

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

**INTER-ETHNIC INTERACTION IN AN URBAN SETTING: THE CASE OF
HARAR CITY**

BY
BUZUAYEW HAILU

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF ADDIS
ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS (M.A) IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

ADVISOR: FEKADU ADUGNA (Dr.)

JULY, 2011

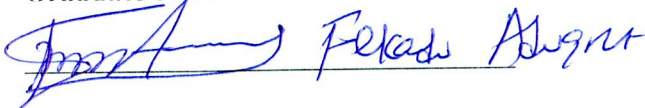
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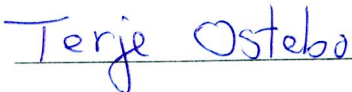
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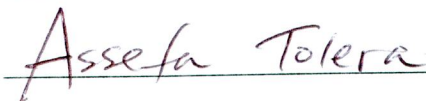
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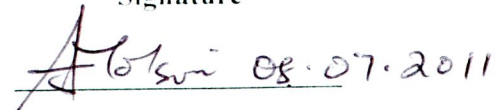
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to those who make a great effort for peaceful co-existence in Harar

Acknowledgements

I would like to give due appreciation for the contribution of different individuals for their invaluable support, encouragement and advise during my entire academic life and while I was undertaking this thesis.

My thesis advisor, Dr. Fekadu Adugna, provide me his invaluable support and guidance starting from title identification until the finalization of the research. His comments, inspirations and his patience to correct each draft I prepare in every section of the research. I would like to acknowledge AAU Graduate School for the financial support that enabled me to commence this paper.

I am also extremely indebted for my informants who gave their time to this study and made this work possible and my field assistants for their cooperation, support and inspiration during the field research. I am grateful to all those employees in government offices who provided support in kind of interviews, data and material, particularly mentioned should be Marudin Abdurahim and Zenebe Balcha.

Special thanks go to Hailu Asfaw, My father for his love, care and encouragement throughout my life. Similar appreciation also goes to my mother Agermelkam Haile and my sisters Wonshet and Adey for their support and encouragement. I am thankful all my friends, colleagues and class mates for their moral support and motivation in my studies and accomplishment of this thesis.

Lastly, credits go to my beloved girlfriend Eyerus for tolerating my mood changes, absence due to field work and close ups for writing the thesis. Without your moral support this paper would not have come into existence. I love you.

Buzuayew Hailu

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Acronyms and Glossary of Local Terms

Acronyms

CSA- Central Statistical Agency
EPRDF- Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democracy Party
ESM- Ethiopian Student Movement
FGD- Focus Group Discussion
HADID- Harari Democracy Party
HNA- Harari National Assembly
HNL- Harari National League
HNRSC- Harari National Regional State Council
HPDUP- Harari People Democracy Unity Party
OLF- Oromo Liberation Front
OPDO- Oromo People’s Democratic Organization
SNNPR- Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region
TGE- Transitional Government of Ethiopia
UN- United Nation

Glossary of Local Terms

Am= Amharic
Ar= Arabic
Ha= Harari
Or= Oromifa

Adare (Or) - The Harari, or Ge usu’ people

Afaan Oromo (Or) - The Oromo language

Afocha (Ha)- Funeral and wedding observance association(s)

Afran Qallo (Or) - The son of four Oromo

Amir (Ha) - King, sovereign

Andennya Mangad (Am) - First Avenue.

Asshurah (Ar) - A divine practice that takes place on the south part of the Harar city.

Awach (Ha) – Muslim saints’ shrines of Harar

Awliya (Ar) - “City of Saints”- referring to Harar

Balambaras (Am) – Governor

Beha (Ha) – Association of Harari women of comparable age, economic and social status for giving money during deaths and weddings

Bet (Am) – House

Bidena (Or) - Oromo flat bread

Birr (Am) - The currency of Ethiopia (17 *birr* approximately = £1)

Chelenqo (Or) – The battle where the force of Menilik and the last amirs of Harar engaged in war in 1887

Dergue (Am) - “Council”; referring the Provisionary Military Council laterally under the leadership of Mengistu Haile Mariam.

Faras Magala (Or) - The horse market

Gasha (Am) – A measurement of land (about 40 hectares)

Ge Sinan (Ha) - Language of the city or the language of the Harari

Gidir Gar (Ha) - “Big house”- referring to the big room/living room of every Harari house

Gidir Magala (Ha) - Big/main market at the market at the centre of the town.

Hamat Mot (Ha) - Special basket which is expected to be prepared by the wife for her mother-in-law as symbol of respect and thankfulness

Hannolato (Ha) - (Lit. “Long live”); a Harari independence movement in the 1940s

Harari Harfiyaaach (Ha) - The (new) alphabet designed for Harari language (Ge Sinan)

Harerghe (Am) – The administrative area that encompass east and west Harar province.

Hundene Wereda (Or) – The area that covers Harar city and its surroundings.

Iddir (Am) - A form of indigenous voluntary association meant for burial, mourning activities as well as related social activities

Imamat (Ar) - turban

Injera (Am) - Pancake-like staple food of Ethiopians, especially Amharas; made of *tef*, indigenous grain

Iquib (Am) - A kind of traditional rotating savings and credit association found in Ethiopia

Jemeha (Ha) – Harari women’s association for saving money

Jogol - a) A wall; b) The city of Harar; or c) The space contained within the city wall

Kebele (Am) - An administrative sub-division of *Wereda*.

Khat - *Catha edulis*, a mild narcotic leaf chewed widely through eastern Africa

Khat tera (Am) – A market area where the chat leaf is sold

Mahber (Am) – Religious association practiced by followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and held every month

Meskel (Am) – The festival of the founding of the true cross, held in late September

Mureno (Ha) – Harari women’s traditional association of help for good and bad times known as ‘kitchen association’

Nebi Maulid (Ar) – Celebration of the prophet’s birth

Neftennya (Am) - Amhara soldiers and settlers

Qottu (Or) - (Lit. ‘of the hoe’) an Oromo population settled outside the city walls

Ramadan (Ar) – Muslim holiday at the end of one month fasting

Ras (Am) - Lit. ‘head’; prince, lord

Sanbate (Am) – Religious association practiced by followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and held every week

Sati Baqla (Ha) - (Lit. “Seven hundred”); a shawl given to a bride groom by his father-in-law, reminiscent of the newly wed men who lost their lives at the battle of *Chelenqo*

Sefer (Am) - Small village or villages

Sheikh (Ar) – Religious title given to an individual among the Muslim

Shengo (Am) – Community court at *kebele* level

Shewwal Eid (Ha) - A Harari’ celebration at the end of an optional six days of fasting immediately after Ramadan

Sigara tera (Am) – The biggest market in the city where luxurious goods and contraband business is run.

Takfir (Ar) - Conveys the notion of an outsider or someone who is excluded or has excluded himself from the Islam life.

Toyach (Ha) - Neighbourhood(s); sub divisions within quarters, or *beriach*

Ukhat (Ha) - Harari flat bread or Harari word to describe the pancake which is also known in other area of Ethiopia as *injera* (Am)

Wereda (Am) - Sub-division of a province which is further divided into Peasant Associations in rural areas and Urban Dwellers’ Associations in urban areas

Yesefer Shum (Am) – Representative of a certain village or neighbourhoods in Imperial time

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Abstract

This thesis primarily deals with inter-ethnic interaction in urban setting, with particular emphasis on Harar city. Specifically it had the following objectives: explore the existing socio-economic and political conditions in the study area; assess the trend of changes that have been experienced in the inter-ethnic groups relations across time; investigate the role of migration on inter-ethnic interaction in the city; explore the major causes of ethnic conflicts in urban setting and uncover the role of the national political context and the effects of international and regional influences on inter-ethnic interaction. In order to achieve these objectives, qualitative data was collected from the study groups using in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, case study and participant observation.

The historical inter-ethnic relationship between the Oromo, Amhara, Harari and Gurage ethnic groups has been examined in the context of sharing some elements of cultural practices, economic interdependence, participating in different voluntary associations and in some regard adherence to similar religious institutions. The study of the relationships in the social, economic and political spheres reveals that ethnic identity serves as an important factor which influences the extent of cooperation and/or competition amongst the various groups. The study also shows that the success of the rural-urban migrant in the adjustment to urban life depends on the successful manipulation of the available networks which is mostly ethnic based.

The researcher has questioned the view that ethnic difference bring about conflict while sharing similar elements of ethnic markers bring harmony. For instance, the city of Harar was portrayed by many scholars as a united Islamic 'holy city'. Yet, the findings of the study illustrate the notion of diversity within the unity of Islam in the city. The religious discourse also incorporates the historical inter-ethnic interaction between groups. In this regard, a debate about saint veneration within the Islamic community and the boundary maintenance between the Harari and the Oromo has been apparently observed.

The historical inter-ethnic relationship between the different groups also indicates that ethnicity is used as a tool in various ways. The findings of the study indicate that ethnic identity is constructed and redefined in relation to specific social, economic and political situations. Ethnicity has been used in maintaining the boundary between "we" and "them". It is also used as instrument to achieve a desired goal particularly in the political spheres. The study also attempt to analyze the role of 'Ethnic Federalism' on inter-ethnic relation in the Harar Regional State. In this study, I argue that with the introduction of ethnic based federal system in the country since early 1990s, 'ethnic elites' used the existing socio-political system and historical references in order to attain and continue in power by taking Harari Regional State as a case.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study Area

Ethiopia is an ethnically heterogeneous country which served as a platform for the interaction of its various populations over the past several centuries. Ethiopia embraces more than eighty ethnic groups and rich in diversity. In such a multi-ethnic society, the existence of different kind of interests and needs is palpable. However, the presence of such diverse forms of interaction in the past that continues up to the present has been characterized by both peaceful co-existence as well as histories of tension and conflict. The present research is anticipated to examine the dynamics of inter-ethnic interaction in one of the multi-ethnic region of Ethiopia, Harar city.

Dictated by the various interests advanced by the ethnic based coalition forces and similar ethnic based political groups, who joined afterwards, the recognition of Ethiopians ethnic diversity become the central principle of the new regime's policy. And this is immediately reflected in the Transitional Period Charter of 1991 and in subsequent proclamations and subsidiary laws. Once the charter paved the way for decentralization, Ethiopia became a federal state in 1995. This Constitution confirmed the new approach towards ethnic diversity and stipulates ethno-linguistic line to be the primary basis of the new federal state structure (FDRE Constitution 1995: Art. 46(2)).

Harar is one of the nine regional states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Harar is situated in Eastern Ethiopia. The walled city of Harar, which is located some 526 km east of Addis Ababa, has been a renewed seat of Islamic learning and culture and an economic and social centre of the Horn region, famous for its centuries old remarkable handcraft (Aubert 1999:148).

This walled city is a fascinating place, filled with Islamic and Christian history. The tremendous history of Harar, its fame as the fourth-holiest city in Islam, its commercial importance in the 19th century and its successive occupations by the Egyptians, the Italians and the Amhara have all combined to make up a wide ethnic mix (Aubert 1999:149).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since 1991, Ethiopia has gone further than any country using ethnicity as the fundamental principle of federal government. The downfall of the *Dergue* regime and the coming to power of EPRDF created a historical and radical shift in the political history of the country that the questions of ethnicity held central concern. The new government addressed the issue of ethnicity through decentralization of administration to regions and the local-level units on the assumption that it reduces the inter-ethnic conflict that has divided the Ethiopian society for centuries and as an instrument to defend the rights of different ethnic groups. Hence, the ethnic-based federal arrangement has brought nine regional governments and two city administrations.

Harari Regional State was formed in 1995. The region comprises different ethnic groups like the Oromo, Amhara, Harari, Gurage, Somali, Tigray, and Argoba. The historical relationships between the diverse ethnic groups with various linguistic and religious backgrounds were characterized by competing and cooperative of inter-ethnic interaction. The historically and politically marginalized ethnic groups at this moment are able to secure political and economic rights over their own territories. As much as possible they tend to guard this self-government or administration from other ethnic groups. In this case, Turton (2006: 1-2) argue that when one considers the level of internal conflict, military violence and repression by agencies of the state that characterized Ethiopia under the previous regime, the restructuring of Ethiopia as an ethnic federalism has been an undeniable success.

Harar has been exposed to both seasonal and permanent settlement and migration from different parts of the country in search for job, urban life, kin network visiting, military service, and drought in the surrounding area. Two ethnic groups, Harari and Oromo, simultaneously administer the region. The dual forms of administration might lead to high competition and confrontation in the issue of governance and power sharing between different ethnic groups in the last two decades.

What makes the situation complex and multifaceted in this regard is the interweaving of ethnicity with other social institutions like politics, economic, social, and religious ideology. This might lead to a steady state of friction that resulted in increase of conflict. As Newman (1978 cited in Getachew 2006: 3-4) clearly indicated, ethnicity, like any other social construct could be manipulated to satisfy individual's or groups' needs. It can possibly be used to mobilize for personal or group political, social and economic interests. The historical inter-ethnic relationships between different ethnic groups in the city change from time to time based on ethnic affiliation although the source of relationships might be an interplay of a number of factors, which can be broadly categorized as political, economic and cultural.

Although many studies had been done on the historical city of Harar such as Bosredon (2004), Santelli (2004) and Yusuf (1965), they are more or less focused on the material culture of the people. These are the oldest '*Jogol*' wall, the five gates, Harari cultural houses, unique and historical mosques and shrines, Harari handcraft products and skills, museums, cave, Hyena feeding and intangible heritages of the region. Furthermore, other scholars such as Hassen (1990), Trimmingham (1965), and Waldron (1980; 1984) noted few things in a fragmented compartment concerning issues of inter-ethnic relationships that had existed in the region. However, the issues such as the cooperative and competitive relations between the diverse ethnic groups and

mechanism to readdress the situation have remained neglected and under studied. Thus, this thesis has attempts to bridge this gap in inter-ethnic interaction.

This brings up critical question, which need decisive assessment:

1. How the political and economic changes at local and national levels impinge on the historically long co-existence of these diverse multiethnic societies?
2. What are the common cultural elements that shared by these societies?
3. What are the major causes of ethnic conflicts in multiethnic societies of the city?
4. What are the major roles of migration towards the city on the existing ethnic interaction?
5. What are the major effects of national and regional political contexts on the inter-ethnic interaction in the city?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to explore the inter-ethnic relationships between the diverse societies of Harar city. Thus, the study has attempted to investigate changes that have taken place in inter-ethnic interaction through the succeeding regimes and policies.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Explore the existing socio-economic and political conditions in the study area.

- Assess the trend of changes that have been experienced in the inter-ethnic groups relations across time.
- Investigate the effects of migration on inter-ethnic interaction in the city.
- Explore the major causes of ethnic conflicts in urban setting.
- Uncover the role of the national political context and the effects of international and regional influences on inter-ethnic interaction.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Though a substantial amount of research exists on the historical city of Harar, they need to be complemented by additional ethnographic works. To my knowledge, as mentioned earlier, no substantial research has been carried out on inter-ethnic relationships between diverse ethnic groups of Harar city. Having this in mind, this research may have the following significance:

- ❖ It may contribute for academic purpose towards better understanding of inter-ethnic interactions in urban setting particularly in cities like Harar where diverse ethnic groups existed.
- ❖ It contributes to the understanding of the role that state policy plays in maintaining and/ or disrupting inter-ethnic relations.
- ❖ Since inter-ethnic relationships hold a multi-dimensional feature especially in urban context, this research result may serve as a good reference for both governmental and nongovernmental organizations working in the study area.

ethnic interaction of the study groups, and to some extent based on their knowledge about the field of study.

Numerous research approaches have been used in the fieldwork for data collection. Focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, informal conversations, case studies, and participant observation were employed. Focus group discussion was primarily used to pin point the process of migration and to show how migrants adapt themselves to urban setting. In addition, it was also used to examine some controversial issues, even within members of a particular group. Six focus group discussions conducted with members of these ethnic groups. Each ethnic group FGD containing an average of five participant members composed of different age and sex. Basic information concerning about the historically established inter-ethnic relationships and the multifaceted interaction between different ethnic groups in the city was collected via this technique. Despite the suspicions, mainly when it is inter-ethnic, the focus group discussions were vital to grasp the feelings of the people. Informal conversations and case studies were employed in order to uncover the back-region information of a group.

In addition, a number of different kinds of actual case studies were recorded in different times. This enabled me to assess and interpret the forms of inter-ethnic interaction that existed in the city from the cases and the reflections of individuals view. This method also serve as a cross checking method for the focus group discussion to get what informants may not interested to talk about in FGD. Furthermore, it helps to identify the process of migration and the adaptive strategies that migrants follow in urban setting. However, the individual's life histories do not cover their whole life span. In some cases, pseudonyms were used for an ethical reason.

Key informants were selected based on their knowledge about the issues under study, their position as local elders, as leaders of voluntary associations, as heads of religious institutions, as leaders of youth associations, community leaders, and influential persons and officials in both former as well as current governmental systems. During interviews and group discussions, elders narrated about the historical inter-ethnic relationships between these groups, their mode of economic interdependence, and cultural relations such as inter-ethnic marriages and in some regard adherence to similar religious institutions.

In-depth interview session has been held with key informants from the four ethnic groups in order to obtain the details of the past and current inter-ethnic relationships that existed in the study area. Such information enabled me to draw analytical outlines of similarity and difference of views between members of the groups on their relationship, boundary maintenance, and degree of social and economic interdependence of the groups. In this research, informal interview and conversation has been used to uncover information that can not be obtained with other research methods, especially by raising sensitive issues indirectly. Tape recording and note takings were used in cases based on the consent of the informants.

