

Original Research Article

Ethnic Conflict between Oromo-Gumuz Since 2008, Western Ethiopia

Abstract

Conflict and instability in any part of Ethiopia have become a complex and interconnected problem that is present as a basic part of the debate about the nature and capability of the many Ethiopian leaders. The major security challenges in Ethiopia largely emanate from political exclusion/power struggle, ethnic and religious-based discrimination, violation of human rights, the proliferation of SALW, and poverty/famine as a major threat to people's security. The purpose of this article is to identify the causes of Oromo-Gumuz inter-Ethnic Conflicts Since 2018 along the border area. The study employed qualitative descriptive research to meet the stated objective of the study. Purposive sampling techniques were used to gather information. To attain the study objective, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used as primary data. Primary data were gathered from different informants in both Oromo and Gumuz. The study showed that the main cause of the Oromo and Gumuz 2008 and 2018 conflict was the question of referendum, political and economic interests of individuals and cultural conflicts were the main causes. The finding of the study revealed that the ethnic-based federalism way of conflict resolution mechanism is still used as a major way of resolving conflict in the study areas. In the study areas, conflict resolution was employed. But, the conciliation

was not successful, and still difficult for sustainable peace in the study areas. The study also reported the weakness and challenges of the indigenous way of conflict resolution method set the order in the study area. Accordingly, local leaders and elders are influenced by some local administrators for political and economic interest generation gap where the main challenge and weakness

Keywords: *conflict, ethnicity, resource competition, conflict resolution, Conflict management.*

Abbreviations

EPRDF: Ethiopia People Revolutionary Democratic Front

SALW: Small arms and light weapons

B-G.: Benishangul-Gumuz

1. Introduction

The perennial nature of inter-community conflicts between Gumuz and Oromo in the western part of Ethiopia began over land-related issues and was triggered by cattle looting between ethnic groups for many complicated reasons. The area is very volatile and exposed to tension and armed conflict for the last few years. The Gumuz community is living in the Kamashi district in the amalgamation of the Benishangul-Gumuz regional state of Ethiopia and bordered on the East and south by Oromia regional state. Communities in these areas and border areas have strong socio-cultural, economic, and religious ties. Nevertheless, the relationship between ethnic groups in the area is known for long and frequent conflictual relationships, especially after 1991. The conflicts that happened in the area resulted in a large number of people and animal displacement, human deaths, and the burning of a house occurred in different years.

Under the banner of a federal political system, the issues of rent-seeking are easily manipulated by political leaders for their advantage, and in so doing they spoil the needs of one group and clash with the needs of others. Kamashi zone in Benishangul-Gumuz region is mainly the focus of this study and inserted by the above-stated problem, especially since in the middle of 2008, and 2018 a violent conflict erupted along the administrative border with West and East Wollega Zones (Oromia regional state) followed by many casualties.

In my observation, the problem is not a set of federalism, but the practicability of the system that the political administrators' open vacuum for corrupter that gone wild. Seeing that, in many kebeles of the study area the causes of inter-ethnic conflictual problems were rooted due

to the rent looking for some political leaders at the federal and regional level, which seems to play a role in the making or breaking of Oromo-Gumuz relations.

Nevertheless, there is no apt solution found to the problem rather the trend is like finding a solution when conflict has erupted among ethnic groups then leaving the conflict management mechanism was not organized and proactive. Therefore, the main rationale for conducting this research is to examine the peace and security challenge and the failure to manage the issues sustainably in the study area.

2. Material and methods

The Research Method of this study is a qualitative one. In qualitative research, the researcher is central. Unlike the quantitative methodology where data are collected through inventories, in qualitative research data are mediated through the researcher or the “human instrument”¹The study requires data collection that embraces perception and examination of the causes of conflict or groups engaged in instigating or managing conflict. For making a detailed description, diagnosis, and explanation of conflict and its effects on inter-ethnic coexistence in Ethiopia. This method was selected due to the reason that the type of data that have been collected and the nature of the research itself were qualitative.

In other words, the study was objectively intended to identify and examine the interethnic conflict management strategy established by the ruling government rather than making any experimental analysis. Accordingly, the qualitative method enables the researcher to be flexible enough to conduct data collection, by identifying informants using purposive sampling methods and interviewing using structured open-ended questions²

¹Denscombe, M. 2007. *The Good Research Guide for Small Scale Social Research Projects*. Third Edn .New York: Open University Press.

² Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research*

Strategies. Sage Publications, Inc.

