

# Contribution of Post 1991 Ethiopian Social Studies Textbooks in Developing Multiple Identities and Multicultural Values among Students

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# Social identity in multicultural countries

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- **Social identity: Identification with others who share the common group membership**
- **Collective or "we" identities, identification of the self with the group as a whole**
- **Multiple group/social identities**
  - In-group and out-group members vary on context
- **Existence of diverse groups along race, ethnicity, religion in multination states**
  - Ethnic or race or religion and national/civic identity in multiethnic countries (ethnic Basque and Spanish, Black American, Somali and Ethiopian, Guraghe and Ethiopian etc...)

# Dealing with diversity in group identity

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- **Assimilationist/melting pot**
  - Cultural assimilation and acculturation of different ethnic groups
  - Common language, beliefs, and values in the nation
- **Multiculturalism: Cultural pluralism, diversity valued**
  - Recognition and accommodation of minority rights
  - Self-governance acknowledged
  - Lose civic national identity
- **Integration**
  - Respecting in-group rights
  - Integrating with a more inclusive superordinate/national identity
  - Inter-group relations need to be strengthened by adhering to the superordinate identity

# Ethnic and national identity: interaction?

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- Two propositions
  - Two are in conflict
    - ✦ National identity must be more salient than ethnic identity
    - ✦ Negative relationship (Worchel and Coutant, 1997)
    - ✦ So, a strong super-national identity must exist for a multi/nation state
  - Two are unrelated
    - ✦ Zero relationship
    - ✦ National identity does not depend on strength of ethnic identity
    - ✦ Multination states can prevail well by allowing strong ethnic identification
- Thin or thick, some form of national identity helps to sustain multination states.

# Education and social identity development

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- **Education has a controlling and socializing effect**
  - Not ideologically free
  - Primary and secondary school curricula reflect political values
  - Textbooks indicate state views of nationhood, cultural values and ideas
- **Education's role is insignificant compared to other micro-factors**
  - Family, communities, media
  - Interpretation of knowledge in a social context
  - Difficulty in changing group beliefs and values
  - Hidden curriculum versus formal curriculum

# Multicultural education

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- Value of cultural diversity: Rights of all groups
- No reproduction of dominant/common values, beliefs etc.
- Teach critical thinking and reasoning
- Social justice (restructuring of systems) and equal opportunity
- Equitable distribution of power and other resources
- Alternative narratives and choices versus grand narratives
- Civic national identity rather than culture (language, belief)

# Multicultural states and intercultural citizens

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- **Multicultural state exists when there are intercultural citizens or ceases to exist as a state**
  - Positive attitude towards diversity
  - State belongs to all groups
  - Tolerance
  - Respect for others and mutual understanding/total seclusion
- **Healthy levels of ethnocentrism**
- **Role of education: Civics/Citizenship education has to prepare multicultural citizens**

# Critics on Multiculturalism

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- **Emphasizes differences**
- **Creates distrust**
- **Creation of ‘parallel’ communities in one country**
  - **Example: Angela Merkel’s declaration of the death of multiculturalism in Germany**
    - ✦ **Turkish Immigrants do not integrate with German culture even after decades**
- **Promotes a cultural straightjacket**

# Ethiopia Context

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- Home of many nation and nationalities
- Pre 1991 a socialist regime
- Centralized, by and large assimilationist policy
- Major narratives on socialism and One Ethiopia
- 1995-A federal republic organized along linguistic lines (Main indicator of ethnic identity in Ethiopia)
- 9 regional states and 2 city administrations
- Self-administration and self-determination
  - Use of regional language in regional offices and primary education
  - Nations empowered to administer their regions
- Hence, a multicultural country and state as well.

# Map: Regions/States and Neighbors

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- Many ethnic groups live in various regions
- Oromo, Amhara, Somali, Tigray are the largest groups



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- Centrally or regional prepared textbooks-main means of instruction
- Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus Produce textbooks.
- Civics and Ethical education: primary to university level
- History taught in secondary schools and higher primary grades (grades 7-8, as social studies)

# Objectives of Civics and Ethical Education

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- Democratic citizens who safeguard their rights and respect the rights of others,
- Patriotic citizens who uphold the democratic ideals and the principles of the constitution as well as defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country,
- Citizens who are active participants in the political process of their country and dedicated to work for the common good
- Responsible citizens who nurture tolerant culture and resolve differences peacefully and industrious citizens who are self-reliant.
- Citizens who appreciate diversity and co-existence
- Different themes related to equality of nations, patriotism, responsibility, rights and obligation, saving money, constitutional facts, governance are presented in these textbooks.

