Addis Ababa University

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Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)

Community Resilience, Ethno-Religious Violence, and Sustainable Peacebuilding: A Case Study from *Arsi* Zone *Lode Hetosa Woreda* of *Oromia* National Regional State

By:

Yidnekachew Mitiku Mekonen

A Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Peace and Security

Supervisors: Taddesse Berisso (Ph.D., Associate Professor, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University)

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Declaration

This is to declare that this thesis entitled: ***Community Resilience, Ethno-Religious Violence, and Sustainable Peacebuilding: A Case Study from Arsi Zone Lode Hetosa Woreda of Oromia National Regional State*** is submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University for Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Peace and Security Studies. To the best of my knowledge and belief the thesis represents my own work and contains no material which has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at this University or any other institution, except where due acknowledgement is made.

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Peer Reviewed Research Publications during Candidature

- **Yidnekachew Mitiku and Taddesse Berissso** (June 2022). Ethnic Peace vs. Ethnic Conflict: A Tale of two Resorts from Experiences in Tanzania and Ethiopia. Journal of Ethiopian Studies. V. LV (I). ISSN: 03042243

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Abstract

This dissertation examines factors behind the resiliency of the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* community to pressures of violence in general and ethno-religious violence in particular. We know that these days the widely convincing model for a comprehensive Peacebuilding approach is that identifying a conflict's causes and triggers must be coupled with efforts to identify local capacities for peace and sources of resilience. Therefore, a conversation on communities' resilience to pressures of violence is thinking that substantiates the critical role of local capabilities and responses in building sustainable peace. When this study was designed to explore the resilience experience of the *Arsi Zone*, *Lode Hetosa Woreda* community to pressures of ethno-religious violence, it was with such acknowledgment. The core argument of the study was founded on the assertion that even in the most challenging situations, there are communities acting to prevent violence from its occurrence by employing local strategies. The *Lode Hetosa Woreda* community, with this regard, has conveyed a public image of a peaceful society/resiliency to pressures of violence/. Thus, this study placed itself in getting deep into the reasons why the community remained non-violent and how they protect themselves and preserve spaces of non-violence. A related inquiry was on sustaining the community's resiliency to pressures of violence to build sustainable peace. In exploring the puzzle of non-violence (the absence of ethno-religious related violence) in the community, the study had examined and cross-validated relevant sources. It employed an ontology that relies on a social world of meanings rather than reality. Hence, the assumption in drawing the arguments was that different people might construct meaning differently, even about the same phenomenon (constructivist epistemology). Accordingly, through looking at the specific situations (e.g., historical, political, or socio-cultural specificities) that explain the phenomenon in much greater detail, arguments about the community's resilience response to pressures of ethno-religious violence were made. Situations that would explain the research questions were examined through the eyes of the participants rather than the eyes of the researcher (Interpretivism was, therefore, the theoretical perspective of the study). Significant findings of the dissertation that refine our existing knowledge include: Local social cohesion, collective security system, and trust networks maintained *among the community* even under pressures are the basis that made the community resilient to violence; absence of violence in the community may not necessarily imply the community being an "island of unity or harmony," rather the community's awareness of imminent threats and their social knowledge to proactively respond to would be the violent situation;

continuous pressure to descend the community to violence instead produced a reverse effect of the resiliency of the community by prompting the people even to strengthen their relation, networks and social infrastructure for collective security system; ineffective leadership/broken relationship/ between the community and the local government does not necessarily imply community descending to violence. Challenges to sustaining resiliency of the community to pressures of violence or spaces for intervention in the area include issues related to polarized identity politics/topics related to ethnicity and religion/, issues related to feelings of social "exclusion" and "marginalization", issues related to "negative" resilience, matters pertaining "everyday" life and issues related to the relationship between the local administration and the community.

Keywords: Resilience, Ethno-Religious Violence, Social Cohesion, Collective Security System, Trust Networks

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List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

ACLED- ArmedConflict Location & Event Data

AFP- Agence France-Presse

ALF-Afar Peoples' Liberation Front

BBC-British Broadcasting Corporate

CSA-Central Statistical Agency

E.C-Ethiopian Calender

EHRC-Ethiopia Human Rights Commission

EPLF-Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front

EPRDF-Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front

ESAT-Ethiopian Satellite Television

ETV-Ethiopian Television

FAR- Framework for Assessing Resilience

FBC-Fana Broadcasting Corporate

FDRE-Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FGD-Focus Group Discussion

HRC-Human Rights Commission

HRW-Human Rights Watch

IDMC- Internal Displacement Monitoring Center

IDPs -Internally Displaced Persons

ILO-International Labor Organization

IOM-International Organization for Migration

OCHA- UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OHCHR-UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner

OLF-Oromo Peoples' Liberation Front

TNH-The New Humanitarian

TPLF-Tigrean Peoples' Liberation Front

UK-United Kingdom

UN-United Nations

VOA-Voice of America

Glossary

Awraja = *the* 2nd administrative unit in pre1991 Ethiopia. Several *woredas* make *awraja,* and several *awrajas* make *teklay gizat*/province/.

Balabat meret = the indigenous owner of the land. Since the 19thcentury, it used to denote the hereditary chief of the incorporated people into modern Ethiopia.

Equb = a kind of 'credit association' where each member pays a fixed sum of money every week or month, which is then allocated to members on a rotating basis.

Gasha = a unit of land measurement and is equivalent to 40 hectares.

Gossa = clan

Gult = a system where the crown/Emperor/ alienates land occupied by local tribes in common and distributed to members of the imperial family, the clergy, members of the nobility, Menelik's generals, soldiers, and local agents of the state.

Idir = a community association with the central purpose of covering funeral expenses whenever death occurs among members.

Irreechaa = annual *Oromo* People Thanksgiving Holiday

Kebele = the lowest level of administration in the FDRE administrative division

Mahiber = a form of social or religious association but usually appears as a religious one. But it could also be organized in non-spiritual states to help each other, raise funds, or like a '*meredaja mahiber.*'

Neftegna = gun bearer

Negus = king

Temenja yaz = rifle holder

Timket = Ethiopian Epiphany

Waqeffannaa = believe in one Waaqa - the supreme being.

Woreda = the 3rd level of administration in the FDRE administrative division

Study Site Location

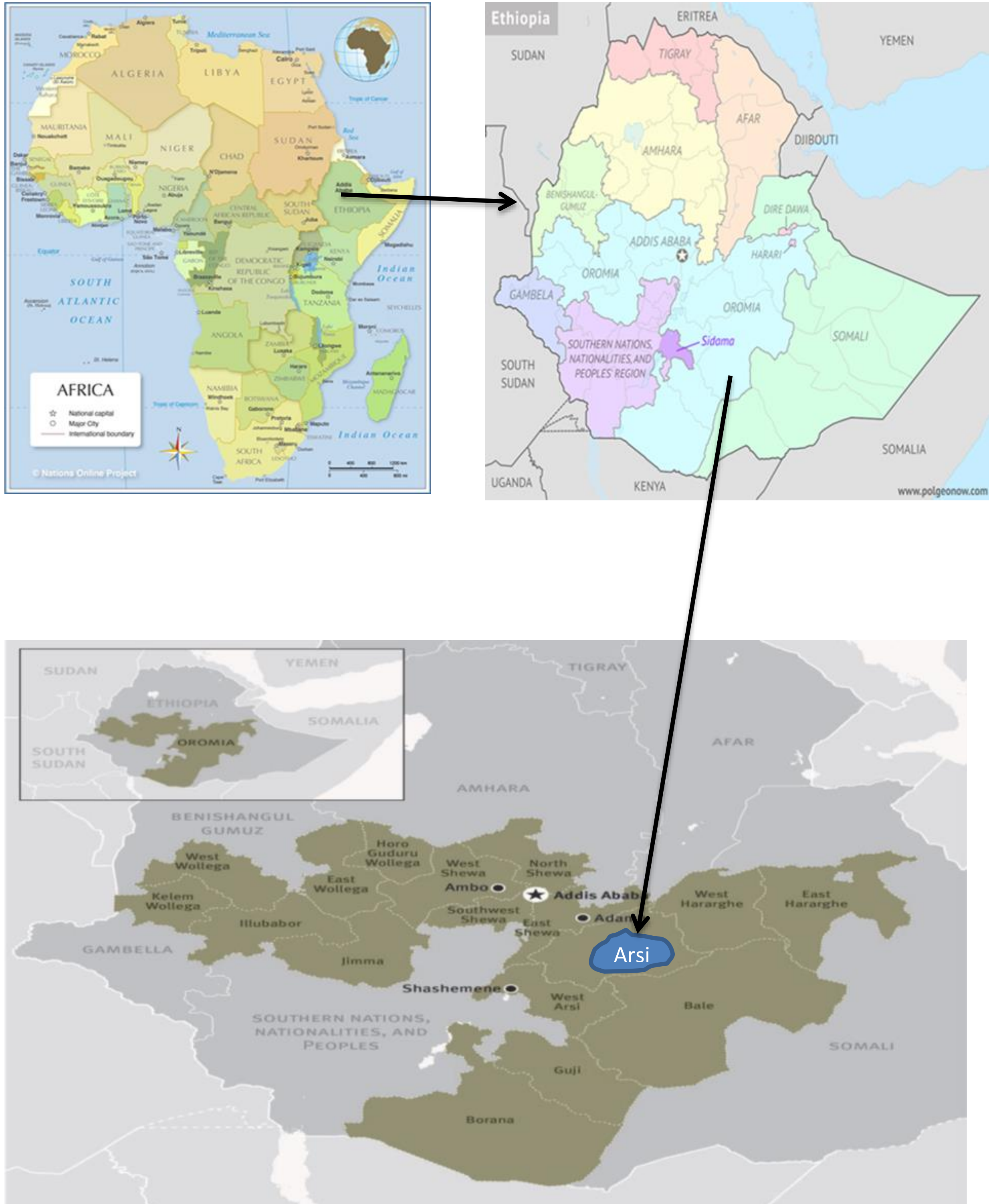

Figure 1: Study site location within Africa, Ethiopia, and National Regional State of Oromia (Source: National online Project, 2020; Polgeonow.com, 2020; HRW, June 2016)

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

For many years, the conventional model[1] of conflict-sensitive programs and Peacebuilding interventions has made its focus on identifying a conflict's causes and triggers. They are mainly informed by conflict analyses and center on understanding the sources of societal and state fragility (FAR, 2016; CEPAD, 2015; Roger and Richmond, 2013). In other words, they used to pay little attention to efforts to identify local capacities for peace and sources of resilience. In cognizance of the gap in the conventional model to conflict-sensitive programs and Peacebuilding interventions, latter approaches brought to the surface a thought that conflicts can be transformed by strengthening existing capacities within the society (de Coning, 2016; FAR, 2016; Barrs, 2010). Accordingly, the widely convincing model for a comprehensive Peacebuilding approach this time is that identifying a conflict's causes and triggers must be coupled with efforts to identify local capacities for peace and sources of resilience, which are specific and unique to each society.

While the conventional models of building peace and conflict-sensitive programming, as stated above, are informed by conflict analyses; the community resilience approach is primarily concerned with the attributes, capacities, and responses associated with how, where, and why peace gains traction or maybe sustained (Anderson and Wallace, 2013, Barrs, 2010). Such a resilience analysis which seeks to understand and harness the factors that enable individuals, communities, and societies to insulate them from resorting to violence or transform the contexts that give rise to such violence can be a valuable complement to conflict analyses when designing integrated peacebuilding strategies.

With an emphasis on the strength and capabilities of local communities, the concept of community resilience to violence is gaining sway in the peacebuilding community. There is a growing sense that strengthening communities' capacity to overcome violence opens up new possibilities for conflict prevention and more sustainable post-conflict community recovery (Lauren, 2016, Norris and Stevens, 2007).

[1] The conventional model here meant to refer to 'an approach dominantly employed' for a very long period over the issue at hand.

While building a sustained peace aspires to be transformative, understanding the endogenous assets, attributes, qualities, resources, and ultimately actions that enable that positive action becomes essential. Therefore, resilience thinking emphasizes providing support to the systematic self-help mechanisms that already exist within local communities and institutions. It aims to aid individuals and communities in becoming more resilient to violence and, over the long term, strengthen local capacities for managing conflict, building peace, and promoting overall social cohesion (Ondendaal, 2013, Mitchell and Hancock, 2012, Barrs, 2010).

For that matter, communities that prevent the emergence of violent conflict or rebound more quickly after it has everyday capacities to harness against violence successfully. These resilience capacities are identified and cross-validated in the works of Varshney (2002), Carpenter (2012), Anderson and Wallace (2013), among others. On the other hand, communities may have these engrained capacities but fail to use them to mitigate risk or avert or recover from threat. Where latent capacities existed, how they can be mobilized to actively and effectively reduce a violent conflict threat is a question that needs closer scrutiny in every country context in general, with no exception to the Ethiopia case.

However, there also needs to bear in mind that such resilience capacities are not inherently benevolent, nor do they automatically translate to peace for the wider society. It has to be recalled that some of the strategies people use to protect their community from conflict may imply resorting to violence. Thus, for local actors to use their resilience capacities towards peace, they need to know and value their individual and collective potential to peacefully overcome obstacles to peace and identify which resilient actions, intentional or not, may contribute to greater violence and polarization.

The resonance of community's resilience and local capacity thinking also lies with its ability to address chronic weaknesses in early notions about Peacebuilding; such as the realization that recent interventions have overlooked and undercut host nation capacity and that knowledge of the local environment is a crucial variable for conflict prevention and building durable peace. The conventional intervention model that pushes available and predetermined programming provides topical assistance rather than addressing the underlying root causes of conflict (Bridget, 2016, Severine 2014, Severine, 2010, Nathan, 2012, Roger and Richmond, 2013). With that note,

emphasizing resilience as an approach to peacebuilding and understanding conflict situations goes beyond conventional liberal peacebuilding approaches.

That said, though a glimpse at Ethiopian history gives one an understanding that war and violence among various groups were rampant in the society, it is equally important to note that the people have time and time again risen from misfortune. This is partly attributed to the endogenous resilience capacities embodied within the community and those values supportive of the culture of peace (Ephraim, 2008). In parlance with this, Putnam (2000) has argued that resilience responses, local institutions functioning at the community level, and social capital have their role in maintaining peace and security at individual, household, and community levels.

Similarly, Lederach has also argued that 'the greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term is always rooted in the local people and their culture' (Lederach, 1997:94). Therefore, strengthening these already existing local capacities and cases of resilience must be a strategic priority to peacebuilding as it ensures sustainability. De Coning (2016:165) also concludes that "International peacebuilders can assist this process, but if they can interfere too much, they end up undermining the self-organizing process necessary to generate and sustain resilient social institutions."

Moreover, while explaining the importance of endogenous capacities to advance peace in the continent (Africa) on the Tana High-Level Forum, Prof. Andreas Eshete has remarked that:

> *[T]o advance the cause of peace in Africa, we must look beyond the norms and practices of states and intergovernmental institutions. The existence of an ethos upholding a culture of peace among ordinary citizens is essential if inter-communal violence and the all too common unspeakable abuses of children and women in Africa's wars are to be checked* (Tana High-Level Forum report, 2012:12).

Thus, a careful analysis of which capacities can bring about peace and which need to be mitigated should be an integral part of any resilience assessment in a given community.

Resilience responses and mechanisms are highly diverse, across different levels, from the individual to the community to the national level. Accordingly, this research explored avenues to

appraise the *Lode Hetosa woreda*[2] communities' resilience to ethno-religious violence. Concerning this, the underpinning factors to the community's resilience response to multiple pressures of ethno-religious violence and actors probably shaping the local's response to violence were investigated. The research also sought to inform policy and practice integrating the community resilience approach into durable peacebuilding and conflict prevention strategies. Therefore, the focus of this study was on community resilience as a means of preventing violence through building positive attributes rather than responding to violence after its occurrence.

1.2. Problem Statement

As alluded to in the preceding section, the mainstream approach to peacebuilding is, for the most part, premised on finding solutions to fragility. In the same vocabulary, studies related to peace and security are mainly informed by analyzing external interventions and the conflict dynamics, exploring the root causes, actors, spoilers, proximate factors, etc. For that matter, as Ramalingam (2013) notes, the dominant interventions to conflict situations in Africa have often tended to focus on liberal economic and political principles as viable solutions to violent conflicts. As such, liberal principles such as adopting a free-market economy and democratic governance through free and fair elections are usually proclaimed as an antidote for violent conflicts in the continent. Though understanding conflict dynamics, including root causes and the role of external interventions, is necessary to develop an appropriate response, such a focus tends to overshadow the capacities and processes that are present and endogenous in a community (Doucet, 2012; Lederach, 1997).

Putting the context otherwise, even in the most challenging situations, individuals and communities are acting to prevent violence from its occurrence and counter the effects and causes of conflict. The dominant intervention model nonetheless tends to undermine these local communities' resilience mechanisms, which are crucial aspects in explaining and understanding why some communities with similar socio-economic and political characteristics fight and some do not. And failure to take stock of these community efforts can, and often does, undermine the effectiveness of sustained peacebuilding interventions. A growing recognition principally bears

[2] The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is administratively divided into four divisions: regional states and chartered cities, zones, *woredas* and *kebeles. Woreda*/district, therefore, refers to the third-level administrative division whereas k*ebele* is the lowest level of administration.

this out that capable democratic states must be grounded on indigenous social values and contexts while at the same time adapting to changing realities (Bridget, 2016, Roger and Richmond, 2013).

Therefore, the community's resilience conceptual conversation is thinking that substantiates the vital role of local knowledge, responses, and capacities in an effective peacebuilding program. As such, it opens up space for engaging with local communities and makes them the focal point (FAR 2016).

For instance, religion can be taken as one illustration to frame a community's resilience in a given country's context. While religion appears to be associated with conflict in many parts of the world (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008), it is equally important to note also the way religion played, or sought to play, in some rare but significant occasions (a crucial role in building a resilient community). The best illustration is the Muslim community in Rwanda, where the common understanding is that the Muslim community (the vast majority) did not participate in the 1994 genocide but instead acted positively, with many Hutu Muslims protecting Tutsi Muslims and non-Muslims (Bridget 2016, Doughty and Ntambara, 2005).

Back to our context, while Ethiopia is considered as one of the continents' emerging economies (UNDP, 2016, IMF 2015, ADBG, 2016), the political environment in the country is dynamic and marked by some tensions at different times. Various conflicts challenge the FDRE government: intra-state armed opposition, inter-state war, resource conflicts, boundary conflicts, religious conflicts, and other political issues (Asnake, 2014; Assefa, 2012; Dereje, 2011; Abbink, 2011, 2009). Ethiopia today faces social, political, and institutional deficits that constitute the wide-ranging context of violence and political polarization (AFP, 2019; Financial Times, 2018, 2016; WPR, 2017; Reuters, 2016).

Speaking of violence and polarization, social unrest and ethno-religious tension represent the main challenge to durable peacebuilding and democracy today. The country has been engulfed by unprecedented waves of ethnic and religious violence (Semir, 2019; Yonas, 2019). In the face of this situation, several efforts have been undertaken to address the immediate factors involved in

conflicts and reduce their influence through short and long-term measures. Nonetheless, unrest continues at different times, and the mechanism for sustained solutions seems complicated.

At the same time, though, Ethiopians, like any other society, are a community that resists, overcomes, and transforms its problem. In other words, despite all these notable cases showing the hardening of specific claims and relations, the endogenous capacities at different levels, have played an essential role in preventing violent acts. An important illustration for the same can be the resilient response of village elders in *Alaga Dore kebele* of *Arsi zone, Jeju woreda*, where they saved the destruction of Maranque Plc, a Dutch flower plant, in the 2016 unrest (Washington Post, 2016, Daily Mail, 2016). The locals' saving of the Maranque Plc may be one, but it is an important example that makes one question what made this community resilient to the would-be violent act by the protestors and the role resilience and local capacities can play in building a sustained peace. Similar scenarios can also be cited in other *woredas* of the zone, least to mention, for instance, the *Lode Hetosa woreda*, which exhibits a very calm and relatively peaceful experience irrespective of unrest in different parts of the region. To identify this quality, resilience thinking and assessing the local capacities for peace in the country, and strengthening the existing capacities are vital. Hence, the resilience of some communities must be taken into account in explaining why some areas are more resistant to violence than others.

Although the recent proliferation of international works on resilience and local capacity in the Peacebuilding arena, minimal effort is made in scholarly works that comprehensively entertain resilience responses and local capacities of communities to peacefully overcome obstacles to peace in Ethiopia in general and in the study area in particular. While the pertinent studies on local capacities for peace in Ethiopia mainly focus on local institutions and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (Gumi, 2016, Jemila, 2014, Ayalew, 2012, Tolossa, 2011, Mamo, 2008, Tarekegn, 2008, Tirsit, 2004, Assefa, 2003), factors underpinning community's resilience to pressures of violence in general and ethno-religious violence in particular, which this study shall embrace, is overlooked. On the other hand, the resilience concept is mainly viewed in most studies on the ability of systems to cope, adapt and reorganize in response to natural calamities (Mercy Corps, 2012, UNICEF PBEA programme, 2016, Degefa, 2007), implying that studies on community's resilience responses from a Peacebuilding vantage point are limited in the country. In other words,

although there are many lessons that we can learn from these studies, they could not wholly present the dynamics of a community's resilience to violence in general and the pressures of ethno-religious violence in particular.

Apart from that, works that appraise the resilience responses of communities in Ethiopia in general and in the study area, in particular, are scant. For that matter, despite a long history of religious tolerance in the country, recent tensions point to a more pronounced picture of religion playing a role in conflict dynamics in Ethiopia. Meaning, though the long history of Ethiopia's robust religious pluralism and peaceful co-existence, these days, however, we have witnessed the hardening of inter-ethnic as well as inter-religious boundaries and the rise of violent inter-faith conflicts in different parts of the country (Semir, 2019; Yonas, 2019; Ostebo, 2019). *Arsi* zone, as discussed before, is no exception to the problem where it has witnessed ethnic and religious tension on many occasions, thereby manifesting itself as a challenge to durable peacebuilding (Semir, 2019; Yonas, 2019; Ostebo 2019). However, for instance, in parlance to the important illustration on how religion served as a local capacity and community resilience in Rwanda, the question will be: how far have similar studies been conducted in the context of other violence in Ethiopia? What role do societal values play in building a resilient community? What investigation is made regarding preventive violence mechanisms in the community in general and the study locality in particular? What factors could have the potential to diminish the positive resilience capacity of communities in the long run? These and related issues are hardly given adequate focus.

Moreover, there need to note that resilience mechanisms and responses in different places are likely to be a product of various historical, political, local actors and events with their moves and dynamics. Based on these considerations, it would be only appropriate to look at issues such as resilient responses of communities to pressures of violence in general and ethno-religious violence in particular, the capacities for peace that exist in the community that would enable them to prevent violent acts, the different actors, if any, that are involved in the local peacebuilding activity in the area and how they interact each other, factors having the potential to diminish resilience capacity of communities in the long run, what makes a specific community resilient as opposed to fragile and vulnerable to violent acts or conflict and others. These fundamental issues are essential in building sustainable peace in a country.

This study, therefore, aims to explore resilience factors in *Lode Hetosa Woreda* by looking for existing strengths, assets, capacities, strategies, processes, and structures that allow communities and societies to prevent pressures of violence in general and ethno-religious violence in particular, address current tensions and threats to peace, and ultimately mitigate future conflict.

1.3. Research Objective

1.3.1. General Objective

This study explores underpinning factors of community resilience to pressures of ethno-religious violence among the Arsi Zone, *Lode Hetosa woreda* community. It also aims to determine how existing capacities can be leveraged and strengthened to better develop sustainable peace.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

Derived from the general objective, the study identified the following as specific objectives:

- ✓ To investigate the historical, political events, and local actors that shaped the study community
- ✓ To understand factors that influence the community's resilience response to pressures of ethno-religious violence
- ✓ To assess potential limitations on the community's resilience mechanisms in dealing with pressures of ethno-religious violence and building sustainable peace.
- ✓ To comprehend general implications and take a lesson from experience in the area to leverage and strengthen resiliency.

1.4. Research Questions

The study was guided by the following **main research question**: what are the underpinning factors for the resiliency of the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* Community to pressures of ethno-religious violence and how existing capacities can be leveraged and strengthened to better develop sustainable peace?

The study has also embarked on the following related research questions:

a. What are the historical, political events, and local actors that actually shaped the study community?

b. Why the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* community demonstrated resilience response to pressures of ethno-religious violence as different from its surroundings?
c. What potential limitations could be identified on the community's resilience mechanisms in dealing with pressures of ethno-religious violence?
d. How the elements of resilience can take root and flourish in building sustainable peace?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The conventional response to peacebuilding by the international community and national governments has often been seen as short of achieving the systemic transformation from conflict and violence to peace and non-violence. As a result, sustainable peace demands new approaches, such as resilience practice and local capacities, emphasizing local innovation and collective action. A systematic understanding of how societies resist violence and mobilize their local capabilities will improve the assessment of local threats and vulnerabilities for better and more targeted support. In addition, if core local capacities and strategies are identified across areas, a foundation can be established for successful resilience policy and practice and thereby for sustainable peace. When this study is designed to explore the community's resilience responses to pressures of ethno-religious violence in the selected area, it aimed primarily to contribute its part to systematically uncovering, understanding, and explaining the way communities resist when faced with violence. In doing so, it attempted to bring to surface capacities or resources that are either formal or informal and with the potential of sustainable peace or the other way round.

Moreover, the study strived to look at assistance, if any, the study community received that helped them be more resilient to violence. By identifying endogenous capacities and strategies, the study also plays its part in a successful resilience policy and practice to build sustainable peace. Furthermore, the study takes a significant place in unveiling how to work on local government's capacity and legitimacy through a deep understanding of community relationships with local governments.

1.6. Research Paradigms

1.6.1. The Ontological Assumptions

This study used an essential ontology of a social world of meanings/relativism rather than reality. Accordingly, the study assumed that the world to be investigated is populated by human beings

who have their thoughts, interpretations, and meanings. In line with that, perspectives on the resiliency of communities to pressures of violence shall depend on the thoughts, interpretations, and meanings of those who view it. This is in cognizance that resilient assessment by itself is context-dependent rather than a defined reality. As such, the study's investigation of the issue was premised using the different research methods and techniques of the interpretive design. On that note, the study focused on interviews, focus group discussions, and other reports and documents about the community's resilience response to pressures of ethno-religious violence to interpret the communities' opinions, feelings, experiences, and inner thoughts.

1.6.2. The Epistemological Assumptions

The epistemological stance used in this study is constructivism. Constructivism will be the epistemological stance of this study because, firstly, the researcher is, among others, trying to find an answer to the question: "what are the historical, political events and local actors that inform the communities' resilience and sustainable peacebuilding process" by presenting the *Lode Hetosa woreda* community as a case study. The historical, political events and local actors that informed the communities' resilience responses were believed to be constructed in and out of the interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. The same explanation goes on to the other questions also. Secondly, constructivists view that there is no objective interpretation. So, the assumption is that the way this study interpreted and analyzed the collected data are subjected to reinterpretation.

1.6.3. The Theoretical Perspective

Considering the ontology of the study is mainly concerned with the human world of meanings and interpretations and the epistemological stance is constructivist, it is logical to put that interpretivism is the theoretical perspective underpinning this study. Interpretivism was employed as the theoretical perspective of the study for the following reasons: first, from an interpretive viewpoint, there are multiple interpretations of and perspectives on single events and situations, thereby interpretivism is essential. In other words, people actively construct their social world through their interpretation of events and experiences. Hence, the study assumes community's resilience responses are the result of construction by the people. Second, the interpretive theoretical perspective enables the researcher to study the community's social world in its natural state

without the intervention of or manipulation by the researcher. Accordingly, situations were examined through the eyes of the participants rather than the researcher.

1.7. The Methodological Assumptions

The study relied on the following methodological assumptions:

1.7.1. Case Study Type

The study employed a case study type of qualitative research. Because an assessment of resilience responses to pressures of violence in the particular study area is not sufficiently undertaken, a case study enables the researcher to gather in-depth data and understand the situation more. The *Lode Hetosa woreda* community was purposefully selected for the study due to their different case towards responding to pressures of violence. The *woreda* was purposefully selected based on its resilience experience to pressures of ethno-religious violence, especially in post-1991 Ethiopia, unlike the surrounding *woredas*. The study aimed to understand the complex social phenomena that informed the community's non-violence despite pressures to violence in its different forms. Furthermore, this study type allows the research to retain real-life events' in a holistic and meaningful manner. As advantageous as a case study for the stated reasons, it is also important to acknowledge the limitation attached to it and that is that the findings of the case study cannot necessarily be generalized beyond the study's population. Hence, there need to take into cognizance that factors that may be attributed to the resilience response of the study community may not necessarily apply in explaining the same context in another area. The difficulty of explaining causal relationships is another limitation of the case study which the study acknowledges. Accordingly, the research shall not attempt to exactly demonstrate such a relationship. In other words, the factors that could be identified as contributing to the resilience of the study community are not "yes' or 'no' answers. Rather they are predictors of the likelihood of the situation.

1.7.2. Qualitative Approach

In this study of resilience responses to ethno-religious violence, the researcher, through a quality inquiry, sought to understand the endogenous assets, attributes, capacities, which are facets of resilience. The qualitative inquiry was chosen because resilience responses focus on life experiences and situations, and through the qualitative approach, the researcher was able to explore the behaviors, perspectives, experiences, and feelings of the given unit of analysis. Through a

holistic approach to the endogenous assets, attributes, capacities, and so forth, the research attempted to uncover the underlying qualities of structures and processes and their implicit meanings in preventing violence. Furthermore, the rationale for using a qualitative approach in this study was that understanding positive facets of communities' resilience to pressures of violence depends on a wide look of contexts: historical, political, economic, cultural, social, and personal, and hence, qualitative inquiry becomes appropriate. The study also relied on this approach because it gives the researcher a chance to look at those factors that make a given community resilient to violence instead of other communities.

As a qualitative study, the research question was formulated by means of inductive logic. Accordingly, looking at the specific situations (e.g., historical, political, or socio-cultural specificities) that explain the phenomenon in much greater detail, the main assumption and core argument about the community's varied response to violence and resilience mechanisms and local capacities were made.

1.7.3. Exploratory - Descriptive Research Nature

The study assumed an exploratory nature as it, with an interpretative approach, basically seeks to understand the social phenomena or the subjective experience of the unit of analysis. This means, it sought to understand social phenomena like endogenous social assets, capacities, attributes, etc. that helped the community be more resilient to violence.

Furthermore, the study also assumed a descriptive nature. Descriptive research was used to describe, explain, and interpret conditions, practices, structures, and relationships that are facets of resilience in the study community and obtain a picture of communities' opinions in their resilience responses to pressures of ethno-religious violence appreciate its contribution for sustainable peacebuilding.

1.8. Methods

The use of the methodology justifies the use of the methods. The case study design is based upon the assumption that the case being studied is atypical of cases of a certain type, and therefore a single case can provide insight into the events and situations prevalent in a group from where the case has been drawn (Crotty, 2003). In selecting research informants, the case study type usually

uses purposive, judgmental, or information-oriented sampling technique, which was employed in this study. Furthermore, using multiple methods to collect data is an important aspect of a case study. With that in mind, this study had employed two primary data collection methods; interviews and focus group discussions. In addition to that, a consultation was also made with the secondary data sources.

1.8.1. Primary Data Collection Methods

1.8.1.1 Interview

To obtain a general understanding of the resilience response of the community to pressures of ethno-religious violence, the study had employed an interview technique. To ensure complete information across different interviews, the researcher used a guide with questions and aspects that must be covered. Interviews were held with key informants to solicit data in-depth and bring data pertinent to the study. The data collection took place for almost two months (from late July 2020- to early September 2020).

Snowball and purposive techniques were employed to select research participants. Key informants were selected for their specific knowledge, interest, or concern about the subject of inquiry. They primarily included informants from the local people, elders, judges, local government administrators, religious leaders, youths, women representatives, business owners, teachers, farmers, etc. Forty-one interviews were conducted in the course of time. The interviews were determined based on manageability, accessibility, and data saturation after all. Some of the interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of respondents. The researcher could not record all interviews as some disagreed to the tape-recording. But, in order to minimize the problem of keeping accurate information in the non-recorder interviews, the researcher made sure that detailed field notes were captured during and immediately after each interviews.

1.8.1.2. Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion (FGD) assumes this study's other data collection instrument. In order to achieve the objective, the study originally planned to conduct six to eight FGDs. However, the state of emergency the country was in (due to COVID19) made things difficult to meet the originally planned number of FGDs in the different villages of the *woreda.* As a result, the study was forced to limit itself to four FGDs.

The FGDs were conducted per protocols directed by the Ministry of Health and after securing the consent of the relevant *kebele* administrators. Through the four FGDs, the study had strived to learn the socio-cultural characteristics and processes that are facets of positive resilience in the study area. Participants were made to express their opinion freely in a language they feel confident (Afan Oromo & Amharic, in particular, was the medium). In order to achieve that, the questions were designed with an open-ended nature (in a way to promote discussion). Five to seven participants from different walks of life (including local citizens, elders, selected groups representing the community, women, and youth) were how the compositions were made. Most of the FGDs were lasted for less than an hour. Efforts were made to avoid having the group composition dominated by certain groups interms of religion, ethnicity or other markers. The discussions were also facilitated in a way it avoided the domination of specific interests groups.

1.8.2. Secondary Data Collection Methods

In order to gain a fuller picture of the study concept, the study undertook a comprehensive analysis of secondary data that link ethno-religious violence, resilience, social cohesion, social capital, and sustainable peacebuilding. Secondary data were gathered principally from books, journals, newspapers, webs, and works on 'grey literature' in the form of non-published discussion papers. In doing so, the study tried to choose more objective sources and had a direct link with the case study.

1.9. Sampling Process

In order to unearth the questions that are asked in the research question, the study employed a non-probability sampling technique. The sample size was determined based on its manageability, accessibility, and data saturation. Among the different non-probability sampling techniques, the study, in particular, utilized a purposive sampling process whereby a careful selection of where information can be obtained is the utmost priority. Forty-one interviewees and four FGDs were selected purposively in a way that covers both urban and rural areas. In addition, in reaching key informants, the study had also employed the snowball sampling process. In particular, the sampling process included groups such as private individuals, religious leaders, local government officials, business persons, youths, women, teachers, and farmers.

1.10. Data Analysis

In this particular study of resilience response of the community to pressures of ethno-religious violence, the data analysis was concerned with the experience, story, tale, and all the meanings of the informants' response on the resilience responses to violence. In order to accomplish the same, the study conducted a content analysis among the different qualitative data analysis techniques. Therefore, the content analysis was made both descriptively and through interpretevisit analysis.

In the descriptive account of the data, the analysis was made what the informants had to say about their experience, story, and tale on resilience experiences were made with nothing assumed about it. During the interpretative analysis, the informants' responses were analyzed through the cross-reference of their sayings, inferences, thoughts, and experiences. To this end, the researcher had gone through a series of steps. First, the transcribed data were presented according to key themes, then identified bases for interpretation, and finally developed generalizations to that specific issue from the data. The transcription was made during the collecting of data and soon after the data collection was completed.

Once all the data had been previewed, the next step employed was analyzing the data. The researcher commenced the data analysis process by carefully re-reading all the data collected from different sources to fully understand the emergent ideas. As thematic elements of the research findings surfaced, the most significant themes were coded and categorized for the initial assessment of the data collected. After the initial re-reading, coding, and categorizations of the data collected, the researcher embarked on a thorough, detailed, extensive, and meticulous writing and deeper data analysis that captured the profile, context, dynamics, and nature of the study topic to further explain the findings of the research. The research , in particular, made sure that the analysis, interpretation and conclusions of the data were based on a sample withdrawn from diverse backgrounds (especially in terms of ethnicity, religion and other backgrounds).

Demography of participants

Male	47
Female	20
Age	19-88

Note: for more information about the demographics of the respondents, i.e., age, sex, education, occupation, and others, see attached **appendix I** (page 267)

1.11. Data Validation and Reliability

The study has applied appropriate processes and triangulation, proven among the major criteria for the credibility and validity of data. Accordingly, to cross-check the information in view of the production of accurate information and the production of discursive information of multiple realities, the study employed various data collection methods, including FGD, interviews, etc and reviews of pieces of literature.

1.12. Study Limitations and Delimitation/Scope of the Study/

The study shall adhere to the limitations that may appear in measuring the link between community resilience and that of sustainable peace. Putting it otherwise, the challenge with a concept like resilience to violence is, for analytical purposes, to identify a relationship that is concrete and measurable. Though that can be a challenge, the study strived to analyze the community's capacity and action to prevent violence and contribute to sustainable peace through professional data analysis techniques, controlled subjectivity, and triangulating the data obtained. Here, the dissertation acknowledges that a yes/no definition of resilience do not conform to its normal usage. As a result, it refers to the community being more or less resilient to the presented challenge. Factors would be presented through interpretation just as predictors of the likelihood of being a resilient community than as necessary constituents.

In addition, the study considers the limitation created due to the COVID19 pandemic and the subsequent declaration of a nationwide state of emergency. As a result, there were some difficulties in getting consent of some research informants, especially those from the government offices. The study, in particular, acknowledges the failure to conduct the originally planned number of FGDs due to the pandemic. However, to minimize the gap to be created as a result, utmost effort was

made, including increasing the number of interviews from the originally planned one as well as securing data from some other sources like web pages of the local administration.

The study is also delimited in area and population. In terms of the area, it shall only examine the resilient responses of a purposively selected *woreda, Lode Hetosa Woreda,* of the *Arsi* zone communities'. As such, the entire *Arsi* Zone communities were not covered under the study; rather, a selected *wored*a from the Zone was made to form the scope of the study. Apart from that, the study also emphasized post-violence scenarios in the area, mainly selected post-1991 violent scenarios; thereby, it may lack to adequately reflect on some of the experiences which were not included in the selected period. Population-wise, having the entire population of the study area was not practical, and hence, the study was delimited only to selected, to the extent of manageable size, population from the study area.

1.13. Ethical Consideration

The study took the utmost precautions to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of the participants in this study. The study, in particular, ensured that participants were not harmed by their participation or because of their views. To that end, some participants' names were made anonymous due to the sensitivity of the information they provided and/or because they declined to mention their names in the study. Whenever there appears a mention of research participants' names, it is because they gave their consent. Moreover, the researcher discussed with participants how information gathered will be used and/or protected and, whenever necessary, ensured the anonymity of informants by protecting and coding their names and identities in all notes and records. To protect informants participating in this study, permission was obtained from relevant government authorities whenever necessary (this was particularly necessary during the FGD discussion where, considering the need to ensure the COVID19 protocol, it was must to obtain permission from the relevant *kebele* authorities to conduct the FGDs as per the protocol). Furthermore, a letter of support was secured from the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS).

Finally, the study strived to articulate the findings so that the logical processes by which they were developed are accessible to a reader. The utmost effort was also exerted to ensure the relationship between the actual data and the conclusions about data is explicit, and the claims made concerning the data set are rendered credible.

1.14. The rationale for the Selection of the Study Area

Arsi zone is one of the zones of the National Regional State of the *Oromia* region, Ethiopia, and is bordered on the south by the *Bale* zone, on the southwest by the West *Arsi* Zone, on the northwest by East *Shewa*, on the north by the *Afar* Region and the east by West Hararghe (CSA, 2007). The area is chosen as the site of study for the following major reasons:

Firstly, *Arsi* Zone is one of the zones in the *Oromia* region that can be cited as a spot of violence at different times. When various forms of violence occurred in different parts of the country, *the Arsi* zone was no exception. Following the 2015/ 2016 unrest in the country, for instance, the area, which is one of the corridors for foreign investment, had witnessed the damage of flower farms and other agribusinesses mainly owned by foreigners (Washington Post, 2016, Daily Mail, 2016). Furthermore, following the 2018/ 2019 unrests (ethnic as well as religious), the Zone had experienced a loss of lives and destruction of properties (New York Times, 2019; AFP, 2019). On the other hand, unlike the experience of many other places, a group of locals from *the Arsi* zone, *Jeju woreda, Alage Dore kebele*, actually showed a resilient response to the would-be violent act and saved the destruction of the Maranque farm, a Dutch-run farm in the 2016 unrest (Washington Post, 2016, Daily Mail, 2016). This resilience response of the local people to would-be destructive effects served as a springboard and inspired the researcher to question what made this community exhibit such resilient behavior to the otherwise violent act of protestors. So, with that inspiration, the researcher further sought to dig deep into other experiences of resilient communities to pressures of violence in general and ethno-religious violence in particular in the attempt to build a durable peace. With that, based on the researcher's prior information on the relative stability of the area irrespective of violence in the surrounding *woredas, Lode Hetosa woreda*, from *the Arsi* zone, was identified as the study location.

The other reason is that the area had experienced a hardening of religious claims at different times, but the different localities in the area have shown different responses to the problem, meaning that some of the areas were more resistant to the problem than the others. As a result, the researcher aspired to explore and describe the factors behind such responses to pressures of ethno-religious violence in the area.

Chapter two: Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to conceptualize important terminologies employed in the dissertation; thereby, it lays the foundation for the discussion to be made in the later chapters of the study. The chapter presents key terms like resilience, peacebuilding, social cohesion, and social capital. It highlights the important distinctions and relations that need to be made between interpretations of these terms while explaining how they will be employed within the dissertation. Furthermore, the chapter also aims to lay a base for the rest of the work by presenting the theoretical assumptions where the study shall be founded.

2.2. Conceptualizing Resilience in Peacebuilding Context

2.2.1. An Overview of Peacebuilding

As the definition of resilience, which shall be a point of discussion in the sections to come, the definition of peacebuilding is context-dependent. For example, the United Nations (UN)) views peacebuilding as an activity that follows successful peacekeeping and aims to prevent a return of violence (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). The UN's Agenda for Peace defines peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:6). Peacebuilding extends the UN mandate after peacekeeping as "activities undertaken on the far side of the conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations" (United Nations, 2000, p. 3). As such, it appears as something more than just the absence of war. In other words, while violent conflict does not always necessitate peacekeeping, peacebuilding responds to the violent conflict to forestall further violence.

Schirch (2013: xiii), on his part, defines peacebuilding as "a wide range of efforts by diverse actors in government and civil society to address the root causes of violence before, during, and after conflict."Schirch (2013) adds that peacebuilding could refer to direct interventions efforts for peace or indirect coordination of multi-sectoral efforts that independently may not be conceived as peacebuilding. This includes sectors like development, security, and justice. An alternative approach to peacebuilding has also been advocated by John Paul Lederach (1997). Lederach (1997) presented peacebuilding as building 'a peace constituency' within areas affected by

conflict. He describes building peace as a 'long-term commitment' aimed at establishing an indigenous 'infrastructure,' which cuts across levels of a society and 'empowers the resources for reconciliation from within that society and maximizes the contribution from outside' (Ledrach, 1997: xvi). The 'peace constituency' described by Lederach comprises different actors and activities: from elite leaders and decision-makers at the top, through to leaders of social organizations, churches, and journalists in the midlevel, and grassroots community leaders at the base. Lederach emphasizes that building peace must occur at every phase of the conflict, not simply within a short period following the war. As such, he stresses the primary role of local actors in peacebuilding.

To explain the process of Peacebuilding, Lederach (2003) adopts the conflict transformation theory of change. In conflict transformation, conflict is a progression from latent to overt, and peace is built through multiple activities in the different phases of conflict that transform cycles of violent conflict into sustainable peace. This, according to Lederach, is a long-term process that involves many actors.

Despite a wide array of references supporting Lederach's conception of peacebuilding and conflict transformation, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall (2011), on the other hand, challenge Lederach's preference for the terms 'conflict transformation' over the widely used phrase 'conflict resolution. They argue that Lederach uses a distorted conception of conflict resolution as a conflict-centered and immediate term compared to conflict transformation as relationship-centeredcentered and long-term (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011). For them, the choice of term is not as important as the coherence of the substance implied by either resolution or transformation. Here, Lederach (2003:4) defines conflict transformation as "constructive change efforts that include, and go beyond, the resolution of specific problems."

Another worth note shall be peacebuilding is an ongoing activity that not only responds to immediate violence but seeks in the long term to transform underlying causes of violence (Schirch, 2013; Lederach, 1997). In the above comparison of conflict resolution and conflict transformation, Lederach observes that resolution may be perceived as not addressing the conflict needs of those

aggrieved. But, this conception is challenged by Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall (2011) as this choice of terms is not as important as the coherence of the things implied.

This study, considering the wide encompassing nature of the concept as employed in different pieces of literature and its fit to the content of the dissertation, has chosen to work with the definition rendered by the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture. The Group of Experts in their June 2015 report note Peacebuilding as follows:

> *Peacebuilding – the term that this report proposes is 'sustaining peace' – needs to be liberated from the strict limitation to post-conflict contexts. 'Sustaining peace' should be understood as encompassing not only efforts to prevent relapse into conflict but also to prevent a lapse into conflict in the first place. When considering the peace and security activities of the United Nations, therefore, a strong emphasis must be placed on conflict prevention.*

When peacebuilding is implied in this dissertation, it should be viewed with liberation from its strict sense. The stricter sense of the concept refers to peacebuilding as a coherence of activity to be carried out usually after conflict. In liberation from its stricter sense, peacebuilding in the dissertation is used to refer more of a back and forth activity to building lasting peace in an area. It could takes place either before violent conflict erupts or after violent conflict ends. With that, it may not limit itself with the coherence of activities in the process but at the synergy of actions to attain lasting peace. This goes in line with the note by Yonas (2019a:187) that Peacebuilding 'takes place either before violent conflict erupts, as a prevention mechanism, or after a violent conflict ends, as an endeavor to rebuild a more peaceful society.'

2.2.2. Local Capacity and Local Ownership as a Guideline for Building Sustainable Peace

These days' concepts such as local governance, local capacity, and local ownership have become central in the emerging sustainable peacebuilding discourse. By supporting local governance in peacebuilding, the international community, particularly the UN, seeks to improve service delivery, promote democratic representation and encourage conflict prevention through dialogue (UN, 2000). Although the notion that local governance and local governments are beneficial to peace is not new, these days have seen a rise in literature exploring the connection in depth. Several

studies claim that carefully designed and well-governed decentralization can help achieve stability and peace by increasing legitimacy, accountability, inclusion, and participation (Brinkerhoff, 2011; Chandler, 2010; Bland, 2010). In addition to good decentralization design, the relationship between local and central leaders and having leadership that permits and promotes peace initiatives is crucial (Donais and Knorr, 2013; de Coning, 2013).

Menkhaus (2006) argues that state-building in Somalia may only succeed by constructing a 'mediated state' that builds on partnerships with already existing local informal polities. In the same vein, Menkhaus (2006) addresses post-conflict state-building from a bottom-up perspective by assessing local non-state arrangements in Somalia that provide typical state functions such as governance, public security, and in some instances, even public services. Forrest (2003) also puts forth similar claims as he argues that already existing sub nationalist movements should be seen as building blocks to counteract state fragility in Africa rather than as movements to be outmaneuvered in a state-building process. Jarstad and Olsson (2012), on their part, argue along the same lines pointing to the importance of addressing the 'horizontal dilemma,' which concerns the balance between whom to include and whom to exclude in peace processes.

The UN emphasizes the vital link between local capacity and ownership in achieving the same. As such, it argues that ownership will remain theoretical if local actors cannot fully engage in the peacebuilding process (UN, 2010). Accordingly, the question of what actors and levels to include in peacebuilding processes is often framed within the terminology of local capacity and local ownership for sustained peace. Despite differing ideas on whose capacity to support, that is, local government, local communities, or civil society, critics of local capacity approaches argue that such approaches often assume a non-state and traditional local that is inherently authentic and legitimate (Donais and Knorr, 2013). Accordingly, there need to critically assess whom this local represents. In addition, Chandler (2010) suggests that, in the discourse of effective peacebuilding, supporting local capacity may be seen as a way for Western advocates of liberal peace to circumvent accountability for unwanted outcomes in policy interventions. Thus, by promoting local capacity, question of responsibility for the outcome of the peace process is effectively transferred to those intervened upon.

Apart from the issue of responsibility, the contestation sometimes also goes against the success story of decentralization itself. In some research, the conflict-mitigating potential of decentralization is said to fail due to elite capture, low levels of administrative capacity, and inability to raise sufficient resources (Bland, 2010). Such deficiencies may lead to widened economic and social gaps or perceived resource allocation as unfair. In addition, in some instances, decentralization is said to increase corruption and nepotism as well as competition between national and sub-national decision-makers (Brancati, 2006).

As seen above, although the concept of local ownership is commonly used in building sustainable peace, it remains contested. The question of whom to support and how to support it is challenging for peacebuilding practitioners. And while there are typically no arguments between policymakers and practitioners on the need for broad-based inclusive local ownership, the time horizon allowed to identify, engage and support strategies that lead to impact are too often impossibly limited. In practice, the UN often discusses local ownership in relation to national ownership, in which civil society is seen as the local that legitimizes elite-level national ownership (Machold and Donais, 2011). The focus on local actors sustaining and rooting processes of peace, as argued by Lederach (1997), has thus influenced international peacebuilding. However, the question remains as to how it incorporates the holistic and bottom-up approach initially advocated. The need to leave space for local peace initiatives is an essential component of the emancipatory approach to building sustainable peace. That is said because, as Barnett and Zurcher (2009) argue, including them might be the only option to achieve some peace instead of no peace at all.

2.2.3. Applying Resilience to Peacebuilding

These days', scholarly works reveal a significant change in the way that conflicts and conflictive situations are perceived. The change ranges from focusing on those factors that generate conflict to seeking out social groups' capacities that allow them to cope. That is, seeking out capacities that allow societies, communities, and institutions to anticipate risks resolve problems in such a manner that it transforms the structural bases of conflicts for the benefit of peace and development (Menkhaus, 2013).

One could note here that conflict is not an external event but part of the social fabric. For this reason, resilience for peacebuilding requires the strengthening of capacities and actions aimed at

overcoming unfavorable conditions for peace. This requires identifying the factors that produce conflicts and the capacities of social groups and institutions to confront them. That is to say, to be resilient in the face of conflict via non-violent resources is the necessary condition of resilience for peacebuilding. Resilience in a peacebuilding context is, therefore, about the ability of communities to withstand various forms of pressure on their integrity and functioning and still survive or thrive (Menkhaus, 2013; Milliken, 2013).

2.2.4 The Evolution of the Concept of Resilience

When concepts that originate in a specific discipline are transferred and adapted and finally applied to another of a different nature, complexity is probable. The concept of resilience is an example of such complexity. Since its emergence in several fields, resilience as a concept has gained increasingly broad use; some of these diverse fields include Engineering and Material Science, Psychology, Ecology, Disaster Management, Humanitarian, and Peacebuilding. The concept was initially developed in engineering and physics to study materials' specific qualities, more specifically referring to a property of materials to resume their original size and shape after experiencing stress (Hollnagel, Nemeth and Dekker, 2008). Something related to that definition, for mechanical engineers, resilience is the maximum energy per volume that can be elastically stored (Milliken, 2013). As such, initially, flexibility is often a key attribute quality of resilience (Milliken, 2013).

The concept was later applied to psychology to study the capacity of individuals to recover in the wake of traumatic situations (Kaplan, 1999; Dyer & McGuinness, 1996). Subsequently, the social sciences such as sociology and anthropology explored the concept to understand the capacity of social groups to overcome devastating situations such as natural disasters and wars (McAslan, 2010). These days the concept is gaining sway in the peacebuilding spectrum. As a discipline, peacebuilding incorporates a wide variety of strategies aimed at reducing the risk of the outbreak or perpetuation of violent conflict by addressing both its causes and consequences. These strategies can include provisions of emergency economic aid (emergency humanitarian assistance) and peacekeeping interventions involving military and non-military personnel before, during, and after the conflict itself. In this context, resilience is defined as the ability of individuals and communities to anticipate, prevent, withstand, adapt to and recover from the stresses and shocks caused by violent conflict (Menkhaus, 2012). With its emphasis on enhancing the capabilities of local

communities, resilience thinking emphasizes the provision of support to the systematic self-help mechanisms which already exist within local communities and institutions (Menkahus, 2012). As such, it aims to aid individuals and communities in becoming more resilient to violence and, over the long term, strengthen local capacities for managing conflict, building peace, and promoting overall social cohesion. The following sections are designed to discuss the journey the concept of resilience has gone through.

2.2.5. Resilience: From an Applied Concept to a Social System Expression and Resilience to Violence

As briefly implied in the preceding section, resilience has been an applied concept from its beginnings. Instead of seeking to abstract a phenomenon, the concept attempts to give form to a series of specific qualities to make them available for practical use. As a result, it seeks to describe the specific and concrete characteristics of something, a reaction, a quality, a state, etc. (Mankhaus, 2013; Milliken, 2013). The various disciplines that have adopted the use of the concept of resilience have assigned it elements of their own fields of endeavor, thereby converting it into a concept that is adaptable to different circumstances (Milliken, 2013).

As such, hard sciences like engineering and physical and materials sciences used resilience as a concept to define the qualities of an object to recover its original form after being subject to an event from an outside source. In this respect, resilience was understood as an attribute both specific and inherent to the object that allowed it to absorb that tension and return to its original condition (Nemeth, 2008). From this initial interpretation, two elementary characteristics of the definition of the concept can be derived: absorption and adaptation, that is, the quality of an object to absorb the tension produced by an external event and the capacity to adapt to it. The other element derived from this interpretation is the existence of an external event that exerts the tension (the shock), which, in turn, activates the qualities mentioned earlier (Nemeth, 2008). During the last three or four decades, resilience has been introduced, for example, into the study of ecological systems in support of scientists who seek to understand and respond to natural disasters from a perspective of the world as something complex and uncertain instead of ordered and predictable (Odum & Barrett, 2005; Holling, 2001).

As the study of resilience developed in socio-environmental systems, it evolved to address an understanding of the impact of shocks or forces by recognizing the complex interactions of the

response mechanisms in the social and environmental systems systemically. In this field, it was no longer possible to expect that events or disturbances would generate a response anticipated and conditioned by the nature of the object's qualities. Instead, it became necessary to anticipate both the direct and indirect effects within a wider system and its more complex and interrelated capacities to absorb shocks or disturbances (Folke, Colding, and Berkes, 2003). Therefore, resilience in this context was conceived as the capacity of a system to be hit by a shock while maintaining essentially the same function, structure, and identity ((Folke, Colding, and Berkes, 2003). These new uses of the concept determined that resilience is a relational phenomenon when observed in ecological and social systems instead of being only a specific attribute or quality that can be isolated from the multiple subcomponents of a system. It follows that resilience depends on the event and the tension it responds to. That is the question of resilience “to what or in the face of what” is key to observing how the relationships among the different components of the system create a series of complexities related to risk and protection factors that can occur at different levels (individual, familial, communal, environmental, Etc.) (Odum & Barrett, 2005).

The use of the concept in psychology resulted from diverse disciplinary interests. One of them was using the term to describe those groups or individuals who did not change their behaviors regardless of the adversities they faced. Diverse studies centered on how individuals and families responded to adversities and vulnerabilities such as poverty, concentration camps, natural disasters, etc. (Luthar, 2006; Werner, 1995). These studies frequently reflected the resilience paradigm as used in engineering by focusing on resilience as a set of psychological attributes rooted in individuals or families, which were understood, in turn, as the fundamental units of any society. This perspective underscored that resilience is an inherent attribute of people independently of the contextual factors from which events and tension originate. However, psychology is still debating whether attributes and qualities of resilience are inherent or, instead, develop in individuals (Steven et al., 2014).