Since participant observation is the main research method in this study I had spent a long time in observing interactions between members of the groups in market areas, public religious celebration areas, *khat* chewing and tearooms, public service areas and so forth. I also used every opportunity to talk with the inhabitants of the city. For instance, when traveled on car I always tried to talk with driver as well as other passengers. Participation in some informal relationships with people in informal association of a group of *khat* chewer, local drinking areas, café and restaurants has been made. I had also made an attempt to attend some of *Kebele shengo* judicial cases and community meetings both in the old and new city, which were very essential in understanding the main causes

of urban conflict and the general neighborhood relationship in the city. For instance, I got an opportunity to participate in a conference held in January 28, 2011 in Harar city, arranged by the city administration. Observing the meeting gave me the chance to examine the feelings which these groups showed towards each other and the city administration.

Documents that are crucial to exemplify the nature and the prevalence of different forms of social interaction including inter-ethnic relationships in the study area were analyzed. These documents were drawn from archival materials, historical documents and others. It helps to explore the basic differences and similarities of the inter-ethnic relationships in the community, including formation of social network which of mostly ethnic based. In addition, secondary sources were also used to obtain basic information on the historical, socio-economic, geographical and political aspect of the city. These secondary sources are vital to validate the oral information gained from the study area. Related literature on the topic under study carried out by different researchers, figures, maps, and other materials were used to supplement the field data.

During the field work multitudes of challenges have been encountered. A few days before I left Addis Ababa, in mid-night of February 13, 2011, the largest business center of city was damaged. This unexpected incident had left an atmosphere of suspicion in the minds of the subjects and led to high tension between the regional government and merchants. The resulted instability in the political atmosphere of the city at large and restriction of access to any information concerning the incidence by the city administration were among several practical challenges.

Furthermore, there were mixed reactions from the study groups towards me and the topic of study. An atmosphere of suspicion in the minds of the subjects due to the above reason made gaining the confidence of informants a difficult task. Most people considered me as a government spy who

wanted to know their political opinions. This view was further strengthened when I asked many questions related to ethnicity and politics. However, the 'sensitivity' of the topic itself made my informants skeptical to expose themselves. Thus, the names of informants are kept anonymous in some cases, particularly under the part dealing with the present conflict.

To some extent gender dimension has been another challenge that the researcher has faced while gathering data among the study groups in the city. In getting access to observe the neighborhood relationships, especially those between women were one of the difficulties in this regard. Since I could not approach the women directly I had to go through their husbands or male relatives.

Nevertheless, an impression of distrust and unwillingness has been overcome with the help of field assistants to whom the informants and government officials had a sense of belongingness and trust, and by presenting the purpose of the study and myself as a neutral researcher rather than a politically or ethnically affiliated person. As a result, I was able to get their consent and obtain the relevant information needed for the study.

However, the urban fieldwork make possible for the researcher to observe the relationship between different ethnic groups at close. The available social service in the town can make urban fieldwork less distressing. Yet, the effort to develop trust with adequate representative individuals to figure out the overall dynamics of the urban setting is not easy.

This research particularly emphasizes on inter-ethnic interaction between the various ethnic groups who inhabit in the city of Harar. Therefore, the scope of this study was limited only on the four major ethnic groups (in terms of number and/or their position in the socio-economic and political spheres) that mainly control the economic, political as well as cultural interaction in the city. In this regard, the Oromo, Harari, Amhara and Gurage ethnic groups have been included in the study.

The criterion for the selection of these groups is based on their duration stay in the city. In this regard, I tried to categorize the Oromo and Harari ethnic groups as inhabitant to the city while the Amhara and Gurage ethnic groups as late migrants. However, exploring the deep-rooted inter-ethnic interaction with short field stay may make the research result not all encompassing.

The field data are analyzed in combined way in which different narratives, views, critical expressions and theoretical approaches are analyzed within the related contexts of the following chapters.

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

The study is structured into eight chapters. The first chapter sets an introduction to the thesis, and outlines the introduction, statement of the problem, the research objective, the significance, the rationale for the selection of the research topic and site, and finally the method employed and field experience have been dealt under this chapter. The second chapter is relatively broad in content and covers the conceptual and theoretical approaches on ethnicity and ethnic relations, ethnic groups and boundaries, ethnicity and the process of migration, and discussion on the current approach regarding 'Ethnic Federalism' in the country.

Background of the study area including the geographical setting, ethnic composition, economic activity and structure of the city are the themes dealt under the third chapter. Chapter four focuses on major areas of inter-ethnic interaction and articulates the concepts of boundary maintenance in different cultural, economic and political settings shared among the groups. This chapter gives vital information about the interdependence and mutual co-existence between the groups.

Chapter five focuses on the process of migration and adaptive strategies that migrant follows in urban setting. The impact of migration on the existing inter-ethnic relation and the urban land use and its controversy in the city of Harar are discussed in detail. The historically established inter-ethnic relationship between these ethnic groups in the city was presented in detail in chapter six.

Similarly, chapter seven mainly focuses on the inter-ethnic interaction since 1990s in the city of Harar. The chapter aims at showing the discourse of political representation, the political debate between political parties, the effort of revitalizing ones identity and history, and finally discusses the contemporary ethnic-based politics of the country. The last chapter concludes the main themes of the thesis. The close relation between the chapters necessitates the use of going back and forth, and all chapters rely on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks and literature reviews under chapter two.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Discussion on Ethnicity and Ethnic Group, Ethnicity and Ethnic Interaction, and Federalism

The purpose of this literature review is to map out the state of knowledge, identify important knowledge gaps and suggests promising avenues for the practical work in the area of inter-ethnic interaction in urban setting.

2.1. Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups

Ethnicity has been such a difficult concept to define. Scholars have found it impossible to give a standard definition- much like the problem of defining culture, religion and so on (Vaughan 2003: 40-42). Yet, the difficulties involved in studying a complex and diverse society necessitates the presence of at least a certain degree of consensus and agreement in the definition and meaning of such important concepts as ethnicity. Accordingly, a number of attempts have been made to conceptualize and operationalize the meaning of ethnicity. It is neither my intention nor the scope of this study to go into the details of all controversies related to the concept, ethnicity. In this respect, I simply present some relevant literature on ethnicity.

Due to the growing need for proper understanding of the concepts and theories of ethnicity, there are wide ranges of debates among scholars and often misperceptions and controversies. Gudina in his book on “Competing Ethnic Nationalisms and the Quest for Democracy” expresses the problem of defining the concept as: “definition is not always easy, and ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nationalism’ are particularly elusive; they have continued to frustrate the development of common

terms of reference. Moreover, the attempted definitions are either ideologically informed or limited to local situations and hence lack universal meaning and application” (Gudina 2002: 20).

The study of ethnicity confronts interrelated terminological, political and conceptual problems. ‘Ethnicity’ remains a mobile term (Glazer & Moynihan 1975 cited in Vaughan 2003: 43), meaning different things to different people. ‘Ethnic’ or ‘Ethnic group’ has been used to mean: race; socio-cultural groups; sub-groups living among others in a foreign country; or, a group of people who ‘contrast themselves or are contrasted by others, on the basis primarily of sharing certain cultural criteria such as language, beliefs and values, religion or history’ who may or may not share ‘geographical contiguity’ and ‘racial characteristics’ Du Toit (1978: 1-4 cited in Vaughan 2003: 43).

The key concept in the study of ethnicity is that of an ethnic group constituting a social group which is orientated in terms of shared language or common historical fate. Below we find a few definitions of the concept of an ethnic group in order to identify the characteristics that are most often mentioned in relation to such groups that have an identity based upon ethnicity.

A scholar on ethnicity, Barth, states for instance “A group, which perpetuates itself biologically, at least for some generations, shares fundamental cultural values, constitutes a field of communication and interaction, identifies as a distinct group by other groups and by itself.” (Barth 1969: 10–11 cited in Lane and Ersson 2005: 76) Barth’s definition of ‘ethnic group’ combines several characteristics of a group: biological reproduction over several generations; shared or common values; interaction or communication between the members; and self-identification as well as identification by other groups.

According to Fearon and Laitin (2000: 20), an ethnic group is “a group larger than a family for which membership is reckoned primarily by descent, is conceptually autonomous, and has a conventionally recognized “natural history” as a group.” In a similar inflexible way, Hutchinson and Smith (1996: 6) define an ethnic group as, “a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of a common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity.” Both of these definitions operate with the view that they posit human collectivities as either/or fixed and overly structured entities with stable and almost unchangeable features.

Contrary to the above approach, Fukui and Markakis refute the attempt to define ethnic identities on the basis of genealogical or cultural criteria by claiming that a complex pattern of fusion and fission among groups is the reality. They argue therefore that ethnic identities are to be understood as essentially political products of socially defined and historically determined specific situation (Fukui and Markakis 1994: 06). Similar to this argument, Turton argues, ‘an ethnic group is not a group because of ethnicity but because its members engage in common action and share common interests’ (Turton 1994: 17). However, this assertion does not necessarily mean that the assumed genealogical or cultural traits are completely irrelevant.

An ethnic group, Cohen writes, can be defined “as a collectivity of people who (a) share some patterns of normative behavior and (b) form a part of a larger population, interacting with people of other collectivities within the framework of a social system” Cohen (1974 cited in Gmlech and Zenner 1980: 293). Cohen’s emphasis is on the use of a set of common symbols, shared kinship, and religion as useful ways of organizing people on behalf of their common interests. Since ethnic groups are analyzed as interest groups and interest groups are, by definition, political associations, ethnicity is essentially seen as a political phenomenon (Melaesevic 2004: 116). Therefore, in

defining an ethnic group, scholars emphasize those factors that differentiate a given group from others and strengthen its internal cohesion.

Some scholars categorize the paradigms of understanding ethnicity into three approaches: primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism (Sokolovski and Tishkov 1996; Kaufman 2000). Nevertheless, many of the theoretical accounts of ethnicity are clustered under the two categories, combining the arguments of instrumentalism and constructivism under one category and labeling it by either of the terms or several related others such as circumstantialism, situationalism, interactionalism, and subjectivism (Thompson 1989; Jenkins 1996; Banks 1996; Llobera 1999). On the other hand, primordialism is also labelled by several other related variant terms such as essentialism, naturalism, objectivism, and socio-biology (Abbute 2004: 21).

Primordialists view ethnicity as an objective given that is bound to be natural and innate to human identity based on fixed deep primordial attachments to a group or culture. They believe and contend that ethnic identity is a primordial feature of humanity existing deeply rooted in the historical experiences of all societies with inherent characteristics of irrational attachments based on blood, race, language, religion, territory, and a common mentality of recognizable membership (Shils 1957; Geertz 1973; Isaacs 1975; Van den Berghe 1981, 1986, 1996; Grosby 1996 cited in Abbute 2004: 21-22). There exist two different strains of primordialists: the one that stresses on the biological basis of ethnic sentiment and the other that advocates the socially and historically produced primordial ties (Thompson 1989: 11-12).

The main criticism leveled against primordialism is the assumption that ethnic divisions are fixed, natural and static. Many scholars contend that ethnic identity is subject to renewal, remodification and renegotiation and it should be considered flexible and malleable (Thompson 1989: 14; Banks

1996: 47; Hutchison and Smith 1996: 8). In addition, primordialists under emphasize people's passions and strong dedication to rational values, sense of duties, classes and other socially constructed supreme goals.

Constructivists view ethnicity as not objectively "given," but rather fluid, situationally defined, and strategically manipulated subjective and rational socio-cultural constructions (Barth 1969, 1970, 1998; Cohen 1978; Eller and Coughlan 1993, 1996). For constructivists, ethnic identity is conceived as dynamic, flexible and variable in which both the contents and boundaries of an ethnic group change based on circumstances (Abbute 2004: 23). For Banks (1996: 25) and Rudolph (2006: 5) ethnicity is considered as 'subjective' and 'situational'. They viewed it as relative and to some extent situational and an aspect of social relations. Variations in expression and the idea of choice in the expression of ethnic identity is the basic underlying factor of situational ethnicity.

Cohen's main thesis is that ethnicity is instrumental; that is, there are reasons for a group asserting and maintaining an ethnic identity and these reasons are economic and political rather than psychological (Banks 1996: 33). In this regard, Cohen explicitly rejects the quasi-psychological explanations of Mitchell and Mayer. 'Ethnicity is alive political and economic issue and is not a method of categorization... to deal with the bewildering complexity of urban society or to regulate for him such "domestic" matters as marriage, friendship, burial, and mutual help.' (Cohen 1969: 193)

For the constructivists, ethnicity in Africa can be attributed to the colonial system of "divide and rule policy" and the opportunities it created for African politicians to exploit the system of division for their own advantage (Johnston 1998: 137). Furthermore, as Cohen emphasizes "Ethnicity in modern society is the outcome of intensive interaction between different culture groups, and not

the result of a tendency to separatism. It is the result of intensive struggle between groups over new strategic positions of power within the structure of the new state: places of employment, taxation, funds for development, education, political positions and so on.” (Cohen 1974a: 96)

Although the instrumentalists have some true basis of argument, they cannot escape from criticism. Elite theories treat non-elites as passive creatures prone to easy manipulation. Unlike elites, who seem to be heterogeneous, often in conflict with each other, creative and skilful in their power struggle, the masses are largely viewed as homogenous, ignorant, dependent conglomerates, with child-like qualities. In this sense, Malesevic (2004: 123) argue that such a position is too crude to understand the subtlety of ethnic relations.

2.2. Ethnic Groups and Boundaries

The most influential and seminal constructivist approach is that of Fredrik Barth (1969). Barth argues that investigation of ethnic groups’ categorization/distinctiveness primarily should focus on “ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuffs it encloses.” (1969: 15) Ethnic identities in Barth’s approach are not necessarily fixed rather they are situational. The critical features in Barth’s definition of ethnic group is the characteristic of self-ascription and ascription by others that refers a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order (Barth 1969: 11-13).

According to Barth, a categorical ascription is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background. In this case, Barth argues, “the features that are taken into account are not the sum of ‘objective’ differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant” (Barth 1969: 13-14).

Furthermore, Barth stated that some cultural features are used by the actors as signal and emblems of differences, others are ignored, and in some relationships radical differences are played down and denied. For Barth, the cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies would seem analytically to be of two orders: overt signals or signs- the diacritical feature that people look for and exhibit to show identity, often such features as dress, language, house-form, or general style of life, and basic value orientations: the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged (Barth 1969: 14).

Concomitant with the above assertion Barth argues that inter-ethnic interactions are patterned on an ethnic boundary dichotomization of an in-group/out-group of ‘we’ and ‘they’ basis (Barth 1969: 15). According to Waldron (1980: 399), Harari in-group solidarity, combined with the symbols of ethnic identity, which define the people of the city as separate from all other peoples in the world, provides a strong basis for the maintenance of their ethnic identity. In this case, Waldron take the Barth approach in analyzing Harari social boundary maintenance and argues that “the way the people of Harar have held on to their identity is exactly by identifying limits for the types of interactions permitted with the members of other ethnic groups” (Waldron 1980: 400).

In similar manner, Barth stated that “stable inter-ethnic relations presuppose a structuring of interaction: a set of prescriptions governing situations of contact, and allowing for articulation in some sectors or domain of activity, and a set of proscriptions on social situations preventing inter-ethnic interaction in other sectors, and thus insulating parts of the cultures from confrontation and modification” (Barth 1969: 16). Treating ethnic groups as ‘a form of social organization’, Barth drew two important conclusions. Firstly, it is the maintenance of the boundary between groups, the ‘continuing dichotomization of members and outsiders’ which allows specification of the continuity of ethnic groups.’ Secondly, ‘socially relevant factors alone become diagnostic for

membership, not the overt, 'objective' differences which are generated by other factors.' (Barth 1970: 14-15)

Barth opts for a comparative view of ethnic groups, one in which they are concerned primarily with the maintenance of boundaries between themselves and others. The positive bond that connects several ethnic groups in an encompassing social system depends on the complementarity of the groups with respect to some of their characteristics cultural features. Such complementarity can give rise to interdependence or symbiosis, and constitutes the areas of articulation of ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969: 18).

For scholars like Bank (1996: 12), Barth's main contribution is to urge a shift away from discussions of the content of ethnic identity through considerations of ethnic markers such as dress, food, language, and so on, towards a consideration of the boundaries that mark the limits of such contents. With regard to such boundaries, he makes two salient points. First, that boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel and information across them; secondly and as a corollary to the first is that such groups cannot exist in isolation but only in contrast to other such groups.

However, Barth's approach to ethnicity also does not escape from critiques. Accordingly, Salamone and Swanson (1979: 170) affirmed, "while Barth's observations shed valuable light on how groups maintain boundaries and manipulate identities, he does not account adequately for why a person presents a different self when engaged in interactions with members of different ethnic groups; nor does he deal fully with changes in ethnic group allegiances." Furthermore, some criticize Barth assuming that he neglected the place of covert signs and diacritical features in ethnic categorization. For instance, Banks (1996: 14-16) claims that Barth heavily relies on the very cultural features he claims he is rejecting. As it will be detailed latter in this thesis, I argue that ethnic groups' cultural stuffs are as vital as the boundary and thus both should be viewed as

two faces of the same coin rather than separate determinants. Ethnicity is more than a matter of identification and affiliation within a given cultural system or "style." It is also a matter of strategy, of the active use of that system or style by its adherents.

2.3. Ethnicity and Ethnic Interaction- the Urban Context

In his introduction to *Urban Ethnicity*, Cohen (1974) noted that there are many confusing definitions of the term 'ethnicity'. Much of the confusion surrounding the concept of ethnicity results from its overloaded nature serving too many purposes. According to Rogers and Vertovec (1995: 21), the 'folk' definition of ethnicity in urban context includes two kinds of processes: communal and categorical, and internal and external, or self-identification and categorization of others. As Mitchell (1987: 182) also observes: "Initially we need to distinguish between ethnicity constructed as the way in which a set of actors make use of and display their particular common cultural characteristics in some situation and ethnicity as the way in which observed or presumed differences in culture become an element in inter-group relationships in some social setting."

