

Investigating the Challenging factors in the implementation of Federalism in Managing Ethnic Diversity in Gambella: the case of Itang Special Woreda

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ABSTRACT

Federalism as an ideology about state political structure “holds that the interaction of human affairs is best reflected in the celebration of unity in diversity within the state. Regarding this, the main purpose of this study was to investigate the major challenging factors in the implementation of Ethiopian ethnic based Federalism in managing ethnic diversity in Gambella particularly in case of Itang Special Woreda through qualitative research method using both proportional stratified random sampling for selecting 45 participants and purposive sampling to select 10 kebele. Focus group discussion, in-depth interview and field observation were used as means of collecting first hand data from the fields. Beside, many journal Articles and government reports were also reviewed as secondary data for further analysis purposes. Regarding this the collected data were analyzed accordingly by employing thematic descriptive analysis method. Based on these, the major challenging factor in managing ethnic diversity in the woreda emanate from the existing challenge of maintaining positive intergroup relationship; frequent prevalence of ethnic conflicts as far as the settlement pattern of people is concerned and easy manipulation of community based on their identity which paved the way for the use of identity in local politics by the elites. However, in relation to it achievement, the study reveals that the local people of the woreda has attained undeniable political rights to self-governance which was highly restricted by the past regimes of the country before the introduction of this federal state structure since 1995 by the EPRDF. Based on this, it is argued that in order to achieved the desirable outcomes of the current transplanted federal state arrangement of the country, the woreda administrative councils as well as the regional state government should highly steadfast themselves in playing enormous roles to established a positive and advantageous environments where problems of ethnicity, political and economic antagonism as well can be settled to promote co-existence between and/or among diversified ethnic groups of the woreda.

Key Words: Federalism, Identity Politics, and Ethnic Conflicts

Introduction

Background of the study

Federalism is a term that signifies an ideological position about how a polity should organize its power structure. As an ideology about organization of power, federalism “holds that the ideal organization of human affairs is best reflected in the celebration of ethnic diversity through unity within the state¹.” Ethnic diversity is a salient and challenging issue in most countries of the

¹Emezat H. Mengesha, (2008), Federalism and Accommodation of Ethnic Diversity in Africa: The Ethiopian Experience, In Wachira, M. George (Eds), *Ethnicity, Human Rights and Constitutionalism in Africa*, Published by the Kenyan section of the international commission of jurists. Pp-160

world. 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, ethnic diversity refers to “differences between individuals on any attribute that may lead to the perception that another person is different from the self”², or as a variation that exists within and across groups on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and social status.³ In general terms, ethnic diversity can be broadly conceived 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.

Many countries of the world practicing federalism recognized the value of diversity and viewed diversity as an essential resource for optimizing their political and socio-economic development.⁴ This is due to the fact that ethnic diversity can support a broad range of social, political and economic outcomes.⁵ However, although ethnic diversity has various benefits it is not only an opportunity. Managing diversity is one of the largest, most urgent challenges facing federal state today. It is also one of the most difficult challenging factors which the government has ever faced. Ethnic diversity can be source of challenges that leads to less cohesiveness, less effective communication, increased anxiety, and greater discomfort, tension and conflict among diversified societies.⁶ This is because at present, different researches 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, tribalism and/or racism”⁷ Its negative impacts often adversely affect administrative activities as well as the broader society residing within the state.

². 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. 311-314)

³Banks, J. A. (2007). *Educating citizens in a multicultural society* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

⁴Montalvo, J. G. & Reynal Querol, M, (2005), Ethnic diversity and economic development. *Journal of Development Economics*, 76(2), 293-323.

⁵ Ibid

⁶. Metcalfe, B. D & Woodhams, C. (2008), Critical perspectives in diversity and equality management. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 23(6), 377-381.