Despite multiple contributions by psychology, the criticism centers on its excessive “western” outlook and the emphasis it places at individual level and not so much on communities or collective experiences. In order to fill these gaps, social psychology has explored resilience among groups and communities that face events related to conflicts, violence, and traumas (Chandra, 2011). The collective perspective emerged from the analysis of groups' reactions in the face of traumas and

effects of violence either at a community level, in victim support groups, acceptance and compensation within society, or reinsertion in communities of former combatants or underage soldiers. Psychosocial research of violence and conflicts goes beyond the condition of the victim and addresses aspects related to the state's role in recovering interpersonal trust after violent events in the past. At the same time, the potential of expressions of resilience – both positive and negative – has been recognized in response to shocks, marginalization, and exclusion of social groups with shared identities (Eggerman & Panter-Brick, 2010; Farwell and Cole, 2001).

The concept of resilience also made an important contribution in preparedness against natural disasters by identifying long-term actions instead of only focusing on immediate reactions in the wake of disasters. This has resulted in the development of specific definitions of "the resilience of disasters" as, for example, "the ability of individuals, communities, organizations, and states to adapt to and recover from hazards, shocks or stresses without compromising long-term prospects for development" (Combaz, 2014:2). As expressed by Twigg (2009: 8), "A focus on resilience means putting greater emphasis on what communities can do for themselves and how to strengthen their capacities, rather than concentrating on their vulnerability to disaster or environmental shocks and stresses, or their needs in an emergency." Therefore, to think of resilience as a concept that incorporates preventive elements was one of the contributions from the field of disaster assistance that helps to overcome a focus that is designed for relief efforts.

In general, the discussions and contributions derived from different applications of the concept refer to events or shocks in which resilience is expressed or required that are external to individuals and their qualities. Building on these existing conceptual foundations, resilience to war and violence has increasingly referred to those mechanisms and capacities necessary to prevent conflict and promote peace (Ryan, 2012). According to Ryan (2012:21), "a resilience-based approach … provides a comprehensive and powerful approach to overcoming fragility and promoting sustainable development by supporting and building the capacities of societies to prevent and resolve conflicts and learn from the experience." While detailed discussion about the employment of the concept in this study will be made in sections to come (section 2.2.9), the employment of the phrase 'resilience to violence' in this dissertation generally resembles its connotation by Ryan above. As such, it shall mean investigating those mechanisms and capacities that helped the study community (the *Lode Hetosa woreda* community) prevent ethno-religious violence in their

locality as different from their surroundings. With that, it shall attempt to provide a comprehensive and powerful approach/explanation/ to the community's resiliency to pressures of violence and draw a lesson from their experience.

2.2.6. From Liberal Peace to Resilience

International interventions throughout the 1990s and 2000s attempted to address conflicts in the Global South by focusing on state-building, strengthening state institutions, and creating the conditions for free elections and free markets, as a way to promote sustainable peace (Chandler 2016, Paris, 2010). In the meantime, international institutions were thought to have acquired the scientific knowledge and practical expertise necessary to 'build' peace (Chandler, 2016). Furthermore, the process was understood as a linear cause-effect problem-solving model. Through this model objective experts analyzed a conflict to diagnose the problem by identifying the root causes, which were then addressed through programmatic interventions undertaken by international actors such as the United Nations and international NGOs (Ramalingam, 2013).

As such, the problem of recurring violent conflict was usually attached to illiberal weak and failing states in the Global South. The solutions then required these states to adopt liberal and neoliberal state practices that have proven successful in the Western state formation experience). However, as Chandler (2016) notes, the failure of Universalist and externally imposed liberal peace strategies led to a rethink of international intervention. The belief in the transformative power of international peacebuilding has gradually diminished because many of the interventions undertaken over this period are widely understood to have been ineffective (de Coning, Karlsrud, 2015; de Coning, 2013). This shift in contemporary intervention strategies was linked to the new concept known as 'resilience.' In line with that, if a society is fragile, the social institutions that govern its politics, security, justice, and economy lack resilience. Thus, while liberal peace approaches assume a Universalist subject position, resilience approaches remove the external subject position entirely (de Coning, 2016).

Generally, resilience discourses emphasize internal capabilities as the best way to deal with societal problems. Thus, it can be referred to that resilience fits with people-centered approaches and the "local turn" in building sustainable peace (Ejdus & Juncos, 2018). It is also in line with new approaches to peacebuilding as "sustaining peace" (de Coning, 2018; 2016). Resilience thus

operates a turn from the international to the local. In other words, as an approach, it seeks to target communities to enhance their existing local capacities.

2.2.7. Resilience Variants

While an exhaustive discussion on resilience forms is not possible considering the fluid nature of the concept, this section aims to deal with some variants that would serve as a frame of understanding in dealing with the concepts in the later stages of the work. Before getting into the details of its variants, it is important to recite the work of Luthar and Zigler (1991) as a foundation where they implied that resilience is neither entirely individual nor entirely social but an interactive combination. Thus, according to this understanding, it is necessary to look beyond individual characteristics and examine family, community, societal, state, and global characteristics to understand resilience. One can be resilient to some risks but not others (Luthar and Zigler, 1991). Though it is not the intention of this paper to examine resilience characteristics exhaustively, as just mentioned, it shall, however, attempt to lay down a foundation as to what the understanding of resilience should look like when it is implied either at individual, community, or national level in the study. In doing so, the definition of the term 'resilient' with violence as contextualized in the preceding sections shall appear likewise for all variants of resilience.

2.2.7.1. Individual resilience

As implied in the above section, resilience to violence assumes the working definition in previous discussions. Accordingly, individual resilience is demonstrated by "individuals who adapt to extraordinary circumstances achieving positive and unexpected outcomes in the face of adversity" (Fraser, Richman, and Galinsky 1999: 136). The study of individual resilience has been explored with an emphasis on different factors. For example, some researchers have emphasized the risk and protective factors that may lead to or interrupt resilience in the individual (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Rutter, 1993). Others have focused on the internal or biological factors and/or external or environmental factors related to resilience (Luthar & Zigler, 1991). Still, others have used the integration of a damage and challenge model to clarify how resilience is realized by some but not by others (Wolin & Wolin, 1993).

2.2.7.2. Community resilience

As implied in the preceding discussions, resilience may render different meanings depending on the context it may be used. In other words, the meaning it embraces in disaster risk may not

necessarily be similar to the meaning it embraced when is used as communities' resilience to violence. While the focus of this dissertation would be on community resilience as a means of preventing violence rather than responding to violence/disaster, some definitions include the notion that a resilient community can prevent events that seriously disrupt communities, such as violence (Ahmed et al. 2004; Coles and Buckle, 2004). With that understanding, community resilience refers to including those features of a community that in general promote the safety of its residents and serve as a specific buffer against injury and violence risks, and more generally, adversity (Ahmed et al., 2004; Coles and Buckle, 2004). For that matter, concerning violent extremism, for instance, the challenge or threat can be understood as the potential for violent extremists to recruit individuals to their cause and potentially even engage in violence.

Accordingly, a successful adaptation to this threat would be a community that comes together in such a way that its members are no longer vulnerable to the threat (Stephens, Sieckelinck & Boutellier, 2019). The process of becoming a resilient community, in short, would need to inherently promote protective experiences or conditions and reduce potential vulnerabilities or risk factors. It is important to note there is a lively and ongoing debate over the meaning of community resilience. This contribution does not attempt to settle this debate. Rather, it builds on existing notions of community resilience, collective efficacy, and social capital to offer a conceptual model of community resilience.

2.2.7.3. National resilience

National resilience as a concept has emerged in the literature upon acknowledgment that a nation's power cannot be evaluated solely by military capacity but also by political–psychological aspects (Kimhi and Eshel, 2009). Likewise to the individual level and community level resilience as described above, resilience at the national level also deals with the process of adjusting to and absorbing the adversity or change dictated by an external threat. In the same vein, Friedland (2006:8) suggests that resilience at the national level is "the ability of a society to withstand adversities and crises in diverse realms by implementing changes and adaptations without harming the society's core values and institutions."

While the above conception to national level resilience made their focus on the new behavioral patterns emerging as a reaction to a threat, political and social attitudes and perceptions have also been found to determine a nation's ability to withstand situations of crisis and ongoing conflicts

(Ben-Dor et al., 2007). Accordingly, patriotism, optimism, social integration, and political trust are identified as measurable dimensions (Ben-Dor et al., 2007). National level resilience in peacebuilding, therefore, aligns more with the latter understanding of the concept than on the new behavioral patterns emerging as a reaction to an external threat. In other words, this means that national resilience should be measured according to political–psychological attitudes such as the strength of democracy and trust in leadership, rather than rely solely on behavioral and mental dimensions of individuals in society (Adger, 2003).

That said, it is important to take in to cognizance that no one of these three layers of resilience can alone ensure the sustainability of peace. All the three layers of resilience need to operate synergically together so as to build durable peace overall. Hence, the focus of the study on community resilience is not in disregard of this assumption but due to methodological choice for practical considerations.

2.2.8. "Positive" and "Negative" Resilience

Resilience can also be viewed in "positive" and "negative" forms. The former is associated with 'success in resisting or mitigating violence, managing shocks, and the capacity to transform conflict through trust and confidence-building (Menkhaus, 2013: 4–5). The latter or "negative" form of resilience blocks absorption, adaptation, and transformation and is often associated with corruption, crime, and extremism (McCandless and Simpson, 2015). Peacebuilding in this context involves promoting "positive" resilience and mitigating or eliminating the effects of "negative" resilience within a given space, often focused on the local, collective, institutional, or community level.

Making a distinction between "positive" and "negative" resilience is important because resilience may manifest in both positive and negative forms. That means that it may manifest in either virtuous or vicious cycles depending on the specific conditions under which peace and conflict factors contribute to positive/negative resilience, respectively. On the one hand, resilience capacities may help peaceful processes which mitigate or prevent violence and boost the capacity of societies and communities to resist the resort to violence; on the other hand, resilience may enable to create of forms of organization that promote, exacerbate and may even rely on violence or undermines peace.

Though positive and negative resilience forms are the principal discussions in many pieces of literature, in work entitled "Urban Resilience in the face of Chronic Violence," Davis (2012) captioned how their team used the three forms of resilience; Positive Resilience, Negative Resilience, and Equilibrium Resilience. In defining the three phrases, Davis and co based their reference on whether community adaptations strengthened, weakened, or stabilized violence's existent forces and conditions. Accordingly, they implied that when the collective capacities of urban institutions are invigorated, when urban violence is tangibly reduced, or when citizens push back against the actors and institutions of violence, then resilience is termed positive. On the opposite extreme, when state institutions fail to thwart the perpetrators of violence despite aggressively attempting to, or when community adaptations create an environment in which violent actors, regardless, dominate citizens and the state through coercion, then resilience is considered as negative. Equilibrium resilience is more managed and in between, where the capacities of only certain institutions are strengthened, or the key institutions merely cope with ongoing violence, but the situation is relatively stable, and violence is less chronic (Davis, 2012).

That said, it is important to take note of the complex and sometimes porous boundaries between these different manifestations of resilience and the implicit dangers of a possible slide from one form of resilience to the other. This calls the similar difficulty one observes while referring "positive" peace and "negative" peace as conceptualized by Johan Galtung. Given the fluid nature of the concept peace itself, setting a clear framework for describing and exploring varities of peace appears problematic. Similarly, as studies conducted by CEPAD and Interpeace (2016) in different communities suggest, it is not automatic that peace factors necessarily lead to positive resilience or that conflict factors inherently produce negative manifestations of resilience. Rather, it is important to note that the concepts require a more fluid process in their proper understanding.

2.2.9. Resilience in this study

As implied in the above discussions, the concept of resilience can be referred to among those concepts whereby complexity is most probable because the concept originates in a specific discipline and is then transferred and adapted and finally applied to another discipline of a different nature. That said, McAslan (2010), on the other hand, suggests that, although the details varied, the differences in its definition are not as wide as some literature may suggest. McAslan (2010:7)

in particular points out that, regardless of its application, the term resilience has many common characteristics like:

> *the ability to absorb and then recover from an abnormal event; being ready and prepared to face threats and events which are abnormal in terms of their scale, form, or timing; an ability and willingness to adapt to a changing and sometimes threatening environment; a tenacity and commitment to survive; and a willingness of communities and organizations to rally round a common cause and a shared set of values.*

Having noted that, these days, resilience has gained considerable traction in studies about how communities cope with pressures of violence and war. Probably the most dramatic form of resilience is evidenced by concerted or proactive efforts of communities to actively wrest control of their daily situation. It is also expressed as: "the condition of relative stability and even tranquility in areas recently or intermittently beset by violence" (Davis, 2012:9). Building on these existing conceptual foundations, resilience to violence and war has increasingly referred to those mechanisms and capacities necessary to prevent violent conflict and promote peace (Mankhaus, 2013).

Thus, it can be said that a core value of assessing resilience to violence (in this dissertation, resilience to pressures of ethno-religious violence) lies in uncovering the endogenous assets, attributes, qualities, resources, and actions embedded within communities and societies which can potentially serve to protect them from violence. Assessing and understanding resilience to conflict is, therefore, important to how communities and societies deal with the past as well as potentially vital to the agenda of preventing violent conflict in the future.

In this study, community resilience is employed to examine the ability of communities to anticipate potential violence/violent situations/ and prevent them. In other words, the focus of this paper would be on community resilience as a means of preventing violence rather than responding after violence. With that note, it, in particular, aims to explore how communities (in this case, the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* community) anticipate the risk of emerging patterns of conflict or potential conflicting situations and respond to it accordingly. It also intends to examine the ability of a community to prevent pressures of violence (ethno-religious violence) while retaining its ethnic composition, preexisting relations, and basic functions. In short, resilience responses of the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* community to violence as opposed/compared to communities that may be easily

swayed to pressures of violence and the factors contributing to the resilience response of the communities shall be the focus of this study.

This understanding somehow aligns with those definitions/dimensions/ of resilience as provided in the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (Menkhaus, 2013) and Ryan's (2012) definition. More specifically, it aligns with the dimension of a community's ability to maintain a positive peace and the capacity of a community to transform negative peace (potential violent situations) into positive peace (non-violent situations). The Geneva peacebuilding platform has rendered the different dimensions of communities' resilience in its series (Menkhaus, 2013). Among that included the ability to maintain a positive peace and manage the process of transforming a negative peace into a positive peace.

As such, in its first implication of the ability to maintain a positive peace, a *resilient community* is defined as a community which able to successfully resist pressure to resort to violence as it resolves or manages the tension (so, it is of local conflict prevention) (Menkhaus, 2013). Thus, it refers to the endogenous attributes, capacities, resources, and responses that potentially enable, in this research context, communities' to deal peacefully with the impact of past conflict and violence and prevent new and emerging patterns of conflict and violence. In its usage of the ability to manage the process of transforming negative peace into positive peace, resilience is understood, among others, as the ability of communities to maintain peace and order in their towns and neighborhoods even in the absence of police and government security sector (Menkhaus, 2013). As employed in this dissertation, however, the latter dimension may somehow fall short of exactly explaining the transformation essence as detailed in pieces of literature on conflict transformation.

As a result, it concerns itself with the study community's resilience stories and actions in preventing possible violent situations had it not been for the preventive measures of the community. In addition, while resilience at the community level also focuses on conflict prevention, this study specifically focuses on the first phase of preventive action: conflict prevention. The other phases of preventive action, escalation prevention, and post-conflict prevention, as identified by Raimo (1996), shall lie outside the scope of this study. Furthermore, as different from the dominant literature where community resilience has often been built from socio-ecological, disaster studies, and psychological /mental health/, this study builds community

resilience from conflict prevention approach. As such, the paper departs from dominant conflict literature that focuses on the causes and consequences of conflict.

Moreover, as noted by Frankenberger et al. (2013:10), resilience to one type of adverse event may not translate into resilience to a different type of adversity (see also Sampson et al. 1997, noting that efficacy is task-specific). Thus, this study shall dwell on conceptualizing community resilience in the specific context of examining the underpinning factors behind that resilience to violence instead of the neighboring communities. Further, widespread recognition is that community resilience is difficult to measure (Frankenberger et al., 2013). Indeed, even some internal components like social networks or connectedness resist measurement (Chandra et al., 2010). Therefore, the research shall take into account these notes.

In general, the ontological and epistemological complexity and uncertainty attached to the concept are in alignment with the research paradigm as envisaged in the methodological section of the study. Furthermore, this paper does not circumscribe resilience as used in natural science to refer to the ability of a physical object to regain its original shape after being subjected to stress, or the ecological definition, which looks at resilience as the ability of the ecological systems to adapt to environmental stresses (Menkhaus, 2013). Instead, operationally conceives resilience to mean communities' capacity and/or functional strengths to prevent and counter violent conflicts. This capacity of communities to respond to violence is dependent on the historical, political, local actors and events in which the community is shaped. In line with that, de Coning (2016) notes, complexity appears at the heart of the resilience approach, partly explaining why resilience should be adopted as the primary approach in peacebuilding discourse.

2.3. Conceptualizing Social Cohesion, Social Capital, and the Relation with Resilience

Social cohesion and social capital, together with social networks, appear the key theme of this study. Before examining the relationship between resilience, social cohesion, and social capital, it is central to have a clear understanding of the conceptual underpinnings thereunder. This does not mean the section would seek to provide a comprehensive review of the existing definitions; instead, an attempt will be made to render an operational definition for the concepts to their employment in this dissertation.

2.3.1. Social Cohesion

Social cohesion as an essential tool of building a resilient community has been communicated in abundant literature (Carpenter, 2014, Varshney, 2002). But what is a socially cohesive society? How is that possible to build a socially cohesive society? What is its relation with resilience and social capital? Social cohesion as a notion has been subject to several interpretations. Friedkin (2004) used social cohesion to refer to the social forces that bring people together. He, in particular, puts it as describing community capacity to form groups that can realize collective action, including maintaining public order (Friedkin, 2004). Stanley (2003:8), on the other hand, noted the key components underlying any valuable concept of social cohesion, saying:

> *...Social cohesion appears to be based on the willingness of people in a society to co-operate with each other in the diversity of collective enterprises that members of a society must do in order to survive and prosper. Willingness to co-operate means they can and do freely choose to form partnerships and have a reasonable chance of realizing them because others are willing to co-operate as well. This, of course, implies a capacity to co-operate.*

While willingness to co-operate appears to be the central defining feature in the definition rendered by Stanley, this resonates with the note by Varshney (2002), where he characterizes social cohesion as it reflects willing co-operation across many types of social interactions. For Varshney (2002), this circumstance correlates with an absence of inter-communal violence even in ethnically diverse societies. In line with that, Easterly, Ritzen, and Woolcock (2011) also wrote that, though such societies are not necessarily demographically homogeneous, by respecting diversity, however, they harness the potential residing in their societal diversity and, by doing that reinforce cohesion. Thus, they are less prone to slip into destructive patterns of tension and conflict when different interests collide.

On the other hand, Jensen (1998) wrote about a socially cohesive society where all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition, and legitimacy. In an extension to the above, Browne (2014) notes that building social cohesion primarily relies on endogenous processes of building trust and inter-group relations. According to Jensen (1998), the above-mentioned positive attributes of cohesion are often complemented by references to negative variables such as isolation, exclusion, non-involvement, rejection, and illegitimacy. These attributes, he said, exemplify the absence of the perceived absence of cohesion in a society. In other words, while the negative variables could determine cohesiveness in the negative, common

values, a civic culture, social order, and social control, solidarity as well as extensive social networks, on the other hand, characterize a socially cohesive society (Beauvals and Jensen, 2002). Forrest and Kearns (2001), on their part, attempted to give a clear overview of social cohesion by identifying the following five dimensions: a. Common values and civic culture (having common aims, moral principles, and codes of behavior) b. Social order and social control (absence of conflict and threats; informal social control) c. Social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities (equal access to wealth benefits; harmonious economic and social development) d. Social networks and social capital (social interaction, civic engagement, associations) and e. Place attachment and identity (connection of personal and place identity).

In general, though coming up with a single definition for the concept could appear problematic, however, be said that cohesiveness, as demonstrated in the different works, affects group behavior by encouraging particularly vigorous conformity to group norms. Given the all-rounded framework that would allow the dissertation to have an in-depth analysis of social cohesion and an insightful overview of its dimensions, especially concerning the neighborhood, its connotation in this work shall ascribe to the dimensions offered by Forrest and Kearns (2001) as it deems appropriate. With that, it bases itself on the assumption that stable networks of mutual acknowledgment and recognition allow individuals and groups to secure access to other forms of capital and resources, which are essential for collective action. In other words, the socially marginalized lack this kind of capital and, therefore, would find it problematic to secure access to other forms of capital. In line with that, Pruitt and Kim (2004:117) note, "members of cohesive groups are particularly convinced of the rightness of their cause and the effectiveness of their intended actions."

2.3.2. Social Capital

Likewise to the definition of social cohesion and resilience, different researchers have employed different definitions for the concept of social capital. While it could be possible to draw some common elements from the different definitions, it is imperative that its exact meaning is imprecise and thus, obtaining a single accurate measure of social capital is problematic. Moreover, the difficulty, among other things, lies in the fact that social capital comprises various social elements that promote individual and collective action. The other reason is that, like resilience, social capital

is a concept transferred from one discipline (in this case, from economics) to another, thereby resulting in different definitions for the term and what it encompasses (Bourdieu, 1986).

That said, Coleman (1988) conceptualizes social capital as the relations among persons that enable them to co-operate to pursue mutual objectives. Drawing the concept from Coleman, Putnam (1993: 167), on his part, defined social capital as "those features of social organizations, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions." Thus, for Putnam, "co-operation, trust, reciprocity, civic engagement, and collective well-being" are required to bring about collective action among people (Putnam, 1995). Therefore, the general quantity and quality of social relations are indicators of social capital. This takes us to the note by Lin (2001), where he identified that the basic idea of social capital is that individuals invest, access, and use resources embedded in social networks to gain returns. In line with that, Emmett (2000) proposed social capital as those features of social life that facilitate or ease social interactions, encouraging people to work together towards shared goals. Huysman and Wulf (2004:1), on their part, connote social capital as referring to:

> *...network ties of goodwill, mutual support, shared language, shared norms, social trust, and a sense of mutual obligation that people can derive value from. It is understood as the glue that holds together social aggregates such as networks of personal relationships, communities, regions, or even whole nations.*

As it appears from the definition, social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable collective action. This resonates with the "civil social capital" note as coined by Collier (1998) while disaggregating social capital as "civil" and "government." Collier used civil social capital as those forms of social interactions that are not directly dependent on the government rule system. According to him, it encompasses common values, norms, informal networks, and associational memberships that affect the ability of individuals to work together to achieve some common goals. Collier employed "government social capital" refers to those government institutions that influence people's ability to co-operate for mutual benefit. The enforceability of contracts, the rule of law, and the extent of civil liberties permitted by the state are the most commonly analyzed of these institutions (Collier, 1998). For writers like Fukuyama (1995), on the other hand, social capital appears synonyms to collective action and co-operation. He defined it as "the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups" (Fukuyama, 1995:10).

In general, while acknowledging the different understandings of the concept, this paper ascribes itself to some of the common elements that we could draw from the various definitions of social capital. It shall be employed to refer to the networks, shared norms, and trust that shape social interaction and allow co-operation between groups. It can be referred to as the fabric of social relations that holds a society together or the glue that maintains societies united. Furthermore, it will be used to refer to the internal social coherence of a society, the norms, and values that determine the interactions between individuals and the institutions in which they are embedded. With that, it aligns itself to the conceptualization made by McCandless, Erin, and Graeme (2014), where they refer to social capital consisting of personal connections and interpersonal interaction, together with a shared set of associated values with these contacts.

On another note, the so-called "government social capital," as precisely coined by Collier, shall not form part of the dissertation as it lies beyond the scope of the study. However, that might not mean examining a specific aspect of "government social capital" like, for instance, the community's relation with governmental authorities shall not form part of the study. On the contrary, the dissertation shall examine the relationship between the study community and government authorities in underscoring factors that contributed to the community's resilience.

Another worth mentioning point shall be how social capital can be assessed in a community. Though a detailed discussion will be made in the section to follow, the social capital of a community is assessed through a combination of its bonding, bridging, and linkage dimensions. Gittell and Vidal (1998:15) have coined the terms' bonding' and 'bridging' to describe the different levels of social capital in communities. According to them, bonding social capital is "the type that brings closer together people who already know each other well." Thus, it refers to within-group relations. Whereas bridging social capital is "the type that brings together people or groups who previously did not know each other well." Thus, it refers to inter-communities ties.

For that matter, in his later work, Putnam (2000:16) has also made the same distinction between "bonding social capital" and "bridging social capital." He defined 'bridging social capital' as bonds of connectedness formed across diverse social groups, whereas 'bonding social capital' cements only homogenous groups such as family members and close friends (Putnam, 2000:16). Generally, "bonding" is expressed as a network among people with homogeneous social backgrounds, socio-

demographic characteristics, Etc. Whereas "bridging" is a network among people with heterogeneous social backgrounds, socio-demographic characteristics, Etc. In this sense, bridging social capital refers to resources that people can gain from ties with people from the outside, while bonding social capital includes all resources that people can obtain from within-group ties (Adler and Kwon 2002). Finally, "linkage" refers to the society's relations with formal institutions, and with that note, it connects those with different levels of power or social status (Woolcock, 1998). It, for instance, connects individuals or civil society organizations with state agencies. That is also why "linkage" capital referred to involving social relations with those in authority that can be used to access resources or power (Stone and Jody, 2002).

In general, social capital can be taken as one of the social resources relevant to understanding society cohesiveness. Thus, to differentiate each effect of social capital in the resiliency of the study community, the study will follow the three classifications of social capital (a combination of its bonding, bridging, and linkage dimensions) as advocated in the social network theory approach.

2.3.3. Relating/linking/ Social Cohesion, Resilience and Social Capital

Social capital and social cohesion are closely related, creating confusion about the concepts. For that matter, this overlap of social cohesion and social capital can be said to be a frequently occurring phenomenon within social science research. Despite such overlap of the concepts, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, however, warns against the narrow understanding of social cohesion as social capital and emphasizes that "it is a broad concept that covers several dimensions at once, like a sense of belonging, active participation, trust, exclusion and mobility" (OECD, 2011:53).

Socially cohesive societies have significant social capital and are continuously building it. On the other hand, what can be referred to as a possible difference and link between social cohesion and social capital was forwarded by Oxoby (2009:1136) as follows: "Social capital is an individual's sacrifices (time, effort, and consumption) made in an effort to co-operate with others," while social cohesion refers to "a characteristic of society which depends on the accumulated social capital." In line with that, Van Beuningen and Schmeets (2013) also noted that the link of these concepts is defined in various ways, for instance, social capital as a building block of social cohesion, an

element or indicator of it. Social capital can be considered a prerequisite for social cohesion based on this understanding. In other words, social cohesion is only possible where there is social capital present or available. Therefore, social capital is one of the key elements of social cohesion.

As there appears an overlap between social cohesion and social capital, there also appears to be some overlap in the understanding of social capital and community resilience. Both refer to community-level organizations as key contributors to positive outcomes. That said, John Paul Lederach (2005:14), for instance, described resilience as "the capacity to forge solidarity, to sustain hope and purpose, and to adapt and negotiate creatively with the challenges presented." On the other hand, as implied in the preceding section, social capital appears necessary to explain society's response to adversities because the actions of individuals and groups can be significantly facilitated both by their direct and indirect links to other actors in social networks. It is characterized by attributes such as trust, reciprocity, collective action, and participation (Putnam, 2000). Thus, it can be said that social capital is key to resilience. In addition, noting the discussion of social capital as a building block of social cohesion, social cohesion similarly appears an essential dimension while speaking about a community's resilience (in this dissertation, resilience of the community to pressures of ethno-religious violence). This dissertation will refer to social capital and social cohesion interchangeably/a non-strict sense of the terms/, but with the understanding that social capital and social cohesion are closely related but not the same.

Furthermore, saving the discussion above, it is also worth remembering that social capital and social cohesion in themselves do not always, or automatically, translate into collective action to reduce violence. As different studies demonstrate, in some cases, strong ties within a group, or "bonding social capital," can reduce violent behavior in ethnic-based conflicts (Varshney 2002). On the other hand, research by Patillo-McCoy (1999) and Wilson (1996) has shown how solid social ties within a group can hinder collective action by creating a dense network of connections that ends up isolating residents from broader society or fostering collective action that itself inevitably drives the breakdown of social capital. Building on the same, research shows that bridging and linkage dimensions are more important for community resilience; otherwise, groups will consider their selfish interests (Carpenter, 2014, Varshney, 2002).

2.3.4. Difficulties Associated with the Terms

Among the difficulties associated with concepts like social cohesion, social capital, as well as resilience is the variety of definitions that exist; which makes the concepts sound almost everything and close to nothing specific in the end (Janmaat, 2011; Brand and Jax 2007; Grootaert & Bastelaer, 2002). Strunz (2012:114), for instance, described that resilience has become a fuzzy concept, and the issue is now characterized by "blurred boundaries of concepts, metaphors and an implicit mix of normative and positive aspects." Furthermore, some argue that the attempts to apply the concepts to so many different fields have impeded the continual improvement of their operationalization (Davidson et al., 2016).

On the other side, however, scholars point out that blurred boundaries and conceptual fuzziness may be particularly appropriate to inter-and trans-disciplinary contexts where creativity is required concerning addressing some research questions (Deppisch and Hasibovic2013; Strunz 2012). Moreover, such ambiguity would mean that the concepts are open to many interpretations across multiple theoretical and practical contexts, giving a chance for their usage in multi-disciplinary contexts (Stead 2013).

Questions like: what exactly amounts to a socially cohesive society, what conditions should present that could be interpreted as a resilient community, and other present difficulties in terms of methodological approach to the issue under investigation. The other difficulty emanates from the concepts' being challenging to measure empirically (Levine, 2014; Grootaert & Bastelaer 2002). Thus, as the dissertation acknowledges that a yes/no definition of resilience does not conform to its normal usage, it refers to the community's more or less resilience to the presented challenge. This means that, for instance, the factors that will be explained as contributing to the resilience of the study community to pressures of ethno-religious violence under chapter six of the dissertation should not be considered as all-out constituents of a resilient community rather just predictors of its likelihood.

In general, the difficulties observed with the concepts neither imply that they are not relevant nor do they exist. With that note, while regard shall be made to the thresholds /difficulties/ associated with the terms, at the same time, the dissertation shall exert the utmost effort to make the best of the opportunities presented as a result of lack of precision over the concepts.

2.4. Theoretical Frameworks of the Study

Despite various and continued efforts by different stakeholders, building sustainable peace has continued to be a challenge in the world we live in. At the same time, there is a relatively common understanding that building peace needs to embrace the capacity available at the grassroots level. Different theories have also been developed to explain building a resilient community and building peace at the grassroots levels through local capacities. This study, therefore, shall basis on theoretical approaches such as social network, social capital, social solidarity theories that are important in explaining the role of resilience response in the sustainable peacebuilding agenda. However, before looking at the main approach of the dissertation (Social Network Approach) and specific conceptual tools to the approach (such as Social Capital and Social Solidarity), it is essential to first embark on the structural-functionalist theory as it sets the grounds.

2.4.1. Structural Functionalist Approach

The structural-functionalist perspective is one of the major theoretical perspectives in explaining how social order is possible or how society remains relatively stable. Structural functionalist focuses on the macro-level of social structure rather than the micro-level of everyday life (Merton, 1968; Levi-Strauss, 1963). Structural functionalist theory interprets each part of society in terms of how it contributes to the stability of the whole society. According to the theory, society is more than the sum of its parts. Each part of society is functional for the stability of the whole (Durkheim, 1997). Durkheim envisioned society as an organism. Like within an organism, each component plays a necessary part, but none can function alone, and when one experiences a crisis or fails, other parts must adapt to fill the void in some way (Durkheim, 1997).

Within the structural-functionalist approach, the different parts of society are primarily composed of social institutions designed to fill different needs. Each is designed to fill different needs, but each has particular consequences for the form and shape of society. Accordingly, the core institutions include family, government, economy, media, education, and religion (Merton, 1968). According to structural functionalism, an institution only exists because it serves a critical role in the functioning of society. An institution will die away if it no longer serves a role. New institutions will be created whenever new needs evolve or emerge (Parsons and White, 1964).

Structural-functionalism has been criticized late despite its importance in explaining why society functions the way it does. It has been criticized, for instance, for accepting existing social

arrangements without investigating how they might take advantage of some groups or individuals within society (Newman and Erickson, 2010). Another critique of structural functionalism assumes regular interaction between a political system and its environment. This causes the approach, according to Nixon and Frey (1996), to overlook the likelihood of change and so ignores potential political conflict. In other words, the approach supposes that the status quo is in effect. Another critique from the field of politics is that of ethnocentrism. Accordingly, structural functionalism does not account for authoritarian political systems; the system and environment interaction only applies to western democratic systems. Those places where people in society have no political input are often left out when describing structural functionalism (Kamrava, 1996).

2.4.2. Social Network Analysis Approach

In the road to filling the gap observed in the structural-functionalist theory, the social network analysis approach emerged as one of the most influential scientific revolutions after the structural-functionalist theory. As an approach, Social Network aims to analyze communities of interest in terms of social ties within that community. It relies on the identification and systematic examination of actual actors and the relationships that exist between these actors (Freeman, 2004). It labels the structural-functionalist approach as highly abstract and overly generalized (Holmwood, 2005). In structural-functional work, discrete data on individuals and events were rarely used, and statements about social structure and processes were almost entirely conjectural. Apart from that, the structural-functionalist approach relied too much on integration and harmony within society and forgot about conflict and people's independence (Holmwood, 2005).

Though these differences exist, it has also been argued on their numerous affinities by writers like Benjamin and Laumann (2016:3). These writers emphasize on similarities between the theories by noting that:

> *..both spend considerable time in addressing: 1) connections that exist among social actors and the larger structures or systems that emerge from these connections; 2) the importance of social roles in shaping the nature of transactions that occur between actors; 3) the dynamics of social structure and the importance of time in understanding social action, and 4) regularity or patterns of social action that occur within social structures. Both paradigms are concerned with actors' linkages to each other in the context of a more extensive system consisting of dynamic social relationships.*

That said, the underlying premise of the Social Network Analysis Approach is that the kind of relationships within communities matter in influencing the beliefs, behaviors, and experiences of individuals within that community (John and Peter, 2011). In line with that, researchers of social network theory suggest four necessary characteristics that institutions must have to enable people to forge ties that bridge ethnic or religious divisions. First, institutions must be culturally diverse, indicating that the more institutions are based on self-selection, the more likely they are to be homogeneous and exclusive (Mutz, 2002). Second, institutions need to promote acquaintance ties rather than friendship-based. The need for the same is because individuals seek out those similar to them (culturally, socio-economically, and ideologically) for solid and intimate relationships (Marsden 1988; Laumann 1973). What follows from the same is that strong ties do not promote diversity. Third, institutions must possess a norm that allows for interethnic as well as interreligious co-operation. Thus, community institutions possessing norms to allow heterogeneous co-operation rather than just homogenous co-operation appears vital here (Marsden, 1988). Lastly, settings should be designed to promote repeated and mutually dependent interaction among individuals from different groups. This, according to Seligman (1997), helps to build trust, even if the initial interaction is mistrustful and the relationship remains acquaintance-based. For that matter, as Axelrod (1981: 308) noted, "even where no effective authorities promote it, co-operation can emerge if individuals rely on reciprocity."

Even though the above two approaches are among the dominant paradigms to explain why societies function the way they do, other specific theories must be recognized within these broader spectrums. The social capital/social cohesion and social solidarity concepts are important examples. This study also contextualizes itself to these specific conceptual tools under the broader approaches in the attempt to explain communities' resilience response to pressures of ethno-religious violence and towards building durable peace:

a. Social Capital/Cohesion

As pieces of the literature suggest, although social capital has been defined in various ways, there can be witnessed a common emphasis on social structure, trust, norms, and social networks that facilitate collective action (Green & Haines, 2002). In theorizing social capital, Putnam (1995) posits that social networks, bonds, reciprocal duties, and trust bind people together and enable them to coexist. He, in particular, noted the concept of social capital as features of social

organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and co-operation for mutual benefit. In the context of community resilience, social capital, therefore, reflects the quantity and quality of social co-operation. For instance, community ties and networks are believed beneficial because they allow individuals to draw on the social resources in their communities. They also happen to be beneficial because they increase the likelihood that such communities will adequately address their collective concerns (Green & Haines, 2002).

Community/individual/ networks can also provide an external resource to facilitate the developmental process. With this regard, Lin (2001:3) argues that empirical work on social capital should be rooted in individual interactions and networking because social capital is "captured from embedded resources in social networks." The concept of social capital is important because it allows citizens to resolve collective problems more efficiently. Communities that work together toward a common goal are the most resilient (Davidson, 2006). The argument is that, in circumstances where characteristics of a strong community are missing, members of that community tend to have less capacity to cope with violence/violent acts.

In stressing social capital like a local phenomenon, Putnam and Lewis (2003:9) discuss that:

> *[S]ocial capital is necessarily a local phenomenon because it is defined by connections among people who know one another. Even when we talk about social capital in national and regional organizations, we are really talking about a network or accumulation of mainly local connections.*

Moreover, social capital researchers outline two types of social capital: bonding social capital that fastens ties of individual members of a group, socializing with like people: same age, same race, same religion and so forth and bridging social capital that allows inter-linkage with other social groups (Putnam, 2000; Gittell and Vidal, 1998). In a related illustration, Mignone and O'Neil (2005) asserted that the social capital of a community is assessed through a combination of its bonding (within-group relations), bridging (inter-communities ties), and linkage (relations with formal institutions) dimensions.

Putnam also notes that a resilient community requires connections and even trust among dissimilar people, apart from the networks /links/ among people similar in crucial respects /intra-linkage/. He further reiterates that bridging and linkage dimensions are more important for community

resilience. Otherwise, groups will consider only their own selfish interests. From this perspective, societies with strong social capital and an absence of latent conflicts point to capacities for resilience which tend to overcome or confront problems without recourse to violence. In other cases where there is weakness in social capital and latent conflicts, recourse to violence then contributes to the detriment of social cohesion and, consequently, an increase in social conflicts.

When discussing linkages, be it 'inter' or 'intra,' building trust through those networks is the goal. That is why the concept of trust-building is highlighted in the works of different scholars concerning social capital. The importance of trust to peace and conflict processes, in particular, has been underlined in different works (Hoffman, 2002; Kydd, 2000a, b; Mitchell, 2000; Stein, 1991). Varshney (2002) suggests that a critical structure of peaceful multi-ethnic societies is their informational networks of civic life, which bring different communities together. Many multi-ethnic communities have resisted elites' provocations, efforts to radicalize followers, and attempts to mobilize support against 'the other side. These communities are characterized by intergroup or inter-communal civil society networks, which create interethnic dialogue and increase the level of trust at the local level. Furthermore, by killing rumors, removing misunderstandings, and identifying perpetrators behind misdeeds, highly decentralized tension-managing organizations and social structures protect peace (Varshney, 2002).

In general, social capital, as some have argued, is a necessary ingredient for reducing violence in a community. Understood as the "networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and co-operation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 1995:67), social capital is seen as providing the basis for communities being able to act together to address violence and disorder. In line with that, Bursik (1999) also notes how the concept of social capital is related to social disorganization; neighborhoods that have little social capital would potentially have less capacity to organize to exert social control over violence and crime than communities with substantial social capital.

b. Social Solidarity

Another conceptual tool that perhaps explains the role resilience plays in peacebuilding is the social solidarity theory. Though resilience was not mentioned in one of the earlier notions of social solidarity by Emile Durkheim, it is explicit in his work that social solidarity makes a society function. In this regard, Emile Durkheim, in his book The Division of Labour, explains society in terms of social order and social facts. According to Durkheim, individuals in a society are social

actors who are restrained by social facts to stay in society. Social facts are functionalist in nature. They exist only if the society can derive utility or benefits from them (Durkheim, 1984). The argument from Durkheim is that solidarity develops in specific forms in different historical periods, and in order to capture the broad shift in the type of social bonds that glue societies together, he develops two dichotomies of solidarity: mechanical and organic solidarity (Ritzer, 2010).

Mechanical solidarity, he argues, occurs in small, simple societies where people live in small groups with no or little differentiation of functions or social roles. In pre-modern societies with low levels of specialization, solidarity is grounded in a feeling of sameness (doing the same job, fighting the same natural threats Etc.) (Durkheim, 1984). 'Mechanical' refers to the condition of living, thinking, and acting being very much the same for everyone. Putting it otherwise, Mechanical Solidarity here refers to everyone doing relatively similar tasks. A typical example provided was the time of the hunting and gathering societies where there was not a substantial division of labor. Durkheim theorized that shared values, common symbols, and exchange systems functioned as the tools of cohesion in these societies (Perrin, 1973). The essence is that members of society performed similar tasks to keep the community running. Hence, according to his explanation, homogeneity in material living conditions and immaterial values and rituals result in a strong 'conscience collective' (Durkheim, 1984). This collective consciousness, he argues, includes everyone in the traditional society.

On the other hand, organic solidarity occurs in a complex society in which people take up various roles and functions (Durkheim, 1984). In more modern and complex societies, individuals are quite different, and they do not perform the same tasks as they used to do during the hunting and gathering societies. However, diversity leads to a different form of solidarity, interdependence. Organic solidarity, therefore, leads to a strong sense of individuals being dependent on one another (Pope, 1983). The evolution from mechanical to organic solidarity is driven by factors like increasing physical and social density. Increasing density stimulates competition for jobs and other valued resources, leading to a more complex division of labor (Durkheim, 1984). Therefore, one of Durkheim's main messages was that social arrangement that is not underpinned by solidarity between the individuals involved is vulnerable to fragmentation. Social solidarity is founded on common values and moral commitment and hence, where social integration is fostered.

In strengthening the many facets of social solidarity in the contemporary social arrangement, Graham Crow (2002) discusses that social solidarity is important in many areas of our lives. He, in particular, noted that "family and kinship relationships, community life, trade union activity and the identity politics of new social movements are just a few of the many ways in which solidarity can feature in contemporary social arrangements (Graham Crow, 2002: 3)."
He goes on to say that "there is, of course, no inevitability that these or other collective activities will be characterized more by unity than by division" (Graham Crow, 2002:3).

Generally, though explicit use of the term resilience in nowhere can be seen in the earlier conception of Social solidarity by Durkheim and others, it can be argued that the notion embodied in those works is that social solidarity is what maintains a society together. If that is so, more social solidarity will take more collective action and, thus, more chance for resisting risks. Improving social cohesion among communities and strengthening the capacity of local institutions to mitigate conflict can create conditions that enable the community to be more resilient to violent acts.

Having that said, resilience in this study is examined mainly from the perspective that features of resilience response to pressures of ethno-religious violence springs primarily from the strength of internal social cohesion (social capital and trust networks). The study makes its framework on the assumption that dense patterns of trust networks, shared narratives, common interests, multiple lines of communication are the qualities that make communities more resilient to pressures of ethno-religious violence. It further assumes that the presence of social capital/social cohesion is central to this process of resilience in building bridges between persons, families, and social groups to develop a spirit of civic culture, harboring such values as civic engagement, the pursuit of the public good, political equality, solidarity, trust, and tolerance. Once these values are sufficiently established, legitimized, and shared in a given social group, they will lead to a rich network of local groups and associations devoted to the well-being of their community.

Figure 2: Pictorial representation of the analytical assumption (the interplay of factors for building resilient community)

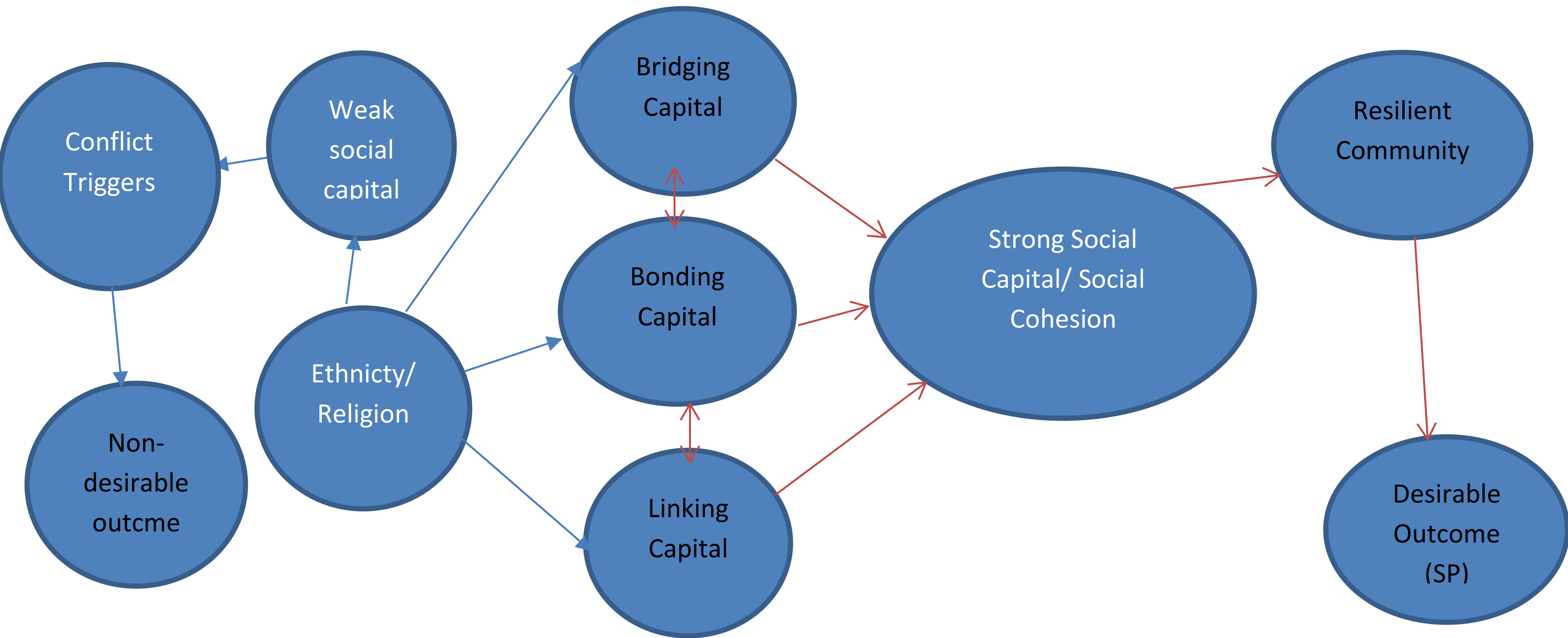

Figure 2 Pictorial representation of the analytical assumption (created by the Author)

Chapter three: Review of Related Literature: Religion, Ethnicity, Peacebuilding, and Community Resilience

3.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to examine the contending arguments in the literature surrounding the role of ethnicity and religion regarding conflict and Peacebuilding. Here, while most conflict analysts treat religion as a subset of ethnicity, this section shall take a separate treatment of the two though there may be cases where both identities are present and overlapping. Besides, the chapter presents a literature review on communities' resilience to violence in general and in the Ethiopian context in particular. In doing so, an attempt shall be made to review literature related to the resilience of communities to pressures of ethno-religious violence in the Ethiopian context.

3.2. Religion and its Relationship with Conflict and Peacebuilding

The role of religion in conflict and Peacebuilding is increasingly acknowledged but remains disputed. Religion is connected with both Peacebuilding and violent conflict. Human history includes many examples where religiously motivated acts led to bloodshed. On the other side, history also documented the memorable roles of religion in bridging divides, promoting reconciliation, or advocating peaceful co-existence. It becomes clear, therefore, that understanding the dynamics of conflict, which is, both the sources of discord and the forces of resilience, requires an understanding of the multifaceted nature of conflict, religion, ethnicity, and Peacebuilding. In other words, any attempt to analyze religion and the role it plays in conflict must balance two seemingly contradictory perspectives. That is, religion acts both as a "divider" (a source of conflict) and a "connector" (a source of peace).

Different scholars have pointed out that much of the current debate on ethnicity, religion, and violence is based on incoherent understandings of ethnicity, religion, and ethno-religious violence (Patterson, 2013; Cavanaugh, 2009). For that matter, focusing on the 'myth' of religious violence, Cavanaugh (2009) warns, prevents us from tackling violence and the different conditions, ideologies, practices, and symbolism under which it emerges and spreads. Hence, the section shall develop itself on binary assumptions. Thereby, an exaggerated approach may not be made linearly as to the role of religion with violence or vice versa.

3.2.1. Religion as a Trigger of Conflict

Religion has been associated with episodes of violence throughout history and during modern times. It is natural to ask why religion and conflict so often coincide with the historical record. Of course, this brief overview cannot discuss all conflicts in which religion played a part in past or present and how. However, it shall strive to show how religion is linked to violent conflict in general and in the African context in particular.

Accordingly, with religious and political power consolidated, political elites can use religion to promote violence as a means to achieve political goals. Similarly, religious figures can use military and political violence to promote religious agendas. As acknowledged by North, Wallis, and Weingast (2009), such an alignment of political and religious powers frequently occurred in the form of persons or official institutions. The convergence between the political and religious can also occur in alliances in which ethnicity and religious affiliation coincide or in political party coalitions. Either way, the distinction between religion and politics becomes blurred, thus giving a religious dimension to state violence (North, Wallis, and Weingast, 2009).

Having said that, in many conflict situations in Africa religion is often depicted as a trigger factor. This happens to be the case whether the conflicts are primarily of a political, ethnic, intra-societal, or ideological nature, (Treverton et al., 2005). Nevertheless, as Amos (2004) noted, contemporary conflicts in African societies are frequently categorized as either religious or ethnic conflicts, even though most are caused by governance failure. Such categorization is because religious factors are often mobilized as conflicts in zero-sum politics associated with highly centralized, autocratic, and greedy African regimes.

In this regard, circumstances of sustained deprivation or fears of integration into something else can heighten religious attachments. Appeals to religious sentiments can prove a potent tool in conflict. Though religion is a critical element to conflict in every society, empirical studies in Africa evidence that religion alone is not a source of violent conflict but can be used as a proper instrument of conflict (Lake and Rothchild, 1998). This, however, is not to claim that there are no purely religious-based conflicts. Religion played a crucial role in several African armed conflicts (Silvestri and James, 2015, Bjorn, 2006). Moreover, Africa provides a very diverse religious

demography which is often considered a risk factor, and religion plays a more prominent role than it does in Western countries or countries in other regions of the world (Pew, 2015; Ellis et al., 2007). During conflict also, religion is often been blamed and used as a tool to mobilize people. This is mainly so because African people are susceptible to religion as religion forms part of the people's cultural identity (Pew, 2015; Ellis et al., 2007).

As implied above, African societies have been washed with conflicts between various groups However, the relationship between religion and conflict is a complex one. Thus, one must consider many factors before concluding that religion is the leading cause of conflict. The following sub-section is designed for explanations on some of the key reasons why religion is implicated in conflicts situations in Africa:

3.2.1.1. Religion as a Source of Identity

Identity markers for a group may be expressed with different elements, and religion is one of the fundamental elements of identity (Pearce, 2003; Horowitz, 1985). In other words, everyone has multiple identities related to characteristics they have in common with others. These identities include their profession, nationality, ethnicity, religion, skin color, class, gender, and even the sports clubs they support. Thus, religion is one of the cornerstones of a person's identity. Accordingly, particular identities may become emphasized in times of conflict as conflict lines develop among different groups (Pearce, 2003). Therefore, in some conflicts, religious identity groups may become associated with different sides of a conflict.

That said, identity-based conflict is a conflict that arises as a result of differences in identity (Louis, 2010a). As some would argue, humans would be unable to survive psychologically and socially (Davis, 1994). Naturally, identity-based conflicts as social conflicts are based on ethnic, cultural, religious, or national-identity differences (Rothman, 1997). The fact that participants in conflict are very passionate about what they are fighting for has been described as one of the characteristics of identity-based conflicts. As a result, identity-based conflicts have been some of the fiercest and violent conflicts that ever took place (Louis, 2010).

Like it does in other regions of the world, religion in Africa serves as a source of identity. That is why religious conflict can be labeled as one type of identity-based conflict. In most conflict scenarios in the continent, competing motives like historical, political, and social narratives have

been constructed and attached to the religious landscape (Ellis and Ter Haar, 1998). Religious ideologies are incorporated into every group's self -understanding and justification. Thus, challenging someone else's identity could lead to a violent reaction, leading to identity-basedidentity-based conflict (Haynes, 2009). For example, in Nigeria, the country is divided between the North and the South, dominated by Muslims and Christians, respectively. And almost all the conflicts scenarios are given religious coloration in all activities. The religious-cultural separation and segregation regularly sparks disagreement and fight over natural resources such as oil, land, water, political representation, provision of basic infrastructure, and revenue sharing between the Islamic North and Southern Christian (Jok, 2007; Lowrey, 2007).

When we speak of religion, identity, and conflict, another characteristic of identity-based conflicts is that this type of conflict is usually protracted (Louis, 2010b). One of the reasons for the protracted nature of identity-based conflicts is that no person, in the history of mankind, wants to think that everything they believe in is wrong and untrue (Northrup, 1989). In other words, it is just natural for a person to believe that their view of the world is accurate and true. As such, they refuse to easily give up on what they believe.

3.2.1.2. Religion as a Mobilizing Factor

While religion is one of the fundamental elements of identity, it serves the role of initiation, mobilization, and binding of adherents. To mobilize followers and widen their base of support, actors in a conflict may employ religious authorities or religious language (John, 2016; Frances, 2009). This can occur at different levels. It can occur at the political level (when leaders use religious discourse to garner popular support) or at the the military level (when military or militia movement leaders use religion to recruit, mobilize, and bindf combatants). This has been demonstrated in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo, Zimbabwe, and Cambodia (Richards, 2005).

As Specht (2011) noted, in Congo-Brazzaville, for instance, the practice of initiation rituals was promoted as a ground for mobilization. Initiation rituals in Congo had been limited to isolated communities for a long time. But during armed conflict, the soldiers that had gone through initiation were claimed to be much better fighters than their non-initiated modern friends. The main explanation for this was that those who were initiated were much better protected through mystical powers (Specht, 2011). Likewise, in the case of Sierra Leone, the Camajores, a civil defense force, was claimed to be mobilized through Poro, a secret society (Specht, 2011). As

Specht (2011) notes, their mobilization was done in the bush,, and their training was claimed to be based on traditional hunting skills with mystical help.

Similarly, Honwana (1998) notes that the combatants of the Angola war claimed to have had a lot of help from their ancestors. The ancestors would give the rules and regulations for the behavior of the combatants through dreams, visions, mediums, and other signs. Failure to abide by the rules and regulations would make the combatants vulnerable to attacks by enemies (Honwana, 1998). These examples attest that religious actors employ mystic-spiritual methods in engagements and draw on a common worldview, theological language, and shared values by adherents to gain support for victory and peace.

In general, while the root causes of most violent conflicts, as argued by Norman (2004), lie in economic and political factors, people are organized, united, and mobilized by identities, in particular ethnic or religious ones. Therefore, a link between religious factors and conflict can be established theoretically with different assumptions, especially by a mobilization hypothesis as briefly discussed above.

