



INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES

**EXPLORING TRADITIONAL PEACEMAKING PROCESSES IN ETHIOPIA: GAMO
ELDERS AS MODEL PEACEMAKERS (2018-2020)**

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June, 2020

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Institute for Peace and Security Studies

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**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University in partial
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Acronyms

CDRMs	Customary Dispute Resolution Mechanisms
CE	Community Elders
CL	Community Leaders
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FICs	First Instance Courts
GCA	Gamo Council Association
GEC	Gamo Elders' Council
GGZICD:	Gamo Gofa Zone Information and Culture Department
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOs	Governmental Organizations
GZAPRO	Gamo Zone Administration Public Relation Office
GZFEDD	Gamo Zone Finance and Economic Development Department
HC	High Court
HPRs	House of Peoples' Representatives
IPSS	Institute for Peace and Security Studies
KII	Key Informant Interviewee
KIIs	Key Informant Interviewees
LJB	Liberian Justice Bodies
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NNPE	Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia
ODP	Oromo Democratic Party
ORS	Oromiya Regional State
PP	Prosperity Party
RGAC	Rwanda Governance Advisory Council
SNNPRS	Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State
TCA	Thematic Content Analysis
TCMIs	Traditional Conflict Management Institutions

TCMMs Traditional Conflict Management Mechanisms

TPMPs Traditional Peace Making Processes

UNESCO United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization

WWI World War One

WWII World War Two

Abstract

The objective of this study is to explore traditional peacemaking processes in Ethiopia: Gamo elders as model peacemakers (2018-2020). To achieve the above objective, the researcher uses qualitative research methodology and exploratory research design. The data are collected primarily from 12 KIIs, one FGD and observation and secondary sources. Gamo elders have long experiences in conflict management, resolution and reconciliation. They consider the term conflict as disagreement, difference and misunderstanding. Participants have mentioned the negative effects of conflicts as follows: deaths of human life, destruction of private and public properties, social, economic and political crises, fear, etc. The major sources of conflicts in the study area are: competition over natural resources such as land (for farm and grazing) and water (for irrigation and fishing); value and faith-based conflicts; criminal and political related causes include corruption, insults, theft, etc.; and poverty related pushes like unemployment. To tackle these, Gamo use traditional peacemaking processes such as the tuuge, iginththo, and gomppa processes at their traditional institution called dubbusha. Procedurally, cases are seen according to the appealing procedures of dubbusha. Since 2018, the roles of Gamo elders in peace-making are increasing. This is because, (1) accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness of TCMI; (2) having traditional peacemaking values; (3) weakness of governmental institutions to provide peace and justice; and (4) the roles of Medias in promoting and introducing the elders roles to the world. However, their roles are not without challenges and limitations. The discussed challenges are globalization, politicians' interference, and institutional barriers, expansion of urbanization and question of impartiality among elders. In the study area, both governmental and traditional institutions are working together in the time of crises and sometimes their relationship is reflected in competition and conflicting. Thus, the researcher recommends that the relationship between the two institutions should be considered relevant and avoids unjustified interferences over one another.

Key words: Conflict, Peacemaking, Gamo, Elders, conflict management

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

In the past there was conflict; in the future it will probably never end (i.e. according to various scholars, conflict dates from the start of human history and will probably stay with the existence of humans on this planet). Some define conflict as follows. Bisrat (2018: 4) defines: “conflict is inherent in virtually every aspect of human relationship, from sport to parliamentary democracy, from fashion to arts to paradigmatic challenges in the sciences, and from economic activity to intimate relationships. Yet, it can be among the most serious social problems the human race faces”. According to Fisher (2000) cited in Council of Nationalities, SNNPRS (2014) and Daniel (2016), conflict is defined as a relationship between two or more parties who have, or think they have incompatible goals.

In Africa, there are different traditional institutions and mechanisms—that have been established to manage/handle conflicts. For example, Mutisi has mentioned some local institutions of Rwanda such as Gacaca court and Abunzi. According to her, the main purposes of these traditional institutions were to manage the genocide crimes, healing of traumas and the resolution of disputes (Mutisi, 2012). Similarly, Kagaha (2014) discussed that the Karamoja and Teso regions of Uganda people have used traditional and community-based mechanisms for regulating conflicts and providing justice for long periods of time. These institutions are helpful in maintaining social balance and harmony based on the true cultural perspective of African society. As Eskedar reasoned, elders are respected mediators and reconcilers (Eskedar, 2010). Also Zartman (2000) in his article called “Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts” argued that the role of traditional leadership in modern Africa is continuing. Therefore, as discussed by Achieng (2015) in the Somalia context, the elders’ contribution in conflict management should not be overlooked; instead they should be encouraged, facilitated and included especially in mediation to be able to have local ownership of peace processes.

Why do community members practice traditional institutions and mechanisms in all societies of Africa? Researchers answered that the reason is that as Kagaha (2014) believed; this is because TCMI and TCMMs are easily accessible where often the state is absent, and because, being

based on traditional principles of spirituality and peaceful coexistence, and the outcomes are expected by community members. The SNNPRS's Council of Nationalities (2014) again stated that conflicts resolved/managed by these methods and institutions where governmental bodies such as judges and security bodies are not able to reach in the area with some causes. Furthermore, Planta added that traditional mechanisms are more effective and more flexible and allows greater leverage for case-based decisions (Planta, 2017).

Almost all communities in Ethiopia have developed and practiced their own customary laws of making peace. There are societies that have developed and practiced their own indigenous mechanisms of peacemaking are: the Oromo (Eskedar, 2010), Sidama (Daniel, 2016; Mekonen, 2008), Gamo (Zenebe, 2015), Afar (Demessie, 2012), and others—that are some of communities practicing TPMPs in Ethiopia. These institutions and mechanisms are unique from society to society, region to region and culture to culture; however they have certain features in common (Daniel, 2016). Different societies in Ethiopia have different conflict resolution structures. For example Sidama according to Ambaye (2008) cited in Daniel (2016) indicates that four level of Sidama *Songo*, namely: Mini songo, Nafaru songo, Ayadu songo and Woma songo. Through these procedures/levels, a “case that does not get decision at a primary council passes to the next council and *Woma songo* is the final decision making structure”. Similarly, the Afar society has five structures such as the Har Abba, Dar Abba, Keddo Abba, Fi'ema Abba and Ma'ada—through which the cases are seen (Demessie, 2012). Thus, geographically this study was conducted in Gamo Zone, mainly to explore traditional peacemaking processes in Ethiopia: the reasons for why Gamo elders as model peacemakers over the past two years (2018-2020).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

African societies had developed their own traditional institutions that often deal with conflicts. These institutions have been recognized in law for example in Kenya. According to Kariuki, though they have recognized, they are subject to some limitations. African peoples or communities have applied them to manage conflicts/disputes where often the governments' justice systems are far from the communities (Kariuki, 2018). In Ethiopian context, traditional or customary and religious institutions are get recognition by the FDRE constitution under its articles 34 and 78—but without compromising the supremacy of constitution (Rule of Law) (Assefa, 2013). As Zartman (2000) said, African traditional leadership in modern time in resolving conflicts through elderly people is continuing. Thus, in light of that, elderly people are

respected as trust worthy mediators (Eskedar, 2010). He stated that African TCMI maintain social balances and harmony basing on the true cultural perspective of the society. Eskedar adds that different ethnic groups in Ethiopia have developed and practiced their own customary codes and traditional institutions to manage conflicts. And again, Achieng (2015: V) in his study stated that:

“Traditional leaders have been involved in solving conflicts in Africa for many decades yet their input in international conflict management have not been documented widely compared to the modern conflict management techniques. Traditional leaders are still highly respected and used in conflict management in Africa and Asia compared to the European States, therefore their input in conflict management should not be overlooked, instead they should be encouraged, facilitated and included especially in mediation to be able to have local ownership of peace processes”.

In Ethiopia, the role of traditional authorities in peacemaking is critical. For example, among the Afar society of Afar Regional State, the mediators are the Afar elders (Mekabon) who play a critical and vital role in resolving inter-clan conflicts (Demessie, 2012). Among the Alelto Oromo community, the *Jarsumma* institutions have been playing a great role in managing conflicts (Eskedar, 2010). Similarly, in the societies like the Kambata of Southern Nations Nationalities and People Regional State (SNNPRS), the society had developed different TCMI that include: *Kokata, Reda, Gotcho, Gogata, and Ilammo* and they have developed and practiced traditional conflict resolution traditions like *Gudagambela*—which is used as a mechanism of purifying the ‘curse’ from the guilty and as a method of conflict resolution (Abebe, 2015). Because of this, the local communities of the Kambata prefer customary laws than courts. Furthermore, the most common traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Kaffa society are *Shimgelena, Tommo* and *Eqqo* systems. While *Shimgelena* is also widely used in other communities of Ethiopia, *Tommo* and *Eqqo* are indigenous to Kaffa society (Bisrat, 2018). Among the Maale society of South Omo Zone, the role of family leaders (*Toydis*), elders (*Chimi*), *Gatto, Goda* (clan heads) and the *Kaati* (king) are crucial in providing justice and managing intra-ethnic conflicts (Melkamu, 2011). According to him, the Maale have applied traditional reconciliation process known as *kuchi maskisi*—for homicide crimes and drinking water process (*kunkula*) by Makana goda—for purification of sin and as method of dispute resolution.

All in all, the main purposes of the above theoretical and empirical literatures are highly concentrated on the roles of traditional institutions in managing conflicts in the respective study areas of Africa as well as in different ethnic groups of Ethiopia. These literatures had precisely addressed some of the roles of traditional institutions in peacemaking activities through elders. However, there is lack of empirical literatures done recently on the Gamo traditional peacemaking processes and procedures in conflict management, resolution and reconciliation. The main rationale for this study was, except the media (public and private) including the social media narratives, a little is known—about the reasons why the Ethiopian Government and the people recognized Gamo elders as model peacemakers over the past two years (2018-2020). The third one is the researcher's interest on traditional methodology for conflict management which comes from his father's experiences in dealing with conflicts settlement in the community in which the researcher grew up. Therefore, this paper is intended to fill the empirical gaps on the Gamo traditional peacemaking processes and its central focus is to explore the rationale for why the government and the people recently recognized Gamo elders as model of peacemakers.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to explore traditional peacemaking processes in Ethiopian: Gamo elders as model peacemakers (2018-2020).

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To explore the current reasons of recognizing Gamo elders as model peacemakers in the study area;
- To investigate the existing peacemaking processes followed by elders in the study area;
- To assess the challenges facing elders in settling/resolving conflicts;
- To discuss the relationship between the indigenous mechanisms and formal mechanisms of conflict management in the study area.

1.4. Research Questions

The study would answer the following two major research questions. These are: (1) what are Gamo traditional peace-making processes used to manage, resolve and reconcile conflicts and (2) what are major reasons for why the government and the people recently recognized Gamo elders as model peacemakers?

1.4.1. Specific Research Questions:

- ❖ Which conflict issues are repeatedly occurring in the study area?
- ❖ What are the major reasons for the government and the people to recognize Gamo elders as model peacemakers in the past two years in the study area?
- ❖ What are the existing peacemaking processes followed by elders in the study area?
- ❖ What challenges are elders currently facing in settling conflicts in the study area?
- ❖ How are the indigenous mechanisms and formal mechanisms of conflict management in the study area interconnected?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Conducting research on this issue would have the following significances. Firstly, it would add new insights to the existing body of knowledge on the roles of traditional institutions of conflict management, resolution and reconciliation. Second, the findings of this study will intend to provide new suggestions to policy makers and implementers in order to fill the gaps in failure to identify and utilize the Traditional Conflict Resolution Methods and institutions and thirdly, it will serve as a reference material for other researchers on same issues for further studies.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Geographically, this study is limited to Gamo Zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State (SNNPRS). The subject matter and the time of this research is delimited only to explore traditional peacemaking processes in Ethiopia and the rationale for why the government and the people recognized Gamo elders as model peacemakers over the past two years (2018-2020). Methodologically, its scope is exploratory research design and qualitative method only.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The target of this study was to explore traditional peacemaking processes in Ethiopia and reasons for why government and people are recognizing Gamo elders as ultimate indicators (models) of peacemakers over the past two years in the study area. Since the proposed research design is exploratory; it was not easy to obtain relevant published academic documents (empirical literatures)—which were conducted previously on selected study area on the current selected research problem. The other problem was lack of researcher’s experience on dealing with semi-structured interview which need more skills in the process of data gathering and analysis. The third challenge—which hinders the researcher to employ the planned two FGDs was Coronavirus or COVID-19 epidemic during data collection time. Due to this reason, the researcher has used only one FGD. As a result, all these factors would have an indirect impact on the validity of the study.

1.8. Ethical Considerations

The social science research protocol and code of ethics has to be familiar to this study. The interview was held if and only if the participants gave their consent to be interviewed and included in the FGD. Without their permission it was not possible to make audio recording in the interview process and it also needed in taking photographs during the focus group discussion. The participant’s basic information needed to this study and other personal information (e.g., name, address, etc.) would be kept confidential and it needs the confidentiality of their responses. Again, the researcher’s reflexivity was parts and parcel of the research throughout the research processes.

1.9. Organization of the Study Paper

The study paper is organized in to five chapters. Chapter one has contained the background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study and ethical considerations. Chapter two comprises review of related literature. Chapter three contains research methodology, description of the study area, research design, data collection instruments, study population, sample size, and sampling techniques, and methods of data analysis. Chapter four is about findings and

discussions—that include data analysis and interpretation. And finally, chapter five is all about conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

Under this chapter the researcher has assessed and reviewed different published and unpublished academic and non-academic documents—that are related to the research problem. The review of related literatures has three main sections. These are theoretical literature, empirical literature and conceptual framework.

2.1. Theoretical Literature Review

2.1.1. The Concept of Conflict

Many writers and/or researchers agreed on the start of conflict with the existence of human beings on this planet. For instance, Folarin (2015) indicated that conflict is as old as human society. To him, conflict is a key feature of the human being on this planet. This point is similar with Jeong's account about conflict. Jeong said that conflict dates from the beginning of human history and will probably never end (Jeong, 2008).

Some scholars and practitioners who did conflict studies defined conflict in different ways (i.e. we have no single definition/conception toward the term conflict). However, the following are some of the meanings given to the term 'conflict'. For example, Folarin (2015:2) quoted the explanation of conflict by Jeong (2000) in his book under chapter three stated that: "it is supposed to happen when conflicting parties/actors involve in a contest over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the rivals are to neutralize, injure or eliminate the opponents". In line with this, Folarin said that conflict is an existing state of separate/divergence between two or more actors/parties on prevalent issues. More importantly, Diez (2007) had abstracted the term conflict as a contest between different actors with differing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Again, it is described as dispute, discussion and debate and considered as 'disagreement' between parties/actors (Wallenstein, 2007). His three elements of conflict are: parties, disagreement and action.

Other scholar who defines conflict is Kamran Khan. For Kamran Khan (2017: 2), "conflicts are an unavoidable part within an organization; this is because when the goals of the shareholders, managers, and other staff members are different from each other". Similarly, conflict is as indicated by Miller (2005) that a confrontation between one or more competing parties seeking

to incompatible means or ends. To that end, it is an unavoidable, inherent and inevitable part in the human interactions (Jeong, 2008).

The term conflict is used in different literatures interchangeably with other concepts. Some of its synonyms include contrast, disharmony, discord, struggle, contest, strife, antagonism, controversy, clash, rivalry, contention, brawl, fisticuff, fight, battle, feud, combat and war (Folarin, 2015). However, it is obvious that conflict is different from war. How conflict differs from war? According to Folarin, conflict is somewhat similar to but technically dissimilar from war. To him, the former is a general description of a state of chaos; while the latter is a legally declared course of action by constitutionally recognized groups.

With regard to its typology, as discussed by Folarin (2015:4-6) mentioned that there are intra-personal conflict, inter-personal conflict, family conflict, inter-group conflict, intra-state conflict, inter-state conflict and global or international conflict.

