

ETHNIC CONFLICTS AND MECHANISMS OF THEIR RESOLUTION
BETWEEN AFAR AND OROMO IN THE NORTH-EAST ETHIOPIA:
From 1991-2015

**PhD dissertation in Political Science and International
Relations**

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**A Dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of Addis Ababa
University in the fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Political Science**

by

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May, 2020

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is my original work and has never been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for this dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

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Confirmation for Defense

This is to certify that the dissertation prepared by ***Kebede Yimam Tadesse***, entitled: “*Ethnic Conflicts and Mechanisms of their Resolution between Afar and Oromo in the North -East Ethiopia: From1991-2015*” submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality. Thus, this dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as a dissertation advisor.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ALF – Afar Liberation Front

ANDP – Afar National Democratic Party

ARDUF – Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union Front

APDO Afar People Democratic Organization

ANRS Amhara National Regional State

AVA – Awash Valley Authority

CSA Central Statistical Agency

EC – Ethiopian Calendar

EPLF – Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front

EPRDF – Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front

EVDSA – Ethiopian Valleys Development Study Authority

FDRE Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FGD Focus Group Discussion

FRUD – Front for Restoration of Unity and Democracy

HOF -House of Federation

HRCO- Human Rights Council

HPR – House of Peoples Representatives

IGAD – Inter-Governmental Authority on Development

IRIN – Integrated Regional Information Network

MFA -Ministry of Foreign Affairs

ND - No Date

NDRP -National Democratic Revolutionary Program

OLF -Oromo Libration Front

NEBE – National Electoral Board of Ethiopia

NGOS – Non-Governmental Organization

PDRE – Peoples Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

PMAC – Provisional Military Administrative Council (Derg)

TGE – Transitional Government of Ethiopia

TPLF – Tigray People Liberation Front

TPSC – Tendehe Plantation Share Company

Definition of Terms

- Abagar* Traditional dispute resolution mechanism mainly in Wollo
- Balabat* Individual or families with hereditary status of rulership and high social acceptance
- Dega* Highland area in Ethiopia's climatic zone
- Dagu* Traditional information exchange mechanism in Afar society
- Kebele* Lower administrative unit in Ethiopia's local government structure (below *Woreda*)
- Kolla* Low land area mainly with hot climatic condition
- Mahiber* An association organized for the feast of Saints and helping with each other
- Shimglina* Traditional conflict resolution mechanism in Amhara society
- Shimagle* Those (mainly elders) who participate in arbitrating conflicting parties through *shimglina*
- Teklay Gizat* The name of provinces in Ethiopia during the period of imperial regime
- Woreda* Local administrative unit (below zone) which comprises a number of Kebeles within it
- Woynadega* A climatic zone that have moderate climatic condition (lies between *Dega* and *Kolla*)
- Zone* The highest level of local government in Ethiopian local government administrative structure (above *Woreda* below region)

Abstract

This study explores ethnic conflicts and mechanisms of their resolution between Afar and Oromo in the adjacent woreda of Afar and Amhara National Regional States in the northeast Ethiopia. Empirical data were gathered through key informant interviews, focus group discussions supplemented by informal conversations. The findings of the study show that the post-1991 Oromo in Dawa Harawa and their neighboring Afar in Dawe interactions were characterized by twofold relations, peaceful and conflicting. Peaceful interactions were spoiled by various factors that have contributed to conflicts. Such pacific and friendly relations have gradually been eroded after the introduction of ethnic-based federalism in Ethiopia. The study has identified root causes and triggering factors of the conflict. The root causes of the conflict are attributed to contested boundary, competition over natural resources, ethnic-based federalism, environmental degradation and drought and violent cultural practices. The Afar -Oromo conflict has also been triggered by Issa-Somali pressure, acts of homicide, theft and looting, government developments schemes, illegal arms, ethno-political parties. Furthermore, the study found that public grievances, distrust between the government and people, and hindrance to consensus and unity are the political factors that have attributed to the effects of the conflict. Findings of the study have also revealed that various conflict resolution mechanisms have been practiced among the two groups. Public conferences and establishment of joint peace committees are major accomplishments in changing attitudes. Exchange of criminals, legalization to control behavior and addressing the underlying causes of the conflict, such as some infrastructural developments are undertaken to redress contradictions of the communities. The study revealed that absence of comprehensive and all-inclusive conflict resolution mechanisms, led to continuation and escalation of conflicts between the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups in the borders of Afar and Amhara Regional States in the northeast Ethiopia. Instead, the over- all efforts of all stake holders refer to attempts on ad-hock approaches and elite perspective of ethnic conflict management to minimize the consequences of ongoing crises. The absence of holistic approach and proactive measures in the resolution mechanisms has left Afar-Oromo conflict far from viable solution. It is commendable that the best practices of the two resolution styles (the indigenous and the modern) be harmonized.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1 Background

During the period of the Cold War, as the world politics was dominated by East-West ideological rivalry, ethnic conflicts did not receive much attention (Weiner, 1994; Ryan, 2001; Wallenstein, 2007). In the post-Cold War era, however, rivalry between East and West blocks had lost its place for widespread ethnic conflicts that became one of the major new global realities. Many scholars (Ryan, 2001; Callahan, 2002; Merera, 2003; Esman, 2004; Hussein, 2005; Osaghae, 2006; Jinadu, 2007; Asnake, 2009; Yasin, 2010) have expressed the growing political significance of ethnic conflict around the world in general and in multi-ethnic countries such as Ethiopia in particular.

In the post Cold War era, Africa has been experiencing an increase in the scope and intensity of ethnic conflicts. Ethnic conflicts have been a major characteristic feature of African countries (Irobi, 2005; Musau, 2009; Ngengong, 2007; Osinubi and Osinubi, 2006; Osaghae and Robinson, 2005; Yasin, 2010). The continent of Africa is highly susceptible to inter/intra-state war and conflict (Alemayehu, 2004; Aremu, 2010; Asnake, 2011). Millions have lost their lives because of conflict and its atrocities (Kellas, 1998:43). Fuelled by the legacy of colonialism, it has the highest number of ethnic antagonism and violent inter-ethnic conflicts even in the post colonial era (Abbink, 1997; Yasin, 2010). The genocide of Rwanda, Darfur crisis (Straus, 2006, 2012), the failed state status of Somalia, Nigeria's ethnic conflict (Osinubi and Osinubi, 2006) and the current political crisis in South Sudan are few examples that prove the terrible consequences of ethnic conflicts.

Above all, the Horn of Africa is more vulnerable and can be cited as the most disputed part of the world whereby armed struggle, ethnic conflict, political instability and religious radicalism are its hallmarks (Cascão, 2013; Gaim, 2012; Muhabie, 2015a). And all these have exacerbated inter-ethnic conflicts and tensions. Hence, the Horn of Africa is the most violence stricken and conflict ravaged region of Africa due to inter/intra state conflicts. In the post colonial era,

African leaders politicized ethnicity for economic, social and political reasons; however, this caused many violent ethnic conflicts (Azarya, 2003; Abbink, 1997).

In spite of proud history of independence, Ethiopia is not unique in terms of ethnic tension and unrest from other multi-ethnic African countries. Inter-ethnic conflict is one of the persisting problems in Ethiopia. Due to different factors, the idea of pan-Ethiopianism is deteriorated and identity based conflicts become recurrent phenomena (Abbink, 2006, 2011; Daniel, 2003; Muhabie, 2015b) Different ethnic groups engage in conflict while competing over scarce resources and boundaries. Ethnic conflicts erupt frequently between Regional States especially because of borders (Assefa, 2007; Alemayehu, 2009; Abbink, 2011).

Although the causes, magnitude, complexity and intensity of the violence nature of conflicts vary from region to region, all Regional States of Ethiopia have witnessed some sort of violent ethnic conflicts (Asnake, 2004; Dessalegn, 2007; ARPD, 2008). Abbink (2011:605), for instance, discusses that ‘over the past 20 years, borders between regions, zones and districts have been the recurring issue of dozens of ethnic conflicts’. According to Abbink (2011) the newly formed ethnic federal arrangement generated ethnicity and ethnic tension in the country. In the year 2007/8 only, 28 ethnic conflicts were broke out in the country (Wondwosen and Záhóřík, 2008:67). The conflict of Oromo-Somali, Afar-Amhara, Oromo-Harari, Somali-Afar, Amhara-Oromo (Wondwosen and Záhóřík, 2008:67) are few examples that resulted in severe loss of life and displacement.

As a result, inter-ethnic relations have become more hostile and less peaceful. Regardless of differences in extent, actors, causes and consequences, Afar-Issa conflict (Biniam, 2016; Mu’uz, 2009), conflicts between Afar and Kareyu Oromo (Asnake, 2011), Gedeo-Guji ethnic conflict (Asebe, 2007, 2012) and the conflict between Alle and Konso (Bantayehu, 2016) are some clear evidence that indicate the recurrence of ethnic conflicts in the post-1991 period. Despite the fact that efforts have been made by the government (via the House of Federation or the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Regional States) and traditional institutions to tackle or mitigate ethnic conflicts, most of the conflicts have remained unresolved.

The conflict between the Oromo (in the Amhara National Regional State) and the neighbouring Afar is one of the protracted small- scale inter-ethnic conflicts in the northeast Ethiopia. Afar and

Oromo communities share common boundary and they have economic, social and cultural relations for centuries despite ethnic differences. However, ethnic relations are eroded and identity based conflicts started to emerge particularly in the border areas. Put simply, Afar-Oromo conflict is one among many conflicts that can be explained in terms of ethnicity. There have been small-scale armed conflicts in the area (Seyoum and Yacob, 2000). Small-scale conflicts are, as described by Dessalegn (2007:6), ‘...conflicts[that] involve individuals or small groups who attack a settlement or other individuals or small groups in which there is the use of arms, arson and stealing of livestock.’ The two ethnic groups dwell in adjacent *woreda* (districts) of Amhara and Afar Regional States respectively, in the north-eastern part of Ethiopia.

In the past, the conflict between the two ethnic groups was mainly over water, pasture, access routes, cultural values and tradition; a purely pastoralist and social cultural confrontation (Ahmed, 1994; Seyoum and Yacob, 2000; Dessalegn, 2007; Ali, 2008). However, as Yasin (2010:2) argues, ‘nowadays it turned to modern political disputes competing over territorial expansion as well as politico-economic hegemony’. This is an element of the wider Ethiopian context, which Asnake (2004: 68) notes that ‘the political changes since 1991 are changing the nature of conflicts and their management among Ethiopia’s ethnic groups’. Ethnic conflicts gained salience and proliferated frequently, and become common to ethnic groups that did not have records of violent conflict (Asnake, 2010; Muhabie, 2015b). Ethnic tensions are multiplied (Siraw, 2015; Tsegaye, 2010) and dozens of ethnic conflicts have occurred in the past decades (Abbink, 2006; HRCO, 2017) which claimed the lives of 5000 to 6000 individuals (Abbink, 2011:605). Therefore, attributing conflicts between Afar and Oromo merely to the competitions over natural resources and social, cultural issues is simplistic that doesn’t reveal the nature, magnitude, and consequences of current inter-ethnic conflict and lead to inappropriate resolution mechanisms.

Therefore, it can be fairly argued that Afar-Oromo relations in the north-east Ethiopia has been changed in the past two decades, particularly after the adoption of the predominantly ethnic based federal arrangement in the country. The conflict between the two ethnic groups has been exacerbated in the post -1991 period. The relationship between Afar and Oromo ethnic groups have deteriorated and conflicts become more common than before. Especially, in the post-1991 era, the conflict is increasing and resulted in dislocation and loss of life. The conflict ranges from killing to cattle raiding and property destructions including counter retaliation for such activities. Tensions

and contradictions are rising even though the level of intensity varies in time and space. To settle the conflict and normalize the condition, mostly traditional conflict resolution mechanisms were employed. However, identity based clash becomes more frequent with increasing scale and severity. Not only the degree but also the human and material cost of the conflict increased rapidly. Therefore, the conflict impeded the socio-economic lives of the people, and created insecurity and tension in the overall well being. This study intends to explore the dynamics of the Afar and Oromo conflict and the current practice of conflict resolution mechanisms.

2 Statement of the Problem

Conflict is natural to human experience which will arise when individuals or groups hold divergent values and interests. This leads to conflict and violence among different sections of societies and in a country at large. Conflict has both destructive as well as constructive outcomes. Destructively, conflict is a terrible phenomenon which results in displacement, devastation of property and loss of life (Alemmaya and Hagmann, 2008; Muhabie, 2015a). However, what is important is how to settle differences or the problems among disputing parties. Resolution of conflict is crucial for day to day co-existence as human societies are in constant search of resolution mechanisms, of conflicts (Pankhurst and Getachew, 2008). Conflict can be classified as inter-ethnic, inter-state or intra-ethnic and intra-state. This study focuses on ethnic conflicts and their resolution mechanisms.

Ethnic conflicts, as one dimension of conflict, have existed since the beginning of humanity; however, it is recently that scholars realize how extensive ethnic conflicts are around the world (Isajiw, 1999:122). As a result, several scholars and researchers focused their attention on ethnic conflict. Ethnic conflicts have occurred in different parts of the world in general and Africa in particular. Conflicts in Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the like are some illustrative examples of ethnic conflicts that brought about adverse consequences in Africa (Jinadu, 2007; Abrha, 2012).

Studies on ethnic conflict in Africa, (for example, Musau, 2009; Osinubi and Osinubi, 2006); Irobi, 2005 and Jinadu, 2007) discuss that ethnic conflicts have been a major characteristic feature of African countries and predominantly focus on the causes of ethnic conflict in Africa.

Other studies on ethnic conflict in Africa such as, Aapengnuo 2010; Osaghae, 1999, 2006; and Isajiw, 2000) focus on causes of ethnic conflict.

Narrow focus of the elite perspective of ethnic conflict management (Osaghae, 2006:10-11), and inadequate knowledge on ethnic conflict (Isajiw, 2000; Osaghae, 1999, 2006), are the major predicaments of ethnic conflict resolution. According to Osaghae (1999:57) regardless of 'new expansion in the volume of research output, knowledge on the subject remains unsatisfactory [and there is also]...much less strategies of resolution, management, and mediation...'. In terms of policy measure, Ethnic conflict resolution in Africa is characterized by 'reactive, *ad hoc*, and emergency rather than proactive and comprehensive approaches to problem solving' (Osaghae, 1999: 65). Osaghae (2006: 9) argues that 'Beginning from the late 1980s, there was an ascendancy of ethnic conflicts all over Africa The escalation of conflicts is perhaps the clearest indicator of the underdevelopment of conflict resolution mechanisms'. This might be the main reason why ethnic conflicts in Africa are often portrayed as little prospects for resolution. In general, in Africa and elsewhere, a lot of researches have been done on ethnic expressions, markers of ethnic identity and factors for ethnic conflict. Specially, there is extensive literature on the roots of ethnic conflict in African countries by sidelining resolution mechanisms of ethnic conflict.

The Afar-Oromo conflict is a long standing inter-ethnic conflict between neighbours of the eastern frontier line of the Amhara National Regional State (Oromo Zone) and the western part of the Afar National Regional State in north- east Ethiopia. Recently, some researchers (for instance, Dessalegn, 2007; Kebede, 2009; Yasin, 2010), have stressed the growing severity of such ethnic conflict in the area. All these express the seriousness of the problem especially in relation to the state restructuring in the post- 1991 period.

In the study area, the Oromo and Afar have lived side by side for long with mutual respect and in peace (Ali, 2008; Yasin, 2010). However, as time goes, peaceful mutual coexistence appears to have been deteriorating. The main factors for this include population growth, with shrinking land and natural resources or dwindling pastoral resources, drought and impoverishment, adoption of ethnic-based federal structure, lack of committed leadership at different levels in both regions, and poor integration of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms with modern skills (Asnake,

2004; Dessalegn, 2007; Kebede, 2009), like in many other areas in the country.

Studies on ethnic conflict in Ethiopia, for example, the Gedeo-Guji conflict (Assebe, 2007; Asnake, 2004), the Borana-Gerri conflict (Asnake, 2004; Befikadu, 1999), the Afar-Issa conflict (Asebe, 2007; Asnake, 2004; Markakis, 2003; Yasin, 2010), and Afar-Kerreyu conflict (Ayalew, 2001) are on conflicts between ethnic groups who reside in different regional states, which denote inter-regional state ethnic conflict. However, these studies mainly focus on the causes of conflicts. Although the causes identified by researchers are varied, the objectives of the studies are mainly to identify causes of conflict between ethnic groups. In this case, some claim competition over scarce resources (Markakis, 2003; Teka, 2004). There are also researchers who claim, particularly in the post- 1991 period, the nature of state structure in Ethiopia, which divides ethnic groups on language factor (Alemayehu, 2009; Asebe, 2007; Hizkias, 1996). According to Luba (2012: 68), ‘the causes of the Gedeo-Guji conflict, the Borana-Gerri conflict, and the Afar-Issa conflict were socio-cultural problems’. Currently, however, due to the dynamics of the ethnic conflict in Ethiopia, it is misleading to take social and cultural issue as mere cause of ethnic conflict. In short, all of the above studies are descriptions of the causes of ethnic conflicts by understating conflict resolution mechanisms and without which explaining the changing nature of conflict in the post-1991.

There is scarcity of literature on the ethnic conflict and resolution mechanisms between the Afar and Oromo in the study area, while there have been few researches conducted regarding Afar-Oromo conflict in other sites (for, example, Ahmed ,1994; Anteneh ,2013 ; Asnake,2011 ; Bekele ,2010; Kebede, 2009; Theodros, 2017). Different researchers have conducted studies at different times. Bekele (2010) studied conflict between Afar pastoralists and their neighbors, motivation and triggers. The study found that contemporary challenges like recurrent drought, illicit trade and weak inter-clan conflict management mechanism are root causes. Asnake (2011) also conducted study on Afar and Karrayu inter-group conflict in Awash valley. Using qualitative approach, Asnake uncovered that the conflict is typically pastoral conflict and can be explained in terms of resource competition. Anteneh (2013) studied the transformation of Afar-Amhara inter-ethnic conflict in Kewot *Woreda* of Amhara Region and Semurobi Gela Alo *Woreda* of Afar Region Using descriptive explanatory approach, Anteneh found out that the transformation process is bottlenecked by lack of capacity and narrow space for participation.

Similarly, Theodros (2017) studied inter-ethnic conflict transformation process in Habru *Woreda* of Amhara National Regional state and Chifra *Woreda* of Afar National Regional state. Employing qualitative approach and exploratory design, he found that the transformation processes are too limited.

Besides, the influences of ethnic federalism, social and political repercussions, why the conflict becomes recurrent and who are the actors behind it are less been investigated in Theodros's study, as well as, other studies mentioned above. In all the above studies, the resolution mechanisms are not well treated. The issues that these studies focused on are only causes of the conflicts. The studies also lack depth as they focused on a relatively large area. They also relatively overstretched themselves by dealing with many ethnic groups; Oromo, Amhara, Argoba and Afar. Furthermore, they didn't provide in-depth analysis of the conflict between the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups. Like in the above mentioned studies, these studies overlooked conflict resolution mechanisms by focusing mainly on the causes of the conflicts.

Therefore, the contribution of this study in addressing the aforementioned issues is the following: First, the study focused on conflict resolution mechanisms, which has not received much attention by various studies. In this regard, Hussein (2005: 20) notes that 'the bulk of the existing literature appears to focus on describing the problem and its causes rather than suggesting possible ways of resolving ethnic conflict by peaceful means'. Like wise, Isajiw (2000:122) argues that '...while both scholars and practitioners have become more aware of inter-ethnic conflicts, the approaches to their resolution have still remained not very effective.' On the other hand, Osaghae (2006:17) stresses that 'the emphasis on reconciling and accommodating elite interests in the name of managing ethnicity is the main obstacle' to applying viable conflict resolution mechanisms. In Ethiopia, conflict resolution efforts at the community, regional and national remain less fruitful. There is still a lack of strategy of harmonizing different conflict resolution mechanisms. This study contributes to the endeavours to fill the gap in the literature on the subject.

Secondly, this study intends to fill the gap in the literature by drawing attention to farmer-pastoralist inter-ethnic conflict as an example of small- scale or low-intensity conflict¹ of intra-state boundary conflict. High-intensity inter-ethnic conflicts associated with regional boundaries, such as Afar and Issa, Borena and Gerri, Guji and Gedeo have obscured the equally important low-intensity inter-ethnic conflicts such as conflicts between Afar and Oromo in the study area. So far, a significant proportion of intellectual and policy energy has been channeled to the former.

The purpose of this study is, therefore, to contribute new perspectives to the little literature on the understanding and resolution of the inter-ethnic conflicts by considering the experience of the frontiers of Afar and Amhara Regional States in the north-east Ethiopia. Assessing the study on the Oromo of Dawa Harewa *Woreda* in Oromo Zone of the Amhara National Regional State and its adjacent Dawe *Woreda* of the Afar National Regional State.

3 Core Argument

The central argument of this study is that absence of comprehensive and all-inclusive conflict resolution mechanisms led to continuation and escalation of conflicts between the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups in the borders of Afar and Amhara National Regional States in the northeast Ethiopia. Instead, overall efforts of all governmental and non-governmental bodies refer to attempts on ad-hock approaches and elite perspective of ethnic conflict management to minimize the consequences of ongoing crises.

4 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study is to explore ethnic conflicts and mechanisms of their resolution between Afar and Oromo in two adjacent *woreda* of Afar and Amhara National Regional States, from 1991-2015.

The study has the following specific objectives:

- To assess the dynamics of the Afar –Oromo conflict and cooperation in the study area,

¹ According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program(UCDP) minor armed conflicts are conflicts with more than 25 deaths but fewer than 1000 for the year and for the duration of conflict(Wallenstein,2007:22).

- To explore factors perpetuating conflict between the two ethnic groups,
- To identify effects of the conflict between the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups,
- To examine the conflict resolution mechanisms employed in the study area,

5 Research Questions

The core research question of this study is that, what are the major ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms between Afar and Oromo in the study area.

The study will attempt to address the following specific research questions:

- What are the major changes exhibited in relationships of Afar and Oromo from 1991-2015? How and why did the long period of mutual interdependence and co-existence between Afar and Oromo ethnic groups change overtime?
- What are the major causes of conflicts between the Afar-Oromo ethnic groups in the study area?
- What are the major effects of the conflict between the two ethnic groups?
- How do the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups resolve the conflicts in the study area?

6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in terms of both the policy and academic perspectives. The study will provide input to the policy makers and executers in their effort to look for amicable solutions to the ethnic conflict in the country. They may find interest in this study as providing an understanding into the ethnic conflicts in the study area which would further enhance them to devise ways of resolving ethnic conflicts as a precondition to human and economic development.

It will have also significant academically because it provides insight into the nature, dynamic, and resolution of mechanisms of ethnic conflict in the northeast Ethiopia in general and the study area in particular. It tries to show how and why ethnic conflict came to the fore in the context of the adoption of predominantly ethnic based federalism in Ethiopia, since 1991. It will also provide the motive for further research on the resolution mechanisms of ethnic conflict. It is, therefore, intended to contribute to the literature on ethnic conflict.

7 Scope of the Study

The study explores the conflict between the Oromo and Afar ethnic groups emphasizing on the mechanisms of conflict resolution. It focuses on the methods of ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms in building and maintaining peaceful interactions between the two ethnic groups in Oromo of Dawa Herawa *woreda* and Dawe *woreda* of Afar from 1991-2015.

The time period of the study is from 1991-2015. The year marks the emphasis of the study because Ethiopia has adopted ethnic-based federalism as a panacea for the recurring ethnic conflicts elsewhere in the country. The period is chosen because the concept of predominantly ethnic-based state restructuring has been introduced.

8 Limitations of the study

This study did not reach at this stage without any challenge. The researcher has been faced the following considerable challenges: First in accessible to transportation which results from its ups and down geographical landscape of the *woreda*. As a result, it is difficult for researcher to collect data in such geographical setting going to it by foot.

The second challenge that encounters this study was that the written materials that explain the historical relation between the two ethnic groups were scant. Specially, this is highly evident on the Afar side.

The third challenge of this study was lack of willingness of some informants from study area to provide information on the issue under investigation. Local elders primarily suspected me as government spy. Government officials also saw me as private spy working for foreign Medias to expose wrong doings of the government officials. Due to this reason, the researcher faced challenges and rigorous checking by *Woreda* and *Kebele* officials while interviewing and moving into different *Kebele*. Particularly, *Kebele* administrators had considered me as person of special mission for collecting data deviated from the usual way. However, I convinced them with the help of field assistants. After the field assistants told them, they became voluntary for the interview. Furthermore, categorizing as an issue of security confidential, government officials were reluctant to give reports and documents related to the conflict. To secure their willingness and trust the researcher enlightened them to know purpose of the study with the help of field

assistants. Due to religious and cultural reasons, the researcher was unable to conduct face to face interview with women with exception of two government officials.

Fourth, as conflicts are not resolved, there was fear on the researcher. While collecting data, intermittently guns were fired and there were high tension of conflict. Especially, the researcher felt insecure to go to Dawe *Woreda* and *Kebele* that the conflict existed. The active stage of the conflict became obstacle to go to the area freely and to have more information from many residents to better understand the scene. So, in some cases, the researcher relied on telephone interview, and some personal interview in Semera city and Delfaga (Afar zone five center) with those who are from Dawe *woreda* but lived there. However, the researcher tried all his best to overcome the above limitations as much as possible.

Fifth, in many areas subjected to prolonged conflicts (e.g. Dire and Ocheru areas) both the elders and other informants (government officials) were skeptical about the contribution of study to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Informants from communities affected by conflicts tend to exaggerate their side of the story. In order to reduce the biases of those involved in the conflict and keep them from influencing the output of the research, I employed a triangulation technique. In addition to documentary sources and secondary literature, in undertaking the fieldwork itself, this study used multiple sources of information, interviewing and organizing focus-group discussions with individuals not related to the protagonists of local conflicts.

9 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter one the introductory part provides the justification for the topic, statement of the problem, the objectives and research questions, scope, significance, as well as, limitation of the research. Chapter two presents study area, methodology and methods. Chapter three deals with literature review. Under this chapter, concepts, theories and perspectives and debates on ethnic conflicts are discussed. Chapter four is about setting the context of the study area. Geographical setting, social organization, and the origin of the Afar and Oromo peoples, and their relation with the Ethiopian empire beginning from the turn of the 20th century are the themes dealt here. This chapter describes the relations between Afar and Oromo ethnic groups which is intended to give insight about Afar and Oromo, what relations

they had (both cordial and hostile) in the pre and 1991-2015 period briefly. Chapter five investigates the major factors that generated conflict between Afar and Oromo in the study area. The root and immediate factors are assessed. Chapter six examines major effects of Afar -Oromo conflict briefly. Chapter seven explores conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area. Under this chapter, practices on attitude, behavior and contradiction as resolution mechanisms are discussed. Furthermore, actors in the process of conflict resolution and challenges of conflict resolution practice in the study area are assessed. Finally, the conclusion part illustrates major findings and implications of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: STUDY AREA, METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

2.1 Study Area Description

The study area is located in the borders of Afar and Amhara Regional States in the Northeast Ethiopia. That is, Oromo Zone, in the Amhara National Regional State, and Zone Five(known as *Hari Rasu*) in the Afar National Regional State in which the neighbouring Dawa Harawa and Dewe *Woreda* are located, respectively.

Dewe is one of the thirty two *woreda* in the Afar Region. Part of the Administrative Zone Five, Dewe is located near the base of the eastern escarpment of the Ethiopian highlands, and bordered on the south by the Borkena River which separates it from Dalifage and Hadele Ela, on the west by the Amhara Region, on the north by Telalak *woreda*, and on the east by Administrative zone three. It has ten *kebele*(*rural*). Based on the 2007 Population and Housing Census, the *woreda* has a total population of 42,397, of whom 24,865 are men and 17,532 women (CSA, 2007).

Dawa Harewa is one of the five *Woreda* in the Oromo Zone of Amhara Region of Ethiopia. The Oromo Zone is one of the national zones in Amhara Region. Its administrative centre - Kemisie- is found on the main road 325 Kilometers on the way from Addis Ababa to Dessie and 555 Kilometers of Bahir Dar, the capital of the Amhara Region. Part of the Oromo Zone, Dawa Harewa, is 30 kilometers away from Kemisse. It is bordered in the south by Artuma Fursi *woreda*, in the west by Dawa Cheffa, and in the northwest by the Argoba Special *woreda*, in the northeast by Bati, and in the east by the Afar Region. Bora is the main town of this *woreda*. According to the 2007 Population census, the *woreda* has a total population of 41,359, of whom 20,431 are men and 20,928 women (CSA,2007).

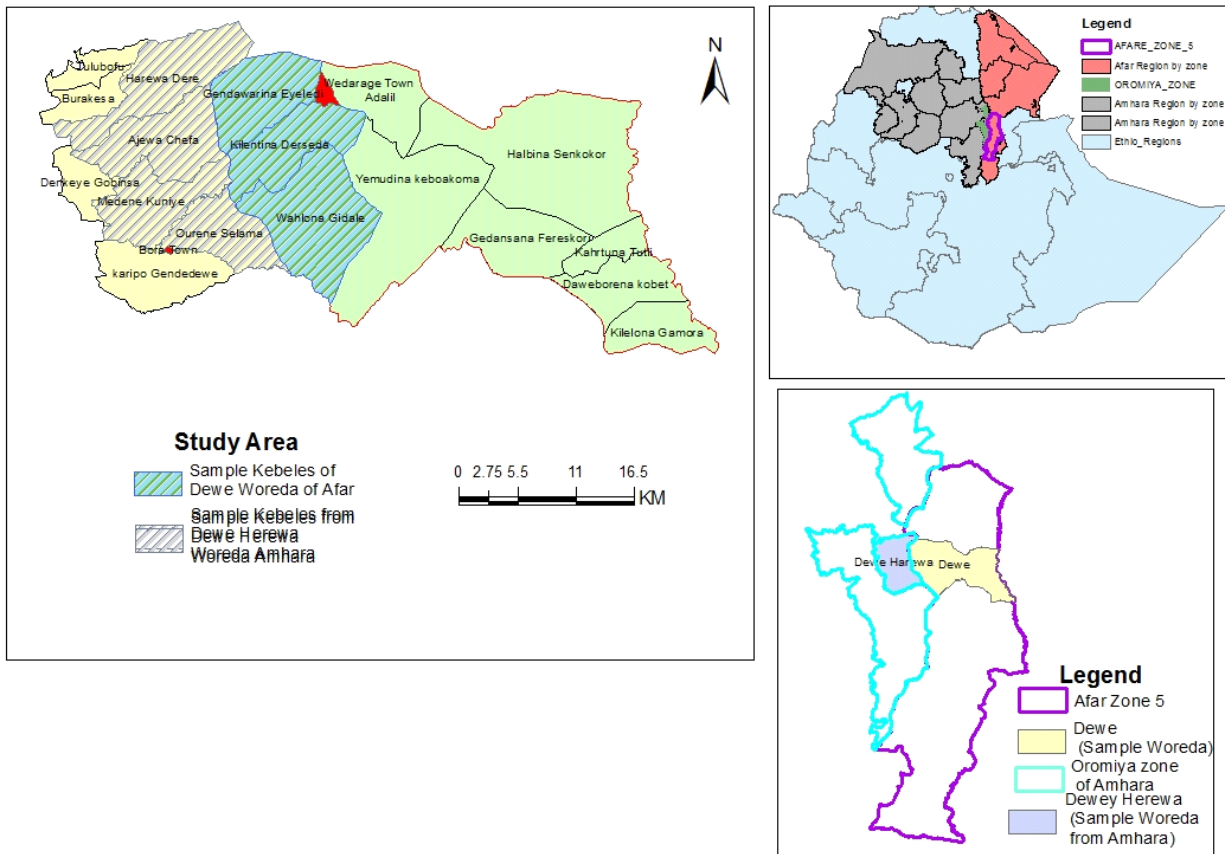


Figure 1: Location Map of the Study Area

The study areas are located in the interface between pastoral (Afar) area and sedentary (Oromo) area where they interact with each other. The Afar has their own traditional territory and historical relation with the neighboring Oromo ethnic group. Now days, the relation of the two ethnic groups is characterized by hostility and violent conflict. Especially the conflict has been exacerbated mainly because of the adoption of predominantly ethnic based federalism. This has given me an opportunity to explore the inter-ethnic conflict at the buffer zone. Like in the case of the two *woreda* i.e *Dawe woreda* from Afar and *Dawa Harawa woreda* from Oromo, I also selected the four *kebele* under study purposely, in consultation with community elders and officials of *woreda* administrations. Among the four *kebele* selected (Gendawarina Eyelendi and Kilentina Derseda from Afar and Direand Medine Kuniye from Orom)(see on figure 1 above). Dire and Medine are typical examples where conflict of the two ethnic groups is severe.

In general, these sites have been selected for the following reasons: First, the conflict in the study areas is small-scale herder-farmer violent ethnic conflict between Afar and Oromo who live in the neighbouring Regional States of Afar and Amhara, respectively. Secondly, it is a conflict between Oromo who are minority in the Amhara National Regional State-enjoying Zonal Self-administration status and their neighbours, to the east are, the Afar enjoying regional state status, self-administration. Thirdly, although studies on conflict involving the two communities are available, studies of conflict resolution at the study area is inadequate. Fourthly, my acquaintance to the Afar side in my previous studies (BA and MA studies). So, the study is different from others in dealing with such instances.

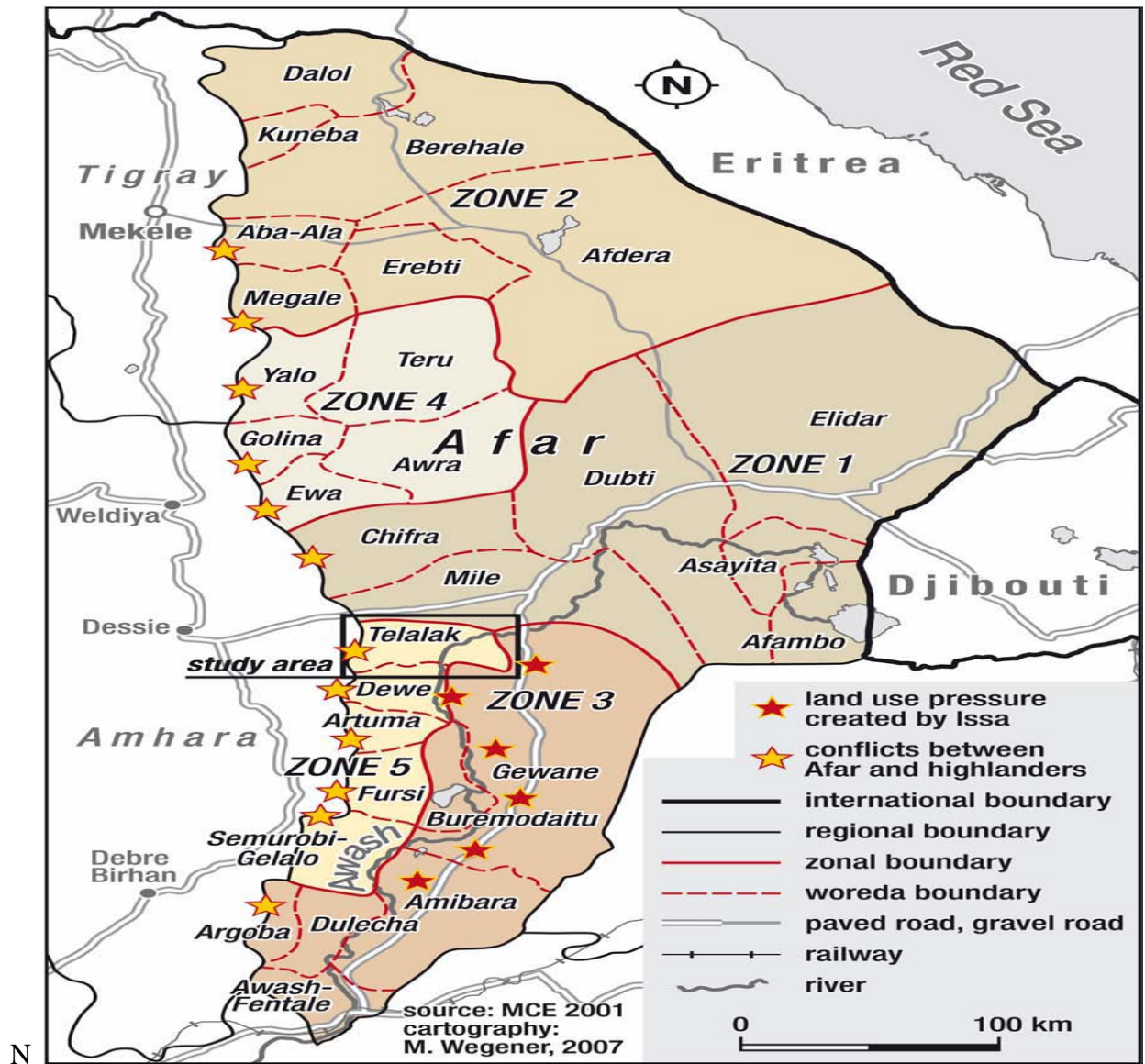


Figure 2: Conflicts between Afar and Highlanders

Source: Ali, PhD Dissertation 2008, p.131.

2.2 Methodology

This study employed qualitative approach. Qualitative research provides insights into a research conducted in a natural setting, and aims to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. This study seeks to deeply understand the views of the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups on their conflict and their conflict resolution mechanisms, which is the ‘central phenomenon’ of this study. Accordingly to Creswell (Creswell, 2012:129) ‘the central phenomenon is the concept or a

process explored in qualitative research’, which is, in my case, conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms between Afar and Oromo ethnic groups in the study area.

I selected the qualitative research methodology for this study for a variety of reasons. First, the philosophical assumptions of the research rely on constructivism. Qualitative research methodology is used more frequently within the constructivist paradigm, as it is considered to be better suited to investigate the truth (Donaldson,*et.al.*, 2009: 25).

Second, in a qualitative research, the researcher is central to the study, where he/she is the primary agent of data collection. In qualitative research, the researcher plays a pivotal role in constructing concepts, theories, and principles based on detailed discussions, interviews and observations (Creswell, 2007). This means that a researcher does not rely on questionnaires, telephone calls or e-mail. Unlike, the quantitative methodology, where data are collected through inventories, telephone calls , e-mail, administration of questionnaires, in qualitative research data collection is undertaken through the researcher or the ‘human instrument’ (Creswell,2007:129). Furthermore, as Silverman (2006:30) notes, ‘unlike the quantitative methodology where flexibility is limited, qualitative research enjoys much flexibility because of [face -to-face and intensive] interaction between the researcher and the subjects studied’. Meanwhile, qualitative approach has its own weakness, which is in relation to rigour that depends on words than numbers. Many researchers often criticize qualitative methodology as ‘soft’ approach which lacks academic rigour. However, in qualitative approach to make sure that the study follows a rigorous approach, it uses procedures such as triangulating sources of data and feedbacks from peers and individuals who are expertise in the area.

Third, qualitative methodology is exploratory (in-depth understanding of the phenomenon to be studied). The motto of the researcher relies on the processes, perceptions, interpretive-meanings, as well as, the insight to be gained through words. Qualitative approach, then, refers to ‘the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things’ (Berg, 2001: 3). Qualitative research is an in-depth exploration, and understanding of what people think on a particular phenomenon, where as quantitative research seeks causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings.

Fourth, the other important reason why I employed the qualitative methodology is the very nature of the research problem which is complex, which requires a ‘detailed understanding of the issue’ (Berg, 2001:40). As the Afar –Oromo conflict in the study area is very complex, which has been persisting for years and requires in-depth understanding to develop viable resolution mechanisms. It is in line with this that I have been motivated to conduct this research using qualitative methodology. Furthermore, the study employed inductive approach in synthesizing knowledge. An important characteristic of qualitative research is that the process is inductive in that researchers gather data to build concepts, theories rather than deductively testing theories or hypotheses (Merriam, 2002:5), which is appropriate to quantitative research.

To this effect, I used case study research strategy with exploratory and descriptive techniques. There is no agreed definition of a case study among scholars. Gerring (2007:19) defines case study in political science as ‘an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units’. In this study, I have adopted Gerring’s definition of case study.

The reasons for choosing a case study strategy for the current study are the following: first, the nature of phenomenon, which is complex requiring a detailed understanding. Case study is a common research strategy in the field of political science, as well as, other social science disciplines, for example, anthropology, which enables understand complex social phenomena by allowing the researcher to have a ‘holistic’ and meaningful nature of real life events (Yin, 2003:1). Case study is thus, identified with ‘holistic’ analysis and with the ‘thick’ description of events, as well as, ‘the depth of analysis that it offers’ (Gerring, 2007: 49).

Second, nature of research objective and question matters. The nature of the research objective and question can also provide an important clue regarding the appropriate research strategy to be used. Case study research is often said to be mainly suitable for research seeking to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions (Yin, 2003: 5). According to Yin (2003), case studies are favorable when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being asked. In this regard, the nature of my research objective and research question call for case study strategy.

In general, case study is more useful to have deep understanding of a phenomenon. As Gerring (2007: 1) notes, ‘... in-depth knowledge of an individual example is more helpful than fleeting knowledge about a larger number of examples. We gain better understanding of the whole by focusing on a key part’. Eventually, what is inspirational in selecting case study strategy in the study is that ‘knowing more about less’ is better than knowing ‘less about more’ (Gerring, 2007: 49). This is not to deny the importance of knowledge about many things with extensive coverage. What is meant here is that at this level of study, deep knowledge of an issue in-depth is more important than shallow knowledge of many things with extensive coverage.

Hence, this study employed qualitative based case study in which data were collected using semi-structured key informant interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and informal discussions. These methods of qualitative data collection have been identified as appropriate (Gerring, 2007; Yin 2003) and used to collect data on the perceptions of human beings, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about the nexus between ethnic identity, territorial expansion, conflict and governance.

2.3 Procedures and Phases of Field Visits

The overall aim of the fieldwork was to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions, opinions, and concepts of the local communities. Before I went to the field area for data collection, I made all necessary preparations. Voice recorder devices and interview protocols were made ready for the field. The key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) guides were prepared in English. Then, it was translated into Amharic language (the language of data collection). Then after, my supervisors and peer reviewers of the study commented and corrected the guiding instruments. On date 20 December 2013, I made phone conversation with gate-keepers for the study. On this basis, I conducted three rounds of fieldwork.

The first round of fieldwork was conducted between 1st -15th January 2014 in order to familiarize myself with the two study areas and to collect information on the case studies that examined ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms. It was preliminary visits to familiarize myself with the study area and identify potential key informants and participants of group discussion. Accordingly, I stayed in the Dawa Harawa *Woreda* of the Oromo Nationality Zone of the

Amhara National Regional State (Bora) and Dawe *Woreda* Zone five of the Afar National Regional State (Woderage) for two weeks (1-15 January). In this visit, I interviewed some local government officials and elders of the study area. It did not pose many problems to the researcher in collecting data since the researcher has a letter from the Department of Political Science and International Relations of Addis Ababa University. With the help of research assistants, I travelled into different *kebele* of Dawa Harawa and Dawe *Woreda*. I went to Bora (the administrative town of Dawa Harawa *Woreda*) and Woderage (the administrative town of Dawe *Woreda*) by asking permission from Oromo Zone and Afar Zone five administrations, respectively

In the second round, I undertook major field study. The second round of fieldwork, conducted from April to June 2014, was to collect data regarding Afar-Oromo ethnic conflict and resolution mechanisms of the study area. The fieldwork for this round required extensive travel to some localities affected by Afar-Oromo ethnic boundary conflicts. Hence, in the field for three months in the remote Dawe and Dawa Harawa *kebele*, I collected data regarding to the problems associated with the conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms of the Afar and Oromo areas. I stayed in the *woreda* capital of the Dawe, Woderage for five weeks (1st April to 8 May 2014), and collected data through two focus-group discussions and fifteen interviews with elders and officials and managed to conduct two focus-group discussions and fifteen individual interviews about historical developments in the region and the state of ethnic conflicts and resolution mechanisms. Since Woderage is the capital of the Dawe *Woreda* and almost all of the elders of the Afar involved directly or indirectly in violent conflicts come regularly to Woderage, it made it possible to conduct the interviews (Afar side). Similarly, I stayed in the *woreda* capital of the Dawa Harawa, Bora for five weeks (16 May to 21 June 2014) and managed to conduct two focus group discussions and fifteen interviews. The five weeks field visit in May and June 2014, was to gather data further on boundary disputes between the Afar and Oromo neighbors. I visited number of localities affected by boundary conflicts and organized two focus-group discussions and fifteen interviews (Oromo side). The data collected during this fieldwork contributed a lot to the study.

I administered last round of the field visit to fill the gap identified. The last field visit was made in February 2015 for fifteen days in the study areas to gather information on how the process of conflict resolution mechanisms have undertaken when conflict between the Afar and the Oromo has happened. In addition, visits to some of the conflict hotspots of Afar-Oromo territories such as Dire and Ocheru, I conducted seven interviews

2.4 Sources and Instruments of Data Collection

2.4.1 Sources of Data

Regarding data, this study depended on three different kinds of sources– interviews, documents and academic literature. First, data generated from interviewees and focus-group participants constituted major sources of primary data. For political science research in developing countries like Ethiopia, where the written culture is limited and most political activities occur in informal ways, the significance of interviews cannot be underestimated. This study used focus-group discussions and semi-structured and open -ended interviews with key informants. The key informants were community elders, leaders of clans and villages; local and regional officials, and others.