⁷ Wolff, S. (2006). *Ethnic conflict: A global perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Beside to its large geographical territory Ethiopia is also occupied by more than 86 ethnically diverse populations.⁸ With the fact that Ethiopian governments had faced with different challenges of accommodating diversity in the past which need to be systematically addressed, currently, issues of ethnic diversity in the country is getting more attention after the establishment of the federal structure of government by EPRDF and its allies since 1995.⁹ In Ethiopia, multiculturalism is one of the guiding values that promote and uphold in pursuance of the mission of the 1995 FDRE constitution that gives the right to self-determination up to secession to all nations, nationalities, and people of the country.¹⁰ According to this, regional governments are also aspiring to create sustainable condition in which everyone feels welcome, and that contributes to enhance national development.

However, although the current federal government of Ethiopia gives high values in addressing and promoting ethnic diversity at the central level, there is a clear lack of research on process of managing diversity in Gambella particularly Itang Special Woreda. This is because ethnic related issues have been the historic and prevalent questions of the local indigenous people of the region residing in Itang special woreda. The history of the area is highly characterized by ethnic tension and conflict. As a result, in an attempt to deal with diversity related problems and to take advantage of managing ethnic diversity, the regional government seems dependent on different experiences, policies and strategies of others regions of the country particularly the SNNPRS. But, based on the findings of different studies conducted on issues of diversity, it is found that “there can be no single universalizing model or conception of managing diversity that can work effectively in all contexts” because integrating diversity by itself is a phenomenon that is culturally, socially and historically formed and reformed.¹¹ Regarding this, the main purpose of this study was to investigate the major challenging factors of Ethiopian ethnic based Federalism in managing ethnic diversity in Gambella in the case of Itang Special Woreda. Thus, in order to achieve the purpose of this study, the following guiding research questions were forwarded;

- ✚ What are the challenging factors of federalism in managing diversity related issues in Itang woreda?

⁸. Van der Beken, C. (2012). *Unity in diversity: Federalism as mechanism to accommodate ethnic diversity-The case of Ethiopia*. Zurich & Berlin: Lit.

⁹. Young, J. (1996), Ethnicity and power in Ethiopia. *Review of African Political Economy*, 23(70), 531-542.

¹⁰. Ibid

¹¹. Reynal Querol, M. (2002) Ethnicity, political systems, and civil wars. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 46(1), 29-54.

- ✚ How inter-group relation among different ethnic groups does looks in the Itang Special Woreda?
- ✚ How does the administrative council of the woreda manage issues related with ethnic diversity?

Objective of the study

General Objective of the study

The main objective of this particular study was to assess the challenges and opportunities of Ethiopian ethnic based federalism in managing ethnic diversity in Gambella Regional State in particular reference to Itang special woreda.

Specific Objective of the study

- ✚ To investigate the major challenging factors of federalism in managing ethnic diversity in the woreda;
- ✚ To examine the existing intergroup relation between and/or among different ethnic group evident in the woreda;
- ✚ To evaluate the socio-political strategies and function of the administrative council of the woreda in managing ethnic diversity issues.

Description of the study area

Itang is one of the woredas in the Gambella Regional State of Ethiopia. Because Itang is not part of any Nationality administrative Zone in the Gambela Region, it is considered as a Special woreda, an administrative subdivision which is similar to Zone or autonomous area. Based on the 2010 Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), the woreda has a total population of 48,673 of whom 24,548 are men and 24,125 are women; with an area of 2,188.34 square kilometers. Among these, 11,319 are urban inhabitants and 37,354 are rural residences¹². The main ethnic groups of this district are the Anywaa (32.45%), Nuer (61.86%), Opo (2.1%) and highlanders (3.59%). Regarding this, economically, the Anywaa are mainly crop dependent people with fishing and hunting as their supplementary income sources living along the

¹² Ibid

riverbanks. Most of the Anywaa are found in many local villages of the woreda¹³. The Nuer people are largely livestock dependent. Opo represent minority ethnic group and they mostly also depend on crop production likely like the Anywaa society¹⁴.

Research Design and Methodology

There are two major methodological approaches in research which involves qualitative and quantitative. The choice of one of these paradigms depends on the purpose of the research at hand. Regarding this a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this study because it seeks to understand issues or phenomena such as people, events, institutions, and activities from the participants' point of view. Thus, using qualitative research becomes very useful because it helps to better understand a phenomenon or a situation about which little is yet known like the case of Itang District.

