh, G. D. (2006). Student experiences with diversity at Liberal Arts Colleges: Another claim for distinctiveness. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77(1), 169-192.
- United States Department of state [USDS]. (2001). *Ethiopia: Country reports on human rights practices*. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/789.htm>
- United States Department of State [USDS]. (2007). *The international religious freedom report*. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2007/90097.htm>
- United States Department of State [USDS]. (2011). *The international religious freedom report*. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/192923.pdf>
- Valfort, MA. (2007). *Containing ethnic conflicts through ethical voting? Evidence from Ethiopia*. Working Paper 35. Households in Conflict Network. Retrieved from <http://www.hicn.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/wp35.pdf>
- Van der Beken, C. (2007). Ethiopia: From a centralized monarchy to a federal republic. *Afrika Focus*, 20(1-2), 13-48.
- Van der Beken, C. (2008). Ethiopia: Constitutional protection of ethnic minorities at the regional level. In E. Brems & C. Van der Beken (Eds.). *Federalism and the protection of human rights in Ethiopia* (pp. 126-160). Zurich: Lit.

- Van der Beken, C. (2012). *Unity in diversity: Federalism as mechanism to accommodate ethnic diversity-The case of Ethiopia*. Zurich & Berlin: Lit.
- Van Dick, R., Wagner, U., Pettigrew, T. F., Christ, O., Wolf, C., Petzel, T., ... Jackson, J. S. (2004). Role of perceived importance in intergroup contact. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(2), 211-112.
- Van Knippenberg, D., De Dreu, C. K., & Homan, A. C. (2004). Work group diversity and group performance: An integrative model and research agenda. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(6), 1008-1022.
- Van Laar, C., Levin, S., Sinclair, S., & Sidanius, J. (2005). The effect of university roommate contact on ethnic attitudes and behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 41(4), 329-345.
- Van Vuuren, H. J., Van der Westhuizen, P. C., & Van der Walt, J. L. (2012). The management of diversity in schools: A balancing act. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 32(1), 155-162.
- Vaughan, S. (2003). *Ethnicity and power in Ethiopia*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh.
- Vaughn, S., Schumm, J. S., & Sinagub, J. (1996). *Focus group interviews in education and psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wagaw, T. (1990). *The development of higher education and social change: The Ethiopian experience*. Michigan: Michigan State University Press.
- Wagaw, T. (1999). Conflict of ethnic identity and the language of education policy in contemporary Ethiopia. *Northeast African Studies*, 6(3), 75-88.
- Way, N., Gingold, R., Rotenerg, M., & Kuriakose, G. (2005). Close friendships among urban, ethnic-minority adolescents. In *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development 107* (pp. 41-59). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Weisel, D. L. (2002). *Graffiti*. Problem-specific guides series No. 9. Retrieved from http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Publications/e07042448_09update.pdf
- Weldemariam, A. F. (2009). *Conflict management in the Ethiopian multi-national federation: A critical examination*. (Unpublished master's thesis). European University Center for Peace Studies, Stadtschlaining.

- Whitt, E. J., Edison, M. I., Pascarella, E. T., Terenzini, P. T., & Nora, A. (2001). Influences on students' openness to diversity and challenge in the second and third years of college. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 72(2), 172-204.
- Wibeck, V., Dahlgren, M. A. & Öberg, G. (2007). Learning in focus groups: An analytical dimension for enhancing focus group research. *Qualitative Research*, 7(2) 249-267.
- Wilkinson, S. (2004). Focus group research. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research: Theory, method, and practice* (pp. 177–199). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Woldeyohannes, S. (2012). *Ethiopia: Creating a culture of progress*. Claremont, CA: Phanos Press.
- Wolff, S. (2006). *Ethnic conflict: A global perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- World Bank. (1948). *Ethiopia: preliminary background report*. Washington, DC: Author.
- World Bank. (1995). *Strategies for Education*. Washington, DC: Author.
- World Bank. (2003). *Higher education development for Ethiopia: Pursuing the vision*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yizengaw, T. (2003). Transformations in higher education: Experiences with reform and expansion in Ethiopian higher education system. Keynote paper presented at a regional training conference on “*Improving Tertiary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Things that Work!*” 23-25 September 2003, Accra, Ghana.
- Young, J. (1996). Ethnicity and power in Ethiopia. *Review of African Political Economy*, 23(70), 531-542.
- Young, J. (1997). *Peasant revolution in Ethiopia: The Tigray people's liberation front, 1975-1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Záhořík, J. (2011). Ethnicity and nationalism in Ethiopia: Some recent reflections. *The Annual of Language & Politics and Politics of Identity*, V, 91-108.
- Zellelew, T. B. (2010). *Conflict management in higher education institutions: A multicultural perspective*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag.
- Zewde, B. (2001). *A history of modern Ethiopia 1855 -1991*. London: James Currey.