In urban areas categorical distinctions in which an individual allocates some other individual to an ethnic category so as to provide some rationale for adopting attitudes and adjusting behavior toward that person (Mitchell 1987: 183). According to Rogers and Vertovec (1995: 22-23), the necessity of making such categorizations is likely to be greater in urban conditions, particularly where recently arrived migrants are concerned. Although the argument of these scholars are mainly on western urban centers, it is practical for city like Harar where the social life in the entire city was based on ethnic categorizations and structuring individual relations accordingly.

In uncertain conditions where it is not possible for each individual to know every other, then ethnicity provides a common-sense set of expectations and cues to appropriate behavior.

According to Mitchell, 'ethnicity is not a pervasive element in social relationships but one which emerges in particular social situations' (Mitchell 1987: 241). Criteria of ethnic category membership and modes of behavior are shown to be fluid and changeable. The cultural differences distinguishing the ethnic groups operate as diacritical features by means of which the ethnic groups are identified (Mitchell 1987: 183).

An important line of variation to be considered in the study of ethnicity and ethnic groups is the extent to which ethnic ancestry and culture play a role in the way people think of themselves and in the choices they make concerning such matters as work, residence, socio-cultural activities, and political behavior. Ethnicity can be the basis of a social identity (Breton, et al 1990: 5). In addition, ethnicity can also be the basis for the construction of neighborhoods and social belonging.

Furthermore, the market for jobs and the social relations at work can also be structured along ethnic lines. It is as if family, kinship, and neighborhood ties were transported into the work domain. Ethnic solidarity is extended beyond the private to the public sphere of economic activity. In other words, economic action is embedded in structures of social ethnicity and some of these relations are based on ethnicity (Breton, et al 1990: 5).

Ethnic social formations, and the boundaries they imply, can be obstacles or barriers to incorporation for certain ethnic groups. The control of job networks and career lines provides advantages to some that may be used to the detriment of others. In addition, members of various ethnic groups can bring different skills, values, and attitudes to the job market, the workplace, and other institutions (Breton, et al 1990: 6-7). For Mitchell (1987: 186) cultural differences quickly become part of the everyday experience of town dwellers, whether they are attributed to ethnic, regional, or national origins, and may become the basis of social action.

2.4. Ethnicity and the Process of Migration

Migration is not a moment and random decision, but rather a process that takes a long time to materialize and make decision to migrate from the place of origin to the new destination area. In his push-pull model of migration, Lee (1966 cited in Tafesse 2007: 55) denote those factors, which attract migrants to a destination area, are considered as “pull factor” and those, which repel the migrants from the source area and encourage them to leave as “push factor”.

Similarly, Ismagilova (1978: 202-203), argue that migration cannot be considered a mechanical process of the mixing of diverse ethnic group and swift mutual assimilation. Everything depends on the existing conditions and decades old traditions. Pull factors include jobs, educational opportunities, conveniences, the excitement and lure of “city lights,” and hopes of success. Since few migrants have prior experience living in cities, pull factors often tend to be stereotypes of city life and what it has to offer (Gmelch and Zenner 1980: 163). This shows as that it takes multiple factors to necessitate any type of migration.

A current theme in African urban anthropological works is the pattern of migration and adaptive strategies of migrants to urban life. For example, Little (1965: 85) indicated that there are both push and pull factors involved in the migrants of Africans from the rural to the urban areas. Once in town- the migrant is confronted with the problems of adapting to urban life. According to him, many scholars in the field of migration studies view this situation to serve as the expression of ethnic identity manifestation itself (Little 1965: 85).

Correspondingly, Epstein examines some of the variables identified as having shaped the structure of social relations in African towns. He assertively identifies the two important factors in determining the organization and the physical structure of African towns: the new patterns of

economic activity and the effect of colonialism (Epstein 1967: 312). He considers African towns as important centers of social change and discusses the important roles of social networks and urban ethnicity in urban social relations (ibid.).

Concomitant with this notion, Eriksen (2002: 23-27) has clearly put it that some ethnic groups have moved to towns or regional centers where they are brought into contact with people with other customs, languages and identities, and where they frequently enter into competitive relationships in politics and the labor market. Frequently, people who migrate try to maintain their old kinship and neighborhood social networks in the new urban context, and both ethnic quarters and ethnic political groupings often emerge in such urban settings.

2.4.1. Rural- Urban Migration in Ethiopia

Ethnic groups in Ethiopia have been influenced by centuries of migration and interaction between people, which has created a complex pattern of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. De Waal (1991 cited in Fransen and Kuschminder (2009: 13) argues that many migrants in Ethiopia fled the rural areas for urban areas in the period 1961 to 1991. Berhanu and White (1998 cited in Fransen and Kuschminder (2009: 13) reported an increase in rural-urban migration of women between 1960 and 1989.

According to Van Dijk & Fransen (2008: 3), "the rapid rate of urbanization is primarily caused by poor rural living conditions and persistent famine, forcing rural populations to migrate to cities in search of alternative livelihoods." A number of so-called push and pull factors can explain the rural-urban migration trend in Ethiopia. Ezra and Kiros (2001 cited in Fransen and Kuschminder 2009: 13) summarize the main push factors in Ethiopia as being overpopulation, famine, poverty, land scarcity, governmental agricultural policies, and a lack of agricultural resources, all factors

that have been discussed previously. Many households, however, also participate in seasonal labor activities, leading to temporary rural-urban migration.

From the earliest works of migration (particularly the rural-urban ones) and ethnic identity relation, the Ethiopia case, the works of William Shack (1973) and Fekadu Gedamu (1974) are the prominent. The study of Shack on urban ethnicity deals with the role of ethnic identity in the urban setting among the Gurage people. He tries to provide a review of the history and socio-cultural background of Ethiopian towns and goes to further to scrutinize the growth of urban ethnic groups in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. He further stated that the maintenance of ethnic identity in urban setting seems to be more crucial for those societies which are "rigidly stratified" and where the industrial sector of the urban economy lags behind the rural-urban market sector, which is likely to perpetuate "rural socio-economic institutions in the urban society based on kinship and ethnicity for the purpose of furthering local interests" (Shack 1973: 281).

The works of Gedamu (1974) was also important in looking the relationships between migration and ethnicity in urban context and the role of voluntary associations in maintaining the rural urban ties among urban migrants. He plainly stated the potential roles of traditional ethnic organization which in the urban situation is 'poly-ethnicized' function not to enhance ethnic cohesion and the articulation of ethnic boundaries, rather some of voluntary associations cross-cut ethnic cohesion and thereby function as an instrument for national integration (Gedamu 1974: 72). In general, there seems to be increased rural-urban migration for both long-term and seasonal migration in the country. This situation is also a fact in Harar. There is an increasing rural-urban seasonal migration including for trade, civil servants, soldiers, construction workers, domestic workers, etc.

2.5. Federalism: Conceptual Overview

The majority of the world states are multinational. So far, such the mechanism to administer the various people peacefully under the umbrella of democratic system of governance has a crucial role. Theoretically, federalism is assumed to hold the notion of balancing and maintaining political autonomy and unification of multiethnic society as a means of managing their ethno-linguistic diversity and cultural background though differences. In this regard, many countries of the world had experienced and still are experiencing the notion of federalism in order to uphold different ethno-linguistic groups and to diminish (reduce) inter-ethnic tension and conflicts.

According to Smith (1995: 5), federalism is a “doctrine of balance”. It is all about compromise of interests and striking fair balance between integration and diversification, decentralization and centralization, centrifugal and centripetal forces. Elazar (1987: 5) defines federalism as a “political remedy for political diseases”. Scholars for instance, Young (1994); Horowitz (1985); and Watts (1998) (cited in Kefale 2004) forwarded federalism as an alternative method for multi-ethnic nation, which have been overwhelmed by inter-communal conflict and tension. Federalism is taken as an appropriate answer for governing deeply divided multi-ethnic, multiracial, and multi-religious countries.

On the other hand, opponents of the ethnic policy argue that cementing ethnicity even temporarily, as the salient political identity-marker will have a negative effect on the political, economic, and social development of the country. For instance, scholars, as Gudina (2006) and Clapham (2006) cited in Turton (2006) reveal their doubt about federalism as a means of managing ethno-linguistic diversity. For them federalism will tend to be anti liberal and anti majority, prone to conflict and disintegration, deter country wide free mobility of citizens, when particularly modeled on the basis

of ethno-linguistic diversity. It could encourage ethnic mobilization, secessionism and even armed conflict.

2.5.1. Ethnic Federalism the Ethiopian Experience

The background to ethnic diversity in contemporary Ethiopia has historical precedents traceable to relentless campaigns of empire building which began in the late nineteenth century and continued in the early twentieth century. According to Hameso, et al (1997: 3-4) the net effect of the process of state formation by Emperor Menelik II (1889-1913) put the more than eighty ethnic and linguistic groups under the newly created state of Ethiopia. The attempt to build cultural homogenization through policies of assimilation, centralization, and one language policy continued during the administration of emperor Haileselassie I (1930-1974).

In Ethiopia political history, the question of ethnicity appears in 1960s when the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM) for the first time rose up with ethnic/nationality question against the then governors of the country and the century old ethnic domination (Turton 2006: 12). The emergence of ethno-nationalist perspective in Ethiopian politics and a multi-ethnic perspective led to a hot debate within the student radical movement of the 1960s and 1970s and each spawned its own subdivisions and internecine disputes. Although factors such as language, ancestral linkage, common descent have become a foundation for the development of solidarity and political mobilization by the elites, the major questions of the elites were context related to social, political and economic reasons (Turton 2006: 12-13).

In this regard, Gudina (2006: 126-127) and Turton (2006: 12-13) identifies three main ethno-nationalist perspectives in contradictory conceptions of the Ethiopian state in relation to ethnicity discussion. The first perspective is represented by the 'nation-building' thesis, according to which

the imposition of the cultural, linguistic, and religious values of a dominant sub national group was a historically necessary means to the creation of the Ethiopian 'nation'. The second perspective is the 'national oppression' thesis, according to which Amhara dominations was responsible for creating an Ethiopia which was a 'prison house of oppressed nationalities and classes'. The third overall perspective on Ethiopian politics which Gudina calls 'the colonial thesis' that the Ethiopian state was established through a series of conquest and colonization of various nations and societies such as Eritrean, Somali and Oromo nationalists (Turton 2006: 12-13).

The national oppression thesis which was developed in the 1960s with the Ethiopian Student Movement, advocate the rights to self-determination, including secession for the various ethnic groups that are marginalized or oppressed by Amhara group. The third and the extreme version of the Ethiopian nationalist group, which claim that Ethiopia is a colonial empire and just like other western colonial empire need to undergo decolonization. It was started by the Eritrean in the north and in south the Oromo and the Ethiopian Somalis of the Ogaden developed their own colonial thesis (Gudina 2006: 120-124).

Since early 1990s, Ethiopia has witnessed a major turning point in the area of national political arena. One of the main changes is that the country adopts ethnic based federalism by putting an end to the past-centralized system of administration (Turton 2006: 12). The country is currently experimenting federal forms of government, which officially advocates decentralization of power in favor of ethno-linguistic regions as well as distribution of political power on the basis of federal and regional states levels. The ratification of the new federal constitution is held in 1995, which is preceded by the establishment of nine regional states and two federal states in 1993/4.

According to Fiseha (2006: 131-136) and Gudina (2006: 119), the current federal experiment has three objectives: first, to create a country of equal 'nation, nationalities and people', second, to put an end to authoritarian rule by democratizing the Ethiopian state and society as a whole and third is to bring about a solution to the age-old crisis of the Ethiopian state and society characterized by conflict and also serve as a political instrument in the management of the conflict ridden ethnic relations.

There are around 80 ethno-territorial groups in Ethiopia, with enormous variation in size, however, none of them have definite territorial and linguistic boundaries. In the political restructuring of the state only the six ethnic groups (Amhara, Tigray, Harari, Oromo, Afar and Somali) have "Mother state" named after them. The remaining three states are made up of mixture of small, sometimes tiny ethnic groups, none of which constitutes an overall majority of the state's population and none of them considered large enough to establish its own regional states. According to Turton (2006: 18), these arrangements generate ethnic conflict in the multiethnic Western and Southern regions of the country. For instance, in Gambella Regional state, the struggle has been dominated by competition between the two largest local ethnic groups, the Nuer and the Anywak, to gain 'ownership' of the state itself (Feyisa 2006: 209).

The position of minorities in regional states is also taken as a shortcoming to the notion of federalism. For Fiseha (2006: 136-137) among the six major nationalities that have their own states there exist minorities, so there is a potential for local political and economic oppression against this minority groups. Where there is no dominant ethnic group in the states structure the possibility occurs for a minority also to exercise authority over the majority. In this regard, according to Fiseha (2006: 136-7) and Gudina (2003: 139) a serious cases arisen in the last decade in Gambella Regional state and in the state of Harari. For Kefale (2004: 54-55) the federation

process has been accompanied by inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts, while Gudina (2003: 26) has considered it as a 'divide-and rule policy'. For them, politicized ethnic identity creates hatred and violence between different ethnic groups.

On the other hand, there are scholars who support the ethnic federalism. According to Young (1998: 203), for instance, ethnic based local administration is historically and politically sound despite their current difficulties, and he added that 'it is highly innovative and even daring approach.' Furthermore, Kymlicka (2006: 58) argues that federalism reinforces identity and authorizes border to such an identity. For him, if such a process and its results considered erroneous then there is no successful multinational federalism in the world and institutionalization of ethno-national identities is not, in and of itself, either good or bad. To him what is important is that the process is peaceful and democratic.

In a similar approach, Hechter (2000: 14) in his book entitled "Containing Nationalisms" argues that the more federalism encourages self-governance the lesser demand for secession. He regarded federalism as a stabilizing measure, since it accommodates the claim for autonomy through concession than repression. Elazar (1994: 167) reminds us; however, that federalism is not accepted without opposition. A significant number of writers, however, question if ethnic-federalism can solve ethnic problems. Elazar claims that ethnic nationalism is at odds with the principles of federalism. In federalism consent should be the basis of division and sharing of power not "language, religious or national myth." (Elazar 1994: 167)

EPRDF argued that ethnic federalism (redrawing of boundaries along ethnic and linguistic criterion) is one way of resolving ethnic tension whereas others suggested geographical and economic criteria and forwarded the American style territorial federal system as the best one

(Fiseha 2006: 237). Kymlicka argued that rejecting the idea of ethnic federalism, as a remnant of absolute Soviet ideology is misleading. He stresses the fact that many aspect of Ethiopian constitution can be seen as consistent with the most progressive developments within Western democracies (Kymlicka 2006: 54).

The Ethiopian constitution does not directly employ the term ethnicity and or ethnic group. It introduced the idea of “Nations, Nationalities and Peoples”. The phrase “Nations, Nationalities and Peoples” is defined in the constitution “as a group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory” (FDRE Constitution 1995: Art. 39(5)). These criteria of defining ethnic identity are quiet subjective and practically illusive considering the inter-marriage of groups and cultures in Ethiopia. It also begs another complex issue of who determines ethnic identity? It could be argued that the political elites play significant role in articulating and constructing ethnic claims.

Another major problem of the concept of ‘ethnicity’ in the country’s constitution is its failure to consider historical realities of the peoples and at least the new demographic dynamics. In countries like Ethiopia where population movement is prevalent demographic phenomena, it is uncommon to find indigenous (native) peoples linguistically and culturally dominated by new comers. In addition, according to different scholars, Gudina (2006) and Cohen (2006) to mention some of them, taking language as a basic criterion for territorial rearrangement is risky for the indigenous (local) peoples under such circumstances.

Furthermore, misconception of the nature of ethnicity and ethnic identity was also observable. The government has operated in the positivist tradition of an instrumental or materialist understanding of collective identity, according to which nations, nationalities, and peoples are the products (for primordialists additionally the 'natural' if not perennial products) of the operation of 'objective criteria' within 'the objective situation'. Thus, the organization has tended to disregard the continuous internal process of collective construction and reconstruction of group identity (Vaughan 2003: 203).

Many ethnic-based political organizations are legally registered in Ethiopia (Vaughan 2003: 35-38). In almost all cases, the claims for ethnic mobilization and solidarity have been made in the context of redressing injustices of the past and developing their culture and usage of languages which were ignored in the past. However, these claims are more of a demand for social status, political power and economic benefits (instrumental) rather than preserving relationships that make a bond from generation to generation, speech, custom, and so on (primordial).

In a multicultural country like Ethiopia, I believe ethnic federalism is practical and it will help to accommodate the existing ethnic diversity and improve the already problematic ethnic relationship in the country. In line with this, it is better to look the social values of ethnicity and ethnic federalism as providing sense of security, source of trust, certainty, reciprocal help and internal cohesion of the society. However, the implementation of the constitution on practical ground has, in many cases, led to inter-ethnic tension and conflicts against the state. This will be shown in detail in latter chapters.

Chapter Three

Setting the Context of the Study Area

3.1 Introduction

The Oromo, Harari, Ahmara and Gurage peoples are numerically the main communities inhabiting the city of Harar, Ethiopia. They have a long history of cooperation, interdependence, friendship, and competition. Their relationship ranges from sharing the same geographical landscape, economic transaction, some cultural practices, and religious brotherhoods to intermarriage. Most of their members living in the city that allow closer interaction are bilingual, fluent in more than one language. Despite such geographical neighborhood, cultural similarities, and their historical interdependence the nature of the existing inter-ethnic interaction in the city is so complex.

In any investigation of inter-ethnic relation, the geographical setting of the groups, economic life, the pattern of migration and the structure of the city, which altogether considered here as the context of the study, play a crucial role in determining the nature of interactions of the groups. In my study of inter-ethnic relations in Harar city, this chapter gives emphasis to the historical background of the groups as it manifests itself in the later interaction between the various ethnic groups, both cooperative and competitive.