According to Robson, (2002)³, qualitative research design enables the researcher to apply “triangulation” methods, which involve comparing and contrasting the empirical data for validation purposes. The concern of researcher focuses on conflict dynamics, causes, and the interest of the disputant group and other parties involved in mitigating or escalating conflict. Hence, qualitative research is important in that the researcher plays a pivotal role in constructing concepts, theories, and principles out of details of discussions, interviews, and observations.

The source of data is from both primary and secondary sources. Thus, a combination of data collection instruments will employ to obtain and cross-check information. The primary data will be generated from key informants’ interviews, face-to-face interviews, and focus group discussions while secondary data sources are mainly used relevant documents produced by the government and academic researchers.

The interviews were chiefly open-ended to explore the views of the key informant. As Denscombe (2007) indicates when the researcher wants to gain insights into people’s opinions, feelings, emotions, and experiences, interviews become the appropriate method of research. While focus group discussions are mainly used to scrutinize some ‘controversial’ or contested issues even within members of one particular group, the informal conversation was chosen to uncover the unrevealed information of a group. Accordingly, in the study site (i.e. Kamashi Zone, West, and East Wollaga Zone,) from each Zone researcher will conduct four FGDs which encompass seven members who have direct concerns about the conflict.

Generally, it is difficult to confidently accept oral information as perfect, I carefully checked and counter-checked with secondary sources available in different offices in the State of Oromia and Benishangul-Gumuz Region.

The Population and location of the study mainly focus on three Zones. Kamashi Zone from Benishangul Gumuz region, West, and East Wollega Zones from Oromia Regional State (*see*

³ Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers* (2nd Ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

below: map of study zones and woredas). Specifically, to collect primary data in six Woredas namely: Yaso and Belo-jogonfof, Kamashi Woreda and Agalo-meti woreda from Kamashi Zone, Haro limu and Sasiga, Woreda from East Wollega Zone, Boji-dermaji and Gimbi Woredas from West Wollega Zone will be selected which faced blistering conflict and because of the advantages like geographical distribution, population composition, and their livelihood and those areas are purposefully selected to get reliable information through key informant interview and focus group discussion on the same issues in a different context.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Causes of Oromo- Gumuz Conflict 2018

The study area has a long and complex history of conflicts, related to issues such as competition over resources and population movement; ethnicity; resettlement programs; relations to the central state. The following are some of the issues that push people into conflict

3.1.1 The similarity in the lifestyle of the two pastoralist societies

Some experts on conflict argue that similarities between societies have more opportunities to lead to conflict than a society with a difference. Among this researcher (Dawit), the same lifestyle means that having the same material and spiritual interests, having the same feeling of threats and dangers, and sharing similarities will lead to an interest in the same things, material and spiritual which subsequently lead to conflict. Population pressure and others harm the co-existence of these populations.

3.1.2 Natural resource conservation and use

Similar to the lifestyle of the population living in these regions are natural resource conservation and use. The existence of the pastoralist and semi-pastoralist was based on the herding of their cattle and the products of their cattle. Farmland, grassing land, and thus preserving the forest both by the farmers and regional administrations is the survival issue for the farmers but there is no sufficient awareness of this issue. Thus, due to a lack of awareness on the preservation of natural resources, deprivations of these natural resources are becoming so obvious. Consequently, the scarcity of natural resources will lead to the expansion of conflicts.

3.1.3. Presence of Illegal Small Arms

Pastoralists straddling border regions of Oromia and Benishangul-Gumuz regional states are armed. They engage in cattle rustling to restock herds, so that fight over grazing land and water with the increased use of modern weapons increases insecurity, and leads to high losses of lives. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are abundant. Thus, more people can carry rather loaded pack animals to move from place to place and are cheap and widely available to use by the mass of the countryside communities. The acquisition of small arms by any member of society is considered to be a top priority to protect themselves from enemies because governments in the region cannot provide adequate security for their citizens. Individuals who lived in these cyclical scenarios of animosity feel forced to use these as a matter of individual as well as collective security.

They believe that the possession of firearms by large numbers of people is an asset. The majority of youth attach great value to a semi-automatic rifle because it is considered an assurance to gain power over the opposed groups. These weapons were simple to be used by one group against the other. Therefore, the easy availability of small arms in the vicinity has contributed to human insecurity. Even today, the presence of small weapons is a great question among the communities in the region of Ethiopia. Furthermore, the presence of arms dealers from different areas indirectly added fuel to the fire.