In this study, data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources include books, journal articles, electronic publications, media reports and magazines, government reports, correspondences, police records, political statements, and occasional publications of political parties. There were systematic examinations of relevant documents - both published and unpublished from the district, zone, and regional offices, which include reports, peace agreements, joint collaborative works on peace- building and conflict prevention, resolution and management. Documents in the national archives and libraries, as well as, in AAU libraries- particularly Institute of Ethiopia Studies (IES) Library are used. The study employed a wide array of documentary sources. Governmental statistical reports of both regional and federal governments are used.

Primary sources of data include key informants and participants of focus group discussions (FGDs). Key informants include, religious leaders, clan leaders(for Afar), community elders, police officers, high-ranking regional state security officials, and former *woreda* officials, current

woreda, zonal and regional administrators, *woreda* judges, as well as, House of Federation Secretariat and, officials and experts in the Ministry of Federal Affairs and non-governmental organization (workers of Kombolcha Catholic Church).

To minimize the weaknesses in each data collection technique and benefit from the strengths of each technique, triangulation is vital. Triangulation entails using more than one source of information, as reference to multiple sources provides more insight into the phenomena investigated (Cooper & Schindler, 2008: 185). To a certain degree, triangulation limits biases and limitations and allows one to have broader perspectives of the issues one is investigating (Willis, 2007: 219). It enhances validity and makes the necessary look at issues from different perspectives in terms of methods and analysis (Lee & Lings, 2008: 239). Triangulation, in this study, is achieved through the use of comparison data obtained through key informant interviews and FGDs, as well as, reports obtained from the above institutions.

2.4.2 Instruments of Data Collection

Key Informant Interviews

Data collection for this study is mainly through interviews with the selected interviewees. Both unstructured and semi-structured interview techniques widely used in qualitative approach (Robson, 2002: 227). In this study, both unstructured and semi-structured interviews are used.

Unstructured (open-ended answers) interview is appropriate only for oral history and life history, where responses to a question may generate a number of other questions on the spot, as the interviewer asks for elaboration, explanation or remind the interviewee certain event. Unstructured (open-ended answers) interview which can be done without interview guide/checklist, while semi-structured is guided by interview guides/checklist in order to address research questions. In this study, it is more of semi-structured, as it is needed to be guided by interview guide/checklist indicated in the organization of empirical chapters of the study. Semi-structured interviews combine both features of structured and unstructured interviews. Therefore, I used predominantly, semi-structured interviews, as I had interview guides/checklist for more the key informants.

Interviews are conducted face-to-face with the informants. Face-to-face interviews are considered appropriate because of their flexibility in letting interviewees feel motivated, the fact that importance and credibility of the research is conveyed best by a face-to-face interviewer who can show identification and credentials and, though it is not always, helpful particularly with informants whose writing skills are weak or have none at all or who are less motivated to make the effort to respond fully. Face-to-face interview is also one way empowering, as well as, showing respect for the research participants.

Interviews are conducted with people who are believed to have experience and knowledge about the issue, which is under study. Accordingly, in-depth interviews with key informants were conducted and data generated in order to have thick description of the state of Afar-Oromo ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area. Key informants were selected purposively based on their age, level of education and awareness/ knowledge about their culture, society and environment. Key informants were interviewed to share their knowledge regarding the various aspects of Afar –Oromo conflict and its impact on the maintenance of peace and stability in the study areas. Qualitative interviews are employed to record people’s description and explanation of events and experiences in their own words (Berg, 2001:3). Using this tool, I have recorded informants’ intimate knowledge of the subject matter.

Focus Group Discussions

One of the main data collection instruments I used was focus group discussions (FGDs). Focus group discussions are useful when the researcher wishes to gain understanding on shared views, perceptions, and opinions on current issues (Creswell, 2007; Silverman, 2006). It is a way, participants’ responses can be explored in a real-time setting, dynamics within group behaviours can be observed and put into perspective, and responses can be clarified.

In this study, selection of participants like key informant interviewees was purposeful, diverse, and representative of the communities to be studied. This means both the Oromo and Afar ethnic groups were represented. Focus group discussions were held at the *kebele* level, which are

located at the border areas between the two regions. I have four *kebele*, two from each *woreda*², to conduct focus group discussions. There were four groups (two/one from each *kebele*). A total of four focus group discussions (two/one focus group discussions in each *kebele*, two with men and another two with youth) were conducted to generate data for the purpose of understanding the various sources of conflicts and its related issues. The focus group discussion participants were selected purposively based on their age, level of education and awareness about their environment. Focus groups consisted of six to ten participants who shared common perceptions about the issue. Group discussions were conducted in a separate schedule. To avoid boring of participants, each discussion did not last more than one and half hours in duration.

I met with some of the community elders through *kebele* administration officials during my preliminary field visit. This created an opportunity for me to locate and establish contacts with some of the potential key informants. I also identified some of the oral historians before travelling to the two *woreda* under study, as they were well known at the zonal level. Subsequently, I identified many other community elders, especially oral historians, through the elders with whom I had already established contacts, which constitutes a ‘snowball sampling’(Bryman, 2004: 100). In fact, some oral historians recommended to me their counterparts to participate with them in the interviews

Participants of FGD were categorized into two: elders and youth. Categorizing participants and organizing separate forms was necessary to encourage elders and youth to air out their views freely. Categorization is also useful to affirm representation of groups of the study sites. Elders were selected based on age, wealth-ranking categorization, occupation like peasants/pastoralists as locally understood, and on their knowledge about the subject. They were also selected with the understanding that they best represent their all groups. The youth were also selected to constitute focus group because they played active role in the conflict.

My role, as a researcher was changed under FGDs. I was more of moderator, facilitator of group interactions. My role was to supply topics and questions to the participants to initiate and

²The four *kebele* selected are Gendawarina Eyelendi and Kilentina Derseda from Afar Dawe *Woreda* while Dire and Medine Kuniye from Oromo Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. (See on figure 1 on page 14).

provoke discussions and ask for clarifications. I also ensured that discussions are in line with the research questions of the study. I developed FGD guide for group participants. The contents of the guide used for all FGD was similar. The discussion was conducted in *Afan Oromo*, *Afaraf*, and *Amharic*. Discussion with Amharic was with the consent of participants. In the selection process, I attempted to make sure that participants were not only willing to use Amharic as a medium of communication, but also have sound command of the language. In case where the participants donot understand Amharic, I used interpreters. During the field visit, many re-arrangements were made depending up on the situation on the ground as I obtained good exposure to my research environment.

2.5 Sampling Procedure

Regarding sampling procedure, I used purposive or judgemental sampling. This is because in qualitative research, purposive sampling is essential to identify knowledgeable informants for interviews. I have chosen purposive sampling procedure based on the nature of the problem to be studied and the type of data I required. The study sought to collect and analyze data mainly as regards experiences, perceptions, and views of people who had been involved in or affected by the conflict. This means interviewing resourceful persons gives more precision than doing it in a random manner. Purposive sampling was applicable for both key informants and participants of focus group discussions. According to Neuman (1997: 205), purposive sampling is based on the researcher's knowledge of the research area and the important opinion makers within that research area. The social classes/groupings (ethnic groups, occupational groups, and others) were identified purposively so as to ensure that they all have represented in the study. But, within the groupings, purposive sampling (for identifying key respondents, especially for identifying people's perceptions with regard to ethnic conflict and resolution mechanisms) and snowball (where some respondents lead me to many potential informants) is used.

Purposive sampling procedure were employed to select the key informants from each *kebele*. The number of key informants was adjusted after factors and conditions became clear and while the study was in operation. In the initial phase of interview, first, two *woreda* were identified from a number of *woreda* in the two Zones. Potential interviewees in the selected *woreda*, in turn, were classified into four *kebele* administrations selected, two from each *woreda*. Two

kebele (namely, the lowest administrative units) from each district were selected purposively based on the severity of recurrent conflicts. The *kebele* were purposively selected on the basis of their hosting the conflict at the boarders between Dawe and Herawa *woreda* of Afar and Amhara Regional States, respectively. Eventually, some individuals, by virtue of possessing rich knowledge about the subject under study, who were thought to reflect the views and attitudes of the farmers and pastoralists in the study areas were selected for the interviews.

2.6 Data Recording, Transcription, and Analysis

2.6.1 Data Recording and Transcription

In a qualitative research, there are various means of recording data; such as taking notes, photographing, and using electronic devices like tape recorder, video recorder or digital voice recorder. In this study, to record interviews, I used mainly field notes. In addition to field notes, I used electronic devices such as tape recording, to supplement my field notes.

Transcription is an interpretive process from oral speech to written texts (Duranti, 2007; Barbour, 2008; Slembrouck, 2007). In conducting transcription, the issue of trustworthiness and avoiding transcriber's errors is central in qualitative research. This is mainly because irrelevant information might obscure the research purpose. Transcription that encompasses translation from one language to another presents complex and challenging situation. It requires the use of interpreters, for example, and transcribers other than the researcher, if the researcher is not a native speaker of the language of informants (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Moerman, 1996). Therefore, as my research participants have different mother tongue, I selected people from the native speakers that would help me in transcribing the tape recorded data into written text.

2.6.2 Data Analysis

This study used qualitative method of data analysis. Concerning with the analysis of qualitative data, the research was based on the theoretical and methodological principles of subjective interpretations. To this effect, a content analysis technique was employed to analyze the qualitative data. Qualitative data analysis provides ways of discerning, examining, comparing and contrasting, and interpreting meaningful patterns or themes. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data analysis involves three macro processes. These are data

reduction (extracting the essence), data display (organizing for meaning), and drawing conclusions (explaining the findings). Meaningfulness is determined by the particular objectives of the subject. Data analysis will generate answers to the research questions of a study. Willis (2007: 310) states that 'data analysis in qualitative research commences with a research question'. In qualitative research, generation and analysis of data are often interwoven (Hamersley and Atkinson, 1995: 21). The analysis technique targets at organizing and reducing of the empirical data into themes or essences through analytical induction. Qualitative data analysis is a process of making sense of data through uncovering themes, concepts, insights, patterns, categories, perceptions and understandings. The analysis involves an iterative, inductive and reductive process of formulating conceptual ordering for data is called coding that facilitates conditions for the constructing themes, essences, descriptions and theories (Walker & Myrick 2006). Empirical data collected and analyzed thematically. Thematic categorizations were drawn from the major points raised in the research questions. Data was categorized or classified into themes. The themes were categorized into more manageable groups of sub-themes and codes. Data was analyzed by using descriptions, explanations, understanding and interpretations.

The major challenge in qualitative research is data reduction or cleaning (Creswell, 2007:38). Because for the analyst, especially the less experienced ones, everything looks important, especially at the outset, and the analyst wants to get it all. Data reduction often forces choices about which aspects of the data should be emphasized, minimized, or set aside completely in the process of analysis. Accordingly, data was edited, which means separating the sheaf from the grain. But, care was taken not to discard important points while editing.

In this study, I analyzed the qualitative data inductively from particulars to more general perspectives by way of 'establishing patterns and themes' (Creswell, 2007: 38). Data analyzed and generalizations drawn as to the relations among them. As my research process begins with gathering data, which would be used to develop explanations /interpretations, it was vital to take inductive strategy as an instrument of analysis. The analytical generalizations followed logically from the data in the inductive strategy.

Finally, all descriptions written in a narrative form to provide a 'holistic' picture and interpretations followed in relation to the situation of the Afar and Oromo ethnic conflict and resolution mechanisms in the study area. The study report comprises the 'voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher and a complex description and interpretation of the problem and it extends the literature or signals a call for action' (Creswell, 2007: 37). Hence, the study, in addition to presenting some findings, seeks to inspire and motivate further research on the subject.

To make sure that the study follows a rigorous approach to data analysis and reporting, I have validated findings by using peers, staff and other individuals who are experts on the subject (Creswell, 2007). It was both necessary and beneficial to discuss the analysis and interpretation of the data with peers or other individuals who are expertise in the subject. It was significant when there is opportunity to present the progress of the research to department staff and other higher degree students, lecturers and colleagues either through individual presentations, student seminars, or academic meetings. Feedback that obtained from these individuals on my data and draft thesis through mid-term and final seminars organized by our department created opportunities for reflection and consideration. Their perspectives provided an invaluable opportunity to consider different approaches to analysis and interpretation of the data. So, I did my best in presenting my work to peers and other pertinent individuals.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Participants were clearly informed about the purpose of the study. That is, information were solicited from informants voluntarily based on their informed consent. They voluntarily decided whether to participate in the research or not. If they wish, informants were described anonymously in the analysis and writing up of the research and every care has been taken not to hurt the privacy and confidentiality of participants. Informants participated in the study without their identity being revealed. Their names are kept anonymously for safety reasons, when they demanded so. Because of the sensitivity of the subject that the study dealt, I obliged to withhold the names of informants.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Under this section, first, defining concepts that are relevant to the conceptualization of the subject under study are dealt. These are ‘ethnic group’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘conflict’ and ‘ethnic conflict’. Secondly, discussions are done on theoretical perspectives, such as ‘primordialism’, ‘constructivism’, ‘instrumentalism’, ‘conflict theories’, ‘consociationalism’ and ‘pluralism’, causes and nature of ethnic conflicts and review of empirical literature. These perspectives are vital in analyzing ethnic conflicts and their resolution in the study area, the researcher used them as frame-work of analysis.

3.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives

3.1.1 Defining Concepts

Since the study has a focus on inter-ethnic conflict, conceptualizing of terms such as ethnicity and ethnic conflicts have paramount importance. Taking the actors involved in the conflict, the study proposes that the conflict has ethnic element. Though, various causes which are not directly attached to identity are identified, people in the study area enter in to conflict in the name of their ethnic group. Taking this in to consideration, this study argued that competition of resources along ethnic lines leads into conflict and the conflict in the area can be termed as ethnic conflict. Hence, an analysis of concepts of ethnic group, ethnicity, conflict and ethnic conflict are provided.

3.1.1.1 Ethnic Group

The terms ‘ethnicity’ and ‘ethnic group’ have been defined in many ways by different researchers. As regards ethnic group, there is little consensus among scholars as to what constitutes ‘ethnic group’ and what ‘ethnicity’ is all about. Hizkias (2001: 113), for instance, states that ‘...it is not clear what is meant by the terms ethnic group, and ethnicity...it is very difficult to distinguish between them’.

For some researchers, ethnic group entails that members of the group share certain beliefs, values, habits, customs and norms because of their common myths of origin and territory, define themselves as different and special because of cultural identities, and view and treat as if identities are biological (Barth,1969; Geertz, 1996; Babatunde, 2004). For Osaghae (2006: 5), ethnic group refers to ‘primary groups that are distinguished from others by name, language, and core territory, myth of common origin, culture and social organization’. An ‘ethnic group’ has been defined as a group that regards itself or regarded by others as a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics that will help to distinguish the group from the surrounding community³. Hizkias (2001: 113) states that ‘a commonly used definition is that an ethnic group is a collectivity of people who share the same primordial characteristics such as common ancestry, language and culture’. Babatunede (2004:35) also explains ethnic group as ‘group of people classed together according to common traits and culture, as well, as common myths of origin and territory, which differentiates it from other groups.’

According to Jenkins (1997:13) ‘Ethnic group is a group of people whose members belief that they are of a common descent’. It is not enough for a group to have certain common features because it is the interaction of various ethnic groups, which according to Eriksen, (1995:251) creates group. He pointed out that ethnic groups are not isolated. Ethnic groups can only know of their existence by being in contact with others. Similarly, as much as ethnic groups are different, they need others so that they could have their own identity (Shale, 2004:1).

3.1.1.2 Ethnicity

According to Jenkins (1997:9) ‘ethnicity’ or the word ‘ethnic’ comes from the ancient Greek word ‘ethos’, which is a condition in which a collectivity of humans live, in a place and interact with others. Eriksen (1995:251) defines ethnicity as an aspect of relationship between people or groups whose members believe that it is culturally distinctive. He indicates that ethnicity is situational in that people can behave differently according to situations. It is possible to make a distinction between ethnic groups that have different cultures. Ethnicity may not be adequately defined by cultural groups because they are not identical to other ethnic groups. Cultural groups can only be used to reinforce ethnic identity (Shale, 2004:1).

³ <http://www.intercultural.ie/isses> accessed 12May2014.

Ethnicity is an elusive concept. The meaning of 'ethnicity' tends to be elusive in that the term invokes mixed feelings and subjective interpretations across different contexts or cultures.

Plentiful literature on the topic, scholars '...define and describe the term in various ways, such as a modern cultural construct, a universal social phenomenon, a personal identity, a peculiar kind of informal political organization or affective association' (Berhanu, 2007:1). While many researchers have attempted to define the term 'ethnicity', there is no agreement reached on its meaning (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996; Merera, 2003; Luba, 2012: 65). With this characterizing feature, there have been a number of definitions put forward at different points in time by different researchers. 'Ethnicity' as a concept entails that identification and feeling as a member of an ethnic group and exclusion from certain other groups because of this affiliation⁴. Similarly, Hizkias (2001: 113) defines 'ethnicity' as a 'behavior and feeling about oneself and others'.

According to Barth (1969: 75), 'ethnicity' refers to a group that is mostly 'biologically self perpetuating, shares fundamental cultural values and makes up a field of communication or interaction, has a membership which identifies itself and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order'. However, Barth's position has been challenged by Eriksen (1997) and Cohen (1996) arguing that he relies on culture. For Eriksen (1997: 39), 'ethnicity is an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinct from members of other groups....' Ethnicity, in this case, is where ethnic groups are continually involved in dynamic relations and identity in the process acquires a potent narrative (Young, 2003:14). Such notion of imagined kinship is a fertile input in the political field where ethnicity appeals to its shared constitutive elements.

On the other hand, placing less emphasis to the centrality of culture in ethnicity, Cohen (1996:84) argues that 'ethnicity is a political phenomenon and traditions are only used as ... mechanisms for political alignment'. This implies that ethnicity is not necessarily genetic. It also shows how ethnic groups might describe themselves by an ethnicity different to their birth identity if they reside for a considerable time in a different area and they decide to adopt the

⁴ <http://www.intercultural.ie/isses> accessed 12May2014.

culture, symbols, and relationships of their new community. Ethnicity, in this sense, is not mainly for mere identification, but a force of group organization and taking position in the political arena. In this regard, Osaghae (2006:5) affirms that "...ethnicity describes animosities among members of different groups'. He further notes that 'not only animosities among members of different ethnic groups ...but also the adversarial and conflictual relationships between the state and aggrieved ethnic groups'.

The above discussions surrounding the definition of 'ethnic group' and 'ethnicity' show the elusiveness of the terms and the absence of a common definition. All the above designations, in defining ethnic group have made the notion even cloudy than one could imagine.

3.1.1.3 Conflict

The term 'conflict' requires clarification as that of 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic group'. 'Conflict' is an extremely vague and illusive area. It has many meanings. Different scholars perceive the concept of conflict differently and come up with their own definitions and descriptions of the term depending on their experiences as well as the contexts they consider. For instance, it can be defined as a struggle between opponents over values and claims to scarce resources, status and power (Coser *et al*, 2006). This definition is provided by having more focus on major causes such as material resources, power, values or feelings. Conflict is a dynamic process in which structure, attitudes and behaviors are constantly changing and influencing one another (Galtung, 1973). Galtung's definition is based on the dynamic nature of conflict. According to Romsbotham (2011), conflicts can be destructive (which should be avoided) and constructive (which is a necessary and valuable aspect of human creativity).

Conflict is a natural aspect of any relationship. It may be positive (functional) or negative (dysfunctional). Negative conflict threatens to erode the consensus needed for development. Positive conflict, on the other hand, when it is managed creatively leads to creativity and development (Grewal, 2003). Conflict is present when two or more parties perceive that their interests are incompatible, express hostile attitudes, or take pursue their interests through actions that damage the other parties (Galtung, 1973). These parties may be individuals, small or large groups, and countries (Muhabie, 2015).

Conflict is inevitable part of human existence. It is a phenomenon in all relationships of individuals and groups. It prevails at international, regional, national, local, community, family and even at interpersonal levels. Jemal (2012) define conflict as violent dispute or war between combatant parties or armed forces. His definition revolves around the violent aspect of a conflict and tends to equate conflict with war or armed struggles between various antagonistic groups. Other scholars like Babatunde, 2004; Romsbotham *et.al* (2005) state that violence and conflict are deeply inter-connected but not contingent on one another. For them conflict is much more than a physical clash (which involves not only physical clash but also psychological, ideological, value and other incompatibilities) between two or more groups with opposing goals or ideologies. So many writers and organizations define conflict in different ways.

Although the various definitions of conflict can be found, yet the major role of conflict theories and concept is to explain social conflict in general examining their sources and patterns of escalation, de-escalation, consequences, and management (Salih, 2006; Fisher, 1990). Kriesberg (1998: 35), for instance, views 'conflict' as a manifestation of incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings toward each other. For him, incompatibility or difference may exist in reality or may be perceived by the parties. Nonetheless, the opposing actions and the hostile emotions are very real hall- marks of human conflict which have the potential for either a great deal of distraction or much creativity and positive social change.

Conflict is defined as a fight over values or claims to status of power and limited resources. For example, conflict over land and other natural resources, and among two more groups that perceive incompatible self-interests or hostile attitudes (Castor and Ettenger, 1997:27). Conflict happens among people in all kinds of human interactions and in all social settings. This is because of the wide variety of differences among people. However, the absence of conflict usually indicates the absence of meaningful interaction; the manner in which conflict is handled whether it is constructive or destructive (Deutch and Coleman, 2000; Pia & Diez, 2007). This means conflict in itself is neither good nor bad. Rather, it is one's attitude and reaction to it that makes it either constructive or destructive. The way of handling conflict has a crucial factor for conflict being productive or destructive.

In one way or another, conflict symbolizes notions of contention, struggle, divergence, and disagreement. It involves a 'struggle for mutually exclusive rewards or the use of incompatible means to achieve a goal (Babatunde, 2004: 35). Conflict is 'a struggle in which the aim is to gain objectives and simultaneously neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals' (Horowitz, 1998: 23). According to the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), conflicts are 'clashes of interest (differences of positions) concerning values' (Mildner *et al*, 2011:168). Conflict can be also understood as an incompatible interaction between at least two actors, whereby one of the actor's experiences damage, and the other actor causes this damage intentionally, or ignores it (Mason and Sandra, 2005:1). In human life, conflict involves at least four factors (Deutsch 1991 cited in Babatunde, 2004: 35), involving the following formality.

First, is contact between the parties involved. Second, conflicting parties must have perceived incompatible differences, in terms of values, beliefs, or goals. Third, at least one of the parties involved must insist that existing contradictions must be eliminated. Fourth, at least one of the parties involved must believe that there is more to be gained or less to be lost by engaging in conflict than in not so doing.

According to Galtung (1973), for a conflict to occur three elements have to fulfill. These are: Contradiction (C)-the underlying conflict situation, which includes the actual or perceived incompatibility of goals between the conflict parties; Attitude (A)-the parties' perceptions and misperceptions of each other and of themselves; Behavior (B)-which involves cooperation or coercion, gestures signifying conciliation or hostility (threats, coercion and destructive attacks). Galtung describes conflict as a dynamic process as explained so far. Wallensteen (2002), on his part explained conflict as consisting of three components: action, incompatibility and actors. Combining these three components gave a rise for a complete definition of a conflict as a social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) compete each other to fulfill their resource desires at the same moment in time.

Conflicts are so diversified and manifest themselves in different forms. Academic literatures classified conflicts in to various categories taking in to consideration different criteria like the conflict parties, the duration of the conflict, the conflict scale, context of the conflict, the consequence a conflict brought, etc (Romsbotham, 2011). Of these various categories, types of

conflict based on actors involved are discussed to explain the type of conflict this thesis focused. As such, intra-personal, inter-personal, intra-state, and inter-state conflicts are some common type of conflicts.

Intra-state conflict is a kind of conflict that occurs within a nation, involving different groups. This could be inter-ethnic, inter-religious, or competition for resources within a given state. Economic, social and political factors could cause a conflict within a state (Dereje, 2009). The contention between Afar and Oromo in the study area of this Dissertation is a good example of intra-state conflict between two ethnic groups. Therefore the study is categorized under this type of conflict. The other one inter-state conflict is a conflict between two or more states or conflict between nations. It could be for ideological reasons, territorial claims, and political competition (Romsbotham, 2011).

As many scholars agree, conflict has a negative effect and leads to sufferings, but it can also leads to the alleviation of people's suffering and leads to sustainable peace (Deutch and Coleman, 2000; Pia & Diez, 2007). This implies conflict in itself is neither good nor bad. Rather, it is one's attitude and reaction to it that makes it either constructive or destructive. That means the way of handling conflict has a crucial factor for conflict being productive or destructive (Pia & Diez, 2007; Muhabie , 2015). Relating to this, Yasin (2010:16) argued that:

Conflict is a normal, even healthy dynamic. A certain amount of conflict can be constructive, inspiring creativity in thought, communication, and action. Even violent revolutionary conflict, viewed from the longer perspective of history, may be a force for progress. The American War of Independence and the Civil War, India's fight for independence from the British, and the struggle of the South African blacks against apartheid fall into this category.

In general, the preceding discussion reveals that conflict is an ever present phenomenon in social relations. It is inevitable in any social gathering, organization and society as a result of divergence of interests on issues such as access to scarce resources, power, status and the like. Therefore, in this research, the term conflict is broadly seen as a phenomenon where two or more parties perceive that their interests are incompatible, express antagonistic attitudes, and pursue their interests via violent actions that damage the other party. The parties may be individual, small or large groups.

3. 1.1.4 Major Concepts of Conflict

Though there are various approaches that deal with handling conflicts, the ideals of conflict resolution is vital for this study. Many concepts of conflict exist among the practitioners and academics studying, analyzing and dealing with conflict. Five concepts of conflict are identified in this study. These are conflict management, conflict settlement, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. Since examining the processes and approaches of conflict resolution is the major purpose of the research, theoretical exposition of the issue adds value on the issue under investigation. Using the ideals of conflict resolution, the study unveils the various practices the *woreda* undertake in order to bring positive relationships between the two groups. Hence, the study discussed the issue of conflict resolution. There is a considerable contest among scholars in the use of appropriate concepts in addressing conflict. There is persisted debate among five important concepts employed by conflict experts to explain the process of handling conflict. These are conflict management, conflict settlement, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation.

Conflict Management

Conflict management implies the process of handling conflict in a positive and constructive way (Leaderach, 2003). It stresses that some conflicts are intractable, i.e. very difficult to resolve. Thus, the conflicts in this context can only be controlled or managed. The intractability can come from history, distribution of power, and differences in interests through conflict management. The theory purports that conflict can be prevented from escalating or becoming more volatile and violent. Finally, this theory sees conflict management as the best option for accommodating difference (Leaderach, 2003; Harris and Reilly; 1998; Merga, 2012).

Some researchers argue that conflict management is a way of bringing opposite parties together and, hence, get rid of hostilities by realizing cooperation between them. As Harris and Reilly (1998: 18) have put it, 'Conflict management, then, is the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence rather than advocating methods for removing conflict'. It addresses

the more realistic question of managing conflict; how to deal with it in a constructive way; and how to bring opposing sides together in a cooperative process. It designs a practical achievable cooperative system for the constructive system and for the constructive management of differences. However, others criticize it as the word 'management' connotes manipulation of human beings and the involvement is not the best way of addressing conflict (Harris and Reilly (1998: 18).

Conflict Settlement

Conflict settlement refers to all strategies that in one way or another seek to end violent conflict through a cease fire or termination of hostility (Muhyadin, 2005; Merga, 2012). According to Riemann (n.d.), conflict settlement is a comprehensive out-come oriented strategy for achieving sustainable win- win solutions or putting an end to direct violence without necessarily addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. It emphasizes short- term agreements. This approach believes that mutually satisfactory solutions are possible between the contending parties. It does not necessarily address the underlying cause of conflict, but, instead focuses on ending the dispute through various methods like negotiation, conciliation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, or litigation to address the disputes (Merga, 2012 ; Riemann (n.d.).

Conflict Prevention

Conflict prevention, on the other hand, is aimed at controlling the escalation or re-escalation of violent conflict (Jeong, 2000:168). Preventing and resolving conflict before it ends into violence is far less costly, both in human and financial terms, than reacting to it once it has occurred. Action to address the fundamental causes of conflict include strengthening good governance, improving the condition of human rights, economic and social development, demolition of armaments and developing a culture of peace(Susan, 2008:26). Conflict prevention can be described as actions, policies, procedures or institutions undertaken particularly in vulnerable places and times so as to avoid the threat or use of armed forces and related forms of coercion by state or groups. Conflict prevention can take place in two conditions: 1) when there is no violent conflict in recent years, but significant signals of violence; and 2) when there has been a recent violent but peace is being restored, conflict prevention in this case aims to avoid a relapse of violence (Lund, 1997:34). A decade ago, conflict prevention was referred only to actions

undertaken in the short term to reduce manifest tensions and to prevent the outbreak of violence. But these days it includes long and short term activities and responses. It addresses built in capacities of societies to deal with conflicting interests without resort to violence. It also extends to the management of conflicts with destabilizing potentials. Such work helps in delegitimizing the belief that violence is an inevitable or acceptable way of resolving conflicts, making nonviolent options known and more attractive, addressing structural and immediate causes and reducing vulnerability to triggers. The goal is not to prevent all conflict. Some conflict is normal, unavoidable and often leads to bring about positive change (OECD, 2008: 16).

Conflict Resolution

Another concept in the realm of conflict theory is 'conflict resolution'. It refers to the processes, actions, and activities exerted with the aim of addressing the underlying causes of conflict (Burton, 1990; Jeong, 2000). The United States Institute of Peace (2011:17) defines conflict resolution as 'efforts to address the underlying causes of a conflict by finding common interests and overarching goals'. Conflict resolution is a broad term, which implies that the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed, resolved and, behaviour among the contending parties is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer hostile, and the structure of the conflict has been changed (Jeong, 2000:34; Khannas and Kueck Gert, 2003; Dagne, 2013: 21). Resolving a conflict means avoiding disputes between individuals or groups of people through viable solutions that make them refrain from violence and that attempt to harmonize the peoples involved in the conflict or that attempt to restore amicable relations between the parties in the conflict (Dagne, 2013: 21; Jeong, 2000; Merga, 2012). Conflict resolution is all about addressing the sources of conflict and the restoration of former relationships between the disputants. Resolution prevents the re-appearance of future conflict by fulfilling the needs of all parties. Notably, conflict seen as inherent in the social system can be eliminated only through structural changes. 'Conflict resolution has been a central part of the work towards building peace, promoting development and consolidating regional cooperation and democratic efforts/processes' (Jeong, 2000).

One of the goals of conflict resolution approach is to bring relational change between conflicting parties by minimizing misunderstandings and maximizing understanding (Burton, 1987; Wallenstein, 2007). 'Conflict resolution is more than the limited definition of peace. It is more

than the absence of [conflict]. The parties are agreeing to respect each other and prepare for living together with one another' (Wallensteen, 2007:9). According to Wallensteen (2007:8), 'conflict resolution as a situation is where the conflict parties enter into agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other's continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other'.

The essence of conflict resolution is building new and lasting relations between conflicting parties by changing hostile attitudes and behaviors. It includes developing and enhancing positive attitudes and generating trust through reconciliation, and building or strengthening the institutions through which the parties interact with one another peacefully. In conflict resolution, the primary goal is not just to end the strife, but also to solve the problem from its bottoms. Conflict resolution is a sustainable multi-dimensional task of bottom up and holistic peace building approach, aims at truly achieving positive peace (Lederach, 2003; Ramsbotham, 2011). In order to best find a solution and address the long standing inter-ethnic conflict through conflict resolution approach, practitioners need to look at the structural (root) and triggering (immediate) causes that brought the conflict into manifest stages. In this case, resolution means to deal with conflict successfully to clear it up and to find an answer for it (Jeong, 2000; Merga, 2012; Ramsbotham, 2005). It is a multifaceted process of reframing conflict parties' interests and position so as to successfully restore peaceful relationships among them (Ramsbotham, 2005:35). During the conflict resolution, Ramsbotham underlines that, behaviors should not be violent, attitudes should not be hostile, and the structure of the conflicts should have been changed. Such approach prevents the recurrence of future conflict by addressing the needs of all parties on equal footing.

Recognizing parties' interest needs their continued existence and arriving at mutually acceptable solutions are considered to be ingredients of effective conflict resolution mechanism. However, this perspective is strongly criticized that the word 'resolution' contradicts the nature of conflicts itself (Colson, 1995:80). The argument lies on the fact that conflict is part of human life, therefore, it cannot be resolved once and for all (Colson, 1995; Jeong, 2000; Merga, 2012; Ramsbotham, 2005, USIP, 2011). Colson (1995:80) criticized the assumption that conflicts are resolved and led to harmony. As to him some societies focus upon the issue at stake rather than

the social relationship of the disputants in dealing with conflicts. They often resort to law for they simply seek remedies for their ills rather than to restore lasting peace and harmony. Thus, for Colson, though followed by rituals, negotiation and adjudication 'have much less success in convincing contenders that they are in the wrong and they do little or nothing to heal ruptured social relationships or abate anger and contempt.' The publication of the United States' Institute of Peace (2011:17) seems in favor of the above assertion. The writing states as follows: '...conflicts are a normal part of human interaction and are rarely completely resolved or eliminated, but they can be managed by such measures as negotiation, mediation, conciliation, and arbitration.' Generally, conflict resolution is the process whereby the disputants attempt to resolve their conflicts. It involves the end of violence, attitudinal changes to one another and addressing the sources of conflicts.

Making a sharp distinction between conflict resolution and conflict management, Osaghae(1996:173) states that, the notion of resolution implies a once and for all treatment of conflicts, while management implies that conflicts cannot be disposed of in one fell swoop. While resolution suggests that conflicts can be dealt with in a rational comprehensive way, management presupposes that they are best approached from the incrementalist's stand point. Obviously, says Osaghae, the management approach is more discerning of the dynamic nature of ethnic conflicts and conflict situations: the fact that conflicts are usually complex and that the 'resolution' of one conflict could result in emerging another, the actors and issues in conflict are forever changing form and character, and that supposedly different conflicts (ethnic, religious or class conflict) are linked in important ways. Moreover, the management approach presents a more continuous strategy for dealing with conflicts and the hope is that if disagreements at the level of basic competitions can be minimized, then the scope for conflicts will be reduced (Osaghae, 1996:173). Conflict management also supports the longer-term development of societal systems and institutions that enhance good governance, rule of law, security, economic sustainability, and social well-being, which helps prevent future conflicts (USIP, 2011:17).

Conflict Transformation

Recently many authors employ the concept of conflict transformation, particularly to explain process depicted in addressing protracted social conflict (Galtung, 2001; Lederach, 2003;

Ramsbotham, 2005). Lederach (2003) defines conflict transformation as dynamic and ongoing process of changing relationships, attitudes, and social, economic and political structures from negative to positive. It is a long- term process and involves several stake-holders. Ramsbotham (2005) maintains that conflict transformation is the deepest level of conflict resolution. Conflict transformation is long term and broad process of changing the social, economic and political conditions of people, which could be the major causes of violent conflict; it involves transformation of the context, the socio-economic and political make up, actors and underlying issues (Ramsbotham, *ibid.*)

Conflict transformation is structural- oriented and long- term peace building effort, which aim at overcoming revealed forms of direct cultural and structural violence (Lederach, 2003; Galtung, 2001). It moves beyond the aims of conflict management, settlement, and conflict resolution. It means that efforts are made not to eliminate conflict as such; rather, it is believed that conflict expressed in a non-violent manner is an essential for social change (Shide, 2003; Muhyadin, 2006). Thus, conflict transformation approach tries to change the social and political system in which the conflict occurs (Shide, 2003:18). Below in the table, brief comparison is made by Lederach (2003:46) between conflict resolution and conflict transformation perspectives.

Conflict Resolution and Transformation: A Brief Comparison of Perspective

	Conflict Resolution Perspective	Conflict Transformation Perspective
The key question	How do we end something not desired?	How to end something destructive and build something desired?
The focus	It is content-centered.	It is relationship-centered.
The purpose	To achieve an agreement and solution to the present problem that has created the crisis.	To promote constructive change processes, inclusive but not limited to immediate solutions.
Development of the process	It is embedded and built around the immediacy of the relationship where the present problems appear.	It is concerned with responding to symptoms and engaging the systems within which relationships are embedded.
Time frame	The horizon is short-term.	The horizon is mid- to long-term.
View of conflict	It envisions the need to de-escalate conflict processes	It envisions conflict as a dynamic of ebb (conflict de-escalation to pursue constructive

		change) and flow (conflict escalation to pursue constructive change).
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Adapted from Lederach, John Paul. October 2003 "Conflict Transformation." *Beyond Intractability*.⁵

To deal with behavior in conflict, it is important to distinguish conflict resolution from conflict management and conflict transformation. Burton (1991) makes a distinction between conflict resolution, conflict management, and conflict settlement. He suggests that 'conflict resolution means terminating conflict by methods that are analytical and enables to get the root cause of the problem. Conflict resolution, as opposed to mere management or 'settlement', points to an outcome that in the view of the parties involved is a permanent solution to a problem (1991: 72). But, conflict transformation is structural- oriented and long- term peace building effort. This approach tries to change the social and political system in which the conflict occurs (Shide, 2003:18). Thus, it moves beyond the aims of conflict management, settlement, and conflict resolution.

According to Wallernsteen (2007:47) conflict resolution is 'a social situation where the armed conflicting parties in a (voluntary) agreement resolve to peacefully live with-and/or dissolve- their basic incompatibilities and henceforth cease to use arms against one another'. This means that conflict is transformed from violent to non-violent behavior by the parties themselves, not somebody else, such as an outsider or third party. For Wallernsteen, conflict resolution focuses on an agreement which marks the end point of the armed phase of the conflict (ibid.49). Conflict transformation and peace building concern wider array of the importance of durability of peaceful settlement of conflict. Conflict management typically focuses on the armed aspect of the conflict: bringing the fighting to an end, limiting the spread of conflict and thus containing it.

On the basis of the concept of 'conflict resolution' and the nature of the conflict that I dealt with, I preferred to use conflict resolution as a frame-work of analysis. The Afar- Oromo conflict is one of the protracted social conflicts in north east Ethiopia. Therefore, I explored Afar-Oromo conflict through the use of concepts of conflict resolution lens.

⁵ <http://www.beyond_intractability.org/essay/transformation>.accessed in April 2014.

3.1.1.5 Ethnic Conflict

'Ethnic conflict,' as scholars agree, is clash among two or more ethnic groups due to demand for power, resources, identity, social status and the like (Burton, 1990; Babatunde, 2004; Shale; 2004; Sisay, 2007). 'ethnic conflict' can be defined as a conflict between two or more ethnic groups over resources, identity, borders or against national oppression. Burton (1990:137-138) states that multi-ethnic conflicts are usually violent and destructive to the societal development. Parties in conflict may get external military and financial support for strategic or ideological reasons and these may result in costly and protracted conflict (Shale, 2004: 2). However, there is a problem surrounding the definition of 'ethnic conflict'. In spite of the fact that many cases of violence have been referred to as 'ethnic conflict' in various parts of the world, controversies still surround the term. As Hussein (2005: 8) notes 'there is no single or uniform definition of ethnic conflict.'

According to Smith (2000: 24) 'ethnic conflict' refers to 'a continuum of events which range from the articulation of discontent, protest, mobilization, confrontation, sporadic or sustained violence, and civil war or insurrection, in which ethnicity plays a key role'. This entails that ethnic conflict ranges from violent to non-violent interactions. To Brown (1997), in Hussein (2005:8) 'an ethnic conflict is a dispute about important political, economic, social, cultural, or territorial issues between two or more ethnic communities'. This definition lacks clarity, however it is not clear whether it is about the conflict between neighbouring ethnic groups or between the government and excluded ethnic group. Babatunde (2004: 35) claims that 'We have ethnic conflict when two or more ethnic groups contend against one another, in order to achieve objectives perceived as incompatible.' On the other hand, he suggested that 'positive inter-group contact appears to provide more viable means of resolving ethnic conflict'. When two or more ethnic groups have close settlement and share similar resources, conflict is likely to happen (ibid.). Ethnic conflict refers to situation where people mobilize against others on the basis of ethnic identity. Hence, ethnicity can be a factor in conflict, since parties in the conflict belong to different ethnic groups. Markakis (1996) argues that inter-ethnic conflict is fought between and within states. Inter-ethnic conflict is a conflict by which the primary line of confrontation is

ethnic markers. In ethnic conflict whatever the cause, ethnic groups confronted each other with special emphasis to their ethnic identity (Fowkes, 2002). Moreover, for inter-ethnic conflict to happen two or more ethnic groups must reside in close proximity. Thus, the existing literature claimed that multi ethnic states are more vulnerable for ethnic conflicts than homogenous states (Blagojevic, 2009). However, it does not mean that ethnic diversity by itself is a source of ethnic conflict. Ethnic differences lead to ethnic conflict when ethnic differences are politicized for personal or group benefits. In the contemporary world, ethnic diversity leads to ethnic conflict when ethnic identities are constructed and instrumentalised by different actors (Young, 2000; Romsbotham, 2011).

Sometimes ethnic conflict is often used loosely, to describe a wide range of intra-state conflicts that are not, in fact, ethnic in character. The conflicts in Somalia, for example, are occasionally referred to as an ethnic conflict even though Somalia is the most ethnically homogenous country in Africa (Yasin, 2010; Admasu, 2016). In general, it is sound to recognize that ethnicity by itself cannot be a source of conflict but can be used as tool to mobilize a certain group of entity constructed through courses of socio political changes.

All in all, there is conceptual gap in perceiving ‘ethnicity’, ‘ethnic group’ and ‘ethnic conflict’ among researchers in the field. As Hussein (2005:24) summarizes the ‘Academics perceive ethnic group, ethnicity, and ethnic conflict from different perspectives. The existence of ethnic group and ethnicity is objective to some and circumstantial to others’. However, this study will adopt Brown’s definition, which includes many factors, ethnic conflict to arise, and Smith’s definitions which concentrates mainly on violent ethnic conflict. Furthermore, this study will take up the clash between neighboring ethnic groups. Babatunde’s definition is appropriate to use as a frame- work of analysis in this study, as he claims conflict is likely to happen, among other things, when two or more ethnic groups have close settlement and share same resources. The concept of ethnic conflict is, therefore, will be used in this study to refer to ethnic conflict with so many complex factors, and that happens between neighbouring ethnic groups, the Afar and Oromo.

3.2 Theoretical Perspectives

There has been a proliferation of research on ethnic conflicts. Various social science theories have been developed to explain the occurrence of ethnic conflicts. Three of these theories, which explain the concept of ethnicity include, are primordialism, constructivism and instrumentalism. The debate among ‘primordialists’, constructivists’ and ‘instrumentalists’ is at the heart of the conceptual problem with ethnicity. The theoretical debate on ethnicity has largely rests within the limit of the primordialist, constructivist and instrumentalist range.

3.2.1 Primordialism

Accordingly, primordialists looked at ethnicity as natural and innate to human identity based on fixed deep primordial attachments, like blood and common ancestor, to a group or culture. This approach regards blood ties, language, religion, and custom as given in featuring ethnic identity. Primordialists argue that identity is shaped by deep-rooted history, common culture, language, and religion and psychology and some would say, biological factors (Barth, 1969; Van den Berghe, 1995; Geertz, 1996; Horowitz, 1998; Eller, 1999; Vaughan, 2003). According to primordialists, ethnic conflicts occur as a result of persistent natural factors, which are often used as basis for ethnic groupings and pursuance of a common goal. The symbols of ethnic identity are believed to be proceeding to experience deep-rooted, innate and unchanging.

According to this perspective, individuals engage in conflicts due to the attachment that keeps them together and they, therefore, risk their lives for the common good of the entire group. Ethnic conflicts here are then carried out on the basis of identification of ‘us’ versus ‘them’, which is the essence of ethnicity (Hale, 2004:460; Young: 2003:14). It holds ethnicity is an ascribed identity, something inherited from one’s ancestors. Van den Berghe(1995:358) for example, understands ethnicity as biological and genetic. Hence, ethnicity is static and ethnic identification is determined by common ancestor (Isajiw, 1993; Williams, 2015). This approach deeply relies on one’s biological hereditary and attachment which is fixed at birth and always remains the most significant determinant of one’s identity throughout the life time and cannot be subject to any alteration (Isajiw, 1993:2).

The main criticism against this approach has been that it argues that ethnic divisions are fixed, static, and natural. The primordialist approach stresses too much on the irrationality of ethnic members and inter-ethnic group relationships. It does not explain conflicts emerging from perceived and actual discrimination, especially in the distribution of power and resources (Hatchinson and Smith, 1996:8; Smith, 1994). In this view, primordial perspective looks at ethnicity from a static and negative stance implicitly suggesting that ethnic rivalries can never be addressed. However, ethnicity is never static since new forms of characteristics, such as, culture, custom, language, and history are perpetually created over time (Poluha, 1998: 33). Moreover, this theory claims the presence of ‘natural ties’ within a certain ethnic group and inevitability of ethnic conflict, it fails to take in to account the impact of social, economic, and political factors on ethnic conflict(Williams,2015:147).