2.1.2. Causes of Conflict

There is always conflict between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings due to the wide range of differences/divergence among people (Fisher, 2000). As Wallensteen discusses, if disagreements happen between parties, it affects people's relationship either of constructively or destructively. In the former use, it leads to new decision and improvements of society and can be dealt with in peaceful ways while in the later use, it changed to the use of violence and at times this turns in to armed conflict and even war (Wallensteen, 2007).

Although the sources of conflicts vary from society to society, Katz (1965) cited in Fisher (2000) had categorized the sources of conflicts in to three. This broad categorization include: economic, value and power conflicts. On the other hand, Wallensteen (2007) pointed out four causes of conflicts. Namely: Need, Greed, Creed and Triggers. In this regard, I discuss Wallensteen's four causes of conflicts as follows:

2.1.2.1. Need as a Cause of Conflict

The need that most often is mentioned in connection with war and violence is poverty. Though poor people in the global south going to war due to underdevelopment, however the developed countries fought or were involved in the war (e.g. WWI and WWII) (i.e. rising wealth is not a

guarantee against war); on the other hand poor people may have strong drives for frustration and anger that led them in to conflict. Still Putnam argued that affluence and prosperity have no direct effect upon social stability/political harmony but rather the presence of strong tradition of civic engagement of powerless, exploited, and unhappy groups—that might be a precondition for economic progress and effective government (Putnam, 1993).

2.1.2.2. Greed as a Cause of Conflict

Greed refers to excessive desires to materials such as land and other loot-able resources that have an explanation to conflicts and particularly civil wars. In Africa, the existence of more loot-able goods such as petroleum, diamond and drugs, their exploitation are led the area in to conflict particularly civil wars. According to Wallenstein (2007), there is a remarkable correlation between authoritarian regimes and dependence on these goods.

2.1.2.3. Creed as a Cause of Conflict

The notion of creed points to the significance of faith-based violence and conflict. Wallenstein (2007) noted that such conflicts had occurred within thought systems (intra-faith conflict) than between different sects (inter-faith conflict). For example, the conflict within Christians in the Northern Ireland was mainly caused by creed. But, this doesn't deny the violence between faith-based groups. With regard to this, Folarin (2015) had mentioned one example of inter-faith conflict—which is the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. On the other hand, Wallenstein adds that the clash between the original understanding and new understandings causes intra-faith conflict.

2.1.2.4. Triggering Factors

Factors such as price changes, repressive action that sparks resistance, demonstrations, and riots can cause conflict. According to Wallenstein (2007), when repression is strong, the formation of rebel movements in separate areas where military bases can be built, a supply of arms secured and cross border traffic used. And hence these triggering factors result in armed action.

Generally, he had mentioned Historical, Governance/Political, Leadership, Justice, Security, Cultural and Economic factors that motivate people in to conflicts. Some of these factors are: greed of leadership; denial of political rights; corruption; large numbers of unemployed youth; poor leadership; weak judicial systems; absence of rule of law; lack of respect for cultural

diversity; disputes over resources, especially under conditions of resource scarcity (e.g., land, water, forest, etc.); poverty, etc.

2.1.3. Impacts of Conflict

The violent conflict has sometimes a devastating impact. With regard to this, Alexander (2005) has stated in the research report of Abebe (2015: 4) that:

“It is undeniable fact that violent conflict kills quite a mass of people arbitrarily. It also consumes such great deal of other material resources that they would have been used in such returnable investments”.

Similarly as indicated by Diez (2007) conflicts can bring about physical, psychological or emotional damage to the rivals. This definition of conflict was introduced a destructive expression of conflict. As a result, the destructive conflict can embraces personal loss and societal destruction. Again, Reilly also stated that the violent expression of conflict is its destructive side. On the other hand they argued that conflict can be the starting point for energizing social change and improvement (Reilly, 1998). Therefore as Jeong (2008:3) had argued, “our survival on this planet hinges on how we manage/resolve the various features of conflict”.

2.1.4. Conflict Management Mechanisms

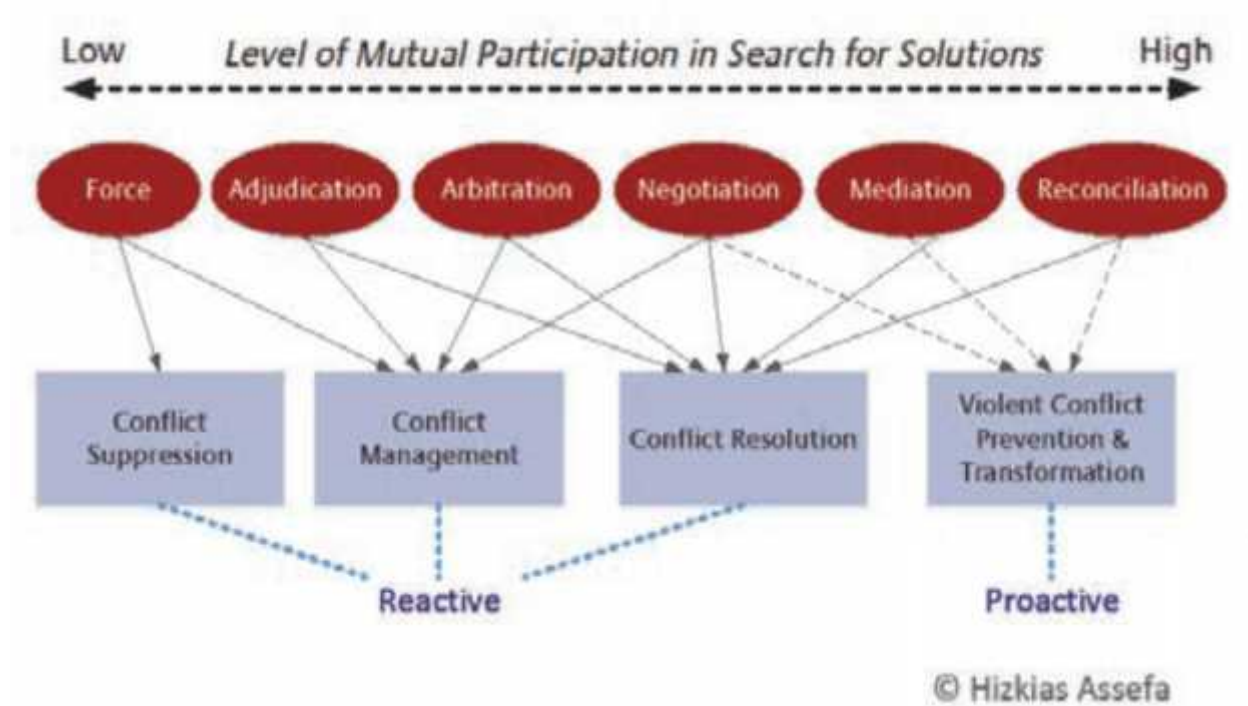
The destructive/hostile features of conflict need management through conflicts handling mechanisms. The term conflict management refers the positive and constructive handling of differences and divergence (Reilly, 1998). To manage or to resolve conflicts, there are two types of peacemaking approaches: the modern or formal and traditional or customary approaches. Only little discussion is made about the modern or formal mechanism as an introduction but the detail discussion would be on traditional or customary approaches.

2.1.4.1. The Modern Peacemaking Approach

Regarding this approach, Hizkias (2008) had proposed six commonly used approaches of conflicts management—which are placed in its spectrum (see figure1). According to Hizkias, at the left of the spectrum, we find approaches such as Force, Adjudication, and Arbitration where mutual participation is least. When we are moving to the right on the spectrum, we find approaches like Negotiation, Mediation and Reconciliation in which the level of mutual

participation in search for resolution is increasing. According to Hizkias, the use of force is one kind of managing conflicts. It is done by one party (by a government or a guerrilla group) to impose a solution on the other party in international relations. Adjudication on the other hand, is aimed to impose a solution to conflicts. In this mechanism, at least parties have the right to resort their cases, to be heard, and to submit their arguments for why their preferred solution should be the basis upon which the third party's decision is made. Yet, in adjudication, the parties have no choice over who the decision maker(s) will be, as this is decided by the state or the international community. Moreover, the solution is not made by the parties themselves and in some situations the decision is backed by force. The third approach is Arbitration—that gives rights to both parties to choose their judges. Although the parties' participation is greater than adjudication, the solution is still decided by third party (judges). Next to this, we find negotiation on the spectrum. In negotiation, parties themselves have to formulate the issues, find the win-win solution for all, and enforce the agreement. With regard to this, Hizkias argues that negotiation to be win-win, there must be balanced power between parties/actors. To minimize the power imbalance, he proposed neutral third party intervention. Thus, the fifth approach on his spectrum is called mediation. Mediation is a special type of negotiation where a third party assists the parties in their search for mutually satisfactory solutions. The third party's role in this case is to minimize obstacles to the negotiation including those that emanate from a power imbalance. Finally, he discussed about reconciliation. In reconciliation, both parties must have to participate insensibly in the resolution process. At the end of the day, both parties will transform their relations and get durable peace.

Figure 1: The Conflict-Handling Mechanisms' Spectrum of Hizkias Assefa



Source: Hizkias (2008)

2.1.4.2. Traditional Peacemaking Approach

Traditional approaches on the other hand had been also playing great roles in dealing with conflicts. They have been described using other terms such as community, non-formal, informal, customary, indigenous and non-state justice systems (Kariuki, 2018). Africa is the home for diverse traditional societies. Eskedar is one of Ethiopian scholar who wrote an article on “the role of traditional conflict management institution among the Aleltu Oromo community and said that in order to deal with conflicts, traditional societies in Africa, including various ethnic groups in Ethiopia have developed and practiced their own ways of managing conflicts. In these societies, traditional conflict management institutions (TCMIs) such as elders emulate peaceful coexistence, maintain and preserve social harmony among the society (Eskedar, 2010). That is based on as Abebe (2015) specified, every society has their own norms and values—which is peculiar to them. This indicates that Africa has perhaps effective and practically workable conflict resolution mechanisms and institutions.

In conceptualizing traditional peacemaking mechanisms, as defined by Nwolise (2005) cited in Habtamu (2017) these methods involve negotiations, mediations and reconciliation based on the knowledge, customs and history of the community. According to Habtamu, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms comprise social, economic, cultural and religious-spiritual dimensions in accordance with the entirety of traditions, customs and world views of a society within the different spheres of societal life.

Other writers have added that traditional peacemaking approaches are also based on locally-inspired and context-specific factors. That means traditional peacemaking approaches are unique—which mainly distinguish them from non-traditional or formal justice systems—which would seem Universal. Some of the features that distinguish traditional from non-traditional are: (1) its considerable longevity and historical evolution within a society; (2) it is locally inspired and locally driven; (3) it is custom-based; informal; open to community and process-oriented; (4) it is considered as non-state, pre-state and/or autonomous of the state; and (5) its centrality of relationships and key persons (Planta, 2017). Another essential feature of TCMMs is: its ability to conflict transformation and community peace. By doing this, it fills the gap of formal justice system. The aim of formal justice system is only to settle disputes rather than transforming conflicts and restoring community peace. The second feature of it is that having strong link with communities' belief systems and morality (Assefa, 2013). With regard to this feature, he puts that:

“Another feature of most CDRMs is their strong link with spirituality, faithfulness and search for truth. The opening of peace processes, the elders’ insistence in finding out the truth and their reliance on oath to find out the truth particularly when there is lack of evidence, the peace rituals (curses and blessings), and the use of sacrificial animals indicate the role of belief systems in CDRM. One of the key attributes for the prominence of the elders, among other things, is the commitment to and/or fear of supernatural powers” Assefa (2013: 115).

Galvanek and Planta in their research report on “peaceful coexistence? Traditional and Non-traditional conflict resolution mechanisms” also put that the advantages of traditional mechanisms by noting the works of Boege (2011) and Muithi (2008). It was written as:

“Traditional mechanisms are more process-oriented, are more legitimate by the communities on the ground, focus more on the psycho-social dimensions of the conflict and

its transformation, are more participatory, and are less cost-intensive than that of non-traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Furthermore, Planta added that traditional mechanisms are more effective and more flexible and allow greater leverage for case-based decisions” (Planta, 2017: 27).

Romanticisation is one of its critiques given by Galvanek and Planta. They had argued that the ‘romanticisation’ of traditional mechanisms/institutions as being more effective one by overlooking their limitations. These limitations include: traditional mechanisms have had the pervasive effect of reinforcing the forms of domination and inequality in the society that partially led to the conflict by allowing the male elders to re-assert their power under the guise of tradition and rebuilding on authentic order. Similarly, Sexism and the absence of codified law are affecting the indigenous conflict management mechanism the so called shemgelena in the case of Guangua and Dibate districts of Metekel region (Wondyrad, 2014). Another limitation of it is that traditional institutions are not always homogenous. Galvanek and Planta again argued that local elders may lack capacity for sustained peace activities, as these elders too are susceptible to the effects of violent conflict and may be influenced by other powerful bodies/actors including liberal philosophy, colonization, modern state machinery, criminal groups, and other factors on these mechanisms/institutions (Planta, 2017).

2.1.5. Theoretical Basis for Peacemaking by Community Elders

Most writers including Kariuki have agreed that before colonialism, and/or still? Most African societies were living communally and were organized along clan, village, tribal and ethnic lines. Hence, in these societies, elders, chiefs, priests, priestesses, sect cult etc. are some of the important principles of conflict resolution (Ajayi, 2014). According to Kariuki (2015), Social ties, values, norms and beliefs and the threat of exclusion from the society provided community elders (CE) with legitimacy and sanctions to ensure their decisions were complied with. Accordingly, as peace and security researcher, the researcher has used two social theories which would be basis for conflict management by community elders in order to give explanations for the reason why Gamo elders were able to make peace in their communities.

2.1.5.1.The Social Capital Theory

According to Putnam (1993), social capital refers to features of social organization such as norms, trust, ties and networks, which facilitate coordination and cooperation among the society for mutual benefit. As Putnam explains, the stocks of social capital such as norms, trust, ties and networks which are embodied in the society binds the community members together. This is due to the community members' belief on what he described as the reciprocal duty of community members for tradition of strong civic engagement—which was taken as a precondition for economic progress and good government.

According to different researchers including Putnam, Traditional Conflict Management Mechanisms (TCMMs) are carried out by community leaders (CL) such as elders in the interest of society. Individuals in the society are the members of a given social group (clan, village, religion, and ethnic group) and are accountable to that social group. This leads to, as Putnam discussed cited in Kariuki (2015), social capital fastens ties of individuals of a given group and allows the inter-linkage of these individuals with other social groups. With regard to this, Kariuki discussed that:

In most of Africa, elders aimed at restoring the social ties or social capital that had been broken by the wrongs done, committed or omitted. Without strong social ties, communities could not exist and function effectively. Even in serious cases such as murder, the threat of excommunication from the society, and therefore exclusion from social ties, ensured that potential wrongdoers thought about and refrained before wrongdoing (Kariuki, 2015).

2.1.5.2.Social Solidarity Theory

Solidarity by different anthropologists such as Cheung and Kan Ma (2011) and De Beer and Koster (2009) cited in Zelalem (2016) referred as peoples' interaction in the society for common/mutual interest. Social solidarity theory was attached to works of Emile Durkheim known as “the division of labor in society”. In his book, he says, social order and social factors are parts of society. Individuals in it are actors who refrained from wrongdoing when they commit. If individuals wanted to stay in the society, social factors play a great role in regulating them. These social factors according to Durkheim are functionalist in nature. Adding that, these social factors exist only if the society can derive benefits from them (Durkheim, 1933).

As Katriuki noted, one of benefits derived from social factors is conflict resolution by community elders (CE). He said that because of elders' long experience, wisdom and the respect

they are accorded in society it helped them to manage disputes in the society. Besides social solidarity theory, being a functionalist theory, due to several reasons even in modern society/town areas; community elders play a great role in conflict management (Kariuki, 2015). Thus, elders' presence in the conflict management indicates that the common benefits the society obtained from the social factors by the community members in the process of social interaction.