Data Collection method

With regards to the collection of data, data were collected using interviews, focus groups discussion, document reviews and observation. In short, this indicates that both primary and secondary data were necessary and collected.

Data Analysis Techniques

As noted here above, a case study research always 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 always enable researchers in achieving this purpose. Therefore, this study has used thematic descriptive analysis which that was hoped to provide a rich and detailed description of the data set which is also belied to be the most widely used data analysis method in qualitative research.

Ethical considerations

It is clearly known that 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. Hence, the primary objective of obtaining informed consent was to ensure that individuals

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

understand what it means to participate in the study and decide in a conscious and deliberates way whether they want to participate.

Finding and discussion

The Challenges of Ethnicity, Identity Politics and Intergroup Relationship

The issue of identity and ethnicity is more sensitive in Itang Special Woreda. The sensitivity of ethnicity in this woreda had aggravated the differences without minimizing its gap. It has been stated also as a major factor that caused for absence of socialization and social integration among different ethnic groups. The settlement pattern and organization of people along their social identity exacerbate ethnic cleavages reducing social interconnectedness. This settlement pattern and organization of local kebeles along ethnic identity and tribalism or sometimes along clanship usually invites both intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic competition.

According to this information, it became evident that there is an increased ethnic preference in friendship selection if one takes a look at whom the majority people of Itang woreda often spend their time with. One case that participants have tried to illustrate regarding this claim was walking together either for work, communal ceremony, and breakfast or any other activity. It seems a common motion to walk for breakfast in an assembly with friends. Inhabitant of the woreda noticed that people usually walk together 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 speak.

Through personal observation, it was observed that most of the time people engaged themselves in friendship interaction, communication and enjoyment or entertainment activities with someone from their own ethnic group. This become commonly obvious because while travelling across this very crowded town of Itang locally known as Achwaa Kebele it has been found that;

“People of the same ethnic groups sit and organized themselves together along same ethnic identity where on the other hand, the other nearby groups are members from another ethnic group speaking distinctive language from whom they are nearly sited”.

These findings indicated that though people make friendship with individuals from other ethnic groups, a majority of them tend to select friends from their own ethnic group. Thus, ethnicity can be considered as a major criterion in friendship selection among divergent ethnic families in Itang woreda. Hence, people of the woreda mentioned that ethnicity was also one of the criteria they

used to select friends when they were in the age of childhood years ago by remembering their primary schooling years and the manner their parent nurture them.

There are a numbers of reasons for increased ethnic preference friendship in the woreda and among these the dominant factor is the mal interpretation of current political system of the country. The way that the current 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 regardless of their national character or unity, and in this case people of Itang woreda are no exception. Participants also indicate that the ethnic based federal system increased differences among ethnic groups in Ethiopia by facilitating social and political division along ethnic lines. At this time people lacks strong national identity but strong ethnic and regional membership. Regarding this, the issues of diversity had resulted in the creation of unprecedented ethnic prejudices and antagonistic feeling and relationship among the people of the region in general and Itang Special woreda in particular. This is due to the fact that past misdeeds rather than positive contributions and achievements are emphasized by ethnocentric elite and political leaders as one way of political motives for maintaining their social solidarity and cohesion. In this context such ethnic preference in selecting friendship had their negative impacts which influence intergroup relations among people from different ethnic backgrounds. Most of these kinds of social prejudices and stereotypes are influenced and associated with the tradition and history of the people.