3.2.2 Constructivism

Constructivists, on the other hand, see ethnicity as a constructed identity, which is created. For them ethnicity is dynamic, a reaction to social environment and ethnic identification is determined by society (Sisay, 2007; Yang, 2000). The basic notion in this approach is that ethnicity is something constructed in everyday living. Ethnic identity is not something people possess but something they construct in specific social and historical contexts (Isajiw, 1999). The constructivist dimension sees ethnicity as something that is socially constructed through various processes like migration, conquest, and colonization (Williams, 2015:147).This theory contends that the socially constructed nature of ethnicity causes conflict not because of individual actors (Yang, 2000).Since ethnicity is a social process and product rather than a cultural given, it can be constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed (Wimmer, 2008; Williams, 2015). Unlike primordialists, ethnicity is not something that is given at birth, rather it is chosen by the individual actor. As such, the content and form of what constitutes an ethnic group changes as people flow across boundaries, but ethnic boundaries tend to persist (Barth, 1969:9).In this regard, modernization projects and officially state sponsored policies are taken to be one the major responsible factors to the formation of ethnic groups where there was no prior collective consciousness(Hale,2004;Young, 2003:14).Additionally, constructivist theory influences the public arena of the political field, and the role of, what Young(2003) calls, ‘cultural entrepreneurs’ is so vital in the politics of ethnicity. In the course of such an activity, a skillfully

created ethnic identity and group would be born. Furthermore, the constructivist dimension shows the existence of asymmetric degree of ethnic mobilization in the political field. It follows that all ethnic groups do not show equal mobilization behavior when they are, for instance, wooed by elites.

Despite such strength, the constructivist theory has shortcomings. It disregards the role of primordial 'ties' for the construction of an identity of a certain ethnic group. Moreover, even if it argues for the constructedness of ethnicity, like the primordial theory, it does not sufficiently address the impact of economic and political interests that are prevalent in the construction of ethnic identity (Hale, 2004; Yang, 2000).

3.2.3 Instrumentalism

The instrumentalist school unlike the primordialists and the constructionist schools, views ethnicity as an instrument or strategically tool for gaining resources. According to this theoretical framework, people become ethnic and remain ethnic when their ethnicity yields significant returns for them (Brass, 1991; Hale, 2004; Smith, 1994; Yang, 2000). Contrary to the above to two theories, instrumentalism is not about, as Hale (2004:462) put it, 'ancientness or constructedness', but rather this theory is all about 'how strongly individuals are tied to the ethnic identities'. The central theme in instrumentalism theory is that ethnic membership or identification is based on rewards or cost benefit analysis. Individuals change or shift their ethnic identities depending on the potential gain it brings. Ethnicity 'exists and persists because it is useful' (Yang, 2000:39). Proponents advocate that the elites in the modern state use and manipulate perceptions of ethnic identity to further their own ends and stay in power. It is artificially created which is flexible, changeable and manipulated or framed based on the advantages of the elite (Sisay, 2007; Muhabie, 2015). According to this theory, ethnicity is susceptible to manipulation by elites who would use their ethnic members for their own benefits. Ethnicity is employed as a weapon by elites in the fight for political power. This theory shows how ethnicity might be politicized by elites just for the sake of elites themselves, not for the group *per se* (Young, 2003:14). Instrumentalist perspective represents the view that ethnic identity is a social, political, and cultural construct that can be used in competition over resources or as a motivation for conflict. In this view, ethnic conflict as an outcome of mobilization of

ethnic identity by individuals or group of individuals for political and economic ends (Brass, 1991; Smith, 1994; Eller and Coughlan, 1996; Hutchison and Smith, 1996; Berman, 1998; Merera, 2003, Asnake, 2009).

Instrumentalists view ethnic identity not as rigid, but rather, as fluid and constructed (Hechter, 1996; Horowitz, 2001). It requires only a 'belief' in common ancestry rather than the genetic fact. Their view takes ethnic conflicts as political in nature and places more emphasis not on cultural, but political and territorial appeals (Carment, 1993: 138-139). This approach is distinct from primordialism, in so far as the discourse is considered to being socially constructed, rather than, natural.

The instrumentalist view is criticized for its failure to identify that ethnic identity cannot be 'decided...by individuals at will but is embedded within and controlled by the larger society' (Lake and Rothchild, 1998a: 5). The drawback of instrumentalism theory is that while ethnicity is limited, it gives huge emphasis on the rational choice of individuals *vis-a-vis* their ethnicity. Individuals do not have many options to choose their ethnic group because it is hardly possible to identify oneself with any other ethnic group as ethnic identification is socially sanctioned and needs others recognition. Besides, not all ethnic choices are for material or political gains. For instance, people choose a certain ethnicity because of its psychological satisfaction, (like affection and attachment from other people). Ethnic choice might be based on its symbolic gains. They also failed to recognize primordial elements as strategy to manipulate ethnic groups as a response to oppression and suppression by a dominant group. To conclude, since ethnicity concerns with 'us' and 'them' group mentality, it erodes togetherness, empathy and sympathy among the people. This opened the way for political entrepreneurs to activate conflict between ethnic groups.

Thus, in this study an integrated approach is applied because of the inherent limitations of exhibited in the three theoretical lenses discussed above. The integrated approach presented here is based on the work Yang (2000:39). Yang discussed the three major theories of ethnicity (primordialism, constructivism and instrumentalism) and showed their relative strength and limitations, and as well argued that an integrated approach is needed to fully understand

ethnicity. As such, the first central argument of integrated approach is that ethnicity is partly cultural given and natural since there are some primordial elements that we cannot deny, for example religion, territory, language, physical appearance, material culture, livelihood, and history. Secondly, ethnicity is constructed. The construction of ethnicity, according to this approach, takes place via various ways: ethnic categorization rules, social conditions, and structural issues. Ethnicity is the work of society whereby societal standards and categorization rules (like ancestor, physical appearance, or social class), which might be written or unwritten, governs one's ethnic affiliation. Ethnic categorization rules also are not uniform across societies; they change from society to society. Consequently, the same person could be categorized into different ethnic groups by different societies. Also social conditions (like migration) can craft new ethnic groups and identities, as well as, can change the ethnic membership or identity of individuals and groups. There might be ethnic switching (like religious conversion). Lastly, structural conditions can increase and bring about ethnic consciousness. For example, government policy of recognition or disintegration can lead to a group's self-awareness and organization. Thirdly, ethnicity is something that the decision of the individuals themselves who would decide their ethnicity based on some calculations like material gains. Thus, an individual's interest to some extent shapes the ethnicity of one selects.

3.2.4 Contextualizing Primordialist, Constructivism and Instrumentalist Perspectives

Informed by the above debates, this study will consider all primordial, constructivist and instrumentalist perspectives to explore inter-ethnic conflicts in the study area. Considering all perspectives is apparently vital when seen from Ethiopia's reality. Because, on the one hand, 'in the Ethiopian context primordialism has been greatly influenced both popular perceptions of ethnic identity and political discourses' (Asnake, 2009: 38). This has been further reinforced ethnic identity to become an organizing principle of Ethiopian federalism. In this regard, ethnic groups uphold primordial elements of ethnic identity to strengthen their cohesiveness as a group to maintain their ethnic identity in response to the historic domination and suppression by a dominant ethnic group.

On the other hand, a sort of instrumentalist approach has its own significance in the political discourse and institutionalization of predominantly ethnic-based federalism in Ethiopia.

Researchers argue that the current ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia are results of the EPRDF Government's political experiment (Hizkias, 1996; Teka, 1998; Zerihun, 2001). Hizkias (1996), for instance, stresses that the current intended role played by ethnic elite and ethnic-based political parties is instrumental in creating ethnic conflicts. His argument implies that ethnicity in Ethiopia is a new political artifact constructed by the government since 1991. Ethno-nationalist movements like Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) and Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) use the primordial elements of their ethnic group for political mobilization (Asnake, 2009:39). These ethno-political groups are using the ethnicity card to win the minds and hearts of their respective members. The formation of such ethno-regional political groups as a defiance to the state policy that fosters the 'oppression' and 'colonization' and in defense of 'their respective' ethnic groups is an act of ethnic identity construction by 'ethnic entrepreneurs', shows the constructivism link to ethnicity, where ethnic identities are seen as something that can be constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed through social process (Alem, 2003:10; Merera, 2006:120). To achieve their political goal, the elites then used their respective ethnic group as a social base and instrumentalized ethnic identity in their struggle for political power by invoking the constitutive elements (primordial elements) of respective groups.

In relation to primordial, constructivist and instrumental theoretical perspectives on ethnic identity, Merera (2003: 26) notes that ' the most relevant in the Ethiopian situation is the position that takes it as an ideology of mobilized collectivities that may be used both as a weapon of resistance by the marginalized ethnic groups and as a political instrument for elites'. In line with this argument(Asebe, 2007: 89) claims that 'while ethnicity remained a critical medium for the manipulation of power by the dominant class and constituencies, ethnic structures have also emerged as a critical rallying point of resistance to oppressive and corrupt regimes'.

In Ethiopia, ethnicity is an enormously complex issue of concern. Inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts over issues of identity, governance and competition over resources (mainly over grazing land, over cattle, over water points and over cultivable land) are common phenomenon (Sisay, 2007). However, all ethnic based conflicts in the country are not necessarily based on primordial sentiments since many conflicts relate with social, political and economic reasons (Asebe, 2007; Anteneh, 2013). However, the change in the political landscape of the country

since 1991 has its own role in increasing the ethnic line of thinking (Abbnik, 2011; Anteneh, 2013). Due to the restructuring of the Ethiopian state basically on the basis of ethnic identity, the ethno-cultural differentiation of groups has been pronounced more loudly than ever.

One can conclude that ethnicity manifests itself in two forms: as a strategy to manipulate ethnic groups for political mobilization and legitimacy, on the one hand, and as a response to oppression and exploitation by the dominant ethnic group, on the other, the Ethiopian experience represents both aspects. While the political entrepreneurs (elite in power and some opposition politicians) use politicized ethnicity as an instrument to gain popular support, there are also situations where ethnic politics emerges against oppression and in quest for self-rule and shared-rule. This entails that all perspectives should be taken in to consideration, while analyzing ethnic conflict in Ethiopia.

Scholars have been studying the phenomenon of ethnicity in Ethiopia by employing either of these major theoretical frameworks (Asnake, 2009; Asebe, 2007; Berhanu, 2007; Clapham, 1988; Dereje, 2003; Lincoln, 2000; Vaughan, 2003). Asnake, 2009; Clapham, 1988; Vaughan, 2003; adopted a constructivist approach while Asebe, 2007, and Dereje, 2003 used primordial and constructivist approach. Berhanu (2007) also employed primordial and instrumentalist lenses. In regard to constructivist approach, Clapham (1988:24), for instance, asserted that 'it is essential to emphasize the plasticity of Amhara-and hence, in a sense, of Ethiopian -identity...Being Amhara is much more a matter of how one can behave than of who one's parents were...'. The exception is Lincoln the one who tried to combine the three theories, where the three theories are 'understood as complimentary rather than mutually exclusive' (2000:54). So, one can see how primordial, constructivist, and instrumental elements of the integrated approach work in this political struggle for power and resources both at the national and sub-national levels.

Despite such studies, scholars have largely failed to answer basic questions that are pertinent to ethnicity mainly because they study ethnicity from a single perspective and such an isolated study could not fully elaborate the phenomenon (Horowitz, 1998; Williams, 2015; Yang, 2000). Explaining the inadequacy of any single perspective, Horowitz (1998: 23) stresses that 'none of the above perspectives can fully explain why people fight along ethnic lines'. Williams

(2015:147) also fittingly observed,'although each of these theories have significant contributions to the understanding of the phenomenon, they are all limited in their explanatory, predictive and perspective ability mainly as a result of their implicit bias regarding the origin of ethnic identity'. Consequently, the failure to address fundamental questions urged scholars on the field to look for a theoretical framework that goes beyond the primordial-constructivist or primordial – instrumentalist dichotomy. This has eventually led the emergence of the integrated approach(Yang,2000:39). The integrated approach of ethnicity includes the central arguments of primordialism, constructivism, and instrumentalism and insists that the combination of these theories is by far in better position to stand the test of ethnicity questions rather than a one-theory explanation (Yang, 2000:40).

Like wise, none of the above perspectives can be generalized as the most fitting explanation for the complex ethnic conflicts that arise in various parts of Ethiopia. Hence, this study acknowledges the inadequacy of any single perspective to explain exclusively ethnic conflict. And the study employs integrated approach of ethnic conflict and resolution mechanisms in the northeast Ethiopia, which is the focus of this study. Ethnic conflict, in this research, refers to inter-communal conflict that occurs between two or more ethnic groups who have or assumed to have different language, culture, geographical setting and political, economic and historical experiences. Ethnic conflicts here are to mean violence both at group and individual basis between non-state groups mobilized along a shared communal identity with no professionally trained army. It is against this background that the study explored the conflict between the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups, as well as, conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area.

3.3 Consociationalist and Pluralist Perspectives

The other theoretical perspectives that are pertinent to conceptualizing ethnic conflict management, settlement, resolution, prevention and transformation are 'consociationalist' and 'pluralist' perspectives. Of course, there is a deficiency in the theories/concepts of ethnic conflict in connection with conflict resolution mechanisms. In this regard, Hussien (2005: 20) emphasizes that '...one of the most important deficiencies in the theories of ethnic conflict is that they tend to side-step the discussion of conflict resolution mechanisms'. However, despite this

limitation, the academic literature on ethnic conflict resolution is dominated by two competing perspectives: the 'pluralist' or 'integrationist' approach and the 'consociational' or power-sharing approach (Hussein, 2005; Lebamoff and Zolan, 2008).

With regard to the pluralist perspective (often referred as pessimistic view), on ethnic conflict resolution, Hussein (2005: 21) has noted that 'the pluralist society theory sees no solution to ethnic conflict.... Because there is an incompatibility of interests between or among different ethnic groups in a given country' implying that 'a multi-ethnic state is doomed to conflict and disintegration....' Similarly, Christopher (2006: 786) argues that because of ethno-political competition, heterogeneity 'breeds conflict that is difficult to resolve and, as a consequence, political systems that are inherently more unstable'. This perspective goes even to the extent of disconnection of ethnic groups as a panacea for their conflict. For example, Deutsch 1991 in Babatunde (2004:36) suggests 'isolation of ethnic groups as an effective means of resolving [ethnic] conflicts.' This means conflict occurs when there is contact between ethnic groups involved and when these ethnic groups are remained apart, the likelihood of conflicts is resolved. Nevertheless, when it comes to the context of Ethiopia in particular and, Africa in general, it is difficult to materialize the pluralists' solution. In support to this, Babatunde (2004:36) argues that 'isolation [is] extremely difficult if not completely impossible' because 'with modernization, ethnic groups are no longer self-sufficient and now need one another in order to survive and develop' and as 'ethnic groups occupy contiguous locations, isolating them tends to be counterproductive because it might aggravate hostilities'(Babatunde, 2004:36).For Babatunde reducing contact between ethnic groups may aggravate conflict. This perspective is pessimistic about the management and resolution of ethnic conflict in multi-ethnic society.

In contrast, Hussein (2005: 21-22) explains that 'Consociationalist perspective assumes that it is possible to resolve ethnic conflict and promote inter-ethnic solidarity under a democratic environment'. This perspective insists on the possibility of resolution of ethnic conflict by a peaceful means with the realization of democratic political system, which addresses the interests of all ethnic groups in a given country. Against the pluralist theory, the consociationists (often called optimistic theory) believe that it is possible to preserve peace and stability among multi-ethnic states where various ethnic groups live in harmony. According to this perspective, inter-

ethnic problems could be resolved internally under a democratic political environment. In a condition where by governments/policy makers avoid discriminatory course of action, one could hope to see conflicts resolved genuinely (Hussien, *ibid*).

The above discussions indicate that there is no agreement among researchers on the possibility of resolving ethnic conflict. Consociationalist may provide the best option for addressing ethnic conflict resolution in societies with ethnic cleavages. All the theories have certain strength in explaining ethnicity though they cannot sufficiently serve that purpose when employed independently. Hence, in this study, I adopt consociational perspective as a frame-work of analysis, as it is the most relevant to the current Ethiopian situation. Against this theoretical background, this study sought to explore local conflict resolution mechanisms and identify their relations with state mechanisms.

3.4 Effects of Ethnic Conflict

Ethnic conflicts are not limited to the generally conflict prone areas alone. It is a pervasive global phenomenon cutting across cultures and societies, including those of the developed world, in each case exhibiting its own specificity. To mention some, the intense nationalism that disintegrated the multi ethnic state of Yugoslavia, the deep-rooted religious rivalry in Northern Ireland and the peripheral nationalism of the Basques in Europe (Keating, 1993; Malesevik, 2000) as well as the religious and ethnic nationalisms across Asia are all part of the global upsurge of competing nationalisms (Merera, 2003). The intensity of the effects of an ethnic clash is determined by the nature and scope of the conflict concerned. The adverse effects of violent ethnic conflict could be categorized into political, economic and socio-cultural factors.

As experience has shown, the political effects of an ethnic conflict can be seen at two levels. The first is the weakening and possible collapse of the central government. The deposing of the military regime in Ethiopia, in May 1991, by the ethno-nationalist groups of TPLF/EPRDF forces can be taken as a case in point. Another political effect of ethnic conflict could be the disintegration of the ex-Soviet Union and federation of Yugoslavia might be an illustration. What is hinted here is that ethnic conflict can play a crucial role both in the collapse of the central government; and at the extreme cases, the disintegration of the country totally.

Seen from economic point of view, ethnic conflict destroys the very bases of development: environmental resources, economic infrastructure, and the social and civic ties that permit and sustain development. The damage of immense resource in Yugoslavian war among different ethnic peoples, and the overall disintegration of the country's infrastructure and other economic resources in Somalia can be mentioned as illustrative in this case. When there is violent conflict in a country resources that otherwise could have been invested for development endeavors, would be shifted to cover the expense of the war. The productive labor force will be drained to the war front and hence production and productivity decline in the countries engaged in the war. In a country where there is violent conflict no tourism and incomes associated with tourism. Trade and other social and civil institutions either completely or partially cease their services as a result of which life become costly and terrible. Conflict also reported to be among the major factors of vulnerability that destroy people's social and private property and trigger unemployment in the area.

The final and perhaps the harshest outcome of violent ethnic conflict is its social costs. According to Jeong (2000), Nazi German killed six millions of European Jews, and other ethnic minority groups. 'The 1994 horrific war in the country of Rwanda in central Africa, among Hutu (the majority) and the Tutsi (the minority) ethnic groups claimed the life of over half a million Tutsi ethnic people within a few weeks' (Scupin and Decourse, 2004). Another outcome of inter ethnic conflict concerns displacement of a large number of people as refugees. According to one source, the following numbers of people were estimated to have fled their homes: 100,000 Hindus because of the war in Kashmir; 500,000 people following the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan; three million people were displaced as a result of the war in the former Yugoslavian federation (Brown, 1997:93). Ethnic conflict engenders, in addition to refugees, internal displacement. For instance, in 1992-93, about 60,000 people were internally displaced owing to the war in Tajikistan, ex-Soviet Union. This is other than the over 100,000 people who took refuge in Afghanistan, Russia and elsewhere (Tishkov, 1999:583).

In general, ethnic conflict leads to the breakdown of law and order, the disruption of economic activities, humanitarian crises and a state of uncertainty which deter long run investment and development efforts and stability. Violent ethnic conflict leads to unprecedented out migration of

people including vulnerable groups like women, children, and the old as well as the disabled. Therefore, it is worthwhile to give due concern to interethnic relations and manage it cautiously and systematically. Conflict is like contagious disease. Unwise handling of conflict gives it the opportunity to widespread all of a sudden. If once occurred, conflict must be handled at its early stages. If allowed to escalate, it would be changed to violence that cannot be easily remedied. In connection to effects of Afar -Oromo ethnic conflict of the study area, more elaboration will be made under chapter six.

3.5 Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Ethiopia

Inter-ethnic conflicts were and are still intense and problematic in Ethiopia (Abbinik, 2011; Anteneh, 2013). Researchers provide several causes for the outbreak of ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. Despite differences in degree, extent and actors, the country has encountered a lot of inter-ethnic conflicts at different periods (Abrha, 2012). These conflicts include historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors. Inter-ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia dates back to the formation of the modern Ethiopian state at the turn of the 19th century, incorporating different ethnic groups found at various levels of social and economic development through the use of both forceful subjugation and peaceful persuasion (Markakis, 2003; Merera, 2011; Amare, 2013).

After the downfall of the Dergue, ethnic federalism was opted to manage the complex ethno linguistic diversity of the country. However, since the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took power in May 1991; there have been a number of inter-ethnic conflicts in different parts of Ethiopia. Among others, the conflicts at the borders of Oromia and Somali, Afar and Issa, Garre and Borena, Oromia and Gumuz, Guji and Gedeo, Anuak and Nuer, Sidama and Guji, and Kereyu and Afar have occurred in the past couple of decades (Habtamu, 2013). As identified by Sisay (2007), claims and counter claims for land and water points, exclusion from power at some levels, unmarked boundaries, blood feuds, proliferation of small arms, feelings of insecurity by some groups, domination by a certain group and lack of good governance are the main causes of conflicts in Ethiopia. The post 1991 political changes witnessed inter-ethnic conflicts over grazing lands, water and other resources. These recurrent violent conflicts have claimed the lives of thousands of people and accounted for the destruction of public properties (ibid.).

The post-1991 Ethiopian politics reveals politicization of ethnicity. With the construction of identity from above, elites employ the ethnicity card during election and other political campaigns. In fact, in Ethiopia the majority of the political parties are organized not along a national and an all-inclusive platform, but along a narrow ethnic basis. As such, the politicization of ethnicity is augmented and elites tap into this 'gold mine' for their own end. Thus, the elite manipulation is unfolding against this background (Asnake, 2009; Berhanu, 2007; Vaughan, 2003).

The Ethiopian lowlands are potential areas of conflicts because all pastoralist communities have possessed small arms and light weapons (Bekele, 2010; Teshome, 2010; Abrha, 2012; Atsibha, 2014). Unrestricted proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the arming of certain communities intentionally without considering the security of others is a major threat to peace in most of the Ethiopian pastoralist areas and it is an aggravating cause of conflict (Sisay, 2007). Nowadays, pastoralist communities provide the largest market for illicit arms from local circulation and from neighboring countries in the Horn of Africa (Kenya, Somalia, The Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea) (Bekele, 2010). Easy availability and circulation of small arms and light weapons in these communities have been aggravating protracted violent conflicts and social disintegration within the pastoralists and other social groups for control of resources and power (Abrha, 2010; Atsibha, 2014).

In addition to inter-ethnic conflict, inter-ethnic conflict transformation studies are conducted in different parts of Ethiopia. One study conducted by Amare (2013) investigated inter-ethnic conflict transformation in the post 1991 Ethiopian ethnic federalism in *Asosa woreda*, Benishangul Gumuz regional state. As to the study, inappropriate development policies particularly in the pre-1991 period; economic factors like land grabbing, resource competition and political factors were the major causes of conflict between the Bertha and settler Amhara in *Asosa woreda* (Amare, 2013). Besides, political or ideological differences and discriminatory policy that made settler's as second class citizenry were identified as triggering causes of conflict (ibid.). The study also found out that both formal and traditional conflict transformative mechanisms were used through identification of the structural conditions, actors, issues and the general context of framing the conflict. The author argued the mechanisms applied were

successful in light of conflict transformation theory and brought constructive outcomes. Amare (2013) claimed that the processes of conflict transformation brought the conflict in to non-violent level and mend the people's attitude to address their problems through peaceful means by themselves. Clear manifestations of inter-ethnic integration and cohesion like growing inter-ethnic marriage between the Bertha and settlers, participation in wedding and mourning ceremonies, etc. were indicated in the findings of the study.

Another study conducted by Anteneh (2013) assessed the practice of inter-ethnic conflict transformation in Ethiopia, taking the case of conflict between Amhara and Afar in Kewot and Semurabi Gela Alo *woreda*. The study found out that conflict in the area was as a result of inter-play variables that cut across economic, political, and socio-cultural factors. The study revealed economic underdevelopment and competition for limited resources as major causes of conflict between the two ethnic groups. Cattle raiding and proliferation of small arms and light weapons were also identified as triggering causes of conflict. As to the study, peace committee arrangement, promotion of inter-communal interaction, infrastructural undertakings, expansion of education, deployment of security forces, cooperation on cultivation of disputed land, improving agricultural productivity, and strengthening cooperation between the two *woreda* administrations were the major approaches used to transform the conflict (Anteneh, 2013).

A different study entitled ethnic conflict management and transformation: the case of Derashe and Konso in Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region also explored transformative peace building in ethnic conflict management. The study identified competition over natural resources for reasons of scarcity of arable and pasture land, the motive to control benefits from the public infrastructure, and attempt of boundary expansion as major causes of conflicts in the area. It also revealed the role of reconciliation ceremonies and the potentials of local peace committees for peace building (Yidnekachew, 2012). A further study investigated and described the causes of conflict and conflict handling mechanisms to build stabilized society and sustainable development in Raya Kobo and Golina *woreda* of Amhara and Afar regions respectively. The study found traditional conflict resolution method as the preferred mechanism of handling conflict in the study area (Jemal, 2012).

The most important issue which is rampant in Ethiopia is the issue of ethnic boundary. The federal system empowers ethno-linguistic groups and assumes that every ethno-linguistic entity in the country resides in clearly demarcated territories although the opposite is true as individuals have taken residence in different parts of the country either through migration (forced or voluntary) or inter-ethnic marriage (Assefa, 2006:136). Consequently, one of the consequences of this system happens to be change of ethnic boundary. As it has been articulated by the integrated approach, ethnic boundaries are not fixed, but they change across time. Such ethnic boundaries transformation might take different forms like expansion, contraction, fragmentation, elevation, and dissolution. Some of these forms of boundary alteration have occurred in Ethiopia. Some regional states (called *Killil*) have granted some groups in their territorial jurisdiction, which are assumed to have a unique identity, special status so that they could run their own affairs by themselves and fulfill the right to self determination as it is declared in the FDRE constitution. The establishment of ‘special’ Zones of Wag- Himra, Awi and Oromo and ‘special’ *Woreda* of Argoba and Kimant of Amara region (The revised Amhara National Regional State Constitution, 2001; Argoba Nationality *Woreda* establishment, 2006); the emergence of an independent Siltie ethnicity by breaking away from the Gurage in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) (Smith, 2005), the division and placement of ethnic groups under two different regions like Boran and Dogdi groups into Oromia and Somali Regional states (Mesfin, 2006), as well as, Guji and Gedeo peoples, who were included into Oromia and SNNPR, respectively (Asebe, 2007); the conflict between Borena (located in Oromia) and Gari (located in Somali region); finally, the Conflict between Afar (in Afar region) and Issa (in Somali region) (Assefa, 2006:136). These cases exhibit some of the mechanisms how ethnic boundaries have changed or how ethnicity switching is taking place in Ethiopia.

3.6 Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Ethiopia

Although the existence of various ethnic groups in a country could not explain the intensity of conflict, once conflict occurred in such countries (particularly along ethnic lines), it is difficult or challenging to handle it. The former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are recent and living examples in this case. Though arguable, several researchers still agree that under conducive political circumstance where the root causes of conflict are identified and addressed properly, it is possible to resolve a social conflict, which, of course, includes ethnic ones (Rugumamu, 2000;

Gouden, 2000; Vanhanen, 1999). Wallenstein strongly argues that conflicts are solvable. He says that if conflicts are exposed to early challenges, solutions may actually be found, even in unexpected situations. Thus, conflicts are solvable and there are many and varied experiences of such solution (Wallenstein, 2002: 13). Generally speaking conflict resolution is a comprehensive term which entails tolerance, respect for other's culture and way of life, appreciation of differences, willingness to admit blunder and commitment to learn from past experiences, and readiness to give and take i.e., not a 'zero-sum-game', where the gain of some becomes or felt to be the loss of others.

The major conflict resolution mechanisms used in African continent is indigenous conflict resolution systems. Customary conflict resolution mechanisms (CCRMs) in Africa are generally closely bound with socio-political and economic realities of the life styles of the communities. These mechanisms are rooted in the culture and history of the African people, and are in one way or another unique to each community (Gebre *et al.*, 2011:26). Unlike the formal justice sector that principally targets at clear up conflicts between parties, customary conflict resolution mechanisms are informal and aim at restoring severed relations and hence at durable community peace. To be more specific, governmental efforts are limited to calming down the crisis without addressing the root cause and without making sure that the inter-group conflict is transformed from hostility to cooperation and smooth interaction. The formal conflict resolution mechanisms often emphasize the resolution of the material causes of conflicts (resource and power are often the focus) without dealing with the psychological and cultural traumas that often trigger retribution. The formal system of conflict resolution mechanisms are alleged to be unsuccessful, not confidential, time taking, not under the control of the groups in conflict, rigid, client-unfriendly, costly, and inaccessible. It is only when potential and actual conflicts in Africa are understood in their social contexts that they can be resolved. Values, beliefs, interests, needs, attitudes, actions and relationships should be given due concern. Origins or the core causes of the conflicts need to be explored so as to develop a shared understanding of the past and present.

The prevailing approach to deal with conflicts in Ethiopia since 1991 has been ethno-linguistic federalism (Anteneh, 2013). Ideally, federalism is conceived as having the potential for resolving conflicts. In the Ethiopian context, federalism is presumed to redirect conflicts to constructive primes so as to rebuild the nation (Abbink, 2011; Anteneh, 2013). In the Ethiopian federalism,

regional and local governments have been accorded the power to deal with conflicts in different ways. The regional and local governments have the major responsibility to manage conflicts. There are different joint forums between the federal and regional governments established in pursuit of addressing conflicts. These include, among others, a Joint House Speakers Forum (for speakers of the parliaments and regional councils), Educational Professionals Forum, Forum of Dialogue between the House of Federation and each regional state, Prosecutors' Joint Forum, and the Council of Judges (Alemayehu, 2009). However, the roles of regional and local governments in dealing with conflicts have been marked by some drawbacks. The understanding of the principles of federalism by regional and local governments' officials is one such a problem (ibid.). Failure to develop a legal and institutional framework, the prevalence of parochial views and localized interests and lack of capacity are the suspects for the problem (ibid.).

Different societies have developed various conflict resolution mechanisms for different kinds of conflicts. This could range from a traditional mechanism to national and international laws and agreements (Muderis, 2000). According to Yasin (2010), sophisticated socio-cultural, political and economic problems that cause conflict among distinctive groups could somehow be resolved using various mechanisms of conflict settlements so as to create a long-lasting peace and harmony among societies through resolving the hostile attitude and achieving a respectful coexistence. However, conflict resolution is not a process to eliminate conflict but to vastly moderate its intensity and impacts (Muderis, 2000; Yasin, 2010).

Indigenous conflict resolution processes are part of well structured, time-proven, social systems geared towards reconciliations, maintenance, and improvement of social relations. These methods, processes and regulations are deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of peoples of Africa (Hwedie & Rankopo, n.d). In the traditional African society, conflict may generally exist whenever or wherever incompatible events occurred and may result in win-lose character. However, the resolution, transformation and management of conflict may produce win-win situation (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014).

As the case in somewhere else, different forms of conflicts exist in the continent of Africa too. As Stedman (1991:369) maintains, conflict in Africa originates from problems basic to all

societies such as competition between different identities, the unreliable allocation of resources and right of entry to power and differences on what is right, fair and just. In line with this, according to Osaghae (2000:208) 'conflict is triggered in individual, family and lineage level among traditional 'societies of Africa from various sources. Personal differences and disagreement, material problems, rituals, constant competition for scarce resources like agricultural land, grazing and settlement can be cause of dispute'. To regulate conflicts that caused by different factors, Africans have built multitude of indigenous Mechanisms (Murthi, 2008; Osaghae, 2000; Stedman, 1991). Indigenous institutions are locally structured institutions and functioning according to the custom and norm of the given societies (Murthi, 2008:34). These mechanisms are used according to the specific culture of a particular community.

Exhaustive literature and studies agree about Ethiopia which is the museum of peoples with more than 80 ethnic groups constituting and forming multinational state. Nation and Nationalities have their own perspectives and unique cultural practice. As a result, every ethnic group as their African counter parts have indigenous conflict resolution at grass root level to address different types of conflict in the country. Alike other African societies, different ethnic groups of Ethiopia had built and experienced diverse ways of indigenous conflict management mechanisms. Ethiopia is believed to be the home for various ethnic groups. These diverse ethnic groups have developed their own distinctive political, administrative, economic, social and judicial systems.

In Ethiopia, there are a number of indigenous institutions for conflict resolution that are deeply rooted in different ethnic groups. These practices are serving to manage conflicts and maintain peace and stability there by playing their role for transformation of conflicts. Indigenous conflict resolution (ICR) mechanisms are widely used in all corners of the country, including in urban areas where the formal justice system is strong. However, communities in rural areas prefer the customary approaches to the formal justice system (Gebre *et al.*, 2011: xii). ICR institutions have served historically in the absence of the state justice system as well as where it exists in the past and in the present. These institutions are localized and their constituency and jurisdiction are generally limited to particular localities within ethnic groups. ICR institutions often function at the community level, based on trust among people. They are connected with the cultural norms and beliefs of the peoples and gain their legitimacy from the values of the concerned community instead of the state (Assefa, 2001; Daniel, 2016; Dejene, 2002; Sisay, 2007).

As Daniel (2016:1) stated ‘Almost all ethnic groups have developed indigenous mechanisms of conflicts resolution’. For instance, ethnic groups like Oromo, Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Hareri, Somali, Sidama, Walayeta, Gamo, Tigiray and others develop their own indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution with certain peculiar features. These features, which comprise social traditions, values, norms, beliefs, rules, and laws, communicated and accepted among the respective communities for peaceful coexistences. Assefa (2001:54) described that different nationalities in Ethiopia have a developed and employed their own indigenous mechanisms to solve different conflicts that arise due to divergence of interest and other factors. Macfarlane (20012:88) affirms that ‘indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in Ethiopia are more persuasive and influence the lives of people than the formal justice system in the country especially in remote areas from regional center’. Similarly, Tarekegn (2008:25) explains that the ‘traditional conflict management mechanisms could help us to resolve conflicts, reduce tensions and rebuild social relations’.

There are different indigenous institutions that play in resolving and managing conflicts in Ethiopia(Ambaye,2008;Legesse,1973;Pankuhrst and Getachew,2008 ;Wondyrad, 2011; Zelalem and Endalkachew ,2015; Jemal, 2012; Sisay, 2007; Tasew, 2016; Yaynshet, 2004). For instance, *Shimgilinna*, (also known by other names among different ethnic groups) is a kind of arbitration or reconciliation by elders which is widely practiced in different areas of the country. Like other regions, the indigenous conflict resolution mechanism which practice in Amhara region is called *Shimigilna*. It is the one among many ways of resolving conflicts and reconciling conflicting parties in Ethiopia. *Shemgelena* is the most well known and widely practiced in different parts of the Amhara region even possible to say in Ethiopia (Pankuhrst and Getachew, 2008).The concept of *Shemgelena* denotes the process of mediation and reconciliation so as to resolve conflicts between different parties (Wondyrad, 2011). Similarly, Pankhurst has described that ‘dispute management mediation is often termed *shimgilina* a noun from the word ‘elder’ (*Shimagele*) which one might translate as ‘eldering’ (*Shemgelena*)’(Pankhurst and Getachew, 2008:14). It plays a substantial role in resolving and contains different conflicts which exist between individuals, families, groups and communities in the region (Yohnnes, 2003; Zelalem and Endalkachew, 2015). Further, Zelalem and Endalkachew (2015: 4) stated *shimigilina* as ‘Most

eminent and traditional institution of the ritual Amhara in resolving conflict was *shimiglina* (elder of the land) by which the service of third party is used as a means of helping the conflicting parties to reduce the extent of their differences and disagreements to arrive at an amicable settlement.’

Zewelde is a traditional conflict resolution institution functional for areas bordering the Afar and Raya people (Jemal, 2012; Yaynshet, 2004). These traditional local institutions together with formal legal machinery provide the mechanism for redressing conflict (Yaynshet, 2004). Since conflict resolution encompasses multiple actors the role played by these traditional institutions is vital for its goal of building positive relationships.

The *Gada* system could be mentioned as another indigenous conflict resolution mechanism among the Oromo people. It is the first one in the regional state of Oromia in terms of a system of class (*Luba*) that succeeded each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political and spiritual responsibilities in the leadership of Oromo society. There are divergent views among scholars on the functions of *Gadaa* institutions. For Legesse (1973, 2000) the *Gadaa* assumes military, economic, political and ritual responsibilities in the leadership of the Oromo society. In contrast, others view the *Gadaa* as less politically relevant, playing ritualistic roles only (Hinnant, 1978:234). However, Tache and Irwin (2003) argue that *Gadaa* is more in line with the first assessment, although recent weakening of the institution, particularly post 1974, means that change in the influence of the *Gadaa* may increasingly be leading to its’ playing a more ritualistic function. Besides this, many studies explored about the socio-cultural and political function of *Gada* institution which practiced in Oromia region.

In similar vein, according to Ambaye (2008), in his study of Sidama ethnic group indigenous conflict resolution mechanism of Southern Ethiopia indicates four level of Sidama *Songo*, *Mini songo*, *Nafaru songo*, *Ayadu songo* and *Woma songo*. According to these four structures of Sidama council, a case that does not get decision at a primary council passes to the next council and *Omo songo* is the final decision making structure. *Yejoka* is the most important traditional conflict management institution of the Guraghe people (Sisay, 2007; Wondyrad,2010). For instance Wondyrad (2010), in his studies on Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanism of

Gurage of Southern Ethiopia, identified five structures of conflict resolution in the Gurage. These are *ye sera Dana*, *Ye Mura gengne Dana*, *Ye tib Dana*, *shengo* and *Yejoka*. *Yejoka* is the highest authority and provided binding and unappeasable decision on the Gurage people. The Anyuaa community in Gambela has established a traditional conflict resolution mechanism called *Nyieya* (Tasew, 2016:29). This has been established to realize indigenous knowledge for their social interaction. Their indigenous knowledge encompasses the skills, experiences and insights of people, applied to maintain or improve their livelihood, and handle conflicts like homicide (ibid). This indigenous conflict resolution mechanism in general is centered on the values of truth, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, addressing the affected relationship, voluntary participation and gives more emphasis for personal change above complaint behavior (Daniel, 2016).

These indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in general are centered on the values of truth, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, addressing the affected relationship, voluntary participation and gives more emphasis for personal change above complaint behavior. Although indigenous conflict management and resolution systems have profound roles for different aspects of human life in different areas, they come across multiple challenges. Many literatures and studies argued that indigenous conflict resolution mechanism in Ethiopia are neglecting by state institution and peoples (Francis, 2013; Gebreyesus, 2012; Kelemework, 2006; Meron, 2010). In fact they are practiced in different parts of the country. For instance, Francis (2013:43) stated the main challenges as follows:

African traditional justice system regarded as inferior in comparison to formal westernized judicial systems. This inferiority is resulted from subjugation of customary law. The other is inadequate or unclear legal and policy framework on traditional conflict resolution mechanisms poses a challenge to their application in contemporary African societies including Ethiopia.

Similarly, as Gebreyesus (2012: 24) stated ‘Absence of policy direction and comprehensive laws that deal with legislation, institutionalization and synchronization of popular customary dispute resolution is the main challenges to their application in Ethiopia. The state neglects to support indigenous mechanism to become popular in state institution. The references in the constitution and the few provisions stated in civil code are limited to family and contractual relation. In

similar vein, Meron(2010 :63) stated ‘even if traditional mechanisms administer almost all kind of disputes ranging from petty offences, civil cases such as financial, familial, and contractual disputes to first degree murder cases and, they have no legal legitimacy and institutionalization’ . Nowadays, as a result of internal and external factors, indigenous conflict resolution institutions/mechanisms are made non functional in most parts of the continent. Formal or government-run approaches and institutions replaced the customary systems. According to Ofuho (1999), ‘for years the treatment of conflicts in Africa involving national armies revolved around conventional mechanisms that have excluded the customary approaches’. But they have little success in bringing sustainable peace and lasting security in the region.

Ethiopia has several indigenous conflict resolution institutions and mechanisms that have survived the pressure of internal cultural domination and repressive political measures taken in the name of modernization and nation building. There are various such institutions that have curbed many unreported conflicts that could have otherwise damaged community bonds in that country. However, the prevailing situation shows that there is loose collaboration, if any, between indigenous institution and government in dealing issues in community affairs. The governments bodies at different levels fail to appreciate collaboration and complement the indigenous methods in any community affairs. The limited understanding of the roles played by the indigenous institutions by the state and particularly by the new generation has diminished the efficacy and relevance of these institutions in most parts of the country, despite their tangible and fruitful contributions.

In sum, there are different indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms which practiced in different parts of Ethiopia. Ultimately, besides resolving and managing the occurrences of conflict, they build sustainable social capital in place of their birth. As many studies and literature stated, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms not received much consideration in governments polices and legal laws especially in criminal matters despite they served in time immemorial. The various indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms exist and being practiced in different regional states of Ethiopia to resolve multifaceted or comprehensive social problems on the ground, despite they have no legal recognition and authority to settle disputes regarding criminal cases. The experience in different regions of Ethiopia shows that the people tend to use

indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms for reconciliation and in order to control the acts of revenge conflicts.

With this brief conceptual and theoretical understanding, now we will turn to a brief observation on the setting on the context of the Afar- Oromo relation of the study area. This consideration will enable us to have background information on the overall environs of the research. The following chapter gives much emphasis to the political and economic setting of the study area in the belief that it is this factor that becomes fertile ground for friendly relations as well as incubator for conflicts.

CHAPTER FOUR: SETTING THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AREA

This chapter focuses on the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups' social, political structures and indigenous institutions; Afar- Oromo relations and their relations to the central government. The information used in writing this chapter largely come from secondary sources. In some sections of this chapter, whenever necessary, discussions are supported with primary data sources generated from field work.

Firstly, a short description of the administrative structure of the study area is presented on the basis of available information or empirical researches. Secondly, an overview of the social and economic features of Afar and Oromo ethnic groups will be discussed. Third, major indigenous institutions of both communities will be treated. Fourth, background to Afar –Oromo relation is reviewed. Fifth, Afar-Oromo communities' relation with the central government is elaborated. And at the end, there is a brief summary. In doing so, this chapter is limited to assessing the dynamics of the Afar –Oromo conflict and cooperation in the study area, which is in consideration of the research objective of the study.

4.1 Administrative Structure of Afar and Oromo Communities

Afar, Somali, and Oromo belong to Cushitic language family. The Afar language - *cafaraf*- is classified along with the Somali and Oromo languages within the Lowland East Cushitic language family (Ali, 2008; Getachew, 2001a; Kebede, 1994; Kebede, 2005). Trimingham (1976:8) also stated that 'the Afar-Saho, Somali and Oromo belong to one of the waves of Cushitic people [...] who crossed the Bab-al Mandab⁶ and the Gulf of Aden in early times into the coastal regions of East Africa'. Another writers (Lewis, 1955; Thompson and Adolff ,1968; and Thesiger, 1935) have similar views with Trimingham.

⁶For the location of Bab-al Mandab (Balel-mandeb) see map 1 (Languages of North-East Africa) in Trimingham (1976:16).

The Afar were first mentioned by IbnSa'id in the 13th century under the form or by the name Dankal/Danakil (Trimingham,1976:171;Lewis,1955:155).The Afar call themselves *cafara umata*, the Afar people, and they call their language *cafara-af*, and their country *Afer-barro* (Getachew, 2001a:35, 49). The Afar are known by their neighbours and outsiders by various names: *Danakil* by Europeans and Arabs; *Adali* by their Oromo neighbours; *Oudali* by the Issa-Somali; *Taltal* by Tigre; and *Adal* by the Amhara and Argoba (Getachew, 2001a:49, Trimingham, 1976:171).

In Ethiopia, with the change of government in 1991 came a new administrative structure established on the basis of ethnic-based federalism. Prior to this period, both the Afar and Oromo peoples in the study area were administered under Wollo province. The Oromo reside in Kalu *Awraja* (sub-province), while the Afar reside in Awsa *Awraja*. In fact, prior to 1991, the 1987 Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) provided the Afar with 'autonomous regional status' under the name of 'Assab Autonomous Region', while the Oromo remained under South Wollo 'Administrative Region', which was changed after 1991.

4.1.1 Administrative Structure of Afar

During the Transitional Period (1991-1994) the Afar territory changed into two ways. The north-eastern part, which is from Ethio-Djibouti border to the Buri peninsula has been incorporated into the new state of Eritrea, and the territory extending from Berehale was made part of the newly restructured territory of the Afar National Regional State of Ethiopia. Subsequently, the Afar have been consolidated within one regional administration with its own powers of self-administration in Ethiopia (ANRS, 2004b:1).

The Afar National Regional State (ANRS) territory covers some 95,266 km² across the northeastern part of Ethiopia (ANRS, 2004b:1). The Afar region shares international boundaries with Djibouti and Eritrea, as well as regional boundaries with Tigray, Amhara, Oromo and Somali National Regional States in Ethiopia. It is structured into 5 zones (sub-regions),

32 *woreda*⁷ (districts), and 358 *kebele* (villages) of which 326 are rural and 32 urban *kebele*⁸ (ANRS, 2003:1).