2.1.5.3. Optimal Psychology Theory

The theory is important to explain culture in conflict management, resolution and reconciliation. As Mayers (1992) cited in Kariuki (2015) indicated, culture is one of the important social factors used to explain how people view reality, live and resolve conflicts. According to Kariuki, in societies like Africa, it is argued that there is optimal theory in conflict resolution, when people use their culture to resolve conflicts. To him, there are conditions that make dispute resolution sub-optimal when done through a foreign culture. Received justice systems such as courts are thus sub-optimal in the African context due to varying cultural context. The imposition of western cultures over African cultures cause cultural-conflict. This is because; the western cultures are individualistic while African cultures are communal. When it comes to Received justice systems, they are retributive with a winner-loser ideology while traditional or customary dispute resolution systems of Africa are restorative with a win-win ideology (Kariuki, 2015), because customary and spiritual laws are linked with supernatural/the spirit/, the punishments are often resorted to appease the parties in to obedience and agreement and because the status of parties in dispute resolution through traditional or customary laws are irrelevant (Eskedar, 2010). According to Kariuki (2015), this theory is important in understanding the resilience of traditional dispute resolution in modernized and westernized African societies.

2.2. Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1. Traditional Peacemaking Institutions in Africa

A. The Abunzi of Rwanda

In traditional Rwanda, before the establishment of *Gacaca* and *Abunzi* institutions, there were headmen who give justice and security service to the society. According to Bert Ingelacre (2008) as stated in Kariuki's article, the family headmen are the initial problem and conflict resolvers of the society. They are headmen of families. These traditional leaders settle their disputes by

sitting on the grass together to resolve/manage disputes through restoration of social harmony, seeking truth, punishing wrong deeds and compensating losses through gifts (Kariuki, 2015).

As translated by Mutisi, Abunzi literally means local elders who have responsibilities to reconcile. They are local mediators who are mandated by the Rwandan government to use mediation as an approach to resolve disputes. The aim of establishing the Abunzi institution was to find a mutually acceptable solution to both conflicting parties. In 2006, the Rwandan government had recognized this system under its Organic Law NO 31/2006 as traditional justice system—which encourages local capacity in the resolution of conflicts (Mutisi, 2012). According to this law, the Abunzi system is dealing with civil and penal cases of Rwanda.

According to Mutisi, the aim of popularizing the Abunzi institution by the state of Rwanda was to decentralize its justice, making it affordable and accessible. It helps the Rwandese people to address their disagreements without resorting to litigation and other retributive approaches. This is because; the Abunzi system plays a restorative mechanism for conflicts. The challenge of this system is the Rwandan government's excessive oversight in the processes of Abunzi mediation.

In Rwandan case, there are other local and traditional institutions aimed to resolve disputes. The first one is the family headmen called *inama y'umuryango* and the village headmen known as *umudugudu*. The question here is why the Rwandese people then resorting their cases to the Abunzi institution? With regard to this, Mutisi has put two reasons. The first reason is that if the conflicting parties attempted to resolve their cases at lower level institutions such as the family level through *inama y'umuryango* or the village level, namely *umudugudu*, has failed to adequately resolve the dispute. The second reason why people are resorted their case to the Abunzi is, it is the only institution whose formal statutory mandate is dispute resolution through mediation.

As Mutisi discussed, the Rwandan Organic Law of 2010 (Article 2) establishes two Abunzi mediation committees. The core one is the Abunzi Mediation Committee—whose jurisdiction is at the cell level and second one is the Abunzi Appeal Mediation Committee—whose jurisdiction is at the sector level. In order to provide the administrative oversight, both mediation committees are situated under the Ministry of Justice with the Ministry of Local Government. As Mutisi indicated, the Abunzi comprises 12 volunteers (plus three substitutes), all of whom must be residents of the cell. The Abunzi committee is headed by a 'bureau' comprising a president, vice-president and secretary. The president and vice president are elected by the Abunzi committees

and the secretary of the Abunzi is also the secretary of the cell. The committee members are expected to be persons of integrity who are acknowledged for their mediation skills. Again, the cell council elects its mediators whose term of year is two years and the type of election is renewable—that has been designed to give equal chances for all qualifying members of the community an opportunity to serve on Abunzi committee as well as prevent complacency, bias and corruption.

According to the Rwanda Governance Advisory Council (RGAC) as stated in the Mutisi’s research report, there are more than 30,000 Abunzi mediators who operate in Rwanda at the cell level, which has a total of 32,400 Abunzi committee members across 2,150 cells, and within 30 districts. The committee members have jurisdiction over the following cases. One is the civil cases that include the breach of contract, and they also have involved in mediation of family cases such as paternity, matrimonial inheritance and succession issues.

With regard to its mediation process, three Abunzi mediators hear and resolve the dispute. In this regard, Mutisi writes:

At the beginning of the first session each party is requested to choose one mediator from the twelve available at the cell level. The third mediator is mutually chosen by the two selected Abunzi and thus the panel is established.

The established session is done if and only if; when each Abunzi mediator take an oath of the office in front of local people of Rwanda and the cell coordinator. The oath includes swearing to observe the country’s constitution and other laws and to consciously fulfill their duties of representing the people of Rwanda and without any discrimination and promote the basic rights of citizens and safeguard the interests of the people.

2.2.2. Traditional Peacemaking Institutions in Ethiopia

As aforementioned above, in Africa, most societies have developed and practiced their own locally-based informal institutions. Similarly, almost all Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia (NNPE) have developed and practiced their own ways of administrative systems and conflict resolution institutions (Endalcachew, 2015; and Abebe, 2015). As Ayke and Mekonnen (2008:3) documented, in general, there are four types of “traditional or customary informal institutions in conflict management, resolution and reconciliation. These include: clan leaders’ councils, elders’ councils, ritual practitioners and public gatherings”. The role of elders and

public gatherings (dubbusha institution of Gamo) in conflict management, resolution and reconciliation is discussed below.

i. The Role of Elders in Conflict Management

Kariuki in his study clearly stated that in most of Africa, elders aim at restoring the social ties or social capital (restorative function) that had been broken by the wrongs done, committed or omitted. To explore more here, researchers asked that what makes African elders as the model peacemaker. Kariuki answered that African elders have long experience of peacemaking, wisdom and the respect they are accorded in the society (Kariuki, 2015). In addition to this, elders are given with standardized acceptance from the society in which they are dwelling with (Habtamu, 2017) and they have moral persuasion, and have a strong relationship with the communities such as in Northern Somali (Somaliland), they are effective peacemakers (Ibrahim, 2018). These also help elders to properly administer and harmonize the people (Abebe, 2015). In that vein Southworld (2013) argued that community elders in traditional societies of south world are also equipped with knowledge and wisdom of peacemaking and reconciliation. Because of this, Achieng had recommended that, traditional elders' contribution in peacemaking should not be overlooked; rather they should be encouraged, facilitated and included in conflict settling methods such as mediation to be able to have local ownership of peace processes (Achieng, 2015).

In Ethiopia, although their role in conflict management, resolution and reconciliation is less compared with other African countries (Kariuki, 2015), in the case of Mareko woreda of Dawro zone, elders are the major participants of TCMMs (Habtamu, 2017). In western Ethiopia particularly in Metekkel zone, elders developed TCMMs known as '*Mitchu*' or friendship. In line with this, Kariuki has argued that the aim of elders in resolving different types of conflicts in the described study area was not to punish the wrongdoers but rather to restore the social harmony. In the similar study area, Shemegelena is the most common recognized conflict resolution mechanism—which is practiced by elders (shemageles) through mediation and reconciliation. In the Metekkel zone (particularly Guangua and Dibate woreda), with the exception of homicide, the major role of elders (shemageles) is mediating and reconciling the conflicting parties with extended members of the party (Wondyrad, 2014).

The role of community leaders (CL) such as elders in making peace is crucial. For instance, the Mekabon are the Ethiopia Afar elders who are playing a crucial and indispensable role in conflict

management, resolution and reconciliation between clans and sub-clans (Demessie, 2012). In the area if there are antagonistic situations happen between clans or sub-clans, clan elders play a key role as mediators. According to Sansculotte-Greenidge and Demessie, it is believed that the mediators are from neutral clans and are called upon to mediate and reconcile antagonistic clans. The clan elders resolve/manage inter-clan conflicts based on their customary rules known as *Ma'ada*—which identified five crimes such as Eido (killings), Aymissiya (injury), Rado (theft, destruction of property), Samo (adultery) and Dafu (insults, affronts). The Afar society's compensation payment decision is based on severity of crimes. In line with this, Diat and Nefsimiklah are the Afar terms for the compensation payment for homicide crimes and Dekah is the Afar term for the compensation payment for all other crimes. Jaarsa biyaa and Dhaddacha are also one of locally-based conflict management institutions among the Oromiya Regional State (Eskedar, 2010; and Endalcachew, 2015). According to Eskedar, elders are traditional judges who apply customary and spiritual laws of the community. Based on this, traditional judge elders perform their functions and fulfill their cultural and moral obligations. To Eskedar, threats of supernatural /the spirit/ punishments are often resorted to appease the parties in to obedience and agreement. In line with this, it is believed that the status of conflicting parties is irrelevant in the jaarsaa biyaa institution. Zelalem and Endalcachew again stated that during the adjudication, the traditional judges sit according to their seniority of age and knowledge of customary laws of Oromo people because there is a belief in the Oromo traditional society that senior person have more knowledge accumulated over time than juniors. For them, the dhaddacha institution solved conflicts by providing the right to select five elders for the plaintiff (the accuser) and four elders for the defendant.

Similarly, in SNNPRS, community leaders (CL) have their own place in conflict management. Almost all Nations, Nationalities and Peoples in SNNPRS have their own TCMI and TCMMs. Researches revealed that most of community leaders (CL) have gotten legal ground in order to make peace in their communities—which is stated under article 37 of FDRE constitution. One of TCMI in the region is Gudumaale institution among the Sidama society. Literally, according to Ayke and Mekonnen, the word Gudumaale means 'justice place'. To the community, this institution is the highest judicial body where major dispute cases and appeals are heard. It is led by clan leader, called Moti—who has a hereditary role in the office of Gudumaale known as Gudumaale Moticha (Mekonnen, 2008). As Ayke and Mekonnen discussed, cases (both minor

and major cases) have been dealt by the gudumaale institution at a marked day. However, most of the time minor cases are seen by the village elders' council whereas more serious problems such as homicide are seen by Gudumaale institution. But the institution does not reject/ignore the minor problems presented to it rather; it appoints trusted elderly persons from the disputants' village to handle the case with other elders (Ibid).

ii. Woga and Dubbusha in Settling Conflicts among the Gamo Dere

The main purpose of dubbusha among the Gamo society is to serve as court to settle/manage conflicts. Dubbusha in this regard refers to public gathering places (assembly, court)—which is territorially the highest assembly place and Gadho (respected house) is become the lowest one. Dubbusha has three levels: dere dubbusha, qommo/guta dubbusha and gadho dubbusha. Within these, assemblies take place on all scales and in varying contexts, small disputes are settled/managed in Gadho / Qommo level dubbushas while large scale disputes/crimes are settled/managed in Dere level dubbushas (Zenebe, 2015). Sometimes it is called Gassa—which is a common land for two dereta. Gassa serves as a place where conflicts between two dereta are settled. However, dubbusha is a place where the issues of single dere is discussed and resolved (Zelalem, 2016). As Mahe (2013) cited at Zenebe (2015), dubbusha is a culturally preserved place by arranging seats prepared from stone under big indigenous trees or free grounds (see photo below).

Photo 1: Dubbusha of Kacha Sub-dere of Bonke Dere



Source: (Zenebe, 2015)

As Zelalem discussed, Woga on the other hand refers to a customary law that guides the social, political, economic and spiritual life of the people. It regulates/guides kinship and marriage, social and political structures and organizations, and gender relations between men and women (Zelalem, 2016). For Zenebe, Woga refers to an unwritten body of rules and procedures that bind the community members in all patterns of relations. By using woga and dubbusha, traditional leaders resolve/manage all types of conflicts through Traditional Peace Making Processes (TPMPs) such as *tuuge*, *iginththo*, and *gomppa*. The following is an example that shows the role of woga and dubbusha in settling conflicts in different communities of Gamo Zone.

When some come to Zigiti dere of Gamo Zone, the role of Woga in settling/managing conflicts is crucial. According to Zelalem, in the early times, all crimes including homicide were resolved by the dere dulata (public assembly). But now days, except homicide crime—which are taken to formal court system all other crimes are settled by the process of dere dulata (public assembly) (Zelalem, 2016). This doesn't mean that bringing the case to formal court system is restoring the

peace between parties. For example, if an individual commits homicide crime, his/her case must pass through a process of cumatetha (purification of sin) according to woga. With regard to this, Zelalem (2016: 41) wrote that:

“If both parties agree to reconcile then the killer presents a goat or sheep for sacrifice. The killers two hands are chained by rope and taken to the place where the ritual is planned to take place accordingly to woga. The family of the dead and elders are waiting at the place where the reconciliation is planned to take place. When the elders bring the individual who committed a homicide, he is not allowed to walk in a normal way. The killer is obliged to look down to the ground to represent that he is ashamed of his own action. Then at the ritual place the family members of the dead hold spear and show an act of throwing the spear on him to signify that they are able to kill him but they do not do it because of woga. After that a man from a Maka clan (a clan which has the power to purify cases like homicide and adultery) cut the sheep or the goat through its stomach when the goat or sheep is alive. This action symbolizes abnormality of committing homicide. After that the two families in the conflict can walk over the blood and it ends the enmity of the two parties and prevents the dere from any misfortune”.

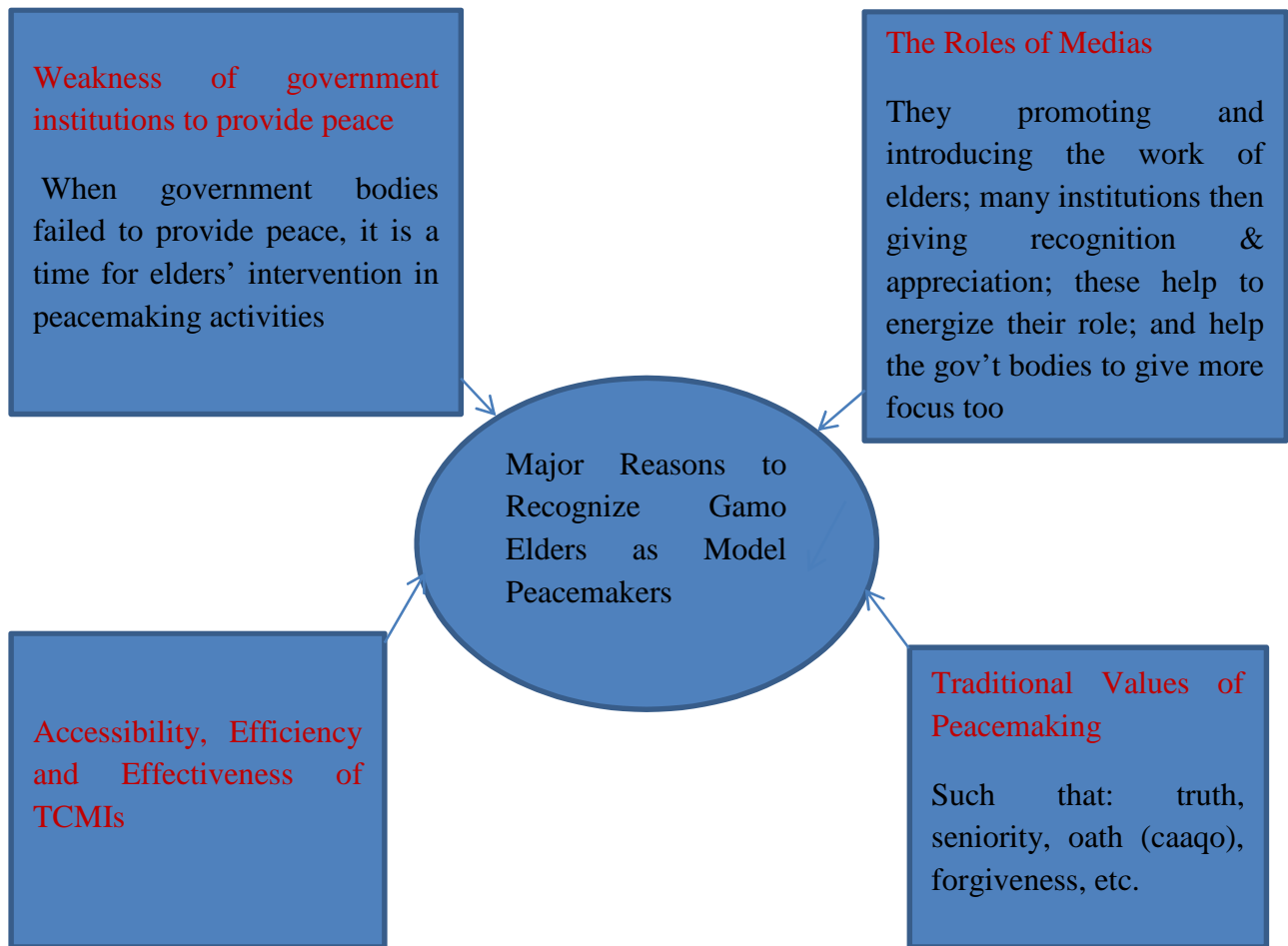
Using tuuge process is one of TPMPs existed in different communities of Gamo Zone. It is used when there are violent conflicts between communities or between deres. For community level tuuge processes, the most appropriate traditional leader is ogaadde or kare (traditional diplomat). He is selected from initiated halaqas such as *Halaqa Maaga, Halaqa Huduga, Halaqa Bitane* (Zenebe, 2015). According to him, ogaadde is responsible body to follow up, and maintain social relationship among communities. To him, the tuuge process has to pass different levels and it differs based on severity of case. With regard to this, Zenebe (2015, 65) noted that:

“Firstly, if the homicide case was related with the mistake of the individual killed by other dere individual (example, theft, adultery, etc.) the Ogaadde can use green grass or cultural cloth (bulluko, gaabe) as Tuuge or Boora instrument and erect on top of stick at the treaty place (Caaqo bessa or Gasa) of two communities. If the case was intentional killing using different strategies, at this time, the level of Tuuge instrument to be erected on stick at Gasa has to be changed to skin of animals (skin of cow, tiger or lion). At this level, the dere which is asking excuse and forgiveness also prepares to protect dere property from destruction and human life from revenge killings by transferring them to another place.

Secondly, if the preparation of accusing dere for revenge is very high, then they further increase the Tuuge level and provide an Ox physically while displacing infants, women, animals and properties temporarily. Finally, if the preparation for revenge is assumed to be severest and beyond their physical defense, the last stage of Tuuge has to be offered by the Ogaadde, i.e., carrying Dog on his shoulder and standing in front of accusing dere that prepared for revenge”.

2.3. Conceptual Framework on Current Reasons to Recognize Gamo Elders as Model Peacemakers

Figure 2: Conceptual framework explaining the current reasons of recognizing Gamo elders



Source: Developed by the researcher (2020)

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Background of the Study Area

A. Location and Population

As published and unpublished documents' data revealed that prior to this year (2020), geographically the Gamo are located in Gamo Gofa zone of SNNPRS. For example, GGZICD (2004) stated in the research report of Zenebe that the Gamo ethnic community is located in the Southwestern part of Ethiopia what was formerly called Gamo Gofa province and is now with some boundary changes in Gamo Gofa Zone, which is one of the administrative zones of southern nations, nationalities and people's Regional State (SNNPRS) (Zenebe, 2015). Zenebe also put that astronomically, Gamo is located between altitude of 5°38' to 6° 42' North and latitude of 37° to 37°45' East and bordered by North and Northwest with Wolaita and Dawro; West and Southwest with Gofa and Maale; East with Koore and South with Mossiye and Derashe ethnic Communities. The area coverage of Gamo land is about 7366.59 Km². It also located at 505km south of Addis Ababa and 275km south west of Hawassa, the capital city of SNNPRS (Yishak, 2013).

However, as Gamo Zone Finance and Economic Development Department (GZFEDD) annual report indicates, recently the Gamo nationality is one of 56 ethnic communities of SNNPRS who live in 14 rural woredas of Gamo Zone, namely Kucha, Kucha Alfa, Kogota, Dita, Gerese, Bonke, Boroda, Mearab Abaya, Dara Malo, Arba Minch Zuria, Kamba Zuria, Garada Marta, Chenchu and Gocho Baba woredas. And, it also has 4 Town Administrations, namely Arba Minch Town (Capital of the Zone Administration), Kamba Town, Chenchu Town and Selamber Town Administrations (GZFEDD, 2019). According to Zenebe with reference to CSA (2008), due to modern urbanization growth in Ethiopia since 1898 and population growth as indicated by Belete in 2006, the Gamo live in most urban areas of the country, thereby accounting 8th urbanized ethnic community out of 76 ethnic community—which account for 1.5% (1, 107, 163) total population of the nation of which 965, 930 (87.24%) is rural population and 145, 233 (13.76%) is urban population (Zenebe, 2015).

B. The Cultural Setting of Gamo Nationality

According to Freeman (2006), the Gamo are made of more than 40 deres. Regarding languages, in the study area there are people who belong to Gamo clans and people who belong to D'ache clans. Hence, the clans are speaking different languages. The language spoken by Gamo clan is referred to as Gamo-tso and the language spoken by D'ache clan is referred to as D'ache-tso. Other research results including Temesgen (2011) revealed that the Gamo is composed of more than 200 clans and traditionally they are divided into some forty autonomous self-administrative deres ruled by the traditional leaders such as Kawo, Halaqa, Huduga or Maaga and are Omotic speaking people in the SNNPRS.

As Getaneh (2006) indicated in the research report of Wagaye, the Gamo nationality has unique culture and value systems however it shares similar culture with neighbor ethnic groups. Wagaye also stated that the Gamo has unique cultural administrative system—which is carried out by the institution called *dubusha* (assemblies) through cultural leaders such as Kawos, Halaqas, Hudugas or Maagas. The society is known and ruled by patriarchal ideology—that give right to men over politics and other natural resources such as land and houses and are known by communal life. As Wagaye discussed with referencing the works of Getaneh (2006), the society is divided into three social groups. These are the mala (free citizens), the ayile (ex-slaves) and the artisan (mana and degela, i.e. tanners and potters) (Wagaye, 2016). The relationship between these three social groups are regulated and guided by the customary law known as woga among the Gamo nationality of SNNPRS (Zelalem, 2016). To explain the relationship between these three social groups is discussed as follows. Their relationship is governed by the firmly established rule of taboo especially in relation with marriage system and economic rights. Accordingly, it is taboo for the mala to establish marriage with the degela and mana (the artisans). And, it is seriously taboo for degela and mana to own and cultivate farmland (Olmstead, 1973) as cited in Wagaye (2016).

About the marriage system, the Gamo are organized in to two known marriage systems, namely exogamy and endogamy however exogamous system is predominately practiced marriage system endogamy is exercised in a great extent. With regard to wedding system, Wagaye has paraphrased the works of Yishak and Gambu (2014) as follows:

The Gamo wedding ceremony is arranged through a mediation process overseen by the elders, known as Chimma. If a man wants to be married to someone, he sends his family

representatives to the parents of his fiancée to begin the negotiations. The elders, sent for mediation, will be allowed to enter the house of the girl's parents on their third trip and fix the date of marriage together.

Another value that defines the Gamo is *gome* or *taboo*. In line with this, Getaneh (2006) cited in Wagaye (2016: 39) clearly discussed that:

“Gome is the transgression of traditional rule locally named as woga. It is a misfortune which afflicts a person for the transgression of a traditional rule. It is believed that an infraction of gome would bring misfortunes such as illness, drought, infertility, poverty and death”.

C. Socio-Economic Situations of Gamo Nationality

Agriculture is one the main modes of production for rural areas of Ethiopia in general and Gamo in particular. Most of its people (87.24%) are living in rural areas so that their way of life and mode of production definitely depends on agriculture. Freeman (2004) cited in Zelalem (2016) said that agriculture is the basic units of production and consumption for people who live in highland and lowland areas of Gamo dere. Adding that, there are two working groups, namely *tsire* and *zurra*. With regard to this, Freeman (2004) discussed—this was stated in the research report of Zelalem (2016:18) as follows:

There was tsire for men, who hoed the land and harvested the crop and tsire for women which carried manure to the field. A typical male tsire consists of thirty or forty men from one small dere, neighborhood and one artisan who would blow a horn while the men worked the land. Anyone could ask the tsire to work, on their land and would pay a set. Each tsire had the tsire kawo and dana [elected leaders of the work group] who were the only members of the tsire who did not work on other peoples land. But they are responsible to collect payments and put on a big feast for the groups after the field had been harvested.

Regarding the second working organization (*zurra*), Zelalem (2016:19) also cited the works of Freeman in the following manner:

The second working group is zurra, in which one man from each household must participate land must arrange it with the zurra organizers called zurra kawo and dana. Any household that fails to spend a man to work with the zurra is fined for each day that is missed and at the end of the season the money is divided among the men. Unlike the tsire

the zurra kawo and dana do contribute their labor to the group and they work as equal as the other men.

Zelalem puts that the major types of crops in the study area are the followings. Farmers in Gamo are cultivating crops such as barely, wheat, peas, beans and cabbage in highlands of the Gamo deres whereas crops such as sweet potato, maize, and teff are cultivated in the lowlands of the Gamo deres. In the areas such as Bonke, Mirab Abaya and Arba Minch Zuriya, the agriculture is divided into rain fed agriculture (71704 ha) and irrigated agriculture (5022.5 ha). These areas are also known by cattle population local dairy cow accounts the highest (140, 2660) followed by oxen and improved cows which are 80,738 and 323 respectively (Yishak, 2013). Another source of its economy is weaving in Dorze dere. As Getaneh (2006); Olmstead (1974): and Mathiszig (2014) cited in (Wagaye, 2016) weaving is more profitable and sold in urban areas of Ethiopia. To do so, the weavers mostly men are migrating into urban area (e.g. Addis Ababa, Shuro Meda). Its well-known products include: na'tsala, kuta, gabbe, and buluko.

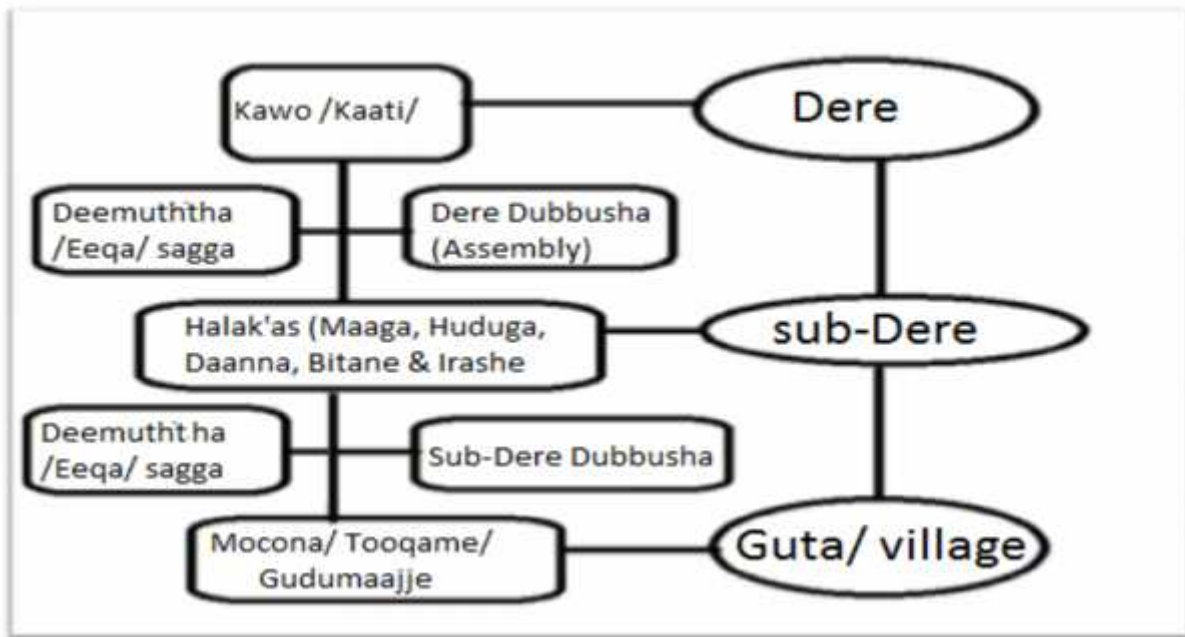
D. Political Structures of Gamo Nationality

According to Zelalem (2016)—he has paraphrased the works of Bureau (2012) and Freeman (2001 and 2004), among the Gamo deres, there are two ways of gaining politico-ritual status. One of it is the principle of initiation or election and the second one is the system of *baira* (seniority). These ways sometimes working competitively and complementary with each other. **Political authority by initiation or election:** one of social status gaining by this system is halaqa, huduga or maaga. According to Gamo waga, the office is open to the election process in the *dulata* (public assembly). The *dulata* gives equal chance for all married and adult men to be elected as halaqa, huduga or maaga however this doesn't mean that all adult men acquire this social title. This is because; he must be married; second he cannot take initiatory title before his father and elder brothers have been initiated; and third this title must give expensive feasts—which needs years of preparations, that influences the candidate's chance of acquiring this social status. In addition to this, according to Freeman (2004) cited in Zenebe, Halaqa was given to lead the society within time periods of 3-to-7 years term. Once his period of herding the community comes to an end, the Halaqa discharges his responsibilities to the next Halaqa and himself takes on the more senior status of community father (*dere adde*) (Zenebe, 2015).

The baira (Senior) system: regarding this system, Zelalem discussed about the description of baira system by Bureau (2012) as follows:

The Gamo are distributed in agnatic clans and with each clan has a system of individual genealogical hierarchy. The baira (senior) of the clan has a privilege over lineage members. Baira makes animal sacrifice on the behalf of their juniors at all levels of the community. The senior sacrificer of the dere is the kawo. The concept of kawo refers to the first rank status, with variable attributes and he is legitimized by birth and primogeniture. The kawo represents the unity of dere and plays an important role in relations with the outside world.

Figure 3: Gamo Traditional Administrative Structure



Source: Zenebe (2015:24)

3.2. Research Design and Method

In the planning phase, the researcher did the following main activities. Finding the research theme based on his interest of the area; searching reading materials from different sources; reading the materials and taking notes on the selected research theme. Based on secondary data and consultation the researcher had, the researcher planned to conduct a thesis on a research problem called “Exploring traditional peacemaking processes in Ethiopia: Gamo elders as model peacemakers over the past two years in the study area”. The first draft of proposed plan was submitted to the office of director of IPSS on 18 November 2019. Then, the proposal defense came after a week on 25 November 2019. When it comes to actual research phase, based on comments given by the supervisor and reader, with some improvements especially on research

problem and sites and after enabling the budget issues, it was a time for data collection from February 2020 to March 2020 and a further reviewed related literature and collected secondary data from relevant institutions of Gamo Zone. The first and final draft of the paper was submitted to the supervisor and institution after data analysis and interpretation has been completed according to deadline of the institution.

An Exploratory research was designed because of the following reasons. Firstly, by thinking the peace-making processes and the procedure elders' use in the particular area that the researcher selected to conduct this study is relatively different. And a little was known about the reason why the government and the people recognized Gamo elders as the model peacemakers over the past two years (2018-2020).

A Qualitative research methodology was employed. **Why qualitative?** Firstly, it is possible to collect data through qualitative methods such as interview, FGDs and Observations about the research subject's feelings, emotions, interaction with each other as well as with environment, life experiences, social and cultural phenomenon and organizational functions. The second reason the researcher has preferred this method was that because qualitative research approach uses non-numerical data and data in the form of words that have to be interpreted by the researcher himself.