Harar is situated in South Eastern Ethiopia at about 526 kms from Addis Ababa. Harar's geographical co-ordinates are approximately 9 degrees 18' minute latitude north and 42 degrees 7' minute longitude east. The region is bordered to the North by Kombolcha and Jarso *weredas*, to the South by Fadis *wereda*, to the East by Babile *wereda* and to the West by Alemaya *Wereda*. The altitude ranges between 1600 meters and 1900 meters above sea level. Climatically, Harar is among the favorable cities in the country which is mild throughout the year. The rainy season lasts

from June to September. The annual average rainfall varies between 700-800 mm and the average annual temperature is about 18.3 degrees centigrade.

3.2 Population Size and Spatial Distributions in the Region

According to the result of the 2007 population census, the total population of Harari region is indicated to be 183,415. Of these counted population of the region, 92,316 (50.33 percent) of were males and 91,099 (49.67 percent) were females. The residents of Harar city are estimated to be 99,368, while the rural residents number 84,023. The proportion of urban population in Harari region is 54.2 percent, more than three times larger than proportion of the urban population at country level (CSA 2010: 2). The statistical results shows that the number of urban dwellers has increased from about 76,000 persons in 1994 to about 99,368 persons in 2007, an increase of about 23,000 persons over the last 12 years (CSA 2010: 2). The religion and language composition of Harar city is presented as follow:

Table 1. Ethnic Composition of Harar city based on Religion and Mother Tongue

Population	Percent of Urban Resident Population -54.2
Religion	Muslims-44.8 Christians- 55.2
Mother Tongue	Amharic- 49.2 Afaan Oromo- 23.7 Harari- 12.2 Gurage- 5.3 Others- 9.5

(Source: November 2010 CSA Material)

In Harari city different ethnic groups speak a number of mother tongue languages. According to CSA 2007 population and housing census of Harari region statistical summary report, Amharic was the most dominant mother tongue (49.2 percent) followed by *Afaan Oromo* (23.7 percent) while Harari (12.2 percent) and Gurage (5.3 percent) stood third and fourth, respectively in the city (CSA 2010: 28-29). The 2007 national census result also indicate that, the Orthodox religion was the dominant religion in the city (48.5 percent) followed by Muslim (44.8 percent). Protestant and Catholic constitute 6.1 percent and 0.49 percent, respectively (CSA 2010: 31).

The ethnic and language diversity is a result of a complex social and cultural history. Both language and religion are utilized by the various ethnic groups in their definition of themselves as a discernable group from others in the current social and political climate of Harar city. For example, the Harari were viewed as the group of people bounded by some communality. This is complicated by the centuries of linguistic, social and economic interaction and interdependence between the various ethnic neighbors. The linguistic importance of Amharic and *Afaan Oromo* shows changes in the population distribution by ethnic group in the area over the last century. The population movement has brought immigrant populations of Oromo and Amhara which far out number the local population.

3.3 Ethnic Composition of the Harari Region

The biggest ethnic group in Harar, according to the 2007 census, is the Oromo. The historical relationships of the Oromo ethnic group with the Harari started from the Oromo movement that had been undertaken before many centuries ago. The domination of Oromo is clearly seen in the city as well as inhabiting the surrounding area both in terms of political and economic aspects. The historically long dispute between the Oromo and Harari ethnic groups to control the main trade routes in the eastern part of the country led strong boundary maintenance between the various

peoples in the region. For the sake of convenience, I divided the present Oromo of *Hararghe* into two parts.

The largest group of Oromo in *Hararghe* area (including Harar city) are the *Afran Qallo* Oromo. The *Afran Qallo* is a name of four Harar Oromo *gosas* (clans) namely Dagaa (Noole, Jarso, and Huume), Oborra, Baabbile and Ala. *Afran Qallo*, literally means the four (sons) of Qallo, the father of the four groups. It also represents the confederation of *gosas* that form the largest confederation or moieties called Barentuma (Hassen 1990: 3). According to tradition, at one point these four *gosas* and Itu had formed a confederation named *Afran Qallo*. Nevertheless, though widely known among the Oromo, the name *Afran Qallo* has never been used by the non-Oromo scholars who preferred an offensive term *Qottuu* (Markakis 1974: 54). For the *Afran Qallo*, however, the word *Qottuu* does not have any meaning since it represents 'anything that digs.' According to an informant, Bekke Mummed¹, the Harar Oromo called themselves *Afran Qallo* while the Harari as the city people might have called them *Qottuu*.

The second groups of Oromo are the Oromo from Shewa, who came from together with and part of the Amhara *naftamya* soldiers. They were, therefore, essentially *naftamya* political settlers like the Amhara. Their similarity with the Amhara was not only restricted to their profession and immigration, but also most of them were followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and upon their arrival in Harar, the majority of them were given land together with tenants, similar to the Amhara.

The second most important ethnic group in Harar both historically and at present are the Amhara. According to many historical documents, the highland Christian Amhara migration towards the

¹ Bekke Mummed, Harar, 22 February 2011

city took place following the defeat of the Harari and Oromo at the battle of *Chelenqo* in 1887, by Menilik of Shewa. The Emirate of Harar ceased to be an independent state and was forced to become part of Ethiopia. In this case, soldiers of Menilik of Shewa were the first Amhara inhabitants of Harar who are recruited from the Northern regions of the country- Shewa, Gojam, Gonder and Wello. Later, other groups of Amhara also continued to migrate to Harar. Following the eviction of the Italians in 1941, Amharas, mostly associated with the military, have moved into the city and in fact have formed a large population outside the old city. In addition, the reason for migration of these people towards the city includes looking for search of job opportunities, to engage in business, and working as civil servants. During the 1974, change of government and nationalization of rural land in 1975 new wave of Amhara migrants came to Harar from different provinces.

The Harari are the third ethnic group in terms of political and economic domination in the city. The long century boundary maintenance between the peoples in city comes from a need for the internal solidarity of the city's society, the high value they place on their own way of life, and some of the symbols they use to reinforce self-identification. Although since the mid-nineteenth century the role of the wall (known as *Jogol*) as defensive mechanism has declined, to some extent, still now it is the physical manifestation of the social boundaries which have preserved the Harari ethnic identity.

The fourth numerically superior groups in Harar are the Gurage. The Gurage in Harar, as is the case in many other urban centers actively engage in trade. The Gurage migration to Harar started towards the end of 1920s and early 1930s and especially increased its trend after the period of Italian occupation. A number of informants indicated that most of the early Gurage migrants were Soddo Kistane Gurage. Then after different people of Gurage migrants came from various area of

Gurage land to Harar in search of job and other business activities. Currently, mainly people who represent the migrant Gurage ethnic groups in the city of Harar are from Sodo Kistane, Welene, Kebena, Sebat Bet, Meskel and Ejje and Enamor sub-ethnic groups.

The 2007 census summary result illustrated that the distributions of Harari region by ethnic groups for a population size of one thousand or more persons are presented in summary table two. As indicated in the table two below, the Oromo and Amhara ethnic groups together accounted for about 79.2 percent of the total population of the region (each accounting for 56.4 percent and 22.8 percent, respectively). The remaining five ethnic groups comprise 19.5 percent of the total population (CSA 2010: 9). The Gurage population did not include the Silte ethnic groups.

Table 2. Percentage distribution of ethnic groups comprise with one thousand and more persons by census period; Harari Region: 2007

Nations/ Nationalities (Ethnic Groups)	Number	Percent
Oromo	103,468	56.4
Amhara	41,768	22.8
Harari	15,863	8.6
Gurage	7,952	4.3
Somali	7,102	3.9
Tigray	2,808	1.5
Argoba	2,287	1.2

(Source: November 2010 CSA Material)

3.4 Economic Activity and System of Governance in the Region

The economy of the Harari region is dominated by primary and tertiary sectors (HPNRS 2001: 130). Agriculture is the main economic activity. Using terracing and irrigation as well as intercropping, which are useful for tropical soil and a symbiotically correct practice, the farmers in the region were able to produce grain and cash crops in adequate supplies for local consumption and export. The cash crops include the finest coffee, the high-grade hides and skins, groundnuts, fruits and *khat* (*catha adulis*). Both coffee and *khat* (*catha adulis*) are lucrative export items, which provide the Ethiopian economy with substantial financial resources. Both are also consumed socially and are assumed binding force for social peace and coherence. Mixed farming is the major agricultural characteristics of the region. A typical household in the rural area may grow food crops and horticultural crops (HPNRS 2001: 48-50).

Harar has never been exclusively depended on agriculture. Since it was geographically an entrepot of exclusive trade between the Red Sea and the vast Ethiopian hinterland it has benefited from caravan trade. To facilitate the international trade of those days, Harar had to mint its own coin (Bosredon 2004: 23). Nevertheless, Bosredon argued that the emergence of other cities and markets following the completion of Ethio-Djibouti railway had influenced and reduced the city. Since then, it has no longer served as the commercial hub it used to be (Bosredon 2004: 27).

The long history of Harar's self-administration ended when Melinik soldiers conquered the city in the 1880s. Subsequently, the local administration was replaced by the highland Ethiopian political system that continued in the time of Emperor Haile Silassie's period. During the *Dergue* regime, the city served as administration center of *Hararghe* province that encompasses East and West *Hararghe*. Since 1991 following change in the government and the orientation of the political system of the country through federalism, the old city, Harar, was established as autonomous

regional state. Harari National League (HNL) and Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) administered the region. The administration division took place between these two political parties that the Harari National League represent the 19 urban *kebeles* including the *Jogol* wall while the Oromo People's Democratic Organization represent the remaining 17 rural peasant *kebeles* included in the region.

3.5 Determining Factors of Rural-Urban Migration

According to the 2007 census result, 26.4 percent of the total population of Harari region are migrants and the remaining 73.6 percent were non-migrants. Most of the migrants are youth people in the age group 15-34 /49.99 percent/ and most of them are single. The role of internal migration in changing population size of the region is reflected highly (CSA 2010: 113). Unlike the developed countries, urbanization in Ethiopia in general and Harari region in particular, is a result of rural problems /push factors/ and urban attraction /pull factors/. Under normal circumstances, internal migration is a mechanism by which local population adjust themselves to a real differences in opportunities and spatial shifts in the pattern of economic opportunities. This also depends on pull-push factors. People move towards areas which are believed to be desirable for either economic or non-economic reasons through interplay of push factors at the place of origin and pull factors at the place of destination. The following are major push factors that force people to leave rural areas in the region (HPNRS 2001: 42-43).

The primary factor was the scarcity of agricultural land and other natural resources and due to increase in rural population size. In addition, poverty of rural people due to various socio-economic crises, environmental crises, and the consequence of famine and drought continuously facilitate the migration of mass number of individuals and households to the city in search of job for life survival. On the other hand, the existence of trade in Harar town, especially large scale

contraband, illegal smuggling of cattle and *khat* from the region to neighbouring countries have attracted migrants from both rural areas of the region and neighbouring regions. The presence of wages in formal sectors is higher in the urban than rural areas of the region. This has aggravated urban ward movement by raising expectation and hope of rural people for better life in urban areas (HPNRS 2001: 42-43).

3.6 Structure of the City

The old Harar city (*Jogol*) has an elliptic form of which the east-west axis is 1,600m long and the north-south axis 800m. The main square and the market were located in the center. It developed on a curved terrain that was bordered on the north and south by two rivers (Santelli 2004: 158). As map 1B illustrates, the administrative division of the city and its surroundings follows a system put in place by the *Dergue* regime in which the country is divided into 73 *weredas*. The city of Harar is designated as an urban *wereda* named *Hundemey*. *Hundemey* is divided into 19 *kebele*: 7 of them are within the *Jogol* and the remaining 12 are found surrounding the *Jogol*, commonly referred as the “new city” (See the map, annex number 1B).

The city shows a characteristic of both a medieval pre-industrial and modern city. The old city, with its traditional rectangular stone house, zigzag narrow road, abundance of mosques and shrines is mostly inhabited by the Harari while in contrast, the “new city” characterized by wide asphalt roads and modern style concrete buildings, and is inhabited mainly by Amhara. The “new city” built in the 20th century is located west of the old city. The two are connected by the road called *Andenya Mangad*, or First Avenue in Amharic. The density and complexity of the settlement pattern inside the wall *Jogol*, forced the new comers to settle outside the wall. For the majority of the indigenous Harari community, the new city is perceived as a colonial settlement of the northern Amhara oppressors and outsiders who are distinct in terms of language, religion, cultural values

and practices, and the total way of life. The Menilik's image of a conqueror is symbolically reflected through the church erected at the city center, *Feres Magala*.

According to some of Harari informants, and affirmed by historical documents, the destruction of the principal mosque and its replacement by Medhane Alem Church is a painful historical event for the local people, and it portrays the power of domination of the northerners on the city for more than a century. It is the only church that is established inside the walled city where there are more than hundred mosques and shrines exist. On the other hand, the city's Orthodox Christian followers who live in both the old and new city attend this church more frequently than any other churches.

The new city is of recent creation and dates from the occupation of the city by the Ethiopian empire at the end of the nineteenth century. It is the product of the city's development and growth following its forced opening to outsiders after the conquest. Some new populations, especially Christians, immigrated thus to Harar and moved in to the western outlying zones outside the walls, on terrains barren of any construction (Santelli 2004: 177). The first neighborhoods were surrounded by a zone that was far from dense, and occupied in a haphazard manner by facilities built in the second half of the twentieth century. These include the stadium, a hospital, and a certain number of public and private schools- the whole forming sort of an urban fringe of public facilities encircling the first neighborhoods of the new city (Santelli 2004: 177-180). The large buildings outside the old city walls continuously serve as administrative buildings for the past successive governments.

It should be mentioned that in Harar the opposition between the latter and the old city was very strong. For instance, because of ritual differences in slaughtering, separate Muslim and Christian market places are maintained although such strict demarcation is not openly observed currently.

Chapter Four

Major Areas of Inter Ethnic Interaction

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have described the four ethnic groups, basic economic activities, factors for in-migration, and the structure of the city. In this chapter, discussion is made to present factors of inter-ethnic interactions and common area of inter-ethnic interaction including intermarriage, economic interdependence, and the role of voluntary associations, and boundary maintenance and ethnic dichotomization among these ethnic groups.

Discussion of inter-ethnic interaction between the Oromo, Amhara, Harari and Gurage is a complex but very crucial in the analysis of ethnicity and inter-ethnic relations in Harar. The inter-ethnic interaction that was observable between these ethnic groups in Harar city shows different features. For instance, it should be noted that the *Afran Qallo* Oromo share significant markers of ethnicity such as religion, shared memory of history and some similar traditional practices with the Harari. In this regard, Caulk also state, “the Islamic and mercantile legacy of the [Harar] town was deeply enough rooted... to flourish among the *Afran Qallo* and to distinguish them, like the Harari themselves, from their conquerors [Amhara]”. (Caulk 1977: 386) Yet, these shared commonalities could never stop long history of conflict between these groups for many centuries. In addition, the Oromo and Harari peoples’ relation with the Amhara people have been characterized by a long history of tension and conflict.

Both the Oromo and Harari share a common history of conquest by Amhara, that happened before a century. On the contrary, the Oromo and Harari have had more harmonious and friendly periods of interaction with the Gurage. The Amhara and Gurage share a common element such as shared

memory of history (both of them are late comers to the city), closer linguistic affinities (both of them belong to the Semitic language group), religion (as a substantial number of Gurage are Orthodox Christian even if I have no actual data at hand), and their current subordinate political position in the city. In this regard, the researcher has questioned the view that ethnic difference bring about conflict while sharing similar elements of ethnic markers bring harmony. Rather, we need to investigate factors of inter-ethnic interaction between these groups.

4. 2 Cultural Practice as A Means of Inter-Ethnic Interaction

4.2.1 Marriage

As it is discussed in the previous chapter, from the residents of Harar city, the Harari and the Oromo are considered as the inhabitant people and the Amhara and the Gurage are immigrants or children of immigrants. The Harari who established the city and the Oromo who are the inhabitants of the city as well as the surrounding area since the fifteenth century are considered indigenous people to the Amhara and Gurage migrants. Marriage customs and its practice in Harar showed a various feature of the ethnic groups.

Marriage relations may have been among factors that contributed to Harari-Oromo harmonious relations. In contrast, restriction on intermarriage between Amhara-Harari ethnic groups increases the dichotomy between groups until the present time. On the other hand, inter marriage between Oromo-Amhara and Amhara-Gurage established despite the maintenance of ethnic and religious boundaries between these groups continues. As it has been discussed so far, the inter-ethnic relations between these groups are characterized by diverse features.

Connected with intermarriage there are important questions to be raised in relation to identity of individuals through marriage across ethnic boundaries. Barth (1969: 13-16) once argued in this respect "Ethnic distinctiveness persists regardless of flow of personnel across ethnic boundaries."

In this case, I will consider the maintenance of ethnic identity of Harari men who married to Oromo and Gurage women. Here, the question of ethnic identity goes beyond the claims of genealogical tracing including language usage, cultural and historical recognition within the city and the way of life of the Harari acceptance and active participation within the traditional forms of social organization. The myth of an Arab ancestor is also often used by Harari as a vehicle for the exclusion of other Muslims (particularly the Oromo and the Gurage) and is intended to affirm the boundary and thus strengthen its claim as an Islamic centre community. According to informants Suleyman Dori and Bekke Mummmed², this has been reflected in the Harar's position that the surrounding peoples can bring their goods to the town every day 'while the land belongs to Harari, others can work and live'.