3.2.1.3. Counter-integrative Role of Religion

The integrative role of religion has been depicted in writings mainly to the positive. This is so because religious beliefs by legitimizing value patterns and suggestting why certain values should be preferredare are important in solving integrative problems (Schwartz SH and Huismans, 1995). The existence of common religion indeed helps to hold together a group of people who might otherwise be competing politically and economically. However, the integration factor can be a source of conflict as well. That is because the integrative role of religion can sometimes be overemphasized, thereby serving as a counter-integration of people (Woodhead, Partridge, and Kawanami, 2016). This is rooted in the explanation that there is always a tendency to feel one’s religious persuasion is true, and all others are false. This could lead to affiliation to one group and alienation of the other. For example, in Nigeria, the selection of a presidential aspirant for political office is always interpreted in religious terms between the Christian South and the Muslim North (Silvestri and James, 2015).

Similarly, as Megesa (1997) noted, the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007 was fuelled by political affiliations of the religious actors. Moreover, the close cooperation between the United States of America and the Kibaki-led government by then in counter-terrorism initiatives had

increasingly alienated a considerable population of Kenyan Muslims from the government (Megesa, 1997). These all cases demonstrate that religion's integration role could sometimes serve as a source of conflict by producing a non-integrated society.

3.2.2. Religion as a Source of Peace

While the role of religion in many parts of the world as contributing to violent conflict is well documented, its role in contributing to Peacebuilding is not equally spelled out. The opportunities to employ religious leaders and institutions' assets to promote peace hardly have attained attention at the required level. Traditional diplomacy has been particularly evoked in its neglect of the religious approach to peacemaking (Smock, 2006). Stuckelberger (2012) argues that research in peace studies has not yet succeeded in fully understanding the 'instrumentalization of religion or how it can be organized and adapted for their discipline. He also warns that excluding religion is a way to postpone problems, not solve them. Moreover, integrating religion early can pre-empt the emergence of violent fundamentalism before it is too late (Stuckelbeger, 2012). On the same note, Haar and Busuttil (2005:31) argue that:

Religion is a reality, whether one likes it or not. Religion is a social fact, that rather than being lamented or dismissed or ignored may be turned to the advantage of humankind by considering how it can be used for constructive purposes. In short, even when peace processes do not lead to sustainable peace, religion is nonetheless thought to positively contribute to peace as it can help build trust between and among social groups and individuals.

However, prominent peace scholars like Lederach (1996; 1997) and Galtugn (2012) have documented at different times the importance of promoting a holistic treatment on the role of religion towards conflict and peace. Lederach (1997, 1996) argued for and also developed conflict resolution mechanisms that focus on religion, among other factors, as positive tools for bringing about change and promoting a holistic approach. This was indifferent to the antagonistic approach that divides societies along religious lines. In the same vein, Galtung (2012: lecture note) calls upon international leaders to explore the 'enormous reservoirs of experience' that are presented by religions. He believes that different religions can address different forms of violence and emphasizes that the insights of religions can help societies judge political developments. For him, religions provide a 'toolbox' to promote peace; 'their comparative advantage is their transcendence perspective' (Galtung, 2012: lecture note).

Appleby (2000), on his part, acknowledges that religion has a lot to offer to human society in terms of Peacebuilding. He states that the collaborative alliance between religious traditions can facilitate the reality of common humanity, especially when the leaders are true to the essential tenets and the repository of social capital available to them. He also argues that the religious behaviors of adherents can make religion a tool for suing for peace or violence. Building on the same, Schimdt (2004) argues that religion and faith connect the human person to his cultural anchor and, as such, can find the way to peace through the cultural anchor for peacemaking and can make amendments when they are conflicting. Because according to Schimdt (2004), the core of the human person is touched and controlled by religion, and this includes the emotions, frustrations, and expectations, which are both physical and psychological. What cannot be assessed by ethnicity and other identities could be assessed by religion which calls for deeper investigation into motives in the Peacebuilding process (Gopin, 2005).

Some scholars have also developed models for specific activities to promote the positive force of religion. Abu-Nimer (2001) described a training model of interreligious Peacebuilding, which he sees playing a fundamental, central role in transforming conflicts, given the crucial place that religious identities have had in many conflicts. Johnston and Cox (2003) provide a systematic elaboration of the attributes that enable religious leaders and religious institutions to influence peacemaking. These actors have 'well established and pervasive influence in the community and typically (though not always) a 'reputation as an apolitical force for change based on a respected set of values' (Johnston and Cox, 2003: 14). Johnston (2003:6) also argues that they have a 'unique leverage for reconciling conflicting parties, including an ability to re-humanize relationships' and they possess the 'capability to mobilize community, national, and international support for peace processes.'

Hizkias Assefa (1996) also stated the role of religious leaders as an asset in peacemaking commendable. Such religious leaders' effectiveness is particularly high when they are from different faith communities and work together for peace (Hizkias, 1996). Similarly, Cox et al. (1994) and others argued that religion could be well suited for resolving particularly prolonged, stalemated, or intractable conflicts. The key characteristics associated with religious leaders that enable them to help in conflict situations include authority, trust, professionalism, and cultural and

practical/experiential closeness to the people involved (Smock 2002; Lederach 1997; 1996; Cox et al. 1994).

3.3. Ethnicity and its Relation with Conflict and Peacebuilding

Likewise to what has been said above to religion, a linear focus on ethnic violence will be a short-sighted approach to understanding the complexities involved. In other words, a conflict analysis that neglects or simplifies the role of ethnicity runs the risk of being incomplete and missing vital considerations. Such a one-sided approach would possibly suffer from the fact that ethnicity can affect African political behavior variedly. It has to be taken into account that ethnic identities may be employed to contrast motives, and if we are to focus our observations on singularly ethnic adherents, the analyses will suffer from being complete. That said, the following section shall attempt to show the varied adherents of the subject at hand.

3.3.1. Ethnicity as a Trigger of Conflict

Since the mid-1960s, there have been prolonged and protracted ethnic-related violent conflicts (L.Adele, 2007). A conflict between ethnic groups has increasingly received academics' attention since the end of the cold war (Gellner 1983; Horowitz 1985; Huntington 1993a; Wimmer 2002). However, ethnicity's role in motivating and structuring violent conflicts remains a question that is not settled yet. This happens to be the case particularly due to the fluid nature of ethnic groups and their endogenous development during the conflict. Of course, several voices in recent research express the idea that ethnic diversity presents economic advantages to diversified states (Collier and Hoeffler, 2006). Collier and Hoeffler's argument is anchored on the assumption that ethnic diversity presents an opportunity for raising diverse productivity skills and knowledge useful for problem-solving. However, it is a moot question whether the same advantage can be obtained from politicized ethnicity. In other words, every type of ethnicity does not afford the same opportunities. While an explanation of ethnic peace shall be made in the next section, this section is presented to show how ethnicity does play a role in defining and structuring conflict.

Since the late 1950's civil wars between ethnic groups have constituted a substantial part, if not the majority, of all wars (Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2005). The validity of this claim depends, of course, on the definition of ethnic groups. This work considers ethnic groups in resonance to Brubaker's (2004) and Smith's (1986). These woks consider ethnic groups as groups formed based

on cultural, religious, linguistic, or biological characteristics perceived to be shared by their members (Brubaker 2004; Smith, 1986). On the two extreme spectrums of opinions, we have the arguments, on one end, that the exclusive basis of conflicts is ethnicity and "ancient hatreds" between different ethnic groups (Kaplan 1993). Here there appears even going so far as to argue that ethnic heterogeneity is conflictive (Vanhanen 1999). This argument is based on the assumption of the primordial approach, where it views ethnicity as fixed and ethnic differences are the rationale of ethnic violence. Therefore, where there are multiple ethnicities, there is ethnic violence (Vanhanes, 1999). In addition, Frank P. Harvey (2000:40-41) explains that according to primordialism, "ethnic ties are inherently more potent (and fit) as an organizing force than…ties based on class or occupation." This, however, does not mean that violence or conflict is a constant state but that the history of bitter rivalry, age-old conflicts over land, vengeance killings, or preemptive slaughter of populations can easily be attributed to identity. Hence, identity is the root cause (Frank, 2000; Vanhanen, 1999; Kaplan, 1993).

On the same account, Hizkias (2001:18), for instance, depicts that most wars waged in Africa generally and particularly in the Horn during the past 30 years have been described as "inter-ethnic conflicts," both by the antagonists themselves and by external analysts. Furthermore, he writes that the civil wars in Sudan between the north and the south have been described as a conflict between the Arabized northerners and African Southerners (with cleavages along religious, racial, cultural, and linguistic lines). At different times, the civil wars fought in Ethiopia have been characterized as wars between different ethnic groups like the Amharas and the Tigrians, Oromo, Eritrean, etc. Similarly, the conflicts in Somali have been described as ethnic conflicts between Maraheens and Issas, or between Darods and Ogaden, Etc. Moreover, the conflict in Djibouti has been described as a conflict between the Afars and the Issas (Hizkias, 2001). Hizkias attempted to show that many people believe that almost all of the conflictual problems in the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia, in particular, emanate from ethnic differences.

One of the criticism of primordialism approach is it operates under the assumption that identities are fixed. In other words, it fails to explain, as Lake and Rotchild (1998:5) argue, the emergence of new identities. Accordingly, what matters is not ethnicity purely but politically salient ethnicities, where there is an "us against them" construction to these identities. This point leads to

the second kind of explanation, which is instrumentalism. To this end, parties to ethnic conflicts are nothing but “bands of opportunistic marauders recruited by political leaders” (Mueller 2000: 42). Therefore, according to this approach, group grievances are less convincing as conflict-generating factors when seen in terms of individual, rational cost-benefit calculations (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004a). Therefore, the likelihood of ethnic violence or conflict depends on whether the overall outcomes benefit exceeds the transaction and coordination costs (Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Thus, ethnicity is not so much an explanatory factor. Because it is a tool for the elites to manipulate the masses into supporting them in pursuing their personal, material goals (Fearon and Laitin, 2003).

Instrumentalism understands that groups rationally choose to identify with a certain part of their identity for economic or political gain. When ethnicity is seen from this perspective, it brings practical advantages such as reducing organizational problems, for instance, by reducing action costs through shared language, culture habits, etc. (Sambanis, 2001). Hence, the approach argues for a rational cost/benefit calculation, and the possible losses and gains from joining a rebellion. The rational cost/benefit calculation could also extend to opportunity costs such as expectations of future employment before joining therein (Sambanis, 2001).

In general, primordialism links violence directly with identity differences; instrumentalism, on the other hand, does almost the complete opposite by mentioning economic interests as being predominant. As implicated above, political elites can and do use ethnic divisions to their advantage. For instance, in the colonial experience of European- African states, ethnic divisions were capitalized to keep groups from rising against the imperial governments. The Hutu and Tutsi were played off against another and more formally separated racially so that one group could oppress the other. The imperial system had also left the dominant ethnic group dependent on colonial support (Tong, 2009).

Instrumentalism, as an approach, is not without criticism. One criticism of the instrumentalist approach is that it presupposes ethnicity as purely elastic. But, if ethnicity is purely instrumental and elastic, then there would be little room left for political elites to exploit as conflict would be purely economically motivated (Tong, 2009). In other words, identities need to be politically salient to be useful for exploitation. Thus, there must be something compelling enough to average

citizens to make them riot or mass murder people. Instrumentalism could be true for the elite and the upper class but appears less convincing in the lower class.

This takes us to the final approach, constructivism. The final approach is essentially a bridge between primordialism and instrumentalism. Based on scholarly arguments regarding the sources of ethnic conflicts, one may presume that both primordial and instrumentalist approaches are a misconception. In bridging the two approaches, constructivism posits that ethnicity is a social identification, not just an individual one. As different from instrumentalism, constructivism recognizes that ethnicities are not chosen and change as a society changes. However, it does not assume that ethnicity inherently leads to conflict or violence, unlike primordialism. So, what leads to the onset of violence as per the constructivist approach? For the constructivist, a combination of multiple factors is where violence rises; factors from economic pressure to loss of political rights and others. As a result, the current discussion focused more on examining the dynamics underlying ethnicity's use in conflict (Grigorian and Kaufmann 2007; Kaufmann, 2006; Gurr, 1993; Gellner 1983).

In his attempt to show the link between ethnicity and conflict, Gellner (1983) discusses that the two can be shown through the concept of nationalism, the demand that the political state should correspond with the territory of a nation. Accordingly, conflicts associated with ethno-nationalism can be secession wars where an ethnic group attempts to secede from an ethnically heterogeneous state to form their independent state. Alternatively, instead of seceding, ethnic groups can try to seize control of their ethnically heterogeneous state under the banner of nationalism (Gellner, 1983). Ethnic cleansing and genocide may occur if an ethnic group attempts to homogenize a multi-ethnic state.

Gurr (1993), on the other hand, argues that the existence of cultural identity in combination with economic or collective political grievances is the basis of group mobilization. In a way that supports Gurr’s argument, Kaufman (2006) identifies three main pre-conditions for mobilizing an ethnic group; firstly, the existences of narratives that define the ethnic in-group and, in doing so, the existence of narratives, also create an out-group, which is the in-group's opponent. Secondly, fears regarding the future of the in-group can be linked to political exclusion and discrimination

and, finally, a territorial base or a homeland for the ethnic group (Kaufman, 2006; also Grigorian and Kaufmann, 2007).

Besides these main pre-conditions for ethnic conflict, Kaufman (2006) also identifies three additional conditions necessary for the mobilization for violent conflict. These conditions include appeals to group myths, the presence of extreme mass hostility, and the development of a security dilemma (Kaufman, 2006). These conditions suggest that ethnic groups should not be considered unitary actors in themselves. Instead, ethnic groups often have multiple factors attached to acting in a certain way. Given these factors, the temptation to strike first by each group in order to gain the advantage of early action can be, therefore, substantial.

With that note, most ethnic conflicts, which are regarded as inter-ethnic conflicts emanating from mere ethnic differences in various African countries, are reported to have other causes. According to Norman (2004), African conflicts are complex as they make ethnicity the core of the problems even though they are, in general, initiated and aggravated by an economic and political crisis. He gives examples of these problems concerning the wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo and that of Angola. Norman (2004) contends that the former is due to economic plunder, whereas Diamond and Oil finance the latter. In the case of the Liberian conflict, the causes are attributed to the returnees of "Americo-Liberians who came back from America in 1820, snatched the lands and powers of the indigenous people, and imposed western culture on the indigenous one" (Lemarchand (1983: 62).

As to the Rwandan Genocide, the conflictual problems between Hutu and Tutsi groups were deep-rooted, for they were the result of the colonial “divide and rule” policy of the Belgium and Germany that gave rise to the differences of the two groups by propagating that the Hutus had been oppressed by the Tutsis (Lemarchand, 1983). According to Gahama (2002), the conflictual problems of Burundi were due to the hatred developed and spread by the Belgian colonial powers who alienated the majority Hutus and favored the minority Tutsis and the Ganwas. In Nigeria, the conflicts are claimed rooted in the “divide and rule” policy of the British colonization and the post-independence military interventions of the central government (Osaghae, 1983). Osaghae also argues that Somalia’s conflictual problems are similarly rooted in the system of colonization which

divided the country into Italian and British Somali lands and forced them to follow different institutional and administrative systems (Osaghae, 1983). Finally, in the case of Sudan, the violence is rooted in "the British divide and rule policy" that resulted in the division of Northern and Southern Sudan. The dominantly Muslim-Arab Northern Sudan had more active participation and opportunities of education, economy, and benefits of modernity. On the other hand, Southern Christian Sudan was in deep-rooted backwardness and poverty. Violent conflicts occurred between the "Khartoum Military government of post-colonization and the Liberation Movements of the South" due to these inequalities (Wai, 1983: 305).

In explaining the ethnic conflict in Africa and Ethiopia, this work ascribes itself to the multiplicity of variables. It assumes that ethnic heterogeneity by itself does not breed a war, and its absence does not ensure peace. Even if some scholars simply generalize that the above-discussed conflicts in Africa are inter-ethnic, this work takes that these conflicts, which were considered inter-ethnic, are driven by multifarious complex and interrelated variables rather than pure ethnic hatred and antagonism. In other words, most of the conflictual problems in most African countries are not purely due to ethnic differences but due to other variables such as economic and political causes that surface the existing ethnic differences. Of course, the existing ethnic differences, as evidenced from the different empirical case studies discussed above, could serve as a trigger of conflict but should not be considered a standalone factor in understanding the issue. In other words, this dissertation springs on the assumption that any examination of identity would have to be inclusive of all assumptions; instrumental, primordial, and constructivist, and how they are intricately linked.

3.3.2. Ethnic Peace: An Explanation

These days the world is becoming more interconnected, and ethnic groups face one another more often. As a result, individuals of varying ethnicities have lived side by side. For that matter, Africa presents interesting cases of ethnic diversity, varying historical experiences with colonialism, and a wide variance in institutional strengths. On the same note, while most African countries' post-independence experience is marked by a violent conflict of different forms, in particular of identity-related conflicts, Tanzania (at least until recently) has differed from the majority of African countries markedly; that is, in its culture of ethnic peace (Tong, 2009). While much has

been documented on negative impact of ethnicity and its politicization in Africa, little known about the circumstances in which ethnicity germinates as a politically salient identity and grows a debilitating force. Also, how it can be suppressed for national unity remains an issue.

Therefore, as a resilience paper, it would be proper to question what leads some nations down a spiral of violence, sometimes to genocide, while others can foster peaceful co-existence? In other words, the question can appear as saying: Are there any arrangements that are more likely than others to contain and defuse or reduce the destabilizing political and social tendencies of ethnic pluralism in ethnically-split African societies, particularly in post-conflict ones? This question appears most relevant because, in a future of uncertainty where violent conflict continues to occur and where nations are in constant danger of slipping into the mud, it is necessary to distinguish what causes ethnic violence, or what causes ethnic peace, which are the different sides of the same coin.

One concept in addressing the issue is the argument forwarded by Smith (2000). The idea here is that political liberalization will first lead to an increase in violence, and once democratization occurs, there will be a decrease in ethnic violence. Smith (2000:25) used liberalization to mean political control being taken down, such as allowing freedom of the press, getting rid of arrests without charges, freedom from torture, or the "institutionalization of procedures for popular government." Hence, it has been argued that in the presence of viable political institutions where individuals and collectives express their interests, the violent reaction to interest-based factors is reduced because there are democratic outlets for these concerns. Ethnic violence is based on concerns such as competition over resources and security (Lake and Rothchild 1998). However, when the citizenry can utilize things like elections or feel that their anxieties are being addressed or voiced by the media, then the likelihood of ethnic violence lessens (Bratton, 1997).

With that note, therefore, institutions such as a free press can be a key to ethnic peace, as can a civilian-controlled military. Speaking of an influenced military, Uvin (1999) noted that, for example, in Burundi, the Tutsi controlled the military, and so what propagated the onset of some of the killing sprees was Tutsi fear of a Hutu uprising. So in order to protect themselves, they had

the military kill thousands of Hutu either for no reason or with rumored killings of Tutsi villages by Hutu people (Uvin, 1999).

However, the political liberalization and democratization explanation in reducing ethnic conflict is not without criticism. For that matter, Varshney (2002) rejects institutional accounts as an explanation for moving from ethnic violence to ethnic peace. According to him, institutional explanation about ethnic peace "fails to explain the regional difference in ethnic violence (Varshney, 2002: 38)." Varshney (2002) reasons that though cities and regions share the same institutions, some cities and regions experience numerous riots and killings while others are completely or relatively peaceful. Thus, he posits that the actual make it or break it factor is not an institution but rather civil society. Hence, civic engagement and social cohesion is the determining factor for the peaceful experience or otherwise of a community (Varshney, 2002).

While those debates persist, another quite important explanation for the so-called 'ethnic peace' may be the remarkable experience of Tanzania. Tanzania exhibits a striking plurality of ethnic groups that are not ethnically politicized, unlike in many other African states (Bratton, Bhavnani, and Chen, 2011; Weber, 2009). Tanzanians are "less ethnically politicized" despite having around 120 ethnic groups (Jerman, 1997:34). Moreover, The Global Peace Index (2018) lists Tanzania as the 64th more peaceful nation globally out of 162 considered and among the ten more peaceful in Africa. The question would be why Tanzania has managed to remain peaceful during huge political changes despite a highly diversified ethnic composition. The answer to the question may not be simple. However, many cite the major reasons for same as one, the existence of the Swahili language as a lingua franca through which Tanzanians of all ethnic groups can communicate with one another and two, policies imposed by Julius Nyerere, the founding president of the dominant party Chama cha Mapinduzi, where he forged a sense of national unity among Tanzanians (Tong, 2009; Mujwahuzi, 2005; Michael, 1996). The following paragraph will attempt to discuss how he achieved that with an overarching approach:

As to the first reason, it is reiterated widely that Swahili as an indigenous lingua franca in Tanzania does not carry a taint of ethnic superiority and, as such, has provided a significant source of ethnic unity throughout the nationalist and independence periods (Malin, 2012; Jan, 1996; Brian, David,

and Ben, 1994). Swahili is the widespread national language understood by nearly the entire population in Tanzania (Laitin, 1992). It is widely aired as the primary reason for Tanzania's remarkable peace. While no observer would go to suggest that a common language alone could bring about ethnic peace, according to the above writings, at the same time, it is difficult to believe that Tanzania's culture of ethnic peace would have been possible without it.

Back to its emergence as a unifying force, since 1964, Swahili became the official language of government and education (Malin, 2012). The contribution by the former president Julius Nyerere to the consolidation of Swahili was immense where, being a teacher of both English and Swahili, he translated (and published) Shakespeare's Julius Caesar into Swahili (Malin, 2012; Bamgbose, 1991). Nyerere also proclaimed the use of the language, and it was during his leadership Tanzania became the first colonial liberated country in Africa to make a homegrown language or an African language the national one (Malin, 2012; Bamgbose, 1991). Following the declaration of Swahili as the national language in 1964, several institutes and organizations were established to coordinate and maintain the language.

During the decade following independence, the Tanzanian government aggressively promoted Swahili as a tool of common national identity and emphasized its use as the official language of government and as the language of instruction throughout the country's school system (A.Okion, 1972; Lyndon, 1969). Thus, Swahili, as a non-European language through which Tanzanians of all ethnic groups could readily communicate with one another, was a vitally important building block in the construction of an effective and truly nationalist movement (Jan, 1996). Here, of course, the newly independent government of Tanzania, in having inherited a national language that had been diffused widely by the German system of colonial administration as well as by coastal traders and merchants, enjoyed a considerable advantage (Lyndo, 1969). In general, since independence, Swahili has made it possible for teachers and civil servants to be posted to any region of the country, and not just the area where they are familiar with the local language (Brian, David, and Ben, 1994). Lionel Cliffe and co (1977) have suggested that Swahili is the common people's language of Tanzania and not the socially divisive colonial language of a small, educated elite group.

As to the second, many agree on the socially and politically constructed reality, the product of a set of self-conscious and deliberate policy choices adopted by Tanzania's political leaders in the early years of independence, as another important explanatory view to the ethnic peace in the country (Tong, 2009). With this respect, it is claimed that the conscious policy choices adopted by Tanzania's political leaders have made Tanzanians a less ethnically politicized nation 'despite' having around 120 ethnic groups (Jerman, 1997). In other words, Tanzania is recognized as a state in which ethnicity is not politically salient despite being ethnically diverse. But how is the question? The response to the question is embedded within the measures taken by Tanzania's founding father, Nyerere, in his attempt to forge national unity. Among the carefully crafted measures by the founding father of Tanzania include the commitment to the ideal state. As such, Nyerere forcefully downplayed the role of the ethnic association in public life and instead "accentuated a Tanzanian national identity" (Miguel, 2004:337).

Moreover, in an act that confirmed his commitment to moving beyond colonially inherited localized identities and taking the state closer to all parts of the country to further the national project, Nyerere relocated the capital of Tanzania from the coastal city of Dare Salaam to the more centrally-located Dodoma in 1973 (Collier, 2009). He also stopped collecting information on ethnic identity in national censuses and banned tribal unions and the mention of ethnic groups in newspapers (Tripp, 1999). A step in the same direction was the government's policy of allocating teachers and students to boarding schools and other government officials outside their home of origin (Heilman & John, 2012). Other initiatives included compulsory military training that mingled youth from all over the country and political education to instill a sense of patriotism, nation-building, and unity (Lupogo, 2001; Green, 2011).

In unpacking the ethnic socio-economic differences in the country during the colonial period, the Haya, the Chagga, and the Nyakyusa ethnic groups are perceived as having enjoyed disproportionate educational advantages during the colonial epoch. Consequently, it led to an occupational advantage for these ethnic groups in postcolonial Tanzania (Nyang'oro, 2004). On the same note, Jerman (1997) argues that the Haya and Nyakyusa dominate white-collar employment in Tanzania while the Chagga dominate private enterprise (Jerman, 1997). However, these perceptions of prejudice and discrimination have never been strong enough to manifest themselves and affect inter-ethnic relations in political and social domains. The reason for the same

is explained as that belief among Tanzanians that the disproportionate benefits in question are a product of colonialism. Whereas the socialist state has attempted to address the inequalities through equitable distribution of public goods (Nyang'oro, 2004).

Another worth note may be an explanation for the germination of ethnicity as a politically salient feature in a country may be attributed to, among other factors, the number and size of ethnic groups in a country (Posner, 2005; Barkan, 1994). Accordingly, ethnic structures can result in two opposing outcomes of an ethnic salience polity continuum; positive and negative (Bates, 1983). In this regard, countries with few and large ethnic groups are expected to be more ethnically politicized because these ethnic groups are large enough to win a majority in elections. As the base of support is an ethnic group, once politicians acquire political power, they distribute resources favorably to their co-ethnics. The contrary is true for countrysides with an array of small ethnic groups. Because it is difficult for politicians to reach out to and win votes from a myriad of ethnic groups nationally. Politicians under such circumstances strive more to sustain an ethnically inclusive posture by equitably distributing the spoils of the state (Bates, 1983). So, the issue would be where the Tanzanian case fits in this broad structural debate, and the answer seems palpable based on the discussions made thus far.

Despite the above note on Tanzania's experience of depoliticizing ethnicity in the nation-building move after independence, the approach, however, can hardly be said a welcome note by all. Some would argue the approach as suppression of identities, be it ethnic or religious identities in the country, whereas others magnify the move as the only option harnessing an ethnic peace in a nation-state. Laakso and Olukoshi (1996:29), while reflecting on a related issue, have noted that:

> *Ethnic and religious identities are certainly not necessarily detrimental to national unity, and this is a message which needs to be repeated at this crucial stage in Africa's political development. The path to a sustainable project of national unity is not to seek once again to suppress these identities; rather, the state itself will have to be re-constituted to embody the various identities of the groups that exist within its boundaries*.

Thus, it could be argued here that the interpretations of re-constituting a state and suppressing these identities need to be revisited to reconcile the two sides of the argument.

3.4. Reviewing Works on 'Resilience Experience of Communities to Violence' and its Importance for Peacebuilding.

People working for peace are present in every situation of violence and human suffering, no matter how deep and seemingly entrenched violence is. This has been demonstrated in numerous scholarly accounts where they evidenced that cases of non-violent communities, while they are rare, exist within a remarkable range of conflicts (Anderson and Wallace 2013; Kaplan 2013, 2017; Arjona 2016a). During the genocide in Rwanda, for example, in a cluster of communes around Giti, no massacres took place because the mayor calmed people down and resisted violence. Though the mayor was a member of the ruling party, he did not carry out orders, organize militias, or start killings (Straus 2006; Janzen 2000). Likewise, during the civil war in Burundi, one commune escaped killings during the initial years of the war because civilian leaders persuaded Hutus not to pursue violence against Tutsis (Lynch, 2014). Accounts of non-violence within conflict zones like the above exist in many cases. For that matter, the growing literature on zones of peace, infrastructures for peace, and other locally-led initiatives to create mechanisms for preventing and mitigating violence demonstrate the reality that this kind of agency for peace is alive and well in societies across the world today (Mitchell and Hancock, 2012).

Moreover, some genocide scholars have also documented such efforts by individual resisters or communities that refrained from violence. For instance, peace scholars like Mary Anderson and John Paul Lederach have demonstrated how communities within situations of violent conflict can and often do find creative ways of avoiding harm or pro-actively advancing peace (Mary Anderson 2016; Paul Lederach, 2005). Case studies from Colombia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, South Africa, the Philippines, and elsewhere also illustrated that resisting violence and acting for peace is common across cultures and geography, though its specific form and function may differ (Bridget, 2016). Thus, drawing an explanation for the non-violence of some communities instead of the others requires systematic comparative analysis and triangulation, just as narratives of violence are complex and multifaceted.

In their work, *Opting Out of War*, Anderson and Wallace (2013) examined such communities that should have succumbed to violence due to proximity or characteristics (demography, economic status, and the like) shared with warring neighbors but rather chose not to engage in violence, and in some instances worked to actively restore or spread peace within civil war contexts. The authors

identified a set of common capacities and strategies that enabled them to opt-out of war. These communities, according to them, conducted a collective calculation of the costs of violence versus non-violence, developed options, adopted a pragmatic non-war identity that resonated with their culture and history, and communicated group values that helped them to distance themselves from war and violence (Anderson and Wallace, 2013). Based on relative risk, they collectively organized early warning systems and other activities and remained cohesive in the face of threats, keeping community life normal. They did not take the fight to external fighters but focused on community solidarity and survival (Anderson and Wallace, 2013).

Accordingly, Wallace and Anderson (2013) identified key characteristics across these cases like community cohesion, leadership, consultation, communication, and a willingness and ability to engage with armed groups as common factors that may help communities opt-out of violence. Notably, the study finds international involvement to have played little to no role in these communities' choices to opt out of violence. Anderson and Wallace's book provides a critical jumping-off point and inspiration for understanding how local initiatives by communities to avert violence might be relevant to atrocity prevention. The authors note:

> *The experiences of these non-war communities remind us that oppositions exist. They remind us that capacities exist. They teach us that communities of people have the agency to shape things, even in the face of seemingly awful odds, to preserve the values they share and their ways of life. These lessons are not trivial* (Anderson and Wallace, 2013:176).

In another study, Varshney (2002), in his seminal work on the relationship between the structure of civil society and the outbreak of ethnic violence in India, has studied six cities broken down into three pairs coupled by similar ethnic makeup to analyze why, when experiencing an exogenous shock, one community within each pair remained peaceful, and the other did not. He concluded that those cities with institutionalized peace systems could absorb such shocks without outbreaks of communal violence than those without. While Varshney does not explicitly focus on resilience, his conceptual framework does relate closely to the formulation of resilience and adaptive systems within conflict zones. An important component of community resilience to violence, according to him, is existing local networks of civic engagement among ethnic groups. Associational forms of civic engagement (that is, organized networks bound together by working trust across ethnic groups, such as business associations, labor unions, and organized clubs) are

more resilient to violence than inter-communal quotidian or daily associations, such as interactions at markets, soccer games, or festivals.

Amy Carpenter's book "Havens in a Firestorm: Perspectives from Baghdad on Resilience to Sectarian Violence" is another work worth citing in community resilience discussion. Carpenter's assessment of the sectarian conflict in Baghdad identifies a two-part framework for conflict resilience: regime characteristics and community competence (Carpenter, 2014). The general capacities that Iraqi communities tapped into for resilience to sectarian violence, according to her, include: political and social structures (such as salient norms, social institutions and networks, and the political system); economic resources (such as economic resources to sustain community well-being, capacity to adapt to the changing environment through access to diversified economic assets, and proximity to strategically important economic assets (transportation hubs, trade routes, infrastructure); information and communication (such as sources of information, spaces for sharing information, and interpretation of events by the communicative ability of leaders); and social capital (such as sense of community, citizen participation, and community attachment that enable people to work together for a common purpose) (Carpenter, 2014).

In general, an underlying theme of Carpenter's work is on the relationship of resilience to fragility, which highlights that flexibility is often a key quality of resilience. On the other hand, rigidity or hardening of perspectives occurs as conflict escalates, especially about how groups or individuals begin to perceive the other. North (1990), on the other hand, while discussing the importance of local institutions, claimed that local institutions are the rules of the game in every society. Therefore, understanding how they function is paramount because these institutions are mechanisms where people survive the hard times. Putnam (2000) also asserted that social capital maintains the society together by establishing the necessary societal cohesion at all levels. While speaking of social and political cohesion, it is argued that societal resilience relies not merely on horizontal social cohesion but also vertical cohesion. What matters is not just what is embedded in the relationships among people or groups but also between people and the state and other societal institutions. This is similarly captured in the important distinction between notions of bonding social capital (between members of a community), bridging social capital (which connects different communities or groups), and linking social capital (connecting these groups through mediated relationships via institutions, norms, and the state, etc.) (Putnam, 2000).

Other scholars like Oliver Kaplan (2013), Casey Barrs (2010), and Helen Berents (2014) have also attempted to build the evidence base for community-based violence prevention through particular case studies. Examining communities in Colombia and the Philippines that remained peaceful amid war, they again affirm that local actors can and do demonstrate agency even within situations of severe violence and entrenched conflict, often without external support or intervention (Kaplan, 2013; Berents, 2014; Barrs, 2010). In his research on how civilians survive violence, Casey Barrs (2010), in particular, finds local communities can and do employ a range of strategies to protect themselves without reliance on outside interveners. In her research on youth in Colombia, Berents (2014) finds that children demonstrate peace agency through the creative use of spaces available to them to make sense of the violence around them and foster a different and more constructive environment. These spaces, in turn, provide important arenas and resources for sustaining positive engagement and interaction across potential conflict lines. As such, it appears as a lesson directly relevant to atrocity prevention and a growing focus on providing constructive youth alternatives to help avoid recruitment and mobilization for violence (Berents, 2014).

Apart from what has been said so far, in the international community's atrocity prevention agenda, the voices and experiences of local peacebuilders that have experienced mass violence also hold some insights. In line with that, Laura Shipler, in her book "This Light That Pushes Me: Stories of African Peacebuilders," profiles the personal experiences and photographs of nearly 40 individuals from across the continent who are actively working for peace amid or in the aftermath of war and genocide (Shipler, 2014). Peacebuilders from places like Tanzania and South Africa and individuals who survived and sometimes participated in mass violence in Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sierra Leone, and Uganda were profiled. According to Shipler's book, their decisions to work for peace amid violence point to a diverse set of motivating factors behind. They include religious values, transformational personal experiences (some were child soldiers or were saved by others), hope for a different future, and the influence and relationship with particular people in their families and communities (Shipler, 2014).

Generally, the works mentioned above and other research (Wood 2003b; Kalyvas 2006) suggest that most conflict-prone regions embrace pockets of non-violence also. For that matter, peace research has documented 'zones of peace' and emphasized 'positive' civilian agency for violence

prevention, i.e., civilian resistance to war dynamics and attempts to preserve safe spaces within war zones (Hancock 2017; Hancock and Mitchell 2007). Moreover, recent research into non-violent communities in the Columbian civil war by Ana Arjona (Arjona 2016a.) and Oliver Kaplan (Kaplan 2017) offered more systematic analyses and valuable insights into civilian self-protection strategies and interaction with armed groups. Both Arjona (2016) and Kaplan (2017) concluded that the institutional capacity of local communities is key because it would allow them to settle their disputes and enable collective action and resistance against armed groups. In the same vein, many scholarly works have been emerging on the importance of resilience and local capacities for building durable peace in conflict-prone states these days.

Scholarly works that link resilience and Peacebuilding such as Menkhaus (2013), Milliken (2014), Oliver and Moncef (2012), researches on building peace at the grass-root level through sustained dialogue and trust-building by Brouneus and Svensson (2013), Kydd (2000), Hoffman (2002), works on local peace committees by Odendaal (2010), Mitchell and Hancock (2012), Casey (2010), among the many, in one way or another focus on the importance of working on local capacities and strengthening the resilience of communities for building a sustained peace. Moreover, it is also common to read international reports focusing on the importance of building on communities' resilience and local capacities for building sustainable peace (FAR, 2016, Interpeace, 2016, CEPAD, 2015).

However, as noted in the problem statement discussion, there is also a need to bear in mind that such resilience capacities are not inherently benevolent, nor do they automatically translate to peace for the wider society. That is in cognizance that some strategies people use to protect their community from conflict may imply resorting to violence. Thus, for local actors to use their resilience capacities towards peace, they need to know and value their individual and collective potential to overcome obstacles to peace peacefully. They also need to identify which resilient actions, intentional or not, may contribute to greater violence and polarization. In general, such local peace agents may help a few people, but their efforts will ultimately be overwhelmed by a broader systemic organization for violence (especially when high-level authorities are actively mobilizing toward mass killing).

Moreover, had these efforts been recognized, supported, strengthened, and backed up by the international community much earlier and in more effective ways, they might have succeeded in averting the atrocities we are witnessing these days. As Hattingh de Coning (2013) suggests, conflicts are, in fact, so complex that they cannot be resolved without an approach that actively engages local leadership at the forefront. Social network, Social Solidarity, and Social Capital and Systems theory, among others, are also teaching us to look at conflict as an interactive process where small change initiatives can grow and transform entire societies if they gain enough power. However, this does not suggest that local communities should be left by themselves once violence is underway or if mass killing seems imminent. If mass atrocities are underway, it might appear appropriate for external actors to intervene, but they should do so, to the greatest extent possible, in ways that reinforce local leadership for peace and strengthen local resilience against violence. But the problem is locals, too often, rather than being at the center of analysis and action, end up on the margins. That being an issue, this study aims to explore local capacities and resilience mechanisms as input for positive societal change and a way for sustainable peace in Ethiopia with a case study of the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* community *Arsi* Zone of Oromia.

3.5. Resilience Studies in Ethiopia and the Gap

Local capacity studies in Ethiopia are not new. Despite many works that appreciate the role of local institutions in conflict resolution in the Ethiopian context (works like Gondooroo as an Indigenous Method of Conflict Resolution and Justice Administration by Gumi, 2016, Women and Indigenous Conflict Resolution Institutions in Oromia: Experience from Siinqee of the Wayyu Shanan Arsi Oromo in Adami Tullu by Jemila, 2014, Wayyuu, Siinqee and Gora among the Arsi and Guji Oromo by Ayalew, 2012, The Siinqee- Women's Institution for Conflict Resolution in Arsii by Tolossa, 2011, The role of Elders in conflict resolution: The Case of Arsi Oromo with special Reference to Dodolla district and its Environments by Mamo, 2008, Traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution (TMCR) in Ethiopia by Tarekegn, 2008, Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Ethiopia. In: Federalism, Conflict and Peace Building by Tirsit, 2004, Indigenous Mechanisms for the Prevention and Resolution of Conflict: The Experience of the Oromo in Ethiopia by Assefa, 2003), it hardly can be said sufficient scholarly works exist that appreciate local capacity from a resilience and Peacebuilding vantage point.

Apart from that, works that appraise the resilience responses and mechanisms of communities in Ethiopia in general and in the study area, in particular, related to peace and violence are scant. For that matter, despite a long history of religious tolerance in the country, recent tensions point to a more pronounced picture of religion playing a role in conflict dynamics in Ethiopia. Meaning, though the long history of Ethiopia's robust religious pluralism and peaceful co-existence, these days, however, we have witnessed the hardening of inter-religious boundaries and the rise of violent inter-faith conflicts in different parts of the country. Likewise can be said concerning ethnic conflicts where multiple conflicts with ethnicity bearings have rocked the country these days (see discussion under chapter four; see also Yonas, 2019; Haustein and Ostebo 2019, 2011; Meron, 2013). *Arsi* zone, as discussed before, is no exception to the problem where it has witnessed religious and ethnic tensions on many occasions, thereby manifesting itself as a challenge to durable Peacebuilding (see discussion under chapter four).

However, in parlance to the important illustration on how religion served as a local capacity and community resilience in Rwanda, for instance, the question would be: how far similar studies have been conducted in the context of different violence in Ethiopia? What role did religion or other societal values play in building a resilient community? What could be the reasons that in a given neighborhood, communities remain non-violent while others are rocking by violence? These and related issues amongst the Ethiopian community in general and in the study locality, in particular, have not been given adequate focus.

In the attempt to unearth these and related issues, the researcher can know little about their coverage in terms of analytical depth, thematic focus, cultural backgrounds, and geographic locations (which may be partly because most studies in our context are scattered inaccessible, and inadequately cross-referenced). This is also partly because the limited emphasis is given in analyzing the endogenous capacities for peace and the resilience of communities to prevent violent acts, particularly resilience to ethno-religious violence. This study, therefore, will strive to fill the gap with this respect.

In doing so, it is particularly important to investigate the social cohesion, social capitals, community protection strategies, civic engagement of citizens, interreligious Peacebuilding efforts, if any, as well as participatory conflict prevention mechanisms to violence and so forth.

Hence, the main question in the dissertation becomes why communities' aren't descending to violence despite continuous ethno-religious violence in their neighborhoods rather than why they are violent. As such, it assumes a resilience-based approach.

Finally, this dissertation departs from dominant conflict literature that focuses on the causes and consequences of conflict. Accordingly, it builds on the assumption and argument that continuous pressure to descend a community to violence just like neighborhood areas/*woredas* produces community resilience by prompting the people to even strengthen their relation, networks, social infrastructure, and existing institutions (formal/informal/both) and also by empowering it to create new ones. On another note, however, a community's resilience to pressures of violence could sometimes be susceptible to diminishing due to other divisive factors within the community. As such, the dissertation has also strived to investigate factors that can diminish the community's resilience to pressures of ethno-religious violence in the long run.

Chapter four: Explaining Identity Politics, Ethno-Religious Violence and Resilience Experiences in Post 1991 Ethiopia

4.1. Introduction

Ethiopia is a country of great diversities characterized by multiple identities in her ethnic and religious domain. Over the years, ethno-religious crises have been a fundamental issue that posed security challenges in Ethiopia. In recent times the country has witnessed a lot of violent eruptions and general insecurity. Today, aside from the alarming case of underdevelopment in the country, the up-surging waves of violent conflicts have left much to wonder. The recent security challenges in the country are cases in this regard. Conflicts of ethnic as well as religious nature have brought about instability, loss of lives and have disrupted the peaceful co-existence of the Ethiopian people. Its adverse effects have been felt in villages, businesses, and investments. In no measurement can it be an exaggeration if it is said that it has threatened national unity and security. The thrust of this chapter is to make a critical reflection on post-1991 developments in the Ethiopian political landscape and the upheavals that followed the same, with a particular emphasis on various episodes of ethno-religious violence. At the other end of the discussion, a proper reflection shall also be made on the traditions of resilience to ethno-religious violence among the different communities in Ethiopia. However, it is not the intention of the section to exhaustively deal with post-1991 ethno-religious violence in the country.

4.2. Identity Politics and Post 1991 Ethiopia

Identity politics is an increasingly popular term to describe numerous modern political movements. Hill and Wilson (2003:2) define identity politics as "a type of formal, structural, and public politics, practiced by governments, parties, and corporate institutions, in the political arenas of cities, regions, and states…" Osaghae and Suberu (2005), on their part, conceptualize identity politics as the political activity of various ethnic-religious and cultural groupings in demanding greater economic, social, and political rights or self-determination. Thus, it claims to represent and seek to advance a particular group's interests, the members of whom often share and unite around the common experience of perceived social and economic injustice (Ambe-Uva, 2010).

Identity politics is also about recognizing the presence of a repressed or suppressed culture, people, values, and ways of life (Nnoli, 1980). Within this context, it assumes a political action to advance the interests of members of a group that claims to be oppressed under a shared or marginalized identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, and religion (Kauffman, 1990). Such actions usually give rise to a political basis ground in society which they may unite and begin to assert themselves (Zweri and Zahid, 2007). Hence, identity politics means recognizing ethnic, religious, or cultural identity more than solely. It seeks to carry these identities forward, beyond mere self-identification to a political framework based upon that identity.

The facilitation of ‘recognition and accommodation’ of groups who feel excluded from the larger society is all about identity politics. Young (1989) and Kymlicka (1999), on their part, conceive identity politics from the vantage point of ‘group representation rights.' 'Disadvantaged groups rights' and demand for ‘representation rights’ needs to be viewed under the same theme because it is a demand for inclusion. The major problem with the notion of ‘group representation rights,’ nonetheless, is how to measure and determine or identify the truly disadvantaged groups because many groups claim to be disadvantaged in some respects. It would be important to note that some liberals strongly object to ‘group representation rights on the ground that institutionalizing group differences and ascribing political salience to them would have serious implications for social unity. To Iwara (2004), the phrase ‘identity politics’ suggests that considerations of ethnicity, cultural and religious affinity predominate and influence policies and decision-making regarding political appointments and distributions of other public resources.

In any case, identity politics have a lot in common with ethnic identity, only that the former is somewhat broader than the latter (Fukuyuma, 2018). Ethnic identity has its foundations in combined remembrances of past experience and common aspirations, values, norms, and expectations. To Ahmed (1998), ethnic identity is an important variable in societal interaction. It serves as an essential psychological and emotional role in social life and as a basis for collective action (Ahmed, 1998).

In general, one can note that people identify with others by ethnicity, race, nationality, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, age, ideology, and other social markers. No

single group identity or even all group identities taken together comprehend a person's whole. Nevertheless, a commonly shared identification around any of the above characteristics of a person often leads to group identity (Fukuyuma, 2018). Group identities are as abundant in democracies as they are controversial. These days, it is challenging to accept an understanding of politics that abstracts from groupings by race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion, or class. As Francis Fukuyama (2018:16-17) noted:

> *In all cases, a group, whether a great power such as Russia or China or voters in the United States or Britain, believes that it has an identity that is not being given adequate recognition—either by the outside world, in the case of a nation, or by other members of the same society. Those identities can be and are incredibly varied, based on nation, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender. They are all manifestations of a common phenomenon of identity politics*.

In strengthening his assertion above, Fukuyama (2018:92) has also stated that:

> *Again and again, groups have come to believe that their identities— whether national, religious, ethnic, sexual, gender, or otherwise—are not receiving adequate recognition. Identity politics is no longer a minor phenomenon, playing out only in the rarified confines of university campuses or providing a backdrop to low-stakes skirmishes in "culture wars" promoted by the mass media. Instead, identity politics has become a master concept that explains much of what is going on in global affairs.*

The debate on whether identity politics does matter is a continuing reality among scholars. Some scholars argue that identity politics matters significantly, and they defend it as an instrument for social change (Sanchez, 2006), for social "recognition: (Brunt, 1989), and for respecting social "differences" (Young, 1990). Sanchez (2006:31-33) believes that identity politics matters because it has the potential to create and develop an "agent" of change capable of altering structural power relations. Brunt (1989) suggests that it matters because it allows members of a society to acknowledge and recognize various social groups. Building on Brunt's idea, Axel Honneth (1995) argues that recognition has three phases: demand for love, demands for rights, and demand for recognition. The demand for love implies that the basis of identity politics is building "self-

confidence"; the demand for rights is about recognizing others as equal human beings, and the demand for recognition is about mutual respect and social tolerance.

Young (1990: 130-131) defines identity politics as "the politics of differences" in a similar line of reasoning. According to her, the politics of differences necessitates recognition of "self" and "other" as well as taking "the differences" of groups seriously in assessing social and political relations. At a minimum level, taking differences seriously can lead to social diversity in which members of various groups develop a mutual and a more "comprehensive understanding of issues" concerning the entire society (Young, 1990). Moreover, it is also an important choice for respecting social, cultural, and ideological differences in a political setting (Honneth, 1995).

In contrast, another group of scholars criticizes identity politics as an opposition to liberal universalism and a force that creates more social exclusion and social differences (Brown, 1995; Wolin, 1993; Bourne, 1987). It has also received enormous criticism as a "negative" force which further exacerbates social exclusion and social divisions (Brown, 1995; Wolin, 1993; Bourne, 1987). The critics of identity politics see no future for identity politics and no "triumph over the pain they embrace" (Hekman, 2004: 88). In Bourne's (1987:1) words, "identity politics is all the rage. Exploitation is out (it is extrinsically determinist). Oppression is in (it is intrinsically personal). What is to be done is replaced by who am I." Many mention here the bloodiest examples resulting from the politicization of ethnic and religious identities in the 'invention' of the people of the Balkans (Michael, 2010). Therefore, the analysis of identity politics in this context confirms the worst apprehensions. According to this assertion, identity politics is constituted through interested actors. It serves to retain their power and often leads to political instability and violent conflict due to competition between self-interested elites (Michael, 2010). Michael also depicts Riedel's observation on the issue by saying that:

> *Identity politics, with its static concept of ethnicity, is not fit to account for the permanent alterations of and the mutual influence and overlap between different subjective identities. Therefore any order that structurally links political institutions with religion or ethnicity will sooner or later cause societal conflict* (Michael, 2010: 113).

As the debate goes on, politics in the 21st century is more defined by questions of identity than by economic or ideological concerns (Fukuyama, 2018). As noted by Francis Fukuyama (2018), now, in many democracies, the left focuses more on promoting the interests of a variety of marginalized groups, including women, ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees, Etc. The right, in the meantime, has redefined its core mission as traditional national identity protector. This patriotic protection is often explicitly connected to race, ethnicity, or religion. Hence, identity politics in the modern world is inescapable, though, at the same time, it is widely criticized.

The post-1991 development in Ethiopia seems to align with this assertion by Fukuyama. In post-1991 Ethiopia, following the restructuring of the Ethiopian state as an 'Ethnic' based federalism, there has been a transformation process, particularly concerning ethnicity. However, the transformation process cannot be fully understood without locating them within the historical processes of state formation. While much has been discussed on the top-down nature of modern state formation and nation-building in Ethiopia (Markakis, 2011; Teshale 1995; Bahiru, 1991), Ethiopian nationalist groups have shared profoundly different visions of history and identity, each connecting past and present through different political interpretation and, at times, contradictory narrations of various contenders of power at the local level (Dereje, 2006). For that matter, the history of modern Ethiopia was recorded for some as glories of victory and conquest and hence, was all a normal process of 'nation building' (Maimire, 2006; Bahru, 1991; Tekletsadik, 1982), while for some others as a history of exclusion and marginalization (Tekalign, 2004; Markakis, 1998, Abbink, 1998; Clapham, 1994). Other political elites even stated that it must be seen as 'internal colonialism' (see, for example, Assefa, 2002: 43).

While the contention on the understanding of the history of modern Ethiopia stands as it is, modern Ethiopia, as Emperor Menelik II created it, is composed of several ethno-linguistic communities with different histories, languages, and cultures (Galperin, 1981). However, the nation-building process of the monarchy, which used the politics of divine power and Orthodox Christian state religion, had neglected the interests of the bulk of the ethno-linguistic groups. As a result, the various ethnic groups of the country were forced not only to submit to the centralized monarchy's rule but also to adopt the language, culture, religion Etc. of the monarchy (Kymlicka, 2007; Tekalign, 2004; Clapham, 1993; Gebru, 1991; Young, 1996; Strecker, 1994). Therefore, the process of empire building in a manner that did not reflect the multiethnic composition of the

country resulted in the formation of ethnic-based political parties. This is evidenced by the political parties established in the names of the major ethnic groups as liberation and secession movements like in the cases of the EPLF-Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (which has already succeeded in its political program of independence), TPLF-Tigrean Peoples' Liberation Front, OLF-Oromo Peoples' Liberation Front, ALF-Afar Peoples' Liberation Front Etc (Bahru, 1991). In 1974 the Socialist government, Dergue, which took power following the overthrowing of the monarchy, made some political reforms like popular sovereignty, secularism, and land as public property into the nation state-building process. However, it addressed the dissatisfactions of the different ethnic groups through military force until it was overthrown in 1991 by the ethnic-based political parties (Mamo and Papadopoulos, 2004).

The new federal constitution established upon a structural foundation for post-1991 Ethiopia was ratified in 1995 (Fasil, 1997). As such, the constitution sets out a new federal arrangement based on ethnic identity, bestows popular sovereignty on ethnic groups, and endows self-determination rights, including "the right to secessions" to nations, nationalities, and peoples (Assefa, 2007; Chirstopher, 2006; Turton, 2006; Lovise, 2002). Moreover, the post-1991 Ethiopian political landscape is premised on the policy of rectifying the unjust historical relations that existed among the different ethnic groups[3]. Thus, the identity causes /'questions of nationalities'/ are the bases for the creations and struggles of the ethnic-based political parties that formed a coalition under the name Ethiopian peoples' revolutionary democratic front (EPRDF) as well as the other political parties in the country (Asnake, 2002). This identity is also played out in how the country is structured along the lines of religion, language, culture, ethnicity, regional identity, and religion (Alem, 2004).

The post-1991 Ethiopian political dynamics /inter-ethnic relations/ can therefore be characterized by ethnicization of all the state structures, distribution of resources, and political powers. Alem (2004: 91) describes the same as follows: "[i]n 1991 the Ethiopian government-employed ethnic pluralism as an organizing principle, creating multiple ethnic-based territorial units with a "right

[3] A note for the same can be made by reading the preamble of the Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia Constitution, 21st August 1995. Proclamation No.1/1995, Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1st Year, No. 1 Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing Enterprise.

of secession" provision." Following the same, ethnicization of the political culture and the politicization of ethnic identity as the primary vehicle for claims and entitlements to economic resources and political power become the norm (Mamo and Papadopoulos, 2004). Accordingly, the civic basis for politics was displaced by the legalization of ethnic ideology, the creation of ethnic-based political organizations, the creation of ethnic-designated regional states, and the division of the country's territory predominantly along ethnic lines (Mamo and Papadopoulos, 2004). In general, ethnicity has been formally institutionalized and got constitutional recognition after 1991, which some would call 'Formal Ethnicity' (Woldesellasie, 2001).

Despite creating ethnic federalism as an endeavor to address identity-related problems in Ethiopia, many ethno-religious conflicts have occurred after 1991 (Assefa, 2002; Asnake, 2002; Mark, 2002). Today, the quest for socio-economic and political supremacy has characterized the Ethiopian political landscape. The political elites have adopted ethnic and religious strategies to further their interest. The Party system in the country hardly differs from the assertion made above. Furthermore, not always within formal parties, opposition groups have also used religious issues to score political points. Of course, that goes in line with the claim that where identity politicization and mobilization are high political parties are likely to be mainly organized along ethnic lines. Under such conditions, as Lijphart (1997) and Cho (2007) note, crafting a political system that accommodates the interests and demands of competing ethnic groups becomes highly challenging. It becomes highly challenging, especially where some forms of proportional representation and consociational decision-making systems are not in a place like Ethiopia. Moreover, exclusively regionally based parties, particularly of identity-based ones (either ethnic or religious), are risky because unless they are counterbalanced by multi-ethnic-based parties to bridge them at the center, they can lead to a deadlock, as is the case in Belgium, or even to fragmentation, as was the case in the failed communist federations (Assefa, 2012).

Today, Ethiopia presents a complex of an individual as well as cross-crossing and recursive identities of which the ethnic, religious, regional, and sub-ethnic (communal) are the most salient and the main basis for violence in the country. Political parties are based on the ethnic origin of their leaders rather than on right- or left-wing ideologies. Despite those claims, what characterizes the Ethiopian political landscape is that two or more political organizations emerged with

contending claims of being the proper representatives of just the same ethnic group (Markakis, 2011). Many of these organizations grappled with each other either for intragroup political supremacy or for realizing a new form of ethnonational identity, and in a few cases, with an explicit or implicit tendency of distinctive statehood (Markakis, 2011).