3.3. Sources of Data

In order to have a better understanding and achieving the designed goals of this study, there are two sources of data.

A. Primary Sources

The primary data was collected through Interview (semi-structured), Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and by observing the sample of Gamo traditional peacemaking processes and procedures followed by traditional institution—the elders in the study area.

B. Secondary Sources

The secondary data was collected through qualitative document analysis from academic articles, books, thesis, journals, unpublished government reports, magazines and different internet sources.

3.4. Data Gathering Tools

Interview (Semi Structured): in order to get the required information, the researcher has used semi-structured interview—which gives a chance for interviewer to ask another relevant questions while in processing of interviewing (in one-to-one discussion). Data were gathered from Key Informant Interviewees (KIIs) based on the selection criteria such as age, sex and relevant occupations.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD): in investigating the research objectives, some issues need deep and diverse knowledge from diverse people. Specifically, issues such as concept of conflict, challenges and limitations of TCMMs, and the relationships between two methods require diverse information from different individuals who have diverse knowledge. Again, through this method the researcher has examined the participants' level of understanding on aforementioned concepts. Thus, the investigator of this study has used this method as one of data gathering tools.

Observation: sometimes what people do and say is different. Hence, in order to triangulate the data gathered by interview and FGD, the researcher has used personal observation as a major method of gathering data—that was to get some information about the *Ingiththo* (resolution) process in some inter-dere conflicts such as the conflict between Garvansa dere of Gerese woreda and Kole dere of Bonke woreda in 2020.

3.5. Population, Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The target population of this study was: samples from traditional institutions such as *halaqas*, *maagas*, *ogaaddes* and *kawos*, government offices etc. **Sampling Procedures:** the researcher has selected 12 Key Informant Interviewees (KIIs) who are considered as knowledgeable about the matter (i.e., 6 were elders, 3 were senior officials, 1 judge, and two youths) and FGD—which was conducted from different age groups such as elders, and youth. The FGD contained six (6) traditional leaders from Gamo Elders' Council (GEC) at Arba Minch Town—which is one of four main parts of civil society association called Gamo Council Association (GCA) which was established in 2019. Though I planned to employ two FGDs, due to Coronavirus or COVID-19 epidemic in the country, I have used only one FGD. By both cases, all the participants of this study were chosen because of their rich knowledge, skills, experiences and relevance to the

research problem. To do so, the researcher has selected the target population, sample size and study sites based on purposive sampling technique.

Table1: Sample Size for Interview

Study sites	Age Groups		Gov't Officials	Total Population Size
	Old Man/Woman	Youth		
Arba Minch Town	4		3	7
Gerese Woreda	1	1		2
Kamba Town	1	1	1	3
Total	6	2	4	12

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

The collected data were checked at the end of the day, processed and arranged for analysis. Then, the data obtained from primary and secondary sources would be in line with the objectives and research questions of the study. After the collected data were processed, they were analyzed and interpreted completely. For the analysis of the qualitative data Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was used. TCA was done step by step. Firstly, the recorded interview and FGD transcript was written in different Microsoft files (i.e., KI1, KI2, KI3...etc.—this abbreviations given to each key informants in this study); secondly, different marks were given to each of the explanations—that were collected from research participants; thirdly, based on this, the descriptions were categorized and themes were generated; fourth, appraisal of themes by the process of verification of data through observation, document assessment and finding relevant figures and photos; fifth, definitions, interpretations and analysis in line with research objectives were followed; and finally, the research report was write up.

3.7. Study Sites

This study was conducted in Gamo Zone of SNNPRS. The zone has comprised 14 rural woredas and 4 town administrations. The researcher has purposely selected three study sites. These are described below with their convincing reasons.

Arba Minch Town: I selected the site because of the following reasons. Firstly, the site is the seat of the zonal administration. Hence, it is easy to frequently consult the zonal departments such as Gamo Zone Culture, Tourism and Sport, Peace and Security, Gamo Zone High Court and

Gamo Zone Public Relations Office and to consult chairman of Gamo Elders' Council (GEC) in Arba Minch Town. Secondly, in this site there was conflict case in 2018—which was narrated by media only, it should be scrutinized through scientific research methodology. So that it was parts of my study. Thirdly, the research site is a place where resourceful informants can easily be found. All of my FGD members who have rich knowledge and experiences on TCMMs were found in this site.

Gerese Woreda: I choose this site due to, at the time of data collection, there was inter-dere conflict that happened between Garvansa dere of Gerese woreda and Kole dere of Bonke woreda in 2012 E.C. Thus, I choose the site to observe the *iginththo* process (traditional peacemaking process) which was held around their common treaty place (river) and to interview two KIIs.

Kamba Town: to interview three key informant interviewees (one elder, one youth and one senior official) who have information about the conflict between Garda and Kamba dereta and other interpersonal case in 2019.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data Analysis and Interpretations

This chapter discusses the findings of the study based on data that were obtained from primary sources such as KIIs, FGD and Observation and secondary sources. The analysis, interpretations and discussions of data are presented in the following manner.

4.1. The Meaning, Causes and Types of Conflicts in the Study Area

i. Understanding the Meaning of Conflict in the Study Area

According to many writers and/or researchers, there is no single definition of the term conflict. Hence, most of the interview and FGD respondents of this study define the conflict in different ways. Some of them defined that it is disagreement or others understood that conflict is difference or divergence of goals. Others also called it as misunderstanding of people on certain goals and issues. It is obvious that Humans as social animals in their social, political, economic and spiritual life there is always disagreement/misunderstanding of goals—which is inevitable and will probably never end (Jeong, 2008). In order to have better understanding about the concept of conflict, the researcher has quoted and translated the FGD's agreed definitions about the concept of conflict as follows:

“If disagreements or misunderstandings of goals between individuals cannot be solved through peaceful mechanisms such as discussions and negotiations, or when these disagreements/misunderstandings mixed with emotions and actions then the parties to these cannot be able to solve their problems by peaceful means, or when these causes beating of one another; destruction of properties; and loss of human live, solidly this is called conflict” (FGD March 18/2020).

Most of the interview participants understood that conflict is raised because of differences/divergences raised between individuals on certain issues (if not managed peacefully). These differences/divergences will expand to dispute level—which include debate, quarrel, argument, misunderstanding and disagreement. At this level, if he/she cannot solve his/her dispute by peaceful manner, the dispute will become the dispute of group—which is created during argumentations. When a party in the conflict who claimed to win the dispute by using power as ultimate option vis-à-vis other party claimed too, this causes losses of people live,

destroying of properties, and the destruction of society at large. This implies that how conflicts (if not managed) bring negative impacts upon the parties to the conflicts—which is similar with the argument of Diez (2007)—that is stated as ‘destructive expression’ of conflict that can bring physical, psychological or emotional damage to the opponents. On the other hand, the interview respondents said that if conflicts can be solved, regulated and managed peacefully, they become the sources for societal change. With regard to this, Reilly (1998) puts that the positive outcome of conflict is that it can be the starting point for energizing social change and improvement. According to research discussants, the violent conflicts have the following negative effects in the study area. Some of these were: deaths of human life; destroy of private and public properties including infrastructures, social, economic and political crisis and disintegration of family and society at large. For example, during Garda-Kamba conflict, more than four people died, houses were burned, many people were temporarily fled and many private properties were looted.

ii. Causes of Conflict in the Study Area

The research result has revealed that, the causes of conflict in the study area are relative in place and time. As FGD and interview participants discussed, their causes are various. They also discussed that; Conflicts in rural areas may differ from urban areas. According to Zenebe (2015), the sources of conflicts are categorized in to two. These are the root causes and triggering factors. Based on data obtained from FGD and interview, the researcher has mentioned some of the root causes of conflicts in the study area as follows.

Competition over Natural Resources (Greed): as I stated above, the discussed root cases under this category are the followings. Competition over farm and grazing lands; competition over sacred areas such as burials, dubbushas and forests; and competition over water resources for irrigation and fishing purposes in areas such as Sile, Arba Minch and Mirab Abaya

Criminal Actions: some of crimes under these category are: abduction and rape crimes; breaching of promises in relation with trade and debt default; drunkenness, drugs and alcohol; ignorance and unawareness; insulting and hate speeches such as ‘*qen jib*’—that caused political crisis in the study area; revenge; theft and robbing; etc.

Poverty Related Issues (Need): the discussed causes of conflicts under this category are: scarce resources and services such as electricity and roads; selfish nature of human being; and unemployment.

Political Related Issues: based on research results from KIIs and FGD respondents, corruption and rent-seeking; elite competition between different deres; questions of woreda center; self-governance claims; and weakness of government institutions such as cell and one-to-five groups.

Value and Faith-Based Conflicts (Creed): these include claims of constructing churches on sacred places of different deres; claims over burial areas; conflict of culture (modernization); and decrease of culture of tolerance between followers of different religions.

iii. Types of Conflicts and Traditional Peacemaking processes in the Study Area

The previous researches results revealed that, in the study area almost all types of conflicts have been occurring. The previous researches results also showed that there were conflicts that occurred between the Gamo and other neighboring ethnic communities such as Wolaita, Gofa, Gidicho, Guji Oromo, and Maale (Zenebe, 2015). Thus, these types of conflicts in the study area include: interpersonal and intra group conflicts; inter and intra family conflicts; inter and intra clan conflicts; inter and intra dere conflicts; and inter and intra ethnic conflicts. All research respondents of this study were confirmed that these types of conflicts discussed above are occurring in the study area. For the purpose of this study, I will discuss interpersonal, and inter dere conflicts—which are provided with their respective cases.

In order to keep the communities' peace, based on woga of Gamo, traditional leaders such as kaati/kawo/, maaga, huduga, ogaadde, etc. are using traditional ways of settling conflicts. These ways of settling conflicts are: tuuge or green grass, iginththo and gomppa systems as reconciliation procedure and processes to manage, resolve and transform all types of conflicts/crimes except homicide crime—which is settled by the formal justice system (Zenebe, 2015). To do so, elders use dubbusha as an assembly or court places and woga as a customary law for resolving conflicts.

A. Interpersonal Conflicts

As Folarin (2015) posits, this kind of conflict includes a man against man, a man against society and a man against nature. Conflict between two individuals occurs because of differences, misunderstandings and disagreements between them. According to him, conflicts are translated in physical exchanges between both parties. However, conflict does not always translate to physical exchange of blows. Malice or 'cold attitude' to each other already underscores conflict. Conflict thus also means implicit hostility. Among the Gamo communities, this type of conflicts

occurred all the times. The research respondents stated that, this type of conflict can be settled by traditional conflict settlement mechanisms through cultural leaders.

The Case of Ato Zegeye and ways of settlement

Ato Zegeye is one of the residents of Kamba dere. In 2019, he was accused of rape crime. A woman who said she has been raped by Zegeye. Then, her family has accused him to the *guta* level *dubbusha* leaders. The *guta dubbusha* leaders then called him and asked why he committed this crime. However, Ato Zegeye had repudiated his accusation. The *dubbusha* judges then asked her to bring her witnesses for next trial session. After three days, she and her family members have brought three witnesses in order to support her accusation. At this session, arbitrators were asked witnesses one by one and all the witnesses argued that ato Zegeye raped her. Yet, ato Zegeye repudiates to the witnesses' answer to the questions of judges. According to the key informant in Kamba town, after judges examined the case from both parties, they have appointed them for third time *dubbusha* trial in order to give final decision. At this session, based on witnesses confirmation judges decided upon ato Zegeye as guilty of committing rape and order him to pay compensation for the victim. According to Gamo woga, a person who is not satisfied with the decision made by the lower level *dubbusha* has the right to appeal (*qangge*) his/her case to next level *dubbusha* (Zenebe, 2015). By using this right, ato Zegeye appealed his complaint to the dere level *dubbusha*.

The dere *dubbusha* session was opened after the responsible bodies such as *halaqas*, *hudugas*, *magas* and *kawos* received his appeal. As an interviewee said, in order to examine the case ato Zegeye reported to them, firstly arbitrators had called both parties with their relatives in the court session and put them side by side and they sat in between both parties. Secondly, after parties taking an oath of office, elders asked ato Zegeye to explain his complain to them and at the same time the elders were ordered a woman's witnesses to stand in front of the arbitrators of the day and decided to see them three times. What happened then was explained by the research participant as follows:

Based on decisions, one of the witnesses stood up and started to see the judges. At this time ato Zegeye's family members were shouting at him because they know he is dishonest to the dubbusha leaders and it was a false accusation. Due to this reason, he has asked

pardon from the dubusha leaders and ato Zegeye by lying down on the ground in front of arbitrators. Arbitrators then asked him why you are deceiving us. He answered that her family was given some bribes and hence I am now deceiving you and I confirm you that it was a false accusation. Hence, the arbitrators of the day had decided punishment upon him—which orders him to kiss of ato Zegeye and his relatives by using hudugas or maagas for 15 days until they forgive him for his deceiving the dubusha leaders, false accusation and failed to live according to order of woga (KII March 4/2020).

After 15 days later, it was the final session for reconciliation. At this session arbitrators heard the wrong deed person's report on what he was ordered to do and confirmed this from Zegeye's family. Finally, the witnesses and that woman who have made false accusation and deceived the dubbusha leaders were allowed to ask pardon from Zegeye—who was confirmed as the right person. In order to strengthen their relationships, the person who committed the wrong deed may give gifts to the victim and the victimized one has duty to forgive the one who committed the wrong deed. This is because as viewed by FGD (March 18/2020) that:

“The right one is expected to show his mercy. If the individual who is considered as right fails to show mercy, it is considered as a deviant behavior against the dere. So it is believed that it causes gome (misfortune) and this misfortune is seen from the good of the society according to the woga”.

B. Inter-Dere Conflicts

The data that were gathered from KIIs and FGD show that many inter-dere conflicts have occurred between different communities of Gamo zone. The inter-dere conflicts—which are recorded among the Gamo communities over the last one year are the followings. The conflict between Garda and Kamba dereta, and the conflict between Garvansa and Kole dereta are the typical ones—which I will provide them for discussions of this study.

The Settlement of Garda -Kamba Dereta Conflict

The Garda-Kamba dereta conflict erupted in 2019. “Prior to coming of Dr. Abiy Ahemed into power; both deres were parts of Kamba woreda administration. Following the political changes—that took place in the country, the Garda and Marta deres updated their old good government agendas such as self-government questions to the zonal and regional governments. Hence, the regional government has given new administrations to those peoples who have claimed self-administration questions (woreda and zone). One of the decisions made by regional

government was Garda-Marta woreda—which is newly added woreda to Gamo zone administration in 2019”. I took this statement from one of my key informant in Kamba town on 4 March 2020.

As key interviewees indicated, the regional as well as zonal administrations have been put administrative directions that directs all leaderships while in giving new administrations. One of it was the question of woreda/zone center is taking into consideration during announcements. Otherwise, it is playing in fathering conflicts between and/or among peoples. Based on this regulation, Gamo zone administration was given the woreda center for Garda-Marta woreda at Gogale town. However, Garda dere claims it for them, and the Marta dere also claims it too. This causes disagreement between two deres. In relation with this, there were some feuds between two deres. Consequently, the police had arrested some youths mostly from Garda dere. Then, the Garda dere repeatedly asked the Kamba woreda police to release their children. But the police did not try to release their children. Because of this, the grievances are increasing from time to time among the Garda dere. In order to influence the woreda police, they used strategies like aggravating the issues through social media such as Facebook; threatening and insulting the woreda and zone leaders (**by saying *qen jib***).