Zewde, B. (2004). What did we dream? What did we achieve? And where are we heading? *Africa Insight*, 34(1), 6-13.

Zirkel, S. & Cantor, N. (2004). 50 Years after *Brown v. Board of Education*: The promise and challenge of multicultural education. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60(1), 1-15.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Interview topics

- I. Student diversity on campus.
- II. Intergroup relations among different ethnic and religious groups.
- III. Discussing ethnic and religion-related issues.
- IV. Ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts on campus.
- V. Impacts of government policies and strategies on the campus climate for diversity.
- VI. Impacts of the political situation on the campus climate for diversity.
- VII. Strategies for managing diversity.

A. Interview with students

1. What is your perception and experience about living and learning in a diverse campus?
2. I would like to hear your comments on the composition of students from diverse ethnic and religious background on campus.
3. Could you please tell me some background information about your roommates?
4. What is your perception and experience regarding living with a roommate from different ethnic/religious background?
5. How is your contact/interaction with students from different ethnic/religious groups?

6. From which ethnic/religious group are the students you often spend your social time?
7. Could you please tell me some background information about your campus friends?
8. What are the criteria that you use for selecting close friends on campus?
9. Have you taken diversity-related courses?
10. Have you participated in training, events, workshops or seminars that focus on diversity-related issues?
11. How do you often form a group for classroom discussion, group assignment or group project work?
12. What is your perception and experience regarding discussing ethnic/religion-related issues on campus?
13. Could you please tell me about the intergroup relations between different ethnic/religious groups on campus?
14. Have you ever felt discriminated against or harassed in this university?
15. Have you ever participated in on-campus ethnic/religious conflict?
16. What is your perception and experience regarding the strategies that the University used to deal with diversity-related issues?
17. Could you please tell me about the impact of government policies and strategies on diversity-related issues on campus?
18. Could you please tell me about the impact of the political situation in the country on diversity-related issues on campus?

B. Interview with managers

1. Could you please tell me your perceptions of a diverse student population on campus?
2. What is your comment on the ethnic and religious composition of students on campus?
3. Have you organized and/or participated in diversity-related programs or activities (workshops, seminars, training, etc.)?

4. How do you perceive the knowledge and skills of teachers to teach diverse students?
5. How does the University deal with diversity-related issues?
6. Could you please tell me about the impact of government policies and strategies on diversity-related issues on campus?
7. Could you please tell me about the impact of the political situation in the country on diversity-related issues on campus?

C. Interview with teachers

1. What is your perception of t a diverse student population on campus and in the classroom?
2. What is your comment on the ethnic and religious composition of students on campus?
3. Have you participated in diversity-related programs or activities (workshop, seminar, training, etc.) designed to promote sensitivity toward diversity issues?
4. Could you please tell me your perception and experience in relation to students' ethnic and religious diversity inside and outside the classroom?
5. How do you perceive the knowledge and skills of teachers to teach diverse students?
6. How does the university deal with diversity-related issues?
7. Could you please tell me about the impact of government policies, and strategies on diversity-related issues on campus?
8. Could you please tell me about the impact of the political situation in the country on diversity-related issues on campus?

D. Interview with staff

1. What is your perception of a diverse student population on campus?
2. Have you participated in programs or activities (workshops, seminars, training, etc.) developed to create diversity awareness or to improve your skills to deal with diversity-related issues?

3. What positive and negative experiences do you have with regard to providing services to a diverse student population?
4. Could you please tell me about the impact of government policies, and strategies on diversity-related issues on campus?
5. Could you please tell me also about the impact of the political situation in the country on diversity-related issues on campus?

E. Interview with the representatives of the SU and APC

1. Could you please tell me your perception of a diverse student population on campus?
2. What is your comment on the ethnic and religious composition of students?
3. Could you please tell me about your experience of providing services to a diverse student population?
4. Have you organized and/or participated in diversity-related programs or activities (workshops, seminars, training, etc.)?
5. What positive and negative experiences do you have with regard to providing services to a diverse student population?
6. Could you please tell me about the impact of government policies, and strategies on diversity-related issues on campus?
7. Could you please tell me about the impact of the political situation in the country on diversity-related issues on campus?

Appendix 2: Focus Group Guide

Focus group topics

- I. Intergroup relations among ethnic and religious groups.
- II. Discussing ethnic and religion-related issues on campus.
- III. Ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts on campus.
- IV. Impacts of government policies and strategies on campus climate for diversity.
- V. Impacts of the political situation on campus climate for diversity.

Focus group questions

1. How are the intergroup relations among different ethnic/religious groups on campus?
2. What is your perception and experience of discussing ethnic/religion-related issues on campus?
3. What are the major causes of ethnic/religious tensions and conflicts?
4. How do you perceive the university's policies, strategies and activities in relation to ethnic/religious diversity?
5. Is there any kind of discrimination against your ethnic/religious group?
6. What impacts do government policies and strategies have on diversity-related issues on campus?
7. What impacts does the political situation in the country have on diversity-related issues on campus?