While politicization of ethnic identity as the primary vehicle for claims and entitlements to economic resources and political power in post-1991 Ethiopia can be captured in gruesome as discussed above, in the meantime, any examination of Ethiopia's identity would necessarily have to be inclusive of all assumptions as discussed in the preceding section. Those who put too much emphasis on the objective (resource-conflict) factors often have trouble understanding the role of identity, prestige, political and social status in a conflict, and those who also over-emphasize primordial/identity factors have trouble understanding the fact that political and economic factors are often part of the political game (Vanhanen, 1999; Keen, 1999). That is so because, for instance, the instrumentalists, by focusing on the more objective variables (economic and political factors), often fail to consider the identity factor as a cause of tension in multicultural societies. They, in particular, fail to recognize the 'passions and emotions' involved in identity-based conflicts. As Connor (1994: 206) pointed out, "Men do not allow themselves to be killed for their interests; they allow themselves to be killed for their passions."

Moreover, as Francis Fukuyama (2018: 18) stated, 'while the economic inequalities arising from the last fifty or so years of globalization are a major factor explaining contemporary politics, economic grievances become much more acute when they are attached to feelings of indignity and disrespect'. Thus, in conceptualizing ethnicity in the context of multiethnic and pluralistic societies, it is crucial to consider complex and dynamic historical processes and factors. In other words, an inclusive examination of all factors is useful as it enables one to situate the various contexts of identity-related problems, especially the more active and politically salient identities in their fuller, robust and recursive contents.

It is imperative that group identity, as it is controversial, is everywhere. Moreover, there is no such evidence in western democracies that demonstrate the achievement of democracy, economic prosperity, and personal tolerance would lead to the "abetment of ethno-cultural mobilization" (Kymlicka, 2002:82-83). On the contrary, ethno-cultural demands have increased throughout

western and non-western societies. Instead, it is argued that the achievement of democratization, prosperity, and tolerance have direct implications for increased ethno-cultural mobilization (Kymlicka, 2002). In line with that, Post-Cold War developments, as well as empirical evidence from multicultural societies, hint that identity does not necessarily disappear from the face of the political discourse, even if economic and political situations are favorably accommodative, let alone when it is a state target of destruction under the guise of 'nation building' (Horowitz, 1985; Wendt, 1999; Smith 1991).

At the same time, as stated repeatedly in the literature, group identity is not a threat to stability, nor is it necessarily a cause of conflict. As dozens of studies suggest, what explains social conflict and democratic breakdowns is the role of ethnicity in the political process than ethnicity per se (Wolff, 2006; Posner, 2005; Miguel, 2004; Chandra, 2004; Zartman, 2000; Horowitz, 2000; Gagnon, 1994-1995). Wolff (2006), in particular, observes that ethnicity on its own does not cause conflict as several factors are always at play in each conflict situation, arguing that identity is a fact of human existence, and to what use they deploy it is that makes the difference between ethnic cohesion, harmony or conflict. The political salience of ethnicity is linked to increased ethnic favoritism (Posner, 2005; Chandra, 2004) and an inter-ethnic cooperation which is low at the local level (Miguel, 2004). In other words, the diversity of interests and perspectives that emerge from the plurality of identities may not in themselves be a source of conflict if the liberal conceptions of citizenship in which the rights and obligations of individuals are well established, and the institutions that guarantee such rights are firmly in place (Miguel, 2004). The problem, however, is that such conditions rarely exist, and in their absence, individuals tend to rely on their ethnic membership for security, social support, and access to resources.

Thus, what ties the ethno-religious violence in many African countries are claims and counter-claims over identity as a basis for determining who is excluded or included from decision making as well as access to opportunities and privileges under the 'us' versus 'them' formula (Ghai and Cottrell, 2008; Wolff, 2006).

Hence, how activists define the in-group and out-group relationship (the 'us' versus 'them' sentiment) is crucial in conflict dynamics. Accordingly, the more confrontational the definition is, the more it will lead to conflict. What follows from the same is that identity-based loyalties easily

become a source of mobilization when conflict over resources and power leads to antagonistic rivalries. As Will kymlicka (1995) noted, the contemporary challenge to multicultural society is how to accommodate ethnic and national differences in a stable and morally defensible manner.

4.3. Overview of Ethno-Religious Violence in Post 1991 Ethiopia

4.3.1. Ethno-Religious Violence in Post 1991 Ethiopia: Explaining the Context

Currently, most multiethnic African countries suffer ethno- religious violence. Ethno-religious violence in a multicultural polity such as Ethiopia generally refers to a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic group and another, or one religious group and another is characterized by a lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion, and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontations (Achumba et al. 2013; Salawu, 2010, Jega, 2002). Salawu (2010: 347) notes that an ethno-religious conflict is different from other types of social conflict because “it involves various ethnic groups practicing different religions.” In cognizance of the fact that it is not the intention of the paper to evaluate whether the conflicts in the Ethiopian context have both ethnic and religious elements or other correlations, this section shall only strive to mention some notable cases of ethnic and religious conflicts and explain reasons for the increase of occurrences in post-1991 Ethiopia.

That said, post-1991, Ethiopia has experienced a spate of ethno-religious crises characterized by violence leading to loss of lives, monumental damages of properties, and political instabilities (Turner, 2011; Assefa, 2002; Horowitz, 2000). Despite the strong assertion that the new state structure in post-1991 Ethiopia would mitigate or avert violent identity conflicts, the country has rather witnessed resurgence in high-level ethnic, religious, communal, and citizenship conflicts with devastating consequences. In recent times, particularly following the post-2018 political developments, the country has increasingly experienced a plethora of traumatic religious, ethnic, and communal conflicts and violence (Yonas, 2019b; Semir, 2019). These crises have led to widespread and intense internal conflicts that have exploited the myth of national solidarity, perhaps putting its influence on the nation's social fabric. The country’s national security has been affected more than one; its culminate effects have been felt in villages, businesses, and investments.

Incidents of ethnic as well as religious violence that indicate the problem are many. Unsurprisingly, frequent conflicts between the *Oromos* and *Amharas* living in Oromia led to the loss of life and destruction of property in 2000 (Assefa, 2012). *Bedeno, Arba Gugu*, and *Gara Muletta* are clear instances of a case in point (Assefa, 2012). In the same year, a violent and bloody conflict between the two ethnic groups was also witnessed in *Horo, Addis Alem, Kiramu*, and Northeastern *Wollega* ear (Asnake, 2002). Violent conflicts within and between the *Somalis* and *Oromos* pastoral groups of Ethiopia's Southern and Eastern parts are also not a new phenomenon (Asnake, 2002). The June 2006 conflicts between *Guji* and *Borena* communities claimed the lives of many and displaced thousands (Abbink, 2006). Violent conflict between the "indigene" and "highlanders" in Gambella is also worth noting (Dereje, 2006).

The *Silte-Gurage* conflict, which manifested itself as *Silte* ethnic self-assertion based on a difference of language and Islamic faith, was another notable post-1991 identity-related conflict (Makoto, 2005). Though this very problem was claimed by some writers like Asnake (2002) as based on incompatibility of interests, it is undeniable that identity politics played a role in magnifying the question and bringing it to the forefront as never seen before. Ethnic violence in the *Oromia* and the *Somali* regional states, especially along the border, was also a recent phenomenon (Yonas, 2019b; IDMC, 2018). Tigrayans were forced out of *Amhara* and different parts of Ethiopia; *Amharas* were expelled from *Oromia* and *Benishangul Gumuz* (Crisis Group, 2019; IDMC, 2018). It was not that long that violent conflicts between the *Oromo* and *Gedeo* ethnic groups displaced dozens of people in the western *Guji* and *Gedeo* zones of neighboring *Oromia* and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2018; IDMC, 2018). Many innocent Ethiopians have died in the southern cities of *Hawassa* and *Sodo* as well as in *Moyale* and *Dire Dawa* because of ethnic violence (Crisi Group, 2018, 2019). Moreover, it is a recent memory (September 2018) that civilians were killed in Ashewa Meda, in *Burayu* town of *Addis Ababa (*Yonas, 2019b) and also in *Kemise* of *Oromo* Special Zone, Amhara Regional State (Semir, 2019). Moreover, scores of civilians from the Gamo and Ghuraghe ethnic groups were also targeted and killed by unidentified assailants around the capital city, *Addis Ababa*, in 2018 (ETV, 2018; FBC, 2018).

Furthermore, religious tensions in Ethiopia, a country where for centuries Christians and Muslims lived in harmony and won international acclaim for tolerating each other, can be said to have reached their climax these days. Before mentioning the recent incidents, one may not skip the notable 2006 violent religious incident in the country that raised the eye brows of many. The violence occurred around *Jimma* and *Begi* (Wollega) in 2006 in connection with *Timket*[4]*celebration* in a village outside Jimma, and gradually spread to the *Begi* area and had resulted in casualties on both sides, including the burning of churches (Jorg and Terje, 2011). Many other events also pointed to the sharpened antagonism between parts of the Christian and Muslim communities. Abbink (2011) noted that dozens of incidents were reported in the press, from clashes in *Addis Ababa*, *Harar, Kemise*, and *Gondar*, to killings and church burnings in *Agarro, Alaba* in 2005 and Wolenkomi towns in 2010. Public displays of collective religious celebration in the proximity of the house of worship of another faith often evoked enmity and led to clashes (Abbink, 2011).

Apart from those mentioned thus far, a handful of documented or undocumented incidents can be forwarded as evidence that the religious equilibrium in the country is collapsing very quickly. It is becoming common to hear localized violent episodes on several occasions in recent times. Some of these cases include: the August 2018 incident in *Jijiga* town and which was later spread to *Dire Dawa* City Administration (Crisis Group, 2018, 2019; EBC, 2018; BBC Amharic, 2018; VOA 2018); the February 2016 incident in the West Arsi *Zone* of Oromia (HRC, 2017; US Department of State, 2017); and the October 2019 incident in *Harar, Adama, Koffelle, Arsi Bale*. These incidents have resulted in maiming and killings of several persons, loss of properties and business investments. In general, across the country, particularly more recently, there has been a sharp escalation in community tensions and local clashes between different ethnic groups or between different religious groups. While it is impossible to know the exact number of ethnic or religious conflicts in the country due to lack of adequate statistical data on this issue, it is, however, sound to say that such incidents are much more numerous than under any previous regime.

[4]Timket is an Amharic word used to refer to the Ethiopian Epiphany

Many writers have viewed the reasons for the plethora of ethno-religious violence in post-1991 Ethiopia. The defining of the political discourse mainly in ethnic terms has been attributed by many as igniting conflicts and tensions in a society (Lincoln, 2000; Teka 1998; Poluha 1998). Poluha (1998) maintains that politicizing ethnicity is becoming a challenge towards promoting democracy in Ethiopia as it creates violence and civil strikes between different ethnic groups. In the same vein, Abbink (1997) claims that due to the ethnicity institutionalization, social relations have become more and more ethnic oriented. The prejudice and bias of people to 'other' ethnic groups is increasing. Moreover, clear tensions are emerging to control political power and economic resources among the elites of different ethnic groups. Thus, according to him, the ethnicization of politics serves as a source of conflict, division, and threat to national integrity in countries like Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Somalia (Abbink, 1997).

Some others also raise the issue that politicized ethnic identity creates hatred, violence, and civil strikes between different ethnic groups, demonstrating the 'divisive' nature of ethnicity in the African context (Woldesellasie 2001). They argue that the ethnicization of the whole political discourse has resulted in ethnic and religious conflicts in different parts of the country in the last two decades and more. Moreover, Lincoln (2000:35) claims that the "use of ethnicity at the national level as a criterion for territorial reorganization reinforces the likelihood of tension" and that "ethnic arithmetic has a point of marginal return beyond which it begins to harm the system."

On the other hand, some groups deal with the positive aspects of ethnicity in Ethiopia, which considers it a democratization process, redressing past injustices and recognizing equality (Hamesso, 2001). Hameso (2001) critically discusses the social values of ethnicity as providing a sense of security, source of trust, certainty, reciprocal help, and internal cohesion of the society. According to this perspective, ethnicity in Africa should be viewed as a unifying tool in African peoples' socio-economic, cultural, political, and psychological well-being. Hameso (2001) strongly argues that ethnicity should take the blame neither for the border conflicts nor for conflicts over socio-economic resources as both of these were by themselves, not consequences of ethnicity; rather, what to blame is the arrangement put in place. In line with this, therefore, national integration and ethnicity can be viewed as complementary rather than contradicting concepts.

While the arguments on both sides seem irreconcilable, recognizing ethnic groups' rights and articulating ethnicity in a political framework may not necessarily lead to conflict. Rather, as implied in the preceding sections, it is the activation of ethnic differences at the expense of complementary group elements by ethnic entrepreneurs for political instrumentality that gives the destructive connotation to ethnicity. Accordingly, while the roots of ethno-religious and other identity conflicts in Ethiopia have been linked to multiple factors, it would be safe to argue that such conflicts are rooted in the politicization of religious and ethnic identities, the competition, and conflict for political power by the religious and ethnic communities respectively. Thus, such conflicts are due to deliberate manipulation of ethnic sentiments and identities either by the ethnic elite or by a government to secure economic and political advantages. In particular, as Ahmed (2004) captured, the role of an educated, literate intelligentsia in creating and propagating a pan-ethnic consciousness is crucial in this regard. With this regard, the state's institutions and structures may be set so that inter-ethnic rivalries are employed consciously. The state can delineate the strategic contexts in which ethnicity is salient or is not. It may design the choices of political actors regarding forms of organization and astrictive markers of ethnicity in which it may be exercised (Poluha, 1998).

Similarly, conflict from an ethno-religious perspective also erupts when varying groups feel threatened by the activities of other groups (Karl and Stefan, 2009). It has been posited that there are two major types of sources of this category of tension in Ethiopia, namely that associated with the character of the relationship between the so-called "settlers‟ and their "host‟ community; and that associated with perceptions of how kinsmen are being treated in distant locations, which attracts reprisal attacks or sentiment (Assefa, 2012; 2002).

What follows, therefore, is that violent identity conflicts have become a method of collective action by diverse religious and ethnic groups engaged in contestations for political power. Ethnic politics has also increasingly become instrumental for ethnic entrepreneurs to mobilize their respective groups for power-sharing (both political and economic) through playing the 'ethnic card' (Assefa, 2012; Alemayehu, 2004). Based on past experiences, conflicts that begin as politically based frequently assume ethnic and religious dimensions (Valfort 2007). For that matter, in line with the argument by Lijphart (1997), one of the main causes of violent identity conflict in Ethiopia is that

most minority groups have remained permanent minorities, while the majority groups are the permanent majority; a trend that has serious implications for inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations among the diverse ethnic and religious identities in the country. In this way, it has been argued, the incentives for cooperation, consensus, and compromise have been undermined. Diverse ethnic groups are forced to co-exist in mutual mistrust, apathy, and suspicion (Holder et al. 2006). As a result, it poses an enormous challenge for building sustainable peace.

In general, as implied in the preceding section, the contemporary challenge to multicultural society nowadays remains to be how to accommodate the national and ethnic differences in a stable and morally defensible manner. In the attempt to address the same, many attempts have been made in the last few decades. One of the most effective mechanisms devised to accommodate ethnic and religious diversity is adopting a multicultural federal system. Western democracies such as Belgium, Switzerland, and Canada have established effective multicultural federal systems that accommodate cultural pluralism (Assefa, 2012). On the other hand, in developing multiethnic countries of sub- Saharan Africa, challenges of accommodating ethnic diversity are very intense. Ethiopia is no exception. While ethnic federal experiment has been said to have achieved a lot in protecting the cultural and linguistic rights of the various ethnic groups in the country, the politicization of ethnicity also become the predominant explanation of many of the things that went wrong in the society (Hizkias, 2010). Scholars, in particular, called for the de-securitization of ethnic relations in the country as a precondition for making the federation stable (Kymlicka, 2006). In particular, Will Kymlicka (2006), urges the state to no longer perceive certain ethnic groups as disloyal and a threat to national security. In this respect, he judged Ethiopia as a “fragile experiment” by citing the unstable situation, particularly in the Somali region (Kymlicka, 2006).

Moreover, as Ghai and Cottrell (2008) put it, in countries where ethnic identity has been institutionalized, the social bondage that was binding society has been eroded and replaced with a very narrow ethnic identity. This is so because, since ethnic politics assumes differences, it pays little attention to common history, thereby serving as a fertile ground to be easily activated by conflict entrepreneurs. The recent plethora of ethnic and religious conflicts in the country could be communicated as evidence of the assertion made above. Manipulating and mobilizing groups through narratives based on ethnic as well as religious identity has become the norm than the exception in the country. Ethnic entrepreneurs have been seen multiple times, easily activating

identity differences and destabilizing the country with the effect of creating problems for the people's day-to-day activity. Discussion as to the country's proliferated ethnic and religious conflicts and its challenge to national cohesion shall be made in the following section.

4.3.2 Ethno-Religious Violence and the Challenges of National Cohesion

Maintaining the fact that the definition and concept of ethnic identity in Africa is very complicated, ethno-religious conflicts have been recognized and rated as one of the most fundamental threats to institutional cohesion in the multiethnic societies of the Third World (Johnston, in Christie 1998). Johnston (1998) further states that ethno-religious conflicts are serious threats to state-building and the process of democratic transformation in Post-Cold War Africa. Furthermore, as implicated in the preceding chapter, most of the wars waged in the Horn of African countries during the past 30 years have been described both by adversaries themselves and by external analysts in terms of ethnic conflicts (Hizkias, 2010). In line with that, it is also estimated that at least half the states of sub-Saharan Africa, including Angola, Chad, Burundi, Rwanda, Liberia, Somalia, and Nigeria, have experienced either civil war or deaths in many thousands due to ethnic or religious conflicts (Diamond and Plattner, 1994).

On the other hand, sustaining a pluralistic and heterogeneous society can be upheld through unity in diversity (Assefa, 2006; Ghai, 2000; Coakley, 2000; Horowitz, 1997; McGarry and O'Leary, 1995; Elazar, 1987). National cohesion is rooted in the ability to tolerate others. Due to the inability to tolerate others' religion or religious perspectives and ethnic identities, political views, and ideas, several ethno-religious crises have occurred (Abbah and Yemisi, 2019). Therefore, the conflict itself is evidence of human and social forces' relations (Abbah and Yemisi, 2019), but the management of this violence remains paramount before it degenerates into warfare.

Despite the controversy on the making of the modern Ethiopian state, there have been strong cultural, historical, and social ties among the various ethnic groups binding the society in its long history (Levine, 2000; Bahiru, 1991; Pankhurst, 1990). As different from its predecessors, since regime change occurred in 1991, ethnic identity has suddenly become the normative identity. The new state prefers to deal with its citizens in many spheres of life, including political, economic, and election registration (Abbink, 1997). Such an approach has restructured ethnic identities that

used to be weak (Messay, 2009). What follows from there is, as implied above, the activation of ethnic differences at the expense of complementary group elements by ethnic entrepreneurs for political instrumentality, thus, giving the destructive connotation to ethnicity /identity politics/. It is important to note here the escalation of various ethno-religious conflicts that are witnessed all over the country today as a consequence of the same. Generally, post-1991, Ethiopia has experienced deaths in the thousands from conflict based on ethnic as well as religious divisions.

These cases of ethnic and religious violence in Ethiopia have, without a doubt, been central to the socio-economic and political process of the country. These days the country is at the epicenter of ethno-religious violence, thereby posing a serious challenge to national cohesion, unity, integration, sustainable democracy, and development. It urges, therefore, that any good government that has the interests and well-being of its citizens at heart ensure that threats to lives and properties are reduced to the minimum if possible eliminated in its totality. There is the need to boost up security in Ethiopia; there is the need to stop the killing of innocent people in the country; there is the need to stop the destruction of properties in the country. In the absence of a search for lasting peace and security solutions to address ethno-religious conflict, the younger generations are learning the inability to manage a heterogeneous Ethiopia, which poses a future problem beyond present generations. Similarly, in persistent politicization of ethno-religious identities for selfish interests, the present generations are successfully planting the dosage of ethnic and religious intolerance, which seriously affects the state's very existence.

4.3.3 Explaining the Impacts of Ethno-Religious Violence in the Country

As Addison (2001) noted, the consequence of violence in a given country has many dimensions: social, psychological, political, and economical. In the past few years in Ethiopia, ethno-religious conflicts have occurred at an alarming rate, and the probability of future occurrence remains high amid socio-economic and political strife in the country (Crisis Group, 2018, 2019). The frequent ethnic conflicts and religious clashes have posed major security challenges. It would be hard to statistically determine the number of lives and properties consumed by these crises. But in general, the encounters which followed the major confrontations left several people wounded and several thousand people displaced from their homes. Ethno-religious conflicts have brought about political instability and economic shocks in the country (Reuters, 2019; Crisis Group, 2019, 2018; IDMC,

2018). The violence continues to hamper social and economic development, destabilize entire regions, and cause unimaginable human suffering. While the impacts can be viewed from different dimensions with their detailed analysis, this section shall devote itself only to a discussion of some of its impacts in a very general manner.

I. Ethno-religious violence as a threat to the federation

In every nation, there is no complete and unanimous agreement on how resources, power, and status are shared among individuals and ethnic groups. There is also no agreement on how to effect necessary changes and reforms. This is because there are diverse interests associated with the different groups and individuals, in which case some groups will have their aims met while others will not. This means that conflicts (ethno religious ones inclusive) usually occur when deprived groups and individuals attempt to increase their share of power and resource or modify the dominant values, norms, beliefs, or ideology (Gurney & Tierney, 1982; Gurr, 1970). Federalism involves the organization of the state in such a manner that it promotes unity while at the same time preserving existing diversities (Watts, 1998; Elazar, 1994; King, 1982). It, therefore, can be asserted that federalism in a multinational state is a compromise solution between two types of determination: one, the determination to maintain a supernatural framework of government that guarantees security for all in the nation and two, a determination to protect the self-rule components groups which seek to retain their identities (Elazar, 1997; Long 1991). This is one of the reasons why federalism represents a unique form of governmental arrangement. Implicit in this is that federalism is a system that mediates the potential and actual conflict that often arises from the heterogeneity within a political entity. In other words, federalism, where it is truly practiced, is believed to mediate the potential and actual conflicts arising from that heterogeneity within a nation-state (Ojo, 2006, Elazar, 1994).

Despite the assertion above, Ethiopia's federalism is at a critical problem because many factors have reduced its practicability. While some diverse countries in the world have taken advantage of their diversity to better their citizens and enjoy a reasonable level of peace and stability, in some others, it has remained an insurmountable difficulty (Yonatan, 2019; Jose, 2014, Abbink, 2006). This is reflected in the occurrence and re-occurrence of ethno-religious and political violence throughout Ethiopia. Cases of conflicts rooted in ethno-religious undertones almost suffocated the

country. One can note the above-cited as well as many other lists of ethnic and religious violence the country experienced in post-1991. From the various examples of ethno-religious conflicts cited earlier in this paper, there seems to be a divisive interplay of politics, ethnicity, and religion. In sum, ethnic and religious violence continues to threaten the unity of the country, thereby making the country's future unpredictable. This has presented many challenges to the country's corporate existence, which is the fundamental reason for the adoption of a federal system.

II. Socio-economic and political impacts of ethno-religious violence

It is incontrovertible that ethno-religious and political crises have strong implications on the socio-economic as well as political fronts of the country. The impacts in the Ethiopian context following mainly the recent violence can be viewed as follows:

a. Human sufferings

The Ongoing ethnic and religious violence in the country continues to put lives at risk (Crisis Group, 2019, 2018; UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2018; HRC, 2017). As implied in the preceding sections, one of the grievous effects of such conflicts is cruel annihilation of human lives. Victims of various ethnic and religious groups have been targeted by attackers (Crisis Group, 2019, 2018; UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2018; HRC, 2017). In most cases, casualty figures are not known; one for inadequate stocktaking and unreliable statistics and the other due to the alleged deliberate falsification of the actual figures of casualties.

Apart from the loss of lives, another human consequence of ethno-religious conflicts is that people usually sustain injuries of varying degrees (Crisis Group, 2018), of which some may never recover for the rest of their lives are because of the damages they suffered are so acute and permanent. While physical injuries from conflicts may be overcome, it is regrettable that psychological repercussions such as trauma and acrimony of the events usually linger forever (Danieli, 1998).

The increase of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is another consequence of ethno-religious violence. It can be recalled that Ethiopia experienced the highest number of new displacements related to conflict and violence in the world in 2018 (IDMC, 2018). Thus, besides loss of life and varying degrees of disabilities, scores of victims of ethno-religious violence have become

displaced and homeless (IDMC, 2018). As such, they have become refugees in their own country, and in most cases, the IDPs remain in precarious conditions, fully dependent on government and international humanitarian assistance or the generosity of the host community (OHCHA, 2018).

b. Material damage

Another adverse effect of ethno-religious unrest is in the form of material losses. Unquantifiable public and private properties are destroyed in the wake of the various ethno-religious violence in the country. Businesses were looted, properties vandalized, burnt, and destroyed. In general, reports indicate that the violence that happened at different times has resulted in damages and losses in public infrastructure, including water supply schemes, health facilities, schools, and agricultural institutions/production, private property/holdings, including harvest, houses, assets, livestock, churches, mosques and others (OHCHR, 2018).

c. Socio-economic effect

Crisis in its various forms causes lots of deprivations as it weakens social organization, social institutions and thereby creates structural deficiencies to the enabling environment for the society and economy to grow (Madu and Ibrahim, 2013). As a result, it retards all economic and social progress. Furthermore, Horowitz (1985) points out that ethnic conflict strains the bonds that sustain civility, poses a challenge to the cohesion of the states and sometimes to peaceful relations among states. In line with that, Peter (2008:7) notes the contemporary status of Muslim-Christians in Ethiopia in such a way that:

> *Christians and Muslims will often refuse to eat meat slaughtered by the other group or enter others' restaurants. Villages may be divided along religious lines or else inhabited by one group with the clear message that the other group is not welcome.*

While the assessment by Peter may be open for argument, it is plausible to say that these day divisions run deep, communities are separated, and feelings of fear and suspicion dominate relationships with the other group (Crisis Group, 2019). Generally, social relations have been affected heavily, suspicion and tension among different groups were generated, and it would only

be missing the truth if it cannot be referred that the situation is posing a serious challenge to the state's cohesion.

Moreover, as to the economic effect of a conflict in general and ethnic as well as religious conflicts in particular, the economic literature has said a lot (Addison, Choudhury and Murshed, 2002; Easterly and Levine, 1997; Taylor and Hudson, 1972). For that matter,, Addison, Choudhury, and Murshed (2002) note that conflict in a given country creates not only human misery but also suppresses economic activity. Resources shift from productive to destructive activities, reducing growth or negatively affecting its quality and composition (Choudhury and Murshed, 2002). In parallel to that, economic activities of both the public and private sectors have been disturbed, Foreign Direct Investment has reduced, and the high level of insecurity prevents investors from making a huge investment in the economy due to their unguaranteed safety from ethno-religious violence in the country (Crisis Group, 2018). Addison (2001) posited that ethno-religious conflict damages resources and facilities in economic terms, which took the government time to acquire. No foreign investor will like to invest funds in a country that is prone to ethno-religious and communal conflicts. What is implied here is that the crisis portrays the country in a very bad light internationally, where the country is perceived as unsafe and indeed not conducive in terms of security caused mainly by communal and ethno-religious crises.

d. Political effect

As Selin (2006) notes, politics is strongly connected with the phenomena of conflict as it aims to manage it. In order to achieve this purpose, politics have to impose limits on the conflict. Otherwise, the conflict can evolve into uncontrolled political violence. With that respect, Behnke (2004:275) wrote: “limits on its [conflict] scope and intensity have to be imposed to keep it from deteriorating into a war of all against all, with the sole aim of mutual annihilation.”

Unfortunately, such an imposition of a limit on the conflict by the politics seems not achieved yet in Ethiopia. The precariousness of the country’s political landscape was evidenced in multiple incidents.[5] The flux of ethnic as well as religious violence is swaying the country. The issues are

[5]It would suffice here to mention, for instance, the June 23, 2019 attack (what the Ethiopian government described as an attempted coup) in Addis Ababa that killed Ethiopia's army chief, General Seare Mekonnen, and in the northern Amhara Region that killed the regional president, Ambachew Mekonnen, his top adviser and the state’s attorney general (see FBC, 2019; BBC, 2019; TRT World, 2019; DW, 2019)

presenting pressing challenges on the part of the government to control them, and as such, the trajectory of its transition to the hoped democracy is uncertain (Crisis Group, 2019). Long-simmering ethnic grievances have been compounded by elite disagreements about various issues, contributing to communal and political tensions. Following the same, security in the country is highly deteriorating, directly impacting people's freedom of movement (OCHA, 2019; Crisis Group, 2019; HRW, 2018). Recurrent ethno-religious conflicts have dented the country's image among the community of nations and portrayed it as a country incapable of ensuring harmony among its diverse citizens. Furthermore, at least by the time of writing this Ph.D. project, the ethnic and religious tension and violence have shown no sign of abating, which could lead many to question the capacity of the federal government to halt other adversaries in the country.

Generally, the losses accrued as a result of ethnic as well as religious clashes in the country are immeasurable, ranging from loss of lives and properties to internal displacement. Groups and families have been separated. The country's image has been damaged internationally and many countries in recent years issued a travel warning to their citizens in Ethiopia or planning to visit Ethiopia (US department of state, 2018).

4.4. Traditions of Resilience to Violence among Different Communities in Ethiopia

o Elders' resilience role to violence

Among the classic tasks of the nation-state seeking to impose a monopoly over the use of legitimate force is controlling and ending violence (Weber 1947). In this regard, the roles of traditional leaders in solving conflicts in Africa and preventing violence have been documented in different works of literature. African elders assume the most varied tasks in safeguarding the social, political, economic, cultural, religious, and spiritual welfare of the people they represent (Rijk, 1999). As Just (1998: 108) notes, rural societies mostly lack a complete understanding of formal state institutions such as courts and legal codes. They prefer "endogenously defined concepts and procedures" to manage individual and communal disputes. On the other hand, to subordinate competing norms that challenges its legitimacy, the state endeavors "to dominate other institutions that provide dispute resolution services" (Merry 1987: 2069). While the tension between these two

continues even today, elders have varied roles in diverse spheres, including solving conflicts as well as preventing violence before its escalation, yet remain important.

In Ethiopia, too, the roles of elders in conflict resolution and prevention of violence are not different from the experiences of many African countries (Endalew, 2014; Gowok, 2008; Macfarlane, 2007). Despite the proliferation of various forms of violence in different parts of the country, one can still mention a handful of cases demonstrating resilience experiences to violence in different parts. With this regard, the role of elders appears to be at the forefront. The first of such notable cases exemplifying the issue in point was the resilient experience of village elders in *Alaga Dore Kebele of Arsi Zone, Jeju woreda.* The case happened in 2016, by the time the country was raged by unprecedented anti-government protests demanding economic and political reforms (BBC, 2016; Reuters, 2016; VOA, 2016). Thousands of *Oromos*, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, have been protesting since November 2015. Likewise, in the northern part of the country, the protest of the *Amhara* people, the second largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, came a little later (ACLED, 2017; Global Observatory, 2017). While the protests were reported mainly as peaceful (Amnesty, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2016), there were times, however, when protesters damaged properties, mostly foreign-owned factories and flower farms (BBC, 2016; Aljazeera, 2016, Reuters, 2016).

Maranque, a Dutch flower plant, was among foreign-owned factories under threat of attack by the protestors. During this time, a group of elders from the nearby village, notably from *Alaga Dore Kebele*, showed their resiliency to a possible violent act. As reported by different media outlets at the time, the elders rushed to the farm on their scooters and saved the day (Washington Post, 2016; Daily Mail, 2016; AFP, 2016). The elders managed to dissuade the protesters from attacking the compound. AFP quoted community elder Shumi Telila as saying: "We put ourselves in front of the protesters and we told them "Maranque is our property, do not burn it. Burning this farm will not change the government. You will kill us rather than destroy this farm. And our youngsters backed away" (AFP, 2016). Driessen, Head of Maranque Plants, has been in Ethiopia for 12 years. He is convinced that carefully nurtured ties to the local community helped protect his farm (Washington Post, 2016). AFP quoted him as saying: "We built a water line in the village, we put a cement floor in the school, and we fixed their electricity generator... we need to do what we can to help the people surrounding us" (AFP, 2016). While the reasons why the community acted

against the possible violent act of protestors could be many, it is, however, an important gesture that demonstrates the immense role of local capacities in preventing violent acts.

Another case explaining the experience of resilience response against would be violent acts was the incident in *Arba Minch.* The incident had occurred in September 2018, following the killings of a score of civilians in *Ashewa Meda*, in *Burayu* town of *Addis Ababa*, involving *Guraghe* and *Gamo* people, among others (Yonas, 2019b; Washington Post, 2018; Reuters 2018). The government said organized mobs were responsible for the attack (ETV, 2018; FBC, 2018). Some victims' are quoted by different sources that mob of *Oromo* ethnic youth is behind the attack (Africa News, 2018; Washington Post, 2018). The gesture from Gamo elders who prevented what could have been a horrific episode of violence vividly demonstrated what role communities in general and elders, in particular, could play in preventing violence.

In response, members of the ethnic *Gamo, Gurage, Dorze*, and other communities who are outraged and affected by the violence held protests in *Addis Ababa*, as well as in the southern cities of *Arba Minch* and *Hawassa* (Washington Post, 2018, VOA, 2018, Ethiopia Insight, 2018). One of such protests turned unruly as angry youths set their sights on *Arba Minch* city *Oromo* businesses. As youth groups from *Arba Minch* moved to retaliate the attack targeting *Oromo* business, *Gamo* elders intervened, holding freshly cut grass on their hands and kneeling to beg the youth not to attack *Oromos* (Addis Standard, 2018; ETV, 2018; FBC, 2018). Despite the apparent risk to their safety and without any police or security personnel present, the *Gamo* elders and community leaders acted with resilience and averted violence. The resilience of the elders to a violent gesture made the youths back off. The Gamo elders' gesture made sanity prevail; the rioters obeyed and agreed to leave.

The selected case studies are only some indications from recent experiences as to the traditions of resilience from two purposively selected different areas. Dozens of such cases could be mentioned from former and recent experiences in different parts of the country. Resilient responses and mechanisms are, in fact, highly diverse across different levels. In the above two cases, the wisdom of the *Oromo* elders in *Alaga Dore kebele* and *Gamo* elders in *Arba Minch* shaped the resilience response to violence. At the same time, however, it appears to remind that such wisdom is consumed by the politicization of ethnicity and religion in many other parts of Ethiopia. The

proliferation of ethnic and religious violence, among others, in different parts of the country is a testament to the assertion. In short, while violence, including ethnic as well as religious violence, is proliferating in the country these days, stories of notable cases of communities' resilience to violence could also be drawn in parallel in different parts of the country.

o Cultural identity and interconnectedness as resilience factor in Ethiopia

Ethiopian society is marked by diversity. Within this mark of diversity, inter-religious co-existence, if not the only defining feature, remains one defining feature of the society (Abbink, 2007; Hussien, 2006). Hussien (2006) points out that wave of religious differences demonstrate both co-existence and conflictual relations of various ethnic communities within Ethiopia. That is to say, though it is common to witness these days' the hardening of relations based on religious and ethnic differences as discussed in the preceding sections, the cultural interconnectedness has also served as a resilience factor to violence for long in Ethiopia. With that in mind, it will not be challenging to list areas where Ethiopian Christians and Muslims have lived in harmony and co-operation for decades, even centuries. Such mutual encounter between the two religions can be traced back to the arrival in Aksum of the Prophet's followers as asylum-seekers in 615 AD, whereby the Aksumite king welcomed them and allowed them to stay in his kingdom (Hussien, 2003; Alam, 1982). Fast forward, it is not that long memory where Ethiopian Muslims and Christians have each other cooperated and supported in times of national crises, contributed both financially and materially during emergencies such as famines (1973/74 and 1984), and provided a workforce for military operations (in Eritrea and Somalia) (Hussien, 2006). Hussien (2006:14) has also put the solidarity shown between the two faiths in one notable incident in 1990/91 as follows:

> *In 1990/91, on the eve of the collapse of the military government, the Muslims of Addis Ababa, who had gathered at the Anwar Mosque for the daily prayers, reciprocated the solidarity shown by the Christian residents of the capital during the 1974 mass Muslim demonstration by successfully preventing, in collaboration with the Christians, the removal, on the orders of the government, of the tabot (the symbol of the Ark of the Covenant) from the St. Raguael Church located adjacent to the Mosque. Faced with the opposition of both Christians and Muslims, the attempt to relocate the tabot was abandoned.*

The harmony and co-operation can also be demonstrated across communities in different parts of Ethiopia. Muslims and Christians live together in many places and know each other intimately; they are masters of adaptation and improvisation[6]. The co-operation sometimes extends to what possibly can be captioned as unprecedented practices in any other country in the sense that Christians sometimes help Muslims in their religious duties and vice versa. Kalklachew (1997) has provided remarkable examples of this, including Christian neighbors helping Muslims build a mosque and Muslims campaigning to preserve a Christian village church in danger of being closed down (Kalklachew, 1997, 83-85). Interreligious patrimonial ties and interfaith co-operation are common; Muslims and Christians are also joint members in burial societies and savings clubs across communities in different parts of Ethiopia, cases of interreligious marriages involving the conversion of one of the two spouses were not uncommon (Abbink, 2007; Berhanu, 1998; Kalklachew, 1997).

It has to be recalled that too much focus on situations of peaceful co-existence may lead to incomplete statements. In other words, misunderstandings and derogatory representations based on religion and other attributes were numerous in previous times and are also today. With this regard, one can note that the challenge that the fundamentalist trends in religion present to religious co-existence are the separation between religion and culture. Olivier Roy (2010:8) has his say on the issue as follows: "within a major world, religions are new movements that aim to break religion away from the cultural roots and to format them as 'pure religion' and then proselytize people, both in their original culture and in foreign cultures." In line with the argument by Oliver, there are parts in Ethiopia where divisions run deep, communities are separated, and feelings of fear and suspicion dominate relationships between the groups as a result of the new movements in the country. Villages may be divided along religious lines or inhabited by one group with the clear message that the other group is not welcome. This can lead to an outbreak of violence at any time.

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[6]For detailed and profound analysis on Christian-Muslim relation in Wollo and its transformation See Abbink, J. (2007) 'Transformations of Islam and Communal Relations in Wallo, Ethiopia'; see also Hussien Ahmed (2001), *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia: Revival, Reform, and Reaction*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, ed. Reinhard Schulze. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Despite that, the historical depth of encounters, intermingling, controversies, and dialogue between the different religious groups in Ethiopia still plays a resilient factor by fostering the consciousness that shared identity and interconnectedness should prevail. In other words, though these days Ethiopia has significantly been threatened by religious conflict, inter-religious harmony yet remains the norm in many communities, and there is the much-existing capacity to draw from there. Therefore, it will be only plausible to argue that religion can even be employed to strengthen social cohesion, mutual understanding, and durable peace unless politically motivated. As there were undercurrents of tension, misunderstanding, competition, and potential and actual confrontation, no one can also deny long-held tolerance and shared sentiments among Ethiopian Christians and Muslims. In general, it would be missing the whole picture to deny that a state of co-existence and co-operation has been established between religions for long in the country, as Hussien (2006:14) put it, "perhaps with few parallels elsewhere."

o Assets of social capital and social cohesion as resilience factor in Ethiopia

Social capital commonly refers to social networks based on shared norms, values, beliefs, knowledge, and understanding (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). It holds societies together as glue without which there can be no human well-being. Moreover, Kawachi and Berkman (2000:175) note that "social capital forms a subset of the notion of social cohesion." In line with that, Berger-Schmitt (2002:406) suggests that social cohesion refers to "the goal of strengthening social relations, interactions, and ties, and embraces all aspects generally considered as the social capital of a society." Thus, the emphasis is on social relations and group membership, particularly on the quality of social relations in terms of solidarity and trust. That is also precisely why social capital can be considered a key dimension of social cohesion. That being the general usage of the concepts in the paper as implied under chapter two, it has been extensively discussed in the preceding chapters that a wide range of empirical studies suggests social cohesion or the lack of it can be an important factor in explaining why some societies (cities, neighborhoods) are prone to violence while others are not. The ability to act together and intervene on behalf of the common good is seen among cohesive societies. Though the focus here shall be on how social cohesion (when it manifests as civic co-operation) has assisted communities in Ethiopia to resist violence, it has to be noted that it can also become a source of violence when it manifests as gang violence and

vigilante. These localized forms of cohesion actually could undermine national democratic cohesion.

Having said that, the Horn of Africa in general and Ethiopia, in particular, is an area where various forms of human interaction and complex forms of social relations have existed for centuries (Clapham, 2002). Though such interactions and integrations have not been peaceful all the time, positive social cohesion has assisted Ethiopian communities in resisting violence. This is particularly something that cannot be undermined, considering that the country is located in a region where sectarian and ethnic tensions tend to flare up. Accordingly, despite major challenges the country is facing these days in managing diversity of religion and ethnicity, there are yet notable manifestations of social capital in the country holding the community together like glue and playing a significant role in preventing violence. That is to say, in the social sphere at large; several common cultural practices are not just tagged by religious norms but help the community to act together and intervene on behalf of the common good.

One of the areas the social solidarity of the people is expressed is through the ritual of the coffee ceremony. In most Ethiopian communities, coffee preparation is a day-to-day activity that strengthens the social bond between the societies. Ethiopians have adapted ancient coffee traditions in indigenous, Christian, and Muslim contexts (Rita Pankhurst, 1997). The coffee ceremony serves to bring people together, primarily women, to discuss their daily lives, their families, and political, economic, and social issues. Through this ancient tradition, the women communicate support for one another and promote harmony in their families and community (Yedes, Clamons, and Osman, 2004). Done daily, it forges a strong bond between neighbors as it conveys a sense of ritualism and hospitality since it is performed in a particular fashion that needs to be satisfied each time. The daily gatherings for coffee allow neighbors to know each other intimately since it is a time to discuss personal matters openly. With that, it paves the way to trust one another and serve as a peacekeeping practice in the community. As the proverb among communities in Ethiopia says: “people who eat and drink together are brothers and sisters” and “those who eat and drink together do not talk behind each other’s backs;” this long-held tradition in every corner of Ethiopia helps bring harmony among communities. In other words, the

communal bond forged in such rituals is, therefore, one factor that could help communities be cohesive enough and resilient to violence.

The coffee ritual is one of the many traditions among Ethiopians that can help tie a society together by reinforcing a feeling of unity in its people, and many other traditions can also be forwarded in ascertaining the assertion above. As de Reviera (*2009*) puts it, anthropological studies in different parts of the world show that societies that stood resilient to violence have philosophies, values, beliefs, cultural practices that shone violence, promote peace, tolerance, and co-operation; and conflict resolution mechanisms to restore and sustain peace. In line with that, one can mention the different indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in different parts of Ethiopia (Gowok, 2008; Macfarlane, 2007; Assefa, 2001) as institutions to restore and sustain peace. It is worth noting that these indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are deeply rooted in different ethnic groups of Ethiopia. They are associated with the peoples' cultural norms and values and gain legitimacy from the community.

Furthermore, peace as a core value embedded in the daily lives of Ethiopian communities is another take point in being resilient to violence. This is expressed among Ethiopian communities in their daily greetings where they enquire about the peace of family members, their home, cattle, belongings, and their entire locality. For instance, according to Tenna (*2013)*, the *Oromo* concept of peace has internal and external dimensions, further divided into intrapersonal and interpersonal. The internal aspect of peace is peace within the *Oromo* community itself, whereas the external dimension refers to living in harmony and peace with neighbors and other communities (Tenna, 2013). The intrapersonal peace requires every individual *Oromo* to be at peace with himself to be with others. An individual has to be non-violent, tolerant, and live in harmony with others. The interpersonal aspect of peace requires members to cooperate and live in peace, and if there is any problem, solve their problem nonviolently through discussion and dialogue (Tenna, 2013). This shows that the *Oromo* concept of peace is one of co-operation and living in harmony with other ethnic groups, which resembles the variant of social capital and social cohesion as implied above. Likewise, the principles of tolerance and peaceful co-existence are enshrined in other Ethiopian communities' value systems and cultures.

Generally, while this heading attempts to show how social cohesion has assisted Ethiopian communities in resisting violence, on the other hand, the absence of social cohesion appears central to most discussions recently. This is because the seemingly ethno-religious conflicts have threatened the age-long culture of harmonious and peaceful co-existence. As such, the very discussion of social cohesion often triggers the issue of its decline and, even more specifically, the absence of social cohesion. Such decline of social cohesion, referred to by some as "social erosion" (Larsen 2013:2), is manifested through fewer citizens in a given state believing that they share a moral community that enables them to trust each other. Regardless of that assertion, Ethiopians' precious cultural values and long-held traditions have held the social fabric together so far. These traditions can further play an uplifting role in preventing violence, promoting peacebuilding, and creating mutual understanding. That is also why the sub-heading reads 'social capital and social cohesion as a resilient factor among Ethiopian communities.'

Conclusion

While politics in the 21st century is more defined by questions of identity than by economic or ideological concerns (see Fukuyama, 2018), identity politics has become the defining feature of the post-1991 Ethiopian state. In other words, while the politicization of ethnic identity as the primary vehicle for claims and entitlements to economic resources and political power has become the dominant story nowadays in the country, the contemporary challenge to the country remains to be how to accommodate the national and ethnic differences in a stable and morally defensible manner.

With that respect, the chapter recounted that group identity is not a threat to stability, nor is it necessarily a cause of conflict. It is not ethnicity per se but the role of ethnicity in the political process, i.e., the politicization of ethnicity, which explains social conflict and democratic breakdowns in a given area. Accordingly, while speaking of identity issues in multicultural societies like Ethiopia, an inclusive examination of all factors is helpful as it enables one to situate the various contexts of identity-related problems. The chapter underscored that any examination of Ethiopia's identity would necessarily have to be inclusive of all assumptions; instrumental, primordial, or other, and how they are intricately linked.

It has also been highlighted that the country is at the epicenter of ethno-religious violence these days. The country has increasingly experienced a plethora of traumatic religious, ethnic, and communal conflicts and violence, which have been central to the socio-economic and political process of the country. In other words, these crises have led to widespread and intense internal conflicts that have exploited the myth of national solidarity, perhaps putting its influence on the nation's social fabric. It could also pose a serious challenge to national cohesion, unity, integration, sustainable democracy, and development. Therefore, any responsible government with its citizens' interests and well-being at heart should ensure that threats to lives and properties are reduced to the minimum, if possible, eliminated in its totality.

On the other hand, the chapter stressed that even in the most challenging situations, individuals and communities are acting to prevent violence or counter the effects and causes of conflict. This is partly attributed to the endogenous resilience capacities embodied within the community and those values that support the culture of peace. With that respect, some aspects of resilience factors among the Ethiopian community, including the role of elders, cultural identity and interconnectedness, as well as social capital and social cohesion, are communicated under the chapter.

Chapter five: General Overview: Historical, Political Events, and Local Actors that Shaped *Arsi Zone, Lode Hetosa Woreda*

5.1. Introduction

Different studies account that in a country splintered by ethnicity, religion, and regionalism, there appear communities that resist violence and remain non-violent (Carpenter, 2014; Anderson and Wallace, 2013; Varshney, 2002). Community resiliency to pressures of violence is dependent on multifaceted factors. While a detailed discussion on the multifaceted factors in the attempt to understand the underpinning factors to the study community's resilience response to pressures of ethno-religious violence is going to be made in the following chapter, this chapter is designed with the aim of laying the foundation for same. With that intent, the chapter had reflected on the historical, political events and local actors that actually shaped the study community, the *Lode Hetosa woreda* community. Before getting into the details of those issues, however, the chapter had engaged itself on introductory issues such as an overall description of *Arsi* zone, history of incorporation into present Ethiopia, the religious transformation of the *Arsi* people as well as instances of ethno-religious violence in the zone.

5.2. Arsi Zone: History and Context

5.2.1. Brief Description of the Zone Location, Size and Climate

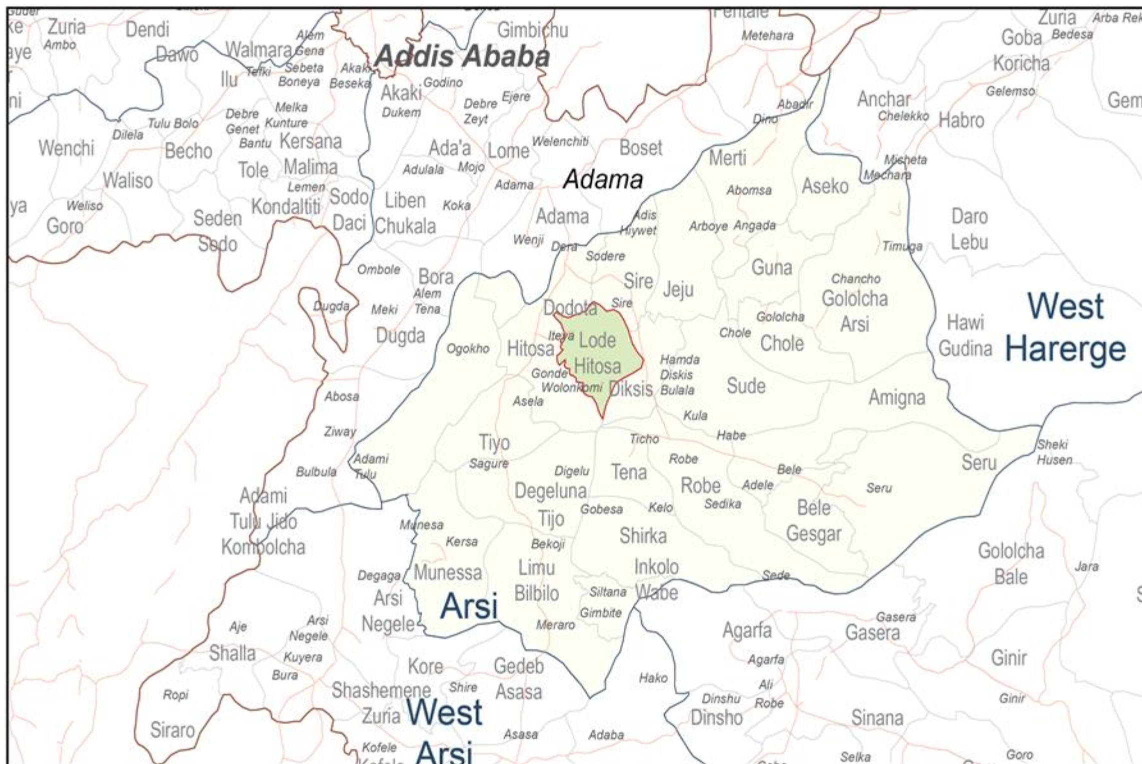


Figure 3: The Current Political Map of Arsi Zone (Adapted to the research context by the Author)

Arsi zone is one of the *Oromia* National Regional State zones. Astronomically the location of the Zone lies between 70 08’ 58’’N to 80 49‘00’’N and 380 41’ 55’’E to 400 43’56’’ E. *Arsi* zone shares boundary lines in the north, north-west, and west with eastern *Shewa* zone, in the south and southwest with west *Arsi* zone, in the south, southeast and east with *Bale* zone, in the north-east and east with west *Hararge* Zone. The Zone has a total area of 20790.85 km2, accounting for 5.85% of the total area of the regional state of Oromia. The total length of the boundary line is about 1050km. The longest borderline of the Zone is with the East *Shewa* zone, 450km, accounting for about 43 percent of its total boundary length. It has the second-longest line with *Bale* Zone, which is 350km. The Zone shares the shortest boundary line with the West *Arsi* zone.

The administrative center of the Zone is *Asella* town, located 175 km southeast of *Addis Ababa*, the capital of Ethiopia. Also, Asela is located 75 km south of *Adama* town (Oromia regional portal, 2020). Having a total area of 23881 Km2, it accounts for about 7 percent of the total area of the Regional State of *Oromia*. *Woredas* in the Zone include, among others, *Diksis, Dodota, Gololcha, Sire,* and *Lode Hetosa,* which is the focus area for this study. Later, some *woredas* at the southern part of the Zone were separated from *the Arsi* zone to create the West *Arsi* zone. *Arsi* University is established recently at *Asella. Abomsa, Assasa, Bokoji, Sagure, Kersa, Dhera, Etaya, Arsi Robe,* and *Huruta* are major towns in this Zone. *Arsi* University is established recently at *Asella. Arsi* Zone is bounded by latitude 7°10′34′′–8°42′46′′N and longitude 38°41′14′′–40°43′58′′E, covering a total area of 20,694.41 km2 (Fig. 3). Altitudes of *the Arsi* zone range from 881 to 4287 m ASL (NRGO, BFED, 2011).

Arsi Zone is divided into four agro-climatical zones mainly due to variation in altitude. The great variation of temperature provides wide opportunities to produce different types of crops in the Zone. In terms of annual temperature, it is dominantly characterized by moderately cool (about 40 percent) followed by cool (about 34 percent). Cool/cold type of thermal Zone is found in the highland areas of *Chilalo, Bada, Gugu, Enkolo,* and *Kaka* Mountains. The category of moderately warm temperature is found in the low land areas of *Gololcha, Amigna, Seru,* and *Merti woredas*. It is also found in the *Wabi Shabelle* river valleys and *Awash* Gorges. The mean annual temperature of the Zone is found between 20-250c in the low land and 10-150c in the central high land. However, there is a slight variation of temperature by month. February to May is the hottest month, while October to January is the coldest.

5.2.2. Socio-Economic Condition

Arsi zone, according to the 2007 Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency (CSA), has a total population of 2,637,657, of whom 1,323,424 are men and 1,314,233 women; with an area of 19,825.22 square kilometers. *Arsi* has a population density of 133.05. According to the same census, while 11.59% or 305,701 are urban inhabitants, 7,098 or 0.27% are pastoralists. A total of 541,959 households were counted in this Zone, which results in an average of 4.87 persons to household and 523,342 housing units.

Oromo (82.93%) and *Amhara* (15.38%) were the two largest ethnic groups reported in *the Arsi* zone; all other ethnic groups made up 1.69% of the population (CSA, 2007). *Afan Oromo* is spoken as a first language by 80.01%, followed by *Amharic* by 19.19% (CSA, 2007). The majority of inhabitants in the Zone were reported as Muslim with 59.33%, while 39.as Orthodox Christian (CSA, 2007). 16.5% of the population is in non-farm-related jobs, which are lower than the national average of 25% and a regional average of 24%. 84% of all eligible children are enrolled in primary school, and 22% in secondary schools (CSA, 2007).

5.2.3. Ethno-Religious Violence in the Zone

These days' ethno-religious conflicts have gained notoriety as the most violent crises in Ethiopia. Many incidents of ethno-religious violence were recorded in the country at different times; perhaps as a piece of evidence to what some say by opening the political space after decades of repressive rule, the new government has also inadvertently uncorked long-repressed tensions between Ethiopia's various ethnic groups (TNH, 2020; Semir, 2019). It could be argued that violence along ethnic and religious lines is one of the biggest challenges for the current administration in the country. Religious and ethnic clashes are becoming notable sources of casualties among different ethnic groups as well as between Christians and Muslims in the country[7]. For that matter, different incidents were seen as triggering factors for the outbreak of violence, which soon degenerated into ethnic and religious violence.

Arsi zone was no exception to the assertion made above. It could be referred here that *the Arsi* zone, like many other zones, is multi-ethnic and multi-religious. While *Oromos* and *Amharas* are the two predominant ethnic groups, Islam and Christianity are the two predominant religious beliefs in the Zone (FDRE-PCC, 2008). That said, as is often the case with ethno-religious conflicts in different parts of the country, the area had witnessed violent communal clashes across ethnic and religious fault lines over the past decade or so. Moreover, as implied above, different incidents, most notably recently, were seen in the area serving as trigger factors for the outbreak of violence, which soon degenerated into ethnic and religious violence.