Nonetheless, the problem is still unsolved. One day morning (At market day) the Garda dere youths closed the road in which people from Kamba dere goes to Garda market. This has caused another grievance among the Kamba dere. The Kamba dere then closed its road on another day to prevent Garda dere not to enter into its jurisdiction. At this day one motorbike youth from Garda came to Kamba town. As an interviewee said, the Kamba town youth opposed his coming and beaten him. This action triggers the grievances among the Garda at climax stage. When the attacked youth returned into his community, he mobilized his friends and planned to counter attack on those individuals (by assuming them as enemy for them) who have beaten him at Kamba town. Thus, they called each other by saying *Alle alle alle* means let us go together and attack them. In this way suddenly more than hundreds of youth went to Kamba and started to attack the kamba dere, at the same time the kamba dere responded similar ways for them. As a result, four youth from Garda were killed, one was killed from Kamba, one house was burned, many properties were robbed and many people fled. The woreda government in collaboration with zone administration tried to manage the conflict temporarily by using the special force. The woreda chief administrator has also tried his best efforts by calling the representatives of people

from both sides but the things were beyond the capacity of woreda. So that he asked help from zone administration to lead the discussion with people's representative. Yet, situation in the area remain similar until elders from both deres recovered their communities' peace. The following are the activities of elders in order to settle this conflict.

As aforementioned above, one of the traditional ways of settling conflicts among the Gamo dere is *tuuge* process (management). When conflicts occurred suddenly and if cultural leaders assume the conflicting situation become at the crisis stage and have a violent mentality, what elders do is; the raising of *tuuge* with ox (*boora*) physically at boundary places when the conflict is between two dereta. Most of interview and FGD participants have confirmed that *tuuge* process is used at the time of conflicts—which have mentality to be changed into violent or war form. Elders use this system when boundary conflicts occurred violently between two deres. As they said, it indicates when conflicts are in a crisis stage. During this, there is no an option rather than using *tuuge* process. Therefore, in the case of Garda-Kamba conflict both parties were choosing their respective cultural leaders such as *Ogaddes* (traditional peace ambassadors) who is responsible to raise *tuuge* between conflicting parties, always at their boundaries (*gassas*). When youths from Garda started to move toward the Kamba dere, elders tried to stop their movement by using green grass and *tuuge* process but they didn't listen to their fathers. The research respondents believed that because of this, they have been beaten and get more attacks in the fighting. As Zelalem (2016) discussed, according to Gamo woga, failure to live with this woga causes come to the individuals or whole dere. In the interview discussion, one of the elder participants from Garda dere stated that:

During crisis time or when one of conflicting parties wanted to stop fighting, elders raise tuuge on stick. Sometimes they raise it with ox (boora) physically. Ox represents giving high respect for counter party and tuuge represents asking apologize or forgiveness for their mistakes. If anyone violates the tuuge process and tried to attack the party that asks apology or forgiveness by this process, he/she will be attacked himself/herself because it is come to him/her. I observed this in Garda-Kamba dereta conflict in 2019. The Garda community youths couldn't listen to their fathers' begging and use of tuuge/green grass in order to stop their moving toward Kamba dere to attack. They came and throw stones but they were severely attacked (KII March 3/2020).

Due to youth's deaths or attacks in the fighting, ogaadde who is representing the Garda dere raised the tuuge process at the Goymo River. According to interview participant, Goymo River is a place where Gassa woga is applied between two dereta. It is their common treaty (caaqo or gassa) place. The aim of tuuge process here is to ask apology or forgiveness from Kamba dere for they have passed the boundary of Kamba and tried to disturb their peace. On the other hand, although the Kamba dere were very angry and want to revenge them, they also have raised the tuuge for they have killed 4 youths of Garda dere. Ogaaddes and other administrative and ritual elders from both sides are responsible bodies to do so. The tuuge process has given room for both parties to discuss and argue their case by peaceful means. To do so, both parties have requested a third party intervention—that is become neutral for both parties. Hence, they have called elders from Gamo Elders' Council (GEC) as neutral body. With regard to this, the researcher has put the FGD's shared views as follows:

As help are requested by Garda and Kamba dereta, Gamo elders travelled to that area from here (Arba Minch). Primarily they have checked the tuuge process around their common treaty place (gassa)—that is at 'Goymo River'. At this place, there was tuuge process—which indicates the way of asking forgiveness from victimized or the one who considered themselves as right individual or people. The council members also saw that, from the Kamba side people were very aggressive and want to attack the Garda dere however still they respect their tuuge process. This is because; according to woga of Gamo, disregarding to the tuuge process will cause misfortune (gome) to the whole dere. Fearing of gome institution was given room for discussion and dialogue between two parties. In addition to this, throughout their history, communities have developed cultural values—that greatly helped them to live together and peacefully. One of these values is: finding truth, respecting to their treaties (caaqo and gassa wogas), forgiving each other rather than going to revenge, etc. Thus, the council members facilitated (mediated) the discussion and dialogue between two parties through their ogaaddes until they have agreed to resolve/settle their case by reconciliation (gomppa) process in February 2019 (FGD, March 18/2020).

Photo 2: The Tuuge Process in Garda-Kamba Conflict



Source: Gamo Zone Administration Public Relation Office (GZAPRO, 2020)

The Gomppa Process

It was held in February 2019. At this day two parties with extended members participated in their common treaty place known as Goymo River. The interviewee who participated from Kamba town stated that, the program was prepared by collaborative work of government and traditional institutions. The process was governed by the gassa woga of two dereta. In this regard, he has reported that:

After both parties have been agreed to reconcile with each other, the process was passed the Garda Kaati brought his people who were directly or indirectly participated in the feud. The Kamba kawo did similar things as well and all other participants including political elites from woreda and zone and the GEC members attended the process. The second step was; elders as well as participants were took an oath of office. Thirdly, discussions have proceeded; in the discussion, the root causes and impacts of feud were identified; penalties on wrongdoers were accorded according to woga of Gamo; and slaughtering of sheep was done in the middle of river by ritual leaders (maakas). As a result, the parties' members who have committed wrong deed were asked forgiveness from a party who considered themselves as right and vis-a-vis. Finally, it was ended by the final common word have to say three times was yoo...yoo...yoo, meaning peace for all, we reconciled each other, we have rehabilitated our relations, we are happy, etc. (KII, March 4/2020).

Photo 3: The Reconciliation Process of Garda-Kamba Dereta Conflict (February 2019)



Source: Gamo Zone Administration Public Relation Office (GZAPRO, 2020)

Based on their agreed discussion, elders who have facilitated (mediated) the negotiation between two dereta have decided the following four points.

- Reconstruction of a house for an individual whose house was burned;
- Those who fled must be returned to their home immediately;
- The robbed properties must be returned to the owners; and
- The closed roads from both sides must be opened.

Consequently, roads were reopened to everyday activities to both dereta including markets. Despite this, during the time of data collection in Kamba town, none of the aforementioned decisions were done. For instance, the house was not reconstructed and hence the owner of the house changed his workplace to Arba Minch; many public servants of kamba woreda who were deprived of their properties changed their workplace to newly established woreda (i.e. Garda-Marta woreda); and until the time of data collection in Kamba town (March 4/2020) the robbed properties were not returned to the owners. Because of these reasons, the reconciliation process has not achieved the expected goals. It lacks an important step and impartiality. A senior official in the interview discussion in Kamba town has argued that:

According to Gamo woga, after slaughtering the goat or sheep, to make the reconciliation process full and impartial, both parties (the killed family members and the killer family members) must walk over the blood of goat or sheep but in our case this step was escaped due to the Kamba kawo couldn't identify the killers in the feud. This is why the Garda kaati has asked two questions to and accused the Kamba kawo.

These two questions were: “Where are your sons who have killed ours? And who is/are walking over these bloods? He said that, if you don’t bring them, the bloods of sheep will find them (a kind of amazing cursing)”. Without answering these questions the reconciliation process was preceded. As a result, people look this reconciliation as fake and it lacks impartiality. Furthermore, these mistakes and partialities are playing some roles in furthering rejection of cultural leaders in traditional leadership processes in their communities (KII, March 4/2020).

The Settlement of Garvansa -Kole Dereta Conflict (2020)

Formerly, Garvansa and Kole kebeles were one of administrative units of Bonke woreda. But, following the reestablishment of woreda and zone administrations, the Garvansa kebele remained in Gerese woreda and Kole has become parts of newly added woreda (Bonke) –which is located at Gezeso town. Following the reestablishment process, resources and services shortages have occurred in the area. As an interviewee in Gerese town said, electric poles and lines were planted to the Bonke woreda through Garvansa kebele without giving the service to it. Because of this uneven distribution of resources and services people of Garvansa kebele were unhappy and hence at every night some unknown individuals were cutting the electric poles and lines—that causes electricity disturbances at Kole and around people of Bonke woreda. In relation with this crime, the police have arrested some fifty persons from Garvansa kebele. But, cutting of poles and electric lines continues. This causes grievance and protest among the Kole dere of Bonke woreda.

Because of the continuation of cutting electric poles and power disturbances, conflict was arising between two neighboring communities in this year. In line with this, in the interview discussion a senior official from one of zone departments described that:

“One day thousands of people from both communities were going to fighting. We send our police force to the area. By police force the conflict was managed. However, we didn’t bring peace to the communities. We have arrested more than fifty persons without any document and person witnesses. In doing so, we have requested cultural leaders’ help to bring peace and justice to the communities by the woga of the areas. As a result, cultural leaders from both communities accepted our request and have prepared deadline for resolution process” (KII, March 20/2020).

The Iginththo (Resolution) Process

As usual all deres in the study area have their common treaty (gassa or gogoja) places. At the time of iginththo process cultural leaders from both communities have played a great responsibility in bringing their respective people together at their common treaty place (river). The Garvansa dere was represented by demusa (kalicha) and kawo represents the Kole dere. I as a participant observer, the police and other governments' bodies participated in the program as an observer. Many people who are represented by demusa sat on the grass at one side of that river. The kawo was coming with his extended members on the way on other side of the river. Before they have crossed the river, demusa of Garvansa dissipated the barley flour on the river and addressed praying to their god—by believing it avoids the evil spirit (xalahe) from the river. And, it also aimed at saving the kawo from evil spirit. Then, the demusa allowed the kawo with his people to across the river and meets with that of Garvansa people.

Relatively thousands of people attended in the resolution process. Those include the police, local governments' bodies, cultural leaders from both communities and fifty arrested persons. The reason why police has been resorted the case to cultural leaders is that it lacks evidences. According to Zelalem, such types of cases are regulated by the woga of Gamo known as “Caaqo or Hathe Woga”. In his study, this woga implies that it is a law of pact. This law applies when cases are lacking evidences. If it is so, the members of the dubbusha must rely on caaqo or hathe Woga (oath). Because of this, the society's members in the study area believe in this proverb—that is “Wordora xilora qorizay hatheko” means Truth and false could be identified by water. He adds that with oath system both parties say we are xilo (hold true). If someone who commits the lying after taking oath will run the risk of gome, may result in death (Zelalem, 2016).

Based on this, all community members who have attended in the process took an oath of office before they went to do what the demusa and the kawo have told to them to do so. After that, both demusa and kawo ordered the dereta members to be in line, by setting fifty arrested persons in front line. The demusa has dissipated the barley flour on the river again and orders them to cross the river. People then started to cross the river one by one according to their line. At the mid time the one who has cut the pole returned back and says that my father has died, my mother is now sick therefore I am not going to allow my mother to die. In this way at the end of the day, there were nine individuals who returned back and were confirmed as criminals. Thus, the police took these nine criminals back to the police station and accused them. But they have provided

complaint to this action of the police and have claimed the penalty should be by traditional method. In the KIIs discussion, a senior official has said that:

They said that, we told our mistakes to demusa and kawo; we were loyal to them; we respected our culture in front of these leaders. Therefore, they have responsibility to punish us according to our culture rather than normal court system. The police then agreed to their complaint and send them again to cultural leaders. The police (accuser) reports its case to the traditional judges traditional judges then hear the case after verifying the case (the case was already verified in the oath system) they decided the sanction upon nine defendants (criminals). Accordingly, the damaged electric poles were changed in to cash (money form) and they were ordered to pay these (KII, March 20/2020).

Protest in Arba Minch (2018)

...“In 2018, political reforms have been taking place in Ethiopia. Following this, leadership gaps have occurred in all levels of governments. Leadership gaps then cause political crisis in the country. This is because the government organizations (GOs) such as security and justice sectors were unable to control these crises through normal court systems. Local government institutions such as kebele and one-to-five¹ are not in position to control problems as usual. One of political crisis happened in our country is the killings of Gamo and robbing of their properties in Burayu of Oromiya Regional State” (KII, March 9/2020).

As “Woga” annual magazine discussed, the assault of Gamo in Burayu caused bitterness and sorrow among Gamo people of SNNPRS. To show these, the dwellers of Arba Minch and surrounding people collaboratively with zone administration prepared demonstration at Arba Minch town. The aim of demonstration was to show bitterness and sorrow by peaceful way. However, in the mid of demonstration, suddenly youths have changed it in to protest by means of destroying some properties owned by Oromo individuals in Arba Minch (GZAPRO, 2019). According to research discussants’ (KIIs and FGD) argument, one of targeted property was Cooperative Bank of Oromiya, Arba Minch Branch—which is found at Sikela sub-city of Arba Minch town. Some aggressive youths went to it and ready to throw stones toward that bank. Elders (bairas) of the dere understood its bad consequences if not managed peacefully. It will

¹ *One-to-five is the smallest unit of government organizations within kebele institutions of study area—which is made up of one leader and five members.*

cause chasm between two beloved peoples, Gamo and Oromo. Therefore, they ran to the targeted area and raised green grass and kneeled in front of youths (see photo4). In doing so, the demonstrators refrained from throwing stones and damaging Cooperative Bank of Oromiya in Arba Minch.

Photo 4: Elders Using Green Grass in Arba Minch Town (2018)



Source: Gamo Zone Administration Public Relation Office (GZAPRO, 2020)

To explore more here, what did elders do in managing this conflict? And what roles were played by these elders in transforming communities' peace?

According to Gamo woga, in a situation in which conflicts are arising suddenly, the first and foremost activities elders do to manage these conflicts are: elders raise green grass with begging, and kneeling down in front of conflicting parties. Among the Gamo communities, elders' use of green grass with begging indicates; it is the symbol of peace; and it is an instrument for conflict management. Again, elders saying that 'you are angry', 'you are attacked', and 'you are in sad mood', but please tolerate it, and it also indicates that you are not like the grass we cut but you seem the grass that is remained green and growing up (GZAPRO, 2019). Similarly, the research participant discussed that at that time what elders did was as usual they have raised green grass, kneeled down in front of demonstrators and begged them (see figure above). In doing so, elders have saved that bank from damage and the demonstrators refrained from destroying the bank. This is because; among the study area, the woga (customary rule) plays a great role in regulating

people's behavior. However, if parties in conflict failed to give respect to those elders who are using green grass or tuuge process with begging, it is believed and is taken as disobeying to the woga—which causes *gome* (misfortune) to individuals as well as to the dere as whole. In line with this argument, Zelalem (2016:25) has stated that:

“It is believed that the existence of the social order is vital role for the fertility of the dere. As mentioned in the men and women group discussions failure to live according to the order of woga may cause misfortune to the individuals as well as to the groups or dere as whole”.

To conclude based on documents and KIIs and FGD analysis and discussions one can understand that among the Gamo nationality, there are three existing conflicts settling processes—that are used by traditional leaders such as elders. These processes are: (1) the tuuge or green grass process—which is used in conflict management; (2) the iginththo (resolution) process; and (3) the gomppa (reconciliation) process. In addition to this, there are six conflicts settlement levels/procedures followed by traditional authorities in the study area. Based on the degree of severity of cases or crimes the higher level authorities such as kawos interfere in the maintenances of communities' peace—which are only through appeal procedures from lower level dubbushas to higher level dubbushas (i.e., Aawa Baira Guta Koyrafire Sub-dere dere).