Dewe is one of the *woreda* in the Afar Region of Ethiopia. Part of Zone five, Dewe is located near the base of the eastern escarpment of the Ethiopian highlands, and bordered on the south by the Borkena River, which separates it from Dalifage and Hadele Ele, on the west by the Amhara Region of Oromo Zone Dawa Harawa District, on the north by Telalek, and on the east by Administrative Zone three. The center of the *woreda* (district) is Wedarage. Dewe was the seat of the Sultanate of Dewe, one of the Afar's traditional sultanates in the Afar Region.

4.1.2. Administrative Structure of the Oromo at the Study Area

Oromo Nationality Zone is one of the national zones in the Amhara National Regional State. It was established in 1986 E.C. as a unit of local administration of the Oromo people, who settled along the edge of the Ethiopian highlands that form this Zone. It is bordered on the southwest by North Shewa Zone, on the northwest by South Wollo Zone and Argoba Special District, and on the east by the Afar National Regional State. This is officially structured in March 1986 E.C. by splitting from South Wollo and North Shewa Zone, of the Amhara National regional state. The Oromo Nationality Zone was created in response to pressure from the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which was actively agitating for autonomy for *Afaan* Oromo-speaking population during late 1991 and early 1992 (*Koti* magazine, 1992; Vaughan, 2003:240). Four districts were taken from South Wollo (Bati, Dewe, Esseya Gulla and Artuma) and two districts from North Shewa (Fursi and Senbete). Currently, this Zone is re-structured into five rural administrative *woreda* (Dawa Harawa, Dawa Cheffa, Artuma Fursi and Jille-Tumuga and Bati rural) and two town administrations (Bati and Kemissie) (Oromo Nationality zone administrative and security Department report, 2006 E.C).

⁷ *Woreda* in Amharic means district. Under the current federal structure, a *woreda* is an administrative unit between a zone and *kebele*, while a zone is an administrative unit between a regional state (next to federal state) and *woreda*.

⁸ *Kebele* is the lower government administrative unit in Ethiopia. *Kebele* peasant associations under the *Derg* were replaced by *kebele* administrations in the post-1991 period, although, like in the past, the administrations are still run by the peasants themselves.

Dawa Harawa is one of the seven *woreda* in Oromo Nationality Zone of Amhara National Regional state, it is bordered on the south with Artuma Fursi *Woreda*, on the west Dawa Chafa *woreda* of Oromo Zone, on the east Afar regional state of Dawe and Telalek *woreda*, on the north with Argoba special *woreda* and Bati *woreda* and in the east bordered with Afar Regional state of Telalek and Dawe districts. The Dawa Harawa *woreda* is organized into nine rural *kebele* and one *kebele* town. The *woreda* was established in 1994 E.C.

4.2 Social and Economic Features of Afar and Oromo at the Study Area: An Overview

The study area is largely arid and semi-arid with high temperatures and low precipitation. Given the dominance of pastoralism and an ongoing shift towards settled agriculture, dependence on rainfall is more obvious and stronger today than in the past. The region has suffered series of recurrent conflicts, droughts and famines for the last four or more decades (UNDP, 2002; Ali, 2008). The 1984/85, 1999/2000 and 2004 drought episodes in the area, described by some as the worst in recent memory, led to numerous deaths both of human lives and livestock species (ANRS, 2004b; UNDP, 2002). Such recurrent events in the area also led to the occurrence of extensive poverty and displacement of many pastoralist families, which has affected all sections of the community. The study area has also experienced a change in land use patterns i.e. from communal grazing land use to privately use land for crop farming and grazing areas for drought periods. The natural resource degradation is also accelerating due to the impact of population pressure, climate change and variability, and the like. These in turn have aggravated the scarcity of natural resources on which the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists primarily depend and such acute scarcity of resources has led to stiff competition between pastoralists and agro-pastoralists for access and use rights.

The Eastern Afar Region specially 'Zone Five' is one of the least developed and marginalized territory of the Afar Regional State in Ethiopia, in terms of economic and social development and basic infrastructure (PCDP, 2005; Dessalegn, 2007; Ali, 2008; Hailu, 2008). Overall, the Afar Region is one of the least developed Regions of Ethiopia, neglected by national development efforts (UNDP, 2002 Report). Development has usually taken the form of assimilation by the

central Ethiopian State and partial annexation into Ethiopia's highland economy. Development Scheme in the Afar Region has historically reflected the priorities of central government or certain commercial and political interests, while the needs and aspirations of the Afar people have been chiefly disregarded (Ayele, 1986; Kebede, 2005; Ali, 2008).

Although the Oromo in the Oromo nationality Zone of Amhara Region are predominantly sedentary agriculturalists, they are one of the neglected peoples in the area. Like their neighbouring Afar, their economic and social well-being is deteriorating from time to time. Both natural calamities and governmental policies of successive regimes in Ethiopia have been relegating the Oromo in the study area (PCDP, 2005; Dessalegn, 2007). This has exacerbated conflict between the two communities and entangled conflict resolution mechanisms.

4.3 Indigenous Institutions of Afar and Oromo in the Study Area

The process of conflict resolution has to do with how indigenous structures and systems ensure action in bringing peace at the individual and community level relationships. In this respect, resolution procedures are generated from general cultural life and daily experiences of living. In this context, the term indigenous refers to 'the structures and units of organization in a community and encompasses also the norms, values, beliefs and worldview that guide social interaction' (Kendie and Guri, 2006:333). There are indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms at grass root level to address different types of conflict in Ethiopia. Alike other African societies, different ethnic groups of Ethiopia had built and experienced diverse ways of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. Ethiopia is believed to be the home for various ethnic groups. These diverse ethnic groups have developed their own distinctive political, administrative, economic, social and judicial systems. As Daniel (2016:1) stated 'almost all ethnic groups have developed indigenous mechanisms of conflicts resolution'. For instance, ethnic groups like Oromo, Afar, Amhara, Benishangul- Gumuz, Gambela, Hareri, Somale, Sidama, Walayeta, Gamo, Tigiray and others developed their own indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution with certain peculiar features. These features, which comprise social traditions, values, norms, beliefs, rules, and laws, communicated and accepted among the respective communities for peaceful coexistences. Likewise, indigenous institutions do have significant role in resolving conflict whenever it happens between/among Afar and Oromo peoples. I will elaborate this in the pages that follow.

4.3.1 Afar Indigenous Institutions of Conflict Resolution

4.3.1.1 The clan system

Traditionally, the Afar were divided into four major sultanates, namely, Sultanate of Aussa; Sultanate of Rahyata, 60 kms to the south of Assab; Sultanate of Biru in Tigray, nowadays found in Afar Regional state; Sultanate of Tadjoura found in the Republic of Djibouti (Ayele, 1986; Dahilon, 1985; Getachew, 2001a; Kebede, 1994). Each of these were again divided into many chiefdoms. The main purpose of chiefs is to arbitrate in disputes that arise over such issues as water and grazing resources and in return they used to receive remuneration for their service (Ayele, 1986; Getachew; 2001a).Historically, the Afar were divided into two groups: Asaimara (reds, nobles) and Adoimara(whites, commoners). In turn, both comprise a variety of tribal confederations and tribes but were not territorially distinct groups (Lewis, 1955:54). According to Lewis, sometimes Asaimara and Adomara clans existed as separate territorial groups but as he further indicated most groups contain a mixture of both and the Asaimara-Adoimara cleavage cuts across the total Afar society(Lewis,1955: Getachew, 2001a; Ali,2008).Many researchers give different origins to the Adoimara and Asaimara where as some others trace the names of the two groups to their respective habitats, since the names Adoimara and Asaimara mean ‘white’ people and ‘red’ people, respectively (Lewis, 1955;Trimingham, 1952).

The Afar society maintains a rigid hierarchy where each of the numerous Afar chieftaincies has its recognized, established place in the social order; one that is based on seniority (Gamaledin, 1993: 45). All their clans or tribes are divided into sub-tribes and fractions, which are divided and made up of related families. A clan belongs either to the Asaimara or the Adoimara or to both⁹.

Clan is the most cohesive group structure among the Afar. It is also the level at which the strongest and most effective traditional leadership structures are to be found (Voelkner, 1974). In Afar clan (*Kedo*) refers to a group of people related to each other by descent, living with shared territory and shared common rituals and political leadership. It may comprise them ‘a few hundred up to a thousand people and between ten and twenty lineages and sub-lineages

⁹ Nuru gaz Da’ato is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on May5,2014, Harawa.

(*Dahla*¹⁰) whose number changes through time due to continuous fission and fusion (Getachew, 2001a:55). Clan leadership has legislative, executive and judiciary functions and it resolves conflicts (Fekadu *et al.*, 1984:22). Members of a clan cooperate in defense of their land, people and property (Ali, 2008, Getachew, 2001a, Fekadu, *et al.*, 1984; Ayele, 1986).

4.3.1.2 The Makaban

A *makabantu* is the clan chief while *makaban* is chiefs of various clans. The role of a *Makabantu* and *makaban* is not that of an order-giving chief, but of an arbitrator of intra-clan disputes and representative in inter-clan arguments and affairs (Voelkner, 1974; Kebede, 1994). The *makabantu* is the representative of the clan towards everything outside the clan, be it the government or groups of other clans, Afar or non-Afar. Clan leaders and lineage heads act as mediators between the local government representative, the central government and the Afar. They represent their people for everything outside their clans (Voelkner, 1974; Kebede, 1994; Getachew, 2001a; Ali, 2008). So any affairs of the Afar will not be out of the involvement of clan leaders. That is why the researcher wants to assess the Afar chiefdoms' structure and working modalities.

The position of *Makabantu* is hereditary in the male line; but sometimes could be appointed and changed by an elderly elective-group (Ayele, 1986; Kebede, 1994). The criteria by which the *Makabantu* is judged to be fit for a position are, for instance: one, who looks after his people, protects his clan, who works for his people, who is a good speaker and who speaks the truth, one who has a 'good brain' and is a good administrator (Voelkner, 1974; Fekadu *et al.*, 1984).

According to Mohammed Seid, chief of various clans is called '*makaban*.'¹¹ Traditional Afar leadership peaks at the tribal level in the position of a '*makaban*' or chief whose powers are relatively limited. Likewise to the *makabantu*, this position is hereditary in the male line. But sometimes could be appointed and changed by an elder elective group. The role of a '*makaban*'

¹⁰ *Dahla* is used to refer to an extended family (Getachew, 2001a:55).

¹¹ Mohammed Seid is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Wahilona Gidale *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 21, 2014, Woderage.

is not that of order-giving chiefs but of arbitrators of internal tribal disputes and representatives in tribal discussions (Kebede, 1994:12).

According to Mohammed Ahmed, ‘the functions of three clan leadership branches or structures are significant in the Afar society. These include; clan leaders (*Makaban*), council of elders (*Daar-edola*) and a sanction-executing unit (*Fimaa/Finna*).’¹² Accordingly, different roles are allocated to each lineage; a senior lineage of a clan provides political leadership of a clan and a junior one provides ritual leadership and leadership of the sanction-executing unit (*Fimaa*). But members of the council of elders (*Daar-idola*) and members of *Finna* are conscripted from all lineages of a clan (Getachew, 2001a:61).

The Ethiopian successive governments have employed indirect rule to administer the Afar from remote highlands (Ayele, 1986). A case in point is the use of *Makaban* as mediators between local people and the government through promoting some of them to a status of, namely *Balabat* or *Chika-shum*. Traditionally, *Makaban* are representatives of the clans towards everything outside the clan during all Ethiopian governments. *Makaban* represent their clans, and contact government, private groups and other clans (Ayele, 1986; Getachew, 2001a).

During the Emperor and *Derg* regimes, the Afar clans, lineages and the Aussa Sultanate were incorporated into the Ethiopian administrative structure. During the Imperial time, the Sultan of Aussa was entitled to use the imperial title *Bitwoded*, and other clan and lineage heads were given the title of *Balabat* and *Chika-shum*¹³ (village chief) respectively (Getachew, 2001a; Ali, 2008). After 1974, the *Derg* regime abolished the offices of the Sultan, *Balabats*, and *Chika-shum* and their feudal privileges. And very similar offices replaced Imperial offices with similar functions called representatives (*Yegosa-teteri/Yegosa-tewekay*), peasant associations (*GeberMahbar*)¹⁴ and the position of Sultan was officially abolished. The following table

¹² Mohammed Ahmed is resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 15, 2014, Woderage.

¹³ *Bitwoded* was the most senior title of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, and it literally means ‘the beloved’ in Amharic; *Balabat* was the title for the clan head (*Kedo Abba*) and it literally means ‘notable’ and *Chika-shum* was the title for the lineage head and it is equivalent to ‘village chief’.

¹⁴ Peasant association (*gebermahbar*) was a grassroots association of peasants mainly in settled areas. In Afar context such association was established mainly in some agro-pastoral areas or in settled agriculture neighbourhoods during the *Derg* time.

summarizes the titles of traditional authority and titles or roles given to traditional leaders by the previous and incumbent governments.

Table 1: local leadership and titles

Traditional Title of local leaders	Title given during Emperor Haile Silassie period	Title/role given during the Derg regime (1974-1991)	Current title/role(1992 to present)
Sultan	<i>Bitwoded</i>	Sultanate was abolished	The Sultan is restored and became spiritual leader
Clan heads	<i>Balabat</i>	The <i>Balabat</i> was abolished and replaced by <i>Geberemahbar</i> leaders	-Clan heads act as traditional leaders ¹⁵ - <i>Makabantu</i> (some individual <i>Mamakabans</i> are given advisory position in the formal structure)
Lineage heads	<i>Chika-shum</i>	The office of <i>Chika-shum</i> was replaced by <i>Yegosa-teteri/yegosatewokay</i>	Lineage heads have continued
Finna-t-abba	<i>Yegobz-Alaka</i>	Finna-t-abba continued	<i>Finna-t-abba</i> has continued

Source: (i)Voelkner, 1974 ;Gamaledin 1993; Getachew, 2001a; Kebede, 2005; Ali,2008 and (ii) Interviews with Afar key informants.

As can be seen from table 1 column 4 above, after the establishment of Afar National Regional State (ANRS), there is an overlap of traditional authority and modern administration at the community level. In recent years, the *Kebele* Administration (KA) established by the Government represents the local community towards everything outside the clans. Most of the ‘elected KA leaders’ are not from clan leaders. In this connection some informants from my study area reported that during the Transition Period (1991-1994) their clan leaders were to some degree involved in local government administration when the Afar Liberation Front (ALF) led by former Sultan Ali Mirah (the then Afar spiritual leader now replaced by his son Hanfre Ali Mirah) was active in the Afar Region.¹⁶ After the ALF withdrew from the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, the informants said, office holders selected among traditional leaders

¹⁵*Kebele* Administration through “elected leaders’ acts as formal grassroots government structure. On the other hand clan and lineage heads and *Finna-t-abba* continue their traditional function in parallel to *Kebele* administration. In fact some hand-picked *Makabanare* given a status of “advisor on Afar culture’ (*Yebahil-Amakari*) in the formal structure.

¹⁶ Tefera Teshome is expert in the administrative and security Bureau of the Afar National Regional State. The interview was held on May 11,2014. Sumera.

were gradually replaced by individuals affiliated to the Afar Peoples Democratic Organization (APDO)¹⁷. Currently, it seems that the role of *Makabantu* as intermediary between the Afar and the state authorities is being taken over by 'elected *Kebele* leaders'.

The traditional authorities also function at clan level without interfering into the activities of *Kebele* Administration. Clan leaders and elders mainly manage and resolve conflicts through the Afar *Ada* (customary law). They handle mainly conflicts over resources (pasture, cultivable land, watering points); conflicts resulting from adultery/rape, theft and robbery; clan rivalry, and conflicts related to *Absuma*¹⁸.

Although the formal government administration is set up at the grassroots level, the local people still pay more attention to the traditional authorities (clan leaders, elders and religious leaders). As Afar group participants affirmed that the source of authority for elected leaders in government offices, is by chance (i.e. not inherited from traditional source of authority) and leadership position is temporary, whereas the clan leadership is life-long¹⁹. Nurgaz Daato reported that 'formal administrative posts are filled mainly with youths who give less weight to the Afar *Ada*, namely Afar customary law.'²⁰

Traditionally, the community members often put more trust into clan leaders and view them as true representatives towards everything beyond their community. Obviously, the Afar heed to clan leaders rather than to the elected *kebele* authorities. This suggests that the Afar want to maintain the full involvement of their traditional leaders in the modern administration and particularly in conflict resolution. This issue is further elaborated in Chapter Five of this study.

As table 1 above shows, in spite of the integration of the Afar people into the Ethiopian administrative structure for such a long time, traditional authority structures and the clan

¹⁷ APDO came into existence shortly after the fall of the military regime. It is supposedly supported by Afar who were formerly part of Tigray province and is an EPRDF affiliate. Considering the close ties between APDO and EPRDF, it seems that APDO largely represents the interests of the country's ruling party, instead of the interests of the Afar (Ali, 1998:113).

¹⁸ It is cross-cousin marriage in the Afar community.

¹⁹ Group discussion with Afar, Dawe *Woreda*, discussion was held on May 2, 2014. Woderage.

²⁰ Nuru gaz Da'ato is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on May 5, 2014, Harawa.

authority of the pastoral clans have undergone little transformation. Although the authority of the Sultanates was undermined during the military rule, 1974-1991, the authority of clan leadership has been largely maintained. This owes partly due to the resistance of Afar and the policies of the governments of Ethiopia that stressed the indirect rule through the traditional authority of clans (Ali, 2008; Getachew, 2001a). After the downfall of the *Durg*, the Sultan is restored and became spiritual leader of the Afar people.

Therefore, it can be said that traditional Afar leadership at grass-root level peaks at the clan level in the position of *Makabantu*. Clan is still the most cohesive group structure among the pastoral Afar. It is also the level at which the strongest and most effective leadership structures are to be found. All clans are divided into sub-clans (lineages) which are made up of related families. A clan belongs either to the Asahimara or the Adohimara or to both. Each clan is headed by a clan chief (*Makabantu*) with over all prescribed functions and powers. However, his powers are shared and controlled by the elders of the clan. Decisions are usually made by *the elders* together with the clan chief (Voelkner, 1974; Kebede, 1994; Ali, 2008).

4.3.1.3 The Sultanates

The sultanate of Afar is a feudal –type political and territorial institution super imposed upon the tribal hierarchy and the sultan shares his power with a ‘vizier’²¹ and a council composed of the group of sub-tribes who make many of the major decisions (Thompson and Rechard, 1968:7). For many centuries, the north-east part of the Ethiopian Afar land has been an area where a number of big and small Sultanates evolved and declined (Getachew, 2001a:35). In the Afar society, there exist four major sultanates, namely sultanate of Tajura (the most senior), Aussa, Birru and Rahayta (Thompson and Rechard, 1968:7). The first lies in Tajura within the territory of Djibouti, while the sultanates of Aussa and Rahayta lie within the territory of Ethiopia and Eritrea, respectively, and Birru in Ethiopia. Sultanate of Rahayata is located 60kms to the south of Assab. But some writers including Dawe sultanate raise the number of major sultanates of Afar to be eight (Dahilon, 1985, Kebede, 1994). The sultanates of Tajura and Rahyta passed under European domination, but Aussa remained independent and its influence extended over all southern Dankalia. There are also Dawe and Biru sultanates in the Afar Region. Biru sultanate

²¹ A high official or chief councilor in some Muslim countries, especially, in Turkey under Ottoman rule.

presides in the northern part of the Region while the Dawe sultanate is found Eastern part of Afar region (Dahilon, 1985) where the study area is situated. The Sultanate of Dawe is one of the existing Afar traditional authorities based in Zone Five of the Afar National Regional State in Ethiopia.²²

4.3.2 Oromo Indigenous Institutions of Conflict Resolution

The indigenous systems of conflict resolution in Oromia of the Oromo people is the *Gadaa* system, an institution developed for guiding the social ,political, economic and religious lives to the Oromo people in Ethiopia and for managing resources , as well as, contribute to conflict resolution among individuals and communities.

In the Oromo Administrative Zone of Amhara National Regional State, the culture of indigenous conflict management institutions and rules have been existing for a long time. The customary rules that exist in Oromo community are unwritten agreements that have evolved within the Oromo community over generations. Although, it bears no formal institutional structure the implementation of *Abagar*, *Aba-Aga* and *Dubarti* over seen by community elders.

4.3.2.1 Abagar

The first and foremost institution of conflict resolution in the Oromo community is *Abagar*. *Abagar* is a person who knows many things in the Oromo community of Dawa Harawa. He is the one who is trusted by the community, and has a lot of wisdom to resolve or manage conflicts. *Abagar* tries to resolve conflicts or blood feuds by way of reconciliation using */Guma/* (compensation for the victim) during or after conflict takes place. Not only conciliation making at the conflict, but also he is supposed to maintain sustainable peace in the area which he resides. When conflict occurs in the area, *Abagar* intervenes to stop the conflict in collaboration with his famous elders. *Abagar* with his elders' converse the two conflicting parties and after conversed, he delivers verdict. The person/group/ who is found guilty will be punish and make compensation for the victim/victims. The intension of the punishment is teach a person who

²² Ahmed Ali is chairman of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele* administration, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April15, 2014, Woderage.

made mistakes and also for others to refrain from such actions. Both compensation and punishment made by *Abagar* upon the guilty, will not initiate the victim and culprit for revenge.

For sustainability of peace, the two parties take a promise and crossed on the *Abagar Qotii* (*Kotti*) i.e *Abagar*'s stick, which is respected by the people. Mostly, the promised locally called *Balli*; the person, who could not apply the *Balli*, culturally condemned and implicated, as well as, ignored and sanctioned by the communities, and lives alone according to the culture. Then, the *Abagar* has taken a great role to managed conflict (*Qotii Magazine*, 1992 E.C: 27).

4.3.2.2 *Aba'Aga*

Aba'Aga is particularly important in rural areas where the presences of modern political institutions are weak. However, even in urban areas with local administration in the case of Dawa Harawa, the traditional conflict management in the community's clan locally called *Aba-aga* and *Abagar*. *Aba-aga*, with his elders, is a person who punishes the one who made mistake in the villagers, according to traditional rules existed in the communities. The authority of *Aba-aga*, with his friend judges, play greater role to support in the process of reconciliation, mediate or arbitrate communities who have disagreed. In the community, it exists as culture until recognized nowadays by the Government (*Qoti magazine*, 1992).

4.3.2.3 *The Dubarti*

Dubeti are group of women who are respected and prestigious in the community. *Dubarti* are elderly women in Wollo who have seized or handled stick like *Qotii* on their hand. They are the one who are loved and spiritually respected by the people especially in Wollo culture. Their *Qotii/stick/* is highly respected among the communities. *Dubarti qotii* is instrumental and famous in praying to God for the cases of individuals and common interest of communities. Not only praying, but also, they have a great role in resolving and managing conflicts between individuals, even communities or clans. They are culturally respected and known in the local communities, the prayer of *dubarti* in Wollo locally called as *wedaja* or *du'a*. After entertained food and coffee, in a *wedaja/ Du'a*, they will make different prayer to God spiritually. They pray in unity with singing of anthem like. The role of *dubarti* in the study area has great role in order

to resolve or manage conflict between individuals, even between groups (*Kotii* magazine, 1992: 27).

In general, the contribution of Afar-Oromo indigenous conflict resolution institutions in conflict resolution is very high. Traditionally, Afar and Oromo communities in the study area have elders who are resolving disputes among the groups or individuals. They are tactics full and have methods of following to solve the conflicts among the disputers. They have daily information gathering systems in the community for what situations happened and dealing with each other how to make a decision and resolve the problems. As a result, these indigenous conflict resolution institutions such as *Abagars*, *Aba-aga*, clan's leaders, religious leaders, and the famous elders are towards indigenous conflict resolution have a great role to resolve Afar – Oromo ethnic conflicts at the grass root level. They have acceptance in the community since they are from their community, accessible and less costly compared to modern institutions' way of resolving conflicts. The common social values, use of marketing and marriage linkage between Afar- Oromo communities of the study area help for resolving conflict smoothly between the two communities, However, Afar- Oromo customary institutions are still facing with problems of enforcement, lack of modern knowledge to adapt globalization; bring the guilty people to the law and also women do not involve directly in mediation, reconciliation and arbitration of traditional conflict.

4.4 Background to the Relation between Afar and Oromo Communities in the Study Area

During earlier periods, Afar –Oromo relation in the study area is characterized by both cooperative and conflictual relationships. Many of their relations were peaceful, with few sporadic conflicts. As participants of focus group discussions of both Afar and Oromo narrated, in the past, relationship between the Afar-Oromo was good. They love and like each other and their relations were strong except some sporadic conflicts. During earlier times, there was demarcated territory for both the Afar and Oromo even though they were residing in Wollo and Dawe Rahmedo same province and *woreda*, respectively.

In support of the above sheik Ahmed Abaye²³ said that there was clear territory with a buffer area that separates the two ethnic groups. Who owned a specific land when and how was known during the Imperial and *Derg* periods. Afar as an Afar and Oromo as an Oromo do have their own territory in which they were living, which was in line with their culture and traditions. With this in mind, let us see some of the cooperative and conflictual relationships that have made between the two ethnic communities.

4.4.1 Cooperative Relations

4.4.1.1 The Incursion of the Issaa against the Afar

There are many issues that bring Afar and Oromo communities together in the study area. Among those issues the major ones are; standing together against external foes that try to encroach both of them, (namely standing together against Issaa and Wajjirat incursions and central government), social- cultural ties, economic relations and common market places.

In the past, Afar and Oromo were standing together whenever attacked by neighbouring communities. During the time of Hale Selassie, they fought together against the Issa-Somalis. Mohammed Bodaya was the local governor of Dewa Harawa, Artuma Fursi, JilleTimuga, areas up to Cheleka River in the north. In the past, there have been conflicts with Issa- Somalis to the East. To stop the incursion of Issa-Somalis in Afar territory, Afar and Oromo fought together against the Issaas. The Issas during Haile Selassie period were in conflict with the Afar. Both Afar and Oromo went for war against Issa as their common enemy. When the Issas forces became beyond the capacity of Afar in a fight, then Afar sought Oromo support. As key informants explained ‘there was a traditional instrument known as *Embilta*²⁴ in which they whistle to the neighbouring Oromo seeking support in the fight against the Issa, when the Oromo heard the war signal i.e. whistling *Embilta*, they were running to rescue the Afar from Issa’s incursion. Together they used to repel Issaas through their combined force’.²⁵ This shows that Afar and Oromo did have cordial relation between them at the time. Nowadays, there is no, as

²³ Shiek Ahmed Abaye is resident of Harawa town, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. He is from respected family in that local area. The interview was held on June 12, 2014, Harawa town .

²⁴Traditional Ethiopian whistling instrument that serves to call for gathering the local people around by producing big sound.

²⁵ Mohammed Awol is administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 21, 2014, Bora town.

such, standing together to withstand the Issaa incursion. However, this shows that the possibility and chance to revitalize the Afar- Oromo cordial relation.

4.4.1.2 The Incursion of Wajjirat against the Oromo and the Afar

The Afar and the Oromo were attacked by the Wajjirat from Tigray in the early 1920s (Ali, 2008; Oromo informants). The incursion of Wajjirat was devastating on both the Afar and Oromo communities. Mohammed Ahmed narrates as follows²⁶:

During our childhood looking after cows, we heard from our fathers about the issue of Wajjirat. We had information from our fathers when we were child looking after cattle. When we asked the cause of the conflict in history, Hiale Selassie had allowed administration on self- autonomous basis for local provincial governors. Tigray was self- autonomous, Wollo was self- autonomous Administration. These two provinces were autonomous self- administration during Haile Selassie. Wajjirat were sent from Tigray to punish Wollo. Many Afar and Oromo were killed by Wajjirat, who were under wollo administration. Afar escaped and went to Cheffa around Kemissie fearing the attack of Wajjirat. At that time, there was only one modern weapon i.e. firearm which was the property of Mohammed Bodaya.

This also shows that they did have common enemy- the wajjirat that brought them together to resist the incursion. They were mobilized by the local chief Mohammed Bodaya to fight not only the Issaas but also the Wajjirat. And also this local chief was treating both Afar and Oromo equally in serving justice.

On similar issue, Ahmed Ali recalled the several intrusions made by neighbouring groups in the study area in the past five or more decades.²⁷ The intruders raided livestock and killed members of the study communities i.e. both Oromo and Afar. The Wajirat from southern Tigray used to come to the area and attacked both Afar and Oromo. Specially, various clashes occurred between Afar and Wajirat in the locality. Around early 1920s E.C the Wajirat raided many livestock, killed Afar and kidnapped children (Ali, 2008; Afar key informants). The Wajirat were able to reach to the present zone three and Oromo nationality zone. The Mohammed Ali narrates that²⁸:

The intruders particularly the Wajjirat were involved in killing persons and raiding livestock. The Wajjirat raided animals, killed persons, and cut males' testicle in order to

²⁶ Mohammed Ahmed is ex-chairman of Medine Kunyo Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June 21, 2014, Bora Town. According to Mohammed, Mohammed Bodaya was the local governor of Dawa Harawa, Artuma Fursi, Jille Timuga, up to Cheleka River in the north, within former Wollo province.

²⁷ Ahmed Ali is chairman of Gendawarina Eyeledi Kebele administration, Dawe Woreda. The interview was held on April 15, 2014, Woderage.

²⁸ Mohammed Ahmed is ex-chairman of Medine Kunyo Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June 21, 2014, Bora Town.

impair males' reproductive capacity. One time the Wajirat invaded large Afar area and reached up to Bäadu located in the current zone three of the Afar region – near Gewane town. At the same time the Wajirat also attacked Oromo.

Both the Afar and the Oromo cooperated to counter attack the *Wajjirat's incursion* to their territory, one reason is the *Wajjirat* are common enemies for both Afar and Oromo groups, who come from far distant area of Christian community. Secondly, both the Afar and Oromo were under same local administration and who follow similar religion, i.e Islam.

4.4.1.3 Afar- Oromo Social and Cultural ties

Marriage

During the older times, the Oromo females were married Afar males. The Oromo did this believing that Oromo-Afar marriage will bring peace between the two groups, by strengthening their relationship. This was aimed at to establish strong relations with the Afar neighbours. When there was inter- marriage there could be peaceful relation between the two ethnic groups. However, Afar did not allow their females to marry the Oromo. When they are asked their females for marriage to Oromo, they were not volunteers because of the Afar culture- *Absuma* (cross-cousin marriage).

However, living in peace as a result of inter- marriage with respecting each other is in jeopardy after the taking power of EPRDF. There have been claims and counter claims of lands / farms/ between the two ethnic groups. As the Afar have been pastoralist they are demanding grazing land by leaving lands unplowed for grazing purpose, turning farm land to grazing land. For example, according to Mohammed Ali 'at present time, two Oromo villages, Uchiru and Haro which were lands of the Oromo before, have been taken by the Afar through their expansion into the Oromo territory. These two places turned to forests/ grazing land/ from being Oromo farm land'.²⁹ On the other side, the Afar claim these places as their own grazing areas.³⁰

Religion

Islam is a major convergence between Afar and Oromo communities. Both Afar and Oromo in the study areas are entirely Muslims. In history, Islam had a profound base in the present day of

²⁹Mohammed Ahmmed is ex-chairman of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June21, 2014, Bora Town.

³⁰ Ahmed Ali is chairman of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele* administration, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April15, 2014, Woderage.

Oromo Nationality Zone in particular and Wollo in general (Bahru, 2002). Dawa Hrawa is a place where many Islamic centers flourish during the Imperial periods. Even Sultan Ali Mirah, the former Afar Sultan, had attended Kura'nic school in the former Dawe Rahmeto vicinity now in the Oromo territory (Kebede, 2005:34).

In the Afar community, some 40 years back, Koranic students and Sheiks were very few, although the clan members were followers of Islam.³¹ There were only few Sheiks who learnt Kuran in the neighbouring Oromo community -located in the present *Woreda* Dawa Hrawa of Oromo Zone of Amhara National Regional State. According to the Adem Hussein the 'Sheiks who run the Koranic schools in the Afar territory came from the Oromo locality'(ibid.). The Afar started strictly to follow the pillars of Islam some 50 years ago (Ali, 2008:134).

Perceived contribution of Koranic education helped to establish cooperation and close relation with the neighbouring communities (Oromo) who were rivals prior to the Koranic teaching. The informants felt that expansion of Koranic teaching brought harmony between Oromo and Afar. It also has facilitated economic and social relations. In the past (i.e some 30-40 years ago) both of them were involved in raiding animal and killing each other. One cannot move safely from one's locality to the other. As teachers of Koranic schools are expanded to Afar area to teach children and the Afar's children go to Oromo area to attend Koranic schools, the two ethnic groups came into close ties through sheiks and students. The sheiks from Oromo locality went to Afar area to teach children and to attend religious ceremonies. At this time they received animal gifts for their religious services and as *Zakat*³². This has enhanced cordial relation between the two communities.

All these interactions and exchanges led to establishment of friendship, common attitudes, even intermarriage among those who interact particularly, the Koranic teaching that disapproves killing and animal raiding or stealing, has inculcated in the minds of clan members from both groups taught to their group members(Ali 2008:134). This has reduced the killing and animal

³¹ Adem Hussein is resident of Gendawarina Eyelendi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. He is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee. The interview was held on June 12, 2014, Harawa town .

³²*zakat* [Arab., purification], Islamic religious tax, one of the five basic requirements (*arkan* or "pillars") of Islam.

raiding by the two groups. Before the full involvement of government, religion has played a great role in reducing killing and animal raiding (Ali, 2008; Oromo and Afar key informants).

As a result of this, the two ethnic groups have formed complex social networks to support each other both in good and bad times. First, during Haile Silassie time Sheiks were very few. Thus, the Koranic School that started in Afar area had contributed to the increased number of sheiks. Second, it helped to introduce principle of Islam and other obligations that the community members to observe and fulfill (e.g. paying *Zakat*, praying five times a day, fasting during the months of Ramadan). Third, it also helped learn *Oromiffa*, *Afaraf* and Amharic languages, which helped the Afar and Oromo to communicate easily with each other while visiting markets, moving stocks to each others' area during drought and summer times. It helped some Afar and Oromo to be *tri-lingua*. And fourth, at individual level Koranic education also created for individuals to get job opportunities when they move to areas where Koranic teaching is valued (Ali, 2008:139).

In general, the expansion of Koranic teaching into the area contributed for the establishment of social capital that the local people mobilized to security and access to economic and social services with their neighbouring communities. This shows how far the Afar and Oromo do have ties in terms of religion that can serve for resolving their conflicts.

4.4.1.4 Afar- Oromo Economic Relations

Economic relations between the two communities take different forms including leaving livestock in the Oromo community, *Tekhisa* (friendship), and common market places. These are some of the major economic ties between Afar and Oromo communities. These economic transactions had been established and functioning for years.

Leaving livestock in the Afar and Oromo communities

When the Oromo face shortage of grass, they send their stock to Afar and the Afar do the same. They did this when they face shortage of grass and water. This animal trusting depends on seasonal availability of grass in respective locality. During rainy season the Oromo send to Afar

and during dry season the Afar take their animals to the Oromo. Renting out oxen for grain in neighbouring communities had been a common practice in the study area. Oromo, are the first, compared to others, to rent in oxen for grain. This practice has been longstanding strategy used by the herders to get access to grain produced by sedentary Oromo cultivators. However, the magnitude has been decreased in the recent years, for two reasons: The Afar lost their oxen or bulls due to drought. Thus they lack oxen to rent out for grain. The Oromo who seek oxen for rent have been reduced since they are also affected by recurrent drought. Their crop cultivation is affected by lack of rains and crop pests. Thus they refrain from renting in oxen. It can be through neighborhood, marriage relation or other gave for exchange of grain (Ali, 2008, Oromo key Informant interviewed April 2014).

Friendship (*Tekahisa*³³)

Afar-Oromo friendship (*Tekahisa*-in Afar language means friendship) is based on certain economic and social advantages. The required characteristics of a person for being a candidate for friendship include; trustworthiness, firm stand, reliability and non-hesitant. Thus establishing of *Tekahisa* needs prior assessment of potential friend through asking other persons who know closely about potential candidate. Friendship establishment is made in the presence of the elders. There is friendship between Afar and Oromo. They support each other. The Afar give cattle and the Oromo provide grazing access or grain. Afar can get access to secured place through his *Tekahisa* in the Oromo territory. They also support each other by leaving cattle under the care of each other. Friendship is inherited by children and inheritance of friendship is respected. Through this mechanism, the Afar leave their stock under the care of the Oromo friends. This is mainly facilitated through friends at the individual level. This is being practiced though it is reduced in scope due to impact of drought in both communities. The Afar also get access to grazing areas through their Oromo friendships in the Oromo areas. This had been an important tradition, which has been practiced for years between the Afar and the Oromo communities in the study area. This can be taken as one way to strengthen cordial relationship between the two communities. It can boost Afar –Oromo ties by prevailing over conflictual relations between

³³ In *Afar af* (Afar Language) *Tekahisa* mean friendship with non -Afar individuals.

them. Furthermore, this kind of friendship also serves as cover against external attack. For example, according to Ali Hassen³⁴:

Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) had been active in the Oromo Zone of the Amhara National Regional State. It had recruited youth from the Oromo Zone and tried to attack the neighboring Afar who were suspected them of collaborating with government soldiers who operated to remove OLF fighters from Oromo Zone in 1989EC. At this time, the Afar who had friends from Oromo were protected. Because, they had prior information through their networks and protection from their friends. Thus, such Afar did not even leave their area while those without friends evacuated their area. Before the attack, the Afar were opposing the construction of a house at the border areas of the two ethnic groups. Because they suspected the construction as claiming land or expanding settlement, though the OLF supporters claimed that the house is a mosque to be used by both groups. But the Afar were not convinced about it. Thus they destroyed the house. After this the OLF was not in good term with Federal government and the Afar. This is in attempt to eliminate the OLF operation from the Oromo zone the government soldiers came through the Afar side and opened an attack on the OLF soldiers. As a result, some were killed and some were arrested and the remaining ones run away. Then after, the government withdrew the soldiers, some remnants opened an attack on the neighboring Afar, because they considered the Afar as collaborators with the Federal Government.

This entails that close friendship (*Tekhesa*) between Afar and Oromo individuals helped to rescue hiding each other (Afar and Oromo) in the study area whenever there has been adverse activities of dissent groups like OLF against the Federal Government. This meant Afar Oromo friendship is more than anything else during awful times. This also can be taken as one manifestation of Afar culture for having enhanced strong ties between their Oromo neighbors in the study area.

Common Market places

The visit to the local and weekly markets in the neighboring communities depends on price situation and specialization of the markets. The Afar prefer to visit markets which offer good prices for livestock and cheap price for the grain. If one market is good for livestock as a whole or one type of animal, they frequently visit such markets. They also follow the same criteria for visiting market while they need to buy grain from neighbouring Oromo.

In the light of the above consideration, Afar often visits Bora, Harawa markets of Dawa Hrawa *woreda* in the Oromo Nationality Zone. During my field visit, I have observed many Afar

³⁴ Ali Hassen is chairman of Kilentina Derseda *Kebele* administration, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 26, 2014, Woderage.

marketing with the Oromo at Harawa and Bora towns in the Oromo territory. During peaceful time, the Oromos also went to the Woderage market of Dawe *Woreda*.

In general, Afar –Oromo Relation is manifested in the study area first, exchanging economic resources, for instance first, renting oxen; second, exchanging local products, e.g. Oromo exchange traditionally woven cloth for goat or cattle. In fact, these days, these neighbours are affected by recurrent drought and this has impact on the reciprocal relation and support since resources are eroded in both communities. Third, intermarriage: it was rare in the past. They started intermarriage because the highlanders move into the Afar community. Then intermarriage between Afar and non-Afar began gradually. Fourth, Conflict: in the past they use forests and water points communally. There is conflict on the use of such resources.

Above all, the Afar and Oromo are from Cushitic family that binds them together compared to the Amhara and the Argoba in the area. So, in many ways, their links are higher compared to their differences. This might create a fertile ground to resolve their conflicts.

4.4.2 Conflictual Relations

According to Oromo and Afar group discussants, in the past, the Afar and Oromos were killing each other like acute enemies. During earlier times, they were killing each other not mainly on land issue. Rather it was due to their culture.³⁵ Conflict occurred in some cases due to cultural attributes (Dessalegn, 2007; Ali 2008). The high tendency of Afar and Oromo intruders for killing persons was attributed to some belief systems of the past. In the past someone who killed a person was appreciated, respected, considered as brave and given precedence in provision and social occasions. Girls praised such persons while singing and dancing during social occasions. On the other hand, persons who did not kill were rebuked through traditional songs, and given lower status and disregard in social occasions. This cultural reward to killing encouraged individuals for killing whenever they clashed with others for one reason or another. Thus, killing was mainly geared to non-immediate members of their respective communities.

³⁵ Group discussion with Afar, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 19,2014, Woderage and, group discussion with Oromos,DawaHarawa *Woreda*,. The interview was held on June 19,2014, Bora.

The other reason for conflict has been related to competition over grazing land and territorial claim by other groups. The Oromo are predominantly sedentary cultivators taking animal raising as secondary activity. The Oromo want to clear more land for farming, and need to make enclosures for their animals. Besides, though a recent practice, some Oromo cut trees for charcoal making. The Afar on their side, claim such land as their domain and do not want the expanding of Oromo groups. Likewise, the Oromo complain that the neighboring Afar encroach into their farm lands and enclosures.³⁶ Therefore, such competitions over resources lead to clash between these neighbouring groups. In recent years, given the scarcity of resource in both communities, competition over resources has been very tense (Ali, 2008; Bekele, 2010). In the past good days, conflict related to use of resources was minimal, since there were enough for both groups (ibid.).

The dynamic Afar-Oromo historical relation has been friendly except some sporadic conflicts. As mentioned above, there are many similar social, economic and political issues that bind together the two ethnic groups. These create a fertile ground for resolving conflicts easily when it arises. However, as time goes on and the changing political and socio-economic dynamic of the two ethnic groups in particular and the country in general, relation may not continue as before. The gravity and magnitude of conflicts have been escalating depending on changing circumstance on the ground. By and large the prime responsibility is left for the government. This will be more elaborated in Chapter Five of the Thesis.

4.5 Afar-Oromo Relations with the Central Government

4.5.1 The Afar's Relation with Central Government

In terms of political, cultural, and economic aspect of Ethiopia both the Afar and Oromo in the study area have been at periphery. There was rivalry between the central government and people in the periphery. This was due to, on the one hand, the motive of central government for effective control of these populations, and on the other hand the resistance of the population in the preservation of their culture and autonomy. Particularly Muslim Oromo in Wollo were rivals to the Imperial Government of Ethiopia towards the end of the Nineteenth century (Bahru,

³⁶ Yesuf Hussein is resident of Oromo elder Orene selama *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 21, 2014, Bora town.

2002:48). Imperial forces who came from Shewa also attacked persons and slaughtered animals for consumption and came rarely and did not tend to raid animals (Ali, 2008:141).

Historically, the Afar have had a complicated relationship with the central government and their neighbors. Trimingham (1976:172) noted that 'the Aussa Sultanate was comparatively free from raids from the highlands and the Abyssinian power until the time of Emperor Menelik II when, as a result of its Sultan having formed treaties with the Italians, it was invaded in 1895 by the Shewan army and forced to pay tribute'. Another explorer (Thesiger,1935) has similar views with Trimingham. He stated that "the Afar country has never been effectively conquered by the Abyssinians, who are highlanders, unsuited by nature to operate in those hot and feverish lowlands" (Thesiger, 1935, quoted in Kebede, 1994:29).Therefore, according to these sources, the Sultanate of Aussa remained independent and unpenetrated by the central government of Ethiopia until 1944³⁷ .

Since the early 1940's (i.e. during Emperor Haile Silassie's time) the relation between the Imperial Government and the Aussa Sultante had changed. In 1944, an Ethiopian expedition was sent against Aussa on the grounds of the insecurity of the trade-routes, and its Sultan (Mohammed Yayo) was captured and brought to Addis Ababa where he died whilst in captivity. One of his relations, Ali Mirah was appointed as the Sultan of Aussa. However, the Imperial Government's attempt to directly administer Aussa through centrally appointed governors was challenged by Sultan Ali Mirah and his supporters. Thus, the central government resorted to indirect rule through appointing local chiefs (*Balabat*). At that time, the relationship between the Sultan of Aussa (Ali Mirah) and Emperor Haile Silassie was largely smooth. In relation to this Kebede (1994:33) stated as follows:

... after a little-known Boha Revolt by the Sultan in 1949 when he decided to exile himself to Boha- a small village near the border of the Republic of Djibouti - an agreement was made between the Ethiopian government and the Aussans. [...] this agreement served the interests of both the central government and the Aussans. The Emperor was aiming to incorporate the then French territory of Afar and Issa. Hence, to the central government the long-term objective of the agreement was to use the Sultan as mediator to influence political conditions in that area. The Sultan was also careful to normalize relations with the Emperor for the role the Emperor could play in

³⁷Clapham argued that "Ethiopia as a whole did not have a centralized administration until after the end of the Italian rule in 1941, when attempts were made to set up a civil and military bureaucracy' (Clapham, 1988:24; Kebede, 1994:29).

influencing or determining who should take power when the opportunity presents itself. This was a lesson the Sultan learnt from the Emperor's role in his coming to power in 1944. Both Sultan Ali Mirah and the Emperor needed to have smooth relations with each other. The Sultan was practically a semi-independent Sultan, having a direct access to the central government. For the Emperor, for anything to be done in Aussa the Sultan's prior consensus was important.