# Statement of the problem

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- **Social identity of people (ethnic identity versus national identity) one of the central questions of the 21 century.**
- **Impact/outcome of programs on students**
- **Reviewing textbooks**
- **Intervention in the teaching of civics education**

# Research Questions

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- How and to what extent ethnic and national identity are presented in social studies textbooks?
- How do students assess the contribution of social studies textbooks in shaping their ethnic and national identity?
- How do students assess the contribution of social studies textbooks in developing multicultural values (tolerance, respect for others, participation, responsibility, cultural empathy etc)?
- Who and how do students consider their hero or model in identifying themselves with ethnic/national identity?

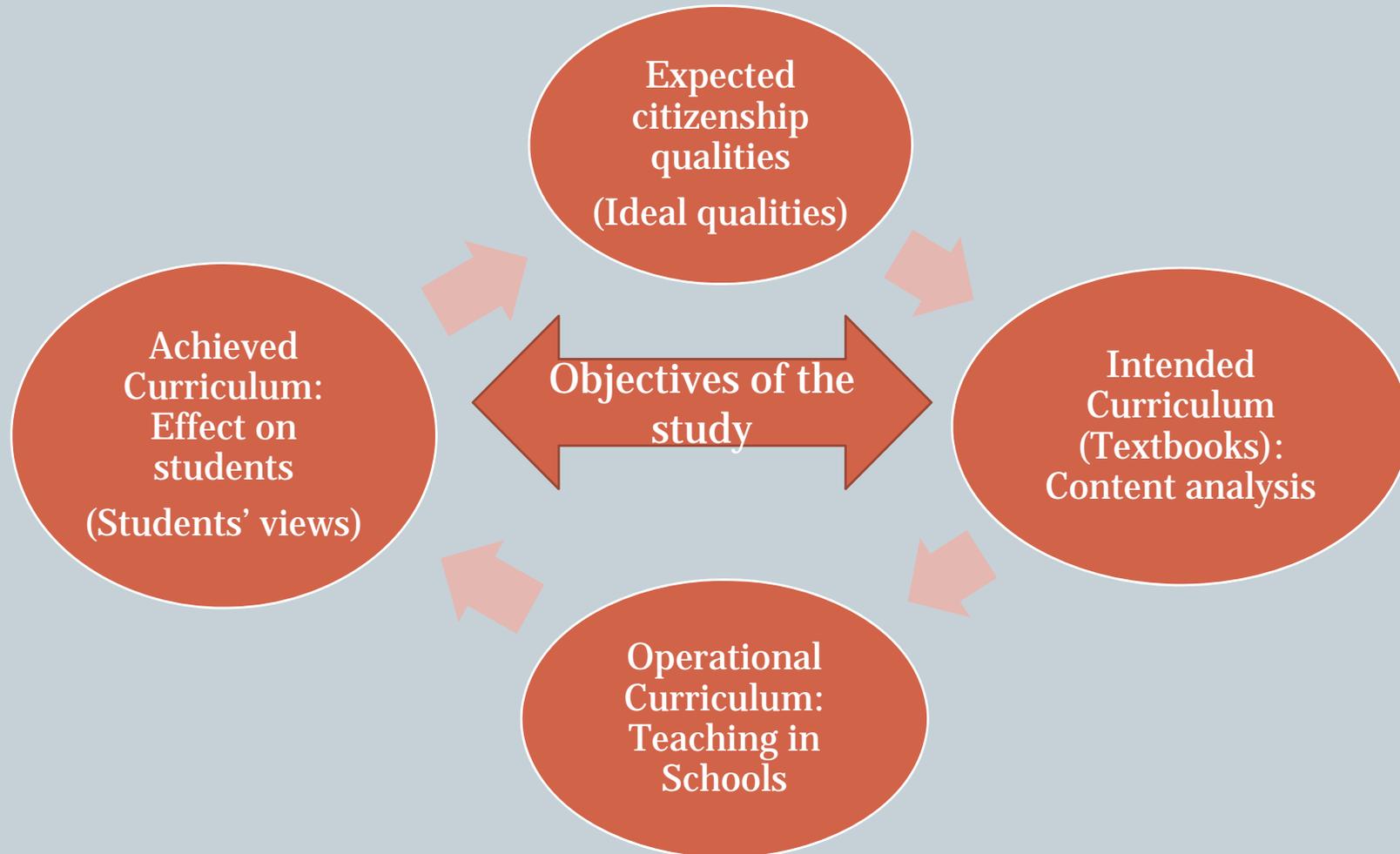
# Methodology

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- **Data sources:**
  - **Textbooks**
    - ✦ History or social studies textbooks from grades 7-12
    - ✦ Civics and ethical education textbooks
    - ✦ Themes that refer to identity and multiculturalism were analyzed.
  - **Second year and above students at Bahir Dar University**
- **Sample**
  - Textbook sampling: Based on relevant themes to the study
  - Composed of students from different ethnic groups
  - Purposive and incidental sampling techniques
  - About 357 students