[7] A reference can be made to the discussion made under chapter four (section 4.2)

Some of the most recent incidents that served as triggers of violence and soon degenerated into ethnic and/or religious ones include the violence that followed the October 2019 incident. The incident led to killings of people and burnings of religious places in the Zone (AFP, 2019; Reuters, 2019). Of course, the violence that followed the October 2019 incident was across *Oromia* and *Harari* regions and to the city of *Dire Dawa* (HRW, 2020; AFP, 2019). But, the situation had underscored one spectrum of violence in the Zone soon flaring ethnic and/or religious intonation. While the violence was primarily along ethnic lines, the US department of state quoted the regional police commissioner saying that: “there were attempts to burn churches and mosques and that there was a hidden agenda to divert the whole protest into an ethnic and religious conflict” (US Department of State, 2019).

The other recent incident of violence, which soon degenerated into ethnic and/or religious violence, happened in late June 2020 (in the aftermath of Hachalu Hundessa’s death, a celebrated singer). Like the October 2019 incident, following the June 2020 incident, violence ensued around the capital and the national regional state of *Oromia*, leading to the death of more than 200 people and destruction of properties (Walta TV, 2020; Washington Post, 2020; BBC, 2020). As protests were sparked following the incident, ethnic and religious tensions were also intensified, especially in the national regional state of *Oromia*. *Arsi* zone was no exception. Different *woredas* of the Zone had recorded both death and destruction of properties due to the violence, some of which degenerated into ethno-religious violence (TNH, 2020; Amnesty, 2020; M&G, 2020; Addis standard, 2020).

The New Humanitarian quoted a displaced person, who was living in a church compound with others following the incident in *Dera*, a town located in *Dodota woreda*, A*rsi* zone, as saying: “Our neighbors bring us food, nobody, not our mayor or the government, has cared to visit or even contact us (TNH, 2020).” Mail and Guardian also quoted a displaced person from the same locality, an ethnic minority, as saying: “My son died the worst kind of death — even criminals don’t deserve this sort of cruelty, it troubles me every day” (M & G, 2020). According to some reports, the town saw the most horrendous human loss and property destruction, leaving hundreds of civilians seeking shelter in two churches (St. Michael & St. Medhanalem churches) in the town (Addis Standard 2020; AllAfrica.com, 2020). Regional officials, on their part, described the situation

saying: “while protests had initially been peaceful, some people had an agenda to divert it into ethnic conflict and looting” (Fantahun, 2020; VOA, 2020).

Furthermore, the government blamed some media campaigns inciting ethnic violence and what followed in the aftermath of the incident was a demonstration to that effect:

> *Since the media campaigns have been pushing young people into believing that Neftegna*[8] *is the enemy operating in the persona of Abiy Ahmed, some targeted attack on alleged ethnic Amharas and their properties in the aftermath of Hachalu's death did not come as a surprise. All these have happened because of the constructed irresponsible media conspiracy, with no credible facts on the ground* (Embassy of the FDRE, London, UK, July 2020).

While the above-mentioned cases were just some examples of the problem, there needs to be noted that ethnic fighting at several universities in the country in general and in the regional state Universities, in particular, has sharpened tensions at different times, thereby serving as triggers of ethno-religious violence in different parts. Mirresa Yadessa (2018:4), for instance, has noted the general situation in public universities these days in the country as follows: “These days it has become common news to hear that a student of one ethnic group being attacked by the other and it is hard to find a university which finishes its academic year without such horrendous incidences and interruption.” Such news was seen serving as triggers of ethnic as well as religious conflicts and tensions in different parts. For that matter, one could note here the tension that surfaced *Assela* city, the capital city of *Arsi zone*, as well as *Adano* town, in *Bale* zone, upon the return of the dead body of two students from *Woldiya* Univerity (Reporter, 2019; Addis Standard, 2019).

In general, these and other incidents are clear indications that the inter-ethnic, as well as inter-religious fabric, is under strain, as Abbink (2014) notes, indicating differing visions and narratives on the Ethiopian community state and society. The mounting religious tensions have risked edging dispute into a sectarian contest in the country and the region in particular. For that matter, the violent confrontation was not limited only to the dominant ethnic groups in the area. There have been reports, both confirmed and unconfirmed, about ethnic and religious-based casualties among

[8] Literally means gun bearer

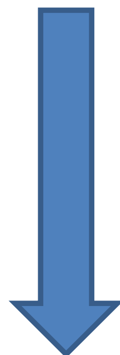
ethnic and religious groups in the Zone at different times (Crisis Group, 20018; 2016). These clashes have claimed lives, displaced people, and destroyed properties as well as religious places (HRW, 2020; Crisis Group, 2016; 18). While large-scale violence has occurred periodically in recent years, attacks have become more frequent, widespread, and efficient.

Moreover, over the years, it can be said that the government responses to the recurring conflicts have hardly been effective in bringing a sustainable solution. For that matter, in many cases of violent ethnic and religious-based clashes mentioned above and prior to other clashes, the government did not intervene in a timely fashion to keep the peace (HRW, 2020; Abbink, 2014). And, the political mobilization drawn along politicized ethno-religious lines in the country, as discussed in the preceding chapter, has the potential to preclude any positive developments soon.

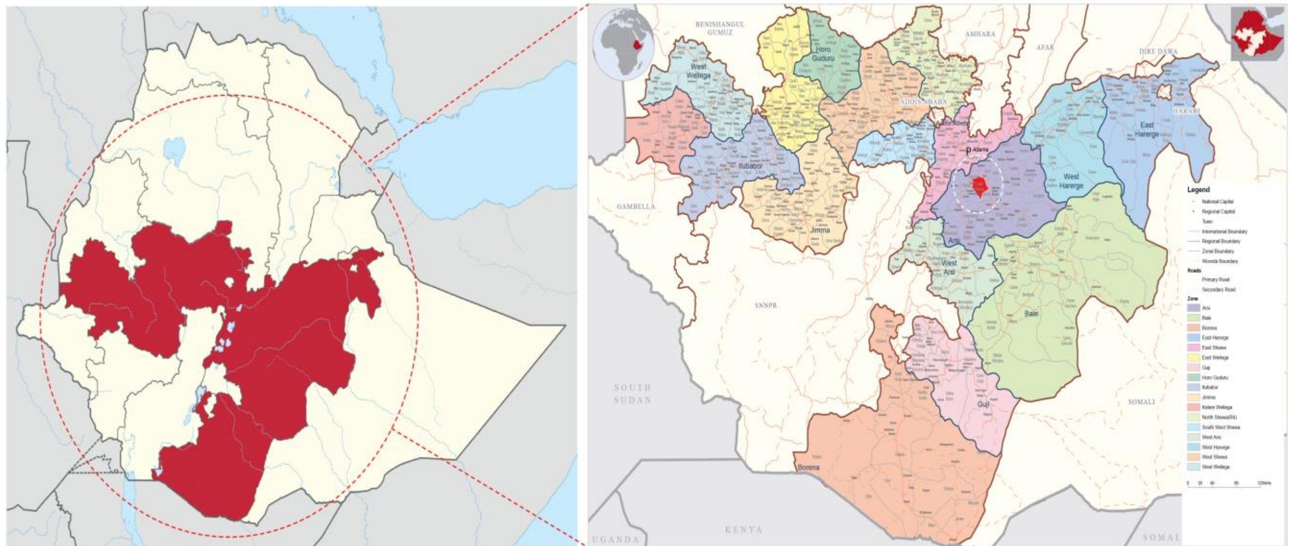
It follows, therefore, that in the face of violent identity conflagrations, efforts to peacebuilding will become very daunting. Thus, while violence along ethnic and religious lines is one of the biggest challenges yet for the government of Ethiopia, there exactly appears a need to explore resilient communities in the face of violence and build on their experience. The experiences of the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* communities exactly fall within this category of resilience response to pressures of violence. While the factors that contributed to the resiliency of the study community to pressures of violence shall be a subject of examination in the chapter to follow, in this section, an attempt will be made to lay the foundations for the chapter to follow by looking at the historical, political as well as local actors and events that shaped the study community.

5.3. The Lode Hetossa Woreda

Figure 4: Map on the location of Lode Hetosa Woreda with in Oromia (adapted to the context by the author)



Location map



Location of Oromia region within Ethiopia

Location of Lode Hetosa district within Oromia

5.3.1 Geographical Location and Socio-Economic Condition

Lode Hetosa woreda is located in the central part of *the Arsi* zone and is one of the 24 *woredas* in *the Arsi* Zone. It is about 165 km away from Addis Ababa in the Southeast direction, about 35km from the zonal capital *Assela* and about 70 km from *Adama* City. The district shares a borderline with *Sire woreda* to the northeast, *Dodota woreda* to the Northwest, *Hetosa* to the southwest, and *Robe* to the south. The administrative capital of the *woreda* is *Huruta*. The *woreda* is divided into 22 kebeles, of which three (two kebels in *Huruta* Town and one kebele in *Lode Jimata* Town) are urban, and the remaining 19 are peasant associations/rural-based kebeles (*Lode Hetosa woreda* Administration Office, 2013).

The *woreda* is fertile and highly suitable for cereal and vegetable production**.** The farming systems consist of mixed crop and livestock production. The main crops cultivated are wheat, barley, and maize. The main livestock reared are cattle and donkeys, followed by goats and sheep. Much of the land in the district is used for crop production (71%). Rangelands, forestlands, and others, including settlements, account for 17%, 4%, and 8%, respectively (NRGO, BFED, 2011).

5.3.2. Population Characteristics and Settlement Pattern

In terms of population, the 2007 national census reported a total population of 107,133 for the *woreda*, of whom 53,522 were men and 53,611 were women (CSA, 2007). According to the same census, 15,298 or 14.28% were urban dwellers from its total population. The 2011 Central Statistics Agency report, on the other hand, projected the total population of the *woreda* to 120,782, of whom 60,329 are male while 60,453 are female. The CSA projection puts the population of the *woreda* to 160, 132 by 2022, which is based on 2.7% annual population change. The overall sex ratio of the *woreda* is 99 males per 100 females, which are 99.5 males per 100 females in rural and 97 males per 100 females in the urban area (NRGO, BFED, 2011). By 2022, the male and female ration in the *woreda* has been projected to be 49.6% and 50.4% respectively. The *woreda* has a total area of 537.62km2, where the population density is about 224.7 persons per km2 (CSA, 2007, 11). Accordign to the CSA projection, by 2022 the population density of the area is projected to be 297.9/km^2.

Based on the 2007 census, most of the inhabitants said they practiced Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, with 53.49% of the population reporting they observed this belief, while 45.22% of the populations were Muslim, and 1.22% of the population were Protestant. Ethnic group residing in the region varies, the majority being *Oromo,* followed by *Amhara*, and several other ethnic groups like *Siltes* and *Guraghes* (CSA, 2007).[9] Until 2003 the *Lode Hetosa woreda* was administered under *Hetosa woreda*. After 2003, it became an autonomous administrative unit under its administrative center, *Huruta* town. In the 1980s, it was one of three

[9] Though the study made utmost effort to know the current ethnic composition of the *woreda* in percentage, it could not able to come up with an accurate statistical data due to lack of recordings from the concerned offices. Future researches can come up with most updated statistical data on the subject.

small towns in *Dodota wereda,* which included the town of *Dhera* in the neighboring *woreda* (Bernhard, 2005).

The administrative center of the *Lode Hetosa woreda*, H*uruta town,* has a latitude and longitude of 8°09′N 39°21′E with an elevation of 1,978 meters. There are different projects carried out in the town of *Huruta.* In 1983, for instance, a water reservoir for the *Dodota* water project was built near *Huruta* with 100 cubic meters. This project included a six-inch plastic water pipeline 21 kilometers long connected to this reservoir to *Dhera.* In 2006, a project called Self Help *Huruta*'s Project was established to increase agricultural production and productivity, increase farm household incomes, improve access to social services, and restore the natural resource base of the *woreda.* The project was established with funding support provided by the charitable foundation of the Irish Agricultural Wholesale Society.

As counted in 1956, the population in the area was 4,501. In 1994 it counted about 9,500 and about 11,600 in 2001 (Bernhard, 2005). Based on figures from the CSA (2007), the administrative center of the *woreda* has an estimated total population of 16,922, of whom 8,391 men and 8,531 women.

5.3.3. Historical, Political Events and Local Actors that Shaped the Study Community

As discussed above, the battle of *Azule* in 1886 had marked the decisive military victory of the forces of Menelik over the *Arsi Oromo* forces. While this study acknowledges the presence of a heated scholarly debate among historians and other scholars who endeavor to comprehend the overall historical development and motive of Menelik's expedition to the south, most, if not all, proponents convincingly present the unique features of Menelik's expedition to *Arsi* (Ayele, 2018). Thus, most scholars convey similarly that, unlike those campaigns conducted in the south, Menelik's campaign to *Arsi* had faced the most sustained and the bloodiest resistance before he was coroneted as an Emperor in 1889 (Bahru, 2000; Teshale, 1995; Abbas, 1995). Most also converse that as Menelik successfully lobbied some of the known clan leaders of *Arsi* and allowed them internal autonomy, on the other, some clan leaders of the *Arsi Oromo* rejected his proposal, consequently making their endeavor in vain (Bahru, 2000; Abbas, 1995).

Tariku (2008:3) communicated somehow similar note on the issue as follows:

The confiscation of Arsi land is assumed two ways, complete and partial. In areas where major confrontations and stiff resistance were staged, **particularly Huruta,** *Sire, Dodota, and Hetosa, complete alienation of land by the conquerors was applied. …Unlike the chiefs of the areas of strong resistance whose land was confiscated, in areas where resistance was not so strong, chiefs were allowed to retain up to one-third of the clan land, thus called balabbat meret*[10]*and to submit the remaining two-thirds to the government which then became crown land (emphasis mine).*

The quote somehow goes in parallel to the argument by historians that the system of administration applied by the time to a certain region varied on the basis of different factors such as the intensity of resistance during conquest, the economic value as well as the strategic significance to the empire (Bahru, 2000). There is a need to also note that the different advocates on Menelik's expedition to the south in general and *Arsi* in particular converse on the point that following the annexation of the area under Menelik's force, soldiers and lords took the majority of the cultivators' lands and made the local people *gebar*[11](Ayele, 2018). Abbas (1995:17) described it saying: "the state expropriated almost all the *Arsi* land which it distributed to soldiers, to the Church, officials and the nobility." As a result, the local people were suffering from burdensome tributes and labor services to be delivered to these lords. On the other hand, Brian (2009) notes that, understanding the severity of the alienation of the indigenous people from their lands, a decree was announced by the emperor in1890 that forced the lords and the soldiers to restore some portion of the land to the cultivators.

That said, while an intensive case study by McClellan (1988) provides one with a clear picture of the foundation of garrison towns in the south (for instance, *Shawan* settlers in the *Sidama* area), the case in *Arsi* was not described clearly, like the number of settler soldiers at each town (Dechasa, 2015). However, a general reading can be made from the different accounts that the

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[10] '*Balabat'* literally refers to one who has a father, indigenous, whereas *'meret'* refers to land. *Balabat meret* used to denote the indigenous owner of the land. Since the 19thcentury, it used to denote the hereditary chief of the incorporated people into modern Ethiopia. As such, '*balabat*' used to signify or represent a local authority linking the government with local people (see Dechasa Abebe, 2015, A Socioeconomic History of North Shawa, Ethiopia (1880s-1935), Doctoral thesis, University of South Africa, Unpublished)

[11] Kidane Wolde defines *gebar* as "he who works because he must and gives the administrator his strength and property", see Kidane Wolde Kifle, መጽሐፈ፡ሰዋስው፡ወግስ፡ወመዝገበ፡ቃላት፡ሐዲስ። Mashafa Sawasew Wages Wamazgab Qalat hadis, Artistic Printers, Addis Ababa, 1948 EC.

foundation of the garrison towns in these regions of Ethiopia was linked to Menelik's conquests in the late nineteenth century (Bahru, 2000; Markakis, 1974; Marcus, 1969). It can be read from these and other writings that more towns were established in each conquered province increasing numbers of officers and their soldiers together with their families and retainers came along to settle there. And, with the arrival of new groups of officers and settler-soldiers, other officials and their families establishments including marketplaces, churches, cemeteries, and schools flourished.

In line with that, it has been documented that most of Milo Mama handed over the land of what is today Hetosa woreda and its surrounding and other chiefs and it was accorded by Menelik to Ras Birru Wolde-Gabrel who kept its possession for life and then transferred it to his descendants (Bahru, 2000; Abbas, 2014, 1982). The end of Menelik's war of conquest in *Arsi* was followed by the Shewan settlers in mass in *Arsi* land (Abbas, 2014; Markakis, 1974; Marcus, 1969). Among the settlers in the region were mentioned as the *Gulele* and *Sellale*, who had served in the army during Menilek's campaign and the new settlers dwelt in considerable number in areas like: ***Huruta,*** *Sire, Tiyo, Sirka, Gololcha* and *Colle* (Abbas, 2014, 1982, emphasis mine). Somehow similar account as to the earlier settlement pattern was also made by an elderly from the area as follows:-

> *አሁን ሊጋባ ዙሪያ የሚባለውን አካባቢ ራስ ብሩ ያስተዳድሩት እንደነበርና በአካባቢውም በጣም ትልቁ የጉልት አስተዳደር እንደነበረ ነው፡፡ በጣም ረጅም ግዜም ያስቆጠረ የራስ ብሩ ቤተመንግስት አሁንም ድረስ በአካባቢው ላይ አለ፡፡ እንደውም የደርግ መንግስት መውደቅን ተከትሎ የተለያዩ ሙከራዎች ቤተ-መንግስቱን ለማፍረስ ተደርገውበት ነበር፡፡ ሚገርመው ግን እስከዛሬም ድረስ ቤተ-መንግስቱ አለ፡፡ በሌላ በኩል የሁሩታና ዙሪያው አካባቢ አብዛኛው መሬት ደግሞ ከሚኒሊክ ጋር አብረው ለዘመቱት ወታደሮች እንዲሰጣቸውም እንደተደረገም ጭምር፡፡ ስለዚህም ነው ከመሮ ጎዳና በታች ከተማውን ጨምሮ ያለው አካባቢው ጠመንጃ ያዥ ተብሎ ይጠራ የነበረው፡፡*

Which means: -

> *Ras Birru was used to administer the area surrounding the current* ***Ligaba****, and the area was by far the largest gult*[12]*system in the region. There still is Ras Birru's palace present in the area. Following the overthrow of the Derg regime, there were different attempts to abolish the palace, but surprisingly it survived all those attacks. On the other hand, much of the land in* ***Huruta*** *and its surrounding was accorded to soldiers who served during Menelik's campaign. That was also why the area downward from Mero Street, including the town, used to be referred to as Temenja Yaz*[13] (discussion with Ato Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020).

The statement rendered by the informant, in fact, echoes the argument by historians that the land appropriated following the military victory of the force of Menelik in the area was allotted to the government employees, soldiers, nobles, ecclesiastics, and administrators as compensation for the service they rendered during the war (Abbas, 2014; Bahru, 1991, 2000). With that note, it could be argued that soldiers who served during Menelik's campaign in *Arsi* have dwelt in the present *Lode Hetosa woreda* in general and in the town of *Huruta*, in particular, following the military victory of Menelik in the area. And these first settlers shaped and reshaped the growth of the towns that attracted numerous settlements from *Shewa*. A number of people seem to have migrated to the area looking for relatives. With this regard, in his translation work, Ambachew Kebede (2009:45) wrote that "the treatment the armies received from their commanders and top officials also seemed to encourage further migrants from *Shewa*." Furthermore, Banti (2002) claims that numerous *Shewan* armies settled in these towns and began to act as 'indigenous inhabitants' or 'hosts'. In what could be referred to as an extension to the assertion made above, Ambachew (2009) stated that the numerical predominance and the politico-cultural hegemony of

[12] In the former land tenure system *gult* refers to a system where the crown alienates land which was occupied by local tribes in common and distribute to members of the imperial family, the clergy, members of the nobility, Menelik's generals, soldiers, and local agents of the state. These people, through land grants, become absolute landowners. For a detailed discussion on the Land tenure system during the reign of the emperors, read Cohen, J. M. and D. Weintraub, 1975, Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia: The Social Background to a Revolution, Assen: Van Gorcum

[13] '*Temenja yaz'* literally means rifle holder. It is referred to as such because Menelik's soldiers were settled in the area after the incorporation of *Arsi* under Menelik's force (discussion with Ato Amare Derej, 20 August 2020)

the *Amhara* in these towns assisted them to adopt their way of life in the area they settled. On the other side, according to Katabo (1999) and Bizuwork (1992), previous inhabitants in the area, the *Arsi* Oromo, were largely displaced into the lowlands and subjected to harsh treatments by the settler soldiers. As an extension to the argument above, an elderly remarked on the earlier inhabitants to the present-day *Huruta,* the administrative center of *Lode Hetosa woreda*, and its surroundings saying:

> **በአካባቢው ላይ በቀደምትነት ይኖሩ የነበሩት ከሄጦሳ ጎሳ የሆኑት ኦሮሞዎች ነበሩ። ለዛም ነው ሄጦሳ የሚለውን ስም በወረዳው ውስጥ በተለያየ ቦታ የምናገኘው። የሚኒልክ ወታደሮች በአካባቢው ላይ መጥተው ሲሰፍሩ ነው አካባቢያቸውን ለቀው እንዲሄዱ የሆኑት። በተለይም አባጭሪ አካባቢ በዋነኝነት ይኖሩ እንደነበር ነው። ከቀደምት ነዋሪዎች መካከል የታወቁ የሀገር ሽማግሌም ሆነው ያገለግሉ የነበሩ ሁሩታ መንዛ የተባሉ ይገኙበት ነበር። የከተማው ስያሜም በሳቸው እንደሆነ ነው የሚታወቀው። በአካባቢው ላይ የሚነገሩት አብዛኞቹ ንግርቶች ውስጥ ያለው ችግር በአካባቢው ላይ የሚኒሊክ ወታደሮች ከመስፈራቸው በፊት ስለሚኖሩት ሰዎች እና በአመታት ውስጥ ምን እንዳጋጠማቸው በግልፅ አለመነገሩ ነው።**

Which means:-

> *Those who were indigene to the area were the Oromos from the Hetosa gossa*[14]*. That is also why the name Hetosa appears here and there in the woreda. When Menelik soldiers came and settle in the area, they were made to leave their inhabitants. They used to predominantly reside around the present-day Aba Chiri and its surroundings. Among the earlier inhabitants in the area was a person named Huruta Menza, a respected elder in the area. The naming of the town was also after him. The problem with most narrations in the area is that they do not tell about the people living before Menelik soldiers arrived. Little is also told about what has happened to that population through the years.* (Discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020).

[14] Though different sources define the term *'gossa'* differently, the informant here used it to denote the concept of clan.

On the other hand, another informant reflected on the nature of earlier settlement in to the area, more particularly in to the surrounding villages of the *Lode Hetosa woreda* administrative center like *Fursa, Gerdebusa, Wodecha* and *Adamare* as follows:

> ***በወሬም በታሪኮችም እንደምንሰማው ከሆነ አባቶቻችን ወደዚህ አካባቢ መጥተው ሲሰፍሩ አካባቢው ሰፊ ፤ ለም እንዲሁም በአብዛኛው በጫካ የተሞላ እንደነበር ነው። መገበያያ ቦታዎችን እራሳቸው እንዳቆሙ፤ከብቶቻቸውንም በጣም በሰፊ ቦታ ላይ እንደፈለጋቸው እያዘዋወሩ ይመግቡም እንደነበር ነው የሚነገረን የነበረው። ባዶ ሜዳ ከመሆኑ የተነሳ ስፋቱን እራሱ በአይን አይቶ ለማወቅ እስከሚያስቸግር ድረስ እንደነበር ነው በታሪክ ሲነገረን ያደግነው።***

Which means:-

> *What we were listening and told in stories were that when our forefathers came to the area, the area was vast, fertile, and largely covered with forests. We have also been told that they were the ones who set up marketplaces in the area and also used to feed their cattle, moving from place to place in large areas without difficulties. We grew up listening to stories that it was even difficult to determine the exact coverage of their area due to its vastness* (discussion with Emama Abay Tirfe, 29 July 2020)

Unlike the above statement that claims the eviction of the people from the area by Menelik's forces, the later statement asserts that the settlers occupied a bare land. An inference, therefore, could be made from the statement that it somehow attempts to draw a different opinion to the common assertion that previous inhabitants were evicted and had gone to a new land in neighboring provinces, at least in the specific area as mentioned by the informant. The claim by the informant was that the soldiers who settled around the present-day Lode Hetosa woreda settled in bare land. With that, it somehow resonates with the assertion by Akalou Wolde-Michael (1973) that garrisons could be established either in already existing settlements or in areas without prior existing settlements. Therefore, in the latter case, the garrison grew up as a new installation, setting up everything as new. They further claim that intensive cultivation today in the area has become a reality only after the conquest of the area by Menelik’s force, late at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In different to the remark above, however, it has been documented that as the *Arsi* offered the fiercest resistance, emperor Menelik settled a number of soldiers in the area, placing a heavy burden of support on the *Arsi*. The emperor, in particular, used land grants to induce northern farmers to settle there (Cohen and Isaksson, 1987). A similar note can also be inferred from the following statement by Cohen (1973:102):

> *When the conquest of Arsi land was completed, the military administrators of Menelik began to consolidate their power by settling their officers and soldiers on the land, turning the former clan owners into tenants of those officers, building strategic towns and administrative centers from which to govern the territory and developing the area along the particular lines followed by Ethiopian feudalism*.

For that matter, the land was offered to government servants according to their rank and position. Ordinary soldiers were given two and three *gashsas*[15]of land (Markakis, 1974). And, the majority of the settlers, especially in ***Huruta*** were claimed to be members of the army (Katabo, 1999). Katabo (1999) further mentioned that these settlers were dependent principally on local farming and, hence, lived mostly in the highland areas where the land was fertile and the climate was conducive. As the conditions for farming were good in many areas where the soldiers were settled, there was soon considerable migration to the area by farmers from the north, both *Amhara* and *Oromo* from sub-groups other than the *Arsi* (Cohen, 1973; Braukamper, 1980). The study population may not fall short of this explanation. The area demonstrates a very fertile land with very conducive climatic conditions, and no wonder it attracted numerous settlements after the settlement of soldiers who served in the Menelik army in the area. The following statement from an informant also supports the argument: **እንደሚታወቀው ይሄ አካባቢ በጣም** ***ለምና የሰጡትን የሚያበቅል ነው። በዚህም ምክንያት ሁሉም ለመኖር የሚመርጠው አካባቢ ነው። ብዙ ሰፈራዎችም በዚህ ምክንያት እንደተፈጠሩ ለመገመት አያዳግትም።*** which means: - “As we know the area is very fertile. As a result, it is everyone’s choice to live here. It would not be difficult to guess that many settlements were followed in consequence” (discussion with Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020).

[15] ‘*Gasha’* was a unit of land measurement in Ethiopia and is equivalent to 40 hectares.

Saving the argument on whether the area was bare or not, there can be drawn little disagreement on the point that once the soldiers/armies settled in these towns, they began to act as ‘indigenous inhabitants’ or ‘hosts'.This act has helped the study community form a solidified community, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Moreover, settlers at a specific locality often call upon their relatives to the new areas, thereby allowing them to congregate at the same vicinity. With that respect, Pankhurst (1982) stated that a specific locality in a town *(sefer)* often had ethnic or provincial associations indicating that migrants from the same locale congregated in close vicinity upon establishing the towns. Besides, the congregation of the same locale in the area was an indication that particular governors or local administrators relied upon kinsmen for a cushion of socioeconomic support until they could better establish themselves (Pankhurst, 1982).

The explanation above seems to fit well to the specific context of the area under investigation. Amongst the earlier settlers in the town of *Huruta,* for instance, are the *Sellale* (discussion with Ato Urge Debella, 29 August 2020). The *Sellale’s* have got a distinct locality in the town of *Hurtuta,* which is referred to as *sellale sefer* (*sellale* locality), and according to my informant the area was named after the predominant settlers in that specific locality, the *Sellales:*

> *በቦታው ላይ በአብዛኛው በተለየም በቀደመው ጊዜ መተው የሰፈሩት ሰላሌዎች ስለነበሩ ነው አካባቢው ሰላሌ ሰፈር ተብሎ የተሰየመው። በተመሳሳይም ሊጋባ አካባቢም ቁስለኛ ሰፈር የሚባል አለ። እንዲህም የተባለበት ምክንያት የቆሰሉ የሚኒልክ ወታደሮች አካባቢው ላይ ሰፍረውበት ስለነበረ ነው።*

Which means: -

> *The locality was named Sellale because the predominant settlers in the locality, especially in the early days, were Sellales. Similarly, in Ligaba there is a locality referred to as ‘kuslegnoch sefer.’ The locality was named as such because those who settled in the area predominantly were the wounded soldiers of Menelik* (discussion with Ato Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020).

While the specific *sefers* now comprise residents from different ethnic compositions, the areas are still known as *sellale and kuslegnoch sefer;* perhaps an illustration of the assertion that migrants from the same locale congregated in close vicinity following the setup of garrison /towns/ all over the newly acquired territory. It also demonstrates that the new settlers attempted to adjust to their new environment by forming a network among themselves. As such, it can be said that, especially

in the early days, the ties individuals build up were within groups of high-density connectedness/around themselves.

Another worth note goes to the issue of social and cultural integration between settlers and previous inhabitants or between settlers themselves but from different social/ethnic backgrounds. With this regard, McClellan (1990) notes that socially and culturally, the early towns maintained a rather strict boundary between settlers and their clients, leaving little room for assimilation. The argument is that military domination, combined with ideological elements of ethnocentrism and divine mission, shaped northern attitudes towards the local populations, providing reference to preserving the settler's identity in the face of overwhelming numbers (McClellan, 1990). Though forming a distinct boundary to preserve the settler's identity, as claimed by McClellan, was mainly vis-a-vis the local population that may not be the case all the time. In other words, preserving the settler's identity could also happen between the settlers themselves when they came from different social backgrounds. That is, as discussed above, settlers to the newly occupied territories, in *Arsi,* for instance, were both *Amharas* and *Oromos* from other sub-groups other than *Arsi.* The difference on their social background was observed serving as a reference to form a distinct boundary between them even though both were settlers to the area.

For instance, one could note the relation between two earlier settlers in the study locality, especially in the previous time. As claimed by informant, the *Sellales* came to the area after Menelik's soldiers' settlement. However, for the most part, their relationship was confined amongst themselves. In other words, they rarely integrate with those groups who consider themselves as "prior settlers"[16] and descendants of Menelik's soldiers. An informant

[16] Research participants used different terminologies in referring to residents in the area which, reading through the line and also asking further explanation, the study identified their usage and meaning as follows: *'yekedemu newariwoch'* was the first phrase referred to by participants, which the study interpreted its literal meaning as 'inhabitants' or 'indigene.' Participants also used the term *'kedimo sefariwoch*', which the study interpreted its literal meaning as 'prior settlers', to refer people whom they presume as prior settlers to the area following Menelik II expansion in the area and it principally includes Menelik soldiers, their descendants, and relatives. *' Ketilew yeseferu*' is a term designated by research participants for people whom they believe were not amongst the 'prior settlers' and the research preferred to use its literal meaning as 'subsequent settlers.' *'Ketilew yeseferu*', therefore, could include all none 'prior settlers' irrespective of their ethnic or religious background (with this denomination 'subsequent settlers' could relatively also fall amongst old settlers in the area but not within the circle of 'prior settlers'). However,

communicated the reason for such boundary between the two settlers as “unreceptive” behavior of the inhabitants who claim themselves as “prior settlers” to the area and their “resistance” to integrate others with them: *በአካባቢው ላይ ቀድመው የሰፈሩት እራሳቸውን የሚኒልክ ወታደሮች እና የነሱ ዝርያ አድርገው ነው የሚቆጥሩት፡፡ በኋላ የሰፈሩት የእኛ ቤተሰቦች በአካባቢው ከሰፈሩ በኋላ ደግሞ በነሱ ማህበር ውስጥ ብዙም ይፈልጓቸው እንዳልነበር በግልጽ ይታይ ነበር፡፡*
Which it means:- “The “prior settlers” to the area consider themselves as Menelik soldiers and their descendants. When our family settles after that in the area it was evident that they were not as such welcomed in their (the “prior settlers”) circle.” (Discussion with Ato Urge Debella, 29 August 2020).

Thus, the statement demonstrates the distinct boundary that was put in place between the so-called “prior settlers” and “subsequent settlers” to the area or among settlers from different social backgrounds, especially in the early days. This boundary, however, has been claimed as not as wide now as it was in the early days. Research participants had narrated that the need to collaborate among the community for collective action and to preserve their common good shifted the landscape for the better, especially the relation between the “prior settlers” and the “subsequent settlers”.[17] (Discussion with Ato Urge Debella, 29 August 2020).

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their current status in the area was mainly cited by research participants in resemblance to the so-called ‘prior settlers.’ Participants also used the term ‘addis sefariwoch’, which the study interpreted its literal meaning as ‘new settlers’, to particularly refer to those who began to settle in the area mainly following the post-1991 political and administrative restructuring in the country. According to a research participant, though it may not be common to hear these days, the term ‘*Metewoch’* (literally could mean non-titular) was used to be employed by so-called ‘prior settlers’. And, its usage was to a denomination of everyone whom they (“prior settlers’) consider did not belong to their patronage line (discussion with an anonymous informant, *Huruta,* 04 August 2020). The statement somehow resonates with Banti (2002) claim that after Menelik armies settled in the conquered areas and towns, they began to act as ‘indigenous inhabitants’ or ‘hosts.’

[17] A detailed examination on the issue was made under chapter six (section 6.2.2)

5.3.4. Present situation

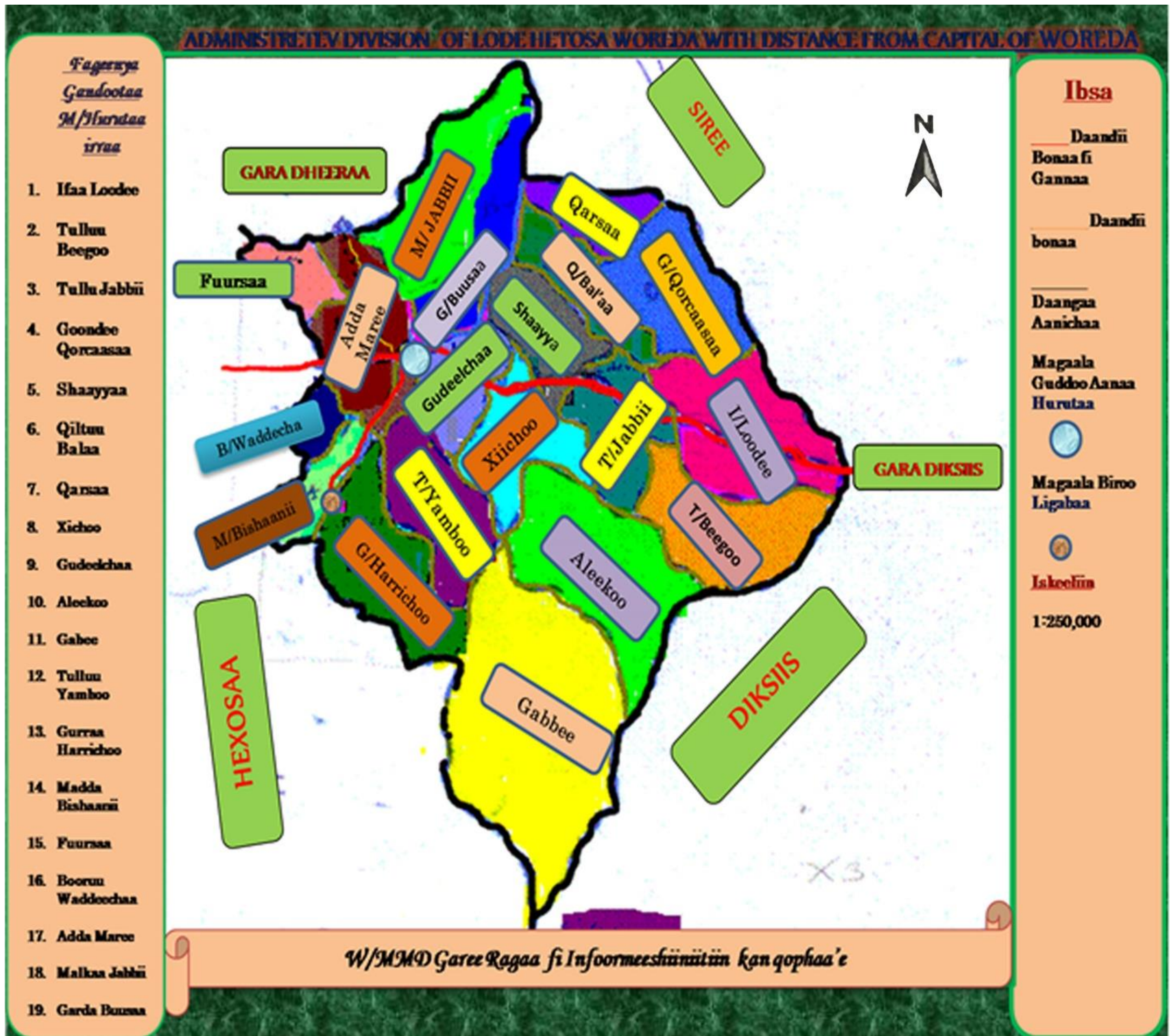

Figure 5: The Current Political Map of *Lode Hetosa Woreda* (Source: *Lode Hetosa woreda* Finance and Economic Coordination Office)

Today the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* is not a homogeneous area in terms of ethnic as well as religious composition. Big groups of *Oromos* and *Amharas* are found together with other ethnic groups. Religious wise also comprises Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Protestants, among others. As heterogeneous is the ethno-linguistic composition of different places in the country, including the study area, the ethnic-based federal system of the country, as noted by Zemelak and de Visser (2017), however, bases itself on the assumption that the ethno-linguistic communities of the country are located in clearly defined, or definable, territorial areas. Such political arrangement

could be argued as having significant political and cultural implications to residents not belonging to the dominant ethnic community of the regions or sub-region. The problem holds especially in those cities and towns where considerable heterogeneous ethno-linguistic groups constitute the towns/cities and ethnic borderlands where different ethnic groups coexist (Zemelak and de Visser, 2017; Asnake, 2014). In line with that, it has been repeatedly claimed that following the promulgation of Proclamation 116/2006 by the National Regional State of *Oromia*, which reserved 70% of the seats in a city council for ethnic *Oromos*, non-*Oromo* barely gets a seat in the councils of the cities in *Oromia* (Zemelak, 2014; Amensisa, 2012).

The present situation in the area under study, especially in *Huruta,* generally falls within the explanation given above. Given the nature of the formation of the town and its surroundings, as explained above, the area at present constitutes heterogeneous composition. Even if the area was initially dominated by settlers who were largely extracted from Menelik's soldiers as well as their relatives and migrants, later on, individuals belonging to various ethnic communities moved from their homelands to the area, thereby making the composition of the area heterogeneous. While *Oromos* and *Amharas* constitute the major portion of the population, other ethnic groups, including *Silte*, *Guraghe* also comprise considerable numbers among the residents in the area. Therefore, the political implication of the premise to match ethnic and administrative boundaries is that significant numbers of residents not belonging to the dominant ethnic communities in the region or sub-region have a slim chance if not none to a political representation in the area. This reality could be argued as against article 38(1) of the FDRE Constitution, which guarantees the right of 'every Ethiopian national' to elect and be elected, regardless of his or her 'color, race, nation, nationality, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion or another status.'

On top of that, the ethnic background was put as a requirement of eligibility either to vote or be a candidate in none of the federal electoral proclamations. On the other hand, as studies on political equality assert, society's economic, social, and political realities are highly contingent on their 'representation' in national and local constituencies. Above all, however, the implication of little or no institutional mechanism for accommodating residents not belonging to the dominant ethnic community in the area would mean there is a favorable condition for violence. That could be said because, as different researches suggest (Khan, Combaz, and McAslan, 2015; Berkman, 2007),

among residents in socially excluded communities, violence becomes an instrument to achieve certain outcomes, such as asserting authority and visibility, acquiring cultural identity, enforcing security, obtaining economic gain and so forth. There can be mentioned instances in the country where multiethnic towns and cities are caught in violent conflicts (see Asnake, 2014).

Nonetheless, the *Lode Hetosa woreda* is known for its non-violence experience to pressures of violence in general and ethno-religious violence in particular. But, the non-violence of the area may not be summarized due to the homogenous composition of the area. Rather multi ethno-religious groups remained resilient to pressures of violence. The different ethnic groups' conceptions about their relations to each other have been accounted for through an interview, which shall be dealt with in detail in the following chapter. But, it might help to get an idea about their belief and sense of reality in general if it is presented briefly here as follows:

> **አካባቢያችን የተለያዩ ብሄሮችና የሀይማኖት ተከታዮች ያለብጥብጥ በአብሮነት የሚኖሩበትን ይወክላል። ድጋፍ ከውጭ የማግኘት እድላችን ባነሰ ቁጥር እራሳችን በራሳችን የአካባቢያችንን ሰላም እና ደህንነት እንጠብቃለን።ያለብጥብጥ ለረጅም ጊዜም መቆየት የቻልንበት ምክነያትም ይሄ ነው ።**

And it means:-

> *The area represents different ethnic and religious groups living together without violence. When there are few possibilities to get any help from outside, we keep peace and order by ourselves. This is why we lived for a long period together without violence* (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020).

For that matter, it is common to hear from the community how thieves and murderers are dealt with well by their collective action even in the absence of state security apparatus (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen 21 August 2020; Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020; Ato Amare Dereje, 2020). On the other hand, they expressed their dissatisfaction with the government. The research documented critical judgments passed against officials from the community, which shall be dealt with in detail in the chapters to follow. Much of the feelings of disappointment and distrust are still present.

On another note, the area, particularly the town of *Huruta,* exhibits an ever-increasing population, with people migrating from different places to the area. Like anywhere else in the country,

demographic dynamism in the area could be explained by the political reforms that happened in post-1991 Ethiopia. The people settling down in the area in post-1991 Ethiopia are said mostly officials in the administration and their relatives, teachers, traders, and migrants from the neighborhoods (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020; W/o Medina Kunbi Negesso, 18 August 2020). The result of the immigration into the area, especially into the town of *Huruta* from the surrounding villages, happened to result an ever-increasing population and shortage of land. Landholders who earlier left large parts of their land unused are now under shortage (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020). An issue of land becomes interesting here because, among the major cases appearing before courts in the area, land issue was identified among the primary ones (discussion with Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 2020; Ato Bekele Guta, 25 July 2020). Though the study could not obtain an exact data, it has been claimed by the informants that a claim about interference with the right to possession and dispossession of land (unlawful possession of land) is the rifest case in the *woreda*. Thus, it is important to note it here as it shall imply the study's analysis in the chapters to follow.

In addition, under conditions of an ever-increasing population, especially in rural areas, the migration of young adults to *Huruta*, especially during the harvest season, was implied as one feature of the town. It has also been communicated as one strategy to alleviate the harmful effects of increasing resource competition in a land-limited rural population (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020; W/o Medina Kunbi Negeso, 18 August 2020). At the other end, this sizeable number of young adult migration into the town could be easily portrayed as potentially disrupting the shore had it not been the effective community resilience strategies/factors/ to violence, which shall be dealt with in detail in detail the chapter to follow.
The area also represents one of the hot spots for female out-migration, in particular to the Middle East and Sudan, with a prospect of opportunities for income generation as domestic servants (discussion with Medina Kunbi Negeso, 18 August 2020; ILO, 2018; Assefa, Seid and Tadele, 2017). On the other hand, the constantly changing political development in the hosting countries and the return of a considerable number of migrants to the area, in consequence, has been communicated by the *woreda's* women, children, and youth's office as a problem to the already challenging employment opportunities in the area (discussion with W/o Medina Kunbi Negeso, 18 August 2020).

Conclusion

The chapter attempted to outline the major historical, political events and local actors that shaped the study community. A presentation was made that most of the historical and political events that shaped the study community took place following the incorporation of the area under Menelik's campaign. Historical accounts, as well as research informants, narrate that settlement to the area, especially in the town of *Huruta* and its surroundings, coincide with the formation of other garrison towns in different parts of the newly conquered territories in the late 19th centuries and at the turn of the twentieth century. Over the years, the area has become more and more multiethnic. Moreover, it has been communicated in the chapter how prior settlers in the area at the beginning attempted to form distinct boundaries among themselves, though the dynamics and coexistence changed later on.

The chapter also pressed on how the present premise of the ethnic federal arrangement of the country (ethnic territoriality) is posing a challenge to accommodating ethnic groups in the area which do not belong to the dominant ethnic group in the region. It, in particular, highlighted that geography and history complicate the political feasibility of providing each group with territorial autonomy in the current ethnic-based federal arrangement in the country. The *Lode Hetosa woreda* falls within the category where such complications have displayed and hence, with its political implications to a significant number of residents not belonging to the dominant ethnic community. However, while such contestation unleashed violent conflicts of diverse forms in different multiethnic areas, the *Lode Hetosa woreda* was different. Amid violent environment in the country in general and in the region in particular, the area shall be mentioned amongst stable *woredas* in *Oromia.* This happens despite favorable conditions for violence in the study locality, just like in some other areas in the country. Therefore, it shall be the thrust of the next chapter to dwell on factors behind the resilience response of the study community to pressures of violence in general and ethno-religious violence in particular by accounting for different instances.

Chapter Six: Understanding Factors of Community Resilience to Pressures of Ethno-Religious Violence in *Lode Hetosa Woreda*

6.1. Introduction

For many years Peacebuilding was taken as a centrally coordinated package of interventions to resolve a conflict by addressing its root causes. However, this shared understanding of Peacebuilding has been significantly eroded over the last decade or so. The new focus has shifted the debate from liberal top-down problem-solving approaches towards a more pluralistic bottom-up conflict management approach. An important concept and approach that have taken center stage in this new shift is the concept of community resilience. The notion is relatively recent in the discourse of Peacebuilding in Africa in general, and nothing different can be said for the Ethiopian case in particular.

That said, these days, the Ethiopian state is experiencing an upsurge of violent conflicts, some of which have tended to have ethno-religious bearings. On the other end, even in the most challenging situations, individuals and communities are acting to prevent violence from occurring or counter the effects and causes of conflict in their surroundings by employing local strategies. Failure to take stock of these efforts can, and often does, undermine the effort of building sustainable peace. Unearthing and understanding community resilience at different parts of the country is, thus, a crucial element towards finding viable solutions to violent conflict situations in the country. In line with that, this section sought to explain community resilience in the study area. Accordingly, the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* community's strategies and experiences in preventing or countering violent ethno-religious conflicts shall be examined.

Based on Menkhaus's (2013) explanations about resilience, the paper contextualizes community resilience in the area to refer to the following two dimensions: the first is the capacity of a community to uphold and maintain positive peace[18] during violent conflict situations. Upholding

[18] The research acknowledges the existence of a much broader understanding of the concept 'positive peace', but here its usage is limited to a specific connotation as implied by Menkhaus while explaining the concept of resilience in Peacebuilding contexts (see Menkhaus K. 2013, "Making Sense of Resilience in Peacebuilding contexts: Approaches, Applications, and Implications", Peacebuilding platform, 6: 1-10).

positive peace entails, among other things, preventing resorting to violence amidst conflict situations in the neighboring *woredas* as well as in different parts of the country. Thus, an attempt was made to find a systematic and scientific explanation on factors that have helped the study community resist violence pressures. While the focus under this section shall be to examine the factors that helped the study community to be resilient in the face of violent ethno-religious conflicts in their neighborhood, there need to take into cognizance that these factors may not necessarily apply in explaining community's resilience or non-resilience in some other contexts. That is to say, an examination of which system capacities are relevant to responding to specific types of violence that preserve a system's peaceful function and identity is necessary to understand its application in different contexts. Second and related to the first dimension, it entails the capacity of a community to transform negative peace (potential violent situations) into positive peace (non-violent situations). Within that frame, experiences of the study community's resilience responses and actions to possible violent situations in the area are explained. In other words, the community resilience stories and actions in preventing possible violent situations had it not been to the preventive measures of the community are assessed. However, there is a need to note here that this scenario may somehow fall short of explaining the transformation essence as detailed in pieces of literature of conflict transformation.

6.2. Explaining Community Foundations of Resilience in *Lode Hetosa Woreda* amidst Rising Violent Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Ethiopia

As discussed throughout the paper, despite violence in different parts of the country, some communities could be defined as relatively calm and able to resist the pressure of resorting to violence. Gareth Evans (2005:91), capitalizing on the issue, wrote:

> *For every case of religious or ethnic or linguistic difference erupting in communal violence, there are innumerably more cases around the world of people and groups of different cultures and backgrounds living harmoniously side by side. For every group economic grievance that erupts in catastrophic violence there are innumerably more that don't; for every instance of economic greed; for control of resources or the levers of government, generating or fuelling outright conflict, there are innumerably more that don't...*

Noting that, *Lode Hetosa Woreda* in general, and the town of *Huruta,* in particular, can be categorized among *woredas* with relatively calm experiences amidst violent ethno-religious conflict in different parts of the country.[19] That is also exactly why the paper opted for the first two dimensions among Mankhaus's (2013) resilience dimensions. As such, in the attempt to explain how the community upholds positive peace, the major question was: what made it possible for these residents/communities' to respond assertively or to push back against these forces and conditions? Acknowledging the fact that communities' resilience, of course, varies with context and with capacity, the section discussed the major factors through a lens of interpretivism as follows:

6.2.1. Shared /Identity/ Narratives and Place Attachment as Resilient Factors

According to the social constructivist approach, where the epistemological consideration of the study was founded, the way we understand resilience and resilience response in a given area is a product of a historical process of interaction and negotiation between groups of people. Social constructivism is also built around an appreciation of the power of shared narratives to create our sense of reality. With this regard, Ricoeur (1991) noted that life becomes meaningful and human by being articulated narratively, and identity is constructed, constituted, and reconstituted in the process of narrating it. Moreover, Panter-Brick and Eggerman (2012) have argued that narratives and meaning-making build social resilience by enabling groups in the face of adversity. That seems why shared narratives are sometimes called "resilience narratives," stories that unite individuals and groups within a shared, coherent interpretation of "what is happening" and "what to do" (Carpenter, 2014). The value of shared narratives in community identity formation and maintenance is a key theme in the resilience literature (Sonn and Fisher 1998).

[19] It could be noted here that amongst 25 *woredas* in *the Arsi zone*, *Lode Hetosa woreda* was chosen as the most peaceful *woreda* in 2018/19. As a result, it was selected to host the annual zonal sports festival in the following year (2019/20). Violent ethno-religious events were also barely recorded in the *woreda* in the following budget years (discussion with Ato Jamal Kelil, *Lode Hetosa* woreda vice administrator, 22 August 2020).

Shared narratives form an important place in shaping a given community's social identity, thereby influencing their response to various pressures either positively or negatively. And history is the most important source of a group's narrative as it is how the group constructs and construes its past and, thus, its present. In line with that, the historical narratives built among the study community have played a role in shaping their social identity, thereby influencing their collective action. While talking about the history of the administrative center of *Lode Hetosa woreda,* it is common to hear from respondents the spirit of solidarity that "always" existed. According to research participants, the people in the area have lived and worked side by side for a very long time, and their history of sense solidarity continued among different generations in the town (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020; discussion with Ato Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020; discussion with Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020).

Different explanations have been provided as to how their sense of solidarity originated. Amongst the explanations by the so-called "prior settlers" of the study community, especially amongst the "prior settlers" and "subsequent settlers" of the town of *Huruta* and its surrounding, was that: Our ancestors were the first to settle in the area, were the one who established market places, shaped the town and hence, we belong nowhere else but here (discussion with Ato Tadesse Dessie, 04 September 2020; Emama Abay Tirfe, 29 July 2020; Ato Hailemariam Kibebew, 28 July 2020). As such, there can be witnessed a persistent narration amongst generations of "prior settlers" and somehow "subsequent settlers" too that their ancestors were the first to come to settle in the area as well as define the major events in the area after that. Thus, despite a difference in narration as to whether the area was already occupied or not before the settlement of Menelik's soldiers, the sentiment shows the so-called "prior settlers" and "subsequent settlers" have already developed sense of "belonging", thereby implying strong sense of "geographical" and "genealogical" attachment to the locality. An attachment and belongingness to the area, especially from the so-called "prior settlers," can be drawn from the following statement by a research participant:

> *ከረጅም ጊዜ ጀምሮ እዚሁ ከመሆናችን የተነሳ ስለኃላ ትውልዱ እራሱ ቢጠየቅ ሌላ ቦታን የሚጠቅስ ያለ አይመስለኝም። የኋላ ትውልዳችንም ቦታ ከዚሁ እደሆነ ነው የምናስበው። በፍጹም ከተማችንን ስለመልቀቅ አስበንም አናውቅም። እንደውም እናቴ ሁሌም ምን ትል*

ነበር ‘መቀበሪያዬ የሚሆነው እዚሁ የአባቴ ምድር ላይ ነው’፡፡ እኔም ብሆን እንደዛው ነው ምለው፡፡ which means:-

Because we stayed for such a long here, I do not think anyone would refer to any other region if asked about his/her ancestry. We just believe our ancestors were from here. We also never want to leave our town. My mother used to say, ‘my burier shall be on the land of my fathers’. Same do I” (discussion with Emama Abay Tirfe, 29 July 2020).

As different studies have indicated, histories with a strong sense of ‘belonging’ and ‘identity’ attached to one’s locality and local ‘traditional values’ are important sources of group symbolism for a common action (See Abreham 2015). Pfefferbaum et al. (2015) also note that participation in social networks; belonging to common ancestry or demographic background; and having shared interests, values, and perceptions generate and augment social capital by strengthening social ties, which in turn improves communication, trust, living with conflict and a sense of identity in social networks. In line with that, the common narration established among the “prior settlers” and “subsequent settlers” that their ancestors came into the place in different groups and settled and shaped the area have helped as an important source of group symbolism, thereby playing its part in influencing their common action. What has been accounted for above was something in resonance to it. In the meantime, the community generally defines themselves and constructs their identity as “courageous who accomplish something that other groups could not” (discussion with Ato Jara Gedebo, 20 August 2020; Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020). In line with that research, participant narrated that:

> ***የሁሩታን እና አካባቢውን ህዝብ ከሌላው ለየት የሚያደርገው መንግስት እራሱ በሌለ ጊዜ ሰላማችንን በራሳችን አስጠብቀን መቆየታችን ነው፡፡ ለዚህም ምስክሩ በ 1983/84 በዙሪያው ያሉት ሁሉም ሊባሉ የሚችሉ ወረዳዎች በብጥብጥ በሚታመሱበት ግዜ እኛ አካባቢ ግን ምንም ነገር ሳይፈጠር ነበር ሁኔታውን ማሳለፍ የቻልነው፡፡ ሌላው አካባቢ ማድረግ ያልቻለውን የኛ አካባቢ ግን በአንድነት ነው እሳካሁንም እያደረገው ያለው፡፡***

This means:-

What makes the people of Huruta and its vicinity different from other areas is that we kept our locality peaceful even in the absence of state machinery. This was evidenced in 1983/84 (E.C) when almost all the surrounding woredas were rocked by violence. By then, we were

*able to maintain our stability. Our locality is still achieving what other areas could not through a sense of togetherness (*discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020)

Research participants proudly mention the area as a leading example to achieve collective needs in prior to the surrounding *woredas* (discussion with Ato Tadesse Ketema, 04 September 2020; Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020). Apart from keeping their area stable in different regimes, participants also narrate their altruistic solidarity for collective needs such as during the construction of High schools, Health centers, Sports centers, and so forth as demonstrations for their effective participation in social networks (discussion with Ato Urge Debella, 29 August 2020; Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020). Thus, the local history, traditional values, and genealogical and geographical connections established among the community have actually created a strong attachment, thereby shaping their collective action, least to say at times of possible violence. Moreover, there needs to be noted here that communities that view themselves as agents of their own destiny are inherently more resilient. As empirical evidences suggest, narratives that emphasize common identity and historically strong communal relationships actually characterize conflict-resilient neighborhoods (Carpenter, 2014; Briggs, 1996).