Therefore, following the agreement between Emperor Haile Silassie and Sultan Ali Mirah, after the brief revolt of the Sultan at a place called *Boha*, the Ethiopian governor was removed from Asayita. Governors, henceforth, were to administer the Aussa district from their remote base at Bati town in the highland. The Sultan who had complained about restriction of access to the Emperor was given such access and he was promoted to the position of 'chief' (*Balabat*) and then *Bitwoded* (the beloved). This later ushered the era of indirect rule, because other Afar leaders were subject to this new overlord (Gamaledin, 1993:53).

Although exploitation was in its rudimentary stage and not widespread, there were some dominant chiefs who were 'first among equals'. In relation to this some authors stated that the Afar had Sultanates resembling feudal kingdoms (Fekaduet *al.*, 1984:18). According to the Afar key informants from the study community, the Chiefs (*Balabatoch*) during the Emperor time were 'exploitative'.³⁸ At each level the Afar had to pay tax to their respective chiefs (*Balabatoch*) and each chief to the higher level leadership.

On the other hand, during the *Derg* rule, Sultanate was officially abolished in 1974. This led to the weakening of the political power of the Afar (Helland, 1980, Assefa, 1995; Kelemework, 2000; Gamaledin, 1993, Ali, 2008). After 1974, the *Derg* regime abolished the office of the Sultan, clan leaders (*Balabatoch*) and the lineage heads (*Chikashum*) and their feudal privileges (Getachew, 2001a:64). At the same time, the relationship between the Derg government and the Afar society deteriorated and became very hostile as the central government pursued aggressively expanding state farms in the Awash Valley and the militarization of the region on the grounds of security and to suppress insurgent groups from Tigray, Eritrea and the Afar Region as well.

³⁸ Muheyta Mohammed is member of Afar –Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Kilentina Derseda *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 125, 2014, Woderage.

Following the coming to power of EPRDF in 1991, the Aussa Sultan was restored (Getachew,2001a:35). The father of the current Sultan, Hanfre Ali Mirah (i.e. spiritual leader) of the Afar is Sultan Ali Mirah reinstated. As stated earlier, subsequent to the 1991 political change in the country, the Afar have their own Region covering a vast area in north-eastern part of Ethiopia. The establishment of this self- administration, which was long-desired by the Afar, is viewed as a positive measure. In fact, it has yet to yield fruit by bringing the entrenched economic, political and ecological marginalization of the Afar society to an end.

4.5.2 Oromo's Relation with the Central Government

In the study area, the Oromo relation with the central government had been hostile particularly towards the end of the nineteenth century (Ahmed, 1994; Bahiru, 2002). This part of former Wollo province was known as a centre of Islam, where the religion had strong base. Due to the expansion of Islam in Wollo in the second half of the nineteenth century, Ethiopian Imperial Government of Emperor Yohannes IV was not in good terms with the people in the area. 'Muslims in Wollo were told [by Imperia Government] to renounce their faith and embrace Christianity' (Bahru, 2002:48). On the same issue, Oromo key informants expressed 'Especially Emperor YohannesIV waged several wars against Muslim Oromo in the area to convert [them] to Christianity'.³⁹ There had been bloody wars waged by Imperial government against Muslim Oromo, which were 'characterized [as] devastation and massacre' (Bahru, 2013:49). In this case, Oromo tried to ally themselves with the Afar to withstand the pressure exerted from the central government. For example, the renowned Muslim leader of the time in the area, Sheik Tolha Jafar ambushed in the Afar territory as a result of strong force he had encountered him from Emperor Yohannes and King Menelik(ibid.).

In the early twentieth century, both the Oromo and Afar were loyal peoples to *Lij*⁴⁰ Eyasu. As a result, hostility between Emperor Haileselassie had continued. The hostile situation had been augmented when Oromo attempt to kill Crown Prince Assfa wossen Haile Selassie when he was returning from Dessie to Addis Ababa in 1958 waiting him in ambush on the road side at Chaffa(Ahmed,1994:3).This attempt annoyed the Emperor and the Royal Prince, who then

³⁹ Hussein Mohammed is resident of Dire *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 16, 2014, Harawa town.

⁴⁰*Lij(son)* meant offspring of Royal family before having title rank in Ethiopia.

ordered punitive force to the area to retaliate the culprit. This military expedition was sent to the area in the name of restoring law and order. The force was led by Colonel (later) General Abebe Gemedo. At the time, the area had fallen under military administration in the sense of state of emergency. General Abebe who was heading the administration had restructured different districts taking from both Wollo and Shewa provinces in 1958 (Ahmed, 1994:3). Thus, the sub-districts of Gemza and the Oromo section of Wagamma(Efrata) from Shewa and the Wollo sub-districts of Arthuma, Daway Rahmado and EssoyeGula were brought together to form what was called *Ye Jarra Awrajja Ye Tor Aggezaz*(*Ye Jarra* sub-province military administration) with Qechicho⁴¹ town as its centre. As a result of harsh suppression by the Military administration, there had been many sufferings of the Oromo. Many were killed and tortured. As one Oromo key informant in Kemissie town narrated, the situation in Amharic:

በባህር ገረገረ ገረገረ ገረገረ ገረገረ
በባህር ገረገረ ገረገረ ገረገረ ገረገረ
በባህር ገረገረ ገረገረ ገረገረ ገረገረ

This meant, as Artuma and Fursi Oromo made an attempt to kill the Crown Prince passing through Cheffa from Dessie to Addis Ababa and revenge had come from the Imperial Government of Haile Selassie, so no mercy at all unless Artuma gather fire-wood and Fursi fetch water for the soldiers of General Abebe Gemedo. This entails more; how far was the Jarra *Awrajja* military administration was suppressive. This sub-province (*Awrajja*) was dissolved in 1964 at the end of the state of emergency with the various sub districts going back to their original administrative divisions.

It is apparent that the Oromo specially felt hemmed in between the Afar pressing on them from the low land in the east and the Amhara from the western foothills of the Menz plateau(Ibid,113). As Ahmed further noted ‘general lawlessness and various dimensions of ethnic conflicts i.e.Amhara versus Oromo; Oromo versus Afar; Afar versus Amhara; and internal conflicts among the Oromo and the Afar themselves actually became chronic features of the region throughout [1941-1974] the period.’ As informants from both Afar and Oromo revealed ‘the central government sides with the Issa when the two are in conflict’ it also ‘sides, with the

⁴¹Qechicho town is found in Artuma which was a centre for Jarra sub province military Administration (*Ye jarraAwrajjaYe tor Agezaz*) 1958-19640 (Ahmed, 1994:3).

Afar when Afar and Oromo are in conflict.’ The interest of the government is that securing the Addis Ababa –Djibuti railway to the port of Djibouti which crossed the Issa territory and the Awash valley big government projects which are found in the Afar Region. As the Oromo key informants reported the government authorities are telling us ‘the Afar are pastoralists while we are farmers the one who are better than Afar in many ways’. The Afar key informants also blame the central government as it sides with Issa when conflict arise between the two by saying that ‘the Issa are living in arid area without water points for their cattle while the Afar are living in the Awash valley where there are many water points compared to the Issa -somali’. This shows that the Oromo were not heard by the government when they raise their grievances in relation to the Afar. In the same token, the Afar issues are not properly addressed by the Federal and Regional governments in relation to the Issa –Somalis.

The central point here is that the central government of Ethiopia in one way or another has been affecting the relation between the Afar and Oromo communities through its policies in the study area. In its policy at a time, it may side the Afar while disregarding the Oromo at another and vice versa. So the particular local issue cannot be seen out of the wider political dynamism of Ethiopia.

As it had happened elsewhere in the peripheral peoples of Ethiopia, the relation between the central government and the Afar- Oromo in the study area had been characterized by conflictual, though it is sporadically. Both the central and local authorities didn’t fully understand the exact causes and forces behind these isolated cases of the two ethnic groups. They didn’t have the right kind of administrative machinery, know-how, and wisdom to give appropriate and effective response to the sensitive undercurrents of dissatisfaction between the two ethnic communities. It is very clear that the seriousness of the explosive situation in the area had been understood but the central government has given less attention. But, it was unable to get to the roots of the problem and it couldn’t bring about a lasting solution to the almost to the continuous unrest in the area. In the next chapter we will explore the major root and triggering causes of Afar-Oromo conflict in the study areas.

CHAPTER FIVE: CAUSES OF AFAR- OROMO CONFLICT

This Chapter deals with the causes of Afar-Oromo ethnic conflict in the bordering *Woreda* of Dawe of Afar Regional State and Dawa Hrawa of Amhara Regional State of Oromo Nationality zone. Understanding the causes of ethnic conflict through scientific inquiry is indispensable to ethnic conflict prevention, management, and resolution endeavors (Dejene, 2001:1). Causes of conflict are so diverse and intertwined that they cannot be reduced to a single factor. Likewise, the conflict in the study area is a result of various variables, including social, economic and cultural factors. These factors can be dealt separately in two major categories, namely, root and immediate causes of the conflict.

5.1 Root Causes of the Conflict

5.1.1 Contested Boundary

After the overthrow of the military regime (the *Dergue*) in 1991, Ethiopia was restructured into new administrative units. Accordingly, the country was divided into essentially nine ethnically-based regions. Before the redrawing of the new administrative map the country, Afar and Oromo lived together in the same province (Ali, 1998; Yasin, 2008). Interviewees of both sides unanimously explained that they are intermarried with each other, and lived together for years sharing resources mutually. However, the post-1991 administrative structure split the people that had lived together into different regions. Likewise, Wollo Province was divided into Amhara and Afar regions. Consequently, intra-boundary is created and commonly shared resources are divided between Afar and Oromo of Amhara region. After this restructuring, gradually, the previous common lands become hot points of competition and conflict. In connection to this Anuar Yesuf comments⁴²:

...both Afar and Oromo raise border claims; none of them agree on the border, rather they came up with contradictory border. Oromo do not accept what the Afar put as border. Similarly, Afar donot agree on what the Oromo accept as line of delimitation. Both claim the same land but different boundary. There is competition even among woreda officials and regions. Their competition is reflected by the people, and now the competition is turned into conflict.

⁴² Anuar Yesuf is an expert of conflict prevention and resolution in the office of administration and security , Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 10, 2014, Bora.

According to interviewees and focus group discussants boundary is also used as a cover to achieve economic and political goals. There is competition for power and fame in the name of border. Furthermore, interviewees confessed that border is politicized and used for economic and political benefits mainly by *woreda* and *kebele* administrators. Elites use border issue to mobilize the people for different purposes and give political interpretation. 'Protecting regional border is equated with protecting national border. Expanding border and claiming new land becomes a fashion; when you see the rivalry, it does not seem that we are living in one country.'⁴³ In the post-1991 Ethiopia, border rivalry becomes too stiff; regional boundary is seen as national boundary. Ethnic elites politicize it and use it for both economic and political ends. In this regard, Mohammed Ahmed stated as follows⁴⁴:

In the pre-1991 period, despite ordinary conflicts over water and pasture which were resolved through traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, Oromo and Afar used land commonly. No questions of border; no competition to control land just like now; no politics of border at all. However, after the coming of the issue of border, previous common lands become hot point of competition. This means politics of border started and the conflict takes political shape.

Contested territorial boundary is the major cause of conflict in the study area. The main reason for the Afar-Oromo conflict in the study area is absence of demarcated border. There is no clear demarcation of boundaries between Dawa Harawa and Dawe *Woreda*. This unclearly defined territorial boundary has been one of the sources of conflict between the two ethnic groups. Thus, there is feeling by both communities that dispute is inevitable unless a clear boundary demarcation is made to separate the two *Woreda* in general and Dire and Gendawarina Eyelendi *Kebele* in particular.⁴⁵ This holds true with the argument of Sisay (2007:7), which denoted 'Ethnic- based regional boundaries and non-clarity resulted in the separation of ethnic groups.' Similarly, the absence of clear demarcation of boundary between Dawa Harawa and Dawe *Woreda*, instigates conflict in Dire area. In the border of the two *Woreda* an area called *Dire*

⁴³ Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June21,2014, Bora town.

⁴⁴ Mohammed Ahmed is resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April15, 2014, Woderage.

⁴⁵ Anuar Yesuf is an expert conflict prevention and resolution in the administration and security office , Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June10, 2014,Bora.

(specially, Uchiru, Mandibo and Haro villages) is a highly contested place because of its potential for irrigation⁴⁶.

During earlier times, though they were residing in same *Woreda*, which was named as Dawe Rahmado, there was demarcated territory for both the Afar and Oromo. There was clear border between Afar and Oromo, i.e., who owned what and how and the territory of each group was known. Both of them had their own territory in which they were living in accordance with their culture and traditions. Nowadays, however, there is no clear demarcated border between the two communities.

As a historical border issue between Afar and Oromo in the area, narrated by Mohammed Awol as follows⁴⁷:

During Haile Selassie period, provincial governor was Dejazmach⁴⁸ Birru- whose centre was at Rike(place found south of Kemissie town), and the then Governor of Wollo Province. Subsequently, he was governor of both Afar and Oromo who reside in the study area of the Province. During that period, Afar and Oromo were in conflict. Once upon a time, all people living in districts of Jille Timuga, Artuma Fursi and Dewe Harawa were called for meeting by Dejazmach Birru to resolve the conflict arose between Afar and Oromo, resulting from border issue. He gathered all these people together asked them one by one: the Afar were asked where their border was visa-viz the Oromos? The Afar said that 'starting Bati following the Asphalt road to Kombolcha Town, then turning to south towards Shewa Robit, Debresina and turn to the east up to Mejjit areas, and below this line is Afar territory'. He also forwarded same question to the Oromo? The Oromo replied 'starting from Terrena (a place near Mille) the road to Addis and from Geleha (a place above Mille) then stretches to north up to mountain Gurale (Worebabo, South Wollo), then turns to west to the two lakes , i.e., Ligo Haik and Ardibo that extends our territory. After they said these, Dejazmach Birru said that 'both of you are liars. I can confidently, tell you your border where is, as follows'. In a place where there are trees, as trees can serve for building short fence, and also furrowed and terraced lands, these places is Oromo territory. If it is Afar territory, we can see trees, which are longer and dense, and no terracing or furrow lands as well. Then, he told both of them 'you have to limit yourself to this territory.' after this authoritative decision, no claim and counter claim, as the Governor decided their border. So, this shows where had been the border of Afar and Oromo in history. During that period, government

⁴⁶ Mohammed Ali is resident of Dire *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. Relatively, Dire *kebele* is place where there is high intensity conflict between the two ethnic group. The main reason for such acute conflict is that the area is irrigable land. The interview was held on June 12, 2014, Bora Town.

⁴⁷ Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 21, 2014, Bora town.

⁴⁸ Ethiopian Imperial and traditional- feudal, military, and administrative rank below the rank of *Ras*.

authorities were giving decisions by punishing the violators of their orders. They were responsive to any problem. Nowadays, though, the problem is known by government authorities, there is problem of violating the decision of government authorities on both sides and the government could not stop it.

This is because of failure of the local government authorities to take final and firm decision on those who create problems on both sides. In regard to this Mohammed Ali claims that⁴⁹:

If government is determined, measures of punishment would be taken on both Afar and Oromo, then problem would be stopped. But, what the EPRDF Government is doing that begging the guilty. Simply, government officials beg the Afar who violate the law. So the government is lenient in this case. This pleading of the government has nothing to do for the maintenance of peace and stability in the area. It is a counterproductive on the situation and it does not bring solution for both sides.

On the other side, Afar maintain that, after the taking over of power by EPRDF, there happen claims and counter claims of lands between Afar and Oromo in the area. This is due to the Oromo farmland expansion on the grass lands found between the two communities.⁵⁰ During the Transition period the border conflict between the two communities was intense since the attempt to delimit ethnical-based administration has raised awareness about border (Abinnk, 2012; Ali, 2008). Each group has coveted to include some key resource areas into their domain. Areas, which were used jointly prior to 1991 political change in Ethiopia, were equally coveted by both traditional users. Muheyta Mohammed said that the conflict was all along the border stretching from Semu-robi to Raya i.e., along the hillsides and escarpments⁵¹ (See the map on page 16). Muheyta also further remarked that the Oromo leaders were involved and claimed land up to the Awash River. In the past, some individuals from the neighboring Oromo used to go to Afar territory to look after their livestock and then received animal in exchange for their labor. But, nowadays such practices have been rare. This show how far labor migration, let alone relationship between the communities in the study area, has been negatively affected as a result of the new political dynamic of Ethiopia.

⁴⁹ Mohammed Ali is resident of Dire Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. Relatively, Dire kebele is place where there is high intensity conflict between the two ethnic group. The main reason for such acute conflict is that the area is irrigable land. The interview was held on June12, 2014, Bora Town.

⁵⁰ Ahmed Yayo is head of administration and security office of Dawe Woreda. The interview was held on April 14, 2014, Woderage.

⁵¹ Muheyta Mohammed is member of Afar –Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Kilentina Derseda Kebele, Dawe Woreda. The interview was held on April125,2014, Woderage. See also Ali, 2008:131.

The Afar pastoralists are demanding grazing land for their cattle, even by turning Oromo farm land to grazing land. For example, as the Mohammed Hassen⁵² reports:

In 2001 E.C, places namely, Uchiru, Gedabura and Haro of Dire kebele which were lands of the Oromo in the past, are taken by the Afar through their expansion into the Oromo territory. These places become forests/ grazing land because of being unploughed farm land. If we go to these places claiming that these lands are our forefathers, conflict will arise with the Afar.

In 2001 E.C., when conflict had happened, the federal and regional governments looking the situation in depth, had made attempts to solve the problem through various means such as through joint peace committees and elders and religious leaders. Specially, regional governments continuously struggling to settle the problem. However, as the case is the issue of borderland, it has been crucial. According to both Afar and Oromo Informants, the Ethiopian Regions (*kilil*) do not have clear territory⁵³. As this is the case, i.e., all regional states of Ethiopia are without delimited borders. Both Afar and Oromo are Ethiopians without demarcated border. As this the case in relation to the Afar –Oromo border area claim, the views of Oromo on the relation maintained with Afar, and trust they have with their representatives, Hussein Mohammed comments as follows⁵⁴:

We treat the Afar as our good neighbors; we treat them politely when they approach us. We show them good conduct, when they are hungry, we give them food by inviting them here in our territory. With this situation, tolerating each other, we are living side by side as neighbours. This is without expressing our internal feelings considering other issues of neighbourhood. Then, slowly they reconcile with us. But, in doing this, when we see the feelings of our people (Oromo), they say to us ‘you are not enabling us to bring back our farm land occupied by the Afar’. The people (Oromo) are losing confidence and tell us we are losing credibility.

In response to his fellow Oromo, Hussein in JPC⁵⁵ further said that:

We (Oromo) and Afar are not equal in many aspects. We are not equal with Afar. We are better educated compared to the Afar. So, we have to teach them little by little as they are pastoralists. It is unnecessary to quarrel with them. They are our neighbors, so neighbors live in tolerance. Above all, the Afar do have problem of

⁵² Mohammed Hassen is a member of Afar –Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Wocheke Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June 15, 2014. Harawa.

⁵³ Focus Group discussions of Afar and Oromo separately conducted in Harawa with Oromo on May 17, 2014 and in Woderage with Afar on April 28, 2014.

⁵⁴ Hussein Mohammed is chairman of Afar- Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Dire Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June 16, 2014. Dire.

⁵⁵ Joint Peace Committee composed fifty representatives from each Oromo and Afar ethnic group.

outlook when it comes to us. God (Allah) says that neighbors should live in peace by tolerating each other.

In earlier times, the two communities were living in the same *Woreda* and Province, Dawe Rahmado and Wollo respectively. Hussein Mohammed reports that⁵⁶:

In older times, the situation was not like today's conflict. During earlier times, Afar and Oromo were killing each other not on land issue. Rather, it was due to their 'backward' culture. Conflict occurred, mainly due to cultural differences. But, after the re-structuring of the Ethiopian State into Federal arrangement on ethnic lines, i.e, national regional states, conflict between Afar and Oromo has been escalated in the area. It is after re-structuring the Ethiopian state into ethnic federalism that conflict between the two ethnic groups becomes severe. The Afar in Afar National Regional State and the Oromo in Amhara National Regional State brought claims and counter claims on land issue.

The Oromo informants told me that they have been planning to organizing individuals who are jobless and landless persons and, returnees from Arab countries to plow the land, which had historically been the Oromo land. But, fearing that conflict would arise, they have abandoned their plan not to let them in conflict with the Afar. Conflict arises as the Afar prevent the Oromo from ploughing the land. Conflict occurs, though the *Woreda* administration organize 'peace committee' constituting from both sides. When Oromo farmers want to plough the land, Afar prohibit the Oromo not to plough the land, in a pretext that their camels will not have grazing. The Afar say 'don't plough the land'. So the Oromo refrain from ploughing the land fearing that conflict will escalate. At present, I observed that the land is not ploughed. It has been left unploughed and only the Afar camels are using the grass and the bush.

During the previous period, the Afar did not bother whether Oromo plough the land or not. The Oromo would plough the land up to they can. This indicates change in mode of production, i.e., from herder to mixed cultivation especially small-scale irrigation. During Haile Selassie and *Derg* periods, the Afar did not practice farming land but now they want to farm the land in addition to grazing their cattle. The Afar instead of ploughing, they were trying to feed their cattle even the crops of the Oromo. So there have been changes in the Afar way of life, i.e., from pastoralists to mixed ones (both pasture and farming). In the past, the Afar did not halt Oromo

⁵⁶ Hussein Mohammed is chairman of Afar- Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Dire *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 16, 2014.

when they want to plough land. But, nowadays they are barring ploughing land, specially, in the border areas. As a result conflict arises between the two ethnic groups.

In the study area, the conflict arises because the Afar occupy Oromo land by burning the houses of Oromo. Afar claim over Oromo land is unabated. Even they want to occupy more lands from the Oromo territory, for example, from Dire, Medine and Urene Selama *kebele* of Oromo *Woreda*. After the conflict, there had been conflict settlement. There have been property damage and killings from both sides. Conflicts were settled in conferences through help of sheiks and elders, that has been agreed by both, the Oromo to plough the land, but to date the land is not ploughed. The Afar refused to allow the Oromo to plough the land by saying that ‘we died because of this land, we will not give this land to the Oromo’. Contrary to this, the Oromo are saying ‘you died in the Oromo land not in the forest or on your land. So, why you disallow the Oromo to plough the land which, is not yours? Seid Abdu told reports that⁵⁷:

I do have many hectares of land in the conflict area of Dire Kebele. For example, thirteen hectares of irrigable land which was mine, left empty and unploughed. This is in Dire Kalu village. This land is near the border of Dawe Woreda. Dire Kalu Village a place where conflict is severe with Dawe Woreda- adjacent to Dire Kebele of Dawa Hrawa Woreda. Another place Huluka irrigable land is not ploughed.

After conflict resettlement, both groups agreed that the Oromo plough the land which they had been ploughing previously. Though the land is not ploughed to date. Agreement was reached through the help of clan leaders, elders and sheiks but no solution to date. The Oromo are blaming the Afar as ‘disobedient to the law’. As Seid further remarks:

We are in need of peace. So we retrain from ploughing the land fearing that violence will be recur (escalate). But we are paying tax for the land to date even though we are not benefiting from it, we do have holding right certificate given from the government. The government did not exempt us from tax even though we are not ploughing and benefiting the land.

In connection to this, Endris Mohammed, who is a member of joint peace committee of Afar and Oromo, he ordered all Oromo in that area not to plough the land until peace is maintained or some other viable solution is made.⁵⁸ However, in some neighboring areas of Afar and Oromo, the Oromo are ploughing land with the permission of Afar. It is only in one place, i.e. in Dire

⁵⁷ Seid Abdu is resident of Dire *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 16,2014 ,Dire.

⁵⁸ Endris Mohammed is resident of Ourene selama *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. He is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee. Interview was held on June16,2014, Bora Town.

Kebele Gerebura place that the Afar refuse to allow the Oromo to plough the land. For example, according to Afar and Oromo focus group discussions, in Medene and Urune Selama *Kebele* the Oromo are ploughing the land. No significant measure is taken by the government, only the two groups were told by government officials to be calm and stay in caution without stopping their work. In regard to this, Endris Mohammed said that:⁵⁹

The government is blaming us as instigators of conflict, which is not actually true. We are awaiting the measures to be taken by the government. The Afar took our land and prevented us from ploughing it. We lost our land. The Afar burned our houses and their cattle graze our crops. They are ordering us to pay tribute for Afar Region, which we refused. We are saying that starting from period of Haile Selassie, we have been paying taxes to the highland authorities (former Kalu Awuraja (sub-province)) not to the Afar low land authorities (former Aussa Awuraj (sub-province)). We have never paid tribute to them. We lost our land because of conflict between Afar and Oromo. As a result of the recent conflict more than 12 Oromo died. Mendibo village was totally burned by Afar. Another village which suffered Afar raid is Haro. At Haro village there were more than 300 Oromos. The Afar looted Oromo properties; even government institutions (like school furnitures) were ransacked.

As reported by Mohammed Aliyu⁶⁰, Afar boldly claim that ‘there is no Oromo between Afar and Amhara’. In conformity to this, Nuru gaz Da’ato said ‘in the past there was no Oromo in between Afar and Amhara area. In the area, only Afar and Amhara are neighbours. Only Afar and Amhara’ reside side by side in the area.⁶¹ The reason why the Afar are saying this is due to failure of the government to demarcate the border between Afar and Amhara Regional states. As a result, Afar continued pushing up ward to the highland and the Oromo stop there in their confined territory lacking anywhere to go. In contrary to the Afar position, Yasin Ahmed claims that:⁶²

In the earlier times, we were together and it is our forefathers’ land that we are claiming. The land is our forefathers’ land from the earlier times to date. We are not claiming Affairs’ land, it is ours, which is inherited from our fathers. It is the Afar who are pushing us upward to the highland even during the times of our fathers. They were pushing us by taking our land. As we did not get anybody to push up ward to the highland, which is deep inside Oromo territory, we ended here.

⁵⁹ Endris Mohammed is resident of Ourene selama *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa Woreda. He is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee. Interview was held on June16,2014, Bora Town.

⁶⁰ Mohammed Aliyu is resident of Medine Kunye *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June20,2014, Harawa.

⁶¹ Nuru gaz Da’ato is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawa Woreda. The interview was held on May5,2014, Harawa.

⁶² Yasin Ahmed is resident of Harawa town, Dawa Hrawa Woreda. Interview was held on May 12,2014. Harawa.

As a result, conflict arises and this happens, when the Afar try to evict the Oromo from their land further to the highland, they are no more to go out of the area where they settled because land is occupied densely by other Oromo deep inside the Oromo Nationality Zone of Dawa Harawa Woreda. The Oromo are in such grief situation. Because schools are looted, students are out of school, they couldn't build houses. They are living under tree shades and bush. Still now, their land is not returned. They lost their irrigated land. They do not have enough food to eat, even when they ask support no body dare to support them. They are living hopelessly. One can see the situation on the ground what is happening. They are waiting for anybody who can restore the previous situation.

According to Mohammed Awol, government authorities are saying to the people 'farmland is farmland while grazing land is grazing land. He further reports that⁶³:

they are seriously demanding their territory but no government body dared to show their territory. Even the Afar are claiming land further extending deep inside the Oromo territory. When we asked the government officials (Woreda and Zone) they do not give us any concrete solution. We apply for the Oromo Zone and woreda government officials but they said us 'it is up to the Regional States'. We kept silent, seeking solution, but the Afar are mapping a territory including our land- even the Afar refused building roads in Dire Kalu village which was formerly our farm land. The Afar are preparing map that shows inclusion of the Amhara or Oromo territory.

The Oromo claim that they are severely in problem with the Afar. They argue while it seems a peaceful situation actually it is not. The Oromo focus group discussants said that 'Even at this joint militia trainees' graduation ceremony the Woderage (Dawe Woreda Center) Afar officials do not come to the militia trainees' graduation ceremony. It is only Telalak Woreda Afar representatives come there for the ceremony. They are taking Oromo land piece by piece every year. This shows they don't have trust on the Afar even when they come together for a certain agenda such as in carrying out a common project like joint militia training in Harawa⁶⁴ in June 2014 .There is fear and suspicion between the two ethnic groups mainly because of contested boundary.

⁶³ Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June21,2014, Bora town.

⁶⁴This is a Joint Millitia Training carried outskirts of Harawa Town in Dawa Harawa woreda. The trainees are from Dawa Harawa woreda of Oromo Nationalty Zone and Telalak Woreda of Afar Region. At this Millitia trainees graduation ceremony, I was invited by government officials to award certificate for trainees, as guest of honor which I made short remark on the occasion.

When seen in the framework of theoretical perspective, primordialists argue that conflicts are rooted with ethnic markers. Ethnic attributes by themselves become the source of ethnic tensions through the feeling of in-group and out-group mentality. Afar and Oromo had lived peacefully for many years except sporadic water and grazing clashes maintain their ethnic differences. After the introduction of ethnic-based federalism, conflicts become more violent and identity based. However, elites used ethnicity as a factor of mobilization for the sake of power and reputation. Therefore, instrumentalist argument that ethnic elites aggravate conflicts for economic, social and political agenda best explains the recent Afar-Oromo relation which exhibits ethnic conflict.

5.1.2 Competition over Grazing Land and Water points

Violent conflicts are usually associated with deterioration of natural resources. Natural resource depletion can be caused by intertwined factors like population explosion, poverty, environmental degradation, and decline of local resource management (Abrha, 2012; Atsibha, 2014). Bekele (2010) argues that inter communal clashes are associated with scarcity of pastoral resources and the decline of environmental space. Similarly, in the study areas, competition over scarce grazing lands and reserved resources bring Dawa Harawa Oromo farmers and pastoral Dawe Afar into recurrent clash sometimes to the extent of bloodshed. For better understanding of this issue, let us further divide competition over resources, one of the causes of the conflict in the area, into two categories viz. competition for grazing land and competition for water points.

Conflicts among the two ethnic groups frequently arise due to competition over grazing land and waterpoints. Mostly, the Afar pastoralist community and to some extent the Oromo farmers follow a seasonal migratory pattern that has long been recognized as a way for searching pasture and water. Since the economic basis of the two communities is highly dependent on agriculture and livestock rearing, they enter into conflict when their economic practice cannot sufficiently sustain their needs for reasons of natural scarcity. Although animal rearing requires water and pasture, both ethnic groups in the study area do not have sufficient access to those resources due to their scarcity. The problem here is the difficulty to explain /measure the scarcity and if this is the real issue when viewed against the others such as territorial issues discussed above. Hence, during periods of drought, the Afar pastoralists who inhabit arid land migrate with their livestock to lands of Oromo to use available resources for their animals. However, this competition often results in violent conflicts. As an informant from Oromo Nationality Zone Administration and

Security Affairs Department stated, competition over grazing land is one of the major issues that leads the two ethnic groups to enter into conflict. Usually, members of the two communities living in adjacent areas enter into conflicts when they meet on grazing lands. In addition, there are situations in which the Afar made their cattle feed the straws reserved by the Oromo farmers. In such cases, violent conflicts erupt between the two groups.⁶⁵

In the study area, initially, rainfall has been uncertain, which, in turn, results in loss of grass on which cattle depend. Specially, of the Afar side, this in turn led to loss of cattle, which were regularly moved to various grazing areas of the contested areas and Oromo territory. In this case, conflict between Afar and Oromo arise and elders and local administrations try to resolve conflicts. Besides, both groups have been claiming lands at the border to put under their respective domain. The Afar said that ‘they have traditional use rights’, while the Oromo said the ‘land is vacant and have the right to expand their farming in to such area.’

The Afar pastoralists move from place to place in search of pasture and water for their animals under the direction of their clan leaders. The orders of the clan leaders are strongly respected. If they are encouraged by their clan leaders, they can even infringe private properties and feed the reserved pastures of Oromo farmers including, straws, crops, protected forests and the grass, which is only open for oxen, to their livestock.⁶⁶ Similarly, Yesuf Mohammed told me that, due to over grazing of protected forests and grazing areas by Afar cattle, heavy damage occurred to the environment in the Oromo areas. As to him, Afar move their livestock to the reserved pastures, protected forests, and crops on the farm lands and most of the time they perform such wrong deeds at night and it is one of the causes of the conflicts between the two ethnic groups.⁶⁷

On the other hand, Mohammed Seid from Afar claimed that ‘they did not intentionally encroach crop’. He stated that ‘due to their large number, sometimes animals may enter into the reserved areas by being out of the control of herders’. He also added that ‘Oromo prevent us feeding our camels in forests, they also prevent us pastures. We are Ethiopians, if there is shortage of pasture

⁶⁵ Suleiman Mussa is Chairman of Wahilona Gidale *Kebede* administration, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 18, 2014, Woderage.

⁶⁶ Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 21, 2014, Bora town.

⁶⁷ Yesuf Mohammed is resident of Dire *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 16, 2014, Dire.

in our area, we should not let our animals die but Oromo prevent us from using resources in their localities and we enter into conflict'.⁶⁸

During earlier times, there was common grazing land for both Afar and the Oromo in which both keep their cattle for grazing. Nowadays, when farmland is turned to grazing land, which was Oromo land before, the Afar are claiming that land as it is their land. The Oromo also claim the land is their fathers' farm land; there is no reason why Afar would take this land, which is not theirs. The Afar prohibit grazing land not to be ploughed rather it should be served for grazing their camels and cattle. Afar are saying 'the land should be unploughed, it should be grazing, land not farmland'.⁶⁹

The cause of the conflict is that when the Afar bring their camels to the Oromo farm land during crop season and destroy their crop. So, in connection with this, conflict arises. What the Oromo do have, as an alternative, is to prevent Afar camels from grazing their crop because the Oromo need peace at the expense of their crop damage. Even if Afar are sending their camels to the Oromo farm land repeatedly they are keeping away their animals not to destroy their crop.⁷⁰ In the past, when Afar livestock was large they caused damage on crop of neighboring sedentary Oromo cultivators. This led to conflict between Afar pastoralists and Oromo farmers. But, Afar focus group discussants claim that nowadays this is not a problem. The livestock number and movement have been reduced and, moreover, the existing livestock are weak to encroach into the neighboring areas.⁷¹ But, the Oromo counter part who specifically consider this as unacceptable and false claim.⁷²

On the other hand, the Oromo have attempted to resolve the problem by allowing the Afar to graze their cattle in the Oromo territory such as in Cheffa⁷³ wetland during dry season and also

⁶⁸ Mohammed Seid is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Wahilona Gidale *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 21, 2014, Woderage.

⁶⁹ Ali Tuahir is resident of Dire *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on 16, 2014, Dire.

⁷⁰ Ahmed Endris is resident of Wocheka *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on May 27, 2014, Harawa.

⁷¹ (Afar Focus group discussion conducted on April 19, 2015, Harawa.)

⁷² (Oromo Focus group discussion conducted on June 12, 2015 Kemissie.)

⁷³ Cheffa is a marsh area and wet land located in the Oromo Nationalty Zone. It is a place where many Afar and Oromo cattle rescued from recurrent drought in the region. Cheffa grazing area was good before 1991 E.C in terms of grass (Afar and Oromo informants). During wet season, it was flooded. During dry season it is good grazing area. Now adays, most of it is converted into farmland (Ali, 2008; Oromo and Afar informants). Thus, it created problem of access to grazing for Afar in dry season or during drought.

the Oromo to graze their cattle inside the Afar territory during rainy season. The Afar move to escarpments found in the Oromo locality where some leaves and trees are available to feed their cattle. Afar animals are to be moved to Cheffa in search of grass. While they have been in Cheffa small rain might fall. Thus, the Oromo tell the Afar to withdraw their stock from their locality. As a result, the Afar are forced to return, even if it might not rain in their locality. The relation between Oromo and Afar deteriorates, as the Oromo expell the Afar from Cheffa, after rain showered in Cheffa valley because it is time for cropping for the Oromo.⁷⁴ Cheffa grazing area was free access before 1983 E.C. Both Afar and Oromo used these areas for grazing during drought time. Due to recurrent drought and expansion of farmland by the Oromo, the Cheffa wet grazing area gradually shrank and grassland became scarce. During dry season, animals rely on crop residues. After rainy season, flooding is minimal and Afar and Oromo use these grazing areas in Cheffa. In some ways, the Oromo do not oppose the Afar in using these areas, since they take their cattle to Afar localities during wet season for grazing. When these areas are flooded and fields are planted, Oromo also take their cattle into the Afar areas for grazing in manner of reciprocity.⁷⁵

Competition over water points between the two ethnic groups is another source of conflict. The competition reaches its climax during dry season. Since there is scarcity of water resources in the area, the two ethnic groups compete to get access to water resources. Cattle herders from both sides need to make a queue for watering their animals in the same river. During this time, however, the absence of tolerance between cattle herders drives them into conflict. For instance, a river called Dawe is found between the border of Dawa Harawa and Dawe *Woreda*. There are also Afar who carry out small scale irrigation at Dawe River. The river is totally dependent on rainfall. It has much volume of water only during the rainy season. At this time, both groups can water their animals. But in the dry season, the amount of Dawe River water dramatically decreases resulting in water scarcity in the area. This water scarcity leads the two groups to compete for watering their animals and crops.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Musa Ali is conflict prevention and resolution expert in the office of administration and security, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 10, 2014, Woderage. Also refer Ali, 2008.

⁷⁵ Hassen Seid is resident of Medine Kuniye *Kebele*, DawA Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on May 30, 2014, Bora.

⁷⁶ Mohammed Aliyu is resident of Ourene selama *Kebele* and Secretary of Afar-Oromo Joint Peace Committee, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 21, 2014, Bora town.

Several empirical studies show that increasing resource scarcity is the main cause of conflicts in different parts of the world (Bekele, 2010; Homer-Dixon, 1994). Competition over resources (mainly over grazing land, over cattle, over water points and over arable land) are common phenomenon of inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts in Ethiopia (Sisay, 2007). Disputes of access rights on water and pasture resources are very common in the Amhara Regional State of Oromia Zone. They occur when herders use water resources without the prior permit request and contact of the individual owner (Hagmann, 2000; Gedi, 2005; Merga,2012).Related to this, the Afar-Oromo conflict, which is mainly, caused by competition over scarce resources, shares the commonalities of conflict that occurred along various ethnic lines.

Besides, this cause of conflict can be related with the human needs theory of conflict which state that violent conflicts are caused when various structural violences jeopardize individual's physical safety and security, which, in turn leads to denial of basic needs (Clements, 2005:23). Since the safety of both groups in the area is attached mainly to animal husbandry, they are always in need of pasture and water resources. Therefore, the scarcities of these resources prevent them from meeting their needs and have a great potential for inducing conflicts.

5.1.3 Ethnic- based State Restructuring

Entertaining ethnic diversity in multi-lingual and multi-cultural societies using federalism is a bone of contention for most scholars in the area. Some scholars choose the federal system of government to accommodate ethnic diversity but many commentators have observed that a federal system of government is inherently fragile even without adding ethnicity into the mix (Alem, 2003:56). There is considerable evidence to suggest that ethnic federalism entails conflict since it politicizes tribal identity and scholars soundly refute its applicability, especially in the Ethiopian context. When it was introduced and developed, social critics and intellectuals have stated the negative consequences of ethnic federalism in the Ethiopian context since this nation is an ancient country having multi-cultural and multi-lingual societies that have been assimilated due to thousands of years of continuous interaction, intermarriage, trade, migration, and other social activities. But, the 'current government' has imposed a federal structure and has politicized human diversity.

Ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia are nowadays frequent and recurrent across the different regions where there are competing and divergent ethnic groups following the establishment of significantly ethnic-based federal system by creating largely ethnic-based territorial administrative units (Alem, 2003:56). In addition to traditional resources of conflict (i.e. resources use, belief systems), another element (political one) is introduced along the ethnic politics since 1991. The establishment of administrative structure on ethnic lines and the concomitant 'delineation' of 'borders' as such, have added new dimension to claims and counter claim of lands and over resources. The border line between the 'areas or territories' of these ethnic groups has been traditionally fluid. In fact, the buffer zone served as a neutralizing border claims. Even in localities joint use and management of resources was used. But, after the advent of the new administrative structures along ethnic lines, each group has been conscious about the buffer zone. Each group wants to put it under its domain through claiming traditional use rights as justification.

The same has happening in the study areas, for example, Mohammed Sule said that 'in 1985/86 E.C OLF has agitated the Oromo to claim and seize more land from Afar territory'.⁷⁷ Ali Hassen reports that 'though there was competition over the use of resources, concern for border was less important in the past. Their relation with neighboring Oromo was smooth during the *Derg* regime. We are the foot, while they (Oromos) are the head'.⁷⁸ In this, he wanted to say that they are one entity with two inseparable parts; one needs the other for surviving. He said they were interdependent in terms of market, bond fried, support and business. The head represents the highlanders (cultivators) and the 'foot' the lowlanders (pastoralists). Thus, the Afar felt that the current political arrangement brought other element of sources of mistrust and conflict between the two groups.

The border is fluid and not demarcated. Both Oromo and Afar have claims of land. Afar claimed that it is under their domain. They see this land as additional grazing area. It is endowed with bushes and trees on which livestock depend during dry and drought periods. In this regard,

⁷⁷ Mohammed Sule is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 15, 2014, Woderage.

⁷⁸ Ali Hassen is chairman of Kilentina Derseda *Kebele* administration, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 26, 2014, Woderage.

Mohammed Sule said, 'it is our lifeline, the area is our life-belt, because livestock, which could not reach Cheffa often stay in this area.'⁷⁹ They also claim that their land is encroached by Oromo. It seems that the land that both claim might not be occupied by either groups sometimes in the past. But, as resources became scarce, both went around and met at the buffer zone. Thus, they ended up in claiming that border area to be designated in their name particularly after the current government restructured administrative regions mainly, on the basis of ethnic lines.

During the *Derg* period, Afar were living in Bora town, Dawa Harawa *woreda*, with whom they were grazing their cattle peacefully in the Oromo territory. But, after ethnic-based federal arrangement was set up, things have changed dramatically. Yesuf Hussein reports that⁸⁰:

After restructuring of the state into ethnic based-regional national states arrangement, Afar are aspiring for land grabbing that is amassing every land as much as they can. If we beat Afar we will be caught by the government as criminals. But when they violet the law, no body ask them even when they kill the Oromo. The government prevents us not to attack them even when they are killing us.

It is clear that the problem arises as a result of federal arrangement of the Ethiopian government on ethnic base. The government does not take measures up on the Afar when they violet the law. According to Mohammed Awole, 'the government always says that the 'Afar are disadvantaged, compared to the Oromo relatively, as they are pastoralists. It is 'you (Oromo) should be careful and tolerate them.' If the government allows us, we would take our own measure up on them.'⁸¹ These shows, as they are pastoralists, the government authorities are standing on the side of the Afar.

In nutshell, the political changes which includes the federal arrangement in the post -1991 period and how that has been affecting relations between the communities in the study area can be the central point, This means that discussions on other factors such as resource discussed previously and environment below can be understood or viewed within the recent dynamics of politics in Ethiopia.

⁷⁹ Mohammed Sule is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on April15,2014, Woderage.

⁸⁰ Yesuf Hussein is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Orene selama *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda* . The interview was held on June 21, 2014, Bora town.

⁸¹ Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June21,2014, Bora town.

5.1.4 Environmental Degradation and Drought

Pastoral communities in Ethiopia are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change specifically to the recurrent drought and floods. They occupy the most inhospitable arid and semi-arid environments characterized by high temperature and low and erratic rainfall patterns often with an annual rainfall of less than 500-700mm (Markakis, 2004; Kelemework, 20014). Delayed seasonal rains are causing livestock loss in Afar region and increasing livestock deaths are threatening the livelihood of pastoralists (ibid.)

Environmental degradation has led to widespread drought in the area causing degradation of arable land and water scarcity. Since the livelihood of Afar pastoralist is predominantly dependent on livestock rearing, they enter into the Oromo of Dawa Harawa *Woreda* in search of pasture for their animals during drought period. The recurrent occurrence of drought in the study areas resulted in a further decline on an already scarce supply of water, arable land, and pasture. It is during this time of drought that conflicts between these two groups most often arise.

During times of drought, the Afar from near and far-off *Kebele* leave their place and come to Oromo areas. Since their coming is usual for such times, they are welcomed by the local people in the Oromo areas. However, conflict emerges when Afar disregard the rules or violate limits in utilizing resources. The Oromo communities claimed that the temporarily settlers of Afar move their livestock to the reserved pastures, protected forests, and crops on the farm lands. They did this at the night, which upset the Oromo community to enter into conflict with the Afar.⁸² In need of move livestock to the Oromo territory Mohammed Seid states that:⁸³

as a result of drought it is a matter of saving our life. Being pastoralists, if four cattle die our life will be endangered. Cattle should not die due to drought in the availability forests and grazing land in the Oromo areas. We are Ethiopians as the Oromos are. Even they face natural calamity, we will help them as our neighbors.

In this case, for the Afar, instead of protection of forests and reserved grass lands priority is given for their cattle life saving. According to Afar and Oromo informants, the study area is exposed to environmental degradation and drought due to the increasing number of population and the subsequent improper utilization of resources. Related with this, Mohammed Amin asserts that the

⁸²Yesuf Mohammed is resident of Dire *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 16, 2014, Dire.