4.2. The Current Reasons to Recognize Gamo Elders as Model Peacemakers

As many writers and/or researchers believed, bringing peace is the common objective of both traditional and formal security and justice institutions. For example, Janel B. Galvanek and Katrin Planta have argued that the first and foremost aim of having traditional leaders as well as formal court or justice bodies in a given state is bringing peace (Planta, 2017). Traditionally, disputes are resolved by 'shimgelena'—which is carried out mostly by elders in many parts of Ethiopia (Wondyrad, 2015; and Bisrat, 2018). On the other hand, government institutions such as courts are established by the FDRE constitution for dispute resolution and providing rule of law. The constitution also gives some rooms for religious and customary institutions (Article 34 and 78) in dealing with peacemaking. In CDRMs Elders took the lion share in this respect (Assefa, 2013). There are reasons in which elders are dealing with conflicts resolution. Some of the

reasons are the followings. For Kagaha, the reason is that traditional institutions are easily accessible where often the state is absent; for they are being based on traditional principles of spirituality and peaceful coexistence; and their outcomes are expected by community members (Kagaha, 2014). According to Council of Nationalities (2014), conflicts are resolved by traditional authorities where governmental bodies are not able to reach in the area with several reasons. Furthermore, Galvanek and Planta argued that traditional mechanisms are more effective and more flexible and allows greater leverage for case-based decisions (Planta, 2017). What are the current reasons to recognize Gamo elders as ultimate indicators or models of peacemakers over the last two years? In the KIIs and FGD discussions, the following are the major reasons.

i. Accessibility, Efficiency and Effectiveness of TCMIs

In the study area disputes are settled/managed by using traditional institution—which is called *dubusha* and *woga*—which is Gamo customary law. *Gassa* is another traditional institution used to settle inter-dere conflicts. The *Tuuge* or green grass (management) process, the *iginththo* (resolution) process, and the *gomppa* (reconciliation) processes are traditionally well known processes of conflicts settlement in the study area. Accordingly, TCMIs are accessible for everyone in the study area at all levels of *dubbushas* (from *gadho* to *dere* level *dubbushas*)—which is unachievable for formal justice institutions. The research data obtained from KIIs and FGD have showed that, there are 17 First Instance Courts (FICs) and one High Court (HC) in the Gamo zone. On the other hand, there are more than 600 *dubbushas* which are giving justice and solving many problems of rural people. This implies that *dubbushas/gassas* are more accessible to people than that of court systems in the study area. Additionally, according to field work and documents assessment, making peace through elders in the *dubusha* institution has the following advantages.

Economic Advantages

- ✓ It saves people's costs while in searching justice from government justice institutions such as courts—that are far from rural people. Elders in peacemaking are not asking money for delivering service to the communities though sometimes parties in conflict are allowed to contribute some amount of money—which is for buying animals for sacrifice in reconciliation process. Adding that, elders' free service to the society is because they want to show their benevolence and loyalty in the traditional leadership. So that people in

the study area need dubbusha institutions than that of formal court systems for its economic purpose. It also saves time. Except homicide crimes, elders manage/resolve/reconcile all other crimes by using traditional peacemaking processes in not more than three appointments (GZAPRO, 2019). Thus, elders did all the peace processes within short period of time and with minimum cost—which is not more than 20 (twenty birr) for their service giving and excluding the market days from appointments for peacemaking—that make TCMIIs more efficient and effective (Zenebe, 2015).

Social Advantages

In the discussion with KIIs and FGD and document assessments, making peace through elders has the following social advantages

- ✓ Elders work for social cohesion. Among the Gamo dere, traditional leaders are believed to be neutral to the parties in the conflict. When they reach the age of 50s, their main purpose in the society is shimgelena for they are neutral to both parties. In doing so, elders defend the society from committing gome—which will cause misfortune to the people.
- ✓ They work for communities' durable peace through consensus building. The Gamo woga allows all parties in the conflict (except women) that include youth, adult, elders and traditional leaders to debate and discuss until consensus is achieved. Their role in peacemaking is for win-win style rather than for win-lose style like as formal justice institutions. According to Zenebe, all participants can discuss and debate in the dubbusha/gassa places through ciye, naare, and giddo woga process until reaching common consensus. Finally, 3-5 elders are allowed to conclude the debate and discussion points based on the consensus they have reached. They ended by saying yoo...yoo...yoo. The aim of building consensus is to sustain harmonious relations between people as well as environment (Zenebe, 2015).

As viewed by KIIs and FGD discussants and document assessments, all discussed virtues such as accessibility; efficiency and effectiveness make the traditional institutions as well as leaders relatively advantageous over formal court systems and judges in the study area.

ii. Values of Traditional Peacemaking

Gamos throughout their history have developed and practiced values of traditional conflicts resolution. As research respondents mentioned, the following are the main one:-

Truth: among the Gamo society, there is belief in searching truth before someone is going to attack/take revenge on another one. This is why elders use tuuge process in Arba Minch and somewhere else. With regard to this, all KIIs and FGD discussants have unanimously said that, this was why elders use green grass (tuuge) process at Arba Minch before their children were going to destroy the properties of Oromo brothers. After they managed the demonstrators from destroying that bank, they have sent the public delegates to the Oromiya Regional State (ORS) in order to find the truth. As they argued, the truth was completely different from what social media were reported. And hence the evil action doesn't reflect the whole Oromo people rather it was the action of some deviants.

Seniority: it is a basis for initiation of adult man to be elected as halaqa as well as to get respect from community members in traditional leadership processes. Elders who are responsible to make peace in the society have been chosen based on principle of seniority. In any conflict situation, elders are there in between both parties. Participants of the study said that when senior elders use tuuge or green grass process in difficult situations, juniors and youths have duty to respect them. By doing these, elder (s) can change the difficult situations to peaceful one.

Oath (Caaqo Woga): it is one of four categories of woga among the Gamo dere (Zelalem, 2016). The dere to dere conflicts are resolved at their common treaty places. There are caaqo (oath) places between all deres within it. There are also caaqo places between Gamo and other neighboring ethnic groups such as Gofa, Wolaita, Guji Oromo and so on (Zenebe, 2015). According to KIIs, the conflict between Gamo and Wolaita was settled at their common caaqo place—called *Hamasa River* in 2011.

Forgiveness: according to Zelalem (2016), Zenebe (2015), and my informants, an individual or group who is/are considered as wrong deed have duty to ask forgiveness from victimized individual or group members and the victimized individual/group members have also duty to pardon the wrong deeds. Otherwise it causes come to parties in conflict for they are not living according to woga of the dere.

iii. Weakness of Governmental Institutions to Provide Peace

According to research participants' discussion, prior to 2018 the status of government institutions typically one-to-five groups in the zone was in a good position in dealing with social, economic, and political aspects of the society. They said that, mostly in rural areas all adults including traditional leaders in the community were organized in to one-to-five working groups

in which they discuss about daily and weekly agendas issued from governments. They added that all agendas are not from above but sometimes they can set agenda for themselves. The role of governments in this regard were: organizing adults in to one-to-five groups, preparing report format, setting marking agendas, receiving report via hard copy and telephone and evaluating the performances of these organizations. With regard to this, researcher has asked that did the act of the governments consider the will of people. The research respondents said that though it has economic and social advantages sometimes the government bodies organize controversial individuals together under one one-to-five work group. Hence, in some cases it becomes hotchpotch group rather than harmonious one.

According to zone and woreda cadre informants, it is the smallest unit of government organizations within kebele institutions of SNNPRS in general and Gamo zone in particular. It is made up of one leader and five members. By using this, farmers were discussing about agricultural packages, working their farm activities together, resolving their social and economic problems including interpersonal disputes. Elders in KIIs and FGD discussion have argued that, these were its main advantages in addressing much amount of problems without requesting much hand from higher level governments. It helps all adults within this group to practice leaderships and solve their minor problems. Through reporting system, unsolved problems were taken to higher government bodies. The report exchangeabilities between institutions help the government bodies to give regard to the development agendas. On the other hand, one of its disadvantages was: it has replaced the Gamo traditional working groups such as tsire and zura in which men and women of the dere are organized to hoe the land and carry the manure to the field. For it was replacing traditional leadership and working organizations, cultural leaders were forgetting their previous tasks such as peacemaking. This implies that when government institutions get strengthened, systematically TCMI's are getting weaker and replaced by formal institutions. On the contrary, some of respondents have argued that this doesn't mean that it was not completely replaced but the role of TCMI's and elders were significant in convincing farmers to new agricultural technologies and most of one-to-five groups' heads were elders (i.e. elders were playing indirect role in leadership processes).

Following political reforms that took place in Ethiopia; leadership gaps have occurred in all levels of governances. Thus, participants in this regard have said that, one-to-five organizations have become dysfunctional; its members were drifted from groups; and hence there are no much

discussions that are taking place within these groups. The occurrences of leadership gaps have caused political crises here and there in the country in general and Gamo zone in particular. Because of this, the command post is ruling the region. When government laws and institutions are unable to provide peace and rule of law, it is a time for elders' intervention in to peacemaking activities. With regard to this, one of KII has stated that:

At Arba Minch's demonstration, the security force members were not ready to calm down the crisis and this is because the road was closed by protesters. If we didn't use the tuuge process, the outcome of conflict becomes very harsh. There may be human loss and destruction of properties. So, we have replaced the responsibilities of security bodies. With tuuge process, we have managed this fearful bitterness situation in to peaceful one without bloodshed (KII, February30/2020).

iv. The Roles of Medias

The role of Gamo elders in managing the demonstrators from destroying the Cooperative Bank of Oromiya in Arba Minch town was highly shared by many public and private Medias including social Medias. Many national and international Medias repeatedly have reported this good peacemaking process (tuuge process) of the Gamo dere and received appreciations. To mention some of institutions that have given recognitions and appreciations were the followings. The FDRE Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed in his Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) summit has said that "Gamo elders' role has these implications. It implies that Ethiopia has yet enough elders to make peace, youths are still giving recognition to the elders as well as customary laws and youths also believed with the principle of not murder; by doing this they can win and become exemplary to many youths". He also came to Arba Minch and gave recognition to the Gamo elders. Other institutions and individuals who have given recognitions and appreciations were: Dr. Mulatu Teshome, the FDRE former president, state presidents such as Ato Million Matwos of SNNPRS, Ato Lema Megersa of Oromiya Regional State, deputy mayor of Addis Ababa City Engineer Takele Uma and many others. The state and zone councils such as council of SNNPRS and Gamo Zone Council have also given recognition and appreciation to the Gamo elders. Some reporters and journalists have written about Gamo elders as the ultimate indicators (models) of peacemakers since 2019 were: Henok Seyoum (reporter) through dire tube and Zenebe Wola (journalist and writer) through JTV (GZAPRO, 2019).

According to KIIs and FGD discussions, four roles have been played by Medias. One is that they have played a great role in promoting and introducing the elders' existing culture of making peace to the world. Second, they are basis for getting recognitions and appreciations from different institutions and individuals; third, elders were energized and increased their commitment in making peace without restrictions of boundary. Thus, they have mediated the Guji-Kore and Burji-Kore conflicts respectively in the year of 2019. Fourth, it helps the governmental bodies to give due considerations to the traditional peacemaking mechanisms and institutions in order to institutionalize them. Hence, the zone government has established Gamo elders' council (GEC) at zone level and designed and proposed the budget project to build Gamo elders dubbusha at Arba Minch town (see photo in appendix IV).

4.3. Challenges and Limitations of Traditional Peace-making Processes in the Study Area

Based on participants' discussion and documents assessment, the researcher has discussed the challenges of traditional peacemaking institutions and leadership in the study area as follows. Because of globalization by charismatic protestant religion movements and modern education from abroad, the charismatic religious leaders and followers as well as educated elites have seen the way people worship, the way traditional leaders solve problems and the way they make law is traditional, bad and incompatible with spiritual and physical worlds. The protestant religion leaders and followers accuse the traditional faith systems of Gamo as evil spirit and pagans. Educated elites who have lived in urban areas look the traditional leadership as well as peacemaking processes as backwardness and unwanted (Zenebe, 2015). The research respondents have argued that, the source of this accusation is ethnocentrism—which means the attitude that one's own group, culture, ethnicity, religion or nationality is superior to others. With regard to this, all elder participants argued that, religious leaders as well as followers—especially protestant religion followers in the study area need the result of our peacemaking process (i.e. peace and truth) but they resist our ritual processes such as oath and animal sacrifices used to reconcile, resolve and transform peace. This is definitely ethnocentrism—that resulted from the influence of westernization.

To strengthen the above argument, Zenebe had argued that the Gamo's spiritual view of world is harmonious and peaceful relationship between spiritual and physical worlds. As he

evaluated, the relationship between spiritual and physical world is strong and cannot tolerate any interference from traditional leaders, individuals as well as community as a whole. Again, the society has strong belief on respecting cultural taboos (*fiilata*) otherwise it causes gome—that affects the society negatively. This negative effect of gome has included: infertility, prolonged drought and rain, famine, strange disease that kills people, crops and livestock, conflicts, etc. In order to neutralize people from gome, ritual leaders such as cultural priests (*Maakas*) are the responsible bodies among the Gamo ethnic group in the southern Ethiopia.

In the process of creating modern state in Ethiopia, mostly Menelik II, Haile Sillasie I, and Derg successive regimes haven't accommodated the different cultures of nations nationalities and peoples in its southern region rather they have followed the assimilationist policies. In the process of state formation and law establishment, many traditional institutions and leaders have been removed and replaced by the modern state machinery (Aadland, 2002; and Markakis, 2004) cited in (Zenebe, 2015). This was because the adoption of major laws by these successive regimes of Ethiopia in the late 1950s and 1960s is from abroad. The main aims of adopting these laws were to achieve the pursuits of modernizing Ethiopian laws (Assefa, 2013). Did these imposed laws have accommodated the cultural relativism of Ethiopia? Assefa answered no! Because these imposed laws were highly influenced by the laws of different countries of Europe and America. These laws were adopted in favor of modernity and not accommodated the principles of cultural relativism. But, the 1995 FDRE constitution of Ethiopia has somewhat under its article 39 recognized the self-government rights for each NNPE. Articles 34 and 78 also embrace with religious and customary institutions and laws in dealing with disputes resolution—which is under principle of constitutional supremacy (Rule of Law). Despite this, some scholars argued that although the FDRE constitution in its ambitious principles recognizes cultural autonomy for each NNPs, due to unwillingness and policy of political pragmatism ruling regime the right to self-determination is under problem to exercise the said right (Kinkino, 2013). Teshome (2008) cited at Kinkino (2013) has also argued that the Ethiopia's ethnic-based federalism increases ethnic conflicts rather than curing it. On the contrary to these arguments Tsegaye has argued that ethnic-based federalism attempts to deal with the old and new conflicts that emerged in/from the past and are emerging day by day (Tsegaye, 2009). In light of that, I argue on pro and con arguments discussed on the controversial principles of FDRE constitution can be

compromised through comprehensive national political elites' dialogue and by increasing constitutionalism—which means daily preaching of constitutional principles to the public.

According to KIIs and FGD participants answer, some of the challenges which come from local formal leaders are discussed below. Local leaders in that sense refer to leaders of kebele, woreda and zone structures (Zenebe, 2015). As he argued, some of formal leaders have participated in the removal of some dubbusha places and taken them for different public purposes rather than traditional leadership and peacemaking activities. Yet, the problem in this regard is still unsolved. Informants have argued that when formal local leaders recruit elders to different positions, they are mostly selected based on partisanship. For example, in 2020, the public delegates to Gamo-Gonder² relation was recruited based on their loyalty to the ruling party rather than cultural virtues they have. Local leaders have also claimed to recruit all members of GEC based on this criterion. From three cadre KIIs, except one, both of them confirmed and struggled in favor of elders' side. They said that, the appointment of traditional leaders for cultural leadership and public delegate is only according to woga of Gamo and based on their cultural status, knowledge, and skill they have in the society. Some of the elders in KIIs and FGD discussion have strictly said that some zonal and woreda cadres want to make division among and/or between elders in GEC by saying Ato egele is our supporter and Ato egele is not our supporter. They recommended that this has to be corrected.

Another challenge comes from the expansion of urbanization. With regard this; one of KII in Kamba town has said that the 'kole dubbusha adbar found in Kamba was served as justice giving place for its people for long time; however now a days because of urbanization it has been kept for museum (see photo in appendix V).

As Zenebe (2015) asserted, other challenges include: insufficient participation of women in peacemaking, insufficient amendment of Gamo customary law, division of Gamo in to small deres and lack of codification.