However, there is also an alternative explanation as to the growth of the sense of solidarity in the area, especially these days. The more recent explanation about the sense of solidarity can be viewed together with the post-1991 political development in Ethiopia in general and post-2005 settings in particular. Leaving out the detailed pieces of literature on socio-political development in post-1991 Ethiopia, it suffices to say that the current ethno-linguistic regional federal structure of multi-ethnic Ethiopia has brought significant socio-economic and political changes in the country (see, Abbink 1997; Merera 2003). In line with that, the post-1991 narration, especially among the so-called "prior settlers" in the area, was based on the assertion that they were systematically targeted and alienated from all sorts of socio-economic and political benefits (discussion with an anonymous participant, 04 August 2020.[20] They claim that they have been

[20] As implied under the 'Ethical Consideration' section, research participants who are unwilling for their names to be revealed and/or the research believed such reveling might expose them to danger because of the sensitivity of the information they provide are kept anonymous.

considered by the regional government as well as by the local administrators as “remnants” of the previous regime (discussion with an anonymous participant, 04 August 2020). Research participants have narrated that this feeling of exclusion has caused an increased sense of social identity and cohesion, creating a strong sense of common identity among the community, especially amongst the “prior settlers,” “subsequent settlers,” and their generations. A research participant can be quoted as saying: “due to an exclusionary policy of the EPRDF government, we as a community suffered together and that this suffering formed a bond among us” (discussion with anonymous participant, 10 August 2020).

The post-2005 developments were particularly echoed by research participants as the turning point in their systematic exclusion and target from all sorts of socio-economic and political benefits (FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa,* 04 September 2020; discussion with an anonymous participant, 06 August 2020). Abbink (2006) claims that the post-1991 ethno-linguistic-based regionalization introduced in the country led to sharpened ethnic consciousness and difference between the various ethno-regional groups and a resurgence of local boundaries and a sense of distinctiveness between the major and sub-ethnic groups. Moreover, the previous socio-political relations among the various groups in the country have also altered. The above assertion resonates with Merera's (2003) claim that, for instance, the *Amhara* in *Oromo* regions, the dominant group under the pre-1991 regimes, was effectively reduced to a minority with little political role whatsoever.

With this note, it can be said the post-1991development in the country has shaped the consciousness of the community, especially the so-called “prior settlers” and somehow the “subsequent settlers” in such a way that the new arrangement in the country have put them in distinctive position. The ethnic and sub-ethnic consciousness, which have become more evident in the much-politicized environment of inter-and intra-ethnic relations in post-1991 Ethiopia, seems to have been bought among the study community but in a way that builds their solidarity. The consciousness is built around the narration that the area and the people represent a distinct boundary, different from the surroundings (discussion with an anonymous participant, 13 August 2020). This sense of distinctiveness has made the study community build their solidarity. A research participant has been quoted as saying:

በአካባቢው ላይ በተለይም በቀደምትነት ሰፋሪ የነበሩት በአካባቢያቸው ላይ ሊኖራቸው ከሚገባ ተሳትፎ ቀስ በቀስ እና በሲስተም መገለል እንዲዳከሙ ከማድረግ ይልቅ ይበልጥ በአንድ ላይ እንዲሆኑና እና ለጫናዎችም በአንድነት እንዲቆሙ ነው ያደረጋቸው:: ለአካባቢያቸውም ያላቸው ስሜት የባለቤትነትና እና ማንም ከነሱ ሊቀማቸው እንደማይችል ነው:: አብዛኞቻችንም እዚህ ለ 30፣40፣50 አመታት ኖረናል፤ እዚሁም ነው ሀገራችንም::

This means:-

> *The gradual and systematic exclusion of the "prior settlers" from any role in their locality has made them stand together even more and resist pressures rather than weakening them. They have a strong sentiment of belonging to their locality and that no one can take it away from them. Most of us have lived here 30, 40, or 50 years, so we know each other, and we belong here (discussion with an anonymous participant, 04 August 2020).*

Coming to the year 2005, it was a year the country conducted arguably one of the most competitive elections in history. The ramifications of the 2005 election, leaving out again the pieces of literature on it, were implied by research participants to explain their solidarity and common action. Accordingly, it was claimed that the reduction of especially the so-called "prior settlers" and somehow "subsequent settlers" and their generations in the area into minority with little political role had made them choose for an opposition party during the election (discussion with an anonymous participant, 05 September 2020; FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa,* 04 September 2020). Though the official statement from the government dictated otherwise, there was a firm claim among residents that the community had given their vote for the opposition party running in the area. By then, just like many places in the country, there was a small protest staged in the town of *Huruta* opposing the election result, but no major violence incidence occurred (discussion with Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020; discussion with Ato Bekele Guta, 25 July 2020).

In consequence of the same, participants reitreated that the area was subject to exclusion and discrimination. Vivid thought can be noted among sections of the community feeling subjected to marginalization as a payback to their choice during the election. They claim that they made victims to the local and regional government programs and policies, most of the cases intentionally, because they represent a distinct boundary and character (FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa,* 04 September 2020*;* discussion with an anonymous participant, 10 August 2020). In support of their

assertion of distinct boundary and character, research participants also mentioned the Agricultural Producers' Co-operatives (APC) in the area during Derg[21], which was one of the few models to be mentioned by then in the whole of the country. The participant implied it as a symbol of the community cohesiveness for collective action and as a demonstration of how they used to relatively well function with the government and local administrators in previous regimes (Discussion with Ato Tadesse Ketema, 04 September 2020; FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 04 September 2020). A research participant has, in particular, commented on the issue as follows: **በቀደመው ጊዜ ለምሳሌ በደረግ ግዜ የሀገሪቱ ትልልቅ ባለስልጣናት ፕሬዝዳንቱንም ጨምሮ ነበር እየመጡ አካባቢያችን የሚጎበኙት የነበረው። በአሁኑ ግዜ ግን ማንም ዞር ብሎ የሚመለከተን የለም።** which means "in the previous times like during the Derg time we used to be visited by the country's top officials including the president. But now no one care for us." (Discussion with Ato Tadesse Ketema, 04 September 2020)

What could be implied from the discussion thus far is that these narrations, coupled with the diminished political role assumed by the "prior settlers" and "subsequent settlers" in the area, contributed to distance themselves from political agendas played out at the national, regional as well as local level. It helped them develop a sense of non-alignment with ethnic and religious

[21] Amongst the sweeping reforms that were made during the early reign of Derg was the Land reform proclamation of 1975. It was a proclamation to bring about a complete transformation in the country's complex land tenure. It required that peasants be organized into a hierarchy of associations that would facilitate the implementation of rural development programs and policies. Therefore, Peasant Associations (PAs) were set up throughout the country (Temesgen, 2013; Bruce, Hoben and Dessalegn, 1994; Ottaway, 1977). While divergent views exist about the well-functioning or failure of these reforms within that frame, very few Agricultural Producers' Co-operatives (APC) were very notable and regarded as models in the country. In that regard, it is to be mentioned one from *Gojjam (Yetnora kebele)* and one from *Lode Hetosa (Huruta Hetosa kebele)* (Ketebo, 2016). Ketebo (2016:4) notes on the model APCs as follows: "The Derg established them and highly cared for them to use them for a propaganda campaign to move as many people as possible to co-operatives and clustered villages." Ketebo (2016) also wrote that Mengistu had once visited *Huruta Hetosa* APC and was impressed by the institution's successes and rewarded it. When the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) assumed power in 1991, PAs were turned into Peace and Stability Committees (PSCs) whose initial function included policing their communities and maintaining or restoring order and security. Moreover, Bruce, Hoben, and Dessalegn (1994) note that, after the TGE assumed power, many leaders of rural institutions, including PAs, were placed in detention on the grounds that they were party members.

actors in the area. On the other side, these factors combined with increasing solidarity and cohesion amongst generations of the "prior settlers" and "subsequent settlers" and depolarize themselves to mobilizations at different levels; mobilizations through ethnicity and religious denominations in particular. That is to say, the senses of distinctiveness established by considerable sections of the society have helped the community to counter polarization and facilitated the mobilization of residents for collective preventive actions against violence.

That said, while most of the violence, especially the recent ethno-religious violence, were intertwined with political developments in the country (Semir, 2019), the shared identity the community forged to neutralize themselves to polarized cards played at the local, regional, or national level had made them play a pacifist role. Therefore, the community's pragmatic choice through their shared identity was crucial in keeping their locality non-violent. And the choice made seemingly align with what James Scott (2008) note: an open and collective confrontation with the power holder is suicidal; self-marginalization and neutrality, while not heroic, has historically been highly effective.

Generally, based on the discussion made thus far, even if different explanations could be given as to how the sense of solidarity grew in the area, it is, however, safe to say that the narratives developed at different times have helped to create a real understanding of each other among the community. For that matter, narratives are stories that we develop about other people, events, etc., just as other people develop stories about us, and they are represented as stories about a group's origins, history, and relationship with other groups (Phelp, 2005). As such, they frame how members of particular identity groups describe and make sense of all life situations (Ross, 2003). And, as evidenced in other research (Krause, 2018), in non-violent communities, meaning-making and narrative formation served to mitigate polarization and prevent the dehumanization of other religious or ethnic groups. Therefore, the explanation to be drawn for the study communities' resilience response to ethno-religious violence was not short of the same. Shared narratives among the study community have played their part in shaping the community's response to violence. There is a community identity based on history/narrative that "*Huruta* is a place of braves; cool and calm for the peaceful but wild for provocateurs." This has been inculcated for generations among the community, thereby influencing their action at times of pressure to violence. The older

generation proudly mentions the "bravery" of the community in keeping their locality safer irrespective of violence in different parts of the country (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020; Ato Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020; Ato Bekele Guta, 25 July 2020). This, as Krause (2018) notes, is an important resource that affirms their identity as a group and provides a sense of belonging.

While the explanation made above about the *Lode Hetosa* community was a reflection of how a strong sense of group 'identity' and 'belongingness' could shape communities' response to the positive, on the other hand, there is a need to remember that it could also be a source of stereotypes. Though research participants noted common identity and attachment to the area as a factor for their solidarity and sound response to pressures of violence, there is a need to remember that such a strong sense of commonality could also be used as a source of stereotyping and might be mobilized for political goal with extreme ends. In other words, having a strong sense of group symbolism is not always an advantage but could also be a source of rivalry. For that matter, Patillo-McCoy (1999) and Wilson (1996) have shown how strong social ties *within* a group can hinder collective action by creating a dense network of connections that ends up isolating certain residents from broader society or foster collective action that itself inevitably drives the breakdown of social capital.

There has been some flash of stereotyping among different sections of the study community, which demonstrates the issue at hand. Elaborating on the same, research participants particularly mentioned the hardening of relations, claims, and interests among the younger generation in the town as a worrying signal in the time ahead. Among the things mentioned was the division instrumented at different incidents between the youth from the town and 'others', who were attributed as mainly 'transported' or only 'recently settled' in the town. The claim was that following the ethno-religious violence in different parts of the country, an attempt was there to extend it to their locality (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020; discussion with Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 2020). Accordingly, community residents can witness an accusation where they ascribe the so-called 'others' bearing an agenda of loosening the tight network that existed for long among the residents of the town. They label these people mainly as 'outsiders' transported to the town by groups who would like to see the area rocked by violence

just like the surrounding *woredas* and claim most of them are not permanent residents. But, collaborators with the so-called 'outsiders' were specified as only minority residents and particularly "new settlers" in the town (discussion with Firew Abebe, 21 August 2020). This might mean that the "prior settlers", "subsequent settlers," and their generations have not been able to develop trust, if they interact and work together at all, with the "new settlers".

This situation makes it easy to accept stereotype narration of other groups within the same community; some sections of the community believe older *Huruta* residents to be "aggressive" and "chauvinist" and some among the older *Huruta* residents believe "new settlers" to be "opportunistic" and "power mongers" (discussion with an anonymous participant, 05 September; discussion with Ato Bekele Guta, 25 July 2020). A research participant narrated the problem the so-called "new settlers" face in the *Lode Hetosa* administrative center as follows:-

> ***ልጆቻችን በወረዳው አስተዳደር ውስጥ እንዲሁም በሁሩታ ከተማ ውስጥ ሲገኙ በከተማው ነዋሪ በአብዛኛው በሌላ ጥቅም የገቡ አንጂ ስለሚገባቸው የገቡ ተደርጎ አይወሰድም። ይህ ደግሞ ለረጅም ግዜ የዘለቀ ከነሱ ውጭ ሌላውን ካለመቀበል የመጣ አስተሳሰብ እንጂ በአንድ ጊዜ የመጣ አይደለም።*** which means:-
> *When our children assume a place in the woreda's administration as well as in Huruta town, there is this perception by most residents of the town that they got there not because they deserved it rather because they have support. This was not a problem that emerged overnight, rather was a result of the long-held attitude of not accepting others; other than their circle* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 19 August 2020)

It can, therefore, be argued that there appears a limitation of the "new settlers" crafting a functional identity with the "prior settlers" or vice versa. A note to make here is that *Huruta's* population has shown a sharp growth, with new residents ("new settlers") coming from the surrounding villages as well as other parts of the country, thereby deepening the dichotomy. Thus, there is a need to envisage a mechanism where the strong generational cross -bonding ties among the "prior settlers"

and also between the “prior settlers” and the “subsequent settlers” in the area could extend with the so-called “new settlers” also.[22]

6.2.2. Crosscutting Societal Relation for Solidarity

Social capital as a central element in building strong community resilience has been broadly conceptualized in various literature (Pfefferbaum et al., 2015; Carpenter, 2014; Varshney, 2001). Berkes and Ross (2013) further note that social capital is a collective resource on which members of society rely and draw on perceived or real common social identity repertoires. These and other studies suggest that community members associating themselves with members from different groups was one of the important factors for community-level resilience. It has also been supported that communities with genuine associations with members from different religious as well as ethnic groups experience less violent activity than communities whose relation is built on homogenous associations. With that note, in the attempt to examine and explain the issue at hand in the study area, the research has developed the following themes as illustrative factors on the issue: Inter-ethnic/inter-religious relations and intergenerational relations.

A. Inter-ethnic/inter-religious relations

Resilience literature, as discussed in the previous sections, suggests that networks composed only of overlapping bonding links, which impose constraining social norms and foster group homogenously, can reduce resilience. Conversely, networks with crosscutting ties, which foster group relation heterogeneously, contribute greatly to the potential for intergroup cooperation; thereby can increase resilience to violence. That said, the administrative center of *Lode Hetosa woreda,* like all other communities, has had an influx of newcomers primarily from the surrounding villages. Yet, because of its communal living, the town enjoys high levels of social cohesion and inter-religious bonding. But what evidence for the same?

Throughout the focus group discussions as well as interviews, it had been consistently held up that the community has high levels of interethnic and interreligious association, not only through

[22] For a detailed discussion on the subject of exclusion, stereotyping, and marginalization as a threat to sustainable Peacebuilding in the area see chapter seven (section 7.2).

community associations but also through social and family life. The so-called 'high level' interethnic and interreligious association through social and family life was explained by participants mainly through interethnic and interreligious marriages (FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 04 September 2020; discussion with Ato Jara Gedebo, 20 August 2020). It may not be clear how to interpret this because mixed marriages are common across Ethiopia, not just among the study communities. It is also not clear, given the problem of getting reliable statistical data in the country, if there is a difference of intermarriage statistics within the study community, as different from some other parts of the country.

On another note, there are areas where intermarriage did not serve as a deterrent. However, research participants were unequivocal in discussing intermarriage as one factor in shaping the community's identity, thereby influencing their response to pressures of violence. Participants discussed that high levels of intermarriage have resulted in high levels of association with members of other ethnicities and religions through family life and shared holidays and festivals. This has made residents avoid ethnic-based manipulation by politicians because the ethnic "other" is a sister, brother, cousin, aunt, or so (FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 04 September 2020; FGDs held in *Gerdebusa*, 03 September 2020; FGD held in *Fursa*, 02 September 2020).

Community members from focus group discussion and interviews also noted that neighborhoods are highly integrated, with different ethnic groups living together as *Oromos, Amharas, Siltes, Guraghes*, and other ethnic groups in the same village. They also share the same social facilities such as a church, mosque, schools, and health facilities for generations (discussion with Ato Ato Sileshi Belayneh, 08 September 2020; FGD held at *Lode Jimta,* 07 September 2020). Ethnic groups and families often incorporate members of different religions, which has helped blend ethnic and religious customs in the area (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020). Research participants' often reference that the area is a place where people intermingled, and religious identity was not of primary concern in their daily interaction. With that regard, a research participant had noted:

> *Here in our town (Huruta), we live in mutual respect. We both respect each other's religious symbols that we hold in high esteem. We (the Muslims) do not hinder their (the Christians) religious duties, and they do not hinder ours. We communicate, interact, and*

alert together; therefore, there is no reason one plans an attack against the other (discussion with W/o Fedila Temam, 27 August 2020).

Thus, the alternative interpretation that could be made here is that, as different from other places where intermingling and intermarriage did not serve as deterrence to violence, they happened to positively influence the study community. This intimate associational life, the community felt, was among the reasons they had no violence despite an upsurge of ethno-religious violence in different parts of the country.

Apart from that, old-aged inter-religious relations and networks to share information among the study community were asserted as another demonstration of the strong crosscutting bond. This pronounces the argument that working trust, not only among overlapping groups but also among crosscutting groups, is necessary for collective action (Carpenter, 2014). The solidarity and trust among inter-religious groups to share information and safeguard their locality was highlighted by a research participant as follows:

> *Ummani Musliima fi Kiristaana walitti dufeenya gaari qabu. Nageenya naannoo isaanii eegsisuu irrattis kan hojjetan waligaluu fi wal gargaruu dhan. Raga adda addaa waliigooduu fi walirraa fudhachuun keenya naannoon keenya nagaan akka turu taasisuu irratti nugargaaree jira. Walitti dhufeenyi gaarii waggoota darban keessotti ijaarranne dhibbaa walbooressuu umamu waliin taane akka afirraa qolannu nutaasisee jira. Ummannis walitti dhufeenya fi walkabajuu dura qabu ni eega iddoo guddaas kennaaf. Waluma galatti ani namoota olla koo akka maati kootin lakkawa.*

Which means:-

> *Muslims and Christians have good relations with each other, and they worked and cooperated to maintain security in their locality. We kept our locality safe because the people shared information with each other. The good relationship between the people that was built in the previous years was what holds us like glue and enables us to face tensions of violence. The people respect and value the old relationship. Generally, I consider my neighbors as family. (*FGD participant1 held in *Lode Hetosa*, 07 September 2020*).*

Moreover, a high level of religious and ethnic relations through community associations has been identified by research participants as playing its role in keeping their locality stable (FGD held in *Gerdebusa*, 03 September 2020; discussion with W/t Aster Mulugeta 11 August 2020; discussion with W/o Momina Kedir, 11 August 2020;). Participants have pronounced it as instrumental in strengthening their crosscutting relations. Participants were vocal in stating the role community associations in their locality like *Idirs, Mahbers,* and *Equbs*[23] play to strengthen their solidarity for common action. An elderly from the town of *Huruta,* who used to serve as a teacher before his retirement, recounts the story of the formation of arguably the earliest *Mahiber* in the town of *Huruta, Meredaja Mahiber,* and how it solidified their relationship as follows:

> *At the time I came to this area, the population was few. Few houses were here and there in the town, and the so-called children of temenja yaz predominantly occupied them. There was strong bonding among those 'prior settlers'. We found it difficult to get into their circle as they considered us not one of them. As a result, we (mostly teachers, DA workers, and a few other residents from other professions) came together and established an organization where we could help each other. We established the Meredaja Mahiber. The Mahiber was by no means meant to be a sectarian organization upon its formation. As such, it comprised members from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Through our Mahiber we were able to solidify ourselves in the area and appeared as valued groups in the town even within the so-called 'prior settlers'. Consequently, the 'prior settlers' started to accept us, and we collaborated for collective action after that (*discussion with Ato Mitiku Tesema, 28 August 2020*).*

[23] *Equb* is a kind of 'credit association' where each member pays a fixed sum of money to the *iqub* every week or month, which is then allocated to members on a rotating basis. *Idir is a community association with the central purpose of covering funeral expenses whenever death occurs among members. Thus, members shall make a periodic contribution to it, which shall be used in times of hazards to members. Mahiber* is also a form of social or religious association but somehow different from *Equb* and *Idir*. It usually appears as a religious one, and in such cases, it is basically devoted to honoring a saint. But it could also be organized in non-spiritual forms to help each other, to raise funds, or so like a '*meredaja mahiber.*'

The statement resounds the concept of social capital, as put by Putnam (1993: 167), that "those features of social organizations, such as trust, norms, and networks can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions." It also echoes Pfefferbaum et al. (2015:106) note where they defined social capital as an avenue where "collective benefits derived from the relationships among the people, groups, and organizations in the network including the cultural, economic, and social resources." Moreover, different works have repeatedly claimed that members highly value the sense of belonging to this form of a social group and getting together each week or month to engage with friends (Pankhurst and Damen, 2000; Getachew, 1996). In line with that, participants were vocal in mentioning these community associations' role in shaping their sense of "belongingness" and "togetherness". There was a particular assertion that it helped create a collective identity "people of *Huruta*", thereby facilitating cooperation to achieve common goals (discussion with Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020; discussion with Ato Hailemariam Kibebew, 28 July 2020).

It has also been firmly claimed that these community associations in the locality are not sectarian organizations because they usually comprise members from different backgrounds. A participant has noted the issue as follows:

> *I am a trader. I have seven close friends in my trading place where we trade together. Most of them are Muslims, and we have a kind of "Mahiber". So, whenever there comes a religious holiday, we have a tradition to visit each other's house. We do this by rotation up on holidays. For Easter, for instance, all my friends come to my house to make coffee and celebrate the holiday together. Likewise, for Muslim holidays I go to their place and celebrate together. There are also other friends that I know who have a similar tradition. We do this without religious or ethnic divide (*Discussion with W/t Aster Mulugeta, 11 August 2020).

Such stories of community associations transcending divides of gender, generation, wealth, education, religion, or ethnicity, as noted by Pankhrust (1998), may exist elsewhere in Ethiopia but not work for non-apparent reasons. But the experience among the study community in strengthening their social cohesiveness for collective action appears different to other violent areas. Accordingly, this strong relationship among people of diverse settings in the area has helped them weather toxic stories; that usually begin circulating in times of political, social, and economic

upheaval, often intentionally by “ethnic entrepreneurs”. In other words, these networks of personal relationships can be said to have played their part in shaping the general communities behavior, thereby helping them to act together.

Photograph 1: W/t Aster (center) & her friends celebrating the Holly Cross Holiday (Inter-religious association) (@the administrative center of *Lode Hetosa woreda*, September 2020)

Generally, the finding on the issue supports previous arguments which account for the relationship of high levels of social capital to strong community competence in preventing violence. Residents were able to secure benefits and act together through the social aggregates they formed. This resonates with the note by Portes (1998:6), where he put the importance of social capital as “the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures.” It also strengthens the view that bridging social capital prevents the hardening or rigidity of attitudes and identities that drive conflict (Anderson and Wallace, 2012; Varshney, 2001).

B. Intergenerational[24] Connection/r/n

Intergenerational relation refers to milieus where different generations interact to achieve objectives (Brownell and Resnick, 2005). Studies suggest that solidarity between generations/intergenerational solidarity/ at all levels is a significant prerequisite for social cohesion. And building social cohesion, as noted by Brown (2013) and Fearon et al. (2009), primarily relies on endogenous processes of building trust and inter-group relations. The intergenerational connection in this section was first examined by looking at the relationship between the youth and the older generation (elders, religious leaders, and community representatives) in the study community. However, it was not the intention of the section to put parameters that indicate the extent of the relationship between these groups and evaluate it accordingly or to scrutinize it in a microscopic sense. Instead, it was meant to assess the groups' communication and collaboration to "identity formation" for collective decision.

Accordingly, elders' and community representatives' roles in bringing down tensions by addressing everyday conflicts and emphasizing a common identity as "people of *Huruta*" were reverberated among study participants. Moreover, religious leaders inculcate strong shared views among the youth that are reflected mainly through "residents of a tolerant and peaceful place" narratives (discussion with Melake Birhan Kesis Tsegaye Getnet, 07 September 2020; discussion with Sheik Shemsu Hedeto, 25 August 2020; discussion with Tsega Simachew, 22 August 2020). Therefore, these persuasive narratives of toleration and coexistence to reinforce social solidarity and establish a common identity have helped depolarize communal relations to a level that facilitated maintaining inter-group communication for violence prevention in the area.

Participants were also vocal in pronouncing the role elders as well as community, and religious leaders play in the effort to keep the area peaceful[25] (FGDs held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 04 September 2020, FGD held in *Fursa,* 02 September 2020; discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August

[24] Even though the concept of "intergenerational relation" may assume a far wider meaning in different literatures, in this research, however, it is selectively used to refer the following two scenarios; first, the kind of relation that exist between the youth and the older generation (elders, religious leaders and community representatives) and second, the relation that exist between generations of the so called "prior settlers" and "subsequent settlers" with the so called "new settlers" in the area. This connotation was purposively selected as it fairly demonstrates the "intergenerational relation" dynamics that exists amongst the study community.

[25] The acknowledgment for the role of elders, community and religious leaders as to their smooth relation with the community (youth) appeared in quite contradiction to the claim research participants made for leaders at the government posts (which shall be a point of discussion under section 6.2.3).

2020). With this regard, research participants were vocal in particularly mentioning the role played by the late Sheik Abubakar Jubo, religious leader of the time, where he nurtured the coexistence of different ethnic and religious groups in the area (discussion with Ato Mitiku Tesema, 28 August 2020; Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020; Ato Amare Dereje, 21 August 2020). What has been implanted by then, according to participants, was serving instrumental to the smooth communication between the youth and elders until now. There usually appears a communication and collaboration between the youth and elders as to possible threat and violence scenarios and agreements usually existed thereunder. A youth participant stated the partnership: "anything comes up, we communicate immediately, so there is an excellent understanding between the youth and religious leaders and the community representatives" (discussion with Firew Abebe, 21 August 2020). A similar note was also made by elders in the area who are members of the developmental committee and community representatives (discussion with Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020; Ato Hailemariam Kibebew, 28 July 2020).

In particular, the informal way of communication was propounded by research participants as the primary source of cooperation and collaboration between the groups. A community representative stated the effort for cooperation as follows: "We do our best to create an excellent network. We have built understanding between the youth and then also the elders, whereby the youths do their efforts likewise other members of the community" (discussion with Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020). Another research participant has said:

> *There is a formally established women, children, and youth office in our Woreda like other places. But, there is more trust, communication, and collaboration between the youth and older generation through the informal channels than the formal office* (the one organized under the ruling party structures at the local levels). *The elders closely watch everything going on in the town by collecting information from all sources. At the same time, they have a well-functioning relationship with the youth. That had been witnessed in their effort to calm the scale-up of tension during the 2019 incident* (see discussion under 6.3), *where the youth were made to restrain from taking any provocative acts in the process* (discussion with Ato Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020)

As such, it can be said that communication and collaboration between the youth and elders of the community were instrumental in the community's resilience to violence. Community leaders have

established social control over the youth, which was exhibited in different incidents whereby the community restrained possible violent acts, as distinct from surrounding *woredas* (see section 6.3). Generally, the older generation's role has been applauded to leave little doubt on the positive relation between these groups. Therefore, their strong informal association and collaboration made the formal government structure one-to-five less relevant among the community.

On the other note, as implied in the preceding section (6.2.1), the intergenerational relationship between the so-called generations of the "prior settlers" and "subsequent settlers" with "new settlers" points to a different scenario to the discussion made above. A hardening of relations, claims, and interests between these two groups can be drawn to the point of confusing how the community remained non-violent given the suspicious relationship between them. It can be implied a dichotomy between so-called "proper *Huruta* youth" and "others," to whom they attach the "others" mainly as "new settlers" or "transported" to the town (discussion with an anonymous participant, 04 August 2020).

As such, there appears to be the labeling of some youth sections as "not belonging" and have a sentiment of collaborating with "outsiders" who would like to descend the area into violence (discussion with an anonymous participant, 05 September 2020). The claim was that groups who got into a confrontation with community networks in different incidents were usually "faceless" and, therefore, should be "transported" to the town or have no intense bondage with the community (discussion with an anonymous participant, 04 August 2020). This might mean that the "prior settlers" and their generations have not been able to develop trust, if they interact and work together at all, with the "new settlers." It can, therefore, be argued that there appears a limitation of the "new settlers" and "subsequent settlers" crafting a functional identity with the "prior settlers" or vice versa as claimed in the preceding section.

Having said that, although a robust, tolerant network of familial association across religious and ethnic lines is a strong point of resilience, a community with inconsistent resilience patterns will reach a tipping point at a particular time (Krause, 2018; Van Metre, 2016). And as the research revealed, there appears an inconsistency as to the societal cohesiveness in the area, thereby leaving a question mark as to the consistency of the pattern of resilience factors. That is to say, while the values of working trust and engagement toward other ethnic and religious groups is a positive note, it is, however, challenging to make the same conclusion as to the value of trust and engagement

between the so-called "new settlers" and others. In other words, the intergenerational tensions are something observable between generations of the "prior settlers"/ "subsequent settlers" and the "new settlers," with no apparent mechanism or structure to manage them.

In sum, the findings of the research demonstrate that while communities of the so-called "prior settlers" as well as "subsequent settlers" and their generations are well organized and enjoy high levels of solidarity, however same conclusion cannot extend with so-called generations of "new settlers" in the area. The inconsistent resilience pattern in the area signals an alarm for intervention before it reaches its tipping point. It has to be noted that sustainable peacebuilding, as claimed by McCandless and Simpson (2015), is about promoting "positive" resilience and mitigating the effects of "negative" resilience. Moreover, building community cohesion is about building better relationships between people from different backgrounds, including new and settled communities (Colletta and Cullen, 2000). A worth noting point is that the resiliency of the study community by no means can be concluded because the place is 'an island of communal unity or harmony. Instead, it was due to continuous collective choices made by the community in violence prevention efforts. Many residents collectively supported the sense of solidarity under a common identity like the 'people of Huruta' and continuous prevention efforts that helped keep the area safe.

6.2.3. Information Sharing and Exchange for Collective Action

> *If there are rumors that people will attack or create violence, we will circulate them right away and stand watch together. If the Christians hear about Mosques being attacked, they would inform their Muslim counterparts and stand watch. Likewise, if the Muslims hear about Churches being attacked, they would tell their Christian counterparts and stand watch. We built strong communications so that our locality became a symbol of peace* (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020)

The statement was quoted from a respected elder in Huruta to how the community can maintain their religious places from different attacks. The answer resonates with a suggestion that information sharing and exchange play an immense role in the community's resiliency to violence. As empirical evidence support (Carpenter, 2014), sources of information, spaces for sharing information, and interpretation of events are among the factors that shape communities' resilience

to violence or to act for the common good. This is so because "the more relevant information people have about each other, the more eager they are to participate or not, the more trust or distrust is created, confirmed or destroyed" (Cloete, 2014:2). Thus, making sense of the information to be received and acting correctly is significant to a community's response. Moreover, most studies on collective response underscore that communities that self-organize were more able to exhibit resiliency to violence than communities that did not (see Carpenter, 2014; Anderson and Wallace, 2012).

Participants were unequivocal in mentioning how the community's awareness of imminent threats and the social knowledge helped them proactively guard against them. They in particular mention 'outsiders' coming in the area/town[26]' were the provocateurs (with an attempt to instigate violence in the area/town at different times) and hence, the community's information exchanges more focused on watching these 'outsiders' (focus group discussion held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 04 September 2020; discussion with Ato Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020). Local government officials in the area have also supported this. He reiterated that the social knowledge to handle groups mobilizing for violence and maintain violence prevention networks was instrumental in preventing violence in the area. He, in particular, stated that:

> *We are aware of the tensions and the dangers in the surrounding areas. Huruta could also be a spot of violence like other places around here. We had to anticipate things reasonably and work hard to develop communication with the surrounding villages that could have threatened peace in our locality* (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020)

Moreover, participants account how community information sharing on security has been going vibrantly among the community, thereby playing its role in shaping the area's resiliency. Participants, in particular, narrated how the use of mobile phone communication has been effectively employed to communicate and prevent insecurity and violent incidents in their area, especially among the youth. The youth appeared to be an essential source of information because they were in the middle of the bowl. A research participant has noted the issue as follows:

[26] It apparently appears from the discussion with participants that there are groups whom the research participants labels them as the "provocateurs" (who were always understood to be the "outsiders" coming in to the area/town/ from the surrounding *woredas*). They claim that they transported to the town at different times by groups who would like to instigate violence in the town, but failed to materialize their plan due to the resiliency of the community to pressures of violence.

> *Usually, the youth are the sources of information to a given threat in our locality. They appeared as such because they are everywhere in the town; they are in transport centers, markets, sports fields, restaurants, and even militias. Hence, no information could go hidden from them (*discussion with Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 2020).

On the other note, an elderly research informant during an FGD held in *Gerdebusa* also recounted stories how, at a time when most people did not have telephone connections; ordinary people had to rely primarily on information gathered through religious and community leaders and their informal networks to ensure the safety of the area (FGD in *Gerdebusa*, 03 September 2020).

As empirical studies on communities' resilience evidence, when a community's information sharing on security is going underground, it would erode any ability of the community to appropriately identify the threat and develop appropriate strategies (Van Metre, 2016). As such, it affects the resilience response of communities to threats. What had been consistently mentioned among the study community was how their information sharing was effective. Research participants reiterated that the community could better resist pressure and prevent violence because there were in place social networks that spread information among the populace. Participants articulated that, sometimes, women receive information about planned attacks and violence even faster than men because of their dense social network. A women participant noted on same: "One wife will tell another wife, and finally the information reaches men, and the men will make themselves ready to prevent it" (discussion with W/o Mommina Kedir, 11 August 2020). In the same vein, another participant had her say on the issue as follows:

> *Here in our community, when new issues or problems emerge, people know how to inform others and get ideas of how to respond, which was a key to our stability. We would communicate through every means we would discuss: Don't be easily provoked when something happens. We do our best to filter and verify the information through our social networks* (discussion with W/t Tsega Simachew, 22 August 2020).

This resonates with the view by Herreros (2004:7) who notes that "information and trust are some of the resources that could be derived from participation in social networks." Bartkus and Davis (2009:5) also hold the view that "networks can reinforce trustworthy behavior, while norms as rules of acceptable behavior provide reasons for members of a community to interact in a

trustworthy manner." Information and communication actively circulate to deter youth from planning violence. Participants also mention information exchange through religious networks, especially among the youth, as an essential tool to spot imminent threats and proactively guard sacred places against any planned attack. The saving of St. Yohannes Church, which shall be discussed in detail in the section to come, was amongst the example mentioned by participants illustrating how religious networks, in particular, played a role in preventing violence against sacred places. An interesting point here is the religious network, as it is informal among the people, is not necessarily forged among people from the same religion only. A participant had his say on the matter as follows:

> *We (both Christians and Muslims) expect to inform one another when there are rumors of a planned attack against other's religious places. I hope the Muslims tell me when there are such rumors and vice versa. We had demonstrated this in different incidents, including during the failed attempt to attack St. Yohannes church. Whatever happens in other places, we stand together and are united.* (Discussion with Firew Abebe, 21 August 2020)

The claim was that those who want to create violence are just minorities, so the community can deal with them whenever problems arise. And a community communication network especially involving the youth was an essential aspect of violence prevention efforts. According to respondents, the solidarity among the study community was sometimes in the face of pressures by some people in the political office or running for office. In particular, it has been claimed that there are people on the payrolls of politicians to sniff every opportunity to instigate violence in the area. Still, unlike other places, they could not succeed due to the vital social networking among the community. It has been mentioned in particular that:

> *...some of those in political office dire to use this tactic when they just consider there need to attack some politicians or groups having a dissenting view or due to their internal desire for avenge because of the non-reactive behavior of the community whatever played at the national agenda* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 05 September 2020).

However, the claim was categorically rebuffed by respondents from government officials who claimed the presence of smooth communication with the community (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020; Jamal Kelil, 22 August 2020). Even though it has been claimed otherwise

by the officials, most of the data collected suggest an absence of the required trust between officials and some community sections, if not all. That said, researchers on the resilience of communities to violence have claimed in their works that the presence of social capital in its cumulative forms; bonding, bridging, and linking is essential to build a resilient community (Carpenter, 2014; Anderson and Wallace, 2012; Varshney, 2002). In particular, Anderson and Wallace (2012) note that legitimate leadership is critical in a community's capacity to opt-out of violence. Resilient communities require a great degree of trust and communication between community members and government representatives in opting out of violence. Though it may not necessarily contradict the previous arguments, the finding in this study rebuffs the necessarily cumulative presence of the three forms of social capital for a given community to exhibit resilient behavior to violence.

What was more manifested as a critical factor in the communities opting out of violence was their strong social bondage and pragmatic choices than an effective leadership acknowledged by the community. Asked about the leadership qualities of their political leaders as well as the extent to which community members felt that various leadership levels were representative of the ethnic and religious makeup of the communities, it has been witnessed a sharp difference of opinion between respondents (FGD held in *Lode Jimata,* 07 September 2020; FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa,* 04 September 2020; FGD held in *Fursa*, 02 September 2020). While the sharp difference of opinion between respondents could also tell other stories, it is possible to safely say that effective leadership and leadership accepted by all community sections is not a definitive statement on the issue at hand in the area of study.

In other words, despite a weak relation, sometimes broken one, between the local community and the political office holders, the community has yet to preserve their area peaceful irrespective of violence in neighborhoods and other parts of the country. This has been so primarily because of the strong bonding and bridging capital that has existed for a long among the community. In other words, the study community is able to remain stable, irrespective of staggering violence in different parts of the country, not because they have a charismatic leadership/administration/ in their area, instead because the community relied upon their preexisting social solid cohesion and also because they have made pragmatic choices.

In sum, the study's findings revealed that robust information sharing and exchange at the community level had capacitated the community to motivate residents to protect their locality, advocate violence prevention strategies, and organize early warning schemes. On the other hand, while studies on community resilience underscore the coordinated role of leadership at every level to build a resilient community, the experience in *Lode Hetosa Woreda* exhibited a slightly different scenario. In other words, though there can be drawn almost consensus on the influential role of community and religious leaders in shaping the communities' behavior, the part of political leaders was under question mark among significant respondents. This showed that community resilience might not necessarily result from effective coordination from political power. Instead, it emanated from the community and the relation built amongst them. With that note, the research, therefore, emphasizes the importance of context-specificity in resilience-building.

6.2.4. Community's Collective Security System for Resiliency of the Area

A collective security system as a mechanism towards developing shared norms of safety and networks of trust and participation in communities, thereby ultimately serving as a factor to enhance resiliency to violence, has been propounded in various literature (Krause, 2018; Vinita, 2014; Ansari & Bruell,2009). In line with that, it appeared to be one of the significant factors behind preserving the study community's peace. Communal collective security has a long history in the area. A research participant remembers from his experience about the topic as follows:

> *During the time of the emperor, Emperor Haile Selassie, the community was riddled with crime. There were just three police for the town assigned by the state. As it was evident that the state security could not provide the necessary protection for the community, we had to organize the community and ask for the government to protect ourselves. Accordingly, selected community representatives from the locality, town of Huruta, went to the then administrative capital of the Arsi Awraja*[27]*, Assella, and received the blessings and were able to organize our community patrols. Together with the community, these community-organized patrols had acted robustly in identifying thieves and criminals from the area. They also used to exercise justice, justice that they deem appropriate. In this way,*

[27] Before 1991 Ethiopia has an administrative division divided in to *kebele, woreda, awraja,* and *teklay gizat*. *Awraja* refers an administrative unit above *woreda*. So, several *woredas* make an *awraja*, and several *awrajas* make a *teklay gizat* /province/.

we made our locality free from crime; to the extent that a lost property could stay outside for days (discussion with Ato Mitiku Tesema, 28 August 2020)

As the story tells, the community's collective decision to organize their security in the absence or weakness of the state and defend their locality dates back many years. This collective action of providing protection was also in place during the Derg (discussion with Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020). According to informants, the measures were taken against supposed criminals sometimes included extrajudicial killings. A research participant discussed different times when the dead bodies of thieves and criminals had been exhibited in the center of the town for the public to watch (discussion with Ato Bekele Guta, 25 July 2020). The message of such a public exhibition of the dead body of the so-called criminals by the time was clear, deterrence. However, extrajudicial killings, especially by the community organized patrols, were kept to the minimal as possible (discussion with Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020). However, it has been discussed by research participants that there used to usually employ repression and violent punishments to keep supposed criminals under control. A research participant had his say on the matter as follows:

በወቅቱ አንድ ወንጀለኛ ወይም ሌባ በአካባቢው ሮንድ በሚያደርጉ ሰዎች እጅ ላይ ከወደቀ እራቁቱን በሳማ ይገርፋትና ውሃ ውስጥ ይነክሩታል፡፡ በዚህ መልኩ ድጋሜ ወንጀል እንዳይሰራ ሌሎቹም ወንጀል መስራታ እንዳያስቡ ይደረግ ነበር፡፡

And it means:-

When the community patrol caught a criminal or thief, they used to flog his naked body with nettle and then drown him in water. In this way, they made sure that he never did a similar offense again and also deterred others from parallel activities (discussion with Ato Mitiku Tesema, 28 August 2020)

Focus group participants and interviewees reiterate that this zero-sum approach to crime quickly rids the community of criminals. At this point, the community praises it as an effective achievement, contributing to their today's stability. This takes us to the claim by Krause (2018: 161) that "social order in a non-violent community was partly based on means of repression and punishment." Of course, it might not be a democratic social order but a reflection of a community

with a clear hierarchy of command, rules, and punishments for noncompliance to the community rules. In line with this argument, therefore, an area that once used to be known for harboring bandits responsible for many crimes is nonviolent now (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen 21 August 2020; Ato Assefa Degefa, 21 August 2020; Ato Hailemariam Kebebew, 28 July 2020).

Yet, community patrolling was the primary form of community organization around crime in the area. The system has continued even today with different adjustments in villages and the town of *Huruta.* There exists and used to live an organized community represented watch groups that patrol their neighborhoods in times of state security apparatus weakness or absence. This has helped the community establish a latent security system to successfully prevent instigators of violence from entering the community or carrying out their plans. According to the research participant, town residents monitor suspicious individuals through their formal and informal security networks (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma 28 August 2020; Ato Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020). An FGD participant from the surrounding village has been quoted saying:

> *Nageenya Naannoo Keenyaa sabummaadhaanis ta'ee amantaan walqoodinsa osoo hin uumin mirkanessuu qabna. Tokko tokkoon walhordafuu fi walitti bu'insi giddu keenyatti akka hinumamne mirkanessuu waliin. Sababni isaas akaa kayyoota keenya irraa eegalee walitti hidhamne kan jirru waan ta'eef.*

Which means:-

> *We had to ensure our safety together, irrespective of our ethnic or religious background. We had to watch out for each other and make sure nobody sparked conflict between us because we had been united since the times of our ancestors (*FGD participant1 held in *Lode Hetosa*, 07 September 2020*).*

A participant also mentioned the critical role played by women in guarding their area as follows: "*we women stand by our men while the men went on night patrol around the town. We barely sleep during the night because we also had to do the watch from home. We support the men with all means."* (FGD held in *Fursa*, 02 September 2020)

According to a discussion with Ato Tadesse Ketema (04 September 2020), an idea which was supported by some members of the focus group discussion held in the town of *Huruta Hetosa* (04

September 2020), as a result of detached relation with the political leadership the community used night patrol even without necessary protective equipment for patrolling. A research participant had referred to the issue as follows: “we used to approach government security officials not expecting a robust help from them rather just to be formal in what we do in providing our security” (discussion with Ato Sileshi Belayneh, 08 September 2020). Nowadays, community patrolling, especially in the town, is conducted more formally by *kebele* militias trained and selected from the community.

From a resilience perspective, this action of the community has enhanced the resilience capacity of the community. It has done so because the community-based security efforts have allowed them to work together in common agendas, contributing to resilience collectively. Speaking from their experience as to the kind of togetherness developed by members of the community at times of difficulties, one of the research participants has noted the following:

> *We know some groups have always worked to break our dense social network in our locality for such long, but we have not made them realize their wish till this day, and they will not realize it in the future. Our togetherness and willingness to organize our security groups have paid us to keep our area's stability. I hope this will continue because we have implanted it among the young generation also* (discussion with Sheik Shemsu Hedeto, 25 August 2020)

This statement demonstrates that community security arrangements, including night patrolling their locality, have played an immense role in preventing possible violent acts in the area. Here, the community feels that they can maintain their area safer not because they have strong linkage with the government officials but because they are active enough to provide their community security. The community organized itself even without the necessary support from the political officeholders. As such, the social cohesion or working trusts among inter and intra-religious and ethnic groups, as discussed above, have helped the community act together when it comes to arranging their security in case of a gap from the administration. Another participant discussed the issue as follows:

> *We are keeping our town peaceful because we have taken the responsibility of our securitty. We do not necessarily need a proper and good relationship with government officials. The*

common mentality developed for long among the community to act as a watch group and the informal chains where we share information about what is going on in our locality are essential tools in this regard. You know what, that is the beauty of my community and my town, Huruta (Discussion with Ato Urge Debela, 29 August 20200).

Therefore, the community's collective efficacy on security is clear from the above discussions. This, however, does not mean that the community represented watch groups/militia/ and the administration's security apparatus function with total parting. Indeed, there exists a formal relation and communication between them (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020). For that matter, while the community's represented watch group/militia/ in the area was initiated, it was with the officer in command of the *Lode Hetosa* Police and the *Huruta* town police chief. Moreover, in areas where there is no trained community watch groups/militia/, the community does patrol their neighborhood by themselves. Before doing so, however, they shall invite the officers in command to a meeting and ask their office's permission to operate (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020; Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 20200). In such cases, the community shall provide the names of the voluntary security watch group so that they are known to the police and can patrol in hand with the police. Community watch groups are also supposed to hand over suspects they brought under their control during their patrol to the police. With these notes, the *woreda* as well as the town security personnel claim that the relative stability of the area was due to the joint effort of the community and the government security apparatus (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020; Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 20200).

Research informants from focus group discussions and interviews, on their part, note that the highly resilient system is due to the communities' strong social cohesion and working trust by providing their security than the support they receive from the administration. Here, they, in particular, mention the lack of quicker reply from the police to launch a speedy investigation based on community reports (FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa,* 04 September 2020). Some participants even accused some of the police of being inactive and irresponsive when it comes to intruders or outsiders' insurgent activities (FGD held in Huruta Hetosa, 04 September 2020; FGD held in *Fursa*, 02 September 2020). Accordingly, the community itself has become active on security issues, including adopting a series of protective measures during their joint meetings like *Idir*

(measures such as get home before dark as far as possible, watch out closely what's going on in your surroundings, accompany vulnerable sections of the society if they have to wander around at night, scream if you are attacked and so forth) (FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa,* 04 September 2020; discussion with an anonymous participant, 04 August 2020).

The absence of solid relationships with the administration's security offices in providing their security is yet to be noted as a concern in the long run. As evidenced in different empirical studies, the presence of a local security system that could complement activities of the state security organs or vice versa has impacted sustaining the resilience of local communities to detect and counter violent incidents (Walwa, 2018;). However, what is mystifying here is that the administration viewed the matter with an entirely different remark. It could be said it is either ignorant of the fact or has no information it pooled from the residents over the issue, which is worrying some in keeping resiliency of the area in the long run.

In general, data collected from the focus group discussion and interviews reveal that the community collectively organized security systems and remained cohesive in the face of threats, keeping community life regular. Consequently, by maintaining internal social control and not supporting 'external groups,' the community prevented violence in their area. Respondents count that hard times have given the community a lesson as to the importance of collective action to keep their locality safe in the long run. This reminds the argument by Krause (2018:246) that "…prevention needs to start by addressing everyday forms of violent social orders, particularly in neighborhoods and areas that suffer from poor policing and state service provision." In line with that, a research participant has been quoted as saying:

> *Criminality was once the prime problem of our area. But, our ability to share information and organize our security has enabled us to hold ordinary criminals accountable and not dominate our community. A community that can control crime can also preserve peace* (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020).

6.3. Community Resilience Stories and Actions Amongst the Study Community

It has been posited in the previous chapters that these days Ethiopia is experiencing an upsurge of violent conflicts and an increase in political polarization. The growth in the number and magnitude of violent clashes seems incontestable. Ethno-religious conflicts have increased significantly where incidents of this nature have been reported in several places (see the discussion made under chapter five). In the meantime, however, there are communities' with well-functioning community resilience mechanisms in place, thereby enabling them to resist the pressures of violence. *In particular, Lode Hetosa Woreda and the town of Huruta* fall under this category. The area, thus far, remained cohesive enough and prevented violent ethno-religious conflicts despite its upsurge in different parts of the country, especially in recent years. In the preceding sub-sections, the research examined significant factors contributing to the community's resiliency to pressures of violence. This sub-section aims to communicate the study community's stories and resilient actions against strains of violence as accounted by research participants.

Accordingly, the first experience communicated by research participants was the one that followed the violent October 2019 incident in the country. The incident happened when Jawar Mohammed, a prominent activist who was a leading organizer of the 2016 Ethiopian protests and now turned opposition political party member, the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), posted on social media that his security detail was told "to pack their stuff and leave the compound quietly without alerting me" (VOA, 2019; France24, 2019). He alleged that security forces were plotting an attack against him (VOA, 2019). The announcement prompted protests by his supporters. As a result, cities in *Oromia* National Regional State, *Harar* in *Harari* National Regional State, and *Dire Dawa* charted city, in particular, were engulfed with protests (Reuters, 2019; VOA, 2019; Aljazeera, 2019). The protests, however, were not all peaceful. Instead, they were followed by violence and group infighting in many cities and towns. Arguably, the incident led to unprecedented violence in many places. The violence spread throughout the *Oromia* cities; from *Ambo* to *Dodolla* and *Bale Robe*, from *Bishoftu* to *Adama*, *Arsi/Asella* and *Ziway*, likewise in *Harar* and *Dire Dawa*. People were killed and properties destroyed. The government and the Ethiopia Human Rights Commission (EHRC) disclosed more than eighty people (FBC, 2019; Aljazeera, 2019; VOA, 2019).

As violence spread in different parts of the *Oromia* region, including surrounding woredas like *Hetosa woreda* and *tiyo woreda*, the study community remained nonviolent. However, this did not

mean that there was no tension or rumor. The town, just like other places, experienced talks as well as uncertainties by the time but not violent conflicts or violent incidents (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020; Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 2020). It could be put here that such rumors often led to riots in several cities in Ethiopia and frequently did so in neighboring *woredas,* where they plunged into horrendous violence. But the outcomes were very different in the case of *Lode Hetosa, Huruta* town. The community's awareness of imminent threats and their social knowledge have helped them proactively guard against the pressures of violence. Aware of the dangers of violence, the community self-organized to defend its locality. An informant accounts the resiliency story in the area in consequence of the incident as follows:

> *Once the protest was turned violent in other areas, including neighboring woredas, few groups made similar attempts to extend it to our locality. But the majority of the town residents were conscious enough about what was going on in their surroundings and were resolute in protecting their locality. We heard information from other places that religious places were targeted and so forth. We had conversations with friends from Adama, Assela, and the surrounding villages. So, we made sure that we protected our holy places and our neighbors and businesses from such attacks. Many town residents were around religious sites and business places and made sure they were kept safe. Those who were trying to mobilize, knowing that they could not materialize their wish, unlike other surrounding woredas, did not proceed further with their plan. The thing was, residents of the town were at stand by to avert any attempt of violence if exerted against their neighborhood, and that ensured our area stayed calm and nonviolent* (discussion with Ato Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020)

This illustrates the typical role social cohesion among a community could play in preventing possible violence, as Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) noted in their multilevel study of collective efficacy. The social cohesion among the community, combined with a willingness to take action on behalf of the broader community, has served as a central protective factor against outbreak violence.

The other resilience experience and response of the study community to attempt of violence happened in December same year (2019). It followed the burning of Mosques in *Amhara* National Regional State, *Mota* town, on December 20, 2019. It had been reported that on the night of

December 20, 2019, about four mosques were attacked, and properties, mainly Muslim-owned, were destroyed in *Mota* town (FBC, 2019). According to the regional police commander, the attacks appeared to be triggered by news of a fire that broke out in an Orthodox church in the town (FBC, 2019). Demonstrations were held in different parts of the country following the attack, including the capital Addis Ababa. They denounced the incidents in Motta town and other places and called for the government to take action against the perpetrators (Addis Standard, 2019). As many called for the government to promptly investigate and bring perpetrators to justice in peaceful demonstrations, there were, however, places where protests turned to violence (DW Amharic, 2019). There were also calls circulated through social media for staging a demonstration on December 27, 2019. However, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council soon issued a statement saying it had no recognition (FBC, 2019). Consequently, tensions and rumors were getting high and created uncertainties amongst communities in different parts of the country.

It was not different for the study community, where rumors were circulating to create suspicion on what could happen next (discussion with Melake Birhan Kesis Tsegaye Getnet, 07 September 2020; Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020; Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020). In the meantime, a group of youth convinced that they should retaliate for the repeated attack committed on Mosques in different places began to organize themselves, especially in *Huruta,* and planned to attack religious places in the town. St. Yohannes church was primarily believed to be at the center of the planned attack as it locates somehow distant from the downtown (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020). But residents of the town alerted themselves and prevented any possible violence. A research participant has noted the incident and stated how the area averted potential violence as follows:

> **ወጣቶች በራሳቸው ተነሳሽነት ነበር የሃይማኖት ቦታዎችን ለመጠበቅ የተነሱት። በመሆኑም በሃይማኖት ቦታዎች ለሊቱን ሙሉ የተለያዩ ጨዋታዎችን እንደ ካርድ ጨዋታ እንዲሁም እሳቶችን በማንደድ ነበር ያሳልፉ የነበረው። ከምንም በላይ ግን የሃይማኖት ቦታዎቻቸውን ከጥቃት በመጠበቅ።** which means:-
>
> *The youths were the one who took the initiative by themselves to guard religious places. As such, they had to spend the whole night around sacred places by playing cards, setting*

kind of campfires, but above all, making sure the religious places were safe from any attack (discussion with Firew Abebe, 21 August 2020).