The occurrence of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kamashi was triggered by the presence of illegally owned arms. This was due to conflicts related to agricultural land and well-armed people who occupy all the land bordering the area. This creates cartels renting guns to perpetrate crime and inter-ethnic conflicts). They legitimize the use of both legal and illegal arms by colluding with ethnic vigilante police to heighten inter-ethnic conflicts⁴ The Greed versus Grievance Theory by Collier and Hoeffler (2004) was qualified since one hires a gun because of greed for money and possesses the same gun as a genuine grievance of self-security.

This study revealed that bandits just like cattle rustlers use sophisticated automatic weapons which overpower the rudimentary ones used by government security agents. The government's compromised monopoly of the instruments of power and force has opened opportunities to perpetuate illegalities. More often than not, the political elite within the government has used a legal process such as mopping out guns from the Rumuruti Division of Laikipia County to politically empower certain communities. The Pokot have often failed to

⁴ Merera Gudina (2003b). „The Elite and the Quest for Peace, Democracy and Development in Ethiopia: Lessons to be Learnt“ Northeast African Studies Vol. 10, no. 2

surrender guns when the Samburu and Turkana do so⁵. The discriminated community automatically loses confidence in the state apparatus to ease tension and takes the law into their hands⁶

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are abundant more people can carry them rather than loaded on pack animals to move from place to place and are cheap and widely available to use by the mass of the population. These weapons were simple to be used by one group against the other. Available information from the local communities reveals that the acquisition of small arms by any member of the society is considered to be a top priority to protect themselves from the enemy. Individuals or communities who lived in these cyclical scenarios of animosity feel forced to use these as a matter of individual as well as collective security. They believe that the possession of firearms by large numbers of people is an asset. The majority of youth attach great value to a semi-automatic rifle because it is considered an assurance to gain power over the opposed ethnic groups. Therefore, the easy availability of small arms in the vicinity has contributed to the escalation of the inter-ethnic conflict.

A large number of weapons were also obtained by some pastoralists and farmers for the protection of their lives, cattle, horses, and other natural resources from all that bring danger to them. From the existing reality, however, weapons around the study area are detrimental to peace and security. Even today, the presence of small weapons is a great question between the communities of Yaso and Haro Limu *woredas*.

⁵□ Tigist Kebede (2014) Conflicts among Pastoralists in the Borana Area of Southern Ethiopia: The case of Borana and Garri Master's Thesis in Peace and Conflict Transformation

University of Tromsø Autumn

⁶(ibid).

The Gumuz culture encourages the use and possession of weapons as a great asset. Traditionally, Gumuz is well-experienced in using traditional arrows and bows which they use for hunting wild animals to gain their daily food. However, these small arms were employed by many individuals for criminal purposes. This in turn hinders the development activities of the community in the study area.

Furthermore, the presence of arms dealers from different areas indirectly added fuel to the conflict. These groups are often targeted when conflict breaks out as they are assumed to give information and arms to the opposite sides. The youth associated with these scenarios supported those dealers and traders by exchanging animals captured for weapons. It has been stated that there were weapon dealers who provided arms to the conflict area. During their repeated clashes, members of both ethnic groups gave priority to own semi-automatic rifles. It is noted that both groups have excessively used weapons like Kalashnikov assault rifles and hand grenades in conflict.

Indeed, increased access to and ownership of automatic rifles by any class of the people had made a strong ground for the eruption of communal conflict between the Oromo and the Gumuz in general and the failure of local administration to control this illegal smuggling of arms as well as arming one group and disarming the rest aggravated the conflict.

A popular Amharic is saying that” having goiter and mums at the same lead to devastating effect’ and the regions are prone to different smuggling of weapons and accompanied lead to

conflicts. The farmers and pastoralists believe that weapons are the tools that secure security and are part of the prestige and capital.

When seen in terms of society, weapons have been believed to guarantee the safety of animals and their family. However, the smuggling of illegal weapons in these villages and kebeles of these two regions has exposed this particular area to conflict. Hence, the presence of these illegal weapons is the question of a lot of people. Following this, societies living in this area have given coverage for those illegal, and supporting them is going to be challenging to control.

3.1.4. Lack of Good Governance

The manifestation of poor governance is violating human rights. As it knows that unless given by law, the federal constitution explains that there are possibilities that human rights might be violated, and not respected.

When the basic human right is violated, not respected or there is no human right at all, being alive is questionable, and running routine activities becomes suspended, talking about good governance will be challenging and need attention. The result will be a quandary and instability.