² "Gamo-Gonder relation" refers that in 2020 Gamo elders were delegated as peace ambassadors to preach peace and to exchange their peacemaking experiences to that of Gonder people at Gonder town.

4.4. The Relationship between Traditional and Formal Peace-making Mechanisms in the Study Area

Both peacemaking approaches' first and principal goal is working toward bringing peace. In that sense, Galvanek and Planta had brought an empirical example, which shows their pragmatic characteristics of coexistence of peacemaking mechanisms in their Liberian case study. Pragmatism by these researchers therefore is, in the sense of working efficiently and with the common objective of bringing peace. The peaceful coexistence and even cooperation between various elements such as elders, chiefs, Liberian Justice Bodies (LJB) and NGOs in peace building activities in Liberia had elevated peace in the country. Another characteristic of their relationship, which was indicated in the Liberian case study, is the mistrust between conflict resolution mechanisms. Mistrust by Galvanek and Planta, whereby both peacemaking approaches do not trust and not sufficiently value the work that the others are doing. According to them, there was a lack of respect for traditional mechanism, its values and principles. And hence, this characteristic has led to tension or competition between these mechanisms of peacemaking; thereby it has potentially played in furthering of conflicts (Planta, 2017).

Another factor that embraces and/or affects the relationship between the modern and traditional methods in conflict management is the supremacy of constitution of any country. In Ethiopian context for example, Article 34 and 78 of FDRE constitution embraces and gives some space for religious and customary based norms and institutions in order to deal with dispute resolution however the same constitution under Article 8 dictates that such norms and constitutional practices can only be valid on so far as they do not violate norms in the constitution (Assefa, 2013) According to him, it is declared that 'The constitution is the supreme law of the land. Any law, customary practice.....which contravenes this constitution shall be of no effect.'

Among the Gamo of SNNPRS, as Zenebe argued, the relationships between formal or modern and informal or traditional systems have coexisted for the past years without one really and fully dominating the others. Due to its topography, ecology and peripheral south location, state structures and institutions have not been fully extended in to Gamo highland—that gives chances to develop the indigenous institutions and functioning well in the area. According to him, in the time of crisis both systems are searching each other in finding truths. Because of this, they are working cooperatively and in some cases both systems are not working cooperatively. For example Ethiopian governments have played a great role in destruction of dubbusha institutions (Zenebe, 2015).

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

Based on data obtained from primary and secondary sources, African elders have played a great role in peacemaking activities mainly through mediation and reconciliation mechanisms. Though the roles of elders have been challenged by colonialism, but still they have indispensable role in making peace in traditional societies of Africa. They are effective peacemakers, because they have the following blessings: their long experiences; wisdom; moral persuasion; their strong relationship with communities; and the respect they have accorded in the society (Kariuki, 2015; Ibrahim, 2018; and South world, 2013).

In Ethiopia although elders' roles is minimum, they have critical roles in conflict resolution. What makes their roles minimum is; the influence of imported religions such as Christianity and Islamism that hinder traditional leaders to make peace in Ethiopia (Kariuki, 2015). Shemgelina is the main indigenous mechanism to make peace in different parts of our country, Ethiopia. Shemgelina and other indigenous peacemaking mechanisms have two major features. First: their primary aim is conflict transformation and community peace (i.e. elders' (shemageles') role in this regard is beyond adjudication of disputes rather they have aimed at resolving disputes and transforming the peace of community). Second: they have strong linkage with belief system and morality. Because of its spirituality, faithfulness, wisdom and search for truth behavior, elders' primary function is to reconcile disputes when they have arisen between individuals or communities (Assefa, 2014).

Among the Gamo of SNNPRS, conflicts are arising because of the following reasons. The primary reason rests on competition over natural resources such as land, sacred places (forests, dubbusha and burials), and water for irrigation and fishing; Secondly, there are poverty related reasons such as unemployment and scarcity of resources and services such as roads and electricity; thirdly, political and criminal issues such as corruption, theft and robbing, rape and abduction, murder, etc.; and fourthly, value and faith-based reasons such as the decrease of culture of tolerance between different religious followers. These reasons are much similar with the Wallensteen's causes of conflict—that include: Need, Greed, Creed and Triggering factors (Wallensteen, 2007).

As investigated in the research processes, the tuuge, iginththo, and gomppa are three existing making peace processes among the Gamo dere of Southern Ethiopia. These are used for conflict management, resolution and reconciliation processes respectively. Gamo elders use these processes for settling interpersonal/intra group conflicts, intra/inter-family conflicts, intra/inter-clan conflicts, and intra/inter-dere conflicts through mediation, arbitration, reconciliation, and adjudication. The place where elders make peace traditionally is called dubbusha. Dubbusha in this regard refers to justice giving place (as public assembly or court). There are three levels of dubbushas in the study area. Gadho dubbusha (palace or sacred house), Qommo or Guta dubbusha and Dere dubbusha. Gassa or gogoja is a place where inter dere conflicts are settled. They are considered as caaqo or oath places in which all types of conflicts are settled through cultural power hierarchies such as ogaaddes (peace ambassadors), halaqas, and kawos/kaatis. Elders use Gamo woga as customary law for conflict management, resolution and reconciliation. For it regulates people's relationships, different cultural power hierarchies use it for peacemaking processes. Based on the degree of severity of cases or crimes, the higher level authorities such as kawos/kaatis are interfered in to maintenances of communities' peace—which are only through appeal procedures from lower level dubbushas to higher level dubbushas (i.e., Aawa Baira Guta Koyrafire Sub-dere Dere) (e.g., Zelalem, 2016; and Zenebe, 2015). Based on the following reasons, the role of Gamo elders in peacemaking is recognized or appreciated by the Ethiopian government and the people in general over the past two years. Based on documents' assessment and KIIs and FGD discussions result, there are four major reasons. These are: accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness of TCMI's such as dubbushas and their economic and social advantages; having traditional peacemaking values such as truth, seniority, caaqo woga, forgiveness, etc. among the people of Gamo; weakness of government institutions to provide peace and justice; and the roles of Medias in promoting and introducing elders work to whole world. Following the work of journalists and writers, different governments' institutions and individuals have been given recognition and appreciation to the Gamo elders as the model peacemakers over the past two years (2018-2020).

However, traditional making peace processes and procedures in the study area are not without challenges and limitations. One of it is the influence of globalization. It is reflected through education, religious movement and in the process of adopting Ethiopian criminal and civil laws. The other challenge comes from local and central governmental bodies. In this case,

governmental leaders need TCMIIs as well as elders as a means for their political agenda performances. In one way or another, formal political leaders have participated in removal of dubbushas and took them to other governmental purposes (Zenebe, 2015). Expansion of urbanization has also negative influences upon Gamo traditional leadership and peacemaking mechanisms. According to Assefa, when it comes to rights of women, the Gamo woga for traditional leadership and settling conflicts has lacked participation. Both KIIs and FGD informants have viewed that women in the study area are participated at dere dulata only as witness but it is forbidden for them participate as judges at dubusha/gogoja assemblies. This is because, as Assefa argued, the principles of CDRMs are found on the idea of collective rights and responsibilities (Assefa, 2013). The question of impartiality is another recent challenge that facing elders in conflicts settlement. For instance, in the case of Garda-Kamba conflict the Kamba Kawo has shown partiality when he was asked to bring murders (KII, March 4/2020).

The last discussion point of the study is about the coexistence between formal and informal peacemaking approaches. In this regard, the researcher has asked that, does it cooperative? Or conflicting? Based on answers of research participants as well as documents analysis, there is cooperation between two approaches at the time of searching truth and peace. This is because; the main objective of both approaches is bringing peace, thereby this complementary relationship promoting making peace processes and outcomes. On the other hand, there is competition between two institutions, thereby it potentially furthering conflicts (Planta, 2017). The same is true for Gamo zone of SNNPRS. In the time of crisis both systems are searching each other in finding truths. Because of this, they are working cooperatively and in some cases both systems are working not cooperatively (Zenebe, 2015).

5.2. Recommendations

The researcher has given recommendations for responsible bodies based on research results and findings. It is believed that these recommendations will be helpful at least for further studies.

For Government Bodies

-) Organize governmental and non-governmental organizations who are working on the areas of indigenous knowledge related to peace and security studies and practice. This helps them to utilize their resources wisely in institutionalization of Gamo traditional conflict settlement institutions such as dubbusha. This organization also helps them to do further researches on values of Gamo woga in conflict management, resolution and transformation.

) Call for lawyers who dwelled in Gamo zone in order to write the long lived legend of Gamo woga. This is because; one of its challenges while the elders in the discussions have emphasized was lack of codification. In the way of writing and documenting the woga, they will familiarize it by UNESCO. To do so, the researcher has recommended that there must be temporary organization made up of experts, officials and traditional leaders—which is responsible to Gamo Zone Culture, Tourism and Sport department. It organizes the lawyers, enables resources and consults different stake holders for achievements of its objectives.

) Relevant relationship between modern or formal and traditional or informal institutions is required. It should be based on mutual support and avoid unjustified interferences over one another.

For Researchers

) As research results indicated, though the role of woga in conflict management, resolution and transformation is critical and indispensable, it has many challenges and limitations that have to be corrected. Therefore, all interested scholars who have done researches on peace and security studies are requested to do profound studies on this issue.

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Appendices

Appendix I: FGD Guideline Questions

1. Understanding of:

- ✓ The Concept of conflict;
- ✓ Causes Of Conflict, by stating the most common conflicts/crimes in the area
- ✓ Types and effects of conflicts;
- ✓ How these mechanisms are related to each other in the study area?

2. Over the past two years why government and people recognizing the greater attention paid to Gamo elders as model peacemakers?

- ✓ Is it romanticisation? Or still do they have power? Or it was accidental?
- ✓ Do they fully resolved conflicts when they occurred in the study area?
- ✓ Selection criteria of the elders?
- ✓ Challenges currently facing elders?

3. In the case of Arbaminch demonstration since 2018:

- ✓ Why did the demonstrators refrain from throwing the stones and destroying that Bank in Arba Minch?
- ✓ Who were the protestors at the forefront?
- ✓ Who were the elders on their knees?
- ✓ What did the elders do, say, indicate, etc.?

4. Cultural Administrative System and Values:

- ✓ structures responsible for Conflict resolution;
- ✓ Public gathering places; dubusha or gogoja and Caaqo (treaty places)
- ✓ Procedures and processes they used in conflict resolution
- ✓ The role of customary law (woga) and values
- ✓ Using Tuuge or green grass?

Appendix II: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Do elders still have the power in the study area?
2. Are traditional mechanisms really intact still now?
3. Why people and government recently recognize Gamo elders as the model peacemakers?
4. What are the existing making peace processes in the study area?
5. What roles do elders play in conflict management in the study area?
 - a. Mediation?
 - b. Arbitration?
 - c. Reconciliation?
 - d. Others?
6. The challenges of the coexistence between two mechanisms/institutions
7. What challenges/Limitations are elders currently facing in resolving conflicts in the study area?
8. How are the indigenous mechanism and formal mechanism of conflict management in the study area interconnected?
 - A. **Complementary (peaceful coexistence, cooperation)?** Is the relationship between two approaches leads to more (or better) conflict management options for the people, thereby promoting conflict management processes and outcomes?
 - B. **Competing (opposing)?** Is the relationship of both approaches leads to tension or competition b/n these mechanisms of conflict management, thereby potentially furthering conflicts?

Appendix III: FGD Members Were In Discussion



Photo by the researcher (2020)

Appendix IV: Photo of Basement Complex of Gamo Dere Dubbusha

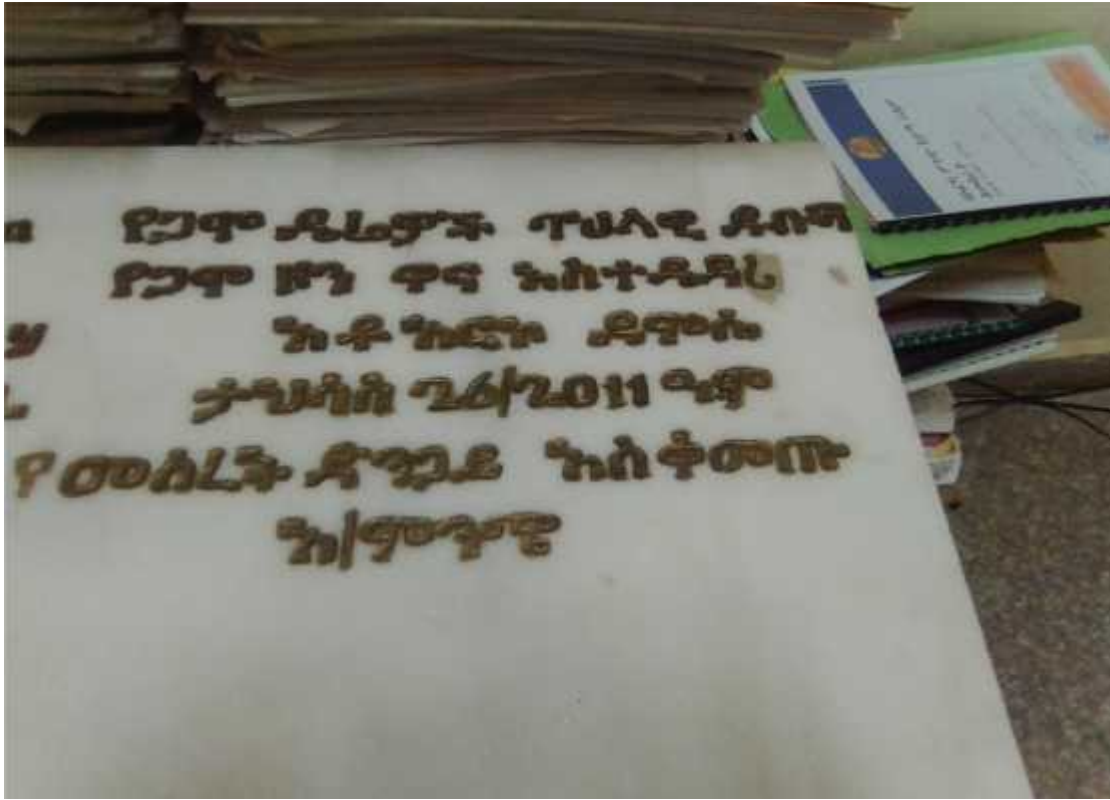


Photo by the researcher (2020)

Appendix V: Kole Dubbusha Adbar in Kamba town kept for museum



Photo by the researcher (2020)

Appendix VI: Glossary

Aawa: head of family

Ayile: ex-slave

Baira: an elder brother responsible to reconciliation and rituals at family level

Boora: an ox, symbol of asking forgiveness or excuse

Caaqo: treaty; oath

Ciye: the first alternative solution provision process during conflict resolution.

Degela: marginalized social groups mainly engaged in tannery

Dubbusha: public assembly places for peace-making or giving justice

Fiilata: taboos

Gassa/Gogaja: common treaty place for deres and sub deres

Gassa: common treaty place of dere or sub-dere

Gome: traditional institution useful for selecting wrong doers

Gomppa: reconciliation, conflict transformation process

Guta: village

Igintho: reconciliation process

Kaati: name of king (Kawo) in some deres.

Kawo: king responsible for ritual and administrative issues at dere level Dere

Maaga: traditional leader responsible for ritual and administrative issues.

Maakka: traditional priest of community.

Mala: free citizens who are not tanners, potters and ayile

Mana: marginalized social groups mainly engaged in pottery

Naare: final durable option offering process in traditional conflict resolution

Qangge: appealing process

Qommo: moiety, clan.

Tuuge: symbol of asking forgiveness

Woga: Gamo cultural law; rule; regulation

Xalahe: evil spirit

Xilo: hold truth

Declaration

I, undersigned, declare that this MA thesis is my original work and has not been presented for any diploma or degree in any academic institutions (colleges and universities) and that all sources of materials I used here for this thesis have been properly acknowledged.

Approved by:

Lako Pulea

Candidate

Signature _____

Date _____

Confirmed by:

Professor Habtamu Wondimu

Advisor

Signature _____

Date _____