Frequent Outbreaks of Ethnic Conflicts

The area of Itang is notorious as one of the woreda where the most imperative ethnic tensions and conflicts of the region are found. Despite the introduction of Ethiopian ethnic based federal system that is intended to address ethnic and other longstanding political, economical and societal problems, there were already registered several ethnic conflicts in different parts of Itang because of ethnic differences, political interests, scarce resources and power rivalry. Itang is one of the most complex administrative districts in Gambella region where many ethnic tension and conflict is occurring. At such situations, public institutions are one of the contexts where mostly ethnic tensions and conflicts take places in Itang Special Woreda. Because of such ethnic conflicts, some public services delivery institutions were interrupted, human lives and property were highly

damaged, and some people from different groups were also physically assaulted, suspended and expelled from their living communities. Previous study indicates that, ethnic tension and conflict among different ethnic groups in Itang Special Woreda outbreak in 1983s between the local indigenous and the Sudanese immigrants.¹⁵ However, regarding the current ongoing conflicts in the area participants indicated that such ethnic clashes and political contradictions in Itang Special Woreda are mostly registered between three ethnic groups namely Nuer, Anywaa and Opho.

Ethnic conflicts have been occurring in this woreda since early 1983s when Sudanese refugees acted badly over Itang people that had resulted in complete destruction of Itang in general and the loss of many life of people killed by the SPLM/A the political party that was fighting against the Republic of Sudan at the time.¹⁶ There may have been ethnic conflicts between different groups that were not reported and significantly affected the people of the woreda but those which became public and required the intervention of the government were between Anywaa and Nuer, Nuer and Opho, Nuer and Highlanders. In this woreda conflict between different groups occurs at different times. For instance, in the year of 2002s the area of Itang has witness extensive level of conflict that destroyed many lives of citizens. From this ongoing this woreda's had dealt with several small conflicts between different ethnic groups with which adverse effects of 2017 conflict cannot be forgotten for its numerous destruction throughout the woreda. When we look at the major conflicts, they are usually between Anywaa and Nuer. However, in the same year, the there was also recorded ethnic conflict between Nuer and Opo.

Disagreements on different issues are anticipated and these may sometimes lead to tension and conflict between individuals. Data from different sources shows that the major ethnic tension and conflict among residences of the woreda are between local people who harbored strongest antagonism toward each other. From this, it has become more interested to understand why the major ethnic tensions and conflicts in the history of Gambella had their sources in Itang. Regarding this, the answer was not simple and direct, but in one way or another it is related to the presences of weak government and institutional strategies for peace building. Further to this, long standing antagonistic behavior between local inhabitants of the area also aggravated the conditions for frequently outbreaks of such conflicts.

¹⁵. Alastair, Scott-Villiers Patta and Dodge Cole P., 'Repatriation of South Sudanese from Ethiopia: A case study in manipulation of civilians during civil conflict', Journal of Refugee, Vol. 14, No. 1, (1994). Pp-19-25

¹⁶ Ibid

The ethnic polarization has also facilitated the politicization of identity, which increased political grievances among indigenous people of the woreda. Based on this, participants mentioned that the ethnic polarization and the political rivalry between them is another factor that contributed to ethnic tensions and conflicts between these groups. The conflicts in this woreda are usual and perhaps start as simple as personal problems, but they immediately tend to become ethnic issues. This is what people have unknowingly learned from this particular woreda of Gambella region. Most of the time the cause of the inter-ethnic and intra ethnic conflict prevailing in the woreda start as personal cases between two partners and in such cases the disagreement between these two individual will invite other members turning itself as ethnic conflicts. Sometimes, their cause may be revenge by attacking others community. Then in such a cases conflict with such causes would become an ethnic conflicts due to easy mobilization of people along their identity and cultural backgrounds.

Informants stated that it is easy to resolve individual conflicts among indigenous and highlanders ethnic minorities living in the woreda because the reasons for the conflicts are not usually complicated and politicized. However, even though the main cause of the conflict is known and similar, it is not easy to resolve individual or groups conflicts between local indigenous because they usually tend to be more complicated and politicized which in turn easily encouraged others to take parts and labeled as inter-ethnic conflicts with very serious and critical consequences. Sorry to say, based on the historical relationship among these ethnic groups it seems possible to argue that the ethnic politics in the area has added some catalyst for these ethnic tensions and conflicts because of grouping people accordingly to their identity.