# Framework of the study

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- Data gathering instruments and analysis
  - Questionnaire: a five point rating scale and open-ended items.
    - ✦ Contribution of civics and ethical education curricula
    - ✦ Identification of heroes and heroines
    - ✦ Multicultural values such as tolerance, cultural empathy, open-mindedness for diversity etc.
  - Interview: semi-structured
    - ✦ 8 items on assessing contribution of textbooks, values and symbols related to their identity
  - Content analysis
    - ✦ Identification of themes and issues in textbooks
    - ✦ Analysis of sub-headings and headings in light of indicators for nationalism, patriotism, models, symbols, and values
    - ✦ Story level analysis and language/phrases

# Data Analysis

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- **Qualitative Analysis**
  - Description of textbooks themes (on-progress)
  - Narration of students' interview responses
  - Categorization along theme: Similar responses organized along major ideas
- **Quantitate data: On progress.**

## Results: Some of the interview responses

### Self awareness about ones ethnic values and rights

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- It is through civics education that I understood my constitutional rights and responsibilities. Now, I have got a chance to attend higher education. I also used my mother tongue language to attend primary education. I feel it made me realize that I have to be respected by others and respect others as well. I know the rights of my group.
- It promotes the formation and strengthening of ethnic views as it narrates a lot about the past inequalities among national and nationalities. It make me know the rights of ethnic groups in Ethiopia.

# Tolerance, respect for and awareness about others

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- The civic education has a great influence on me to be confident that my ethnic group is as equal as others and I have gained the knowledge that each ethnic group should respect and have the tolerance to live together.
- Beginning from grade 5 up to 12 and now at university level I learned about the constitution, country love, and tolerance and so on. It made me know our differences. Tolerance is necessary as there many groups which I faced in my university education.

# Alternative narratives missed

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- The realities that I am facing outside the rhetoric of the textbooks are different. Textbooks dominantly reflect the positive contributions they had. The textbooks did not address controversial issues and promote very surface learning. To me, all the deeds of the kings and the various groups should be presented equally so that we can learn the truth and draw lessons from both the strengths and weaknesses.
- We learn about peaceful and good things. There were many problems in the past. The textbooks do not discuss them.
- We learn facts and do not discuss in detail about their effect. Students are only exposed to the successes of previous governments and general problems.

# Shaping group identities

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- Ethiopia follows federalism as a political system. This enables me to understand the various nations and nationalities and their identities as well. It also made me to be aware of the present socio-political situations. It makes me confident to know what Ethiopia is? Who am I? What is my group as part of Ethiopia? etc.
- Civics education raises the concerns of minorities. As a minority, I feel proud of my ethnic group because of the contents in schools and universities. In addition, the significance of civic and ethical education for national and ethnic identity development is immense.
- It has made me to be aware of that Ethiopia has existed as a country for a long time by the people of different ethnic groups. Similarly, the subject has helped me to know that I should keep my national identity to transfer to the next generation as my fathers did.
- Due to this historical inequality, the textbooks influenced me to develop a very strong ethnic identity over national identity.

# Knowledge versus behavior/practice

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- The topics on patriotism developed a sense of Ethiopian identity on me. I felt that I know what I am expected to do as an Ethiopian. But, what we have learned in class and what people talk and do outside the class is quite different. Many of us could not instill the values in civics education on ourselves. We study the subject for passing the exam; not employ it in our daily lives.
- We learn much about the vital principles of democracy such as the rule of the law, equality, justice, patriotism, responsibility, industriousness, self-reliance, active participation in communal cases. But I am not involved in different activities. I do not participate.
- It is theoretical. Civics taught us citizenship rights. Loving the country and being responsible. I think these are not practiced.

# Conclusion

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- **Inclusion of alternative narratives/perspectives in higher grades and promoting discussion**
- **Acquisition of knowledge needs to be supplemented with change in behavior. This could be possible with intervention in the teaching of the subjects and organization of contents in textbooks.**

**ARIGATOO GOZAIMASU!!!**