The Marriage relations between Oromo and Amhara ethnic groups are increasing across time while the urban social interaction brought these people in close contact in every day life. This is also applicable for the existing inter-ethnic interaction between the Amhara-Gurage and Oromo-Gurage people too. On the other hand, restriction on intermarriage increases the dichotomy between groups as the Harari and Amhara ethnic groups case is evidence. Intermarriage between these two peoples has been almost impractical. As many of Harari informants argue, if a Harari marry a Christian (Amhara in this case) he or she would be ostracized and barred from the community social life. Here, religion boundary plays an important role in dichotomization of ethnic groups. As it has been discussed so far, inter-ethnic relations between these ethnic groups are full of divergent views among the groups concerned.

² Suleyman Dorri and Bekke Mummmed, Harar, 4 and 22 February 2011

Now a days, the market transaction in the historically long established city of Harar shows a fascinating moment for an ethnographer especially interested in inter-ethnic interaction in multi-ethnic urban environment. The market structure slightly differs within the old walled city and in the new city. According to some informants, traditionally, there were markets at each of the five gates⁴ or quarters, attracting the neighbouring population for daily market transaction.

However, from the five gates, the Bedroberi gate market transaction has disappeared and the rest were used to satisfy the demands of people living in the near neighbourhoods. Goods such as eggs, nuts and spices, milk, vegetables, fruit, and grains were sold in these small markets. Despite the smallness in the size of market transaction in these gates, typically they bring different ethnic groups from different quarters for the purpose of transaction. One of the great advantages in these gate markets was that the residents of each five quarters of the city have a choice of using the local market for necessary daily needs.

There are also a number of markets which provide particular items within the walled city. For example, in *Gidir Magala*, women sell spices which are needed for cooking and local medicine by Oromo, Harari, Gurage and Amhara people. There is also butter and milk markets where a number of Oromo women sell their products in small markets as well as going door-to-door to their clients. The Felana gate and the Argoberi gate are known for selling the best quality *khat* next to Sellasie *khat tera* (khat quarter). One can wonder particularly in the mid-day when a large number of *khat* consumer men gather from different part of the city buy from female *khat* sellers in the above-mentioned gates. Oromo, who brings small and big animals from different directions to the city market, dominate the livestock market that is located just beyond the Felana gate.

⁴ There are five gates in the wall which allowed Harar to be connected to the surrounding area. These are Asmaddin Beri on the west, Bedro Beri in south-west, Suquat Beri in south-east, Argobi Beri in the east and finally Assum Beri in the north.

Furthermore, several types of basket are created and marketed within the multi-ethnic city of Harar. These include baskets market in the tradition of Oromo and Amhara ethnic groups, in addition to traditional and contemporary Harari basket styles. Where different types of goods and produce are the domains of different ethnic groups, inter-ethnic relations are necessitated. Amhara, Harari and Gurage women buy their fruit and vegetables, spices and grains mostly from Oromo and occasionally Harari and Amhara women. Harari women buy prepared *ukhat* from Gurage and Oromo women, and milk and butter from Oromo and occasionally Somali women. Oromo and Harari men buy meat from Oromo and Gurage Muslim butchers and *khat* from Oromo women.

The market facilitates interaction between members of different ethnic groups and this is particularly functional especially for women who are most of the time spent in the domestic chores. It led to interact and share information within their neighbourhood, with close relatives as well as with their hearsay friends. Today, the largest numbers of market sellers are Oromo, followed by Amhara, Gurage and then perhaps small numbers of Harari.

Comparatively looking, the market and the type of goods owned by traders in the city depict the existing ethnic stratification and trade specialization between the four ethnic groups. The Gurage were engaged in from small trade such as shop keeping to large luxury and manufactured goods. The Amharas on the other hand actively dominate the grain trade and while substantially participate in the contraband business activity like the Oromo and Gurage ethnic groups. Furthermore, the long period of experiences of controlling the long distance trade of goods for export and import persist with the virtual domination of Harari traders' over import and manufactured luxury items. For instance, the Harari merchants moved out of the small markets and exclusively dominate the shops in the main road markets of the city and along *Andennyä Mangad* where they sell imported and manufactured goods.

On the other hand, the Amhara and the Gurage more or less exclusively dominate the hotel service industry. Generally, this shows the status demarcation that existed in the market transaction in which the Harari leave the market space of selling subsistence and perishable items for other ethnic groups. In fact, the Arab and Indians had owned especially the wholesale business until the late 1920s and early 1930s. It was the Italian occupation which attracted Hararis into paying more attention to large-scale trading, at a convenient time when wealthy foreigners left the city. At the same time, Hararis had lost most of their orchards on the outskirts of the old city to the Shoan Amhara.

Within the new city, we find a number of large market transaction centres that present in different parts of the city. The major difference of these markets from those that existed within the walled city was that every one could find whatever needed items or product within the big markets more or less at one place. Shewa ber is one of the biggest and large market centers in the city of Harar. This trade area gathers people from the whole directions of the region. One of the great moments that were observable in this market area is an agglomeration of different ethnic groups who engage in selling and buying goods and services. In addition, other large markets are found in the new city such as *Sigara tera* and Sillasié business and *khat* markets. Now a day Sellasié *khat tera* serves its customers by providing the best quality *khat* product in the city.

Although a choice of language in trade transaction is free, most of the time Amharic and *Afaan Oromo* language serve as a medium of communication based on the market settings. What makes the market transaction interesting in such situation is that an individual shopkeeper or cloth trader may simultaneously speak one or more of these languages in the market. If one of the actors in a transaction belongs to a specified ethnic group, the tendency is to use his/her language for communication. Thus, the Oromo *chat* or shopkeeper trader will use Amharic when discussing

business with his/her Amhara customer. However, he/she will, speak *Afaan Oromo* to his/her Oromo ethnic group and Oromo to the Harari or Gurage trader.

4.4 Voluntary associations

The term voluntary associations refers to uni or poly-ethnic groupings designed to solve problems or facilitate social interaction in the fast growing and changing urban centers. These could be such institutions as regional development associations, neighbourhood mutual aid associations, rotating credit associations, religious associations, kinship associations, and modern associations like professional associations and recreational associations. Many social scientists in general and anthropologists in particular state the role of voluntary associations in facilitating and maintaining social life as well as inter-ethnic interaction in urban setting. For instance, Kenneth Little wrote that "From the point of view of social organization one of the most striking characteristics of these [west African] modern towns is the very large number and variety of voluntary associations" (Little 1982: 123). This is also true to many Ethiopian towns including Harar.

Voluntary associations that are found in Harar include social, political, religious as well as economic ones. Social voluntary associations could be many kinds but the major one in this regard is the *iddir* (burial associations) and *afocha*. *Maradaja Mahber* which is a variant of *iddir* but with an extended function is now a days becoming common in the town. Voluntary associations that are based on a politics are peculiarly recent phenomena in Harar as the same case in the entire country.

We can find religious associations that are formed by both Christians and Muslims. For instance, *Sanbate* and *Mahiber* are the two most common forms of religious voluntary association among the members of the Orthodox faith. The major form of economic voluntary association is the *iqub* (rotating credit association) and *Jemeha* (Harari women's association for saving money). *Iqub* can

take a number of features, both formal and informal. In this part, I will discuss the two most important voluntary associations *iddir* and *iquib*.

4.4.1 Iddir

Literally, *iddir* is a voluntary association based on religion, employment, ethnic origin, or neighbourhood and it is primarily used to help members in time of death of a family member. A comparison of the different types of indigenous associations and institutions in Ethiopia reveals that *iddirs* are the most widespread type, prevalent in both rural and urban settings and sometimes transcending divides of gender, generation, wealth, education, religion, and ethnicity (Pankhurst and Demen 2000: 38).

While the origins of *iddir* require more historical research, according to available published sources, this institution may have originated during the early twentieth century and it became popular through expansion and diffusion particularly by the Gurage ethnic group during the Italian occupation (Pankhurst and Endrias 1958 cited in Getahun 1997: 53). Some attribute its origin to urbanization and claim that migrants who came to work in the city started it. Others associate it with the Italian occupation when social life was disrupted (Seifu 1969: 8-9).

In Harar there are so many *iddirs* that basis their formation on exclusive ethnic, neighbourhood and occupation. There are community *iddirs* (*yakababiliyekebele*), based on locality and comprised of people living in the same vicinity, *kebele*, or neighborhood; institutional *iddirs*, based on work place (*yemesriabet*); friends' *iddirs* (*yegwadegnoch/yebabroadekoch*), referring to former schoolmates or close friends who grew up or went to school together, and family *iddirs* (*yebetesch, yebetezemed*), involving blood relatives, kin, or very close friends.

In addition, there are women's *iddirs* (*yeselech/yegwada*), youth *iddirs* (*yewetatoch*), *iddirs* of displaced people (*yetefenaqay*), squatters' or settlers' *iddirs*, Church or Mosque *iddirs*. Furthermore, there are also coffee *iddirs* (*yebunna*), roasted grain (*yeqolona*) and beer *iddirs* (*yebira*). It is worth stressing that some types of *iddirs* seem to be relatively recent, notably the women's *iddir* and the youth *iddir*, and others such as the displaced persons' and squatters' *iddirs* may be responses to recent urban crises. However, the variety of *iddirs* offers the city dwellers a range of choice of association, and in many cases individuals and/or households may belong to several *iddirs*.

One of the interesting things that was observed in these *iddir* is that they sometimes serve as a manifestation of one's ethnic identity and the boundary maintenance between ethnic groups in the city of Harar. For instance, there is a clear role difference between the institutions of *iddir* and *afocha* for the Amhara and Harari people respectively. *Afocha* for Harari community serve as a means of exclusion or demarcation mark of a Harari member from other neighbourhood ethnic groups. This is particularly essential for the identification of the Harari from the Christian Amhara people.

The presence of ethnic exclusion of the new settlers in the city since the end of twentieth century by the local Harari and Oromo people leads to the formation of ethnic based *iddir* by the Amhara and the Gurage. The Amhara soldiers' *iddir* still exist especially in the new city where more or less the majority of the members of these *iddir* are veterans of the past successive governments and their children. This was also practical for the Harar Gurage community. Maru Ashagre⁵, who is the current secretary of the Sodo *iddir* association, said that the feeling of alienation from the total

⁵ Maru Ashagre, Harar, 2 March 2011

social interaction of the city in the early period led to the formation of the Sodo *iddir* that was established by small number of members.

Even though this *iddir* continued for many years to be exclusive of migrants of the Sodo Gurage, later on it began to include members from other Gurage ethnic groups such as Meskal, Welene and Kebene. As informant Maru and Wondmagegn⁶ state, the process of establishing a united Gurage *iddir* was takes a long period. What is clearly understood from this *iddir* is that when the *iddir* formed it established as sub-ethnic based voluntary association while through time has grown into the largest Gurage *iddir* in the city.

Despite the existence of various *iddir* established by Gurage community on the basis of religious affiliation and closeness in birth place in their original homeland, there is a large Gurage *iddir* in Harar that unite almost all members of the Harar Gurage. When a need to meet arise all members of Gurage come together and discuss the various issues who are represented from Sodo, Welene, Kebena, Sebat Bet, Meskena and others Gurage ethnic groups. Presently, the *iddir* has more than 800 Heads of households as members.

In spite of the fact that the older *iddirs* are heading towards poly-ethnics and presently open their doors to anyone, other smaller *iddir* are constantly formed based on ethnic group, religion, neighbourhood and other criteria. This is a good indicator of the process of social interaction within various groups in the city which perpetuate the existence of *iddir* as voluntary association. According to Mulat Gezaw⁷, during the imperial time the government discouraged and even forced ethnic-based *iddirs* to change their names and reconsider their membership for registration. On the other hand, during the *Dergue* period the government established revolutionary structures known

⁶ Maru Ashagre and Wondmagegn, Harar, 7 March 2011

⁷ Mulat Gezaw, Harar, 11 February 2011

as *kebele* (urban dwellers associations), and the *iddirs* were viewed by government as reactionary forces. In particular there was opposition from government to ethnic-based *iddirs*, and there were attempts by government to insist on *iddirs* to be formed on a *kebele* or *ketena* (sub-kebele) basis.

According to Mulat and Haji Ali Keyiro⁸, there is evidence of a revival of ethnic-based *iddirs*, with both formerly ethnic-based *iddirs* reasserting themselves and new *iddirs* being formed since 1990s. As some of the city informants argued, *iddirs* have become increasingly poly-ethnic in recent years, though there is a tendency for one ethnic group to dominate a given *iddir*. For many of my Oromo, Amhara, Gurage and Harari informants, the reason for joining an *iddir* are varied. However, all of them explained the vital role of *iddir* in time of funeral and mutual assistance at the time of mourning. The desire to get both moral as well as financial help to cover the funeral expenses is very significant and indispensable. In urban towns, a voluntary association like *iddir* dominantly fulfills this kind of social service.

4.4.2 Iqub

Iqub is the other type of voluntary association which helps the process of adaptation to urban life. This association is known as revolving credit associations and they could take different size or forms. Nevertheless, they are essentially similar in that they are employed to solve economic problems and further a city dweller's financial success.

In Harar, there are different types of revolving credit associations although the rules and regulations of these associations are more or less similar. *Iqub* is an association of members who form a group in order to raise money which can be used for a number of purposes. For instance, *jemcha* is Harari women's associations for saving money. On the other hand, *Beha* is association

⁸ Mulat Gezaw and Haji Ali Keyiro, Harar, 11 and 19 February 2011

of Harari women of comparable age, economic and social status for giving money during deaths and weddings. *Mureno* is also another Harari women's association of help for good and bad times known as 'kichen association'. However, there is no standard formal structure for an *iquib*.

The intricacy of the process and interpersonal relationship around an *iquib* grows as the size of the *iquib* increases due to the growth of membership and their contributions. Most of the small *iquib* were formed and dissolved in a short time. Recent migrants of the city were embarked on small *iquib* as a main means of adaptive strategies to urban life. In this case, there are a number of small Gurage *iquib* associations formed by migrants who came from different Gurage areas. As such, these associations tend to have a strong ethnic character. This is true for some ethnic groups as compared to others. In those ethnic groups where early adaptation depends on kin-based networks, the small *iquibs* usually involve members of a single ethnic group only. This is particularly true for both Gurage and Amhara ethnic groups.

They serve as the portrayal of one's ethnic identity and boundary maintenance within a particular community. Although the primary importance of *iquib* is economical, the social role it plays in maintaining a particular ethnic group was undeniable now days in the city of Harar. For instance, the Harari women's associations such as *Mureno*, *Beha* and *Jemeha* are used to help members in time of need and they overtly looked economical. They served in keeping the community ethnic identity in a close networks. Nevertheless, there are small *iquib* associations formed by many ethnic groups. In this regard, we can find a large number of small *iquib* that are formed by many ethnic groups who live in close neighbourhoods.

On the other hand, there are big *iquib* associations which involve different ethnic groups as membership and may have either written rules defining procedures of their operation. As I

observed in those main *iquib* associations in the city, do have a written law defining the conditions of membership, contribution and payment. According to Dejene (1999) a typical by-laws of *iquib* defines: the roles of the chairman and secretary should lead the *iquib*; the amount of money to be contributed each week or month; the benefits accruing to office-holders; and procedures to be adopted by the *iquib*. In order to reduce the incidence of default, *iquib* uses innovative approaches such as effective screening methods, keeping emergency/reserve funds, etc.

4.4. Boundary Maintenance

Boundary maintenance is basic dichotomizing aspect in ethnic groups' categorization. In this regard, the nature and degree of stereotypical representation of the 'other' influences inter-ethnic interaction. There must be "significant other," because ethnic groups are always relational. There are always "we" and "us" in relation to a "you" and "them" and the relationship is usually in flux, rather than stagnant (Getachew 2006: 8). In dichotomized and/or complementarized groups a presentation of self and the other cannot be fully understood from the groups' front-stage performances alone. As Berreman (1962: 10-11) describes, it is also played at the back-stage performances of our subjects.

Barth's (1969) and his colleague' study are instructive in this regard because their studies provide us with knowledge about the groups' front-stage and back-stage performances in reflecting about self-image and image of the 'other'. My Oromo, Amhara, Harari, and Gurage subjects reflect both covert and overt expressions about their self-image and image about the other group. Comparatively, however, the Gurage informants were careful to conceal both images of themselves and about the other ethnic groups. On the contrary, the 'curtain' between the front-stage and back-stage performances of my Oromo, Amhara and Harari informants was very transparent.

At this point, my two field assistants and I, tried to employ different mechanisms to protect and enter into the back regions respectively. As Berreman stated:

An ethnographer is usually evaluated by himself and his colleagues on the basis of his insights into the back region performances of his subjects. His subjects are evaluated by their fellows on the basis of the degree to which they protect the secrets of their team and successfully project the image of the team that is acceptable to the group for front region presentation (1962: 11).

In this case, I came across some of the back-stage information through my field assistants who seemed to 'share' and 'know' similar 'secrets' of the groups. The Harari and Gurage have self-images as 'peace-loving group', 'hard working', 'industrious' and 'self reliant' as opposed to the Oromo and Amhara whom they presented as 'war-like', 'poor in cooperated social life' and 'no permanent settlement'. The Gurage self-image as a hard working and peace-loving group is also included in the scanty information we find about the group.

Harari informants overtly but not often in public presence of Oromo and Amhara audiences express their self-image and their image about the Oromo and Amhara. The Harari present themselves as "brave, proud, strong group, wealthy, superior culture [referring to the urban culture, which the Oromo and Amhara do not have]" compared to the Oromo and Amhara whom they portray as "uncultured people, unconfident, weak and poor, warrior, inferior cultural traditions [they often refer to the story that Oromo borrowed the Islam religion from the Harari]". As I have discussed in the previous part of this chapter, Harari conservatively focus on descent, orthodox Islam and customs for eligibility to *afocha* membership, which is in turn indispensable in demarcating group boundary. Conventional selection mechanisms are thus related to the group's basic 'markers' of ethnic identity (self image). In line with this, Waldron (1980: 395) also

describes similar ethnic self-image reflected by the Harari and their views about the Oromo and Amhara.