The Unjustified Used of Demography and Land Entitlement in Politics

Even though both the federal and state constitutions did talks about the compositional representatives of ethnic groups based on their numerical figures they had, the other factors aggravating the tension in the woreda all the time is also rooted in the quest for numerically increasing the numbers of local administrative kebeles. It is clearly well understood by many that even if the constitution fail to define who to be considered as minority, the inhabitant of Itang, i.e, the indigenous groups are all minorities as far as their demographic figures are viewed. The quest for increasing numbers of local administrative unit as a means of having more seats in the

administration council of the woreda as erupted political tension between the indigenous people especially the Anywaa and Nuer who are always at odd.

As far as the political games of number is a concerned, demographic figure now become a source of fierce fighting between different groups in Itang Special Woreda. Constitutional representation by numbers brought the two groups in to new arena of competition and conflict. The introduction of federalism and ethnicity as a major organizing element of governance lead to fierce political confrontation for controlling government posts to determine the decision making power in the administrative council of the woreda. In this case, it is believed that controlling more territorial space (increasing kebele) will enhance one's political power in the woreda council which is a decision making organ of government. One question that rightly comes to mind here is why people still follow ethnic leaders whose interest seems to serve the interests of the elites and not the masses. By this it is understood that the essence of ethnicity is the promotion of their unity and solidarity which undeniably overcomes the primordial community. It is through this unity and solidarity that had made the people supports their leader. For example the saying by the Yoruba¹⁷ that, *"omowani e je o see"* he is our son we must support him is a primordialistic statement showing that it does not matter what the person does, as long as he/she is part of us, we will support him resulting in the activation of solidarity when the group is being deprived of its socio-political goods.¹⁸ Through this, one feature of ethnicity that has been invoked here in Itang is the emotional aspect which the primordialist considered as given and undeniable. In justifying this numerical political games, the Nuer used the saying *"ngwan kon"* meaning *"who or which ethnic group exceed our population numbers"* an ideology of expressing their demographic majority in Itang Special woreda and its overall communities. In contrary to this ideology of Nuer, the Anywaa also on their side used the saying *"our ancestral land"* meaning *"a land being inherited to them by their descendants"* indicating their traditional and psychological attachment to the land of Itang area in a broad-spectrum. Regarding this, the Anywaa believes that the land is inherited while Nuer on the other hands believes that land is not inherited rather it is a gift of God to whoever settled and used it. Such thinking of both groups has a negative political implication destructing ethnic cohesion, culture of tolerances and unity in diversity which are the preliminary constitutional objective of the Ethiopian federalism. The establishment of Ethiopian federation is

¹⁷ Ethnic Yoruba is an ethnic group in south western part of Nigeria.

¹⁸See A Osita Agbu Supra note 66 at 29

to maintained unity through building one common economic community by solving past wrong actions of the previously oppressive rulers. Besides to its political impediment, it also constraint the democratic practices of the country as a result of this unnecessarily used of demographic competition for political and socio-economic gains. Thus, based on this the 2002 conflicts between the Anywaa and Nuer in the woreda can be taken as one symbol of playing with numbers in the political discourse just for controlling more space in the administration. This conflict has resulted in more bloody violence which caused more death on both side and displaced many people from their communities.

The Role of the Local Administrative Council in Managing Diversity in Itang Woreda

It well known that formulating wide-ranging inclusion goals in coordination with national government and the civil society is vital, and with the emergence of social inclusion units in local governments, the opportunity arises to expand the responsibility, range and types of activities that the woreda governments can take on in tackling diversity related issues. Regarding this challenges, informants seriously mentioned that increasingly the authority of the woreda is being asked all the time to respond in a more coordinated manner to social and cultural issues as a better means of accommodating all forms of diversity.

With these factual events related to diversity management approaches undertaken by the local government, the administrative bodies indicated that now the government is working closer with communities in addressing diversity issues, developing participatory planning models as mechanisms to promote social capital. In addition to this, the woreda administrative council has undertaken local security measurements within its local peripheral areas. The woreda administrative authority has reiterated its determination to strengthen security and effectively respond to threats without indulging in an arms race. The authority has undertaken a comprehensive review of the woreda security. It highly noted that growing proliferation of weapons in the woreda and around the refugee camps here in Itang and expressed serious concerns over the adverse ramification for peace and security on this account.