Furthermore, societies living where the two regions are bound to have been affected by poor governance that lessens their co-existence and mutual problem-solving capabilities. And also, this poor governance resulted in this society not enjoying their similarity in languages, and religion and sharing a history of suppression. It resulted in poor democratic exercise, lack of

co-existence, quandary, mutual economic development political, social, and not asking for their basic democratic right as well.

Regarding the governmental structure, if there is no balancing and working at the grass-roots level, and seeking solutions to their problems, the structure would rather be harmful than benefit the society. In this case, the society and government structure will gradually have differences. This difference, in turn, will have an impact on society which has been living harmoniously go to conflict. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have been weakening, they have left no one with traditional options to resolve problems in society. Following this, areas, where these two regions share boundaries, have not found any political and legal solutions for sustainable man leading to poor governance and democratic process.

3.1.5. Lack of sufficient infrastructure

Reduction of poverty and good governance will reduce conflicts. There are some promising initiatives in areas where these regions share a boundary toward development though these areas are not well developed yet.

Unquestionably, these initiatives will have fruits if their quests for peace in the areas are going to be addressed. These initiatives have complicated the economic, social, and political situations in the areas.

3.1.6. Ethnicisation Political Elite Competition

Competition for power and resources at the federal level has taken place along ethnic lines and much of the violence that shook the country has been tied to disputes between groups within

the ruling party. This political elite competition is not an inescapable function of the federal structure, but rather, an outcome of the nature of political party organization and practice.

Under the EPRDF's rule, the party and state structures have though de jure separate in practice, become intertwined. One of the consequences of this merger has been the employment of state resources as a currency for the ruling party to maintain and increase its large body of party members.

State rents tied to political and bureaucratic actions have, particularly after the controversial 2005 parliamentary elections, been an important incentive for increasing the membership of the ruling party from around 700,000 in 2005 to seven million in 2015.

Given that the four constitutive parties of the front are Organised along ethnic lines, the distribution of economic and political resources has also taken place through ethnic-based patronage structures (this includes both the legal distribution of official posts in the government, as well as the illicit benefits accrued through some of these positions).

In the process of competing for power and resources, party officials on all sides have consistently and systematically framed disputes in nationalistic terms and mobilized their ethnic constituencies. Political elite competition has consequently spilled over into communal conflicts that have led to mass violence and displacements.

Ethnic politics have in general also come at the expense of meritocracy and economic efficiency. Most importantly, it has also provided the four EPRDF parties with ethnic

constituencies whose support is almost guaranteed through the perpetuation of a discourse of "ethnic interests" and fear of other groups. Both conflicts within the EPRDF and with opposition parties are increasingly becoming devoid of substantive policy and ideological differences and revolve around ethnic group privileges.

Sustainable economic development and a functioning democratic and federal governance arrangement will be difficult to achieve in the current ethnicized framework of political competition

The way forward must, therefore, involve a de-ethnicisation of competition for resources at the federal level. This is difficult but not impossible. The first and most important step in this direction must be to reorganize the ruling EPRDF from a front composed of four ethnonational organizations into a cross-ethnic and unitary party.