On the other hand, the Amhara portray themselves as “brave, civilized people and feeling of matured and a unified people” while viewing Harari and Oromo as “uncivilized traditions [in terms of sanitation and hygiene], violent and atypical way of life”. Here, my focus is not on contents of these stereotypes but on their implications in creating boundaries by dichotomizing the differences. Notably, the covert images of self and of the other overshadow the assumed similarities and intensify the variance. I argue that these ethnic boundary maintenance whether covertly or overtly expressed contributed their share in dichotomizing the groups’ ethnic identities and helped them to maintain ethnic boundaries in their long history of interaction in spite of flow of personnel across ethnic boundaries.

Common area of inter-ethnic interaction such as marriage, economic interdependence and participation in different voluntary associations plays a prominent role to the boundary maintenance and dichotomization between these groups in the city. For instance, marriage is a very important factor in understanding the features of inter-ethnic relationships between different groups and the extent of inter-ethnic integration and the maintenance of ethnic identities. Still marriage is used as one distinctive feature in shaping the ethnic identification and ascriptions between groups in contact. While the marriage relations between the Oromo and Harari still persists in the city, marriage restriction, for instance, between Amhara and Harari ethnic groups sharpened the boundary maintenance between groups for a century.

For several centuries Harari have interacted with the Oromo in social, political and economic spheres. Such interdependence or symbiosis between these two groups also constitutes the areas of

articulation of ethnic boundaries. The Harari enables to maintain their relative boundness as a group through monopolizing the local economy. In this regard, they maintain cultural boundaries and identity while engaging in daily transactions with other ethnic groups. Although market exchanges and exchanges of goods and service are common between the four groups, the type of goods owned by traders shows the existing ethnic stratification and trade specialization between these groups.

For instance, the Harari remain a relatively wealthy community employed in prestigious professions as merchants, and administrators, rather than in farming or other forms of manual labor, hosting expensive wedding ceremonies, and displaying material wealth in 'traditional' dress. The remarkable homogeneity still persist where no Harari appear to be destitute, homeless, begging in the street or employed in position of servitude. Here, the maintenance of Harari prestige is the result of inclusive processes and accommodating strategies through their social institutions mainly by *afocha*. In other words, the social institution of *afocha* plays a crucial role not only in creating a feeling of helping each other within members and social support in time of need, but also vital in maintaining the identity of the Hararis to a profound degree.

Voluntary associations were vital in maintaining the boundary between ethnic groups in the city. *Iddir* and *iquib* function in different contexts and different variables. In some cases, *iquib* is open to certain group as *iddir* irrespective of ethnic background. On the other hand, *iquib* is attached to kin groups than *iddir* which in many cases is open to members of different ethnic groups. It has been argued that *iddirs* have become increasingly polyethnic in recent years, though there is a tendency for one ethnic group to dominate a given *iddir* as suggested earlier. In this regard, the influence of ethnicity in their organization varies accordingly. The common areas of inter-ethnic interaction such as marriage, economic interdependence and voluntary associations altogether

contributed to ethnic complementarities between these groups. At the same time, the contestability of their relationship enabled them to maintain their boundary in their long history of interaction.

To sum up, it should be noted that today overt signs or diacritical features of ethnic identity are not so distinctively observable among members of the four groups. Members of these groups living in adjacent neighborhoods are bilingual in *Afaan Oromo* and Amharic, and/or Harari languages. Language proficiency is no more a 'marker' of distinctiveness in these urban areas. Moreover, in most cases, both the Oromo and Harari was the follower of the same religion and even attend the same or similar mosques. Similarly, the Amhara and majority of the Christian Gurage who used to live in the city attend the same church. As I observed during my fieldwork and from my previous experience about the groups, rather than these objective features, subjective elements of self-identification and ascription by others are central to group categorization. All in all this validate the argument of Barth that ethnic boundaries are not fixed but changing.

Chapter Five

Migration and Inter-Ethnic Interaction

5.1 Introduction- Migration

Migration is a physical transaction which is a special form of spatial mobility of human population involving movement, change of residence, change of social environments, distance and time. Broadly, there are two types of migration: Internal and transnational. Internal migration refers to movement of people within boundaries of a country. Transnational migration refers to movement of people across national boundaries involving people of varying nationality and race (HPNRS 2001: 41-42). The most important migration for developing countries including Ethiopia is internal migration. This is particularly prominent demographic character in Harari Region. The four types of internal migration are rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to rural and urban to urban. The fundamental force of urban population growth in the region is rural urban migration (HPNRS 2001: 42).

De Haan and Rogaly (2002) argue that migration needs to be seen as both social and economic process in order to understand the perspectives of migration. The specific way in which migration is arranged and what it means to particular people is bounded up with social identities. Different groups such as a younger or older person, a woman or a man, a member of a particular ethnic group or social class often have different migration patterns that vary across space and time, and are contested. Thus, migration is one way in which boundaries around social identities may be affirmed, broken down or otherwise changed, including, but not always, through the conscious agency of migrants.

5.2 Patterns of Rural-Urban Migration

There are two types of migration processes. The first process is seasonal migration by which individuals come for a short period usually attracted by seasonal job opportunities. These migrants are those who have a family (at least a wife) in their birthplace and who had migrated to town with specific objectives like raising money to buy oxen or start trade and usually repetitive in their movement. It means that these migrants migrate for a few months or years with both the intention and the need to return. The second is permanent migration by which often individuals and occasionally families move to the town to reside for unspecified periods. If the situation is suitable at the destination area, the permanent migrants are not intending to return to their birthplace of origin once they migrated.

When looking the migration patterns, members of different ethnic groups migrate seasonally to Harar town. Yet, some of the ethnic groups show a more regular pattern of seasonal migration. The Oromo are clearly very important in this respect. Their seasonal migration habitually takes place due to recurrent and frequent drought and famine in the rural areas of the region as well as in neighbouring regions forced to migrate to the city continuously. Most of these migrants are farmers who usually come due to a shortage of food.

According to the male focus group discussion the non-conducive rural environments induced their migration. Some of them stated that the main push factors is rural vulnerability and lack of assets including diminishing of farmland in all their rural vicinity and shortage of land holdings, lack of rain, and recurrent drought forced to migrate. Others state that the high number of household members, lack of off-farm employment opportunities and imposition of heavy taxes were factors that caused their migration to the city in search of means of survival. In addition to this, pull factors for their migration mentioned by the urban male migrants included increasing construction

activities, demand for urban domestic workers, relatively better pay for service work and the presence of social support from the permanent migrants in Harar.

A few other migrants stated that they would be able to harvest their crop when they return from Harar. The possibility of involving other farmers in harvesting makes it easier for them to collect their crop in a short time. This kind of seasonal migration takes place on a large scale and it is estimated that every year thousands of farmer migrants came to Harar. The key informants pointed out that the migration of people from the above ethnic groups reflects previous migration history in the city.

They mentioned that individuals from the same ethnic groups often settle in the neighborhoods where most of people from their areas of origin have already settled. This situation also works for other ethnic group migration experience in the city. In this respect, while the majority of the '*Birra Sefer*' migrants are from the Amhara ethnic groups, most of the migrants in '*Chefe Sefer*' mostly have Gurage origins. Similarly, the majority of the migrants in '*Bole Sefer*' are from Oromo and Amhara ethnic groups, while migrants from Oromo and Gurage also predominate in '*Kerra Sefer*' and '*Sheikh Sharif Sefer*', respectively. These settlement patterns have helped to consolidate ethnic-based networks and associations, which are instrumental in keeping networks with their rural areas.

In addition, it serves as a place of destination for the migrants who cannot directly go to their work place as they do not have a definite knowledge of where they would be working. Similarly, migrants also get jobs upon their arrival through networks which are based on birth place connections. The story of Abdi Hassen, a seasonal migrant from Fedis *wereda* was demonstrating

the pattern of seasonal migration among the Oromo peasants in the region. He narrates his short story as follows:

Abdi Hassen was born in Fedis Wereda, Harari in 1975 from a poor peasant who have no land and a plough ox. His family life entirely depended on ploughing other's farmlands. Poverty and lack of farmland forced him to migrate to other areas. In 1990, he moved with his aunt to live in Kersa Wereda, Oromia region. After staying there for three years, he moved to Harar in 1993. He lived there until 1996 and then returned to his birthplace, Fedis. From his migration experience, he learned that his migration to Harar has increased his financial capacity. He has strong social links with long-term migrants from Fedis and he is a member of other social organizations like Oromo afocha in Harar.

The case of Abdi Hassen migration is due to shortage of farmland and rural poverty. He got better opportunity by moving out of his home area and establishing a new social identity among some members of urban communities that value his social status, skills, and products positively. In addition, some seasonal migrants also revealed that most common reasons for their migration to Harar were 'pull' factors particularly its proximity and the perception of relatively better employment opportunities in the construction and service sectors. This seasonal migration experience provided them better opportunity to accumulate financial capital.

In this regard, the case of Abdi Hassen is in many ways similar to a number of other seasonal migrants. The story is illustrative of the major factor which forces the rural peasants to seek additional income by way of seasonal migration. Nevertheless, the Oromo are not the only seasonal migrants of the city. The Gurage also temporarily migrate to Harar. For instance, the researcher has observed Gurage migrant who came to Harar to search for job. However, the pattern of seasonal migration among these ethnic groups is not easily evident as the case with the Oromo.

There is a clear difference with gender when we compare the underlying causes for the migration of Oromo female from the rural areas of Harari region. The focus group discussion with the female revealed that they moved from adjacent rural peasant *Kebeles* due to factors related to employment in the town. It was also found out from the discussion that they were mostly divorced or single, and engaged in domestic labor work, small business activity, and some of them in commercial sex work.

The long-term migration to Harar was mostly dominated by migrants from rural areas outside of the Harari region. Rural destitutions and vulnerability caused by landlessness are the main reasons for the majority of the male migrants. In addition to these factors, most of the female long-term migrants moved to Harar due to factors related to marriage, notably to join their spouses or to flee from failed marriage experiences. The female focus group discussants indicated that some female migrants from the neighboring region, notably from Bedeno, Gara Mulata, Jarso and Combolcha area in the Oromia region, moved to Harar to follow their family members who had already migrated on a permanent basis to work in the city.

On the other hand, seasonal or short-term migration for men is not entirely limited to the poor. Some relatively better off farmers migrate to Harar. Ethnic-based networks play important role in facilitating migration from their respective areas of origin and supporting new migrants in their urban settlement. The link with rural areas outside of the Harari and Oromia region indicates a strong link with the rural areas of the southern region, mostly manifested by chain of migration with Gurage people. For instance, female migrants from the Gurage area in the South, moved to Harar to carry out small trading and find employment in the private service sectors. There are also female migrants from Amhara and Oromia regions who are engaged in domestic work as waiters

in small bars, restaurants, and local trade activity. They also engaged in backing *injera*, roadside *chat* sale, in the construction sector, in the contraband business, and in commercial sex work.

Except for the small proportion of women who migrated to Harar on a long-term basis with spouses or families, most female migrants, notably those from the Oromia and Amhara region, have been divorced and widows. One reason why these groups of female migrants considered migration as an alternative was the poor social status of women in the society. Furthermore, according to the key informants from the FGD, there is a new trend with female migrants notably from Gurage area, who are unmarried or single moved to carry out small trading and find employment in the service sector. This situation is also work for other ethnic group migrants such as the Amhara. The following case illustrates the above point:

Mulubrhan Demlew, was born in a place called Adet wereda around Bahirdar. She moved to Harar in 1996 when she was 14-years-old to live with her uncle. Her uncle decided to bring Mulubrhan Demlew from her home area when he revealed that her family agreed to give her to an old man for marriage. While living in Harar she started working as assistant of a small trade business. Now she is working as a storekeeper and earns 450 birr per month in Harar. She feels that her migration to Harar allowed her to escape from forced marriage involving abduction. She is also happy that she attends an evening program in college in Harar.

This case study shows how a difficult situation is related to early marriage from rural area might lead to migration to urban area in a large degree. However, migration has increasingly offered her education and job opportunity that was not available to her at home. Migration is also an easy way for her to escape from being indulged into forced or early marriage. According to one of the female informant's argument, in the early time, migration to city by women is considered shameful and only the poorest groups do. Saida Mohammed⁹, mentioned "Oromo women are often supposed

⁹ Saida Mohammed, Harar, 5 March 2011

to be active in managing their households' chores. They must be engaged with activities within the household such as cooking and washing. Women, who have no resource to do this and who leave their children and husbands unattended considered unlucky, weak, and less responsible".

According to the key informants, long-term migration of the Gurage for trade purposes has been common and most migrants in Harar city engaged in a variety of domestic urban activities that range from owning big hotels and restaurants to jobs like shoe shining. There is a well-known Amharic saying which states that "there is no place (in Ethiopia) not yet reached by the Gurage and Land Rovers". Such a statement implicitly assumes that the Gurage's privilege to conduct trade in every corner of the country would not be challenged. Supporting this view, William Shack argues that the beginning of large-scale migration of the Gurage to "the land acts of 1929 which made taxation payable in money" (Shack 1968: 77). According to Shack, the primary reason of migration is the need for cash, but he also identifies other factors such as "escaping domestic and tribal control, death of a parent, and money needed for the celebration of marriage ceremony." (Shack 1968: 77)

On the other hand, a number of permanent male Orthodox Christian migrants from Harar return to their rural areas of origin at a certain time. For instance, a large number of young Christian Gurage migrants who used to live in Harar often return to their birthplace during the *Meskel* holiday in September. Single male migrants that the *Meskel* holiday offers a chance for unmarried men to find wives get married and bring new spouses from their place of birth. Much of the migration was a chain migration whereby former migrants attracted relatives or people from the same area, who come to live with them or work for them and then set themselves up independently. The presence of migrants attracted others, and relatives often joined established migrants.

According to Chernet and Maru Ashagre¹⁰, the levels of out-migration to areas of origin have decreased over the past five-six years because of higher costs of transport and limited savings from urban employment. This becomes more common among married and long-term migrants who found it difficult to save enough money for their transportation and other expenses in rural areas. Return migrants to their Gurage homeland mostly include migrants who used to engage in the informal sector and evicted due to holding of unofficial urban land plots and restrictions on street vending in Harar. This dislocation from their business was mainly observable during the last five years. According to Maru Ashagre¹¹ “the return home of evicted Gurage merchants from Harar city was also observed due to the change of government and the introduction of ethnic-based regionalization in the early 1990s”. Yet, in time of crises, social support from friends, neighborhood, and kinship are all important for the majority of these ethnic groups.

In general, permanent migration involves virtually the major ethnic groups living in Harar. In dealing with permanent rural-urban migration, it is important to note that there is interplay of pull and push factors. However, the push factor that migrants out of their birth place somewhat differs from one ethnic group to another. In general, however, as it will become clear from the cases the underlying cause for all groups of migrants is predominantly economic. Hence, migration must be viewed in search of a more rewarding life (Gmelch and Zenner 1980: 163).

5.3 Inter-Ethnic Interactions at Neighbourhood Level

As previously indicated in chapter three, neighbourhoods in Harar were historically distinguished by the dominant ethnic group residing in it. The present physical division of the city follows the *kebele* boundary demarcated during the *Dergue* regime. In the old walled city (*Jogol*) settlements the houses are built continuously and very few of them have their own compounds. The most

¹⁰ Chernet and Maru Ashagre, Harar, 2 March 2011

¹¹ Maru Ashagre, Harar, 2 March 2011

recent neighbourhoods, especially those built in the last three decades are located in the peripheral parts of the new city. These neighbourhoods are characterized by separate houses with their own compounds.

These types of settlement obviously have an apparent impact in the relationships between members of various ethnic groups. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine the ethnic composition of the neighbourhoods; usually some *kebeles* to be dominantly inhabited by one or two ethnic groups. Accordingly, in the old walled city (*Jogol*) that encompasses from *kebele* 01 to 07 are largely inhabited by the Harari. The peripheral *kebeles*, 18 and, 19 in the West part of the city are inhabited by Amhara and Oromo. The remaining 10 *kebeles* of the new urban city are mainly dominated by Amhara even though there are a substantial number of other ethnic groups. However, the increase in number of the Oromo population in the entire city is highly observable recently. This is because demographically the entire city is surrounded by Oromo people and continues migration of the Oromo on daily basis towards the city made their number largest in region.

Nevertheless, what is important to note here is that some ethnic groups tend to be dominant in some neighbourhoods. The major ones amongst these are the Amhara and the Oromo both in the old walled city and in the new city. On the other hand, the Harari, who inhabited in the city since its foundation reside more or less exclusively in the old walled city in closed neighbourhoods. However, the social interaction at the level of neighbourhoods involves an interaction of different ethnic groups in daily contact. However, still neighbourhoods in the old walled city were publicly categorized particularly by Harari people as good or bad on the basis of their ethnic make-up. As some informants states, the few remaining exclusively Harari *toyach* or neighbourhoods viewed as

good while the Amhara *toyach*, with their status for drinking and prostitution were considered as bad.

Neighbourhood relationships could be either inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic depending on the character of the specific neighbourhoods as discussed above. In addition, neighbourhood relationships can take a number of forms and in various conditions ethnic neighbourhoods reflect social status variation. This is primarily observed in the old walled city where the majority wealthy Harari community owned large and well organized houses while other ethnic neighbourhood reside in small and crowded house structures with large family. Neighbourhood relationships could involve conflict in urban social life which is characterized as both formal and informal relationships. Many cases that are presented for *kebele* courts are emanating from the neighbourhood interaction and most of the controversy arises over urban land claims.