⁸³ Mohammed Seid is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Wahilona Gidale *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 21, 2014, Woderage.

environment in the area is encountering serious hazards by the actions of the two communities⁸⁴. Much of the land is overgrazed and loses its fertility. There is also an act of deforestation for the purpose of expansion of farm land and for charcoal preparation from the Oromo side and for camel pasture from the Afar side. This situation has contributed much to the deterioration of environmental resources and occurrence of drought thereby instigating conflict for scarce resources.⁸⁵ According to Girma Mulugeta, 'during 2008 E.C drought, more than 500,000 Afar cattle were in Cheffa'.⁸⁶ This situation depicts, on one side, the peaceful relation of the two ethnic groups by sharing resources. On the other side, as Oromo communities claimed, when these animals engage in destroying reserved areas and crops on the farm land, conflict emerges and sometimes escalates into violence.

Since 1977 E.C., Afar were not able to fully recover and reconstitute their stock due to recurrent drought and erratic rainfall (Ali, 2008; Bekele, 2010). After the 1977 E.C, there were shortages of rainfall. For instance; the 1985/86 E.C drought led to loss of cattle, displacement of people and movement of livestock to Harbu, Kemisie, Bati, Mille, Kassa Gita, to Zone-Four, etc. To receive food aid, Afar went to Bati, Millie, Kassa Gita. Livestock moved upto Senbetie, even passing Cheffa, which is deep inside the Oromo territory, in 1989/90 E.C. summer rainfall failed, and food was not enough. It resulted in migration to Ewa, Wama (Afar Zone-one), and Cheffa (Ali, 2008:142). Response to the crisis was food distribution made by Red Cross and the government (Bekele, 2010).

Afar were unable to meet their needs and dependent on external support due to recurrent drought that affected cattle population. In addition, since the Ethio- Eritrea war of 1998-2000, the livestock price dropped drastically and no good price for the livestock (Ali, 2008:142). Particularly when *Id al Fatir* and *Id al adiha* approached, Arab traders were used to come to local markets via Assab. So, the Afar received good price both during dry and wet seasons. In fact, rain has been unreliable since the 1977E.C and there is recurrent drought and famine. As a

⁸⁴ Mohammed Amin is an expert in the Agriculture and Rural Development Office, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 15, 2014, Harawa town.

⁸⁵ Musa Ali is conflict prevention and resolution expert in the office of administration and security, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 10, 2014, Woderage.

⁸⁶ Girma Mulugeta is deputy head of Oromo NatinalityZone Administration and head of Agriculture and Rural Development Department. The interview was held on May 16, 2014, Kemissie.

result, there has been displacement of people. The Afar moved their livestock to Cheffa, and even during the time of conducting this study, there had been acute drought in 2008 E.C. According to *Woreda* officials ‘more than 500,000 cattle were moved to Cheffa wetland in search of grass.’ Despite all these efforts, livestock died due to the drought. Ahmed Yayo claimed that:⁸⁷

Nearly all places become grass deficit area, which makes difficult tracking areas where grass is available. The traditional grazing areas with the locality are no more grazing areas. Other grazing areas located at distant places (Baadu, Cheffa, Afar, Megenta, Ewa) have been also inaccessible to Afar herders.

In sum, according to Homer-Dixon (1994), environmental degradation leads to scarcity of natural resources which further induces conflict. Related with this, the Afar-Oromo area is repeatedly hit by droughts, such as 1977E.C, 1985/86 E.C, 1991E.C, and through man-made practices, such as deforestation for charcoal and for animal fodder (Ali, 2008; Bekele,2010). The occurrences of this drought in the area led to resource scarcity particularly pasture and water. And this, in turn, as discussed previously, leads into competition over scarce resource and conflict. Of course, all these factors have been exacerbated as a result of the 1991 political dynamics of ethnic based federalism, the dynamics of territorial space among national regional states of Ethiopia.

5.2 Immediate Causes of the Conflict

There are contradictory positions between government officials and local people over the major and immediate causes of Afar –Oromo conflict. For instance, Girma Mulugeta explained the root causes of the conflict as follows:⁸⁸

As known, the major cause of conflict between Afar and Oromo is competition over water and grazing. Especially, in dry season conflict is inevitable. In addition to water and grazing, unemployment, illegal arm trafficking and violent cultural practices-revenge, theft and blood feud fuel the conflict. The local people said that border is the major cause of conflict; it might be but not that much.

The Annual Report of Amhara Region Administration and Security Affairs Bureau (2016 and 2017) also outlined the aforementioned factors as root causes of conflict. The report indicated

⁸⁷ Ahmed Yayo is head of administration and security office of Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 14, 2014, Woderage.

⁸⁸ Girma Mulugeta is deputy head of Oromo NatinalityZone Administration and head of Agriculture and Rural Development Department . The interview was held on May 16, 2014, Kemissie.

that theft and blood feud are among the grave causes exacerbated the conflict. Simply, the government officials repeatedly claim that water and grazing rivalry as root causes of conflict. Conversely, almost all interviewees, informal and focus group discussants explained that water and pasture competition, harmful cultural practices, unemployment and drought are not root causes of current conflict. Interviewees and focus group discussants argued that competition over water and pasture were causes of earlier intermittent personal conflicts. They strongly underlined that water and pasture, unemployment, drought and arm trafficking are words that the government uses to justify the conflict as small scale as before.

5.2.1 Pressure from ISSA –Somalis

The Afar experienced conflict with the neighbouring ethnic groups (Ali, 2008; Bekele, 2010; Yasin, 2010). They are in a long standing conflict with Issa, and rarely clash with the neighbouring Amhara, Argoba, or Oromo (ibid). Historically, the Afar had severe conflict with Wajirats who come from Tigray and attacked the Afar at various times. Issa and Wajirat contributed to depletion of the Afar economy through livestock raiding, denying them access to grazing areas, killing persons and setting fire on huts (Ali, 2008; Yasin, 2010). Nowadays, the Wajirats don't come to Dawe district. But, the conflict with Issa is recurrent and has become intense (Asnake, 2013; Markakis, 2013; Mu'uz, 2009). The traditional reason was competition over grass and water and animal raiding. Currently, after the establishment of the ethnic-based federalism, competition over land has been the main cause for recurrent clash. For instance, Adaytu and Hundifo areas have been contested areas between Afar and Issa-somalis (Getachew, 2001; Ali, 2008; Yasin, 2010; Markakis, 2013). Both ethnic groups claim that these areas are their domains and compete to put under their administrative border. In connection to this, Ahmed Yayo reported that 'Issa claimed all the land up to Awash River as their domain.'⁸⁹ Along with this, the Issas have continued with animal raiding and killing persons. And, such attacks by Issa have become severe after the 1977 E.C famine in which the Issa invaded the area up to Dawe *Wereda* and took many camels. After the drought, they made several attacks and took many livestock by killing herds and many Afar (Ali, 2008; Yasin, 2010).

⁸⁹ Ahmed Yayo is head of administration and security office of Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 14, 2014, Woderage.

In the past (i.e. before the 1977 E.C drought) Afar were able to keep the Issa to areas where they were. After the 1977E.C, the capacity of Afar has reduced due to recurrent drought. Moreover, the Issa got armed with modern weapons and have got upper hand on the Afar (Mu'uz, 2009; Yasin, 2010). After 1977E.C., the Issa raiding was severe and frequent, this is because first, the Afar are dispersed to other places and those left behind were unable to prevent the Issa's intrusion; second, the Afar, because of drought, sold their rifle and were unable to defend their animals from raiding; and thirdly, some of the youth and energetic ones didn't return immediately after the drought occurred (Ali, 2008; Yasin, 2010).

According to Mohammed Sule during the drought periods, the Issas came and attacked the Afar who remained in the villages and took some of their stocks.⁹⁰ They did this, because they knew that the Afar, particularly the youth and the energetic ones had left their villages. They killed Afar and took camels and cattle. Since the drought lasted for consecutive years and the Afar were not reinforced, they were not able to stop the Issa's intrusion by the time. Thus, the Issas were able to reach up to the Oromo community and pushed the Afar into the Oromo locality. Moreover, the Afar sold most of their rifle to buy livestock and were empty-handed to protect themselves and the Issas reached to Haro area⁹¹, which is found near the Oromo locality. Animal raiding by Issa have been a threat to Afar livestock production next to drought. Particularly, dispersed settlements, aged person and male children, and areas close to Awash River are more vulnerable to Issa's attack. Nearly, all the Afar community members lost some of their livestock to one or another Issa livestock raiding (Ali, 2008; Mu'uz, 2009).

The Afar informants reported that the government discourages revenge from Afar side. Rather it tends to use legal means⁹² to control Issa encroachment in to the Afar locality. However, the legal means used by the Federal and Regional Governments has not been effective. At times, even the Afar National Regional Government appealed to the House of Federation about the Issas repeated attack on Afar community. So far, according to Mohammed Sule, from Dawe

⁹⁰ Mohammed Sule is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April15,2014, Woderage.

⁹¹ Haro is a contested village where Afar and the Oromo conflict with each other.This village is located in the boredering *kebele* of Dire of Oromo and Gendawarina Eyelendi of Afar.

⁹²The Regional and Federal Governments organized various peace conferences during which both parties agreed to avoid violence, clashes, animal raiding and killings, and to resolve their problems through discussion, and negotiation via local administration and elders from both sides. However, all these efforts aren't successful in bringing viable peace in the area to date.

Wereda, many peace conferences were held in Awash town to establish mechanisms of conflict management and resolution which are not been effective.⁹³

The Afar felt that there is something, which is beyond the traditional animal raiding. Tracing and returning the raid animals would not have been with capacity of Issa groups (Ali, 2008:137). The Afar felt that it is related to politics. There might be a backing from some groups living in Djibouti and Somali (Yasin, 2010). The Issas destroyed and burn any property of Afar whenever they come across the Afar locality. Currently, both the Federal and Regional Governments are simply watching the situation. But, the Issas are making move into the Afar territory not because of the searching water and grazing. It is expanding of their territory. They started putting settlements into the Afar area. For example, the settlement called *Hundifo* in Issa and the Afar call it *Endafo-ao*. Osman Abdu mentioned that⁹⁴:

the Issa even put one time the flag of Djibouti in this settlement. They wanted to make one country from Djibouti to Issa land in Somali Region of Ethiopia. This makes the Afar to think that the Issas' current move to their area is not for searching water and grass as it was used to be. It is rather a claim that their border is the Awash River.

Afar felt that the current move by Issas might be for expanding their territory under the condition of new administration based on ethnic identity. This in turn, exacerbates the conflict between their neighbors, with the Oromo in the west, who wage in search of grazing land and water. When the Afar are pushed by Issa-Somalis, they in turn push the Oromo towards the hillside in the Amhara National Regional State of Oromo Nationality Zone of Dawa Hrawa *Woreda*'s territory. So, Issa -Somalis pressure on the Afar is a pressure on Oromo by the Afar, which is one of the causes for the Afar –Oromo conflict in the study area.

5.2.2 Theft, Homicide, and Looting

Theft and homicide acts are one of the immediate causes of conflict in the study area. Theft of camel and other animals by individuals is one immediate source of conflict that might later on turn in to communal level. The Afar give high value for their camels and when the camels are stolen the Afar would not be easily persuaded. They would take any possible measure they deem

⁹³ Mohammed Sule is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April15,2014, Woderage.

⁹⁴ Osman Abdu is head of Militia office, Dawe *Woreda* . The interview was held on April 15, 2014, Woderage.

necessary against the Oromo. Oromo also engage in conflict when their animals are stolen by Afar. Such practices of theft exercised by some individuals from both groups become immediate source of communal conflict in the study area.

Theft of animals was practiced earlier in group as raid. There were times when Afar raided Oromo areas and took herd of animals by attacking cattle herders and vice versa. This practice of raid has decreased gradually from year to year since 1991 though there were times when sudden raid occurs sporadically in the area. For instance, chairperson of the Afar-Oromo Joint Peace Committee (JPC) said that there was raid by Afar and later on counter-raid by Oromo three years ago. Therefore, raid and counter raid is not totally absent in the area but theft of animals by individuals is widespread.⁹⁵

Looting of properties was one of the immediate causes of conflict that aggravated conflicts to develop into violent action in the study area. As informants stated, there are robbers in both ethnic groups. When properties like livestock and firearms are looted by one ethnic group, the other group avenges by looting of properties and killing individuals.⁹⁶ Moreover, in times of drought the Afar pastoralists move into lands of the Oromo in search of animal and water. Similarly, Oromo agro-pastoralists move into lands of the Afar in the rainy season. As a result of this, the two ethnic groups have experienced resource sharing. But, the problem emanated when Afar or Oromo took the animals, which did not belong to them. When Afar or Oromo return to their homeland some individuals stole animals from the contending ethnic group and as a result conflict emerges and escalates into violence.

Betrayal of cattle entrusted in one's protection is also another manifestation of theft. Since the livelihood system of the Oromo inhabitants is partly dependent on agriculture, members of the community usually make agreements with whom they have closer relationship in Afar to keep their animals in their range lands. This agreement between the owner of the cattle and the one who is entrusted to keep the cattle is traditionally known to be *Amana*⁹⁷. This agreement is

⁹⁵ Mohamed Abdu is chairman of Afar-Oromo Joint peace committee and resident of Medine *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*, The interview was held on May 20, 2014. Bora.

⁹⁶ Hussein Ahmed is resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 16, 2014, Woderage

⁹⁷ The word indicates loyalty and trust to keep one's promise among people in the study area.

concluded based on give and take principle, i.e., the owner of the cattle provides some gifts such as crops during the harvest season and few calves among the newly born animals to the one who is entrusted to keep the cattle. He also makes friendly reception when the Afar come to Oromo during times of resource scarcity. But, sometimes this relationship could be spoiled or becomes a source of conflicts either when the entrusted person breaks his promise refuse to return the cattle to the owner or deceive the exact number of the cattle, which the owner of the cattle deserves.

Inter-personal conflicts that result in homicide also gradually extend to inter-ethnic conflict. When a member of either of the two groups kills a person, the victimized group is motivated and compelled to take a similar action or beyond that. If one person is killed from either group, it is conceived by the community as thought Oromo or Afar are killed (perceived as their identity is attacked) and they should kill someone from the belligerent group. The prevalent of looting and homicide acts, therefore, are other immediate causes that escalate inter-personal conflicts in to communal level between the two ethnic groups.

Table 2: The Oromo Animals stolen by Afar from 1991-2006 E.C.

No.	Animal Type	Taken by Amana	Taken by looting	Total	Returned	Not Returned
1	Cattle	186	752	938	276	662
2	Camel	5	17	22	3	19
3	Goat	-	6	6	-	6
4	Donkey	-	2	2	-	2
5	Firearm	-	7	7	-	7
6	Total	191	784	975	279	696

Source: Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Administration and Security Affairs Office.

As can be seen from the table above, for instance, 777 animals and 7 firearms were looted by members the Afar communities. In addition, 191 animals were taken from among the *Amana* animals. The data is compiled by analyzing various reports prepared by Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Administration Office at different years. The table indicates how theft of animal can be a cause of conflict. Such kind of theft aggravates one group over the other to take revenge

The aforementioned causes of conflicts in the study area have resemblance with relative deprivation theory. The theory asserts that the deprivation of needs by other groups such as an

ethnic group or an individual can lead to conflict between the two groups or individuals (Coser, 2006; Rosati, 1990; Raimann, n.d). These people and groups have the emotional and material resources to become involved in conflict and social change (Coser,2006). People may experience a sense of loss or deprivation if the economic structural changes cannot keep with their rising expectations (Jeong, 2008).When individuals or groups from Afar or Oromo enter into killings and looting, they are denying the security and freedom (economic freedom, and civil liberty) of others. Hence, such deprivation breeds counter communal violence.

5.2.3 Government Development Policies and Schemes

There is a misconception that pastoral areas are vast tracts land left idle. For the majority outsiders, the need for an extensive area to enable pastoralists to move freely in accordance to the availability of resources in various seasons is yet less understandable concept. However, pastoralists develop their traditional production system and transhumance way of life in order to cope with the inhospitable physical environment and to adapt, to the environment where they inhabit. As stated in Harbeson (1978:253), ‘the Tendaho Plantation Share Company (TPSC) was founded in 1962 as a partnership of the sugar factor Company and the Ethiopian Government to produce sugar in the lower Awash Valley.’ Apart from successive eviction of Afar in Amibara, Angelele, Bolhama and Maro Gala, the Ethiopia Government carried on to execute schemes to tourism businesses (Ayele, 1986; Kebede, 2005). As listed by Muderis (2000: 12), a total of 353,000 hectare of pasturelands were taken, including West Awash Wildlife Reserve (17,810ha), Gewane Wildlife Reserve (24,390hectare), Mille Serdo Wildlife Reserve (87,660), Gewane Controlled Hunting area (59,320) and West Awash controlled hunting area (91,360 hectare).

In recent years, development projects launched by Ethiopian government for sugarcane plantations have aggravated Afars’ economic problem and intensified the conflict between Afar-Oromo. According to Nurgaz Da’ato, ‘Sugar plantations in Afar territory evicted Afar from their grazing land without compensation. Although, government promised to develop 25,000 hectare of grazing land for our cattle, this has not been implemented.’⁹⁸ As a result, Afar along the Awash Valley became victims of 'development' schemes which alienated them from their ancestral land, limited their mobility, decreasing of grazing land areas, spreading of livestock

⁹⁸ Nurgaz Da’ato is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on May5,2014, Harawa.

diseases as the result of agro-chemicals used in irrigation schemes, cutting of long aged plant species that have prevailing value for pastoral livelihood and how land degradation led to a man-made famine.

In general, development schemes of successive Ethiopian governments have intensified the conflict among the pastoralists group and particularly that of Afar and Oromo due to high rate of population pressure and from scarcity of grazing lands and water points. The eviction of Afar from their grazing land by government development schemes forces the Afar to bring their cattle into the Afar- Oromo border areas in search of grazing. As a result of fierce competition between the two ethnic groups for controlling grazing land and water points in the area is a phenomenon. As the situation getting worse, fighting erupts between the two ethnic groups who were known for relatively living in peace together in the study areas.

5.2.4 Access to Illegal Arms and Light Weapons

The easy accessibility and proliferation of firearms is another triggering factor for conflict in the study area. The abundance of illegal small arms and light weapons (SALW) adds fuel to the conflict. The neighboring countries such as Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia, and the previous military regime in Ethiopia are the major sources of illicit arms (Abraha, 2012; Tigist, 2010). Following the collapse of the *Derg* regime in 1991, large numbers of SALW were left behind the armed forces of the defeated regime and got into the hands of civilians, criminals, and others (ibid.). The existence of inter-ethnic conflict and the violent cultural practices that promote heroism between Afar and Oromo communities have increased the demand for gaining firearms in order to protect oneself and one's livestock.

A combination of different economic, political, historical, and cultural factors explains the availability of guns in the hands of pastoralists and agro- pastoralist communities in the study area. In connection to this, Yasin Ali said that 'If you do not have a rifle, you become vulnerable to attack: when you quarrel with others they easily attack you.'⁹⁹ This fear of vulnerability makes very much important the need to possess fire arms, licitly or illicitly. Another informant from Afar pointed out two basic reasons why people of the study area buy and own arms. First,

⁹⁹ Yasin Ali is resident of Medene Kuniyo *Kebele*, Dawa Heraw *Woreda*. The interview was held on May 25, 2014. Bora.

possession of a gun in the area is considered as a symbol of wealth and respect. Therefore, in order to be respected by the society, every household capable of buying will have a gun. Second, having a gun is considered as a means of self-protection and guaranteeing security.¹⁰⁰

There is high dependence on firearms by the local people. According to Endris Ali, there are illegal arms dealers and brokers that function in the areas of both *Woreda* and people have great access to firearms¹⁰¹. People in the area feel secured when they have arms. As to one of the informants, especially in Dawe, relatively wealthy individuals are expected to buy modern weapons and if they don't, they will be out-casted by the community. Control of firearms by officials in the area is also relatively weak. Because of these reasons Afar are well armed than their counter parts.

According to information secured from chairperson and secretary of the Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and the militia offices of both *Woreda*, the two communities possess SALW. On the part of government there is loose control on the possession of such small arms and light weapons especially in Afar Dawe *Woreda*.¹⁰² However, in Dawa Harawa *Woreda*, there is relatively strict control of illegal weapons.¹⁰³ Although there is an attempt to control illegal SALW in Dawa Harwa, it was however, impossible to fully control the circulation of firearms in the area because of the remoteness of the area that has territorial attachment with Afar Dawe *Woreda*. From the Afar side, Afar pastoralists including boys below the age of 18 own firearms as a common tool and move from place to place freely particularly in the rural areas. Therefore, weapons owned for self-protection and respect is used for hostility and retaliation by both groups, thus, adding fuel to the conflict.

¹⁰⁰ Nuru gaz Da'ato is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on May5,2014, Harawa.

¹⁰¹ Endris Ali is the head of administration and security department of Oromo Nationality Zone. The interview was held on June 6, 2014. Kemissie.

¹⁰² Inspector Mohammed is head of Police office, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June15, 2014, Bora town.

¹⁰³ Mohammed Suabir is head of Militia office, Dawa Harawa *Woreda* . The interview was held on June15, 2014, Bora town.

5.2.5. Ethno- Political Parties and Groups

5.2.5.1 Remnants of Oromo Liberation Front and Afar Liberation Front Aggravation of Afar -Oromo Conflict

Conflict between Afar and Oromo had also been agitated by political parties. Remnants of OLF (Oromo Liberation Front) and ALF (Afar Liberation Front) in the Oromo Nationality Zone and Afar Region, respectively, have their own role in exacerbating the conflict. According to informants, these political parties were working in clandestine. During the Transition Period, there was intense conflict between the two ethnic groups mainly because of these political parties (Ali, 2008:137; Interview with Afar key informants). The neighboring Oromo and the Afar were entered into sharecropping arrangement, while producing crop through irrigation. Previously, however, it has been interrupted due to conflict aroused when OLF fighters took hideout in the Oromo Zone and tried to recruit young Oromo people to fight the central government (Ali, 2008:137). This period is known by the Afar a Transition Period where the OLF was working with government for meanwhile.¹⁰⁴

During the Transition Period, the Oromo claimed that their border was somewhere along the Awash River, based on those OLF fighters who came from Hararghe and agitated the local Oromo that their border was at Awash River. This, again created suspicion and mistrust between the Afar and their Oromo neighbours. This in turn, led to disagreement between sharecroppers. As a result, the Afar stopped sharecropping arrangements with Oromo cultivators.

Finally, when the OLF withdrew from the Transitional Government, government soldiers came and expelled the OLF fighters from the Oromo Nationality Zone. Some informants felt that the Government did this in collaboration with ALF. In the operation, the Afar leaders guided the government soldiers to localities where the OLF elements took hideout. The Afar perceives that Oromo are newcomers to the area. They said that ‘Amhara were their neighbors before Oromo came into their areas.’¹⁰⁵ This also pronounced by ALF’s ‘Afar triangle’ ambition. Before the conflict, the Oromo and the Afar were easily and openly engaged in sharecropping arrangements

¹⁰⁴ Nuru gaz Da’ato is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on May5, 2014, Harawa.

¹⁰⁵ Nuru gaz Da’ato is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on May5, 2014, Harawa.

to produce crop and share equally. It was because that there was no very much concern about the border from both sides.

Conflict aroused after OLF started operation in the Oromo locality. The Oromo started clearing grazing lands and claimed more land that was traditionally used by the Afar for grazing. Thus, they stopped renting out their land for Oromo on the basis of sharecropping arrangement since the eruption of conflict between two groups due to competition over the use of land at their borders. In sum, the Oromo informants said that many people benefited from small irrigation before conflict arose between Oromo and the Afar. Since 1984/85, there was cultivation crop until they stopped it due to conflict with neighboring Oromo community when OLF was operating in the Oromo Nationality Zone.

5.2.5.2 Assemela¹⁰⁶ group

Assemela are group of people who are offshoot of Afar and Oromo ethnic groups. According to Mohammed Ahmed, the other reason for the Afar-Oromo conflict is that rent-seeking people in both sides, that is from both the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups. In this regard, he claims:¹⁰⁷

the Asymela group know that Oromo are in need of wheat. They do not want produce wheat on the farm; instead they receive wheat from the government and donors. They say to us there is a lot of wheat in the form of aid in the Afar Region why don't you join us? We are saying to them why not we together produce wheat at home, on our fertile land? We have to produce fresh and organic wheat here on our farm to feed ourselves instead of seeking wheat aid from government and donors. When we say this to them, as our stand point, they ignore us and they do not want to work hard. As a result, they are the one who prefer laziness in seeking wheat aid from government and want take our land to the Afar Region in exchange of wheat.

This group is trying to deceive Oromo in the name of receiving wheat in way of aid from the government and resorting to take their land to the Afar National Regional State. This is one of the reasons why the conflict between Afar and Oromo is unabated in the study area.

In the past, there was an irrigation which was serving both of (Afar and Oromo) in which tax was being paid to the Amhara Region (Oromo Nationality Zone).Both the Afar and Oromo were

¹⁰⁶A group of people reside between Afar and Oromo territory. They are hybrid of Oromo and Afar i.e they are from Afar husband and Oromo wife. They are living in Afar-Oromo contested areas. They have been one source of Afar-Oromo conflict as they are being opportunist vis-a vis the two ethnic groups (Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June21, 2014, Bora town).

¹⁰⁷ Mohammed Ahmmmed is ex-chairman of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. He is a member of Afar –Oromo joint peae committee. The interview was held on June21, 2014, Bora town.

using the land by irrigating and paying tax to the Oromo Zone. They were ploughing the land together by using the irrigation. But now *Assemela* group are claiming the land which they have settled to be included in the Afar Region though the land which is being claimed by Oromo. According to Mohammed Awole 'Assemela group aspire and incline to Afar Region though the land is ours'¹⁰⁸. The *Assemela* group who are neither Afar nor Oromo but want to be included in Afar region. This group is conspiring to take our land to the Afar region'. But, when *Assemela* group want to go away from Amhara Region to Afar Region, with the Oromo land, conflict arises. Earlier before they were living in peace by producing crops using the irrigation, paying tribute to Oromo zone of Amhara region. But things become deteriorated when the half- caste group known as *Asemela* emerged. This group wanted to go to the Afar region controlling the land as a result conflict arises. Concerning the position of Oromo on *Assemela*, Mohammed Awole explains as follows¹⁰⁹:

If they want to go to Afar Region, it is their right that they can go to Afar Region. If they say 'we should go to Afar Region with the land', they are only 5 individuals, what about 150 persons (Oromo) living there? As they are few in number, they can go to Afar Region. These 150 people (Oromo) have no place where to go? No where to go. As they are few in number they can go and plow land in the Afar Region as there is irrigable and plenty of land there in Afar territory. This is because their father is Afar despite the mother is Oromo.

Furthermore, Mohammed said that:¹¹⁰

Believing that they are our brothers, we have allowed them to live with us in our territory. They do not listen to our advice. This is mainly because of wheat they receive from the government in the form of aid, every month the government gives them. Afar is believed to be pastoralist but they receive huge amount of wheat from the government. The government has ears but has no eyes. As a result, they over report the number of Afar residing in the area as if they are more than 100 but the actual number of Afar are about 10 in the area. A person takes up to 10kuintal of wheat. The Afar said to us, if you come with us or join our region, you will take wheat as you want. If you come to our region with your land, you will have food, i.e wheat from us as you want.

Contrary to the above Oromo claim, the Afar perceive that Oromo are 'newcomers to the area'. They said that 'Amhara were their neighbors before Oromo came into their areas recently.'¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June21,2014, Bora town.

¹⁰⁹ Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June21,2014, Bora town.

¹¹⁰ Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June21,2014, Bora town.

This indicates how far government officials have complicated the problem being lenient rather than solving it with closer look at. Hence, this is one factor exacerbating the conflict between Afar and Oromo in the area. The *assemela* are living in the Afar –Oromo contested territory because of marriage, but they want join to the Afar Region. In the past, the Afar-Oromo relationship was good. Their relations were strong and like each other (as indicated in chapter four of this study). But, because of land/ territory/, conflict arises between the two ethnic groups. However, as informants reported, as a result of the simmering Afar-Oromo conflict with attention and involvement of the security bodies, peace committee, elders and religious leaders, the two groups have been addressing their conflicts for the time being. This shows there is no everlasting solution.

5.2.6 Change of Afar Mode of Production and Life Style

In the past, the Afar community did not about know crop cultivation. Historically, the Afar used to raise cattle more dominantly. But, as cattle became more vulnerable due to ecological stress and decline of range, the shift to crop cultivation has recently arisen in response to decline of livestock production. Most of the Afar have learned and started cultivation from their neighbors. Afar Interviewee remarked that they wanted to try cultivation not only to be immediately full-fledged cultivator, they also wanted to learn more about crop cultivation by themselves.¹¹² Afar resort to crop cultivation, which is traditionally an activity of the Oromo and Amhara. There are also Afar who carry out irrigation at Dawe River.

Crop cultivation particularly by clearing bushes of valleys and growing maize was learnt from the Oromo. The Afar adopt crop cultivation in micro-valleys. In the past, the Afar got support from Oromo for ploughing. As oxen became scarce and Afar lack skills to plough, the Afar use hoe to prepare their fields. In this case, Afar had to resort to small-scale irrigation in order to cultivate crops along the river sides. In the past, they hired Oromo to make furrow for irrigation. So, these sedentary agricultural activities left them in competition with their neighbouring Oromo.

¹¹¹ Seid Omer is resident of Wocheke Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June 22, 2014, Bora

¹¹² Ahmed Yayo is head of administration and security office of Dawe Woreda. The interview was held on April 14, 2014, Woderage.

The main reason that the Afar resorted to irrigation is due to crop failure in the neighboring communities (Ali, 2008; Interview with Suleiman Mussa¹¹³). In the past, they used to get access to enough grain food in the highlands via their social and economic relations (i.e. affinal relations, friendship, renting out oxen, sharecropping arrangements). Moreover, grains were cheap in the neighbouring markets. But, now the neighboring communities are also affected by crop failure either due to lack of rainfall or pests. Thus, the Afar had to resort to small-scale irrigation in order to cultivate crops along the river sides. Thus, irrigation activity has been started aiming at supplementary source food for human and crop residues as source of animal feed. However, there is inadequate support from the government to enhance irrigation despite the strong need expressed by the Afar with regard to the development of irrigation along rivers¹¹⁴.

The situation of pastoralists in three periods is characterized by first, the economic situation was best and better during the Hailessilasie and *Derg* regimes, respectively; and worst in the past 25years (Ali, 2008; Bekele, 2010). But, human security was worse in the past particularly during the Imperial period and *Derg* time, since there was animal raiding, theft, killing and predators attack. But, nowadays this has been relatively reduced due to relation with neighboring communities, absence of bandits along the roads to markets, availability of access roads and transport, involvement of local administrations from both sides to monitor security situations and act to resolve conflict and increased easy movement of members of the two groups into others locality. Economic situation in recent years has being worse in Afar that forced them to change their mode of production to sedentary agriculture. However, sedentary agricultural activities left the Afar in competition with their neighbouring Oromo, which eventually led them to conflict.

The shift towards more agro-pastoralist and farming activities alters the dynamics of mode of production. Sedentary activities create incentives for groups or individuals to own, or at least seek rights, to specific plots of land that they can harvest and from which they can derive economic benefits (Ayele, 2005; Merga, 2012). In the Oromia Zone of Amhara Region State,

¹¹³ Suleiman Mussa is Chairman of Wahilona Gidale *Kebede* administration, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 18, 2014, Woderage.

¹¹⁴ Musa Ali is conflict prevention and resolution expert in the office of administration and security, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 10, 2014, Woderage.

there is an increasingly individual land use-right, i.e. ordinary holding for cultivation, from time to time and this practice fosters individual use of land in contrary to the traditional communal use of land (Merga, 2012: 18). All in all, the making of physical boundaries demarcating border between Amhara and Afar Regional States and individual land use right for cultivation heightens the potential for conflict in the study area.

5.2.7 Conflict of interest between Peasants and Pastoralists

The Afar cut trees for house construction and clear land for farming. The Oromo, on the other hand, cut trees for charcoal making and fuel wood. The Afar lost their important grazing areas like Baadu¹¹⁵. They lost their dry time grazing areas. During summer, the Banks of Awash River are flooded and during dry season the Afar used to move their livestock to those flooded areas to graze. But, since the establishment of farms of big plantation agriculture and government development schemes, they faced constraints to move to such areas (Ayele, 1986; Kebede, 2005). Besides, they also fear the threat of Issa's attack. During drought times, the Afar used to migrate to the Awash River and Cheffa, since water points dried up in their permanent villages. Thus, the banks of Awash River and Cheffa areas are not only the sources of grazing, but also sources of water during severe droughts.

Conflict arises, between Afar and Oromo, when the Oromo try to clear the area for farming. Currently, Afar are struggling to meet their household needs through raising livestock. In time of severe drought, they have to get some support from government to survive drought. There is conflict of interest between these groups. Not only pressure on cultivators from Afar pastoralists to share grain and crop residues, there is emerging conflict over the use of lands for irrigation. Competition over the use of land by clearing has been prevalent. Elders and local administrations try to resolve conflicts, which arise due to claims for land. And yet, both groups have been claiming lands at the border to put under their respective domain. The Afar said that they had traditional use right, whereas the Oromo said the land was vacant and they have the right to expand their farming into such area.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ This is a place where Afar and Issa-Somalis severly fought for control.

¹¹⁶ Mohammed Osman is deputy head of Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Administration and security office. Mohammed resides in Harawa town. Even though he resides in Harawa town, he is the one who has grown in the Afar-Oromo border conflict area. The interview was held on June15, 2014, Harawa town.

There were consultations between elders of both groups to resolve conflicts. But despite efforts to calm the clashes, there is no demarcation between the borders of the two *Wereda*. This conflict over the use of this border area is imminent as the groups have faced resource scarcities (farm and grazing land). During my field visits, although both visit markets found in their respective areas, particularly traders, there seems to be mutual suspicion. Each follows carefully other's movement across the study area.

5.2.8 Summary

Although the two ethnic groups share commonalities in their culture (religion), economic activities (their way of life), political participation (mostly marginalized from the center) and the like, they are engaged in continuous conflicts for almost more than two decades and they are considered as traditional enemies to each other. These pastoral and agro-pastoral areas are well known for their recurrent conflicts. As a result of such recurrent and severe conflicts the area have never been a place where agro-pastoral activities run peacefully and progressively particularly due to the Afar and Oromo conflict.

Access to resources such as grazing land and water sources are the major causes that are historically documented in these areas (Getachew, 2001; Markakis, 2003). The causes of their conflicts are varied, dynamic and multifaceted in nature. Homer-Dixon (2001) argues that environmental scarcities will have profound social consequences contributing to insurrections, ethnic clashes, urban unrest, and other forms of civil violence, especially in the developing world. More specific studies in east Africa also show that resource scarcity is the principal cause for recurrent conflicts among different pastoral and agro-pastoral groups (Ayalew, 2001; Opschoor, 2001; Getachew, 2001). Population explosion, local migration, unfriendliness for large areas of plantations, conservation and other activities combined with the increased focus on cultivation and expansion of the cultivated area have ultimately led to pressure on arable land pastures (Odgaar, 2003, Desalegn,2007; Merga,2012).

The causes of the current forms of Afar -Oromo ethnic conflicts in the study area is not only resource scarcities but, due to the combined effects of environmental degradations/ resource scarcity, population pressure, social, cultural and political factors more specifically the politicization of ethnic identities which is used as an instrument for the mobilization of ethnic groups by political elites. Therefore, analyzing and resolving their conflicts from diverse perspectives is paramount to the ongoing efforts to bring a sustainable peace and development in the study area in particular and the Northeast Ethiopia in general. Conflict resolution requires a practical process of examining and understanding the realities of a conflict from a variety of perspectives. It demands a systematic study of the profile, causes, and dynamics of a conflict. It helps development, humanitarian and peace building organizations to gain a better understanding of the context in which they work and their role in that context. Understanding and identifying the real causes of conflict is tantamount to reaching half-way to the resolution mechanisms of conflict between the Afar and Oromo communities in the study area. Hence, understanding and identifying the root and triggering causes the conflict as milestone, the next chapter assesses the major impacts of Afar-Oromo conflicts in the study areas.

CAPTER SIX: MAJOR EFFECTS OF AFAR –OROMO CONFLICT

In the previous chapter causes of Afar-Oromo conflict have been dealt. As there are causes of conflict, naturally there are also consequences of conflict. It is with this understanding that one might search for indentifying mechanisms of conflict resolution. Under this chapter the major effects of Afar -Oromo conflict are briefly discussed focusing on social, economic and political consequences. Ethnic conflicts are the most destructive and violent which causes too much bloodshed and devastation (Kellas, 1998; Smith, 2009; Thomson, 2010) both on human life and property. Shocking consequences have been observed in many countries because of ethnic clashes.

The intensity of the consequences of an ethnic conflict is determined by the nature and scope of the conflict concerned. In this regard, informants of both groups tell that the 2001 E.C violence was so wide in its scope and intensity. It was a wide-ranging in that it involved a large number of people and carried out in most of the *kebele* where the two-ethnic groups border each other. Consequently, it led to undesirable effects in a number of ways, including loses of human lives, looting of property, burning of houses and dislocation of a large number of people. The major implication of the conflict is the activation of a dividing boundary of ‘us’ and ‘them’ between the historically coexistent, economically interdependent and culturally complementary groups. The conflict demonstrated the potent force of ethnicity in that Afar and Oromo who were far beyond the disputed territories were believed to have participated in the conflict. The impacts of ethnic conflict are not limited to a single sector; rather it has vicious circle of impacts accompanied by a range of spillover effects. Apparently, the impacts of ethnic conflicts are interlocked and multi-faceted including economic, social, political, psychological and environmental. Delimited on social, economic and political aspects, the finding of this study revealed the following social, economic and political repercussions using Afar and Oromo ethnic conflict as a litmus test.

6.1. Social Effects

6.1.1 Deterioration of Ethnic Relations

As clearly indicated in chapter four, Afar and Oromo had strong economic, social and cultural relations and interdependences. Their relations were more peaceful and less hostile (Ali, 1998; Yasin, 2010) within frequent water and pasture conflicts. There existed mutual market and trade

exchange and common market places between them (Anteneh, 2013; Levine, 1974). According to Amhara and Afar Region Administrations and Security Affairs Bureau reports (2005 and 2006 E.C, respectively) the relations between Amhara and Afar have been increasing since 1991. Nevertheless, interviewees including government officials at *Woreda* level, informal and focus group discussants witnessed that positive relations between Afar and Oromo are decreasing from time to time. For instance, Mohammed Awole explained post conflict setting of relations as follows¹¹⁷:

We are intermarried and have offsprings. We were close relatives and friends. We had firm relations in wedding and mourning; Afar came with camels for meat and Oromo went with cereal for food. There were strong market relations too. We traded cereal, vegetable, animals and animal product, wood and charcoal, etc... Afar had spent the winter with Oromo and Oromo went to Afar during summer season peacefully. But now, all these relations are interrupted. We are at war; Afar stopped to come, Oromo stopped to go: who will come or go for dying.

Good relations are deteriorated and gave way to conflict. Relations in market, wedding and grief are reduced since 2001 E.C considerably. This is what I witnessed at my presence in the area. All good relations have been eroded. Inter-ethnic relations are decreasing including traditional mode of cooperation and friendships. The economic and social relations are interrupted and mutual friendship is weakened. Prior friendly relations are on the verge of ending, and the feeling of ‘Oromo’ versus ‘Afar’ is being cultivated. Afar-Afar and Oromo-Oromo cooperation is increasing rather than Afar-Oromo collaborations. The conflict has created the feeling of mutual suspicion and mistrust between the two people and prior amicable relations are reducing significantly.¹¹⁸ Badly enough, hatred and animosity are being planted in place of earlier good relations. The conflict created cleavage and it became bottleneck to mutual social, economic and cultural relations. Suspicion and fear started to develop between the two people, and currently there is fear for one to go with another. This move may further deteriorate relations and increase the persistence of the conflict.

The conflict has increased ethnic loyalty, and Afar versus Oromo feeling is being placed on the ground. This is in line with the argument that the ethnic conflicts have the potential to breed the

¹¹⁷ Mohammed Awole is administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 21, 2014, Bora town

¹¹⁸ Ali Hassen is chairman of Kilentina Derseda *Kebele* administration, Dawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 26, 2014, Woderage.

feeling of ‘we’ versus ‘them’ (Abbink, 2006; Asebe, 2012; Muhabie, 2015b) between ethnic groups. According to Asebe (2012) and Bekalu (2017) ethnic conflicts are likely to happen suspicion, fear, distrust and hatred alarmingly. The conflict bred fear, distrust and suspicion in place of former friendship. Surprisingly, earlier modes of trust and friendship (*Tekesay and Amana*) are trapped by new trends of mistrust and suspicion. Even worse, the current senses of division and hatred are likely to pave avenue for more havoc. Ethnic conflict impoverishes socio-economic interdependence and deteriorates customary life (Mworia and Ndiku, 2012; Tache and Oba, 2009). Likewise, the socio-cultural interactions (wedding, mourning and *Tekesay* (friendship) and economic (trade and market exchange) relations between Afar and Oromo are severely affected because of the conflict.

6.1.2 Insecurity

The conflict bet between Afar and Oromo created social tension and worry on the normal functioning of life. The people feel insecure to carry out their tasks. Interviewees (including government officials) and focus group discussants unanimously claimed that the conflict becomes obstacle to free movement and peaceful living. For example, Osman Abdu said that ‘because of the increasing intensity of the conflict especially since 2001 E.C, the area becomes zone of insecurity’.¹¹⁹ There is fear and stress; no one is sure whether a conflict erupts today or tomorrow. The people are protecting themselves by their own commonly. There is fear and worry because they heard that warriors are coming for aggression. The residents do not feel secure so that they guard the border day and night. The people fed up with the sound of gun fire and marching for conflict. Free movement and carrying day to day tasks freely is questionable¹²⁰. The continuation of the conflict bred fear, insecurity and worry. Hence, the conflict created mental and psychological disturbance and security threat. ‘All the night, guns were fired; people shouted... the residents of Haro village are bagging their luggage for dislocation fearing the conflict’.¹²¹ Fear and insecurity continues to disturb the people. When guns are fired, the people fear that conflict will erupt. They entered into constant worry and they are in a problem to lead normal life tasks. Moreover, farmers cannot plough border lands because such places are hot

¹¹⁹ Osman Abdu is head of Militia office, Dawa *Woreda* . The interview was held on April 15, 2014, Woderage.

¹²⁰ Mohammed Jud is head of administration and security office, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June15, 2014, Bora town.

¹²¹ Endris Mohammed is resident of Wocheke *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. He is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee. Interview was held on June16,2014, Harawa Town.

point of conflict due to questions of claim. Currently, border lands used for neither Afar to graze nor Oromo to plow¹²².

As the border is in conflict, we sold our cattle, camels and goats. We have left only few camels and goats. We also lost for many years of crop product because of this conflict. Still, we did not plough because of the continuation of the conflict. This means we are going to lose additional years' crop yield. We used what we have; our whole of crop run out, we are going to poverty. Our greatest fear is that a starvation will happen because we have finished all of our reserved cereal.

Further than fear and worry, the conflict posed poverty and threat of food insecurity. Farm lands remained idle and farmers spent days while being vigilant to the border. Oromo farm and Afar grazing lands turned into firing grounds due to the ceaseless border competition. Conflict diverts human and financial resource away from development and facilitates poverty (Muhabie, 2015a; Mworia and Ndiku, 2012; Shale, 2004). It may cause starvation and dislocation of people. In addition, ethnic conflict disrupts normal social and economic life and gives new focus of attention. Similarly, this conflict diverted Oromo farmers' attention from production to border keeping. It also posed the threat of dislocation in the residents of border villages (Haro, Uchiru, Mandibo, Gadabora to mention few examples). The conflict and its continuation breed insecurity, poverty and threat of famine among other things. This is related with (Asnake,2013; Theodros.2017) findings that ethnic conflict creates the sense of trauma and insecurity as well as death, dislocation, migration, orphanage which are the worst consequences of conflict in the people.

6.1.3 Disruption of Social Services

Interviewees commonly explained that the conflict has affected the provision of social services (mainly education, and health). Due to insecurity and tension the conflict has breed, social services are either interrupted or inadequately provided. According to interviewees, education is the first to be affected by the conflict significantly. Seid Abdu explains the impact of the conflict on social services in general and education in particular as follow:¹²³

As a result of the recent conflict more than twelve Oromo died. Mendibo village was totally burned by Afar. Another village which suffered Afar raid is Haro. At Haro village there were more than 300 Oromo. The Afar looted Oromo properties; even

¹²² Tuahir Ali is resident of Dire Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on May 28, 2014. Hrawa.

¹²³ Seid Abdu is resident of Dire Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June 16,2014 ,Dire.

government institutions (like school furniture) were ransacked. Hence, the conflict has disturbed the provision of social services. Schools are closed and students cut off from going to school. For example, Haro School was closed many times and still closed. Other schools found around the border also closed when conflict erupts. Since teachers are at fear, they do not carry out their task properly and quietly. Students drop out from school; who will go to school while father, brother and uncle at a conflict with the Afar? No education as far as conflict exists; education is at peace time.