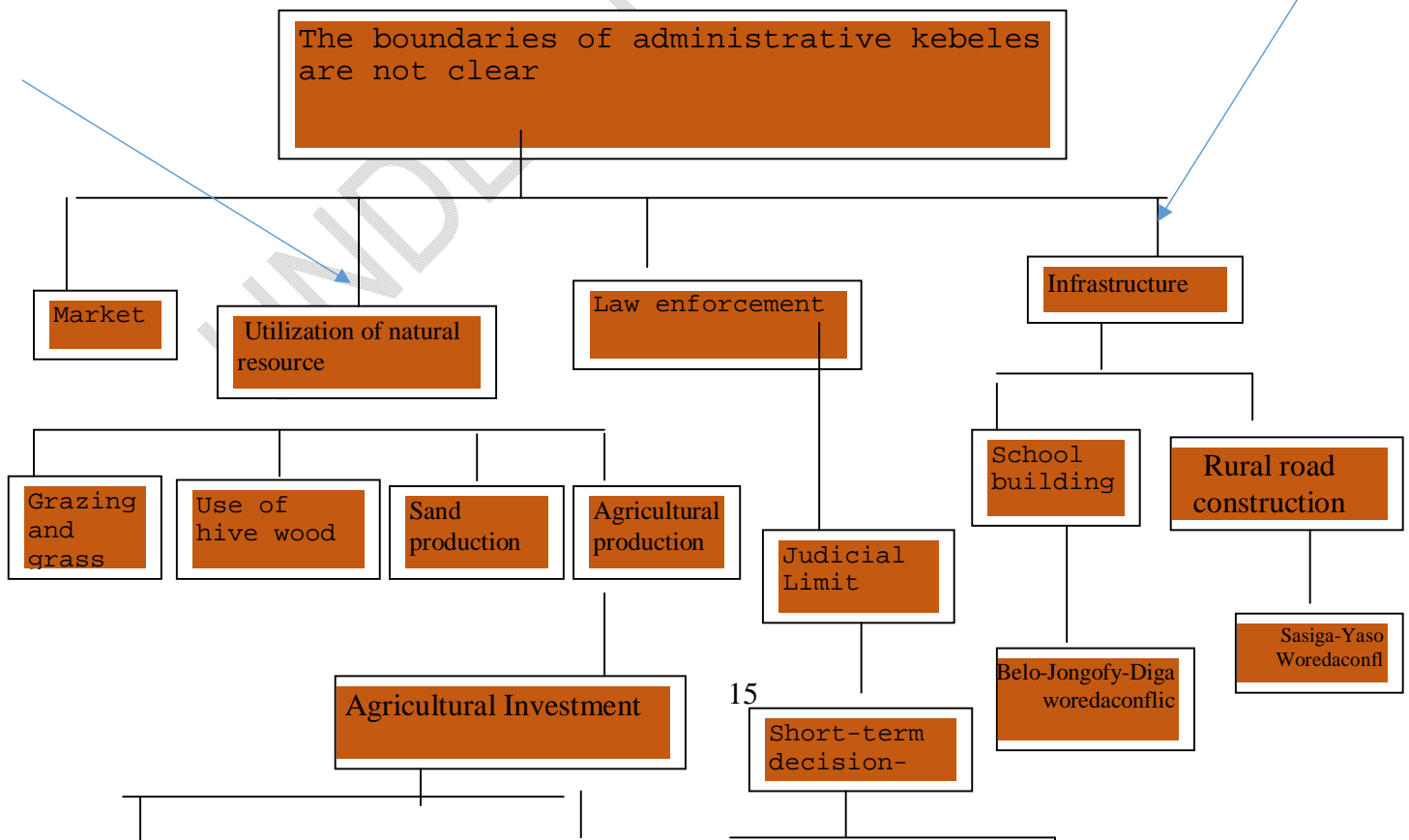
The EPRDF had in its origins an extensively formulated class-based ideology, which explicitly prioritized the interests of Ethiopia's peasantry (which account for more than 80 percent of the working population). Over the last decade, its ideological commitment has weakened, and it has transformed into a party that tries to cater to various and contradictory interests.

It will thus tame communal conflicts caused by competition between party officials and it will encourage the formation of opposition to the EPRDF that is cross-ethnic and based on a different ideological platform than nationalism.

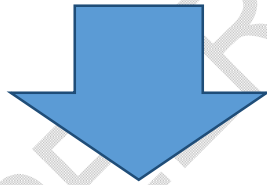
Ethnic politics is not a necessary evil that Ethiopia must live with it is rather an existential threat. And now, more than ever, it is time to think about the possible institutional mechanisms that can contribute to transforming politics away from it.