Appendix 3: Document Review Guide

Document review topics

- I. University's mission, vision, and strategic plan regarding issues of diversity.
- II. Ethnic and religious composition on campus.
- III. Contents of ethnic/religious-related graffiti.
- IV. Strategies for promoting and managing diversity.

Document review questions

1. Does the University include diversity in its mission, vision, and strategic plan?
2. What do guidelines, and rules and regulations state in relation to issues of diversity?
3. How is the numerical representation of students from diverse ethnic/religious backgrounds on campus?
4. What are the contents and impacts of ethnic/religious-related writing (graffiti) on the intergroup relations among students?
5. What strategies does the University use to promote and manage diversity?

Appendix 4: Informed Consent

A. Information sheet

Research title: Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Universities in Ethiopia

My name is Abebaw Yirga Adamu and I am a member of the academic staff at the Faculty of Humanities, Bahir Dar University, and a PhD student at the School of Education, University of Tampere, Finland. The main purpose of the study is to provide a better understanding of the campus climate for diversity in Bahir Dar University (BDU) by examining its various aspects, specifically with regard to ethnic and religious diversity. In this study, campus climate for diversity refers to the campus community's perceptions and experiences with regard to issues of ethnic and religious diversity. The results from this study will make it possible to provide relevant information about diversity-related issues on campus that will mainly help BDU to create a positive campus environment for ethnically and religiously diverse students. Data will be collected from students, teachers, managers, support staff, the students' union, and documents through individual interviews, focus groups, and document reviews.

You have been selected to provide information that will help to achieve the purposes of this study. You can help this study by consenting to participate in the individual interviews/focus groups. Participation in this study is voluntary. You can withdraw your consent at any time during and after the interview/focus group session, at which time the information you provided will be destroyed. Names or other information that might identify you will not be used in written transcripts or any publications and documentation arising from the study. The interviews and focus groups will be tape recorded. The recorded data will be kept in a safe place until the transcription and analysis is completed (maximum 18 months) and then they will be erased.

A report on this study will be given to the BDU's Research and Community Service office and will be available for you to read. If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please feel free to contact me (Email: abebaw.adamu@uta.fi) or my supervisor, Professor Tuomas Takala (m.tuomas.takala@uta.fi).

Thank you for taking time to read this information.

Yours faithfully,

B. Consent form

- I understand that the research on Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Universities in Ethiopia is being conducted by Abebaw Yirga Adamu, a PhD student at the University of Tampere for his doctoral dissertation.
- I understand that the study is mainly focused on examining the campus community's perceptions and experiences with regard to issues of ethnic and religious diversity which helps to provide a better understanding of the campus climate for diversity in BDU.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.
- I understand that the data collection method which involves me is my participation in a 30-60 minute interview, or 60-90 minute focus group discussion in which all participants are from the same ethnic/religious group. (Underline interview or focus group, or both according to your participation).
- I grant permission for the interview/focus group to be tape recorded and transcribed. I also grant permission for the data generated from my interview/participation in the focus group to be published in the dissertation and future publication(s).
- I understand that every possible effort will be made to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.
- I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet and voluntarily agree to participate in the research.

Participant (Name and Signature)

Place and Date

C. Confirmation of written information and oral consent

I, as a researcher, hereby attest that written information has been provided to the participants of the study and the participants gave me an oral assurance of their willingness to participate in the research.

Researcher's Name: Abebaw Yirga Adamu

Place and Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 5: Percentage Distribution of Major Ethnic Groups in Ethiopia - 2007

Ethnic Group	Population	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Oromo	25,488,344	34.5
Amhara	19,867,817	26.9
Somali	4,581,793	6.2
Tigre	4,483,776	6.1
Sidama	2,966,377	4.0
Gurage	1,867,350	2.5
Wolayita	1,707,074	2.3
Hadiya	1,284,366	1.7
Afar	1,276,372	1.7
Gamo	1,107,163	1.5
Total	64,630,432	87.4

Source: Summary and statistical report of the 2007 population and housing census (CSA, 2008).

Appendix 6: Population of Ethiopia by Religion - 2007

Religion	Population	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Orthodox	32,138,126	43.5
Protestant	13,746,787	18.6
Catholic	536,827	0.7
<i>Christian sub-total</i>	<i>46,421,740</i>	<i>62.8</i>
Islam	25,045,550	33.9
Traditional	1,957,944	2.6
Others	471,861	0.6
<i>All Persons*</i>	<i>73,897,095</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: Computed from summary and statistical report of the 2007 population and housing census (CSA, 2008).

*This does not include the estimated population (21,410) of eight rural *kebeles* in Afar region.