Government administrative bodies indicated that contact between police and public is necessary to promote community policing and there is need for steps in this regard. It is because of the fact that the public coordination with police was essential to control crime and criminals which targeted people based on their identity. This is believed to be important steps to minimize the

distance between police and citizens for establishing a better and peaceful society. Hence, regarding these issues respondents argued that community policing should be activated as it could help in addressing the issues of citizens and maintaining law and order situation across the woreda. Therefore the government should be more committed to fulfill the gap allocating finance and facility for educating society about living in diversified community. This is due to the reason that addressing an expo on such issues would put books and pens in the hands of the youth instead of arms and armunition. Informants said that a peaceful and prosperous Itang will be made a reality if and only if that action is put in place by the local government as well as the regional government because this will eliminate secretarianism and hatred between the people of the woreda enhancing to achieve the objective of peaceful environment for all nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia as they promised and committed in their constitution for building one economic community where diversity of all types are respected. More importantly to peace building, the woreda administrative council pointed out that the other mechanism of building diversity in the woreda can come only if all groups are included in local politics. Hence, it is believed that political inclusion of all members of society in the form of popular participation in decision making processes and policy formulation is a central aspect of administering social diversity and should be sought for in all aspects of local governance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

Immediately after the overthrow of Derg government, Ethiopia had witness politics changes that enable the participation of all nations, nationalities and people of the country in decision making processes. However, even though both the federal and regional constitutions has promised a lot, the implementation of the federalism has faced multiple and complicated challenging factors in managing diversity related issues in Gambella region particularly Itang Special Woreda an area characterized by ethnic tensions and conflicts among different groups for many reasons.

In Itang Special Woreda, the issue of diversity mostly of identity and ethnicity are more serious and sensitive making the management of diversity more complicated and challengeable. The sensitivity of identity and politicization of ethnicity in the woreda has intensified differences. The mobilization and negatively manipulation of ethnicity in the woreda politics is critically identified as a major cause of lack of social interconnectedness and sense of belonging to one own state

limiting people to maintained socialization among them. The settlement patterns and organizations of people along ethnic identity and more to that along clanship exacerbated ethnic cleavages and prejudices although the area of Itang can provides rich opportunities for establishing great interpersonal relationship among diverse community or ethnic background. Hence, it is commonly believed that good intergroup relationship/interaction is an essential aspect of maintaining positive and peaceful interpersonal communication.

In addition to the challenge of ethnicity, data from the field and other literatures indicated that Itang Special Woreda is one of the woreda in Gambella region were the most tensions and ethnic conflicts are found. Despite the introduction of the federal system in Ethiopia, there were a numbers of ethnic tensions and conflicts in Itang areas mostly between its local inhabitants like the Anywaa, Nuer and Opo. The prevalence of high ethnic tensions and conflicts in this woreda possess difficulty in the management of diversity. As an area inhabited by different groups disagreements between groups on administrative issues immediately leads to political tensions and if not addressed on time cause many violence. Theses tensions and conflicts are aggravated by high politicization of ethnicity and identity that encourage political resentment among different groups pointing one another as matters of denying the causes of the problems.

Recommendations

(a) Encouraging citizens' engagement

A potential path forward in the promotion of ethnic diversity by local governments all the time lie in the area of civic participation, as all moves towards inclusion depend on active participation of all society. The benefits of such participation is all about to increased both social as well as self-awareness just to construct positive social relations between different ethnic groups by arranging or opening different mechanisms through effective inter personal dialogue.

(b) Promoting strong interpersonal relationship

An aspect of strong interpersonal relationship in Itang Special Woreda in particular and the country at large is the only justifying means of creating solidarity and encouraging the acceptance of others and interrelations among groups who may not share affinity, common values, or have empathy towards one another like what is seen in Itang for a couple of years where people can easily engage in conflicts. Therefore, systematic mechanisms which support contact between people to strengthen intergroup solidarity and interpersonal relationships should be encouraged by woreda administrative council to promote unity at all levels.

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