Extending on same, research participant narrated the incident as: "outsiders coming in the town" collaborated with a few youth groups from the town and attempted to use the incident to extend violence into the locality. But, he reiterated, the community's cohesiveness has helped avert a possible horrific incident" (discussion with Ato Mitiku Tesema, 28 August 2020). A sense of "outsiders coming into the town" by the community (though cannot be verified by security officials in the town as they have claimed not a concert but just rumors, discussion with commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 2020), can be implied from the following story shared by a female participant:

> *I am a trader. So, I frequently travel between Huruta and Eteya[28]. The next night that followed the burning of Mosques in the Amhara region, I came from Eteya. I could say I know most of the youth in the town of Huruta, at least their faces. But that night, the car I was inside was filled with young men that I barely recognized their faces. I was simply wondering whether that was a coincidence. Then, most of them got dropped from the car around St. Gabriel. The next day the rumor around in the market and other places was that groups were planning to attack churches as revenge for what happened in the Amhara region. I do not know where they got the information, but rumors were here and there that groups were transported to the town. Soon, I became part of information dissemination by sharing the thing I witnessed the night before. As a result, the community was aware of the threat and prevented possible violence. For that matter, youths spent the whole night guarding religious places, especially St. Yohannes, as it is located somehow distant from the center of the town* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 13 August 2020).

Reflecting on the matter, an official from the government post stated that there had been little evidence from the *woreda's* administration and security officers to support claims that "outsiders" or "transported" people were behind such incidents. He claimed that the rumor led dozens of people to reach out to the local police that day, "but as per our investigation, we didn't have any evidence of any buses coming from out of town carrying people or so" (discussion with Ato

[28] Is a place about 15km away from *Huruta* and is the administrative city of *Hitosa woreda*, one of the *woredas* in *Arsi zone*

Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020). He went on discussing the issue, saying: “over the past few years and months, local misinformation about apparently nonexistent “imported” and “invasions” has proliferated in our communities, sowing social and political division.” He also stated: "The claim that there were transported groups into the town to descend the area into violence is simply not borne out by fact or evidence.” However, it has been implied that so-called “activists” could be behind such incidents by spreading false rumors (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020).

Despite such accounts by political officials, the story that is being told everywhere in the country was that an escalation of violence in a given area was mainly by out-of-towners who came to the area to wreak havoc and then go home mostly without security personnel interference. For that matter, ordinary people in the area believe that they had gotten the information from sources they knew and believed to be credible. Moreover, the preemptive action was claimed based on a proverb:-”**እሳት በሌለበት ጭስ አይጨስም**” which means “there cannot be a smoke without a fire.” This aligns with researchers like Karlova and Fisher’s (2013: 6) conventional saying that “information does not form in a vacuum.” Moreover, the following statement by an elderly resident from the area strengthens the assertion made above:

> **በእለቱ አካባቢያችንን ሊያሰጋ የሚችል ነገር ሊኖር እንደሚችል ሰማን፡፡ ስለዚህም ወጣቶች የዐምልኮት ቦታዎቻቸውን በንቃት እንዲጠብቁ ስናበረታታ ነበር፡፡ የንግድ ሱቆች ያላቸውና የጥቃት ኢላማ ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ ብለን ያሰብናቸውንም እንዲሁ ጥንቃቄ እንዲያደርጉ ስናበረታታ ነበር::**

Which it means:-

> *On that day we received information that led us to believe there was a cause for concern. As such, we encouraged the youth to stay alerted in keeping their places of worship safe. We also encouraged local business owners to take responsible, precautionary steps for their businesses* (discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020)

Thus, as Carpenter (2014) notes, the sources of information and the spaces they enjoy sharing the knowledge and interpretation of those events by communities influenced their collective action. The information was mainly transmitted through phone conversation, text messages, and personal

communication among people in the area (discussion with Ato Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020; W/t Tsega Simachew, 22 August 2020).

On the other note, another participant has narrated the incident inferring that the "outsiders coming to the town" had required support from Muslims within the community but could not secure it. If they do, they could only secure it from very few groups, and they usually appear to be new residents in the town whenever they got support; the majority denounced their call. For that matter, Muslims were among the residents who were collaborating and exchanging information with their Christian counterparts by the time. It was on fear of the strength of the social relation and retaliation that the "outsiders" abandoned their plan and left the area (discussion with an anonymous participant, 17 August 2020). In sum, it can be argued that the community systematically gathered and disseminated information to judge the security situation and reiterate non-collaboration. In other words, the self-organization by the community and robust information exchange, especially among the youth, helped quash the rumors. This strengthens the argument that resilient societies possess the capability for decision-making that can avert violent conflict and enhance peacebuilding.

Conclusion

The paper under this chapter made it imperative that no single resilience factor could entirely explain why the study area has such demonstrable resiliency to violence. In the meantime, the absence of violence in the study community cannot also be reduced to just geographic or demographic factors. Rather, multi factors are intertwined in such a way that any story told to illustrate one or another of these elements inevitably has components of one of the other elements in it as well. This takes us to the conclusion that the capacities and strategies needed for resilience to violence are multifaceted and at the same time interrelated. Thus, in line with the argument by Van Metre (2016), it makes sense to say that resilience to violence is a complex interplay of factors which may not be explained linearly.

There is a need to underscore the importance of context-specificity in resilience-building and understanding resilience response in a given community. The resilience capacity of the study community was built on historical, political, and socio-cultural specificities and, therefore, should not be assumed or generalized across diverse settings. In line with that, shared identity/narratives

and place attachment, crosscutting societal relations; information sharing and exchange; and the community's collective security system were identified at the center of the community's resiliency to pressures of ethno-religious violence. The analysis generally suggests that people are actively engaged in multiple strategies to prevent violent behavior and attitudes and maintain those communal relationships for collective action. It is also important to acknowledge here that such sources of resilience in the study community are no small achievement. As opposed to the descent into conflict in neighboring *woredas*, mechanisms employed by the community to enhance tolerance and social cohesion and prevent violence were overwhelming. Hence, the relative peace and stability of the community should be counted for a reason than just coincidental.

On the other hand, the chapter clarifies that authorities are not necessarily the best in place to tailor solutions at the local level. Instead, local communities are examined to have a better chance to capture, understand, and respond to the kind of challenges and problems that are most prominent in that specific community. All this suggests the importance of recognizing the value of community organization, not necessarily formal, and the conditions under which the development of solid horizontal bonds at the community level can bring residents together in ways that can enable "positive" forms of resilience.

Finally, although abundant literature on communities' resilience response to violence points to the critical role leadership could play, the study's findings have shown that the role of leaders in the office was almost insignificant in shaping the resiliency of the community. Instead, the substantial part the social knowledge of violence prevention has played in keeping their community more resilient to violence was substantiated from interviews and focus group discussions. It could be well summarized with the following quote from a research participant during an FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa* (04 September 2020) where she stated: **አካባቢያችንን በንቃት መከታተላችን ሊመጣ ከሚችል ሁከት የጠበቅንበት መሳሪያችን እንደሆ እናውቃለን፡፡ በተመሳሳይ ግን ባገኘነው ነገር መኩራራት ብቻ እንደሌለብንም እናውቃለን፡፡**, which means: - "We know our vigilance is the best response to remain non-violent in our area, in the meantime we know we should not be complacent for our achievement."

Chapter Seven: Towards a Sustainable Peace: Unpacking Factors having the Potential to Diminish Community's Resiliency in *Lode Hetosa Woreda*

7.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the paper attempted to understand factors that contributed to the resilience of the study community to pressures of ethno-religious violence. While understanding those factors could help explain communities' absorbing/preventive/ capacity to violence pressures, sustaining peace requires a complexity-informed approach. This emanates from the fact that resilience is not unequivocally good but a neutral concept that can bring about both positive and negative outcomes. Hence, a careful analysis of which capacities can bring about peace and which need to be mitigated should be an integral part of any resilience assessment. The mere cohabitation and collaboration that allow a group of people to prevent violence, although essential, are not enough for a community to sustain peace, as has been discussed in preceding chapters. Preserving peace and stability, for that matter, requires taking preventive steps to reduce vulnerability at the community level while advancing measures to ensure that resilience diminishing factors remain scarce. As such, there is a need to understand, assess, and promote resilience in ways that serve durable peace.

From this perspective, sustaining peace should be about strengthening society's resilience by addressing its weak links. This presupposes, among other things, the re-creation of mutual trust or redefining of the collective rules in a way that allows the peaceful co-existence of groups in different camps. With this regard, de Coning (2016: 171) notes that "the best way to ensure sustainable peace is to encourage and facilitate the capacity of a society to organize itself so that it develops the resilient institutions necessary to manage its internal tensions, competition, and conflicts." Thus, it is imperative to explore building the community's existing capacities and solidarity networks. In doing so, unpacking factors that could undermine the community's resilience capacity in dealing with pressures of violence and working to address appears essential.

While the discussion made in the previous chapter could enable us to grasp issues that helped the study community to prevent immediate violence, durable peace, however, requires reducing underlying issues in the community. It requires upholding the very foundations of trust and social cohesion that underpin relationships within a community. Furthermore, this has been generally situated more and more often within the conceptual framework of strengthening societal resilience,

which means uncovering issues that can diminish the community's resilience efforts in the long run and address accordingly. Therefore, this chapter aims to unearth those limitations to build sustainable peace.

7.2. Issues with Potential to Undermine the Social Cohesion of the Community in the Attempt to Build Sustainable Peace in the Area

As Putnam (1993) notes, the central premise of social capital is that individuals benefit from various norms and values that a social network fosters and produces. He further notes that, these norms and values provide the necessary preconditions for collective action. While investing in capacities that made communities resilient to pressures of violence is essential in carving the endogenous capacities of communities to collective action, there is also a need to seek to advance the resilience of local communities in order to understand how to sustain peace. Any strategy to increase community resilience must harness and enhance existing social connections and endeavor not to damage or diminish them. In doing so, a proper understanding of factors for community's resilience to pressures of violence and recognition of the failures and limitations is necessary. The research identified the major issues with the potential to undermine the social cohesion of the community and ultimately the resilience of the community to pressures of violence in general and ethno-religious violence in particular as follows:

7.2.1. Issues Related to Polarized Identity Politics[29]/Issues Related to Politicization of Religion and Ethnicity/

These days it has become common to hear reports, both confirmed and unconfirmed, about religious as well as identity-based casualties in different places in the country. Unlike those reports, the identity-based conflict has been far less prevalent in *Lode Hetosa Woreda* in general and the town of *Huruta* in particular. And this happened to be unlike the neighboring *woredas,* where they have been rocked by identity-based conflicts at different times, as discussed in the preceding sections. While the co-existence of the community and their resilience to pressures of ethno-religious violence can be noted from preceding discussions, tensions were escalated at different times between different groups, implying that the area is not just an 'island of unity or harmony.

[29] For a detailed discussion on how identity-politics has exacerbated ethno-religious conflicts in the country, see the discussion the dissertation made under chapter four

This fact resonates with research findings that most conflict-prone regions include pockets of non-violence (Krause, 2018; Van Metre, 2016; Varshney, 2002).

The study area cannot be put as an isolated island to the problem. An explanation for the same could be made from the recent developments concerning ethnicity and religion in the country. For that matter, the increased politicization of religion and ethnicity and the conservative religious teachings and practices among people of all faiths is running to counter historical co-existence in the country in general (Yonas, 2019; Ostebo, 2019; Abbink, 2011). In line with that, some moves have been claimed to disturb the co-existence within the community through extreme religious teachings. A research participant reiterated the issue, in particular, saying:

> **ከአካባቢያችን ብዙ ሴቶች ወደ አረብ ሃገራት እንደሚሄዱ ይታወቃል፡፡ በተለያየ ጊዜያትም ከአረብ ሃገራት ወደአካባቢያችን የሚመለሱ ብዙ ሴቶች አሉ፡፡ ከነዚህም ውስጥ የተወሰኑት በነኚህ ሀገራት የቤት ሰራተኝነት አገልግለው ሲመለሱ የተበላሹ አስተምሮቶችንም ይዘው ይመጣሉ፡፡ ይህንንም ስል አብዛኛዎቹ ቀድሞ ያደጉበትን እሴት እና ባህል ይዘው ሲመለሱ አንዳንዶቹ ግን አክራሪነትን በማህበረሰቡ ውስጥ ለማስገባት ሲሞክሩ ይታዩ ነበር፡፡ ነገር ግን እንዳሰቡት ሊሆንላቸው አልቻለም ምክንያቱም ያሰቡትን ድጋፍ ከአካባቢው ከሚኖሩ ሌሎች ነዋሪዎች ማግኘት ስላልቻሉ፡፡**

Which means:-

> *As we know, many women travel to Arab countries from our area. Many have also returned home. While returning home from their stay as domestic workers in these countries, few of these women bring improper religious teachings.While many of them return with their previous values and esteems, some attempted to inculcate extreme attitudes among the community. Nevertheless, they could not go further because they failed to get the support they looked for from residents.* (Discussion with W/o Medina Kunbi Negesso, 20 August 2020)

For that matter, though a clear account on the issue is missing due to the absence of statistical data, different studies and reports show that the area represents amongst the hotspot of migration to Arab countries for domestic works in the country (discussion with W/o Medina Kunbi Negesso, 20 August 2020; Assefa, Seid and Tadele, 2017). While one could argue that the gravity of the problem was blown out beyond proportion considering the narration usually made on the issue in

general, it is also equally important to share the concern from some residents. The concern was that the attempted dissemination of extreme religious practices could derail the existing tolerant practices among the community (discussion with Ato Urge Debella, 29 August 2020; discussion with Sheik Shemisu Hedeto, 25 August 2020). For that matter, research participants expressed concern about the ability and sometimes willingness of local officials for conducting an appropriate oversight regarding potential religious moves that might disrupt the area (FGD held in *Lode Jimata*, 07 September 2020; FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 04 September 2020; discussion with an anonymous participant, 19 August 2020).

A FGD participant referred to the problem with the administration, especially as to their lack of responsibility to counter conflict instigating acts as follows: *"*Gaggeessitonni naanno keenya irra Jiran tokko tokko dubbii jibbinsaa kallattin rawwatamu Akka sirritti yokin himbaleffatamne taasisaa ilaala jiru." Which means: - "some authorities are now making outward expressions of hatred in our area unassailable/indestructible.*"* (FGD participant held in *Lode Jimmata,* 07 September 2020). The proliferated ethno-religious conflicts in different parts of the country should serve here as a lesson on how easily the tinderbox of ethnic/religious hatred can be ignited. Unless such issues are addressed openly and honestly, it has all the potential to grow into a non-healing wound that threatens social cohesion. Moreover, it is essential to note that extremist attitudes having little resonance in the area do not mean they may not emerge in the future. The influence of people and ideas from abroad cannot be undermined in the modern globalizing world. That is also why there is a need to emphasize preserving tolerance and social cohesion.

The other issue is that, though information gap is there on ethnic and religious affiliations in the area due to lack of data base from the concerned authorities over the issue, there were, however, some indications on the intertwining nature of religion and ethnicity issues. In other words, sense of "religious' and "ethnic" grounds as a grounds for their detachment from any governmental role can be inferred from the so-called "prior settlers". They, in particular, claim that "because they are predominantly *Amhara* and Orthodox Christians," their generations are segregated from time to time in the area, particularly from government posts and other services (discussion with an anonymous participant, 10 August 2020).On the other hand, they stated that the "new settlers" are more favored because they are similar to those in the political office in terms of their ethnic and religious background (FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa,* 04 September 2020; discussion with an

anonymous participant, 06 August 2020). Unemployed university graduate from the area reiterated the issue as follows:

> **እኩል የማንታይበት ሁኔታ በተለያየ መልኩ ነው ያለው…አፋን ኦሮሞ መናገሬ ከሌሎቹ ጋር ለመንግስት ስራ ውድድርም ሆነ ሌሎች የጨረታ ውድድሮች ላይ እኩል እንድታይ ዋስትና አይሆነኝም። ይልቁንስ ብሄሬ ሲቀጥልም ሃይማኖቴ እንጂ ።** which means: -
> *The discriminate treatment is in many different forms ... the fact that I speak Afan Oromo cannot guarantee being equally treated with others, neither for securing job opportunities at government offices nor in other bid competitions. Rather my ethnic affiliation and then my religious background that matters (*discussion with an anonymous participant, 02 September 2020).

The statement takes us to Ostebo (2019) note, where he claimed that recent developments concerning ethnicity and religion in the country could not be fully understood without recognizing the intertwined relationship between religion and ethnicity. An ethnic identity with its relationship with religion or vice versa has become intensely conflictual these days. In other words, it is becoming common to see an apparent ethnic conflict being interpreted as religious conflict or vice versa (Ostebo, 2019).[30] What has been claimed above by the research participants also somehow indicate the growing perception in intertwining religion and ethnicity in different walks of life. The claim was that they were segregated because of the cumulative presence of the two; their ethnicity and religious background. As such, it somehow resonates with the general ethnic and religious developments in the country, as noted by Ostebo (2019), and an increased consciousness over the issues these days.

Furthermore, some research participants reiterated that perceived breaches of official secularism by the public authorities themselves should be mentioned as sources of frustration. A research participant who is a trader in the town for long years stated that:

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[30] For a detailed examination on the intertwined relation between ethnicity and religion in Ethiopia, see Terje Ostebo, 2019, The role and relevance of religion in Ethiopia’s current conflicts, Addis standard / 06 November 2019, http://addisstandard.com/special-edition-the-role-and-relevance-of-religion-in-ethiopias-current-conflicts/

> **አንዳንድ በመንግስት ቢሮ ውስጥ የሚሰሩ አመራሮች ማህበረሰቡን ያለመድልዖ በእኩልነት ከማገለገል ይልቅ ይወክለናል የሚሉትን ሀይማኖት ወይም ብሄር ብቻ ስለተከተለ ለነሱ የተለየ ጥቅም ሲያደርጉ ማየት የተለመደ ነው። አንዳንዴ የቤት መስሪያ ቦታም ሆነ የመነገጃ ቦታ ወይም ሌላ አገልግሎት ለማግኘት በስልጣን ላይ ያለውን ሰውዬ ብሄር ወይም ሀይማኖት መከተል ያለብን እስኪመስል ድረስ ማለት ነው ።**

Which means:-

> *It is common to see some government officials favor persons similar to their religious or ethnic background than serving the community without any discrimination. Sometimes it feels that we have to be from his ethnic group or follow the religion of the person at the post to get any service; whether to get a residential land, trading places, or any other service* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 13 August 2020)

Though such claims, as implied in the preceding section, were categorically dismissed by officials from the government post, the statements from certain participants', however, calls for a discussion. That is, certain sections of the society perceive so-called "newcomers" and their generations being given different entitlements by local officials. Whereas "prior settlers" and somehow "subsequent settlers" are denied titles and remain squatters on public land (see discussion under 7.2.2). Given that claim, it would be sensible to expect these tensions to exacerbate inter-ethnic tensions. And an inter-ethnic tension has the potential to exacerbate inter-religious tensions given the intertwined relationship between the two these days.

As studies suggest, the belief by a population that they are being purposively excluded from the benefits that others are receiving could foster deep feelings of grievance, distrust, and animosity as witnessed in different areas (Weine, 2013; Doosje et al., 2013). In other words, real or perceived discrimination toward an individual, community, or both in a broad sense can be a driver for violence. Moreover, perceived illegitimacy of authorities perceived in-group superiority, distance from other people, and societal disconnectedness significantly predicted attitudes towards violence. As such, it could be put as having the potential to disturb the shore taking the intensely conflictual relationship between the two these days in the country.

In general, though the test to pressures of ethno-religious violence thus far showed prevailing levels of tolerance and cohesion in which ethnic or religious identities are rarely used as a formal

basis for collective action in the area, participants also expressed signals with the potential to impact the existing unity. Given an increased politicization of ethnicity and religion in the country's discourse (see discussion made under chapter four), it is unsurprising that some young people take a deviation at some of their actions. In line with that, it is crucial to take stock of the social constructivism perspective, which reminds us that ethnic boundary are often activated and strengthened by the political mobilization of identities and the use of collective violence (Brubaker, 2004).

Moreover, it is essential always to perceive that the underlying conditions of extremism do appear anywhere at any time. For that matter, religion's role in conflict management and social cohesion, as implied in chapter three, is a complex and controversial one. It can be part of the solution and potentially be part of social exclusion. On the one hand, it could play a unifying role among ethnic communities, and on the other, it could be responsible for inter-ethnic and inter-religious rivalries, contempt, and mistrust. A community that seemed immune from violence today cannot rely on it for tomorrow. An apparent departure of many areas in the country from their historical tolerance narratives should serve as a lesson here.

In general, the following statement by a research participant could summarize what the study was implying in this sub-section:

> *My first day in the town was some more than two decades ago. On my first night here, I remember a group of young men telling me to leave the place because I do not belong here. I remember that I laughed because I was surprised by the situation's absurdity by the time. But I don't find it funny anymore. I am reminded daily from what is going on in different places in the country that because of my ethnic background, I can be looked at as different, other, and less* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 17 August 2020).

Thus, when speaking of durable peace in the area, giving due attention to these and other residents' concerns appears essential. As framed by a research participant in a focus group discussion, "sometimes it was frustrating that issues between individuals were being framed by some politicians as an issue of 'X' group vs. 'Y' group, diverting the focus away from the local issues" (FGD held in *Gerdebusa*, 03 September 2020). Finally, building on the commonalities that bound

the community together thus far and living with the differences would help free ethnicity or religion from its misuse.

7.2.2. Feelings of Social "Marginalization" and "Exclusion".

As an essential tool of building a resilient community, social cohesion has been communicated in abundant literature and asserted in this research (see discussions made under chapters two and six). Moreover, a socially cohesive society is one where groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition, and legitimacy (Jensen, 1998). Jensen (1998) notes that these positive attributes of cohesion are often complemented by references to negative variables, such as isolation, exclusion, non-involvement, rejection, and illegitimacy, exemplifying the absence of the perceived absence of cohesion.

In line with that, it has been made implicit in the previous chapter what factors contributed to creating a sense of network among the study community and how it became a basis for their social cohesion. For that matter, factors such as shared narratives/identity/ and ancestral attachment, shared cultural traits, and subjective self-identification, among others, could contribute to strengthening bonds while creating boundaries between those considered different. This takes us to the argument that social capital often enhances the mobilization of resources, communication, and trust between those who perceive belonging to the same category. In other words, by registering members with similar cultural traits and those with similar interests into the common category, social networks would generate and enhance social capital, which builds community resilience.

On another note, if not carefully crafted, a strong social bond would also create boundaries between groups who perceive belonging to the "same category" and "others", thereby serving as a line of division. In other words, a strong sense of commonality by itself could also be used as a source of stereotyping and might be mobilized for political goals with extreme ends. As social network theory suggests, the necessary characteristics that social systems must have to enable people to forge ties that bridge ethnic or religious divisions are to be culturally diverse (Mondak and Mutz, 2001). That was also why it had been argued in the preceding chapter that having a strong sense

of group symbolism is not always an advantage; it could also be a source of rivalry. Robert Putnam (1993:177) described the importance of creating cross-cutting social bond saying that:

> *If you get sick, the people who bring you chicken soup are likely to represent your bonding social capital. On the other hand, a society that has only bonding social capital will look like Belfast or Bosnia—segregated into mutually hostile camps.*

There is a need to note that in contexts where strong bonding occurs along lines such as "us" and "them", it produces social harmony among members of one group and polarizes dichotomies between the parties. In other words, "*othering*" happens to be a primary social-psychological mechanism that causes polarization (Chirot and McCauley 2010; Waller 2007).

That said, even if a strong sense of group symbolism as an essential factor for the resilience of the *Lode Hetosa woreda* community to pressures of ethno-religious violence has been made implicit by most of the research participants, on the other hand, the strong sense of group symbolism as a potential source of stereotyping and in the long run rivalry was also implicated. That could be explained in terms of the feelings and sentiments of social "exclusion" and "marginalization" from certain community sections. This sense of social "exclusion" and "marginalization" from sections of the community, for that matter, applies to diverse groups from different generations in the area. However, the way it was crafted and narrated amongst them was different. A sense of "belongingness" and "attachment" to the area but a feeling of "exclusion" and "marginalization" from so-called generations of the "prior settlers", for instance, can be inferred from the following statement by a research participant in *Huruta* town:-

> ***ይህን አካባቢ እኔ እምወስደውም እምቆጥረውም እንደቤቴ ነው፡፡ የተወለድኩትም ያደኩትም እዚሁ ነው፡፡ ለኔም ሆነ ለአያቶቼ ሁሉም ነገር የሚጀምረው ከዚህ ነው፡፡ መሰረቴም ታሪኬም የተተከለው እዚሁ ነው፡፡ ስለዚህም እዚህ ስኖር ሁሉም ነገር ይገባኛል ብዬ አምናለው፡፡ ለኔም ሆነ ለልጆቼ ከዚህ የተሻለ ቦታ ይወክለናል ብዬ አስቤም አላውቅም፡፡ በዙሪያየም ያሉ የየትኛውም ብሄር ሰዎች የኔንም ሆነ የልጆቼን የህይወት ዋጋ ቢረዱልኝ ደስ ይለኛል፡፡ አያቶቼ እኔ ዛሬ ላይ እዚህ ቦታ እንድገኝ ተዋግተውልኛል፡፡ ይሁንና አሁን ባለው ሁኔታ በከተማው ውስጥ ካለው ፖለቲካዊም ሆነ ኢኮኖሚያዊ እንዲሁም ሌሎች ነገር ተገለን እንገኛለን:: ለረጅም ጊዜ እንደ ቤቴ በምቆጥረው አካባቢም እንደማልፈለግ በሚያመላከት ሁኔታ ፡፡***

Which means:-

> *This is my hometown, and I also feel and perceive it. I was born and grew up here. This is where it all started for my ancestors and me. My root was seeded here and so was my history. I believe I deserve everything here. I cannot imagine a better place where I could belong myself and my children. I want to feel as if the people I am around, of all ethnicities, understand the value of my life and my children's lives. My forefathers fought for me to be here today. Unfortunately, however, we are being excluded from all walks of life in the town; political, economic, and other. This indicates that I may no longer be welcome in a place that I have long called home* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 04 August 2020).

The statement from the research participant echoed that there appears a risk factor that could potentially affect the community's resilience in the long run. This risk factor was built, as alluded above, on social "marginalization" as well as "lack of identification" perception mainly from so-called descendants of the "prior settlers" and somehow from "subsequent settlers" also. The feeling of social "marginalization" and "lack of identification" was fermented on politicized ethnic identity as well as on the closed political arrangement as discussed under chapter four of the study. Given the country's already politicized ethnic and religious identities, there need to fear that such narratives of "marginalization" and "exclusion" could increase the polarization of relations. On the other hand, Strong polarization can severely weaken inter-group networks and strengthen the bonds of intra-group collaboration, which could contribute to *in-group bias,* as social psychologists call it, and ultimately violence (Christie et al. 2008; Fearon and Laitin 2000). In other words, such political polarization can instigate the organization of conscious ethnic groups at the expense of the community. In line with that, Pruitt and Kim (2004:118) wrote that "…polarization divides a community into two opposing camps. The bonds within each camp become stronger while those between camps deteriorate."

Furthermore, what was inferred as an unequal treatment among residents was described by one of the research participants as follows:

> *At community meetings held last year (2019) between the administration officials and the community, community members were very nervous in reporting considerable discrimination the administration follows between groups. That has created significant*

> *tension between "new settlers" and generations of older settlers in the area, especially over land allotment. The "new settlers" were given title deeds to public lands by political leaders, whereas "prior settlers" (perceived by local officials as always resistant to the administration's programs) are denied titles and remain squatters on their ancestors' land* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 15 August 2020).

While the accuracy of the information was another issue (as it has been categorically denied by informants from the public office, discussion with Ato Jemal Kelil, 22 August 2020) , the statements, however, could be taken as a huge mark on the level of trust that supposed to exist among the community in making their collective action sustainable. As Putnam (1993) notes, of central importance to the concept of social capital is the notion of trust. People are more likely to form social or economic ties when they trust their communities. However, what has been posited by research participants was something that would leave a question mark on the notion of trust between different actors; between the so-called "new settlers" and certain sections of the community, as well as between the administration and certain sections of the community.

Some participants also implied during a focus group discussion that politicians instill fear and intimidation among persons they deem are not alike or supporters of their agenda (FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa,* 04 September 2020). Though official data was lacking, there is a perception among sections of the community that the so-called "new settlers" to the area are mainly Afan Oromo speakers. During a focus group discussion, some participants also implied that politicians instill fear and intimidation among persons they deem are not alike or supporters of their agenda (FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa,* 04 September 2020):

> *The "new settlers" have a better job opportunities and security in the town (Huruta) than other ethnic groups. The general patterns of Oromo dominance by officials have alienated what they believe beneficiaries of the previous regimes, especially the "prior settlers". This has created a feeling of alienation and exclusion among the "prior settlers," thereby affecting their relationship with the political office holders* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 10 August 2020).

The perception reminds the sharpened ethnic consciousness and difference between the various ethno-regional groups in post-1991 Ethiopia as well as the sense of distinctiveness created between

the major and sub-ethnic groups as noted by Abbink (2006). It also echoes the argument made in the preceding chapter where the previous socio-political relations among the various groups in the country have altered following the developments in post-1991 Ethiopia (Merera, 2003). It also reminds the concern that major ethno-national groups have been granted extensive group rights but with little or no inclusive protection to ethnic minorities within the dominant ethnonational groups (Assefa, 2017; Zemelak and de Visser, 2017; Van der Beken, 2010). Writing on the issue, Assefa (2017:170) in particular note that:

> *The combination of majority rule by titular ethno-national group and exclusive control over territory at a constituent-unit level in a context of heterogeneous constituent units and increased inter-regional state mobility has therefore had grave consequences for intra-unit minorities. The design provides autonomy for a particular titular ethno-national group, not autonomy for all inhabitants in the constituent unit.*

In line with that, designation of autonomy for a particular titular ethno-national group, in this context to *Oromos*, reveals that other ethnic groups feel and perceive they have been excluded from any role in the political sphere in the area. That appeared so because, as implied above, the so-called "prior settlers", who are predominantly *Amharic* speaking populations, and other ethnic groups were assumed a position of intra-unit minorities in the new reconfiguration of the socio-political order in the area. As such, their status remained non-titular, leaving them at a feeling of "exclusion" and "marginalization" in an area where they lived their entire life.

On another note, a sense of "exclusion" and "marginalization" from generations of the so-called "new settlers" can also be drawn amongst the study community but with a somehow different explanation. As glimpsed in the discussion made under 6.2.1., there can be witnessed a limitation on crafting a functional identity between generations of the "prior settlers" and the "new settlers." The "new settlers" drew their frustration against the "prior settlers" on the basis that they have been usually labeled or perceived by the "prior settlers" as "opportunistic" and as having a sentiment of collaborating with "outsiders" who would like to descend the area into violence (discussion with an anonymous participant, 16 August 2020). Another research participant reiterated the problem as follows:

> ***ሁላችንም እንደምናውቀው በማህበረሰባችን ውስጥ ሁሉኑም ሰው በአንድ ቋት ውስጥ የመክተት ትልቅ ችግር አለ፡፡ በእኛም አካባቢ በተለይም በስራም ሆነ በሌላ ምክንያት***

ከቅርብ ጊዜ ወዲህ የሚመጡትን ሁሉኑም ሰዎች በጥርጣሬ የማየት እና በጥቅም የመጡ አርጎ የመሳል ችግር አለ። ስለዚህም ወደጎን የመግፋት አዝማሚያን በተለያዩ ሁኔታዎች የማንፀባረቅ ሁኔታዎች ይስተዋላል። በርግጥ ይሄ ነገር አሁን በአከባቢው በተነጻጻሪት ቆይተዋል ከሚባሉት እንደ ሰላሌ ሰፈር ካሉ ሰዎችም ሲነሳ አውቃለው። የቀደሙት ሰፋሪዎች የሚባሉት እነሱንም በኋላ ዘግይተው እንደተቀበሏቸው ሲያወሩ ሰማለው ።

Which means:-

As we all know, there is a problem of putting everyone in one basket in our community. Likewise, there appears a problem of looking at every newcomer with suspicion and as opportunists in our area. Moreover, there can be witnessed sidelining newcomers in different ways. I have heard same things being raised from residents of Sellable sefer, who were relatively older settlers. They mention that the so-called "prior settlers" integrated with them only later (discussion with Ato Amare Dereje, 20 August 2020).

Moreover, there appears a claim that they have been discriminated and labeled as "non-proper *Hurutas*'" or "others", having no strong bondage with the community (discussion with an anonymous research participant, 16 August 2020; FGD held in *Lode Jimata*, 07 September 2020). In addition, there can be drawn a feeling of exclusionist narration by the so-called "prior settlers" from certain sections of the community from the following statement by a research participant: **በአሁኑ ጊዜ በተለየ ሁኔታ እያደገ የመጣ ስሜት ቢኖር በአካባቢው ላይ በመጀመሪያ ሰፈሩ በሚባሉት ሰዎች የሚነገረው ንግርት በአካባቢው ላይ በቀደምትነት ይኖሩ የነበሩትን እና ደማቸው በጊዜው በነበረው ድርጊት የፈሰሰውን አያቶቻቸውን እንደማግለያ እንዳገለገለ ነው።** Which means:-"There has been increasing recognition that the narrative from the so-called "prior settlers" has served to marginalize indigenous people whose ancestors' blood was spilled in those endeavors" (Discussion with an anonymous participant, 06 August 2020).

This might mean that the "new settlers" have not been able to develop trust, if they interact and work together at all, especially with the "prior settlers" and their generations. As a result, as claimed in the previous section, a hardening of relations, claims, and interests between these two groups can be drawn to the point of confusing how the community remained non-violent given the suspicious relationship between them. It should be noted here that feelings of multi-faceted social exclusion and marginalization were seen as a fundamental source of religious and ethnic

mobilization and social disorder, often leading to violent encounters in different areas (Fletcher, Orsborn, and Timothy, 2015).

Apart from what has been said thus far, action is needed to confront “memories” which have a divisive effect in their association between generations of the so-called “prior settlers”/”subsequent settlers” and “new settlers” and find a “shared narrative/identity” between them. For that matter, labeling of “prior settlers” as “chauvinist” and “arrogant” and “new settlers” as “opportunistic” and “egotistic” appear as one divisive effect in the inter-generational relation between the two groups as discussed in the preceding section, thereby potentially impacting the lasting peace to be sought in the area. There is a need to note how hate speech has played a significant role in precipitating inter-communal violence in different areas; its influence in different parts of the country is just a fresh memory. A research participant, now a retired High school teacher, has described the problem by relating to the overall experience in the country as follows:

እንዳጠቃላይ ኢትዮጲያ በአብዛኛው መልካም የሆኑ ታሪኮቿን በተተኪው ትውልድ ውስጥ በማስረጽ ረገድ አልተሳካላትም፡፡ በእኛ አካባቢም ከቅርብ ጊዜ ወደህ የሚታየው ነገር ከዚህ የተለየ አይደለም፡፡ በትውልዶች መካከል የምናስተላልፋቸው የጋራ ማስታወሻዎች በመልካም ታሪኮቻችን ላይ ያተኮሩ ሳይሆኑ በተመረጡ እና መልካም በማይባሉት ላይ ነው፡፡ በተለያየ ጊዜ የመጡት መሪዎቻችን ከነሱ በፊት የተደረጉትን ነገሮች ሁሉ ከጋራ ትውስታ ውጭ ለማድረግ እንደሚሞክሩት ሁሉ በተመሳሳይ ሁኔታ የአካባቢውን ነዋሪዎች ያለ ሀይማኖት፣ ብሄር ወይም ሌላ ክፍፍል በጋራ አስተሳስረው የቆዩትን ነገሮች ለመሸርሸር የሚደረጉ ምልክቶችን ከቅርብ ግዜ ወዲህ እያስተዋልን እንገኛለን ፡፡

Which means:-

> *Generally, Ethiopia has largely primarily failed to nurture its positive history for future generations. What we are witnessing recently in our locality is nothing different from this. Selective memories have dominated shared narrations among the generation with little mention of the positives. Just like regime change in Ethiopia ushered in leaders who sought above all to erase all positive mention of their predecessors from collective memory, there are signals that the generation is erasing from collective memory positive mention of their predecessors. Positive memories like their co-existence with their neighbor without ethnic, religious or other ascriptions* (discussion with Ato Mitiku Tesema, 28 August 2020).

Another FGD participant extending on the fear in the future stated that:

በአካባቢያችን ለረጅም ግዜ የቆየ መቻቻል እና አብሮነት አለ፡፡ ብሄር ወይም ሀይማኖት ወይም ሌላ ነገር የፖለቲካ ምርጫን ለማካሄድም ሆነ ሌሎች ግንኙነትን ለመመስረት እንደመስፈርት ስንጠቀምበትም አልቆየንም ነበር፡፡ ከቅርብ ግዜ ወዲህ እየታየ ያለው ነገር ግን የማህበረሰቡን አብሮ የመኖር እና እንደተባለውም የሀይማኖትም ሆነ የብሄር ብጥብጦችን የመከላከል አቅማቸውን እንዳያዳክመው በአብዛኛው ሰው ውስጥ ፍርሃት አለ ፡፡

Which means:-

> *For long there was a prevailing level of tolerance and cohesion in which ethnic or religious identities are rarely used as a formal basis for political choice as well as other relations in our area. But now, many people fear that any change to existing norms will impact the unity of the community and hence, their capacity to prevent attempts of violence; be it ethnic or religious* (FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 04 September 2020)

What follows from the discussion thus far is that, while the community is so far effective in preventing violence, it is, however, a question mark for how long that could sustain. It could be referred here that, while the long-held collective narratives, on the one hand, are the backbone of a group's proud sense of identity, on the other hand, they are also the source of the stereotypes and prejudices it holds of others' narrative. The data collected in the study area point out that the collective narratives have created a sense of 'us' and 'them'. It does so between those who perceive themselves as the earlier settlers of the area ("prior settlers" and "subsequent settlers") and those who feel that they are marginalized and not welcomed by the residents of the town ("new settlers"). The "prior settlers" and their descendants view themselves as defenders of the status quo maintained thus far by their forefathers from anyone who seeks to establish instability and chaos. Whereas the "new settlers", especially those who mainly centered following the political and administrative set up in 1991 and afterward, consider the status quo in the area as exclusionary and not willing to integrate them as well as their children candidly (FGD held in *Lode Jimata,* 07 September 2020; discussion with an anonymous participant, 09 August 2020).

Taking into cognizance all these factors, it would be a puzzle how the area remained resilient to ethno-religious violence while the country was rocked as such. Of course, as explained in the preceding chapter, the cumulative factors have thus far contributed to the resiliency of the area to

ethnic and religious violence. However, if such ethnic tensions could not be managed timely, it could exacerbate inter-religious tensions, thereby throwing a shadow in the future on the community's response in preventing violence. As said time again, networks composed only of overlapping bonding links, which impose constraining social norms and foster group homogenously, can reduce resilience. In other words, resilient communities are those communities that activate their social networks amongst different members.

In general, moderating tension and pre-empt violence is possible when there is communication between members of different communities, which in turn is possible when there is prior and sustained contact between them. The generational bonding ties, especially among the "prior settlers" in the area, can be said to be so strong sometimes to the extent of developing a sense of their superiority and group righteousness that marginalize and stereotypes other groups perceived as a threat to their existence. This is a revelation that some part of the historical narrative is built on unfriendly expressions, thereby leaving little room for new developments in the area to integrate with it. That would leave the area's resiliency under question as resilience is usually built on a community's social cohesion and vice versa (Stanley, 2003). An absence of inter-communal violence in ethnically diverse societies, as Varshnay (2002) notes, basically depends on social cohesion, which reflects willing cooperation across many types of social interactions.

On the other hand, the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy is against the dimensions of social cohesion, which would reject, isolate, illegitimatize, non-involve, and exclude some groups from social interactions. Furthermore, it has to be recognized that building social cohesion, as noted by Brown (2013) and Fearon et al. (2009), primarily relies on endogenous processes of building trust and inter-group relations. Colletta and Cullen (2000) also note that building community cohesion is about building better relationships between people from different backgrounds, including new and settled communities.

Thus, there needs to envisage a mechanism where the strong generational cross bonding ties that exist *within* the "prior settlers" as well as between the "prior settlers" and the "subsequent settlers" could extend with the so-called "new settlers" also. Otherwise, the threshold of threat could rapidly overcome the resilience capacity of the community, and the area would descend into violence sooner or later. Common solidarity among members indicates the identification of self and

acceptance by the group against the 'others' with whom the group has had less/no solidarity. Thus, promoting social capital to produce a sense of belonging and reduce social exclusion and isolation appears vital. The following statement by Bartos and Wehr (2002:131) could summarize what has been said thus far:

> *whenever individuals associate together, especially if they do so on the basis of shared characteristics that exclude others and make a distinction between 'us' and 'them', there are dangers of racism, ethnocentrism,…, and other acts of intolerance [which] can be expressed in tendencies to dehumanize.*

7.2.3. Weakened Relationship between the Local Leadership and Certain Sections of the Community

Studies on communities' resilience to violence suggest that a strong relationship between the community and the leadership appears essential in harnessing the resilience capacities of communities and carving for sustainable peace (Carpenter, 2014; Anderson and Wallace, 2012). This requires building shared goals and purposes between them, which appear essential in building resilient communities. Writing on how to develop same, Szreter and Woolcock (2004:656) note that:

> *For trusting social norms to develop, there needs to be a minimum degree of understanding among the participants in the network in their mutual dealings with one another that they share each other's goals and purposes and are working together toward mutually compatible ends. This, in turn, needs to be based upon a shared sense of fairness...and mutual respect.*

However, the evidence from the study community dictates otherwise with this regard. Generally, the lack of trust, lack of collaboration, and feeling of exclusion not only highlights a suspicious relation between government representatives and segments of the community but, if it is left unabated, may lead to an open confrontation. In other words, it can be argued that the systems lack the knowledge to engage communities in a way that creates a social connection at the vertical level, implying that the risk factors for violence remain on the air.

With this regard, some research participants blame officials at the government post working to change the relatively stable demographic composition in the area. According to these respondents, the relatively stable demographic composition in the area for such a long time has helped their

relative cohesiveness. And they present the political office holders with an interior motive of changing the demographic composition in a way that favors their political motive (discussion with an anonymous participant, 17 August 2020; discussion with an anonymous participant, 04 August 2020). Research participants also communicated authorities at every level use “division among residents as a tool to gain and hold on to power” (discussion with an anonymous participant, 10 August 2020). However, what evidence people blame the political office holders is not clear; they claim to “just know.” Moreover, they mention that anybody who closely follows what is going on in their locality can understand it.

However, the assertion by sections of the community over the interior motive of political office holders was rebuffed by other respondents from the government offices. It has reverberated as simply a fabricated one and just a continuation of the unfounded allegations as one could notice at regional and national levels also (discussion with Ato Jemal Kelil, 22 August 2020). A research participant from the government post forwarded a rather positive comment about their activities and relation with the community as follows:

> **እኔ እንደማስበው እና እንደቆንጆ ነገርም ሊወሰድ የሚገባው ነገር ቢኖር በየትኛውም ደረጃ ቢሆን ጥሩ መሪዎች አሉ። በየትኛውም ቦታ በጣም ግሩም ስራ የሚሰሩ ሰዎች አሉ። እኛም ብንሆን በሁሉም ነገር አሸናፊዎች ሆነን ለመውጣት እየሰራን ካለንበት ነገር አንደኛው ሁላችንም ለጋራ ግብ በአንድ ላይ መስራት ነው እሱንም እያደረግን እንገኛለን:: ከነዚህም ውስጥ አንዱ ለምሳሌ ከህብረተሰቡ ተወካዮች ጋር በመነጋገር የማህበረሰብ ፖሊስን እንደገና ማቀናጀት እና ተጠያቂነትንም ማረጋገጥ ይገኝበታል።**

Which means:-

> *What I think the beautiful thing is that there are good leaders at every level. Many people are doing incredible work here in our locality. And part of what we do to appear succesful in every aspect is to work together towards a common goal. Amongst our work includes reimagining policing in cooperation with community leaders and pushing for accountability measures* (discussion with Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 10 September 2020)

While it was not the intention of the paper to check whether the allegations were true or not[31], it can, however, serve as a point of takeoff for the research to argue that there exists mistrust between some sections of the community and the political officeholders. A failure to address collectively expressed grievances by authorities as a precursor for violent conflict, on the other hand, has been communicated in different works (Azar, 1990). That is why it should be presented as an issue that could diminish the resilience experience of the community in the long run. Moreover, the general finding of the data shows that the administration/leadership/ is seen distant from the community and ineffective. Some even questioned its legitimacy by mentioning that they have no say in electing them (focus group discussion held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 2020; discussion with an anonymous participant, 04 August 2020). For that matter, the gap between the community and the local administration can also be implied from the following statement from a respondent at a government post who, of course, unlike most respondents' from government post remark, viewed the matter with a different note in the following manner:

> *Over recent years, what has become abundantly clear in our town (Huruta) and surrounding villages is that while we have residents who work alongside the local administration with cooperation and collaboration, there has been a disconnect with what our expectations are and should be. This disconnect relates to interactions with the local administration and officers and the community they are entrusted to protect* (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020).

Research participants were also vocal in attributing the administration as holding a green card to play politics across ethnic and religious lines whenever it thinks necessary (FGD held in *Fursa*, 2020; FGD held in *Lode Jimata*, 2020; discussion with an anonymous research participant, 08 September 2020). In line with that, it has been implied that there is continuous pressure from the political officials to make politics play an important cross-cutting, associational role in the area. A participant to a focus group discussion can be quoted as saying: **የአመራር ወንበራቸው ላይ በቀላሉ ለመቀመጥ ያመቻቸው ዘንድ ነዋሪውን በተለይም ከኛ የማይሄድ ሀሳብ አለው የሚሉትን ለማስፈራራት ይሞክራሉ።** which means:-"They intend to project fear among residents whom

[31] Checking the same essentially appears difficult due to the unavailability of statistical data that would track the developments over at course of a time.

they believe could dissent from them so that they get their way on the leadership seats easily" (FGD participant3 held in *Huruta Heotsa*, 04 September 2020).

Distant and sometimes broken relationship between segments of the community and the leadership can also be implied from the following statement by a research participant:

> *I remember an incident in a meeting that was called by government officials last year (2018/19) where we (community representatives of residents of the town) were gathered to discuss the security situation and other issues in our town (Huruta). At the meeting, some participants were re-counting the unpleasant environment Irreecha*[32]*participants faced while returning home after celebrating it at Bishoftu. The complaint was that most residents of the town (Huruta) had exhibited unwelcome behavior and attitude to participants of the event while they were getting back from the festival. It was also claimed that the gesture from certain sections in the town was un-matching to other surrounding woredas (where residents of their town warmly welcomed participants of the festival). After hearing the complaint, the government representatives swiftly sided with the complaints, without inviting opinions from other participants who were about to explain the issue with their side of the argument. The officials, including representatives from the zone, directly accused residents of the town as non-collaborator for local and regional issues by citing the said issue as one example. Though other participants raised hands to explain the matter with their side of the story, the chairperson was unwilling to give them a chance. This offended majority of the participants from the town and made them leave the meeting, commenting: "if you are not willing to listen to our side of the story, we do not belong here." They had to leave the meeting because the talk was just a one-way monologue.* (Discussion with an anonymous research participant, 05 September 2020)

[32] Irreechaa is the annual Oromo people Thanksgiving Holiday celebrated every year (at the beginning of Birraa (spring), new season after the dark and rainy winter season). Irreecha, which is part of the UNESCO registered Gada system, constitutes one of the several religious and cultural practices defining the hallmark of the entire Oromo life. Many have also commented as to how Irreecha has helped the Oromo nation to build their common values and shared visions and consolidate peace, tolerance and resilience (see, for instance, Addisstandard, 29 September 2016, Irreecha – The colors, the identity and the pride of Oromo nation, http://addisstandard.com/irreecha-the-colors-the-identity-and-the-pride-of-oromo-nation/, accessed, September 2020).

Though such accusations were denied by most government authorities, the repeated claims underscore the deteriorating relationship between government officials and some sections of the community. "The one-way monologue" accusation especially needs to be given due attention here as it will impact the idea of shared goals and purposes, which appear essential in building resilient communities, as noted by Szreter and Woolcock (2004). For that matter, the 2018/19 event was communicated by the *Lode Hetosa woreda* administration and security head as a very tense period where social media "activists" made their utmost effort to exploit the situation to create unrest in the area" (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020). Therefore, to build sustainable peace in the area, there needs to look for a missing link between the community and the leadership.

Moreover, research participants were also persistent in mentioning corruption, bribery, and supporter and family-based nepotism concerning political influence and community development funds, such as cooperative association funds, area development fund, maintenance subsidies, and so on (FGD held in *Gerdbusa*, 03 September 2020; FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 04 September 2020). These statements are indications to the presence of underlying grievances on the politicians from some section of the society. They could potentially diminish the resilience capacity of the community in the long run (as it could serve as a recipe for easy mobilization based on group's affiliation and therefore can act as a recipe for violence).

In sum, healing the local leadership, including police, relation with the community should be envisaged. Healing the relationship, for instance, vindicates the overwhelming majority of good police who are just generalized within a few bad police. Such healing will restore the confidence, respect, and trust essential to making this relationship work.

7.2.4. Issue of "Negative" Resilience

Forms of resilience and related capacities in a community are not static. It evolves and changes over time. This fact is relevant to the dynamics within and between "negative" and "positive" forms of resilience. And lasting peace, as implied in the preceding chapters, actually involves promoting "positive" resilience and mitigating or eliminating the effects of "negative" resilience (see discussion under 2.2.8). For that matter, a "negative" form of resilience is often associated with corruption, crime, and extremism, whereas a "positive" form of resilience is associated,

among others, with success in resisting or mitigating violence (McCandless and Simpson, 2015; Menkhaus, 2013). With that note, investigating what might cause catalytic shifts of positively resilient factors and processes into negative ones that undermine durable peace should be a stake when speaking lasting peace in a given community.

That said, while the community's collective efficacy on security can be well inferred from the discussion made under 6.2.4., on the other side, it has to be noted that the community taking the responsibility of security into their hand could be used as a tool to act otherwise. In other words, as studies in different areas demonstrate, strong bonding among the community could sometimes be used as a source of "negative" resilience by the community. In line with that, a study conducted in different cities in South Africa, Kenya, Colombia, and Brazil, for instance, show how strong bondage could nonetheless provide an alternative place of belonging to otherwise marginalized and excluded members of society (World Bank, 2010; Moser and McIlwaine, 2004; Rubio, 1997; Wilson, 1996). It has also been implied how social capital can be created by or used for activities that do not serve the collective interest (Moser and McIlwaine 2004). Rubio (1997), for instance, speaks of "perverse social capital," where strong ties and networks in communities in Columbia are used to facilitate drug trafficking networks that have negative repercussions across those communities and beyond.

In general, as these studies show, when social capital is used for destructive purposes, a set of norms emerges that tolerates, if not promotes, those ends and makes the cycle difficult to break. Such networks, which consisted primarily of groups of thugs and gangs, often extend to vigilante groups and served as a "negative" source of resilience. Moreover, the availability of these groups could be 'sudden,' and massive violence is possible even in apparently peaceful and harmonic places without a legacy of killings based on identity or other markers (Krause, 2018; Agbu, 2004).

While the study community, in many ways, has done remarkably well in providing their security, especially in the absence or weakness of the state, there were also elements of "negative" resilience that could be inferred from the collected data. That was evidenced by the "informal settlement" in the outskirts of the town of *Huruta.* The community (residing in places referred to as "informal settlement") claims that the "discriminatory" treatment by the government officials forced them to invent their solutions. And the invention appeared to be "occupying a space" in groups in the

outskirts of the town and then using every means at their disposal to defend their new area (discussion with an anonymous participant, 25 August 2020). The way this solidarity has been forged among a certain section of the community can be inferred from the following statement:

> *We have been systematically targeted to leave our forefathers' land in the name of development. I, have to buy land from a farmer at the outskirt of the town because the government had appropriated my forefathers' land to construct a hospital. When the powerful came, I had to leave, but at the same time, I had to innovate a solution. So, I looked for it, and with the little money I received from the government as compensation, I bought land and forged solidarity in the new environment. Thus far, we provide our security and will continue to act as a community to protect our locality* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 25 August 2020).

This statement, to a certain extent, can be said to be evidence of "negative resilience." The research employed the term 'to a certain extent' because, on the one hand, in the failure of the formal policing systems to protect the population, communities should simply take "security" into their own hands. For that matter, a research participant notes that: "the political officials' promises on security are unlikely to impress the public, many of whom are likely to see it lofty promises just like those to be made at a campaign pitch before a given election in the country" (discussion with an anonymous participant, 19 August 2020). As such, it can be argued that the community taking security matters into their own hands has catalyzed a positive source of resilience in communities looking to address issues of violence proactively. On the other hand, it could create arbitrariness as it could leave spaces for taking the law into their hands inappropriately in the "ungoverned" spaces. If not regulated on time, it could also potentially develop into negative manifestations of religious or ethnic identity. As studies suggest (Bailey, 2009), while community cohesiveness provides resilience opportunities, on the other hand, it could be exploited by criminal gangs and networks to advance violence and coercion through the dense network established thereunder. In line with that, the distrust the "informal settlers" have in the law enforcement organs, particularly the police, could be exploited to advance "negative" resilience by certain groups.

The distrust the neighborhoods have on the law enforcing officials can be inferred from the following statement by a resident of the town who claims to have closer contact with settlers in the area:

የአካቢው ነዋሪዎች መርሃቸው በማንኛውም ሁኔታ ውስጥ ፖሊስን ወደአካባቢው አለመጥራት ነው፡፡ በዚህም ምክንያት ብዙን ግዜ ፖሊስን ለዕርዳታ ከመጥራት ይቆጠባሉ ምክንያቱም በነሱ ደህንነት ስለማይሰማቸው፡፡ እነሱን ይጠብቃሉ ተብለው በተቀመጡት ፖሊሶች ጭራሹኑ የስጋታቸው ምንጭ አርገው ይወስዷቸዋል፡፡ ለዚህም ምክንያቱ ከህግ አስከባሪዎች ጋር በተለያየ ጊዜ ያላቸው ግንኙነት መብታቸውን የጣሰ አንዳንዴም ከዛም አልፎ የድብድብ ስለሆነ ነው ፡፡

Which it means:-

> *Their (the informal settlers) motto is "don't call the police to the area" for whatsoever reason. They often refrain from calling law enforcement officials because they feel unsecured by them. They feel threatened by the same police officers who are expected to help them. This is so because the residents' relationship with law enforcement officials has, in some cases, been abusive and, in others, violent* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 17 August 2020).

Statements from the *Lode Hetosa woreda* Police office also support the assertion given above where he noted that:

> **ከአዲሱ ሰፈር አጎራባች ያሉ አካባቢዎች በተለየም በተለምዶ ህጋዊ ያልሆኑ ሰፋሪዎች ያሉበት ቦታ እየተባለ እሚታወቀው አካባቢ የሚኖሩ ሰዎች ወንጀልን ሪፖርት የማድረግ ፍላጎታቸው አነስተኛ እንደሆነ በተለያየ ሁኔታ መረጃ ይደረስናል፡፡ ይህም የሆነበት ዋነኛው ምክንያት ብዬ እማስበው ሆነ ብለው እራሳቸውን ከህግ አስከባሪ አካላት ለማራቅ በመምረጣቸው ነው፡፡ ይህም ምክንያቱ ህገወጥ ሰፋሪዎች በመሆናቸው ነው፡፡**

Which means:-

> *We find that residents of Addis Sefer's neighborhoods, especially residents of so-called informal settlers, are far less likely to report a crime in the area. This is so, I think, because a conscious decision has been made to distance themselves from the reach of law enforcing officials basically due to their illegal settlement* (discussion with Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 2020).