In addition, probably a significant character of such relationships is their gender specificity. In the neighbourhood, interaction between women is more significant than between men. Relatively, the urban occupational structure which keeps men out of the neighbourhood or at least out of the immediate vicinity of their home for a larger part of the day, keeps many women at home or near their neighbourhoods. In spite of this, the close personal relationships between men also observable in some cases where there is local celebrations in neighbourhood by chewing the local stimulant plant product, *khat*, and drinking coffee together. To sum up, in some regard the present population distribution within the city largely brought alliance between members of various ethnic groups.

5.4 Urban Land Use and its Controversy

The Harar Municipality was established in 1933. According to some oral informants, it is the oldest municipality formed at the same time with Addis Ababa and Asebeteferi city municipalities. At that time the municipality was given 43 *gasha* of land to be utilized under its administration. Before this period, the city administration system was more closely bounded to the old walled city for many centuries. However, the incorporation of Harar into the Ethiopian state brought the end of the previous self-administration system and expanded its urban land control including the new city. Until the end of the Imperial government, the city land use system was run by '*yessefer shum*'. Nevertheless, the land proclamation of the *Dergue* regime did not affect the municipality works. Currently, the municipality is accountable for the administration of six urban and three rural *weredas*. Each *wereda* has autonomous power to administer its own delimited land.

The recent land redistribution project brought instability in the region. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, one can find a number of market centers established to serve different purposes in the city. Shewa ber is a large and multi-ethnic market center that involves a full business activity ranging from petty trade to large business transactions. According to some informants, the trade activity in Shewa ber started in 1950s and 60s. During the early period, it was exclusively visited by the late comers of the Shoan migrants who used to live outside the city wall. Later on, however, when the inter-ethnic interaction between the local people and the new comers came into close contact, it becomes the biggest multi-ethnic market center in the region.

On mid-night of January 13, 2011, Shewa ber, was burned in to ashes (see the attached photo, annex number 2B). The cause of the destruction is still is unknown and controversial. Many people believe that the government is responsible for the problem. According to some informants, this is because when the fire started at the beginning, members of the regional police force banned any

controlling attempts of the people by encircling the entire area. The confrontation between police force members and the people led to the arrest of some individuals. While the damaged property is estimated by the government to range from 7-10 million *birr*, some traders argued that it reach up to 1 billion *birr*.

Although the regional government tried to resettle those traders who lost their land and property in two new areas, tension continues between members of the three trade associations' and the city administration. The regional government claimed that the trades associations' are unrecognized while some informants viewed this kind of denying the legally registered associations by the government as an attempt to make their own 'artificial' associations, which serve to achieve the regional government's objectives. Informants further argue that it is an intended effort to weaken the strong bases of the traders and to include outsider individuals as a member.

According to some informants, the government has purposely planned to evacuate the traders and control the market area before many years. However, the problem resulted in additional difficulty to the existing urban land scarcity. As some informants affirmed, "the regional government always attempts to benefit a certain groups who need to control the area claiming a rightful owner". Some of the traders I interviewed, repeatedly blame the new resettlement project as unfair compensation and biased to particular groups and individuals. As they further stated "the land redistribution is done based on personal affiliation that led to a number of traders to lose their ownership rights while new individuals who have no land before were gaining it".

The current land redistribution also brought ethnic tensions between Harari and Oromo people in the city of Harar that has reached climax following the murder of Mr. Hashim Idris, a Harari People's Regional State Municipality worker. Mr. Hashim, a Harari was shot in Harar *Faras Magala* on April 13, 2011 by unidentified men. However, due to a growing discontent and anger

by Oromos who inhabit most of the area surrounding the city-state, the murder is being blamed on two Oromo sibling businessmen. This single incident was enough to blow up the volatile inter-ethnic tension in the city. Following the political incident, ethnic Harari's first flocked to the regional president's office. The demonstrators demanded the killing of the alleged murderers, whom they identified by name, and vowed to retaliate if no action was taken. The federal riot police was called in immediately and teargas was used to disperse the demonstration.

Concerning the conflict, informants are divided in their views and the clear information over the situation is very conflicting and unclear. Some individuals believe that "Mr. Hashim murder was deliberately done by those known to the regional administration. The attackers were trying to conceal a massive corruption scandal currently under investigation in the regional administration. In this case, Mr. Hashim was seen as a threat to some of the regional government personnel". On the other hand, according to some informants, the suspected Oromo businessmen fired two bullets at the deceased after a brief confrontation over a plot of land and property in the city. In line with this, many of my informants have criticized the Regional investment strategy for providing land only to wealthy Hararis by forcefully displacing *Afran Qallo* Oromo farmers who have plowed the land for many generations. While the region was formed by separating the *Hundane Wereda* from East *Hararghe* Zone of Oromia, the formation of the Harari regional state at the heart of Oromia has always been questioned by local Oromos.

Here, the feeling of being neglected and excluded from the city's benefits is reflected by various ethnic groups. The following statement also support the point under discussion:

Investment in the city is possible only for particular 'groups' of people. If you do not belong to these 'groups' the transaction cost in terms of continuous incentive is huge and that still you need to have some close friend at offices. There is a land in

the city if you belong to an Adere (Harari) and Oromo in some regard. Everybody knows who invested in Harar (Zelalem Dejen and Ummar Yaya¹²).

On the other hand, since 1990s many people who left Ethiopia during the time of *Dergue* returned after many decades to Harar city. As some of informant stated, however, to make it attractive for the Harari diaspora to return to their city and invest their accumulated money, the government offered cheap land for construction purposes. In some regard, the influence of the local religion is covertly reflected on the city investment policy. It is stated that any investment activity should take into account and not bring a negative impacts on the long established 'Islamic city'.

Currently, many people blame the EPRDF government's state structure that brought inter-ethnic tension and conflicts in the country. As Mohammed (2004: 4) also noted, "the 'self-administration' system formed by the government had alienated different ethnic groups, who were in the past living within the same administrative borders, into different regional states and limited their access to common resources". In Harar case, ethnic tension and covert conflict in the region should be viewed as a question on the current regional self-government system. It means that inter-ethnic tension in the region is principally rooted in the nature of the asymmetrical political power representation and unfair distribution of resources. In other word, it is a question on self-government, equality, fair distribution of resources, equal representation and so forth. For instance, resource competition, such as urban land, has led to tension and conflicts between groups that used to live in harmony in the past.

¹² Zelalem Dejen and Ummar Yaya, Harar, 9 and 17 March 2011

Chapter Six

Overview of the Inter-Ethnic Interactions between the Four Ethnic Groups in Harar

6.1 Introduction

As I explained in the previous chapter, ethnographical studies of Harar tend to demonstrate the mapping of the belief of Hararis themselves as a closed ethnic community and their shared experience as an economically strong minority that enjoys a certain cultural superiority over other ethnic groups. In addition, they also indicate the conscious of Hararis historical successes as well as the symbolic role that the town have in the horn of Africa and the existence of an integrated social system in the city of Harar for more than many centuries (see Caulk, 1977; Gibb, 1997; Waldron, 1980; 1984). The demonstration of social life in the city both historically and at present time as peace loving was highly reflected in the works of many scholars. Conflict and competition for power and dominance within and between ethnic groups, were largely limited to a certain historical events.

Many of Harari's historical evidences, however, showed the presence of tension and disagreement especially in the ruling class. For instance, from the early fifteenth and sixteenth century, the ruling class of Harar emirates has been constantly engaged in conflicts regarding leadership and political succession (Waldron 1984: 24-28). Similarly, since the incorporation of the city into the Ethiopian empire in the end of nineteenth century, the Harari emirates families have been engaged in divergent views, one group trying to remain close to the Ethiopian government while another group provoked for union with the then Somalia government. As present below, the most popular

examples of this phenomenon is the incident of the 1940s known as the *Kulub Hannolato*, which intended to separate the city of Harar from the Ethiopian state and unite with Somalia.

The long inter-ethnic interaction between the four groups is historically characterized by cooperation and competition for many centuries. The alliance formation of the local people against the foreign invasions shows their cooperation while conflict and competition over economic and political power between different ethnic groups dominate in the discussion of inter-ethnic relationships in the city of Harar. Some of the major historical events are summarized below.

6.2 The Afran Qallo Oromo-Harari Relationships

The historical inter-ethnic relation between the Oromo and Harari ethnic group was characterized by complex features. Inter-ethnic relations fostered through centuries of interaction in trade and commonality afforded through co-residence and shared religious orthodoxy. In terms of economic relations, for instance, the Oromo are the industrious power of the city of Harar. Where the Oromo own farms, but they rely on the markets of Harar for manufactured articles and sales of crops in order to raise tax money. It is clear that the Oromo provide the economic backbone of the city of Harar through services, farm labour and market transactions, all of which are made at a Harari profit.

At this moment, Oromo labour is still directly used for Harar's benefit. Until recently, if the Oromo may want to integrate and become a member of Harari community, it is possible mainly by halting his/her ethnic identity. This is possible through the mastery of religious knowledge as the first step toward gaining acceptance as educated and religious person by the Harari. After he or she has learned the language of the city and if he or she is successful he or she may be able to marry a Harari. Furthermore, the religious brotherhood that established on Islamic religion for more than a

century is another major area of inter-ethnic interaction between the Oromo and Harari ethnic groups.

6.2.1 Conversion to Islam

Islam had been introduced to the Oromo people long before the Turco-Egyptian conquest. Yet, until 1875, most of the Oromo of the region retained their 'traditional' religion. Islam during the early centuries of contact seems more to have fortified social and economic bonds among the Oromo already under the influence of the city than to have been the institution which itself brought the Oromo under Harari hegemony (Waldron 1984: 32). However, the Egyptian occupation of Harar city had left long lasting impacts on the *Afran Qallo Oromo* socio-political, economic and military conditions.

Rapid and forceful mass conversion was involved following the Oromo defeat by the Egyptians and a special committee accompanied the colonial armies for circumscribing the Oromo. Furthermore, many war officials were brought to the city of Harar, and were taken to mosques where they were given *Imamat* (turban) as a symbol of the conversion. However, once they accepted Islam the *Afran Qallo* used it as bulwark against the Christian Amhara rulers. Nevertheless, this sudden and forceful mass conversion of Oromo to Islam exposed them to a rapid change in their religious, social and political custom which undoubt precipitated the collapse of the *Gada* system, the age-sets and semi-democratic government in the area (Caulk 1977: 381).

However, there is a difference and visibly manifested controversy in the basic essence of Islam doctrine between Oromo and Harari ethnic groups. In recent years, a tendency and an attempt to make boundary within the followers of Islam in Harar was clearly observed. This brought a

religious tension that reached its climax in the past four years. Here, it is vital to discuss the situation briefly in order to have a clear picture about the case.

6.2.1.1 Differences within Similarity: Religious Discourse among the Muslims in Harar

The manifestation of one's identity and its boundaries are differently expressed through religion, ethnicity, and so on. Boundaries have been maintained because of long history of inter-ethnic interaction between different groups and from the constant interaction between internal and external factors. According to Desplat (2005: 483), almost all monotheistic theologies of the world claim as a 'true' and 'only one right faith' a tendency of creating a view of superiority over other religions. Nevertheless, at the same time these religions have showed variations within themselves. For instance, the variety of Islam is expressed in different practices, vary from a relativist view of Islam to extreme fundamentalist and conservatisms.

However, these differences become essential only in certain situations. In this case, I attempt to illustrate how religious boundaries are expressed and perceived. The modification of boundaries is the result of processes of interaction and negotiation between encountering individuals or groups as social actors (Desplat 2005: 483-484). For many scholars, the city of Harar is religiously contextualized as one and united Islamic faith and the integration of different ethnic groups through common veneration of saints and shrines (see Gibb, 1997; Trimmingham, 1965; Waldron, 1984 for detail). For instance, Gibb argues,

In the context of the saint's shrine [...], inter-ethnic cooperation and negotiation is evidenced as members of different ethnic groups celebrate common areas of tradition such as Nabi Maulud. Through common worship and common recognition of the greatness of saints, difference between ethnic elements co-resident in Harar is in this context inconsequential. (1997: 147)

Nevertheless, Gibb's argument neglected the debates about saint veneration within the city community, particularly between the Oromo and Harari community. In this regard, the apparent but latent debate about the notion of 'true Islam' has been persisting between ethnic groups in the town. In this decade, the debate of *takfir* gives the argument regarding the legitimacy of a 'true' dogma of Islamic faith a new attention. The rhetoric has been intensified because of the increasing influence from the Muslim world.

The term *takfir* indicates the action of judging some to be a *kafir*. *Kafir* means infidel and refers to an individual unbelief of the Islamic religion and it indicates the action of valuing someone a *kafir*, which means disbelief (Desplat 2005: 495). According to *Sheikh Abduraman*¹³, a local Islamic expert, who serves as a preacher in one of the known shrines of Harar, "in the perspective of the Holy Qura'an, it is associated with the negative qualities of a person and expresses the notion of outsider and someone who has abandoned an Islamic life." This classification shows an obvious effort of the boundary marking of religious followers from 'others' and the notion of claiming one's religious cult as the 'true' Islam. In this case, is used to separate someone else from the religious domain and it is serving as an instrument of attacking the opposing groups' views and faiths.

The term *kafir* has been carried a new significance in the context of revivalist movements, such as the Wahhabiyya, whose followers criticized their coreligionists as diverging from the correct path of Islam (Desplat 2005: 495-496). The Wahhabiyya is a reformist movement founded by Muhammed Abdul-Wahhab in the eighteenth century in the Arabian Peninsula. In the Ethiopian context, the appellation, Wahhabiya, has become a general name referring to those people opposing the wide spread local custom of venerating *awliya* and Sufistic practices (Ishihara 2010).

¹³ Sheikh Abduraman, Harar, 23 March 2011

88). In line with this, informant such as Abdusemed Idris and Bekke Mummmed¹⁴ also affirmed that:

Wahhabiyya was established as a response to a perceived moral decline and political weakness on the part of the Muslim community, and the movement proposed an idealized Islamic past through the reclaim of strict monotheism and a word-for-word interpretation of the Qura'an and the Sunna of the Prophet.

The worship of saints and visitation of their tombs is considered by the Wahhbiyyas as void, that is, the association of something external with Allah and it is un-Islamic practice. In the case of Harar, the argument to define the 'true' Islam could take the historical conflict between various religious scholars who were sent to religious education in the Middle East at various times (Desplat 2005: 495-497). According to *Sheikh Abduraman*¹⁵, the clear tension arose in the beginning of the 1940s by two representatives of different schools of thoughts in Harar. *Sheikh Abdallah*, a traditional scholar who led a direct attack on the revivalist movement, the Habbashiyya, which was initiated by Ethiopian Muslims who live in Lebanon and Haji Yusuf Abdu al-Raman, a businessperson who represents the Wahhabitic thought of Saudi Arabia. Both were Harari origin and born in Harar in the 1910s. Habbashiya is a Sunnite religious organization with strong emphasis on Sufism. The ideology of the Habbashiya is strictly anti-Wahhabi and the organization defends mystical Islamic practices.

Hadj Yusuf, who completed his religious education in Mecca and Medina between 1928 and 1938, met a group of Hararis in Saudi Arabia who had gone there on pilgrimage with the support of the Italians who occupied Ethiopia from 1936 to 1941. Because of this meeting, the group came under the influence of the Wahhabi ideology. They able back to Harar in 1941 where they became involved in a local educational institution. At the same time *Shaikh aAbdallah* was teaching in

¹⁴ Abdusemed Idris and Bekke Mummmed, Harar, 21 and 22 February 2011

¹⁵ Sheikh Abduraman, Harar, 23 March 2011

Daway, an Islamic centre in the Wollo region, but, when he heard about the new group in Harar, he rushed back to his birthplace and challenged them on the ground of being 'Wahhabis'. The concept of Wahhabis was initially used as a synonym of 'otherness' and, therefore, viewed as a misinterpretation of Islam.

Sheikh Abdallah finally championed the long historical tension between these two schools of thought and succeeded in bringing to the closure of the new Wahhabistic School in Harar in 1941. However, following of religious freedom by the current government since 1990s, the newly educated young Oromo religious scholars purposely attempt to deconstruct the long established religious practices in the city of saints, in particular relating with the shrines, by connoting it as non-Islamic practice. In this regard, there are various examples of accusation. For some Oromo religious elite, the ceremony of *shawwal-aid*, a day celebrated by Harari at the end of six days additional fasting following the end of *Ramadan* is one example. For these religious elites, the ritual is intended to interact between young men to choose their future wives. Unlike the Islamic rules and regulations, the evening celebration allows an openly mixing of both sexes without limitation.

Another accusation on Harari community is the practice related to the feeding of hyenas at some shrines on the day of *asshurah*, a divine practice on the south part of the city. They regarded these rituals as cultural rather than religious bases. In addition, a group of Oromo reformists associates the religious debate to the historical relationships between the Oromo and Harari peoples. According to Abdi Hassen and Sultan Mukhtar¹⁶, "the historical exploitative relationships in the past serve for the Harari cultural creation and falsely adoption by the Oromo. The (*Adare*) Harari community economically and religiously dominated the Oromo people." Here, the religious

¹⁶ Abdi Hassen and Sultan Mukhtar, Harar, 14 February 2011

controversy included the local politics and ethnic tension between the two ethnic groups. For instance, the historical dominant position of Harari's in the religious arena and their control over land where the Oromo worked as a servant intensify the situation.

As *Sheikh Abduraman* and *Haji Idris*¹⁷ argues, the return of *Sheikh Abdalla* to Harar was intended to control and destabilize the influence of the Wahhbiyya within the Muslim community in the city and to provide religious teaching. In this case, the Sheikh openly accused the Wahhabis as non-Muslims and anti-history. The Harari were unable to accept the reformist ideas of the Wahhabis. This is because the concept of 'Wahhabi' was used as a synonym of 'otherness' and, therefore, viewed as a misinterpretation of Islam. The frequent teaching of modified religious dogma by *Sheikh Abdalla* in the sacred mosques and shrines of the city succeeded in gaining followers from the local community. The Hararis argue that the Wahhabis tried to distort the culture and history of Harar that is highly tied with their saints and shrines. In addition, they argued that the Wahhabis are not Muslims. According to *Sheikh Abduraman*¹⁸, "the Wahhabis were supported by Saudi government and such an sponsored religious movement would illuminate only for a short period of time."