The data obtained from government officials revealed that the conflict created burden on the delivery of social services. As clearly indicated, there are times in which schools are shut down because of the conflict. The conflict created fear and anxiety on student. Just like students, teachers feel insecure to carry out their task of teaching quietly. In addition to this, parents feel insecure to send their children to school. There are also women who are in a problem to send their children to school because their husbands are dying of the conflict. All these increased school dropout and make many children out of school. Mostly, schools found around the border are victims of such problems. As a result, the conflict is increasing the problem of illiteracy. The conflict affects not only education but also health service. The insecurity of the conflict becomes an obstacle to provide services properly in border areas. Physicians, teachers and other service providers fall under trouble because of the conflict and its tension. Workers either leave their place of work or not been there daily.¹²⁴ They need to flee to more secured place of work or pass days in such places. In short, the conflict created setback to social service especially education. In this regard, Mworia and Ndiku (2012) and Sintayehu (2014) maintained that ethnic conflict impoverishes social welfare and breeds social poverty.

6.1.4 Unemployment

The conflict created joblessness particularly among the youth. The interruption of cross border trade and market increased unemployment. The conflict made youth unsafe to go to Woderage for trade and search of job. Owing to border conflict and tension, neither Oromo nor Afar used border lands for grazing and farming. This created shortage of pasture land, and farmers are forced to sell their cattle and camels. This makes cattle keeper youths jobless. Therefore, in

¹²⁴ Mohammed Jude is head of administration and security office of Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 10, 2014, Bora.

addition to insecurity and worry, the conflict came up with another socio-economic evil, joblessness.

Joblessness in turn created another social problem, addiction. Jobless youths come together and engage in smoking cigarette and chewing *Khat*. Desperate youths consider such activities as fashion to hide them but sank there. In this respect, a government informant stated that ‘The conflict disrupted trade relations and free movement of people for social and economic purpose. Youths working cross border become jobless because of the conflict. The interruption of border trade exposed youths to addiction’.¹²⁵ Very interesting expression by Moheta Mohammed¹²⁶ from Afar on the crisis of joblessness and the probable future impact is worth mentioning here:

We sold our cattle because of grazing land shortage the conflict has created. We become jobless and going to poverty. Cattle and goat keeper youths are sitting here (Woderage) all the day while smoking cigarette and chewing Khat. Since they were cattle and goat keepers, many youths did not come here before. After a while, the youths you see (pointing to youths) will engage in smoking and chewing. The problem is increasing quickly; and my fear is that these youths may go to theft and robbery when they run out of money to buy Khat and cigarette.

The conflict created shortage of pasture land especially for farmers. As discussed in the previous sections, former common pasture lands along the border became point of contestation and conflict. Youths who have passed their time while looking after cattle become jobless. Unemployment, the result of the conflict created spillover effect, addiction. As evidenced from the above speech, there is also fear that the problem of joblessness and addiction may come up with new problems of theft and robbery. This will create another circle of insecurity and social crisis. Even though addiction is not the direct effect of the conflict, the problem widens its horizon because of joblessness the conflict has resulted. This is related with (Shale, 2004; Tache and Oba, 2009; Wolff, 2006) finding that conflict disrupts customary life and polarizes social structure. Thus, the conflict and its spillover effect disturb the normal functioning of life that may impede social structure.

¹²⁵ Genene Assefa is head of trade office, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 15, Harawa town.

¹²⁶ Moheta Mohammed is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Kelintena Derseda *Kebele*, Dawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 16, 2014, Woderage.

6.2 Economic Effects

The conflict between Afar and Oromo has brought considerable impact on the economic interactions and conditions of the two communities. Many people have been displaced from their home, several women became widowed, and a number of children remained orphan. The productive members of the population that contribute to economic advancement of the society were killed and injured. The conflict has also created economic and security related problems in the border areas of the two *Woreda*. It has resulted in human and animal loss, as well as, material destructions. This signals the violation of citizen's constitutional rights to life (1995 FDRE Constitution, article 15, and security article 16). The loss of human life and damage of property is summarized in the table below.

Table 3: Human, animal and material loss conflict between Afar and Oromo

Ethnic Group	Human loss		Displaced persons	Estimated value of Properties looted	Estimated value of properties damaged	Un ploughed land in ha.	Remark
	Death	Injury					
Oromo	13	2	517	384,000	700,000	27	Starting 2001 E.C
Afar	9	5	250	317,000	90,000	50	
Total	22	7	767	701,000	790,000	77	

(Source: Dawa Hara and Dawe *Woreda* Administration and Security Affairs Offices,2006E.C).

As can be seen from the above table, damages starting 2001 E.C made to humans, animals and properties clearly imply the severity of the inter-ethnic conflict among the two neighboring ethnic groups. The data are obtained from the analysis of various reports made by Dawa Harawa and Dawe *Woreda* administration offices. Violent incidents on both sides resulted in deaths and injuries. For instance, according to Abdu Abaye¹²⁷:

During the 2001 E.C Afar –Oromo conflict 334 houses were destroyed in one conflict. The land which was used by both of us remains unploughed. Earlier before being the land under Oromo hand and the Afar were using it by paying tribute to the Oromo administration. One school was destroyed and as a result education is discontinued. The Afar have taken the properties of the school. Students are not getting education because of the conflict between Afar and Oromo in the area. As a result of conflict, there have been, both government and private, properties

¹²⁷ Abdu Abaye is resident of Dire Kebele, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 16,2014 ,Dire.

damaged. Villages like Haro, Uchiru and Mendibo have faced devastating Afar raids.

In the border area villages, so many properties are destroyed by the Afar raids. According to Oromo informants; many properties are damaged at the border area villages. Haro village is a typical example. Uchiru village in Dire *Kebele* burned three times. After this, Mendibo village one hundred and eighty houses are burned once. This village was totally destroyed by Afar. It was ransacked and burned by them. After burning of houses, it has turned to forest and covered with forest. This is to take these places as theirs' when turned to forest from settled villages of the Oromo.¹²⁸ The Afar believes that when these places are turned into forests, they can take easily to Afar Region, which is territorial expansion. The Oromo are in a grief situation without good prospect.

6.3 Political Effects

6.3.1 Mistrust between Government and People

The conflict between Afar and Oromo ethnic groups strained relations between the government and local people and created mistrust. Interviewees and focus group discussants witnessed that the conflict created mistrust between government and people. The people are desperately waiting for the government to give solution to the conflict.¹²⁹ Almost all of the interviewees and focus group discussants have similar idea. For instance, as Mohammed Osman¹³⁰ described the situations as 'now we are keeping ourselves by our own militia men. We lost hope on the government: we expect nothing from it. The people also said that we have to protect ourselves. And the condition is let we save ourselves by our own energy and gun'. The people recruit their own militia and safeguard the border turn by turn day and night. The people are more relied on themselves than the government to be secure from a likely conflict. This implies that there is loss of trust and increasing mistrust to the government. As Inspector Mohammed comments¹³¹:

This conflict diminished our cordial relations with the people; even there are conditions in which the people failed to accept command. For example, only few people come when we call for meeting. Now-a-days, the people are

¹²⁸ Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June21,2014, Bora town.

¹²⁹ Nuru gaz Daato is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident ofWahilona Gidele *Kebele*,Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April10,2014, Woderage.

¹³⁰ Mohammed Osman is deputy head of Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Administration and security office. Mohammed resides in Harawa town. Even though he resides in Harawa town, he is the one who has grown in the Afar-Oromo border conflict area. The interview was held on June15, 2014, Harawa town.

¹³¹ Inspector Mohammed is police commander, Dawa Harawa *Woreda* . Interview was held on June12, 2014, Bora.

less voluntary to discuss on the issue: they started to consider it as futile and waste of time. Not only this, the conflict becomes obstacle to government-people relations and good governance.

This indicates that the conflict is weakening government-people relations. The conflict polarized relationship between the governor and governed and created the sense of mistrust and suspicion. Besides, the conflict becomes obstacle on governments' acceptance. Remarkably, the increasing intensity of the conflict and its continuation created hopelessness on the people towards the government. Increasing mistrust and strained relationship have the potential to create questions of legitimacy. Asebe (2012) and Asnake (2013) indicated that ethnic conflicts cultivate the culture of suspicion and mistrust between ethnic groups. However, the findings of these studies unveiled that ethnic conflicts are likely to breed distrust and suspicion not only between ethnic groups but also between government and people.

6.3.2 Public Grievances

The conflict between Afar and Oromo created public grievance towards the government. As indicated above, the relation between the government and people is declining and gaps are widening mainly because of the conflict. The persistence of the conflict and government's failure to resolve it created more grievance and resentment. The people started to developed the belief that the government gives little/or no attention to the conflict. Interviewees and focus group discussants affirmed that the government gave deaf ear to the conflict and far from giving lasting solution. The people complained that government is limited on carrying out trivial tasks than tangible and grounded activities that can avert the conflict and its threat. Governments' focus on minor tasks which can neither end the conflict nor endure lasting peace opened the room for more resentment. Mohammed Awole comments the situation as follows¹³²:

....the government gave neither attention nor place to this conflict. If the government gave attention, it would not have continued for three years. In general, the conflict does not matter to the government. Even when it comes, the government only focuses on very shallow and silly activities used for media consumption. Now-a-days, we do not believe that the government will solve this conflict. We lost our hope; we never expect that anyone will give us a solution, except Allah.

¹³² Mohammed Awole administrator of Medine Kunyo Kebele, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June21,2014, Bora town.

There is increasing resentment and grievance towards the government for its failure to end. The persistence of the conflict, governments' little and slow responses and the increasing cost of the conflict reduced public confidence and induced more resentment. As Abdella Mifta comments¹³³:

The local people do not have good feeling for the government; they did not want our presence there; the people hate to see government officials. Government officials are also unhappy to go and discuss with the people about the issue as they fear to respond to the question 'why you are coming for not ending the conflict'. In short, the conflict created high grievance to the government among the people.

The persistence of the conflict loosens government-people relations and created hatred to the government and its officials. Faded up with the recurring conflict and the insecurity it has created, the people needed lasting solution. However, the persistence of the conflict and governments lenient position increased resentment. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, there is grave complaint that the government itself needs the conflict for its political gain, extending power. The presence of such type of complaints along with conflicts' persistence becomes fertile ground for resentment. Not surprisingly, the inability of the government to give lasting solution and its focus on trivial tasks paved venue for another grievance. There are signs that the resentment of the people is going to open opposition and violence. All in all, beyond social and economic impacts, the conflict has come up with its own political repercussions. The finding Asebe (2007), Asnake (2011), Shale (2004), Sintayehu (2014) and Tache and Oba (2009) magnified social and economic impacts of ethnic conflicts. However, while the social and economic costs remain in place, ethnic conflicts have their own implicit and explicit political hindrance too.

6.3.3 Obstacle to Consensus and Unity

In 1991 the military regime deposed from power and ethnic- based federalism was adopted in Ethiopia. As stated by many authors, Ethno-federal arrangement is launched for protecting ethnic minorities and guaranteeing national unity (Alemseged, 2004; Assefa, 2006; Beken, n.d). The new federal arrangement is seen as an attempt to resolve chronic and deep- rooted ethnic grievances (Cohen, 1995; Kidane, 2001; Tronvoll, 2008) and perceived injustices in the country. Remarkably, the federal system is opted as a panacea to the risk of disintegration (Aklilu, 2006;

¹³³ Abdella Miftah is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Wocheke *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on May 29, 2014, Harawa.

Assefa, 2006) and provided solid base of state unity (Alemseged, 2004; Hashim, 2010). Needless to mention, the federal arrangement is acknowledged as a panacea to recurrent ethnic conflicts (Alem, 2004; Cohen, 1995) and maintenance of lasting peace. National unity is, thus, the major factor for inducing the federal system. In spite of such novel rationales, given that recently, ethnic conflicts are intensified and threatened the unity of the country.

The conflict between Afar and Oromo is the one that is stressed and augmented since recently. Opposite to the justifications of the federalization, the conflict becomes more common in the post-1991 period. The idea of Tefera Teshome on how the conflict affects national unity and consensus is worth mentioning here¹³⁴:

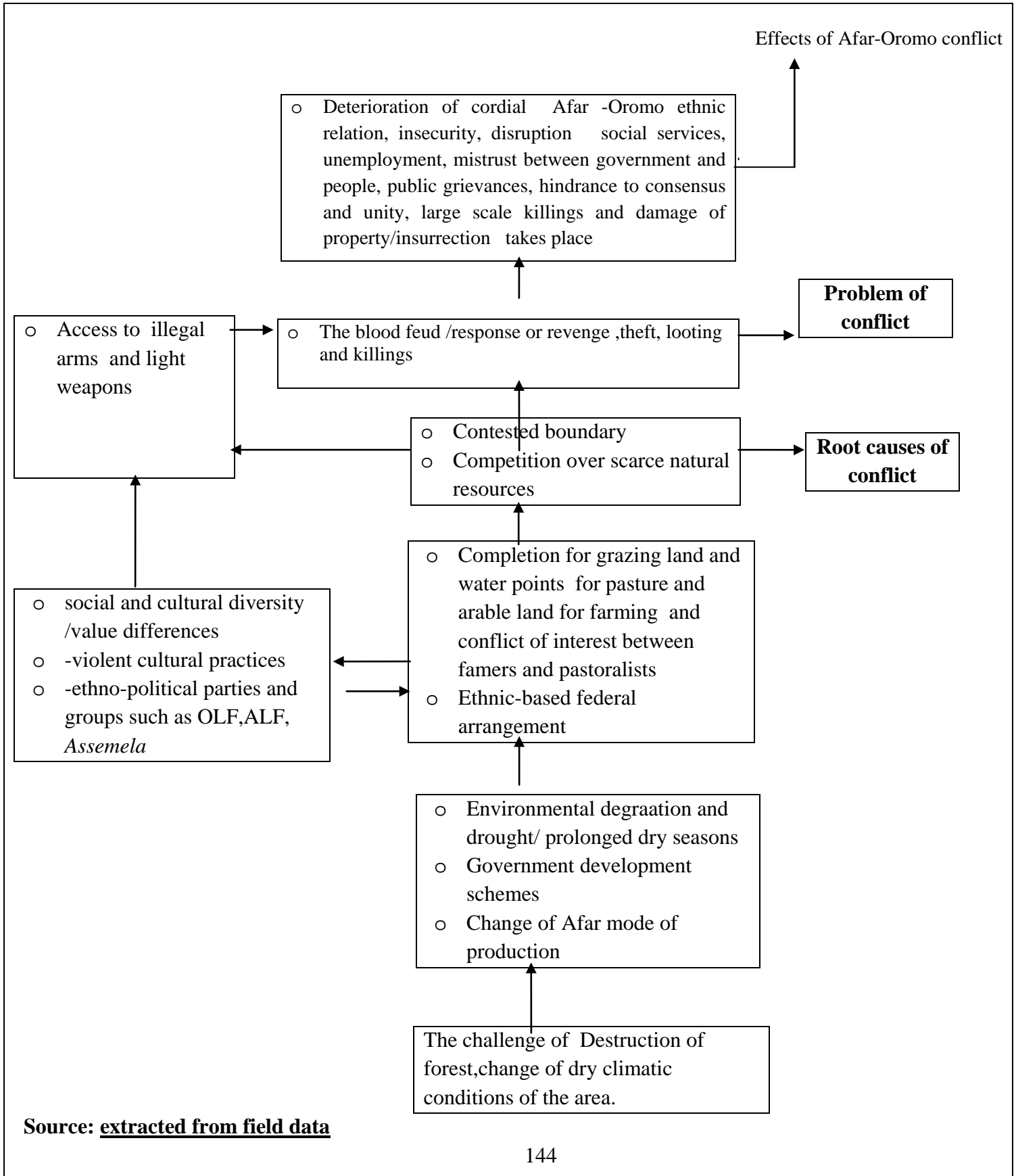
The prospect of the conflict is widening and it becomes ethnic. This conflict becomes obstacle to national unity and consensus. It is putting the tolerance of nations and nationalities into question. If the people of one country enter into war on the basis of identity, where is national unity and nationalism?! This is against the constitutional principle of tolerance of nationalities and togetherness. In short, the conflict is deteriorating unity and becoming setback to cohesiveness.

As a result of conflict, the relationship between the two ethnic groups has been strained. Distrust and suspicion are started to be planted in the place of trust and mutual understanding. For instance, the two regions compete over border, and one blames another. This implies that the conflict is widening gap and reducing mutual trust. The conflict is creating the sense of ‘we’ versus ‘them’ which impedes togetherness. Such types of attitudes are more likely to reduce national unity and belongingness. This is opposed to the rationale of the federalization and its project of solidifying national unity. Put simply, the conflict is becoming antithesis to common consensus and nation building. Related to this, Bertrand (2004:34) founded that ethnic conflicts can destabilize the whole nation. Seemingly, ethnic conflict reduces common consensus and unity by breeding mistrust between ethnic groups and poses the risk of dismemberment. Thus, it is logical to generalize that the Afar- Oromo conflict hinders to reach a viable conflict resolution mechanisms for sustained peace in the area.

¹³⁴ Tefera Teshome is expert in the administrative and security Bureau of the Afar National Regional State. The interview was held on May 11,2014. Sumera.

The diagram below shows the link between causes of the Afar-Oromo ethnic conflict and their major social, economic and political impacts in the study area.

Diagram: Problem tree conflict analysis of Afar- Oromo ethnic groups of the study area



Source: extracted from field data

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS IN DAWA HARAWA WOREDA OF AMAHARA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE AND DAWE WOREDA OF AFAR NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE

In the preceding two chapters, the study dealt with the causes and effects of Afar-Oromo ethnic conflict in the bordering *Woreda* of Dawe of Afar Regional State and Dawa Hrawa of Amhara Regional State of Oromo Nationality Zone. Specially, understanding and identifying the real causes of conflict is tantamount to reaching half-way to the resolution mechanisms of conflict between the Afar and Oromo communities in the study area. The magnitude and the intensity of the consequences of the conflict also demand to search viable resolution mechanisms. This chapter explores conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area. It tries to explain the practices of resolving conflict between the two ethnic groups using indigenous and modern of conflict resolution mechanisms in light of Galtung's (1973) Attitude, Behavior and Contradiction (ABC) model. The model suggests that a conflict moves among the triangle's three corners, where corner A refers to conflict attitudes, B to conflict behavior and C to the conflict or contradiction itself. From this, it follows that conflict resolution is never ending process (Wallensteen, 2007:33). For effective long-term conflict resolution, attitudes, behaviors and contradictions have to be properly addressed. Hereafter, the works done on attitudes, behaviors and contradictions in the study area are discussed. Further more, actors in the process of conflict resolution and challenges to practice conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area are examined.

7.1. Practice on Attitudes

In order to resolve the attitudes of the two communities and develop positive relationships in the short and long run the following major tasks are undertake in the study area.

7.1.1 Public Conferences

According to the information secured from Oromo Nationality Zone Administration and Security Department, conferences are held at various levels to bring attitudinal change and provide lasting remedies to ethnic conflicts¹³⁵. Nurugaz Da'ato from Afar, also stated the significances of the

¹³⁵ Endris Ali is the head of administration and security department of Oromo Nationality Zone. The interview was held on June 6, 2014. Kemissie.

conferences for promoting relations between the two communities¹³⁶. The conferences are organized and financed mainly by the government. To some extent, non- governmental organizations, especially Kombolcha Catholic organized trainings for advocating peace in the area. Besides, local communities are also involved in financing conferences that are held in their localities.

The conferences help to reduce misconceptions between ethnic groups and contribute towards building peace. To this end, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*¹³⁷ Administration and Security Office head Mohammed Jude said, ‘Community conferences play vital role in strengthening the socio-economic and cultural interactions of the two distinctive communities by keeping peace and stability and identifying security threats in the past two years.’¹³⁸ The conferences have focused on building the value of peace. This is basically about changing the attitudes of the two communities at the grass root level. This mechanism is designed to teach the value of peaceful coexistence between individuals and groups. In order to achieve this purpose, the *woreda* and zonal administration and security offices prepare public discussions and give trainings at least once in every quarter of the year for different sections of the community such as community elders, religious leaders, women and youth. Besides, when a need arises, more conferences were organized revising the time frame.¹³⁹

To normalize relation between Afar and Oromo, joint militia trainings and conferences are used. At the moment, both Afar and Oromo are trying to manage their conflicts jointly. For example, Afar militia men are being trained in the Oromo territory (early June 2014, the training was held for 15 days in Dawa Harawa)¹⁴⁰. They were in a good mood as they were managing their conflict through discussions in the joint meeting together. In the past, there were cattle raiding and killing each other, now due to conferences, they are able to minimize these to a greater degree. Stolen

¹³⁶ Nuru gaz Da’ato is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Gendarawina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on May5,2014, Harawa.

¹³⁷ A *Woreda* is one of the administrative divisions of Ethiopia immediately one step down the zonal administrative divisions.

¹³⁸ Mohammed Jude is head of administration and security office of Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 10, 2014, Bora.

¹³⁹ Anuar Yesuf is conflict prevention and resolution expert in the administration and security office, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June10, 2014

¹⁴⁰ My personal obserhaion during my second field visit in June 2014. Harawa Town.

cattle are being returned to their owners of both sides. This normalizes ties and builds trust between the two ethnic groups.

Participants at this conference include, representatives (security forces) and administrators from Oromo Zone and Afar Zone Five, administrators from both *wereda* and, community representatives (namely, elders, clan leaders, *kebele* administration leaders) from both sides. The conflict that took place in study area led to the call of the conference. As narrated by Mussa Ali:¹⁴¹

The neighbouring Oromo marched their cattle to the Afar reserved area. At the time, the Afar reserved this area and marched their livestock below the main road leaving the grazing area as reserve for use in other season. The Afar said that the area was their reserve and the Oromo should have not moved their stock into the reserved area. Then, they told the Oromo to go back to their locality. This led to conflict since the Oromo refused the Afar request. It was because the Afar considered the Oromo presence around encroaching into their settlement, not only as searching grass. At that point, the Oromo opened fire towards the Afar. The Afar youth then fired back and snatched some cattle from the Oromo group. But, the Afar elders intervened and persuaded the Afar youths to return the cattle they took from Oromo. But, the Oromo launched attack after they had received their cattle back from the Afar. Then the Afar got organized and opened offensive attack. The Dawe Wereda administrator and Police tried to stop the clash by going to the front showing the Ethiopian flag.

As a result of this conflict, conference has been organized. The initiators of the conference were representative from Afar and Amhara Regional States. They proposed to conduct conference between the two conflicting groups. They did this through consulting clan leaders and elders to organize meeting of the two parties. The aim was to enable the local leaders to solve this conflict. The government bodies played a facilitating role. Clan leaders and *kebele* administration leaders participated in the conference during which they agreed to return looted animals and pay blood compensation for the killed persons. Hussein Mohammed expresses reconciliation process as follows¹⁴²:

¹⁴¹ Musa Ali is conflict prevention and resolution expert in the office of administration and security, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 10, 2014, Woderage.

¹⁴² Hussein Mohammed is ex-chairman of Dire *Kebele* administration, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 16, 2014, Dire.

The Oromo requested residents of Baro villagers (Afar) to pay Guma (blood indemnity) and the Afar paid 15,000-20,000 birr. But, the Afar claimed that the Oromo did or did not return their camel, which the Oromo after the second conflict took and slaughtered them. At the conference, they formed a joint committee to facilitate the return of looted livestock and payment of blood compensation and to resolve future conflicts that may arise due to clearing land for farm and encroachment into pastures areas. A joint peace committee, consisting of representatives from the adjacent kebele, constituting twenty members who were drawn from four kebele (i.e. five from each) from Afar and from Oromo side, was established. At woreda level peace, committee was also established.

The conflict between Afar and other groups (Oromo, Argoba, Amhara and Tigre) is common along the border that stretches along the escarpments ((Kinfe, 2014:157). All *woreda* (i.e. 10 in number) along these borders have a problem of conflict between Afar and other groups (see the Map on page 16). In the study area *woreda*, Dire, Ojo Wocheka, Medene Kunyo, and Urene Selama *Kebele* from Dawa Harawa side and Gendewarina Ejelende, Kilintina Deresada, and Wahilona Gedele *Kebele* from Dawe side are areas where the two ethnic groups enter into conflict. Especially, conflict between Dire and Gendewarina Ejelende border is severe. All *woreda*, zones and regions have joint peace committees to follow up and handle conflicts that can arise between neighbouring groups. These *woreda* also held joint meeting as need arises.

In addition to the conferences, festivals are carried out in border areas. An attempt had made to integrate the two people through music, cultural dances, poems, jokes and sporting games. The communities also celebrate the nations, nationalities and people's day together through photo exhibition and other festivities. The festivals were prepared through the agreement of the two *woreda* administrations and many people involved from both sides as participants. Therefore, such events had a great potential for shaping attitudes and promoting inter-cultural ties between the Afar and Oromo communities.

Therefore, the undertakings of public conferences and festivals in the study area have a role of facilitating the interaction and agreement between the two communities, aimed at bringing about harmonious relations. The conferences are also provided with the intention of changing the attitudes of people towards conflict and it was aimed at changing the cultural destructive patterns that contribute to the rise of violence, thus contributing for cultural change in the long run.

7.1.2 Afar-Oromo Joint Peace Committee

For managing and resolving conflict, the government has organized joint peace committees at the *kebele* and at the *woreda* levels. At *kebele* level every fifteen days they meet to exchange information. They meet to resolve their problems. This is through peace joint committee (JPC, here after) both at the *kebele* and *woreda*. The government has organized a joint peace committee, constituted from both sides. From both *kebele* prominent persons are members of (JPC). These people by meeting together try to resolve Afar -Oromo problems of conflict.

The establishment of joint peace committee is a major forward for handling conflicts that arise between the two ethnic groups and its function is taken as a preliminary work for conflict resolution. Dawa Harawa and Dawe *Woreda* have joint peace committee (JPC), which is established to meet regularly in every fifteen days to monitor the peace and security of the area. The joint peace committee was organized with the support of the government. Its members were selected by the respective communities in light of honesty and social acceptance. The committee consists of religious leaders and known elders who are responsible to the people whom they represent. When they establish peace committees, they select good and famous individuals who have good behaviors or respected members of the society from both groups. And also they underline the importance peace of development. They teach the people the need to have peace and the benefits of peace for the people.¹⁴³ They teach the people the consequence of the conflict and tell the people the stolen and lost materials and animals to return to the owners in both sides. Benefits from lost animals and materials are not greater than prevalence of peace in the area. Peace is vital for the well being of the society. The joint peace committees list the lost animals and lost materials from both sides and tell the people to return to the owners of both sides to restore peace.

The Dawa Harawa and Dawe *Woreda* JPC has thirty members in which each *woreda* contribute fifteen from different *kebele* of the respective *woreda*. According to Dawa Harawa *woreda*

¹⁴³ Mohammed Sobir is head of Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Militia office. The interview was held on June12, 2014, Bora.

administration and security affairs office report of June 2006 E.C, some of the functions of the joint peace committee are:

- To facilitate the return of looted properties to owners.
- To decide and follow up the compensation payments for human injury and death including animals.
- To discuss on the challenges of peace and identify causes of violence in the study area.
- To solve a disagreement before it turns into violence particularly when there are potential resource conflicts between cattle herders during the drought seasons.
- To make reconciliation of ethnic conflicts.

The aforementioned tasks of the joint peace committee are mainly associated with management of conflicts and lesser extent to conflict resolution. When members of the joint peace committee identify causes of violence, it means that they are working for the containment of conflict, i.e. the preservation of negative peace. When they manage disagreement, it means that they believe that they are resolving disputes. Besides, facilitation of the return of looted properties to owners, facilitation of compensation payment and the making of reconciliation of ethnic conflicts are directly related to conflict management practice. However, all these efforts can also be taken as preliminary tasks that are required for further resolution of conflicts.

The JPC in the study areas has its own rules and regulations that are designed and approved by the public conferences of the two communities. The rules and regulations guide the relationship of the two communities and are important in addressing conflicts. Since the people in the areas are governed by the rules, they are contributing for promoting peace. These rules have lists of the types of criminal offences and the compensation payments imposed on the offenders.

The Process of Reconciliation by the Joint Peace Committee

The moment members of JPC realize conflict arise, they will communicate through phone or face to face sharing experience and updating information. The border *kebele* JPC chairmen have communicated to stop both individuals from their action. So they together have stopped both the Afar and the Oromo from killing each other. So, it is in this way that they stopped them from killing each other.

As informants described, once a violent conflict erupted and crime is made by member of either group, government officials, elders and religious leaders arrange time and place for reconciliation assemblies. After an agreement is reached between the two parties, the joint peace committee would decide on compensation payment based on the agreements signed by the two ethnic group joint peace committee representatives. The compensation payment is given to the victim parents in accordance with the governing rules of the joint peace committee.

One of the major functions of the joint peace committee is deciding on compensation payments as per the rules of the committee. Using the rules, the committee imposes a compensation payment on physical injury, death and damaged property. Each particulars of the payments will be recorded by the committee and the *woreda* officials as it is totally completed or partly paid, started or not, etc. or in case of refusal to pay compensation a person who has involved in raiding (rustling) cattle will be taken to the court by the government for trial.

Table 4: Sample Compensation Payment 2005 E.C

Year	Payer <i>Woreda</i>	Receiver <i>Woreda</i>	Payment for human loss (ETB)	Payment for physical injury(ETB)	Payment for damaged property(ETB)
2005 E.C	Dawa Harawa	Dawe	103,356	67,567	37,735
	Dawe	Dawa Harawa	113,190	78,163	102,782

(Source: Dawe *Woreda* Administration and Security Affairs Office).

Table 5 : Compensation Payment from 1991-2000 E.C by Dawa Harawa

Affected <i>Woreda</i>	Number of death and injury		Compensation paid by Dawa Harawa in ETB
	Death	Injury	
Dawe	17	8	89,765

(Source: Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Administration and Security Affairs Office).

Table 6 : Compensation Payment from 1991-2000 E.C by Dawe

Affected <i>Woreda</i>	Number of death and injury		Compensation paid by Dawe in ETB
	Death	Injury	
Dawa Harawa	35	27	57,600

(Source: Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Administration and Security Affairs Office).

The above tables show how the joint peace committee works for the payments of compensation. The data are obtained from the assessment of reports made by Dawe and Dawa Harawa *woreda*. Human loss and physical injury are evident in any violent conflicts. As a result of this many people were died and injured in the conflict between Oromo and Afar communities. For instance, table 2 & 3 shows 52 deaths and 35 injuries in the years between 1991 and 2000. Because of such casualties the joint peace committee has been working starting from September 1993.¹⁴⁴ As discussed so far, since one of the major functions of the committee was deciding on compensation payments, the above data shows sample of the amounts imposed by the committee and paid by the two communities. It also reflects the task of the JPC in dealing with conflicts in the area.

In the process of the reconciliation, oath will be undertaken by members of each group with the facilitation of community elders and religious leaders. Once the crime perpetrator and his families accept their wrong deeds, they shake the hands of the victims' parents and both groups swear by putting their hands on the Holy Quran held by the hands of religious leaders. After the oath practice is concluded, religious leaders and elders of the two ethnic groups give blessing and the two conflicting group meal together in order to restart new friendship. The oath and the traditional practice of eating together, after reconciliation, symbolize the achievement of the reconciliation by the two parties. Especially, eating together is considered as an indication of sense of love and respect. *Errensa* is a religious place for both ethnic groups, located east of Kemissie town. At this place, with the assistance of *woreda* and *kebele* administrations, conflict is resolved and then after this peace settlement, joint peace committees were established in both territories. After the major reconciliation, they resolve conflicts within themselves by setting programs. Afar –Oromo joint committees call each other periodically for discussions and to resolve the conflict for two-three days in each others' territory.

According to Wallenstein (2007:33), the key role of conflict resolution is establishing strategies that integrate short-term responses with long-term changes. It addresses both immediate and

¹⁴⁴ Anuar Yesuf is conflict prevention and resolution expert in the administration and security office, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June10, 2014,Bora.

broader relationship patterns. With this conflict resolution perspective, the preceding reconciliation process, however, focused on the immediate causes of conflict, which require a short term response. It is not more concerned to address problems of broader relationship patterns like harmful cultural traditions and environmental degradation, which require long- term responses. But, it had contributed much to resolve contested issues. Through continuous dialogue between the conflicting parties, the reconciliation practice was effective in resulting in a win-win outcome thereby, contributing for change in attitudes and reducing acts of revenge.

On the other hand, the role of the joint peace committee is now weakening, from time to time. Its acceptance is declining from time to time. The strict obedience it received from the elders who were loyal to the values of the community strengthened it earlier. But, now youths are not ready to be bound by all decisions of the committee, as was in the past. They can engage in retaliation even after reconciliation or they can involve in obstructing a reconciliation process. This is due to the lack of enough support both material and moral from government officials in undertaking their functions and also overlapping duties of committee members. This would have a devastating impact on the implementation of the regulation of the committee and on the process of handling conflicts.¹⁴⁵ The existing situations indicate that members of the joint peace committee alone are not effective in resolving conflicts and hence external intervention is crucial. This is one manifestation of the gradual weakening of the ability of the joint peace committee to resolve conflicts. Besides, some of the causes of conflicts like territorial claim, dispute over irrigation, etc. are now becoming beyond the capacity of the committee. Members are also not meeting regularly and conflicts are turning into violence to the extent of taking the lives of security officers.

In regard to the weakness of JPC, Mohammed Gudile narrates as follows:¹⁴⁶

I am a security head of the Dire Kebele. I am in charge of security issues of Dire Kebele. By convincing our people, we left farming our land, which is ours because of Afar continual claim upon the land. We left the land unploughed though we pay tax in the border areas between Afar and Oromo. By convincing our people we left the

¹⁴⁵ Mustefa Ahmed is secretary of the Afar-Oromo joint peace committee, Dawa Harawa Woreda Interview was held on June 21, 2014, Harwa.

¹⁴⁶ Mohammed Gudile is security head of Dire Kebele administration, Dawa Harawa Woreda. The interview was held on June 16, 2014, Dire.

land un ploughed. Though the government told us to plough the land, because of the fear from the Afar side we left farming the land. The agreement is only on conferences while there is no real agreement on the ground. No implementation of the agreement was made. Agreement is only on conferences while there is no real agreement on the ground. No practicality of the agreement in the conference with Federal, Zone, Woreda officials presence. The solution that higher authorities gave us only in words there is no reality on the ground. In the conferences, the focus is not to escalate conflict. When we notify the problem for higher officials they come and negotiate us but it is not put in practice. We are not using our farmland as a result of banning the land by the Afar.

These shows how far joint peace committees are lacking trust and credibility by the people as a result of failure of implementation of the agreements made at various conference through the help of joint peace committees under the auspices of the government bodies.

Based on the rules of the joint peace committee, criminal offenders are obliged to pay some sort of compensation, which is related with the crime committed. The compensation differs depending on the way the crime was committed. If the murder was committed accidentally and unintentionally, it is taken as accidental. But on the other hand, if the murder was committed deliberately for revenge or if it was committed intentionally in violation of the reconciliation agreements, it is taken as a cruel murder. Usually, the compensation not lies on the individual offender but to the entire community. That means if a member of either community is found guilty, community members share the burden.¹⁴⁷

7.2. Practice on Behavioral Change

The behavioral element of the conflict in the study areas is manifested by the physical acts of violence. Human and animal casualties and resource damages occurred as a result of such behavior. Thus, the following strategies seem to manage and resolve such behaviors in the study area.

7.2.1 Exchange of Suspected Criminals

An agreement has been reached by the joint peace committee to exchange suspected criminals who are accused of killing of members of other ethnic group. This means if a member of the

¹⁴⁷ Mustefa Ahmed is secretary of the Afar-Oromo joint peace committee, Dawa Harawa Woreda Interview was held on June 21, 2014, Harwa. And document analysis of the Afar-Oromo customary law.

Oromo community kills an Afar, the suspected criminal is hunted by the Dawa Harawa of the Oromo police and would surrendered to the police of Dawe of the Afar region. Likewise, the Dawe police would handover the criminal offenders wanted by the Dawa Harawa police.¹⁴⁸

In relation with this agreement, one of the informants from Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Administration and Security Affairs Office reported a case that depicts the exchange of criminals¹⁴⁹. As to him, an Oromo from Dawa Harawa killed two members of the Afar community in 2005 E.C due to the conflict over grazing land along the border of Dawa Harawa and Dawe *Woreda*. Eventually, the suspected criminal and his accomplice were hunted by the Dawa Harawa *woreda* police and then were handed over to the Dawe *woreda* police. After their cases had been seen by the higher court, they were sentenced to imprison in Delifaghe, the center of Afar Zone Five Administration (known as *Hari Rasu*).

The reason behind this agreement is that the Dawa Harawa community members do not want to be imprisoned in Afar region because they will be suffered from harsh weather condition and fear of unfair treatment within the prisons. The Dawe community members too do not want to be imprisoned in Oromo Nationality Zone because of fear of unfair treatment in the prisons by Oromo ethnic groups. In this case, the agreement has contributed for the de-escalation of violent conflicts, by reducing acts of homicide. However, this agreement is not welcomed by the Dawa Harawa community. They claimed that the Afar are not committed to handover suspected criminals rather, they hide them and said that they escaped Djibouti.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, Afar claimed that the Dawa Harawa communities are not willing to expose criminals rather they report as they went to Saudi Arabia.¹⁵¹ Therefore, this agreement falls short off being materialized.

¹⁴⁸ Seid Abdu is resident of Dire *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. Relatively, Dire *Kebele* is place where there is high intensity conflict between the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups. The main reason for such acute conflict is that the area is irrigable land. The interview was held on June12, 2014, Bora Town.

¹⁴⁹ Anuar Yesuf is conflict prevention and resolution expert in the administration and security office, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June10, 2014, Bora.

¹⁵⁰ Mohammed Suabir is head of Militia office, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June15, 2014, Bora town.

¹⁵¹ Muheyta Mohammed is member of Afar –Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Kilentina Derseda *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April125,2014, Woderage.

7.2.2 Legalization and Confiscation of Small arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Raising Its Price

Being part of the resolution process, the Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Administration has been working on disarming and legalizing of weapons. On the side of Dawe, too, there is an effort to legalize weapons. The Dawe administration developed a new format for registering and authorizing private gun owners.¹⁵² These efforts, tried by the two administrations, help to minimize illicit trafficking of weapons and make legal gun owners accountable for proper utilization of their firearms.

Table 7 : SALW Confiscated by government in Dawa Harawa 2001-2006 E.C

No.	Year	Types of SALW			
		Rifles	Pistols	Bullets	Bombs
1	2001	5	6	79	23
2	2002	7	3	18	11
3	2003	4	3	67	8
4	2004	3	11	277	12
5	2005	2	6	58	3
6	2006	1	5	21	44
	Total	22	34	520	101

(Source: Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Militia Office).

As is shown from the above table 22 rifles, 34 pistols, 520 bullets, and 101 bombs were confiscated by the Dawa Harawa administration in the years between 2001 and 2006 E.C. As discussed so far, though there is control of SALW in the area it was difficult to totally control the circulation of arms. But the above figure depicts the efforts made to control the circulation of illicit arms. In addition, the figure also indirectly indicates the availability of hidden arms in the hands of individuals. According to Mohammed Ahmed, ‘there are many hidden weapons even including machine guns’.¹⁵³ Therefore, the accumulation of such small arms has contributed to destabilizing internal situations by exacerbating crime and violence in the study area. On the other hand, it can be argued that if there is strict control of arms it will contribute for the maintenance of peace.

¹⁵² Osman Abdu is head of Militia office, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 15, 2014, Woderage.

¹⁵³ Mohammed Ahmmed is ex- administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 21, 2014, Bora town.

According to Regulation No.44/2001 article 17 sub-article 2, which is enacted by the council of the Amhara National Regional State Government, the militia offices at different levels of the government have been working for the reduction and control of illicit arms from the community. This regulation states that any person who is armed by the government to safeguard the security of the people has a legal duty to use the weapon in responsible manner. One who trades these SALW, their parts and ammunitions is accused by the criminal code of the state for legal punishment. Furthermore, he pays the price determined by the regional government for the lost weapons. However, this provisional law issued by regulation number 44/2001 could not limit the illicit trade in firearms and ammunitions rather it encouraged the selling of state owned guns for high prices while they are paying less penalty for the lost weaponries. For this reason, the regional government has revised the regulation in 2007. Accordingly, the price of SALW owned by government agents such as militias, police officers and reserved national armies has been increased. The increasing of prices of weapons is aimed at controlling the easy circulation of firearms in the area thereby reducing the negative effect the arms brought to the security of the communities.

7.2.3 Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism

Nowadays, the Ethiopian government has established a chain of information communication strategy starting from the lowest (*kebele*) level to the highest (federal) level. Accordingly, in every 24 hours the focal persons from each *kebele* in the study area communicate with the concerned authorities in each hierarchy before the outbreak of violent conflicts. The mechanism is used to detect the early escalation or occurrence of violence, with the objective of preventing the outbreak of further escalation of violence in order to save life. Through this chain of communication, public officials from *kebele* to zonal level from both Afar and Amhara Regions are able to contain the escalation of violence in the study area. The strategy has contributed to prevent violence at the grass root level.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Musa Ali is conflict prevention and resolution expert in the office of administration and security, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 10, 2014, Woderage.

7.3. Practice on Contradictions

The main issue in conflict resolution is identifying the fundamental causes of the conflict, namely contradictions. In the study area, contradiction is constituted by the underlying causes of the conflict that includes, contested boundaries, competition over scarce natural resources, environmental degradation and drought, and violent cultural practices. ‘Conflict can be successfully minimized and resolved when basic needs are addressed, and which meant violent conflict can be terminated by satisfying needs for access’ (Wallenstein, 2007:37). In respect of the underlying causes of the conflict, due emphasis has not been given in the study area. Much of the efforts are focused on managing conflict.

7.3.1 Building of Infrastructural Developments

On the side of Dawe, there is a sustainable development goal project undertaken by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource in pastoralist region. As part of the Millennium Development Goals, the project is being carried out since 2012 under the auspices of the Federal government in Afar region. The main purpose of this project is to bring together the sparsely settled pastoralists in one area by changing their livelihood system from pastoralism to agro-pastoralism.¹⁵⁵ This will help them experience a settled life in villages and minimizes their seasonal migration (which is one of the causes of the conflicts with their neighboring ethnic groups) particularly during the dry seasons.

Based on this project, infrastructural developments are being built in different parts of Dawe Administrative *Woreda*. These infrastructural developments include roads, schools, clinics, and veterinary clinics. Besides, in order to alleviate the serious shortage of surface water, the project has been developing underground water for irrigation agriculture¹⁵⁶. This practice has a great potential for Afar to experience a settled life thereby addressing the root causes of conflict between the two ethnic groups due to competition for scarce resources, like grass and water.

¹⁵⁵ Tefera Teshome is expert in the administrative and security Bureau of the Afar National Regional State. The interview was held on May 11,2014. Sumera.

¹⁵⁶ Mohammed Seid is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Wahilona Gidale *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April21,2014, Woderage.

On the side of Dawa Harawa, the small irrigation projects are constructed by the Amhara National Regional Government. The projects have a great potential for development of agriculture through irrigation. It will also serve for animal watering and it can be taken as a development endeavor that addresses problem of water scarcity in the area. However, the projects are not based on the common understanding of the two ethnic groups. Besides, as Dawa Harawa *woreda* administration and security affairs office head, Mohamed Jude reported, efforts are made to enhance development endeavors in the area (interviewed on 21 May 2014). Since building common infrastructures in the border areas is indispensable for resolution of conflict, the government tried to provide health, education and agricultural facilities for the two groups. On the other hand, the official claimed that much of the works were not intended to deal with conflicts rather they spontaneously emerged as development works.

To conclude, the developmental endeavors that are undertaken by the two *woreda* administrations are not clearly designed and implemented for the purpose of resolving conflicts in the area. Rather they are targeted to deal with the major problems faced by the community. They are designed and implemented by institutions, which do not have direct concern about conflict and conflict resolution. However, such developmental efforts have their own indirect role in resolving and transforming conflictual relations. Even though they are not targeted to deal with the conflicts, works focused on reduction of poverty, protection of natural resources (done by other institutions), for instance, will contribute for addressing root causes of conflict in the area like competition over natural resources, environmental degradation and drought.

7.3.2 Inter- *Woreda* Cooperation

There are also arrangements for maintaining cooperation between the two *woreda* administrations to enhance joint efforts. Through inter-*woreda* cooperation the two *woreda* administrations are working together. The inter- *woreda* cooperation, is aimed at reformulating the structural causes of the conflict. This is done through formulating joint plans, i.e. both *woreda* have a joint plan that helped them address problems of conflict in the area. The cooperation formally started in the mid-1990s related with the coming of the EPRDF or current government and it has gradually been strengthened. As per the agreement, public leaders from both sides are expected to meet in accordance with their time schedule. The cooperation has

some set of hierarchy. It started from the top governmental officials of the two regions. At regional level, administration and security affairs bureau heads and officers agreed to meet twice a year (January and June¹⁵⁷), i.e at zonal level, once in every quarter of the year, at *woreda* and *kebele* levels , once in a month¹⁵⁸.

According to information obtained from Amhara Administration and Security Affairs Bureau, recently an agreement has been reached between the two regions to involve chief administrators from both sides at different levels of cooperation (Dawa Harawa *woreda* security and administration office report, 2005:16). Previously, the cooperation was guided by the involvement of only heads and officers of administration and security affairs. But, now entrusting the involvement of chief administrators is expected to strengthen the cooperation and they have agreed to involve administrators in each level of hierarchy. This shows the emphasis given to the cooperation. However, this cooperation is not established by formal proclamations and it has no formalities that bind the two sides for enforcing plans and for being accountable for their failure, it rather emerged by the agreement of the two neighboring regional administrations.