From the statements, reporting crime to the police remains the exception rather than the rule in the area. A perceived heavy-handed police activity could be cited as one reason for the community members' choice. The authorities, on their part, argue that such reluctance from the police was because the police in pre-hand recognized that their tactics could escalate violence (discussion

with Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 2020). However, it should be noted that the dense networks by the community (social bonding) could sometimes be exploited to potentially develop a "negative" resilience, as explained above. For instance, it can drive other forms of violence in the community like criminality, if not religious or ethnic identity-related violence. And the presence of criminal gangs, as Philipps and Grovogui (2010:5) note, is often used for "politically motivated acts of severe violence."

Moreover, it could also raise the issue of a double standard for dealing with violence in a given community. In a sense, some groups are escaping possible liability not because they are not known people, rather because the police/authority/ has acknowledged who is potentially dangerous and using that as an excuse not to take action. It could also leave a chance for law-abiding residents to suffer from criminals.

Generally, from the discussion made thus far, it can be argued that the area demonstrates a case where the vertical relation between the administration and the community stood far apart. On a related note, the horizontal relationships (bonding capital) among the "informal settlers" developed from the common narration that they are "systematically marginalized." It also developed through strong neighborhood identities as well as the common visions for what their community can become in the future. Thus, given the bondage created among the informal settlers and justification for their deeds, it seems almost no space for the community to connect with the administration on good terms. A research participant from the government office narrated the problem related to the issue as follows:

> *These days, informal settlements have brought plenty of challenges to the town. It brought plenty of challenges not just because it is illegal but also the narration the settlements were built. They were forged on wrongful narrations, and some used it as an opportunity to extend their illegal activity under cover of victimhood. We had a community consultation involving every resident of the town at different times and among the discussions were the illegal activities going on the outskirts of the town. While most participants were buying similar opinions on the issue, there were, however, groups who defended their illegality under the narration built on false agendas like discriminatory treatment by the local administration. But they could not cite any evidence that demonstrates the same rather was an opinion built on their perception* (discussion with Ato Jemal Kelil, 22 August 2020).

Moreover, it has been claimed by the officials that they are receiving reports about informal groups possibly "organizing" themselves in the area. These groups also seek to appeal to populations' aspirations that they claim "abandoned" by the administration. If this happens to be true, he narrated, "we will be holding them accountable to the fullest extent of the law, as otherwise they possibly instigate violence*"* (discussion with Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 2020).

How far the narration could go beyond the mere assertion of the officials appears another question here. On the other hand, however, it should be noted that communities could enter into protective alliances with local vigilantes in times of loss of trust in state security apparatus. This, as Adam (2014) notes, could enable more violent social patterns to take root and become normalized, stimulating further polarization and conflict. In other words, the statement underscores the possibility that social alliance could be used as a means to further "negative" interests. The following statement from a resident who claimed to live near the area also supports the possibility that resilience capacities could go in either direction:

> *የህግ አስከባሪ አካላት በተለይም ከእኛ አቅራቢያ ካሉ አካባቢዎች ያለመኖር አንዳንድ ሰዎችን የፈለጉትን ነገር እንዲያደርጉ ሊያደርጋቸው ይችላል። ማን ምን ሊያደርግ እንደሚችል አይታወቅም። ለዚያም ነው የአካባቢው ነዋሪዎች እራሳቸውን ሁልግዜም ዝግጁ አድርገው የሚጠብቁት። ማ ማነው ምንድነው ምን ፍላጎት አለው የሚለውን ለማወቅም ያስቸግራል። ደግነቱ እስካሁን የከፋ ነገር አልተፈጠረም ወደፊትም እንደማይፈጠር ተስፋ አለኝ። በተመሳሳይም የአካባቢው ተመራጮች የህግ የበላይነትን ለማረጋገጥ እና የአካባቢውን ነዋሪ ደህንነት ለመጠበቅ መስራት ይጠበቅባቸዋል።*

Which means:-

> *The no-show-up of law-enforcing personnel in nearby residences could make some people do whatever they want to do. You never know who is going to show up. That is why people here are on such high alert; they do not know who is who or what is what or their intentions. At the same time, elected officials have to work to restore the rule of law and protect and defend our community in general*. Fortunately, nothing strange happened so far, and let's hope it won't happen in the future (discussion with an anonymous participant, 17 August 2020).

The local administration mentions most of the "informal settlers" as coming from the surrounding villages but joining forces who narrate their illegality on victimhood or discriminatory treatment (discussion with Ato Jemal Kelil, 22 August 2020; discussion with Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 2020). On another note, it could be claimed that inefficient land provision/administration/ in the area is a central issue for the "informal settlements" in the town. In line with that, studies (Ali and Sulaiman, 2006) suggest that poverty and social exclusion are key drivers behind forming illegal settlements in most developing countries. As such, devising mechanism that efficiently addresses the land issue in the area appears essential while ensuring the rule of law in the meantime.

Photograph 2: An area expropriated for construction of Hospital (@Lode Hetosa Woreda administrative center, Huruta town, August 2020)

Photograp 3: A shot to an area referred as “informal settlements” (@outskirt of *Lode Hetosa Woreda administrative center, Huruta town, August 2020*)

Generally, the role of community bonds and other forms of social capital in the production of resilience, as envisaged in the preliminary sections, is complex. In other words, a linear approach and romanticizing social bonds as a panacea for preventing violence would be wrong. As it has been claimed by Patillo-McCoy (1999) and Wilson (1996), strong social ties within a group have the potential to hinder collective action by creating a dense network of connections that ends up isolating certain residents from broader society or foster collective action that itself inevitably drives the breakdown of social capital. In other words, strong social relations at the locality level do not always bring positive results because sometimes strong linkages between residents and dense networks could help sustain more “negative” forms of resilience. Sometimes, the history of strong community connections leads to a situation where citizens develop “negative” resilience in

ways that make it difficult for the police and the state to eliminate the perpetrators of violence in a certain neighborhood.

Moreover, international experience and research demonstrate that violence soar in areas where there is a vacuum created by the lack of governance (as it exacerbates cycles of inter-communal violence). It should be reckoned that a void left by the state can be filled by inter-communal violence. Thus, managing the issue of "negative" resilience always appears essential in assessing resilience responses of communities to the relentless pressure of ethno-religious violence by "ethnic entrepreneurs" in general and in assessing the resilience capacity of the *Lode Hetosa* communities in particular. That goes with the argument by McCandless and Simpson (2015) that sustainable peace is about promoting "positive" resilience and mitigating the effects of "negative" resilience.

7.2.5. Issues of "Every Day."

Issues of "every day" could be cited as worth mentioning in the attempt to understand, assess, and promote resilience in ways that serve durable peace. Several specific points of grievance arising from the different uses of land in the town, including trading place allotments, residential allotments, land for religious services, and so forth are common. These are long-standing tensions. There has been a claim from participants as to a general lack of genuine consultation and dialogue among the concerned parties to amicably solve the problem. The local administration's efforts to intervene in such disputes, in terms of resource management and dispute resolution, have often been labeled as deficient (discussion with Melake Birhan Kesis Tsegaye Getnet, 07 September 2020; FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 04 September 2020; discussion with Ato Ato Bekele Guta, 25 July 2020).

In line with that, breaches of lawfulness by the public authorities themselves were echoed by research participants as sources of frustration. A participant has narrated the problem related with land allotment in the town *(Huruta)* saying:

> **በአካባቢው ማህበረሰብ ውስጥ ለረጅም ግዜ የቆየ ቅሬታ አለ እሱም የጋራ የሆኑ ሀብቶች ፍትሀዊ በሆነ መልኩ ለሁሉም አልተከፋፈሉም ከሚል የመነጨ ነው። ይህም በተለያዩ ግዜዎች ውጥረት እና አንዳንዴም መጠነኛ ለሆኑ ግጭቶች ምክንያት ሲሆን ነበር። የአካባቢው አስተዳዳሪዎች ማህበረሰቡ ለገነባቸው መልካም ልምዶች ተገዢ አለመሆን**

እንዲሁም ለተቀመጡ ህጎች ተገዢ ያለመሆን ለችግሩ አስተተዋፅኦ አድርጓል። አብዛኛዎቹ አስተዳዳሪዎች የመሬትን ጉዳይ እራሳቸውን ለማበልፀግ እና ወገኖቻቸውን ለመጥቀም እንደጥሩ አጋጣሚ ነው የሚወስዱት።

Which means:-

> *The community has long-held grievances that common resources were not distributed equitably. This has led to tensions and sometimes minor conflicts between groups. The local administrator's noncompliance with established good practices and the infringement or misapplication of the law, whether through ignorance or intention, has contributed to the problem. Most local officials perceive land issues as an opportunity for clientelism and self-enrichment* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 04 August 2020)

The statement echoes the fear that local officials could associate with certain defined groups, which the complainants perceive as "beneficiaries" of the new system. Generations of the so-called "new settlers" were usually perceived as beneficiaries from the new system by descendants of the "prior settlers"/"subsequent settlers," strengthening the previous argument that the relation between the two generations is a soured one. The assertion from the "prior settlers," for instance, was that having the same amount of money would not "guarantee" them access to the same public properties (discussion with an anonymous participant, 13 August 2020). This apparent disparity between the two groups can create a sense of injustice and frustration, which may be exploited by "ethnic entrepreneurs". In other words, the non-integration of the two groups is a potential source of separation, potentially giving rise to an identity-based grievance. On the other hand, however, the authorities denied claims of any double standard where a participant reiterated that "certain groups say that to win sympathy" (Discussion with W/o Tsedale Shumi, 10 August 2020).

Another interesting cross-section of everyday issues was a conflict between the so-called "informal settlers" and farmers who consider the land their "ancestry land". Even if they temporarily benefited from selling a portion of their "ancestry land," the farmers denounce the transaction as unfair or undue. The "informal settlers," on the other hand, claim title deeds on the ground that they have already made a transaction as per their agreement. As a result, there is an increase in the outbreak of minor conflict between neighborhoods on claims of trespass or encroachment (discussion with Ato Mebratu Yilma, 28 August 2020; discussion with an anonymous research participant, 10 August 2020). A research participant captioned the situation, saying: "the increase

in land values at first acted as incentives to sell their plots of land, which could negatively affect extended families and descendants as time pass by" (discussion with Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020). While most of the conflict, thus far, remained minor and usually adjudicated by customary resolutions (discussion with Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa, 25 August 2020), in the long run, however, it could appear as a factor that diminishes the social cohesion of the community thereby impacting their collective action for the common good. In other words, these have potential consequences for inter or intra-communal relations if there cannot be clear guidance in dealing with such situations in a way that is respected by all.

Another worth noting concerning the "issue of every day" could relate to the issue of the youth and employment opportunities. Like any other place in the country, the area has a chronic unemployment problem, especially for senior high school and university graduates. Research participants frequently noted that families are worried over the number of young people sitting home, without work and the prospect of finding any (FGD held in *Lode Jimata,* 07 September; FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa*, 04 September 2020; FGD Held in *Gerdebusa*, 03 September 2020; discussion with an anonymous research participant, 02 September 2020). A university graduate unemployed youth research participant referred to the issue as follows: **ወጣቶች ጊዜያቸውን እና ህይወታቸውን በየመንደሩ ውስጥ ዝም ብለው እየዞሩና መጠጥ እየጠጡ ነው የሚያጠፉት። ይህንንም ለመረዳት ወደ መጋጫ ሰፈር ሄድ ማለትና መመልከት ብቻ በቂ ነው ።** Which means: - "Youths are spending too much time hanging around the neighborhood drinking and wasting their lives. One can simply go around *Meggacha* and witness what I mean by that" (discussion with an anonymous research participant, 02 September 2020). In addition, as implied under chapter five, under conditions of an ever-increasing population, especially in rural areas, migration of the younger population to *Huruta,* especially during the harvest season, was implied as one feature of the town. This can be well inferred from the following statement by a research participant who claims to come from the neighboring *woreda (Diksis)* looking for a job:

> *Waggaa waggaan yeroo kan bakka jireenya kootii Diksiis irraa gara Hurutaan dhufa. Sababnisaas naannoo sana carraan hojii humnaa kana jedhamu waan hinjirreef. Huruuta dhufe yoon milkaa'e hojii kafaltii gaariin argadhe hojjetaa oleen gala yoon dhabe immoo magaala keessa olii gadi jedhaan oola.*

Which means:-

> *Every year during this period (during the harvest season), I come from my home town Diksis to Huruta. I regularly do that because I have no job in my home town. After coming here, I would work and secure modest payment in those good days. If not, I spare my time wondering around the town* (discussion with an anonymous participant, 01 September 2020)

The migration of the younger population was explained as one strategy to alleviate the harmful effects of increasing resource competition in a land-limited rural population (discussion with Ato Tadesse Ketema, 04 September 2020; discussion with Sheik Shemsu Hedeto, 25 August 2020; discussion with Hadji Mohammed Hassen, 21 August 2020). The town, however, like many others in Ethiopia, currently struggles to provide the jobs, housing, and services to support the growing demand (discussion with an anonymous research participant, 01 September 2020; discussion with Ato Jemal Kelil, 22 August 2020). In consequence, this sizeable number of younger population migration into the town could be easily portrayed as having the potential to disrupt the shore in the absence of timely intervention on the issue.

Photograph 4: Young men and women queue to enlist as daily labour (@ the administrative center of *Lode Hetosa woreda, Huruta,* September 2020)

Furthermore, as implied in the above section, research participants were persistent in mentioning corruption, bribery, and supporter and family-based nepotism. These malpractices extend to community development funds, such as cooperative association funds, area development funds, maintenance subsidies, and others. They ultimately used to exert political influence (FGD held in *Lode Jimata*, 07 September 2020; FGD held in *Huruta Hetosa,* 04 September 2020; FGD held in *Fursa*, 02 September 2020; discussion with an anonymous research participant, 10 August 2020). Given that the triggers of youth violence in a given area appear manifold, the factors stated above have the potential to broaden their networks along ethnic and religious lines, thereby serving as a fertile ground for violence.

For that matter, researchers had repeatedly documented that youths joining extremists or thug groups is an alternative means of generating an income when government positions became unattainable. Meaning, lack of employment prospects and poverty make young men particularly more likely to join violent and criminal groups and mobilize for politically motivated ends (Campbell, 2014; Cramer, 2010; Altbeker 2009). Moreover, in different studies, youth exclusion, unjust and patrimonial system has been implicated as a key motivating factor for young recruits to violent groups (Hoffman, 2011; Reno, 2011; Walton, 2010; Fraser and Hilker, 2009). Ikelegbe and Garuba (2011:100) also extended on the same by stating that, violent youth conflict is the "registration of dissent and frustration and a challenge against the forms, practices, and conduct of the state and its officials and local elite."

While young people represent a tremendous asset and a potential catalyst for growth and progress in a given region, this potential needs to be channeled, and the expectations and energy of youth should be carefully managed to mitigate violence risks. There is a need, for instance, to work on how to create more employment opportunities while managing expectations among youth regarding employment creation in the formal sector. For that matter, it could be argued there is little doubt that almost any offer can look attractive in a world where increasing unemployment and reduced opportunities and services pose a question of survival for many young people. Moreover, political inclusion to channel their energy and create space for their expression and dissent also appears critical. When missing that, it is important to recall that youth have been key actors in much of the ethno-religious violence experienced across the continent in general (Gavin, 2008). Ethiopia is not an exception for the same. Hence, there is no reason why the youth problem may not appear as a potential factor in diminishing the resilience story of the *Lode Hetosa* community to pressures of ethno-religious violence in the long run.

Generally, there needs to note that all of these things, if not properly managed, can promote violence. Thus, it is necessary to recognize that mismanagement of plots, whether for trading activities, residential or religious services, competition over resources, encroachment of farms and projects on grazing lands, and tensions related to youth unemployment often lead to violence. In that regard, Ricigliano (2012) noted that making peace last is a comprehensive approach to finding sustainable solutions to the most pressing social problems. Moreover, Krause (2018) captioned

that communal violence is rooted in 'everyday violence networks.' As such, such everyday confrontations can grow into large-scale conflict and violence, thereby impacting the resilience narration of the community. And confrontations are particularly likely when coupled with claims of political and social marginalization as well as the spillover from ethnic, religious, and political tensions in different parts of the country.

Finally, based on the findings of the dissertation from the preceding chapters, the study re-depicted the framework that shows the interplay between the opposite forces of resilience in the area as follows:

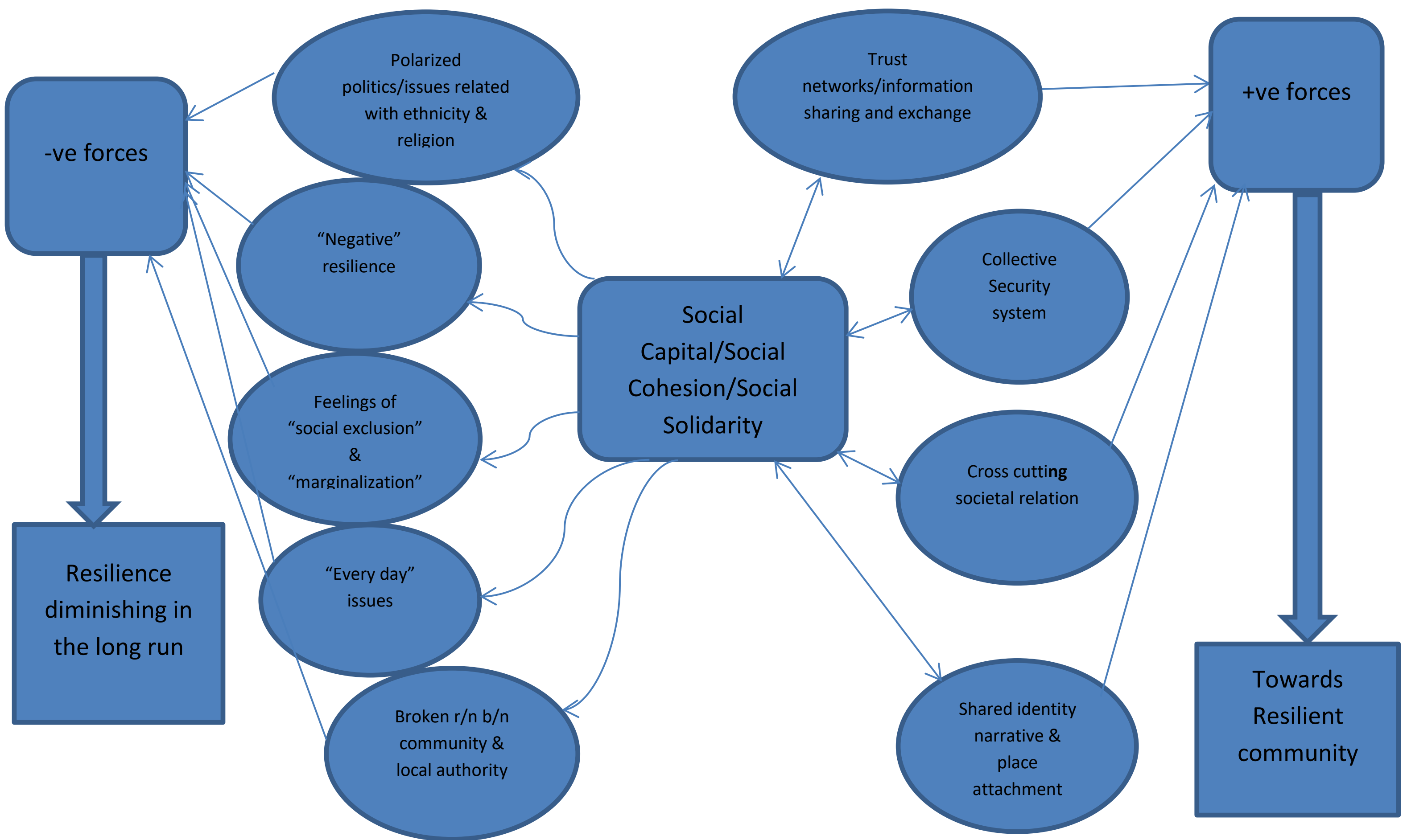

Figure 6: A framework representing the interplay between the negative and positive forces of resilience in the bid towards building sustainable peace in the area

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter made it clear that the community's resilience capacity to pressures of ethno-religious violence built on inconsistent patterns, thereby throwing a shadow on its sustainability. It is important to note that the mere cohabitation and collaboration that allow a group of people to prevent violence are not enough for a certain community to sustain peace. The community's ability to prevent violence could hobble in the future if the factors that contributed to the day-to-day response are not integrated into long-term resilience factors. That implies the need to understand, assess, and promote resilience in ways that serve durable peace.

As such, there is a need to strike a balance between risk factors for violence, and community resilience opportunities as long-term resilience ultimately depend on the balance of the two. For that matter, it appears important to minimize the risk factors that could be associated *within* communities that share similar social identities (social bonding) while building on the opportunities. Likewise, social bridging and social linking ties can be said as discussed in detail in the section. Otherwise, the imperfect peace the community has sustained could reach its tipping point, and the community could descend into violence just like the neighboring *woredas.* It would be logical to expect such circumstances/the risk factors/ if the proper balance could not be envisaged, would appear as fertile grounds for competing parties to mobilize groups against their antagonists, thereby affecting the community's resilience. No wonder to ponder that in circumstances where competing parties mobilize groups against their antagonists, narratives and counter-narratives are produced, networks are (re)created, information is channeled, and existing relations are potentially reconfigured, sometimes to the divisive.

Generally, despite the area's resilience to pressures of ethno-religious violence, unlike the surrounding *woredas,* the community also lives under risk factors that severely test stability and social cohesion. These situations were examined under the chapter as feelings of social "exclusion" and "marginalization" in different contexts, residents' distrust regarding public authority, issue of "negative" resilience, issues related with polarized identity politics /politicization of ethnicity and religion/ as well as issue of "every day." As a result, there needs to work to transform these factors that could undermine the community's social cohesiveness. In other words, the inconsistent pattern of resilience in the area signals an alarm for intervention before it reaches its tipping point.

Chapter Eight: General Conclusion and Intervention Spaces

8.1. Introduction

This final chapter aims to summarize major issues in the dissertation. It shall reflect on the major approaches (implications) derived from the discussions made in the various chapters of the study. It also includes some reflections on spaces of intervention to build sustainable peace.

8.2. Summary of Major Findings and Implications

These days, religious and ethnic-oriented violence continue to present grave threats to peace and security in the country. At least at the time of writing this dissertation, the violence in the country shows little sign of abating. Communities have been suffering from surging ethno-religious violence that has only worsened in recent years. It could also be argued that it is far from getting any solution; in terms of the polarization of politics in the country and how that polarization is unfolding along ethnic as well as religious lines. In line with that, one can note how an ever-widening political difference has put the country on edge. This rising trend is worrisome. It has to be considered worrisome because it puts fear in the minds of the general population and brings a vicious cycle of suspicion, mistrust, and exclusion among communities along multiple lines of identities. It could also pose a serious challenge to national cohesion, unity, integration, and sustainable peace.

But, what is encouraging within this worrisome fact is that even in the most challenging situations, there are communities' acting to prevent violence from its occurrence. The core argument of this study is also founded on this assertion. Amid a soaring rise in violence and chaos across the country and the neighborhood, the *Lode Hetosa woreda* community thus far displayed resiliency to pressures of violence. They have relatively conveyed a public image of a peaceful society. This fact resonated with accounts that while non-violent communities within violent zones are rare, they exist with their character and experience. In exploring the puzzle of non-violence (the absence of ethno-religious related violence) in *Lode Hetosa Woreda,* the study had cross-examined and cross-validated pertinent sources, both primary and secondary. Among others, the question was: what has contributed to such community responses? A related question was how to sustain the community's resiliency to pressures of violence to build sustained peace?

Accordingly, the resilience experiences, stories, and actions accounted by the *Lode Hetosa woreda* community as to how their peace was kept have led to the following important approaches/implications:

a. Local social cohesion, collective security system, and trust networks maintained ***among the community*** even under pressures are the basis that made the community resilient to violence

The first approach the study has drawn from its finding is that local social cohesion, collective security system, and trust networks established and maintained among the community even under various combinations of pressures made the community resilient to violence. The study has revealed that the *Lode Hetosa woreda* community has exhibited a high degree of "social cohesion" where the community displayed a distinctive capacity to transcend ethno-religious borders and backgrounds in collective action processes. This happened to be the case, unlike some indications on the general fragmentation of social cohesion at the national level. An important note here is social cohesion and trust networks maintained ***among the community*** rather than the community's relation with the local authorities have made the difference. This gives the impression that government authorities are not necessarily the best placed to handle all the complex and dynamic threats at the local level. Rather, local communities are assumed to have a better chance to capture, understand, and respond to the kind of challenges and problems that are most prominent in that specific community. The horizontal social cohesion (bonding & bridging social capital) pattern in the area was manifested through shared identity/narratives, crosscutting societal relations, robust information sharing and exchange, and a collective security system. These qualities have helped the study community weather toxic stories that usually begin circulating in political, social, and economic upheaval, often intentionally by "ethnic entrepreneurs." In general, the local social cohesion, collective security system, and trust networks have helped the study community counter polarization and establish internal social control, putting them in a better position to prevent violence.

b. Absence of violence in the community may not necessarily imply the community being an "island of unity or harmony," rather the community's awareness of imminent threats and their social knowledge to proactively respond to would be a violent situation

Second and related to the first is that community's resilience stories, focus group discussions, as well as interview accounts by residents confirm that *Lode Hetosa Woreda* in general and the town of *Huruta*, in particular, remained peaceful neither because they were not under threat of attack/violence/ nor because the area is an "island of community unity or harmony." On the contrary, there were repeated violence attempts against the area but averted by the community's collective action. Speaking about the action the community takes when faced with pressures of violence; a research participant had said that:

> *በአካባቢያችን ላይ ሊደርስ የሚችል የደህንነት ስጋት ላይ ቀድመን ይህን ማድረግ አለብን፣በዚህ መልኩ መዘጋጀት አለብን ብለን የተለየ ፕላን አውጥተን ተነጋግረን አናውቅም። ነገር ግን የአካባቢያችን ደህንነት ሊያሰጉ የሚችሉትን ነገሮች በአይነ ቁራኛ የመከታተል እና ተገቢውን ምላሽ በመስጠት ረገድ ግን የደመነፍሳዊ መግባባትን ፈጥረናል ማለት እችላለው።* *Which means:-*
>
> *We never discuss pre-hand any specific tactical plans as to what to do or prepare for a security threat in our area. However, I could say we have made it instinctive among the community to closely follow factors having the potential to disrupt our area and to react to them appropriately* (discussion with Ato Assefa Degefa, 20 August 2020)

Again, as implied in the dissertation, it was not the institutionalization of violence prevention and conflict management procedures that facilitated conflict prevention in the area. Rather, what can be drawn from those accounts is that the community's awareness of imminent threats and the social knowledge to proactively guard against them helped keep the area peaceful. That takes us to the claim by participants that 'insider' concerns thus far focus more on 'every daily' life and have little to do with meeting the interests of 'ethnic entrepreneurs.' This was against the common usage of inflammatory rhetoric by some actors through different means. In other words, thus far, "Big Men" can be said to have little success in effectively mobilizing ethnic groups against the local social cohesion in the area due to the community's awareness of imminent threats and their social knowledge to proactively respond to it.

An 'everyday' life encounter on trespass, competition at the local market, or grievances over allocation of lands and others, of course, could account for conflicts between residents, but not to the extent that disrupts their coexistence. It was like, as summarized by one interviewee: "We live together and have to coexist, even when we're not happy with each other. It's like a family." (Discussion with W/o Fedila Temam, 27 August 2020). They underscore religious and ethnic attributes rarely being given a place to determine the extent of their interaction and confrontation. That was also why it had been argued in the dissertation that the community's prevention efforts could not be just narrowed to factors such as geography or demography. In other words, the resilience behavior of the community to pressures of violence had been instrumental in preventing violence in the area rather than the absence of tensions. For that matter, tensions have run high at different times, notably in post-1991 but not instrumented at a level of ethno-religious violence, unlike the neighborhoods.

c. Continuous pressure to descend the community to violence rather produced a reverse effect of more resiliency of the community by prompting the people to further harness their relation, networks, collective security system, and so on

When ignited by different incidents, the non-spilling of violence from the neighboring *woredas* to *Lode Hetosa woreda* happened to be the reality than the exception thus far. A continuous pressure to descend the area into violence with different denominations, not to mention ethnic and religious denominations, was accounted for during interviews and FGDs. At the same time, the study made it explicit the resilience response of the study community to those pressures of violence. The dissertation arrived from the analysis that a continuous pressure to descend the community to violence rather produced a reverse effect of more resiliency of the community. The explanation for the same is grounded basically on a strong sense of "geographical" and "genealogical" attachment to the locality. As discussed in the dissertation, community's common identity forged through the sense of "attachment" and "belongingness" to their locality and the historical strong communal relationships the community established have characterized the community as conflict-resilient neighborhoods. This reminds the discussion made in chapters five and six that the capacity of communities to respond to possible violent acts depends on the historical, political, and sociocultural specificities in which the community was shaped. A long-held communal collective security in the area has helped the community develop

shared norms of safety and networks of trust and participation in their communities, prompting the people to strengthen their collective actions at times of difficulty.

Moreover, the successful experience the community went through in the past in protecting their locality from attempts of violence and their sense of "distinctiveness" has helped the community to develop an everyday capacity that enabled them to successfully harness against pressures of ethno-religious violence. In that regard, participants were plain in explaining "outsiders coming into the town" usually happened to be the provocateurs in the attempt to descend the area to violence rather than neighbors taking up arms to attack one another. However, such attempts appeared to have a rather different effect among the study community where it rather made them even strengthen their relation, communication networks, social capital, and security system. It encouraged them to forge solidarity, foster good communication, and be vigilant in protecting their locality. It was how one respondent put it: "**በጣም የጠበቀ ትስስራችንን በጉልበት ለመበጣጠስ በአንዳንድ አመራሮች እየተከፈላቸው ጭምር የሞከሩ ወንበዴዎች ነበሩ፤ ነገር ግን በተደጋጋሚ ቢሞክሩትም ፍላጎታቸውን መሳካት አልቻሉም**" which means: - "there were thugs who were paid by some local officials to violently break up our dense network but failed to materialize their wish again and again" (discussion with an anonymous participant, 06 August 2020). Therefore, the statement could be taken as an illustration of what seemed paradox; a paradox between a continuous pressure to descend the area into violence and an even stronger resilience response from the community to the pressure.

d. Ineffective leadership/broken relationship/ between sections of the community and the local government does not necessarily imply community descending to violence

People's protection and prevention efforts to pressures of violence are often contingent, in addition to other context-related factors, on strong leadership. However, the other theory of change this study made explicitly was that community's resiliency to pressures of violence might not necessarily imply a positive relationship between the community and authorities. Though it has been communicated in different pieces of literature that building and strengthening local leaders and institutions are means to peacefully resolve and manage conflict, this study's finding showed that community resilience might not be necessarily a product of effective coordination from those in the political power. Hence, it was not legitimate leadership that made the *Lode Hetosa*

woreda community resist the pressures of violence. It was not that the leaders had established extensive networks in the community nor valued problem solving with community members as different from the neighborhoods. Their resilience behavior was rather something that emanated from the community and the relation built amongst them.

This study may not necessarily contradict the assertion that local leadership capacity to manage societal expectations will make communities reduce their participation in violence. However, it also made explicit that what communities' do within the space provided to them has a defining influence on their response to pressures of violence. Communities keeping their locality peaceful may not necessarily imply a well-established vertical relationship between the community and the local government. Therefore, the most important lesson here is that communities were at the forefront of responding to violence in general and ethno-religious violence in particular. For that matter, it could even imply a community resisting pressures against the wishes of some authorities to descend the area into violence, as implied in the preceding section.

8.3. Spaces of Intervention

While the major approaches and arguments could be noted as such, it is equally important to recognize areas for intervention before the resiliency of the study community reaches its tipping point. That is so because the study's findings revealed that the community's resilience capacity to pressures of ethno-religious violence was built on inconsistent patterns throwing a shadow as to the sustainability of the community's resilience. For that matter, the community's effort to keep their locality safe may help for a certain period, but threats can overwhelm even highly resilient communities without a matching capacity and action. This means that their efforts could ultimately be overwhelmed by the broader systematic organization for violence, especially when there is a repeated claim that high-level authorities are actively mobilizing towards violence. Thus, as an integral part of resilience assessment in any given community, a careful analysis of which capacities can bring about peace and which need to be mitigated should be made. With that note, the study had identified threats having the potential to diminish the community's resiliency in the long run.

Accordingly, even if it has been a well-accounted trust network and social cohesion as the basis for the resiliency of the study community, there appear also issues having all the potential to undermine positive progression toward more social cohesion. Perception/feeling of social “marginalization” and “exclusion” was in particular examined as remaining a challenge towards more social cohesion between generations of so-called “prior settlers” and “new settlers” in the area. It has been accounted that there exist sections of the community who feel socially “marginalized” and “excluded” from all political roles in the area following post-1991 political developments in the country (as some call it due to a closed political arrangement adopted in post-1991 Ethiopia.[33] A participant remarked it as follows: "Since I was born here, I think I should enjoy everything here, but sometimes the political structure makes you believe that you are not from here"(discussion with an anonymous research participant, 02 September 2020). As such, there is a claim that they are walking on a delicate line searching for full acceptance in many calls “place of birth.”

On the other hand, there appears a claim from sections of the community that they have been stigmatized and labeled as “non-proper *Hurutas*’” or “others,” having no strong bondage with the community. Such claims of covert and overt discrimination as well as stigmatization from sections of the community would potentially undermine the cohesiveness of the community in the long run. It casts a shadow over some and is an outright barrier to mainstream life for others. Furthermore, action is needed to confront “memories” which have a divisive effect in their association among residents of different generations in the area (like so-called “indigene,” “prior settlers”/”subsequent settlers,” and “new settlers”) and find a “shared identity” between them. For that matter, labeling of “prior settlers” as “chauvinist” and “arrogant” and “new settlers” as “opportunistic” and “egotistic” appears as one divisive effect in the intergenerational relation.

Hence, it would be only wise to note that such resentment could lead to deeper divisions and foster mistrust, thereby polarizing relations and affecting inter-group associations. Building a better relationship or crafting a functional identity between people from different backgrounds, including those from new and settled communities, appears essential while speaking sustainable peace. It also appears necessary to look into how to create constituent units that reflect ethnic differences

[33]For a detailed reference on the same, see the discussion made under chapter four of the study

so that the multinational states can accommodate the challenges of multiple and potentially conflicting territorial attachments.

The other intervention shall be on the weakened relationship between the community sections and the leadership (vertical relationship). Authorities were mentioned mostly part of the problem rather than the solution though the authorities mostly dismissed such a claim. Among the claims against the local authorities was their insensitivity and inaction to take adequate steps against threats of violence, just like the lawlessness in different parts of the country these days was partly directed towards security personnel. Moreover, the public concern that the local authorities had failed to work in close collaboration with the community was deepened by accounts of insensitivity and general incompetence in rounding up supposed 'suspects' of violence mongers. On the other hand, local authorities somehow cite certain community sections as resistant to local changes. Here, there is a need to note that there cannot be a relationship that works one way or the other, rather a relationship that works in both ways. Even in a politically partisan and ethnically charged environment, the choice should not be framed as this or that.

Therefore, there is a need to hold different truths in hand to work on reconciling both choices. Both parties should come into the middle ground and devise a mechanism to work together for the common good. The choice should not appear as either-or; it cannot be the government or opposition, public safety or dissenting group safety, or public safety or individual right. These cannot be proper choices in envisaging sustainable peace. Thus, the choice needs to be both. So, is that possible to change societal behavior? Is that possible to change a behavior in a way one respects the other? Of course, it is possible because it has been demonstrated in different societies through various peacebuilding intervention programs. But there needs to be a mindset where all actors work to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. In that way, it is important to make sure the area's resiliency will not reach its threshold soon.

The issue of "negative" resilience happened to be the other area where proper intervention should be envisaged. As resilience literature conveys, for local actors to use their resilience capacities towards peace, they need to know and value their individual and collective potential to peacefully overcome obstacles to peace and identify which resilient actions, intentional or not, may contribute to greater violence and polarization. With that respect, the study has underlined that there are

indications where actions by certain sections of the *Lode Hetosa woreda* community could develop into "negative" resilience capacity. That is in cognizance of the so-called "informal settlers" actions. The study noted a claim by sections of the community that "discriminatory" treatments by the government official have forced the community to invent their solution, which happened to be settling in groups ("informal settlement") in the outskirt of the town and using every means at their disposal to defend it. The relation between the community living in the area and the police as being in distance/distrust had also been accounted for.

While the issues appear as such, there needs to note that criminal gangs and networks could exploit such solidarity among the community to advance violence and coercion through the dense network established there. That is so because strong bondage could provide an alternative place of belonging to otherwise marginalized and excluded members of society, thereby potentially serving as a fertile ground for activities that do not serve the collective interest. In other words, those networks that just compose only overlapping bonding links could produce networks that have negative repercussions across those communities and beyond. That goes in line with the argument that social capital and social cohesion in themselves do not always, or automatically, translate into collective action to reduce violence. And, in this shaky political environment and when the government is facing security challenges, it would be logical to say that it could create arbitrariness as it could leave spaces for taking the law into their own hands. It could also potentially develop into negative manifestations of religious or ethnic identity because of criminal gangs often used for polarized acts of violence.

Another noting point shall be that carelessness about the "everyday issues" could trigger violence. It could be a destabilizing factor given isolated incidents that have already taken place in the area at different times and the peace in the surrounding areas being fragile. Specific points of grievances in the area, especially in *Huruta*, like issues related to trading place allotments, residential allotments, land for religious services, and trespass, had prompted minor confrontations at different times. Issues related to youth and unemployment and corruption, bribery, and supporter and family-based nepotism also need to be mentioned here. These issues would galvanize a sense of injustice and frustration, catalyzing the confrontations into violence. It would be no telling that long-suppressed frustrations could explode into violence. For that matter, cases were recorded in different places where the lack of appropriate interventions on so-called "every day" issues led to

the outbreak of violence of different forms in different areas. That is so because the uneven distribution of resources and inequality can endanger social cohesion. It always is important to accelerate settlement so that the so-called "everyday" issues might not escalate into large-scale violence. Moreover, large-scale violence is normally rooted in everyday cycles of conflicts. Thus, there is a need to recognize that such issues could trigger violence similar to what happened in other places and act to address the issue.

Issues related to polarized identity politics in general and an ever-increasing politicization of religion and ethnicity, in particular, was the other area identified by the study as potentially disturbing the shore. It has been documented in different works that politicization of religion and ethnicity and the conservative religious teachings and practices among people of all faiths is running to counter historical coexistence in the country. Thus far, the study community can counter such threats; they cannot be presented as immune to the problem. There were gestures related to polarized identity politics as accounted by research participants to impact the existing unity. In line with that, perception from sections of the community they subjected to discriminatory treatment due to their identity, especially due to their ethnic and religious identity, has the potential to exacerbate inter-ethnic as well as inter-religious tensions. Hence, they call for proper intervention.[34]Sections of the community complain that they do not benefit from recognition even if they format themselves to the region, claiming that stigmatism based on identity in job searches is part of life.

Furthermore, irresponsibleness to conflict instigating acts such as outward expression of hatred and animosity was accounted as having the potential to derail the existing tolerant practices among the community. Here, there needs to be a reminder that hate speech has become a tool to mobilize votes and played a significant role in precipitating inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence in different parts of the country. And, with an ever-increasing frequency and intensity of interethnic and interreligious violence in the country, it would be logical to fear that some young people could take deviation against the community's collective action. On another note, it could serve as a

[34] For a detailed take on how identity and, in particular, ethnic and religious identity could serve as the basis of an organization including for violent conflicts, See discussion made under chapter three of the study

ground to produce a "counter society" that resorts to tactics at odds with the collective interest. As such, efforts to take the necessary legal and political measures against such acts of hate and animosity should be redoubled. Stakeholders need to maintain and extend the latent sources of peace and stability in the area by responding to such calls.

In general, there needs to note that a failure to prevent violent incidents from occurring would be like granting permission for such violence to continue. Unfortunately, the story we hear everywhere after violent scenes is that escalation of violence was by 'out-of-towners' who come to a given area to wreak havoc and then go home without security personnel interference. Though the story holds some grain of truth, a total externalization of the problem is helping little to prevent atrocities happening in every corner of the country. Even if the claim resonates with the study community's assertion that they have little fear for their neighbors planning an attack against the other but 'outsiders' entering the town at different times to wreak violence, at the same time, an internal effort is needed to depolarize group relations. It appears essential to vow not to back away from exerting every effort to solidify group relations and halt the deepening of internal fractures. That is why there needed to unpack factors that can diminish communities' preventive capacity to pressures of violence. In so doing, taking stoke of the experience of non-violent communities and working to better strengthen and leverage those experiences would be essential. With that consideration, this dissertation departs from dominant conflict literature that focuses on the causes and consequences of conflict.

8.4. Recommendation for Future Research Directions

The following are major points future researches on related inqury are supposed to embrace:

- a comparative study for a community that portrays characteristics different from those of *Lode Hetosa woreda*
- a longer time period in the study areas so as to be able to capture involvement through the whole research process (from initial design through to dissemination). Although economically and methodologically challenging, it would be very useful to conduct such studies through longer term involvement.
- Giving sufficient room for 'how' and 'who' questions so as to identify how the study community figure out that community resilience is key to sustainable peacebuilding and recognize who the main actors are in the process.

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Appendices

I. List of research participants (Profile of respondents)

S. No	Name	Age	Sex	Date of Interview/FGD	Place of Interview/FGD	Remarks
1	Hadji Mohammed Hassen	77	M	21 August 2020	*Huruta*	Respected elder in the area. Very well informed about the overall historical, political accounts in the *woreda*
2	Ato Amare Dereje	69	M	20 August 2020	*Huruta*	Now retired teacher. Very well informed about the overall historical, political accounts in the *woreda*
3	Ato Assefa Degefa	71	M	20 August 2020	*Huruta*	Now retired teacher. Served at different capacity in the *woreda* including as a former administrator, school director, member of development committee etc
4	Ato Jamal Kelil	39	M	22 August 2020	*Huruta*	*Lode Hetosa Woreda* vice administrator
5	W/o Medina Kunbi Negesso	36	F	20 August 2020	*Huruta*	*Lode Hetosa Woreda* Women, Children and Youth office head
6	W/o Tsedale Shumi	55	F	10 August 2020	*Huruta*	*Lode Hetosa Woreda* speaker. She used to serve at the office for land appropriation and registration in the town administration
7	Ato Tadesse Dessie	63	M	04 September 2020	*Huruta Hetosa*	Farmer well informed in custom and traditions of the area
8	Commander Sisay Kassaye Ejersa	56	M	25 August 2020	*Huruta*	*Lode Hetosa Woreda* police main officer
9	Ato Mebratu Yilma	48	M	28 August 2020	*Huruta*	*Lode Hetosa Woreda* administration and security office head
10	Ato Urge Debella	72	M	29 August 2020	*Huruta*	He is among the Shawa Oromo, more specifically among the Sellales, who descend himself to the family who came to the area before the Italian occupation.

11	W/o Fedila Temam	52	F	27 August 2020	*Huruta*	Trader in *Huruta* town. Very well recognized in her role as coordinator in the market whenever one faced with difficulties.
12	Anonymous	47	M	05 September 2020	*Phone interview*	A former administrator of *Lode Hetosa woreda.* Very well informed on the political dynamics in the *woreda* since the Derg time
13	Sheik Shemsu Hedeto	61	M	25 August 2020	*Huruta*	Respected religious leader in the area. Active participant in developmental as well as social activities in the area
14	Ato Hailemariam Kibebew	71	M	28 July 2020	*Huruta*	He knows more about the historical experiences of the area. He also serves as a community representative together with other members
15	Ato Tadesse Ketema	66	M	04 September 2020	*Huruta Hetosa*	He is among the well-known elders in *Huruta Hetosa* village
16	Melake Birhan Kesis Tsegaye Getnet	55	M	07 September 2020	*Huruta*	Religious leader. Has better knowledge on both church and secular matters
17	Ato Sileshi Belayneh	45	M	08 September 2020	*Kitibe/Huruta*	Well informed farmer from *Kitibe* village.
18	Emama Abay Tirfe	88	F	29 July 2020	*Huruta*	An elderly who came to the area before the Italian occupation. Well accounted about different events in the area
19	Anonymous	28	F	25 August 2020	*Huruta*	Resident in the area referred as 'informal settlements' in the town of *Huruta*
20	Anonymous	56	M	04 August 2020	*Huruta*	Long serving Geography teacher in *Huruta* High school.
21	Anonymous	28	F	16 August 2020	*Huruta*	Primary school teacher in *Huruta.* Recently came to the area
22	Anonymous	36	M	19 August 2020	*Huruta*	Judge in *Lode Hetosa Woreda* first instance court
23	Anonymous	39	M	09 August 2020	*Phone interview*	He has acted on different capacity in the *woreda* including in the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* security office. Now reduced from any government post due to alleged breach of official duty
24	Ato Bekele Guta	68	M	25 July 2020	*Huruta*	He is a retired lawyer in *Huruta* who has better knowledge on the various historical experiences of the area
25	Firew Abebe	28	M	21 August 2020	*Huruta*	He is chairperson of youth association that engaged on volunteer service in the area
26	Anonymous	25	F	02 September 2020	*Huruta*	Unemployed youth. She was a graduate from one of the public universities in the country in 2010 (EC) in Civil Engineering
27	Anonymous	33	M	01 September 2020	*Huruta*	Daily laborer. He usually comes to *Huruta* during the harvest season from the neighboring *woreda (Diksis*) looking for job.
28	Anonymous	27	F	01 September 2020	*Huruta*	Daily laborer. She came to *Huruta* from *Lode Jimata.*
29	Anonymous	43	F	17 August 2020	*Huruta*	Resident in the area referred as 'informal settlements' in the town of *Huruta.* First time came to the area in mid-1990s. Usually travels to surrounding woredas like *Diksis, Iteya* as well as to areas under *Lode Hetosa woreda* like *Lode Jimata* and *Kersa*
30	Ato Jara Gedebo	65	M	20 August 2020	*Huruta*	A retired teacher. Well informed on the overall historical as well as current events in the area
31	W/o Mommina Kedir	45	F	11 August 2020	*Huruta*	Resident in *Huruta.* She is among the members of an inter-religious relationship/bond/ in the area
32	W/t Aster Mulugeta	48	F	11 August 2020	*Huruta*	Resident in *Huruta*. She is among the members of an inter-religious relationship/bond/ in the area
33	Ato Eshetu Sime	33	M	16 August 2020	*Huruta*	Officer *at Lode Hetosa woreda* culture and tourism office. Conducted study on the historical accounts in the area
34	Ato Mohammed Ali	52	M	06 September 2020	*Huruta*	Resident in *Huruta.* Served as Social committee member during the transition period (1991-1993).
35	Ato Mitiku Tesema	71	M	28 August 2020	*Huruta*	Stocked very well on the overall political, historical situations in the area. Served at different capacity in governmental posts in the area as well as in other places like west *Arsi. He w*as also a teacher before his retierement.
36	W/t Tsega Simachew	28	F	22 August 2020	*Huruta*	Active participant in volunteer youth services in the area
37	Anonymous	35	M	13 August 2020	*Huruta*	Trader (usually travel between *Lode Hetosa woreda* and *Hetosa woreda* for trading purposes). Has enrich experience on the social fabric between the two communities
38	Anonymous	47	M	10 August 2020	*Huruta*	Farmer in the outskirt of *Huruta.* Very well informed on the overall developments in the town and its surroundings. Served as social committee member in different occasions including during construction of religious places in the town

39	Anonymous	38	M	06 August 2020	*Huruta*	*Lode Hetosa Woreda* council member
40	Anonymous	27	F	06 August 2020	*Huruta*	*Lode Hetosa Woreda* council member
41	Anonymous	50	M	06 August 2020	*Huruta*	Former member of militia in *Huruta Hetosa.* Currently resides in *Huruta* town
42	FGD participant1	66	M	03 September 2020	*Gerdebusa*	Elderly in the area
43	FGD participant2	49	M	03 September 2020	*Gerdebusa*	Local priest
44	FGD participant3	35	F	03 September 2020	*Gerdebusa*	Elementary school teacher in the village
45	FGD participant4	24	M	03 September 2020	*Gerdebusa*	Unemployed youth in the area
46	FGD participant5	33	F	03 September 2020	*Gerdebusa*	Women representative in the village
47	FGD participant6	37	F	03 September 2020	*Gerdebusa*	Farmer (divorced from her husband and raising four children all alone)
48	FGD participant7	27	M	03 September 2020	*Gerdebusa*	Member of militia
49	FGD participant8	40	F	03 September 2020	*Gerdebusa*	Farmer
50	FGD participant1	52	M	04 September 2020	*Huruta Hetosa*	Community Representative in the village
51	FGD participant2	24	F	04 September 2020	*Huruta Hetosa*	Unemployed university graduate (graduated from Debre Birhan University)
52	FGD participant3	33	M	04 September 2020	*HurutaHetosa*	A youth who engaged on barber service in the village
53	FGD participant4	34	M	04 September 2020	*HurutaHetosa*	Government employee (newly settled to the area)
54	FGD participant5	41	F	04 September 2020	*HurutaHetosa*	Women representative
55	FGD participant6	42	M	04 September 2020	*HurutaHetosa*	Farmer living adjacent to the area referred as 'informal settlement' in the town
56	FGD participant1	66	M	02 September 2020	*Fursa*	Elderly in the area
57	FGD participant2	36	M	02 September 2020	*Fursa*	Social committee member in the area
58	FGD participant3	31	M	02 September 2020	*Fursa*	Farmer
59	FGD participant4	26	F	02 September 2020	*Fursa*	Unemployed youth
60	FGD participant5	43	M	02 September 2020	*Fursa*	Member of militia
61	FGD participant6	40	F	02 September 2020	*Fursa*	Tailor in the village
62	FGD participant7	30	M	02 September 2020	*Fursa*	Head of elementary school in the village
63	FGD participant1	55	M	07 September 2020	*Lode Jimata*	Member of developmental committee in the area
64	FGD participant2	19	M	07 September 2020	*Lode Jimata*	High school student
65	FGD participant3	32	M	07 September 2020	*Lode Jimata*	Unemployed youth
66	FGD participant4	37	M	07 September 2020	*Lode Jimata*	Government employee
67	FGD participant5	39	M	07 September 2020	*Lode Jimata*	Farmer

II. Research questions and corresponding tools

Title: Community Resilience, Ethno-Religious Violence and Sustainable Peacebuilding: A Case Study from *Arsi* Zone *Lode Hetosa Woreda* of *Oromia* National Regional State

Research themes	**Main question to be addressed**	**Questions constructed so as to address the research question**
General overview (historical, political, local actor and events that actually shaped the community)	**What are the historical, political, local actors and events that shaped the *Lode Hetosa Woreda* community**	1. What historical, political factors did play in shaping the community? (Historical narratives as well as counter narratives as to the formation of the area? Who were the prior settlers to the area? Indigene? Their ethnic group, religious background? etc 2. Is there a change as to the demographic situation in the area currently? How? Why? Who constitute the majority? etc 3. Is there any change of role/political or so/ among the community before and after 1991 that you witnessed? If so, how did the community respond for same?

		4. Is there any ethnic or religious conflict/violence that you remember in your area? If so, can you tell me the major three? What were the causes of these violence/conflicts? How did the community respond to the violence, if any? How about political violence or election related violence? 5. What examples of resilience stories would you tell me that helped prevent violence in general and ethno-religious violence in particular in your locality?
Strategies, mechanisms and processes used to minimize violent ethno-religious conflicts	**What factors have contributed to the community's resilience response to pressures of ethno-religious violence in the area?**	1. Why do you think your area is more resilient to ethno-religious violence than other areas? Things that you are doing to keep things going peacefully in your locality? 2. What do you think are the glue that hold your community tightly together to confront violent situation from the past and which allow you to confront violence that might arise in future? (example: traditional institutions, shared values, shared history, relation with other communities, etc) 3. How do you explain the role of elders, community and religious leaders in shaping the communities behavior in your area? How about the relation of the youth with community leaders/elders? 4. What do people do on a daily basis in order to cope with difficulties/to minimize violent conflict in the area? Community as police? Patrolling? History of criminality and patrolling in the area and how the community made sure it subsides? Is there any contribution the community makes to the community security committee? 5. Is there any form of initiative that would help to share and circulate information among the community? 6. How do you explain the youth role in protecting their locality from ethno-religious violence? 7. What do people do on a daily basis in order to minimize ethno-religious violence in the area? What role do community associations like Idir, Equb, Mahber play in strengthening the solidarity of the people? Or about the endogenous local institutions in the area that would enable the community to prevent conflict/violence? 8. How do you define the relationship that exists among people from different religious as well as ethnic groups? Is there such a division in terms of ethnicity, religion or so? (The kind of strategy you employ in your community that serves you to embrace differences)? 9. What kind of associational set up you could tell me having contribution to maintain peace in your area? Intra/inter-religious associations? Intra/inter-ethnic associations? 10. How do you explain those people in political power in your locality? Do you feel they are representatives of the ethnic and religious make of the community? How about their relation with the community? 11. Would you mention of any peace settlement activity in your area that has helped you develop awareness on conflict consequences and its prevention mechanisms or strengthening of social cohesion? (example, peace committees, women initiatives, young people movements etc) What kind of strategy you employ in your community that serves you to embrace differences? 12. What do you do when you face with insecurity and violence? Would you find positives ways to deal with it? (Example: night patrolling, filling complaints before the institutions of the state, information sharing etc) Or would you respond in ways that exacerbate the problem, like by cowering in fear or resorting to taking the law in to your own hands?

Towards a sustainable peace: Uncovering issues having the potential to diminish resiliency of the community in the long-run?	**What are issues having the potential to undermine the resilience of the community in the long run?**	1. What factors do you think have the potential to undermining peace in your locality? (example: corruption, exclusion, pursuit of private interest, abuse of power, poor communication etc) 2. Would you tell me instances where the bondage of the community has been used in the negative? What could illustrate some factors that would have a diminishing role on the resilience of the community? Ethnicity aspect, religious aspect, social capital wise, etc? 3. Who or what creates obstacles to your endeavors? 4. What other problems would you mention having the potential to undermine the resilience capacity of the community to ethno-religious violence in the long run?
Learning and identification of implications/new sources/	**What implications/approaches/ can be derived from the experience in the area**	Scientific and meaning making analysis on the data obtained from different sources shall be made to answer the research question

Note: While administering the interview/FGDs, questions might be rearranged and realigned in a way it suits to the specific respondent but without missing the main subject.

III. Selected photos from the field

FGD in *Gerdebusa* (September 2020)

FGD in *Lode Jimata* (September, 2020)

FGD in *Huruta Hetosa* (August 2020)

28 July 2020

Photo with Hadji Mohammed Hassen (August 2020)

Photo with *Lode Hetosa woreda* administration and security head (August 2020)

Photo with *Lode Hetosa woreda* vice administrator (August 2020)

Emama Abay Tirfe (claimed to came to the area before the Italian occupation, July 2020)