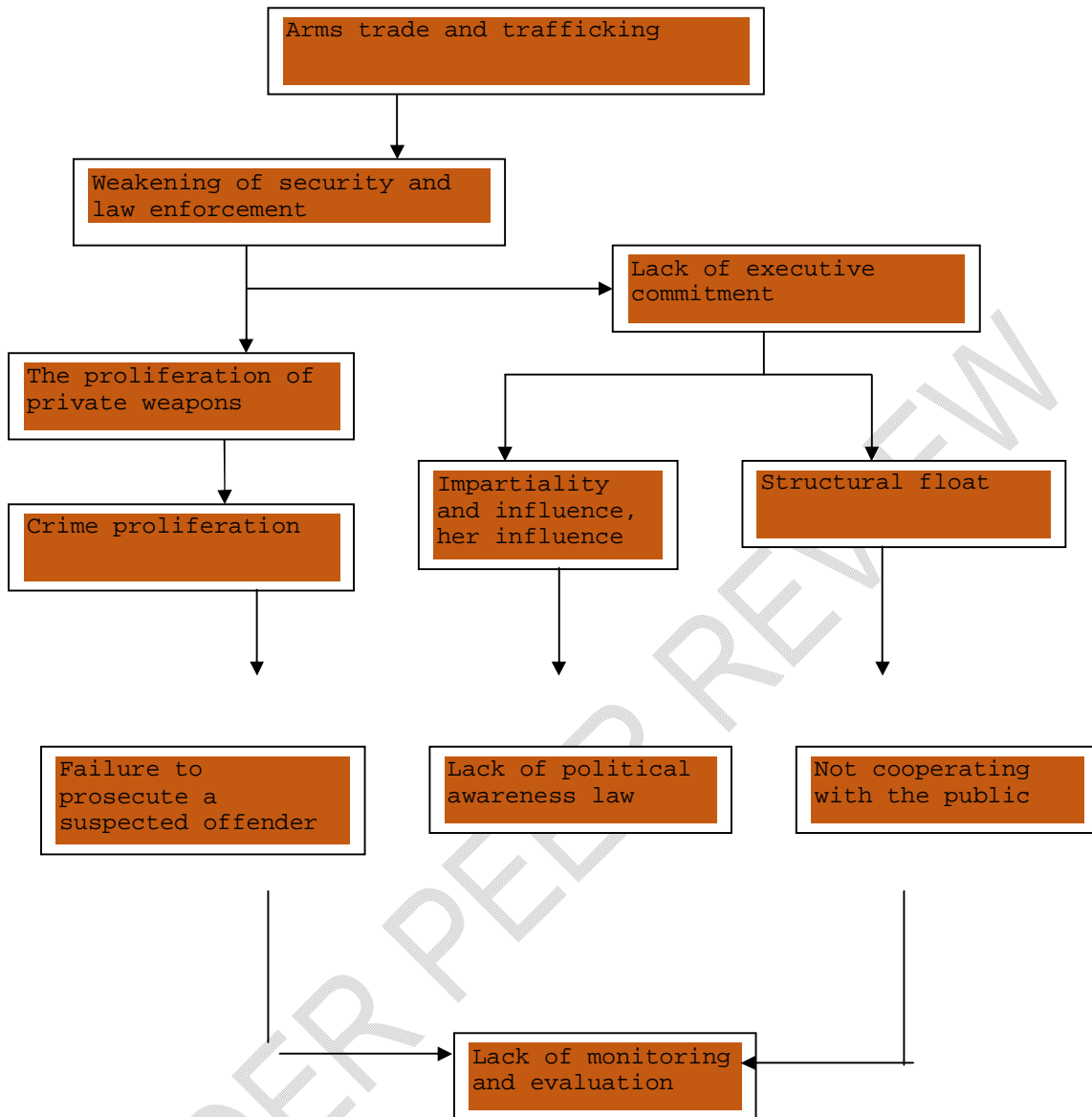
There is no silver bullet that can de-ethnicism politics in Ethiopia. Instead, many individual measures such as those we have outlined above can, over time, make ethnicity a less salient and central feature of how people and politicians conceive of their political interests and how they mobilize against power.

Table 1: Table Of Conflict Analysis Related to the Causes



UNDER PEER REVIEW





4. Dynamic of the conflict

It is an undeniable fact that conflicts have erupted in the neighboring Kebeles of East Welega Zone, West Welega Zone, Kelem Welega Zone, and Horo-Guduru Welega Zone of Oromia State. The main cause of the conflict is the lack of clear administrative boundaries; Overlapping administrative Kebele and got structures; Expansion of agricultural land; Claims raised in many places: Attention and cognitive problems; Lack of good governance; are the proliferation of illegal weapons and the sale and distribution of disputed land to third parties.

Many lives were lost on both sides; He is disabled, also, many neighboring peoples have been displaced by the conflict. Many social and government resources were destroyed.

The relationship of the conflict with the seasons. Frequent clashes on the border between the two districts are often directly related to seasons. This is because of the following reasons.

4.1. During Summer

As in other parts of the country, summer is a time for farmers to harvest and prepare for the field, which could lead to conflict between neighboring farmers over agricultural land. In addition, during the summer, conflicts over the distribution of produce often occur after plowing the fields in the former Gumuz kebeles in search of agricultural land. Occasionally there is a time when neighboring Oromo farmers enter empty-handed.