The inter-*woreda* cooperation is practical through the enactment of joint plans. According to information obtained from ANRS administration and security bureau, joint plans are enacted by both regions. An opportunity was gained to look into the 2014 and 2015 annual joint plans made by the Amhara and Afar regions administration and security bureaus. As per the plans, the circulation of illegal SALW and environmental degradation and drought were identified as major factors that induce conflict in the area. The plans gave due emphasis for organizing public conferences especially for youth and women. This is done because most of the time, it is the youth that involve in direct fighting at grazing fields. Since women can also contribute to the escalation of conflicts by encouraging their men, conferences are planned to bring their attitudinal change. The plans also revealed the need for establishment and strengthening of several institutions at *kebele* levels that deal with conflicts. In each bordering *kebele* of Afar and

¹⁵⁷ Recently, conference has been held at Dessie town to discuss on matters of conflict in the border areas of Amhara and Afar regions organized by president Awol Arba of Afar Region and president Temesgen Tiruneh of Amhara region for two days i.e from June 25 to 26/ 2020.

¹⁵⁸ Mohammed Seid is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Wahilona Gidale *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April21,2014, Woderage.

Oromo joint community policing and joint peace committees were organized. Besides, focal persons who work for early warning and response mechanism were appointed in each *kebele*. These all actions were performed through the inter *woreda* cooperation scheme (ibid.).

According to information obtained from the two *woreda* offices, the *woreda* officials conduct joint meetings once in a month under normal circumstances and once in fortnight when possible peace threats exist. Under normal circumstances, the officials and experts meet once in a month and discuss the condition of peace and security in their respective areas. When conflict erupts, they meet shortly to address the problems before it leads to human live loss and material destruction.

Table 8: Inter- Woreda officials’ meeting, 2005 E.C

No.	Contacts made by <i>Woreda</i> and <i>Kebele</i>	Plan	Achievement
1	Between <i>woreda</i>	12	14
2	Between <i>Kebele</i>	24	25
3	Total	36	39

Source: Dawa Hrawa *Woreda* Security and Administration Office report ,2005.

Table 9: Joint Peace Committees’ meetings. 2005 E.C

Contacts made by <i>Woreda</i> and <i>Kebele</i>	Plan	Achievement
Between <i>woreda</i>	12	14
Between <i>Kebele</i>	24	23
Total	36	37

Source: Dawa Hrawa *Woreda* Security and Administration Office report , 2005 E.C.

These trends have a dual advantage of solving capacity problems of the *woreda* and improving inter- *woreda* cooperation for the attempt of restructuring the sources of the contradictions, which require the concerted efforts of all actors. But, officials from both sides are not always bounded by the cooperation scheme, which has emerged as a result of the joint agreement. If either of the two *woreda*, for instance, cancel a scheduled meeting the other cannot take on any measure unless awaiting the arrival of the other *woreda*. Therefore, though this cooperation is taken as a good start of promoting positive relations, it should be strengthen and endeavour maintained. The *woreda* should place on all efforts required for developing positive relations between the two communities. Besides, both groups should work to formalize and legalize the

cooperation through proclamations. If done, it would be possible to create sense of accountability on both sides.

7.4 Actors in the Process of Conflict Resolution in the Study Area

Actors are the most significant role players in the process of inter-ethnic conflict resolution. The resolution mechanism of inter-ethnic conflict involves the participation of several actors at different levels (Miall, 2004: 165). Depending on various contexts, both domestic and international actors may participate in ethnic conflict resolution. In the study area, the major actors that are working for managing and resolving conflicts are local actors involving local level of administration, particularly the *woreda* administration. Noticeably, this study unveiled that the following actors have participated directly or indirectly being involved in the conflict resolution process. According to interviewees and focus group discussants local farmers, pastoralists, elders, religious leaders, *abagar*, clan leaders, government officials, and those who have participated in the conflict directly or indirectly are actors in the conflict resolution process.

7.4.1 Government Bodies

It is the government that organizes the peace committee and also the government bodies help maintaining peace. It is the government bodies that support the *kebele* to organize the elders and peace committees from both *woreda* and *kebele*. Government officials are doing their best in organizing conferences and meetings between the two ethnic groups. From both *kebele* and *woreda* government officials including police and JPC try to resolve conflicts. Both the *woreda* and the *kebele* administrations try to their best to avert conflict.¹⁵⁹ They try to avert conflicts between these two ethnic groups. Both the *kebele* and *woreda* administrations try to stop or contain the conflict by gathering the people and leaders of *kebele* and *Woreda*. At the irrigation places, many discussions were made not to involve in conflict, but as a matter of fact, conflict happens between these ethnic groups. Otherwise, they tried their best to manage the conflict between the two groups at the irrigation land after the conflict arises. Both the *kebele* and *woreda* administrative bodies believe that they are responsible in discouraging conflicts.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Endris Mohammed is resident of Wocheke *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. He is member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee. Interview was held on June 16, 2014, Harawa Town.

¹⁶⁰ Endris Ali is the head of administration and security department of Oromo Nationality Zone. The interview was held on June 6, 2014. Kemiessie.

When there conflict arises in a certain place between the two ethnic groups, before reaching the *woreda* officials at the conflict place, the *kebele* peace committee try to resolve the conflict immediately by discussion, negotiation. The peace committee would try to resolve or manage the conflict at the *kebele*, and if it is impossible the *woreda* officials would come together and try to solve. As soon as possible, the conflict would be resolved before escalation through the help of peace committees- elders, religious leaders. If it is beyond the *kebele*, the *woreda* would involve in the maintenance of peace through negotiations and discussions. Here the problem lies in the partisanship of representatives of the two ethnic groups to their side.

After the 2001 E.C conflict, government officials from both Regions, that is from Afar and Amhara National Regional States, and Federal Government visited the study area to see the situation.¹⁶¹ Officials closely listened to whose views that the cause of the Afar-Oromo conflict is border claims and counter claims. The local people reported this seriously to the officials of federal and regional governments. However, there is no lasting solution given by both Federal and regional authorities to date. If we look at seriously what is quest of the Oromo, idiomatically, Mohammed Awol expressed as follows¹⁶²:

The Afar –Oromo border dispute should be resolved as a father does for his married son. A father will give plot of land to his married son by clearly demarcating his farm land from the piece of farmland land that is given for his son. The father is not limited only giving new name for his married son but, also he further gives farm land and other properties to enable him to live independently.

This is done to strengthen relation between father and son and to lead lives peaceful. Likewise, there are Afar and Oromo elders who can do this. This shows how Afar and Oromo are families like a father and married son. By way of coming together and bringing their differnces on the table for discussion, with the support of the government they can demarcate the disputed territory once and for all. They can live in peace averting conflict to peace. This should be reinforced by the government bodies. As a father does for his married son, the government should clearly demarcate the borders of the two ethnic groups or regional states. Regional states' border issue is federal affairs. This is the jursdiction of the federal government in which this is stipulated in the

¹⁶¹ Mohammed Ahmmed is ex-chairman of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June21, 2014, Bora Town.

¹⁶² Mohammed Awol is administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June23,2014, Bora town.

FDRE Constitution. The government failed to delimit the border between the two regions, which is the main problem leading to conflict in the study area. The Afar are claiming that their territory extends up to the highway from Dessie to Addis Ababa, while the Oromo claim their territory up to the Awash River. According to Mohammed Awole, 'the Afar are not doing their best from the bottom of their heart in the maintenance of peace in the area. The problem is not a concern for the federal and regional states. People are dying from time to time, as there is no ever lasting solution to date. The issue is not reported to the regional and federal governments.'¹⁶³

In the administration and security affairs of the two *woreda*, conflict is administered through two major phases viz. conflict prevention and conflict management. In each of these two phases two further practices are covered out. Under conflict prevention, teaching of the value of peace and early warning and response mechanisms are major tasks. To create awareness on the value of peace, the administration and security offices established peace committees and peace clubs at *kebele* and school levels, respectively. The awareness creation programs and the operation of early warning and response mechanisms are strategies for preventing the outbreak of violent conflicts. However, while conflicts exist in every day interactions of peoples (Adeleye, 2011:21), conflicts manifested in different ways in the study area. Therefore, when conflicts erupted, the administration and security offices administer conflicts by stopping violent confrontations, and working to transform relations. During times of violence, the offices try to minimize the further escalation of conflicts and will facilitate restoration of negative peace. After negative peace is restored, further actions that promote positive relations will be carried out. For instance, according to Mohammed Osman¹⁶⁴:

In the border area namely, Haro village, more than 40 individuals' irrigated land has been taken by the Afar. Afar are ploughing the land, which was Oromo farm before. Not only the irrigated land the Afar are banning Oromo even the non-irrigated land. The Afar are saying to the Oromo, if you join us, i.e., included in our territory you can plough the land you can take both the irrigated land non-irrigated land what is needed from you is to pay tax to our woreda. If the Oromo continue pay tax to Kemissie they would not get all the land i.e., both irrigated and non- irrigated land. If they pay tax to Afar Region i.e Dawe Woreda, Afar will allow them to plough the land.

¹⁶³ Mohammed Awol is administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June21,2014, Bora town.

¹⁶⁴ Mohammed Osman is deputy head of Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Administration and security office. Mohammed resides in Harawa town. Even though he resides in Harawa town, he is the one who has grown in the Afar-Oromo border area where conflicts recur. The interview was held on June15, 2014, Harawa town.

According to Oromo focus group discussion participants, recently after reconciliation, the school building properties were robbed by the Afar. Three vehicles, building materials were taken by them, which were Dawa Harawa *Woreda*'s property to build school in that village. Oromo know that Afar would not allow them to build any infrastructure in the area (like schools, health stations even roads and the like) but the Oromo officials are trying their best which is not possible to reach solution yet. The Oromo suggest that Federal Government should be there to build any infrastructure otherwise it is not possible to build houses, clinics, roads and irrigation project. However, this might not be sustained unless and otherwise a sustainable peace is maintained in the area.

The *woreda* administration and security affairs offices receive help from the zonal and regional administration and security offices via their chain of command. The structure of the administration and security affairs offices of Amhara and Afar regions were set up from region through *kebele* levels. The bureaus at regional level have the role of dealing with conflicts and guiding the works of zonal security departments. They are directed by the chief administrator of their regional state. But they have been given power to deal with conflicts through proclamation. They can also undertake any security related issues in collaboration with the police commission and militia bureau on behalf of the regional administration. Similarly, the zonal administration and security affairs departments deal with conflicts that would occur within their respective areas. They also provide support to the *woreda* to handle any conflicts. With the help and guidance of the Regional, as well as, zonal administrations, the *woreda* are undertaking various activities to handle conflicts in their localities. As Dawa Harawa administration and security office reported, the *woreda* administrations have the following major functions:-

- Assessing the general status of peace and security, and identifying potential causes of violence through locally based informants (focal persons) as part of the early warning and response mechanism,
- Facilitating the works of peace committees by channeling resources through the finance received from the regional administrations,
- Deploying security forces to areas where violence is erupted,
- Coordinating developmental activities around social and economic services in pursuit of long term conflict resolution aims, and
- Bringing perpetrators of violence before justice.

The above listed functions of the *woreda* administration are relevant for resolving conflicts and maintaining peace in the area. The *woreda* administrations make preliminary assessments on the areas, which are prone to conflicts and through amateur local focal persons they are able to control any emergence of violent conflict and its further escalation. They also regularly monitor the status of peace and security in each *kebele* of the *woreda* administration. Thus, they investigate factors causing the conflict and address sources of conflicts with the involvement of local actors and other sector divisions such as the police and militia. If violent conflicts occurred, which cannot be controlled by the local security forces, the *woreda* administrations can also deploy security forces to result in ceasefire through the use of force.

On the Afar side of the study area, the *kebele* chairpersons discuss with clan leaders and work together in the Afar community. There is no *Ada* (Afar customary law) suppressed or abandoned due to the presence of government structure. The *kebele* administration structure did not replace the clan leadership, since the local people insisted in their *Ada* administration. Suleiman Mussa reported that Afar do not drop their traditional administration. For instance, *Feima* function well. The government has recognized it. If the *Ada* is unable to handle case, the traditional administration refers it to formal government office.¹⁶⁵

In the study community of the Afar side, clan leadership was functioning well than *kebele* administrations. Currently, the clan leaders and elders are involved as members of various committee established by the initiation of the government (school committee, peace committee, etc), participate in conferences, *woreda* regular meeting of councils, participate in NGOs initiation (e.g. NOGs consult them), participate in disaster management committee at *kebele* level; participate in site selection for establishment of facilities (school, health, post, etc).

The informants claimed that the current government allows the Afar to handle their cases (adultery, theft, conflicts) by the council of elders. Conflicting parties present their cases to the traditional leadership and elders mediate and resolve cases. If one presents a case to formal

¹⁶⁵ Suleiman Mussa is Chairman of Wahilona Gidale *Kebede* administration, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 18, 2014, Woderage.

government office, the office may refer him back to elders' council or decide by itself. Though government recognizes the traditional leadership, the young generations are close to the modern administrative rules. On the other hand, elders try to maintain the traditional leadership and administrative rules. If one commits an offence, the police may arrest him. In this case, the elders and clan leaders can request the police to see the case through *Feima* (elders' council) institution. The elders need to take the responsibility for preventing any further revenge, if the victims may try. In most cases, the Afar police refer cases to elders for handling through the Afar *Ada*. These elders fine the offender or guilt and cause to compensate the victim. The fine is paid either in kind or cash and the amount of fine vary according to the status an offender has in his community.

The formal institutions often handle severe offences. For instance, if one kills a person and is caught by police first, the *Feima* cannot request to see the case. If the offender escaped from police and confess to *Feima* first, *Feima* will handle the case. The police may not insist to see that case if once the case is presented to elders and elders take the responsibility to settle it.

In the process of ethnic conflict reconciliation, the *woreda and kebele* administrations play pivotal role by facilitating the works of peace committee. They provide financial assistance and security protection for the committee. Besides, they engage in coordinating developmental activities around social and economic services. However, all these functions of the *woreda* are too much limited to managing and preventing conflict. This is also evaluated by the joint meetings of government officials (the 2005 and 2006 E. C Afar-Oromo joint meetings) as the main challenge they failed to achieve what is planed together due to overburden of other governmental works, as a result they did not go beyond managing conflict .

7.4.2 Indigenous Institutions

Although the customary ethnic conflict resolution mechanism has some weaknesses relating to the violation of human rights, the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups of the study area prefer its services because it is cheap, accessible, gives the people the chance to participate in the process and emphasizes reconciling the conflicting parties, rather than punishing the offender(Amin, 2009;Kinf, 2014). Especially, when the conflict involves disagreement between ethnic groups,

the government usually needs the help of these customary institutions to resolve cases instead of using the formal justice system.

There is a growing acceptance for the importance of traditional approaches of conflict resolution in understanding and resolving local conflicts. Historically, natural resource conflicts at local level in different parts of the Horn of Africa were dealt with through customary or indigenous conflict resolution practices (Ahmed, 2003; Amin, 2009). Currently, there is emerging curiosity on the relevance of indigenous resolution mechanism. At present, community based peace building and conflict resolution is increasingly getting attention, including the rehabilitation and rural development programs (Amin, 2009; Kinfu, 2014). Nevertheless, currently indigenous mechanisms alone cannot be enough for the resolution of the new challenges and changes in the global environment that results many of the conflicts that local people are experiencing today (Tyler, 1990; Ahmed, 2003). One could argue that the level of conflict resolution will depend on the cooperation between the customary and formal conflict resolution institutions and practices.

In the two communities there are customary institutions. These communities have clans' leaders (Makaban), religious leaders (sheiks), *Abagar* and the famous individuals who contribute to resolve conflicts with their good knowledge, experience and abilities. These indigenous institutions facilitate and determine the peace of the two ethnic groups for the mutual uses of natural resource such as land for pasture, arable land for farming and utilization of water.

Elders, sheiks, clan leaders and *abagar* have the potential for peace making without interventions of government. Religious leaders who have taught according to 'Koran' principles promote peace, tolerance, and mutual respect among people. These religious principles are believed in and respected by both communities than rules of government bodies, and also the contribution of *abagar* and *aba-aga (Aba dhiiraa)*, *makaban* and *fiema* are high importance to mediate and stop disputes¹⁶⁶.

Community elders and religious leaders also play crucial role in the process of inter-ethnic conflict resolution in the study area. Community elders and religious leaders are responsible for

¹⁶⁶ Merga Fufa is communication and research expert, Oromo Nationality Zone. The interview was held on February 10, 2015, Kemissie.

building peaceful relationships. They are trusted by society and are enthusiastically working for the benefit of the people. As it is observed from a recorded video of reconciliation ceremony, community elders and religious leaders participate in resolving conflict. They attend reconciliation ceremonies, discuss issues and give blessing to the people. Mohammed Jude explained this as follows¹⁶⁷:

The sheiks and elders along with government officials reconcile Afar and Oromo communities and as a result we (Oromos) return to Haro village of Dire kebele. When conflict arises between the two groups, elders would go to the sheiks and elders. Then, both the elders and sheiks would try to stop the conflict. The government bodies also do the same in collaboration with the sheiks and elders. After the case is presented to the sheiks and elders, they would call both the Oromo and Afar for meeting to identify who is involved in the conflict. Then, with the help of sheiks and elders, the government officials will reconcile the conflicting parties in maintaining peace and stability. It is in this way that they are living by resolving conflicts.

This indicates eventhough they are not successful, the Afar and Oromo are trying to resolve thier conflict with their own methods. By using religious leaders and elders, they are trying to manage and resolve conflicts. Religious leaders are more respected by both ethnic groups because they do have common religion, i.e., Islam. As they believe in peace, neighbors should strive for peace, which is better by far than conflict. This is done with far-sighted elders and religious leaders. As Mohammed Awole said ‘Afar should be ‘*wat*’ and we should be ‘*enjera*’.¹⁶⁸ This is through their own method to manage themselves not to indulge into conflict.

Above all, the common values of the Afar and Oromo communities help to resolve conflict that arises between the two communities. Since both subscribe to same religion, i.e., Islam; bilingual in terms of language at border areas have no language problem to communicate with each other. There is also inter-marriage between the two communities.

Members of joint peace committee, women and youths are the other local actors that work for resolving the conflict in the study area. Women and youth are also involved in the mitigation of conflicts. In the continuous conferences prepared for women and youth, women are discouraging

¹⁶⁷ Mohammed Jude is head of administration and security office of Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June 10, 2014, Bora.

¹⁶⁸ Mohammed Awol is administrator of Medine Kunyo *Kebele*, Dawa Harawa *Woreda*. The interview was held on June21,2014, Bora town.

their sons and men for violence. The youth are also involved in developing friend ties in the grazing lands.¹⁶⁹ The joint peace committee was organized to identify the challenges of peace and promote healthier relationship between the two communities. For this reason, they contribute their part for the conflict resolution process.

Makaba and Fiema¹⁷⁰

There are different sorts of disputes and conflicts in Afar community. These include inter and intra-clan disputes over clan land or other resources (pasture and watering points) and conflict with non-Afar migrants and neighbouring ethnic groups (Issa, Oromo, Amhara, Argoba, Tigre). Although there is some degree of tolerance to accommodate each other, conflicts between clans over scarce resources, and disputes over or claims on territories are common among the pastoral Afar (Yacob *et al.*, 2000: 16). In this connection, the Afar say, ‘We love each other, but we will quarrel with each other, if it comes to land. It means there is no compromise over clan land.’ (Getachew, 2001:62).

In Afar area, conflicts can take place at three levels: intra-clan, inter-clan and inter-ethnic. The causes may include claims on or access to resources (land, grazing, and watering points), animal theft, adultery, raids and counter raids, insults, etc. The Afar use various institutions or mechanisms to resolve conflicts that can arise with their neighbouring ethnic communities. *Makaba* is a representative of the clans towards everything outside the clan, government or private group or clan. *Makaba* represent clans and to contact with government or other clans. This is locally known as Dätamo Aba or Daära Aba. For instance, Dawid Muhayta was Dätamo Aba for Bahir-Aghini and Seko Duaba for Megenta Aghini before 1991.¹⁷¹ Nowadays, Dawid is Dätamo Aba for both groups and Seko Dawid’s vice. During the *Derg* time in the study area the leadership of Makabantu (Dätamo Aba) and clan leaders (Kädo Aba) were not abolished, and they were functioning as they used to be before 1974(Ali, 2008:142).

¹⁶⁹ Nuru gaz Da’ato is a member of Afar-Oromo joint peace committee and resident of Gendawarina Eyeledi *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on May5,2014, Harawa.

¹⁷⁰ *Feima* serves as community police and defense force, and the main task is to enforce sanctions passed by the clan authorities (clan leaders and elders). Thus Feima is expected to collaborate with elders of the clan and clan head. (Afar Key Informants; Ali,2008; Getachew, 2001a)

¹⁷¹ Kedo Abba is clan leader of Kilentina Derseda *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 30, 2014, Woderage.

Nowadays *Kebele* are established to perform government activities. They represent the clan towards outside government, private groups and non-Afar.¹⁷² The clan authority also functions parallel without interfering with government activities. But, the government structures consult clan leaders to recognize the Afar *Ada* (customary law). The clan leaders mediate conflicting parties through the Afar *Ada*. Most of the elected *Kebele* leaders are not from clan leaders. *kebele* perform such tasks as coordinating communal works (e.g. access road construction), labor contribution (i.e., mobilization), water development, passing government's message to the community members, present community's request to government, while clan leaders handle such matters like, theft i.e. searching the offender through Afar *Ada*, adultery: punishing the offender, minor quarrels between individuals.

However, people in the study area, pay attention to the clan leaders, elders and religious leaders, since they have no exposure to modern manipulation of modern administration. The Afar community members have more trust in clan leaders. The Afar pay attention to the clan leaders more than the elected ones. The elected ones get leadership by chance and their leadership position is not inherited traditionally. The power of elected is temporary, whereas that of the clan is long-term and life- long. Very few clan leaders are included in the modern administration. Mostly, they are from non-clan leadership groups. This meant that clan leadrs, eleders, and religious leaders have big role in resoving conflicts in the study areas.

Currently, the government law gives indirect recognition for the function of *Fiema* as court, police and customary law enforcement. Thus, individuals can apply to *Feima* or to formal government institution. The current practice is that the Afar tend to use *Feima* rather than formal institutions. If an individual appeal to the court or police, his case can be handled by these institutions. But, in most of the cases his action is considered as undermining the Afar *Ada* and *Feima*. This discourages individuals from going to formal institutions. Addition, if an individual takes a case to the formal institutions, *Fiema* leaders request the formal institution to take care of the case first through their customary laws. If the institution agrees and the applicant agrees with his case to be seen by *Feima*, the *Feima* leaders and leaders investigate and pass decisions. If the

¹⁷² Ali Hassen is chairman of Kilentina Derseda *Kebele* administration, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April26,2014, Woderage.

culprit does not agree with final decision, he would be referred to the formal institution. If the applicant insists that his case should not be seen first by the Afar customary law, he would be considered as deviant and receive punishment and deprived respect by the community members.

In general, as Kedo Aba reported, the institution of *Feima* is functional and effective at the community level.¹⁷³ On the other hand, if the formal institutions refuse or allow to be seen, the case refers back to the case to *Feima*, no mechanism for *Feima* to influence the institution and the case will be treated there. According to Kedo Abba, in the case of conflicts within Afar ethnic group, the law is called *afare* and those conflicts Afar with outsiders or non –Afar ethnic groups is called *adanle* (ibid.). Islamic law (*Shari'a*) is secondary to Afar customary law(*Ada*). So, the Afar –Oromo conflict will be resolved in accordance with *adanle*. However, the main reason that Afar are not serious in passing the Afar culprit in the border area to formal institutions is because of the Afar *Ada*. They prefer an Afar's case to be seen under Afar *Ada*. In this regard, the Oromo complain against the Afars' failure to bring the Afar culprit to the formal institution such as the police and the court.

Abagar and Aba-aga

In the Oromo community of the study area, *abagar* and *aba-aga* do have major role in the resolution of conflicts. Both inter and intra-ethnic conflicts over the use of natural resources are common in Oromo Nationality Zone of Amhara Regional State, such conflicts are usually settled by the local elders using the principles of the *abagar* and *aba-aga*. *Abagar* and *aba-aga* with their elders penalize individuals or groups for conflict any damage or harm. In the intra conflict of the Oromo the *abagar* have big role in resolving conflict – by the use of *Gumma* (paying blood compensation or indemnity for the victim). The penalty depends on the degree of harm on the victim. Conflicts are frequent phenomena and are usually contained and managed within the cultural set up.

As regards inter –ethnic conflict, *abagar* and *aba-aga* along with elders apply the set of rules and obligations developed by Oromo elders to mediate Oromo and Afar conflicting clans and

¹⁷³ Kedo Abba is clan leader of Kilentina Derseda *Kebele*, Dawe *Woreda*. The interview was held on April 30,2014, Woderage.

sub-clans. However, the universality of *abagar* with elders is contested. Because it is localized bilateral agreement between specific sub-clans that traditionally live adjacent to one another and application of its rule is flexible and varies from place to place depending on circumstances and situations. Therefore, *abagar* and *aba-aga* are not successful, as religious leaders, in inter- ethnic conflict resolution of the study area.

In general, currently indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms alone cannot be enough for the resolution of the new challenges and changes in the local environment. Hence, effective conflict resolution mechanisms will depend on the integration and cooperation between the customary and formal conflict resolution institutions and practices. In this regard, the joint peace committees(JPCs), which is organized by including the *abagar* from Oromo and clan leaders/*makaban/* from Afar, have a paramount importance in resolving conflict between Afar and Oromo ethnic groups in the study area. Therefore, collaboration with the joint peace committees, *woreda* administrations and indigenous institutions contribute to addressing conflict and building positive relations. This is what is called holistic approach of conflict resolution.

7.5 Challenges to Conflict Resolution Practices in the Study Area

One factor that can be taken as a challenge to the process of conflict resolution in the study area is the great emphasis given to settling and managing conflicts, not to long term resolution. Government officials consider conflict resolution and management as similar issues. This implies that officials at the local level are less aware of the ideals of conflict resolution. For instance, a report sent to Amhara National Regional State administration and security bureau by Oromo Nationality Zone administration and security department on September twenty 2003 E.C stated that ‘the conflict could be resolved within fifteen days’ which is difficult to be practical, as there is still recurrent conflict in the area. This shows capacity limitation of government officials. This capacity limitation leads to short-term conflict settlement practices. Once conflicts are settled temporarily, the attempts to deal with their underlying causes are too minimal.

Peace and security workers at the local level are in fact, too focused on variety of security problems. Theft, murder, and other security related problems are handled by those officials and they are responsible for any security related problem in the area. Hence, their primary focus is at

handling of peace disturbances and settling the conflict for a time being thereby paying less attention to the root causes. However, effective utilization of conflict resolution ideals takes time. Even more, harvesting the fruits of conflict resolution can only be yielded in the long term (Miall, 2004). But many of the measures in the study areas are aimed at reducing and containing violence.

Another challenge is the great emphasis advanced on the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, which can solve only the immediate causes of the conflict. However, the root causes of the conflicts, which are beyond the indigenous reconciliation process are not given consideration. Indigenous resolution mechanisms alone cannot be enough for the resolution of the new challenges and changes in the social dynamism. Besides, the roles of these indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are reducing currently. Their acceptance nowadays is declining. Members will assemble and resolve conflicts only when they are told to do by the *woreda* officials, otherwise they have no opportunity to meet and handle conflicts by themselves independently in most of the time.

The challenges are many, but mention some, giving priorities for modern constitutions, both at federal and regional levels that contradicts or confronts the customary structure is one of the challenges. Another challenge is the loose collaboration, if any between the customary or indigenous and the formal institutions in dealing with conflict resolution issue both within and between the communities. The proliferation of elders as a result of the natural demographic factor of population increase, which happened at a more rapid pace leading to an increased need to split groups in different way, as they become too big for an elder to manage is another challenge. Consequently, many new elders were elected, who may not always possess sufficient knowledge of the *abagar* and *aba-aga*, and clan leaders. Furthermore, customary institutions lack of enforcement mechanisms, growth of globalization and expansions of government institutions.

The government fails to appreciate, collaborate and support indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms and there is little resource allocation. Limited government understanding of the role played by customary institutions has diminished their efficiency and relevance in conflict

resolution (Desalegn, *et al* 2005; Amin, 2009). Formal government institutions especially *kebele*, *woreda*, courts, villages have replaced the function of local leaders. Some factors pushing for replacement of indigenous institutions with formal institutions in the Afar community according to elders include, privatization of land for cultivation, sedentization that increased access to facilities like schools, clinic..etc, exposure to modernizations, food aid provided through formal government institutions and some development works like water development that comes through formal administration (PCDP, 2005).

Although customary ethnic conflict resolution mechanism makes a considerable contribution to keeping law and order in the state, it has not acquired legal recognition under national law(Kinfe, 2014:161). To bridge the gap between practice and the law, the House of Peoples' Representatives and the Regional states of Amhara and Afar State Councils should officially recognize this customary conflict resolution mechanism, and should consider the implications of limiting its jurisdiction to personal and family issues according to Article 34 (5) of the FDRE Constitution (FDRE 1995). This would be important in raising the awareness and confidence of the Afar and Oromo peoples, especially those who serve as *makaban*, *abagar* and elders.

Ethnic groups fight because they are denied not only their biological needs, but also psychological needs that relate to growth and development (Anteneh, 2013; Burton, 198). Therefore, great emphasis need to be placed on the expansion of developmental undertakings in the areas. Besides, there are no non-governmental organizations that involve in a broader scale that might have contributed to the efforts of conflict resolution except Kombolcha Catholic that gives short training on the values of peace. In line with this, Miall (2004) claims that international NGOs concerned with conflict prevention and resolution are main actors that have the potential to resolve conflicts. But, practically the involvement of NGOs in the study area is too limited. In Africa, conflicts have become a way of life for many international organizations (Kinfe, 2014:161). As a result, instead of focusing on strategic and long-term solutions, many international NGOs are focusing on short-term solutions; and some may even play a role in aggravating the conflicts. It is now time to rethink the issue and then give long-lasting solutions by taking the main causes of the disputes into account and resolving conflicts in an African way (using the indigenous knowledge systems of dispute resolutions).

CONCLUSION

This study has explored ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms of the Afar and the Oromo ethnic groups by taking the Afar of Dawe *Woreda*, and Oromo of Dawa Harawa *Woreda* of Afar and Amhara Regional States of Ethiopia, respectively. The study attempted to assess the dynamics of interaction of the two ethnic groups since 1991, investigated the various causes and the effects of the conflict, and the practice of conflict resolution mechanisms in the areas.

The findings of the study show that the post-1991 Oromo in Dawa Harawa and their neighboring Afar in Dawe interactions were characterized by twofold relations, peaceful and conflicting. Peaceful relations between the two ethnic groups took the forms of local market interactions and trade exchange, close friendship, i.e., through *teketeyisa* (friendship), cross border resource sharing, and social and religious interactions. They had mutual cultural, social, and economic interdependences. However, these peaceful interactions were spoiled by various factors that have contributed to conflicts. Such pacific and friendly relations have gradually been eroded after the introduction of ethnic-based federalism in Ethiopia. Before the administrative re-map of the country, Afar and Oromo ethnic groups used resources commonly. They had more of cordial relation except some sporadic water and pasture conflicts. Therefore, the claim of boundary changed the dynamics of earlier water and pastures conflicts and gave new form.

The study has identified root causes and triggering factors of the conflict. The root causes of the conflict are attributed to contested boundary, competition over natural resources, ethnic-based federalism, environmental degradation and drought and violent cultural practices. The Afar - Oromo conflict has also been triggered by Issa-Somali pressure, acts of homicide, theft and looting. Inter-personal conflicts, government developments schemes, illegal arms, ethno-political parties and groups that caused by theft and homicide sporadically extend to inter-ethnic conflict.

Specially, ethnic -based federalism by and large led Afar and Oromo ethnic group to indulge into stiff claim of border. Furthermore, the Afar and Oromo elite maneuvered ethnic differences and the issue of border is used to secure power, resource and other entitlements. The presence of disputing boundary used to justify implicit motives of the elite. Spearheaded by ethnic elite, ethnic groups' overemphasis on their identity regardless of 'others' and overstretch ethnicity that leads to conflict between individuals having different identity likely to take ethnic shape.

The study has identified the effects of the Afar-Oromo conflict of the study areas. It has affected the social, economic, and political relations of the two ethnic groups. It has resulted both in human and animal casualties and material destructions. Due to the conflict, people have been displaced, women became widowed, children became orphaned, and the social interaction between the communities has become adversely affected. The conflict damaged ethnic cooperation and interaction. Insecurity, worry and fear of conflict became common experiences of the local people. In the same fashion, the interruption of cross border trade and tense claim over border farm/grazing lands resulted in unused of border land by the neighboring local people which eventually brought joblessness. Dispersion of family, dislocation and psychological scar are also among the grave consequences the conflict. Moreover, the conflict disrupted the provision of social services, too. Politically, the conflict swayed government-people relations and bred distrust and hatred in place.

Findings of this study have also revealed that various conflict resolution mechanisms have been practiced among the two groups. Public conferences and establishment of joint peace committees are major accomplishments in changing attitudes. The undertakings of public conferences, joint militia trainings and festivals, the establishment of peace clubs in schools, have to some extent contributed in changing the attitudes of the communities and in the long-run helped lessen ethnic animosity from the feelings of the two communities. Exchange of criminals, legalization and confiscations of SALW and raising its price, and conflict early warning system and response mechanisms are measures undertaken to control the behavior of the communities. And to address the underlying causes of the conflict, some infrastructural developments are undertaken to redress contradictions of the communities. Besides, the inter-*woreda* cooperation, which aimed at restructuring the roots of conflicts, falls in this category.

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms have been overwhelmed by external factors and have been ineffective. This is due to the inability of the government officials to integrate indigenous and formal conflict resolution mechanisms, i.e., failure to employ holistic approach of conflict resolution mechanisms consequently; conflict resolution is now taken over by government-sponsored peace committees. However, government approach has not brought sustainable peace

between Afar and Oromo communities in the study areas. Conflict resolution is an expensive process, mainly when addressed using imported knowledge and skills. The best strategy is to prevent conflict before it occurs. But, once conflict arises, it should be resolved looking into its root causes. In the Afar- Oromo case, the attempts have focused on addressing mostly the immediate causes. Government officials and members of peace committees' measures are not addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. Their overall efforts are reactive, instead of proactive. Even nowadays, the function of the joint peace committee is declining. Therefore, the practices showed the efforts done on managing conflicts, not on resolving conflict between Dawa Harawa Oromo and Dawe Afar.

Based on the findings of the study, the following implications can be drawn for effective resolution of the conflict into positive relationships of Afar and Oromo ethnic groups. Ethiopia has launched ethnic federalism as a panacea to deep rooted power centralization, ethnic grievances and inequalities. However, its organizing principles have created intricate problems. Despite the underlying assumption by many that ethnic federalism will improve relations among ethnic groups of the country and lessen conflicts, the formation of ethnic federal arrangement brought about violent conflicts among the long time friendly peoples of the Afar and the Oromo. Ironically, regardless of the rationale of the federalism, maintaining national unity, the conflict hindered togetherness and consensus. Historical validity, social reality and cultural interdependence are hardly considered while ethnic based regions are instituted. The denial of such things brought an impasse on the existing inter-ethnic relations. And this has bred its own political repercussion on the dynamics of conflicts and ethnic relations. In place of rectifying perceived past injustices and ethnic grievances, the ethno-federal system has come up with new injustices and grievances. As a result, in the post-1991 period ethnic tensions and unrests become common scenarios between Afar and Oromo communities in the study areas. So that is why resolution mechanisms of ethnic conflicts have been complicated.

Local government officials have a duty to promote harmonious inter-cultural relationship among the country's diverse ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the Afar and Amhara regional states, as well, as local governments under these regional states failed to effectively discharge their responsibilities pertaining to conflict resolution for a variety of reasons. First, the understanding

of the basic principles of federalism among some of the regional and local government officials is doubtful. Thus, the federal principles would not seem to have been fully appreciated by these regional and local governments. Some of the regional and local government authorities usually promote localized interests and biased attitudes towards their own ethnic groups. As a result, let alone resolving the prevailing conflicts, in some areas, they aggravated the conflict. Second, the resolution mechanisms used to 'end' the conflicts by the government at different levels was 'fire-fighting approach', for which both of the conflicting groups bitterly blame the regional as well as the federal governments. The government intervention was too late, and after intervention they didn't investigate the root causes, triggering factors and the actors of the conflicts so as to give lasting remedies to the problems. In general, the different structures, processes, and mechanisms of conflict resolution employed by different levels of government structures were unplanned, disorganized and, above all, their actions were largely reactive instead of proactive.

The study revealed that absence of comprehensive and all-inclusive conflict resolution mechanisms, led to continuation and escalation of conflicts between the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups in the borders of Afar and Amhara Regional States in the northeast Ethiopia. Instead, the over- all efforts of all stake-holders refer to attempts on ad-hock approaches and elite perspective of ethnic conflict management to minimize the consequences of ongoing crises. In spite of its devastating impact on the social and economic lives of the people, the issue has so far received less attention from the concerned bodies, such as the Ministry of Federal Affairs, the Amhara and Afar National Regional States, local administrators, peace and security forces of the bordering *woreda* (districts), community elders and religious leaders of both ethnic groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as, policy- makers. It should be noted that the indigenous and modern conflict resolution mechanisms co-exist and have their own roles in the conflict resolution process. Hence, both resolution mechanisms have their own role in either aggravating or resolving conflict between two ethnic groups. It is commendable that the best practices of the two resolution styles (the indigenous and the modern) be harmonized. It is time to harmonize these by taking the best practices and the common ones so that, agreed upon and harmonized indigenous knowledge and methods of conflict. This could enable us to resolve conflicts in the African way. In a nut shell, harmony with modern and formal institutions is more important. Nonetheless; this study is not comprehensive enough. For that reason, higher level of

attention needs to be accorded for the conflict in the study area and further investigations need to be conducted on the issue at hand.

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ANNEXES

Addis Ababa University

College of Social Sciences

Department of Political Science and International Relations

INTERVIEW AND FGD GUIDE QUESTIONS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I am Kebede Yimam. Currently, I am doing my PhD degree in Political Science in Addis Ababa University. I am conducting this research as part of my post graduate thesis work. The purpose of this study is to explore ethnic conflicts and mechanisms of their resolution in the northeast Ethiopia. In order to undertake the study this interview/FGD has been designed with a view to shed light on the entire problem. The information that you will provide in response to the questions during this interview is for the purpose of conducting a research on inter-ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms between Dawa Harawa of Oromo and Dawe of Afar. I am really glad that you are willing to participate in this research.

First I would like to ask your permission about recording this interview/FGD. I want to record our discussion because that will give me the opportunity to listen the conversation again and again during transcription. This in turn will enable me to keep the accuracy of the data and avoid misinterpretation of your responses. The information collected through the interview/FGD will be used by the investigator for strictly academic purposes. I do respect your wishes to stay anonymous and your responses will remain confidential.

Thank you for sharing your time with me!!

Informant's Background

Sex_____ Place of Interview_____

Age_____ Role in Community_____

Interview questions for local elders and members of joint peace committee

1. How do you explain the interaction of Afar and Oromo since 1991?
2. What are the major causes of the conflict between Oromo and Afar ethnic groups?

3. Are there any local verses that promote heroism in your area?
4. What are the different types of conflict that most of the time occurs between the two ethnic groups?
5. Who are the actors of the conflict? And what positions do they have? What are the factors motivating these actors to engage in the conflict? What are the intended outcomes expected by the actors from the conflict?
6. What are the overall impacts of the conflict on the relation between Afar and Oromo ethnic groups under the study area?
7. What is the conflict resolution mechanism used to handle the conflict in the area?
8. Does the post 1991 political and socio-economic change of Ethiopia have any positive or negative impact on the Oromo-Afar relation?
9. What is the role of traditional conflict resolution mechanism for resolving the conflict in the area?
10. Which intervention mechanism /legal or traditional/ is more preferable and successful to manage and resolve conflict in the area?
11. What steps/procedures do the peace committee followed to handle conflicts and held reconciliations?
12. What kinds of sanctions are imposed by the rules of the joint peace committee?
13. What is the current status of the joint peace committee? Does it fulfilling its responsibility as required or weakening? If its role is weakening why?
14. Do you think that the traditional and governmental institutions are working cooperatively? If so, how are they working cooperatively?
15. What is the role of stakeholders (governmental officials, elders, religious leaders, youth, women, victims of the conflict, and NGOs) in resolving the conflict between the two ethnic groups?
16. What looks like the current conflict trends? (If there are escalations and descaltions)?
17. What are the major challenges to resolve conflicts in the area?
18. What actions do you think should be taken to further resolve the conflict in to peaceful co-existence?

Thank you!

Interview questions for governmental officials and officers of peace and security

☐☐ Interview Guide on the causes of conflict and nature of relationship

1. How do you explain the interaction of Afar and Oromo since 1991?
2. What are the major causes of the conflict between Oromo and Afar ethnic groups?
3. What are the different types of conflict that most of the time occurs between the two ethnic groups?
4. Who are the actors of the conflict? And what positions do they have? What are the factors motivating these actors to engage in the conflict? What are the intended outcomes expected by the actors from the conflict?

☐☐ Interview guide on the impacts of conflict

5. What are the overall impacts of the conflict on the relation between Afar and Oromo ethnic groups under the study area?
 - 5.1 How could be the conflict seen in terms of human casualties and material destruction?
 - 5.2 What is the outcome of the conflict in terms of security related problems?
 - 5.3 Who are the most vulnerable groups during the conflict?

☐☐ Interview guide on the process of handling conflict

6. What is the conflict resolution mechanism used to handle the conflict in the area?
7. What measures are taken to resolve the conflict and develop positive relationship between the two ethnic groups?
8. What actions are taken to change the attitudes of the communities? What is the role of government institutions in promoting peaceful relations?
9. What actions are taken to resolve or change the behavior of conflicting parties?
10. What measures are undertaken to address the contradictions of the conflict?
11. Does the post 1991 political and socio-economic change of Ethiopia have any positive or negative impact on the Oromo-Afar conflict?

12. What is the role of traditional conflict resolution mechanism for resolving the conflict in the area?
13. Which intervention mechanism /legal or traditional/ is more preferable and successful to manage and resolve conflict in the area?
14. Do you think that the traditional and governmental institutions are working cooperatively? If so, how are they working cooperatively?

☐☐ Interview guide on the roles of stakeholders in the process of resolving conflict

15. What is the role of stakeholders in resolving the conflict between the two ethnic groups?
 - 15.1 What are the roles played by governmental officials (from kebele to federal level) to resolve the conflict?
 - 15.2 What are the roles played by local peoples (elders, religious leaders, youth, women, victims of the conflict) to resolve the conflict?
 - 15.3 What are the roles played by Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) to resolve the conflict?

☐☐ Interview guide on the dynamics and challenges of practice conflict resolution

16. What looks like the current conflict trends? (If there are escalations and descaltations)?
17. What are the major challenges to resolve conflicts in the area?
18. What actions do you think should be taken to further resolve the conflict in to peaceful co-existence?

Interview questions for militia heads

1. How do you explain the interaction of Afar and Oromo since 1991?
2. What are the major causes of the conflict between Oromo and Afar ethnic groups?
3. What are the different types of conflict that most of the time occurs between the two ethnic groups?
4. In which year's does higher violence exhibited in the area?

5. Who are the actors of the conflict? And what positions do they have? What are the factors motivating these actors to engage in the conflict? What are the intended outcomes expected by the actors from the conflict?
6. What are the overall impacts of the conflict on the relation between Afar and Oromo ethnic groups under the study area?
7. Why the people do heavily relied on weapons in the area?
8. What kind of impacts does the availability of SALW brought in the area?
9. Does the numbers, and types of SALW are clearly known by the government?
10. To what extent does the control of SALW strong enough? How such controls of SALW can bring security guarantee for the people in the area?
11. How can you describe the power balance in terms of arm possession by the two groups? How such imbalances bring security threat in the area?
12. What is the conflict resolution mechanism used to handle the conflict in the area?
13. Does the post 1991 political and socio-economic change of Ethiopia have any positive or negative impact on the Oromo-Afar conflict?
14. What is the role of stakeholders (governmental officials, elders, religious leaders, youth, women, victims of the conflict, and NGOs) in resolving the conflict between the two ethnic groups?
15. What looks like the current conflict trends? (If there are escalations and descaltations)?
16. What are the major challenges to resolve conflicts in the area?
17. What actions do you think should be taken to further resolve the conflict in to peaceful co-existence?

Guide Questions for FGD

1. What are the root causes of the conflict?
2. What factors make the conflict to be recurrent?
3. List the social, economic and political impacts of the conflict?
4. Who is responsible to the conflict? Please explain how?
5. Who are the actors of the conflict? What motivates them to participate?
6. What actions do you think should be taken to further resolve the conflict in to peaceful co-existence

Figure 3: Picture Showing Reconciliation Process



(Source: Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Government Communication Office).

Figure 4: Picture Showing Oath Practice between the two groups



(Source: Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Government Communication Office).

Figure 5: Picture Showing Eating Together after Reconciliation



(Source: Dawa Harawa *Woreda* Government Communication Office).