4.2. Winter

Similarly, the neighboring farmers of the two woredas are engaged in farming as well as in other parts of the country during the winter. However, due to land scarcity or large tracts of farmland, it is inevitable that there will be an expansion of the farmland or that the Gumuz will push the border over and over again.

4.3. Spring

During this time, the farmer prepares extensive fields; it is clear that he was expanding his farm. As a result, there is no clear administrative boundary between the two neighboring woredas; Conflict was evident during the preparation of the field.

5. The Major Actors of the Conflict

According to Daniel Dana (2001), actors are those individuals or groups whose aim is to benefit from chaos, during and after the conflict. Identifying those groups involved in the conflict and their motives for intensifying violence is necessary to dig into the interconnection of the parties. Furthermore, finding out various actors gives good insight for

mediators who play a major role in peacemaking and resolving the conflict. Accordingly, the parties involved in the conflict were not only those from the two antagonistic ethnic groups but also from many other secondary parties. The researcher tried to identify and examine those parties directly associated with the Oromo-Gumuz conflict as well as those groups who indirectly took part in the escalation and de-escalation of the conflict. The following actors are identified as having taken key roles in the conflict. These were local administrators (Militia, Police, and Kebele leaders), secondary persons (non-Gumuz and non-Oromo), and Arms dealers.

5.1. Local Administrators

According to this research, local administrators include local leaders, militias, policemen, and other accused persons that are expelled from the federal and regional bodies and lived with the people. A source at our disposal underlines that cattle robbery and the burning of many houses and crops during the conflict were not only done by ordinary people, but we're also backed by the local police, local militia, and local government officials in the respective district.

Local officials and farmers in Yaso Woreda for organizing youths and attacking Haro Limu, naming four whom he said had a leading role. They started shooting at Oromo people and killing them on September 26, and since then each day people get killed,”

According to local informants and higher officials from the Oromia Regional States, the input of Yaso local leaders, the police commissioner, and other militias were evident. The acts exerted pressure and led to the loss of many lives and the burning of hundreds of homesteads. They played a great role in sustaining the conflict and encouraged the youth to do what they want against an opponent group.

The actors would like the evacuation of the Oromo from the area. In such conditions, their role was negative and encouraged the Gumuz youth to kill the Oromo and burn their properties. Some Oromo farmers who were affected by the violence claimed the involvement of local police, militia, and local administrators in looting and burning properties. They state that local government agents, in general, have had a duty to maintain the status quo of the conflict. Thus, the failure of local leaders to maintain peace could diffuse possible crises. Hence, the local administrators also contributed to the escalation of the conflict in the study area.

5.2. Arms Dealers

Arms dealers are also one of the major actors in the conflict because they are engaged in facilitating the process of escalation and de-escalation by supplying different types of SALW with ammunition to the local people. The key informant said the conflict between Haro Limu and Yaso was due to historical enmity and land disputes and was exacerbated by corruption and the proliferation of arms. Merchants from different areas were indirectly involved in the conflicts by trading commodities and smuggling arms and ammunition. In the same way, investors have been seen in this situation as agents of conflict accelerators. One investor who was already working in the area and two investors who were working in *Anger Gutin Woreda* have tried to transfer illicit weapons. The report of the joint peacemaking committees also indicates that investors who were coming to BGRS and who were afraid to take possession of land were said to have been involved in arms transfers. Others were allegedly sending weapons to the region from Nekemttee, Arjo, and Bako towns. Their actions had a great contribution to aggravating the conflict. However, the local leaders from both sides refrained from expressing the names of the intervening secondary parties.

5.3. Politicians

Politicians are the ones that cause the divisions in the area, it looks that displacement was caused by well-organized groups that had a political motive. There are many rumors of payments by Tigrayan agricultural investors who may have felt their farms were threatened. The people told me they have lived peacefully with Gumuz for a long time and didn't anticipate this major conflict. The major attacks were triggered by the fatal ambush of the Kamashi officials on Sep. 26, but nobody knows for sure who was behind that although for sure the OLF was blamed by the Gumuz people and B-G officials. On my way from Nekemte to Gimbi around the Didessa River, there was a Benishangul-Gumuz flag raised on the main road and I saw Oromos and Gumuz people trading in the market normally.

Then after driving less than one kilometer I saw an OLF flag. This made me think that politicians are the ones that cause the divisions while diverse people would otherwise peacefully intermingle. Also, I have seen many heart-breaking things on the trip and people are suffering for reasons they even don't know or care about. I can tell that people are tired of meaningless conflict and insecurity and they appear confused. Like people everywhere, they want to live in peace and enjoy the freedom they brought. Our politicians must remember that the people's interests should always come first and that they should act responsibly to fulfill their civic duties.

6. Social and Economic Impact of the conflict

The outcome of the conflicts in the study area was the following: Social relationships in the society were interrupted. For example, not marketing in the same market. Inter ethnicity living together has been limited, not even crossing the others' residents Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced due to ethnic conflict in the Kamashi Zone of the

Benishangul Gumuz Regional State. According to the East & West Wollega Zone Disaster Preparedness Office over 148,000 people have been uprooted from their living places and temporarily settled in various public institutions, among others, including health centers, schools, and police stations in both east and west Wollega zones in 44 IDPs sites with no sleeping facilities like blankets and mattress. The conflict has caused the loss of human lives, the looting of livestock, the burning of dozens of houses, and rapping. Also, many schools have fully or partially burnt.

Displacement in East Wollega is spread across 10 woredas, 16 collective sites, and 57 host communities. Five houses built from grass ownership belonging to Oromo farmers were completely burnt on 11/12/99 in Bedasa Adugna kebele. Five houses built from grass ownership belongs to Oromo Farmers were completely burnt on 11/12/99 in Bedasa Adugna kebele. 500-hectare investments whose ownership belongs to Mr. Zelalem Beyene were burned as a result of two Woreda violence.

Apparently, on 10/7/2007 as of 9 am about 80 to 90 gunmen holding modern wifes invaded the farmland put the employees under custody, and harassed them. They also burned two houses built from grass which were used as a kitchen and restroom by the employees.

Moreover, they have invaded the principal residence area and displaced women and children from their residences. Also, they have unlocked two safe boxes and robbed 299,000 (two hundred ninety-nine thousand) birr.

The Kamashi Zone Administrator and three zonal police officers died, while two others escaped, according to residents. The officials were returning from a meeting in Bambasi town in Benishangul to discuss the relocation of 13,000 people displaced by earlier violence.

Baca Ayele, a Biilaa resident, said on Oct. 2 that since the attack people have been killed and displaced, with perhaps 2,000 sheltering at Biilaa high school. “Even today one police officer was shot around the border on Oromia’s side. Many people were notified that their close relatives were killed.”

Hospital workers and other residents staged a protest on Nov. 28 in Nekemte after the officers’ bodies arrived from the borderlands. They were killed the day before in Limu Woreda of East Wollega Zone in Oromia. More than 200,000 people have been displaced from the wider area in the last two months and ongoing insecurity means they are receiving insufficient support.

Insurgents fired at eight Gumuz teachers and agricultural officials on Nov. 20, killing two and injuring others in Yaso Woreda, which is in the northeast of Kamashi Zone in Benishangul-Gumuz (B-G). The civil servants were walking around 35 kilometers to Yaso town from Chigisha Kebele to collect their salaries and the attackers were thought to be from Haro Limu Woreda in East Wollega, according to a witness from Yaso.

Gumuz youth followed the insurgents and killed several Oromo, Yaso witnesses said. Admasu Negasa, Haro Limu woreda’s security head, said those reprisals resulted in 38 Oromo deaths on Nov. 21.

7. Conclusions

Conflicts are natural to human beings, but the way of resolving them may either escalate or reduce and ultimately solve them. Because of the inevitability of conflict and the physical, emotional, and resource costs that often result from conflicts people have always sought ways of peacefully resolving their differences through different mechanisms. Thus, to effectively resolve conflict and maintain harmonious relationships among them, people throughout history

developed different mechanisms and procedures. Among these, jarsuma is one of the Oromo people. jarsuma can restore the offender into the community, through consensus, admission of guilt, and apology. jarsuma can ensure that the offender, the victim, and the community are all engaged so that mutual cohesion is restored, while at the same time the offender has been made to accept guilt. Although jarsumacould be used as an indigenous conflict resolution mechanism in the research area, when it comes to its frequent practices in the community, it seems to be less practiced.

In the Oromo people, jarsuma plays a significant role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The community elders' method of dispute resolution which focuses on solving the problem from the root and rebuilding broken relationship through Jarsuma and the elders throughout the process focus on truth and justice as central elements of conflict resolution that unless justice is done, and the truth is revealed or found there can be no lasting resolution for conflicts.

In so doing, the researchers have tried to unfold the fruits of Jarsuma practiced among the mettu community as a single example of the Oromo indigenous conflict resolution mechanism process worth attention.

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