To sum up, even if at the neighborhoods of some shrines exists high level of cooperation between people of different ethnic background in the old walled city, religious elites are purposely manipulating the local situation. In this regard, religious actors played important roles in constructing religious identity and boundary maintenance between 'we' and 'other' by using new developments around the Islamic religion. The Harari's Sufi religious practice that is largely saint and shrine-based is challenged by the Oromo Wahhabi reformists, and in the current ethnic politics in Harari this has taken an ethnic shape- Harari-Oromo dispute. Harari's domination of Islamic

¹⁷ *Sheikh Abduraman* and *Haji Idris*, Harar, 8 and 23 March 2011

¹⁸ *Sheikh Abduraman*, Harar, 23 March 2011

institutions, particularly *awach* (Muslim saints) ceremonies was the main factor that had enhanced their ability to dominate the religious sphere and the Oromo become their junior followers. Of course, this had served as a strategy of maintaining the ethnic boundary: the senior Islamic Harari versus the junior Oromo.

6.3 The Amhara-Harari Relationships

A number of features characterized the historically long established inter-ethnic relationships that existed between the Christian Amhara people and the minority Harari ethnic group, who are enclave in small walled city for more than four hundred years. One of this feature is the Harari's view of the Amhara as settlers and invaders as opposed to themselves, the residents, indigenous and native to the city. Historical documents try to show the long co-existence and social interaction between these two ethnic groups characterized by one trying to subjugate and load its interest on the other since the early fifteenth century.

Harar was independent until the end of the nineteenth century, when the battle of *Chelenqo* brought its end and incorporation into the Ethiopian state by the war organized by Emperor Menilik on the city in January 1887. Since then, the inter-ethnic interaction between the two groups has been full of tension and contention both in the political and other public spheres. In this regard, the *Kulub Hannolato* movement by the Harari people against the then imperial government was one of the historically known and well documented event that mainly dominate the discussion of inter-ethnic interaction between the Amhara and Harari people (See the annex number 3).

6.3.1 Kulub Hannolato- the Harari Rebellion

An insight into the contents of the phrasal term, '*Kulub Hannolato*', may enables us to identify the historical origin and meaning of the catch word which had later become the key to the movement

known as the Harari Rebellion. '*Hammolato*' is a Somali word which literally means 'viva' or 'long live', used to be the rallying slogan for Somali nationalists during their movement for the independence of Somalia in the 1940's (Arif 2002: 11).

According to Abdusemed Idris¹⁹, the main champion of the Somali nationhood at that time was the political party known as the Somali Youth Club or the SYC, which later slightly changes its name to SYL, "L." representing "League". The activities of the league, however, were not limited to Mogadisho and its surrounding regions, (i.e. to Somalia proper) alone. Instead, its organizational tentacles and the arena of its political motives were rather extended to the eastern parts of Ethiopia, including area such as Harar, Jijiga, Dire Dawa, and so on, as well. An old dream of the SYL resonates with what nationalists later termed the "Greater Somalia" vision.

The Hararis, also, had joined the movement under the slogan "Somali *Hammolato*", after an appraisal of the situation with their own concrete conditions. In Harar and the surrounding, the name of the movement had remained "*Kulub*", a corrupted form of 'club'. The '*Kulub*', as it was locally known then, aspired not only a new political platform for the Hararis, but also for the introduction of urban insurrection in the wider country, i.e. the hinterland, Ethiopia. The movement in Harar stayed active in the period from 1944-1947, with its main agenda of succession from Ethiopia, to form a unite state with a future free state of Somalia.

According to many of Harari informants, the Harari Rebellion was not a phenomenon erupted overnight, rather it was a process which had developed through interactions that went on for relatively a longer period. During the event, they had experienced intense social and political upheavals primarily aimed at the renewal and restoring of Harari national identity and Harari

¹⁹ Abdusemed Idris, Harar, 21 February 2011

privileges. After Emperor Menilik had won the battle of *Chelenqo* it is known that he had signed a peace deal in Hararmaya town with some Harari elders and religious leaders at the request extended by the elders. Some of the basic points of the deal were to guarantee the permanent seizure of land formerly possessed by the Hararis to remain in their own hands and to carry out some of their internal affairs according to the principles enshrined by Sheria. On the other hand, some of the directives put forwarded by the Emperor includes: expression of the genuine amount of revenues collected in the region and loyalty on matters concerning the countries security (See the annex number 3 for detail).

Unfortunately, the deal with all its fine words and promises was not destined to last long as it started to be eroded soon after its implementation. According to Abdusemed Idris²⁰, "the autonomous rights enshrined in it were eventually stripped of the people and fell under the tight grip of the new governors, and power was absolutely centralized by the autocrats. Suppression of public rights and oppression became the order of the day, in Harar".

Another root cause that contributed to the Harari insurrection was the colonialist policy perpetrated by fascist Italy during its five years invasion and occupation which set up three administrative regions based on Islamic religion as their centre. Accordingly, the Italian had set up the *Hararghe* Regional government to the east, the Oromo and Sidama Regional government to the south west and the Somali Regional government around Mogadishu. In addition to this, they had expanded mosques, Islamic religious schools and 'qadies' or courts based on the principles of Sheria laws in Harar (informant, Abdusemed Idris and Skeikh Abduraman²¹). Consequently, a large number of Hararis, who had a long history and experience in security, military and administrative works, were enabled to be employed again in the government offices'. This opportunity in turn created a

²⁰ Abdusemed Idris, Harar, 21 February 2011

²¹ Abdusemed Idris and Sheikh Abduraman, Harar, 21 February and 23 March 2011

favourable condition for the implementation of the people's culture, language and religion, which resulted not only in the revitalization of Harari identity, but also in highly raising the political consciousness of the local people.

On the other hand, after being reinstated to its throne, following the end of the fascist occupation period, the Imperial Regime put all posts under the rule of the Regency such as the municipality, police, and all officials and workers appointed by the central government had to be selected from among the non-native nationalities, especially from the Amhara. Thus, once again, the indigenous Hararis and the surrounding people were marginalized altogether from power and had become alien to the administration of their native homeland.

In opposition to this oppressive policy of the state in practical terms, elders and religious leaders of the Harari nationality had repeatedly called for peoples summits to discuss the issue of religious freedom, the rights to equality of nationals and had sent delegations to present their demands to the emperor on different occasions. Nevertheless, all these were of no avail, as the palace usually ignored their requests. On the other hand, based on favourable conditions created in the eastern province of the country, by the British and the Italian governments political movements with secessionist trends had been propping up. In Abdusemed Idris²² argument, "for this reason, it was a time to form a joint front to combat against their common enemy".

The political organization first set up in the city of Harar was the one called "*Al-shabab-Wattani al Harari*" which was formed by students of the Harari Jamia School. According to *Sheikh Abduraman*²³, who was a student at the time in Jamia School, states that "the basic objective of the '*Wattani*' organization was to struggle for the realization of the condition of the peace deal signed

²² Abdusemed Idris, Harar, 21 February 2011

²³ Sheikh Abduraman, Harar, 23 March 2011

earlier between Emperor Menilik and Harari elders". Unlike the *Kulub*, '*Wattani*' had no secessionist agenda at the beginning. The change of its political stance had revealed as the organization merged with *Kulub* to form a union. At this point, its organizational stance transformed from a question of autonomy to that of a struggle for freedom and secession.

Even though the organization had an insurrection agenda, the option to recover the rights they had lost through peaceful negotiations was also a matter under consideration. Following this option, the Harari sent a delegation comprising of members of the *Kulub*, some Harari elders and religious leaders to the emperor in Addis Ababa, although their effort was fruitless. As soon as the group returned to Harar, a meeting of the organization was held to discuss over the matter and 13 members were selected to be sent as a delegation to meet UN commission currently visiting Mogadishu, with the aim of explaining about the ill treatment and the atrocities being committed against the Harari people. In a bid to suppress these movements, the Imperial government brought thousands of *neftamya* soldiers from the Northern provinces to repress the opposition movement in the city.

In the mean time, 81 Harari persons were deported to be jailed in different places including Jimma, Debre Markos, Gore and others, where they under went suffering for over a year and half. As some informants affirmed, the long imprisonment and punishment resulted untold miseries, deaths and diseases, affected by lack of sanitation and medical attention, loss of limbs, hearing and eyesight, and physical abuse including castration. The facts remained veiled, but the devastating impact of those events upon the community penetrates their representation of their own identity and their identity of other groups in relation to them to a profound degree. One of the respected Harari elders, Haji Idris²⁴, clearly stated:

²⁴ Haji Idris, Harar, 8 March 2011

The Harari peoples are proud of Kulub Hannolato, because that is the time in the history of the people when one deliberately fought against the Amhara invaders who had deprived the inhabitants' rights. Our members were expressly opposed to the oppressive regime which we had experienced since the time of Harar's incorporation into the Christian empire. That was the time I was personally mistreated by the Amhara oppressors and still I feel it.

Though the delegate made a great effort to expose the harsh situation of their homeland, they had not got any satisfactory response from the external powers (informant Ebrahim and Abdela²⁵). However, a relatively limited political movement made by a Harari in Cairo had created a specific impact on the home front which caused the state to concede to a strategy which would enable the 13 members of the delegation to return to their country, Ethiopia. Following a number of diplomatic works under taken jointly with the Egyptian government via Ethiopian embassy in Cairo, consequently, 12 refugees had returned. The 81 suspects jailed for their participation in the rebellion were then freely released that brought the end of the rebellion.

There are many reasons out lined for the failure of the rebellion by some observers. First, it did not have sufficient time to organize and agitate the larger mass of the neighbouring nationalities. Second and most importantly, the rebellion failed because the majority Oromo nationality was not fully involved, for whatever reason. However, evidence is lacking for the reason that populous Oromo had been not involved in the movement. Furthermore, it was an unwise and less co-ordinated movement which was crushed easily (informants Yalew Arega and Bekele Dabesa²⁶).

In my view, confrontation between peoples and religions was relatively play a prominent role in this regard. As I grasp from the field data from my key informants as well as from historical accounts, difference between the two communities divided along religious lines can be attributed

²⁵ Ebrahim and Abdela, Harar, 13 March 2011

²⁶ Yalew Arega and Bekele Dabesa, Harar, 10 and 11 February 2011

to limited social interaction and to their ways of life built around unrelated ethnic and social customs. For instance, even weddings and funerals were exclusive.

Nevertheless, as the two societies started to come together and learning more about each other, they appreciated each other more. This was especially true with the younger people who were schooling together. Over long period this situation resulted in two changes. First, maintaining the status quo between these groups was as such no longer attainable. Second, it brought some sort of compromise and harmony between these groups. In general, oral accounts as well as historical written documents in this century most commonly refer to the *Kulub Hammolato* uprising of the 1940s as particular episode in the recent history of the Harari people (informant Abdusemed Idris and Mukhtar Adosh²⁷).

²⁷ Abdusemed Idris and Mukhtar Adosh, Harar, 21 February and 2 March 2011

Chapter Seven

Current Ethnicity and Politics in Harar

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, analysis is made to present the impact of 'Ethnic Federalism' on the inter-ethnic relations in Harari region. It is mainly focused on the discourse of political representation, political debate in the city of Harar, revitalization on the move and ethnicity in the contemporary Ethiopian politics.

7.2 The Discourse of Political Representation in Harar

The current government of Ethiopia gave regional administration status to Harar city. The Harari have been recognized as the rightful native population of the area over which they were economically and politically dominant for centuries. Where most other regions of the country were set up a Provisional Council to represent their region in the pre-election period, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) gave a Regional autonomy to Harari community directly. The deal that held between the high officials of Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) and the Harari National League (HNL) brought for authority of the HNL as a dominant political organization of the Harari community to represent their own regional council members.

From the Harari community point of view, it was a positive response to their historic claims over the city and the means to preserve their demographic minority position in the region and even they considered it a compensation. According to Gibb, this arrangement gave the HNL "to control over the administration of the region in its transitional stages and ensured that Harari would effectively control the region by holding an ethnically-based right to vote power in the democratically elected regional administration which was voted into place in 1995" (1997: 268).

Nevertheless, when we see the demographic characteristics of the ethnic groups that reside in the region, we find an unequal political representation of ethnic groups in Harari National Regional State. The Harari National Regional State Council (HNRSC) is the highest political and law making body of the regional state based on the right given by the Federal Constitution to National Regional State legislatures. The Council has 36 members, 14 of these are from Harari National Assembly (HNA). The HNA is totally represented by the Hararis who live in the region and in other parts of the country. The remaining 22 members are through voting. Interestingly 4 out of these 22 must be from within the wall where the Harari are the majority. In other words, half of the council's representation is reserved for the Harari.

The remaining 18 are elected from the 'new city' that is largely dominated by Amhara and the Oromo dominated rural Peasant Associations of *Hundene wereda*. In this regard, the Harari National Regional State Council (HNRSC) is jointly represented by each 18 members from Harari National League (HNL) and Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO). In the last election, only the Harari were eligible to run for the seats inside the '*Jogol*' (the old walled city). This exclusive preservation shows a guarantee that Harari community would regain control over their 'homeland'. In the rest of the region, an equal number of seats were open to all candidates of various political parties. In this case, the Harari National League (HNL) and the Harari Democratic Party (HADID) compete for political representation in the old walled city. However, the election result shows that the HNL won all of the 4 seats within the wall like the previous regional elections and the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (the OPDO) retained all the remaining 18 seats in the rest of the region. The power of nomination of the regional state president and three executive members is given to the Harari National Assembly.

As many informants argue, however, the proportion of political representation in the region remains remarkably one-sided. In comparison, the Oromo and Amhara (has no representation at all), who form the major ethnic groups in the region, were less represented than the minority Harari community. On the other hand, Abdusemed Idris²⁸, Chairman of HNA Cultural Committee, argued that the reference to unique historical, linguistic and religious significance of the 'holy city' in Ethiopian history has led to the acknowledgement of present regional autonomy by Transitional Government of Ethiopia. He further stated as follow:

If you see currently, we Hararis are small in number. However, historically, in the past, Harar was greater than any state. Our people had engaged in disseminating the Islamic religion. Those who went out for that purpose were assimilated and lost into the broader Ethiopia. You can find the trace of this 'nation' up to Northern part of the country including in Tigray and Gonder, to the Southern part of the country such as in Silte Zone. We are very thankful to the EPRDF government. In the early 1990s the TGE take into account the historical contribution and altruism that this people had made for the present country. Only the Harari are the indigenous people of this area and Harar is the only place that the Harari have. The rest who are settlers here are late arrivals and they have their own homeland and region. For example, the Oromos have their own region. The Gurage and Amhara community also have their own region, and so on. The Hararis have no other place to look for. This is the place where we are born and die!

The historical and geopolitical importance of the city, Harar, was taken into account during restructuring the country through the federal system. In line with this, the decisive geopolitical position of the city to control the eastern part of the country has positively benefited the Harari to get the regional power (informant Teshome Regasa²⁹). Besides this, historical factors seem to have given prominence over language as the primary criterion for political and administrative boundary making in the case of Harari state. In this regard, Vaughan also clearly stated that:

²⁸ Abdusemed Idris, Harar, 21 February 2011

²⁹ Teshome Regasa, Harar, 26 March 2011

The EPRDF and the TGE's willingness to grant a highly visible autonomy and prominence at the federal level to the holy Muslim city of Harar was at least partly influenced by the desire to be seen to counteract and reverse a history of equally visible, and bitterly resented, Christian and military domination of the city, which had begun with Menelik II's occupation of it after the exceptionally bloody battle at Chelenqo in early 1887. (2003: 235)

For many of Harari informants, "applying the principle of 'one man, one vote' is impossible in Harar due to the fact that the Harari population is very small to represent in the national political power. All kinds of affirmative action must be given for Harari because the Harari ethnic identity is becoming in danger if things were going like in the past successive regimes" (informant Abdusemed and Haji Idris³⁰). The following quotation also clearly supported the above argument:

Affirmative action must be recognized [as being] in line with the struggle on the elimination of discrimination. Whenever states [...] adopt special measures aimed at protecting minority rights [they] shall not be considered as discriminatory. (Mohamed 1998: 65 cited in Vaughan 2003: 236)

In contrast to the constitutional provision of self-government, including "the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in State and Federal governments" (FDRE Constitution 1995: Art. 39.3), several ethnic groups were put under the jurisdiction of other groups, while others were given a status of region or zone irrespective of population size, but to serve the interests of the state. This constitutional discrepancy is seemingly observable in the case of Harari Regional State. By recognizing mother tongue at some regional levels and by creating affiliated political parties along ethnic lines, key ethnic entrepreneurs attempted to mobilize the diverse ethnic groups from within. However, by defining language as a basic marker of ethnic boundary and demarcating the geographical borders enclosing the groups, they reserved the authority to grant the right to 'self-determination' from

³⁰ Abdusemed and Haji Idris, Harar, 21 February and 8 March 2011

above (Gudina 2003: 138-139). For instance, more than 46 ethnic groups in today's SNNPR were simply lumped together by the vanguard party for administrative fiat, assuming 'common' ethnic identity (ibid.).

In addition, according to many critics, to mention Gudina (2002: 12), the most serious anomaly in Ethiopian government's regional arrangement is the case of Harari state, which has exposed some of the absurdities of the EPRDF regionalization policy. Gudina also further argued that:

At any rate, the Hararis arrangement, judged by the core principle of democracy- 'one man, one vote'- seems to be more primitive than democracy in the days of Aristotle, where certain sectors of the population such as the slaves were not considered citizens, and thus not allowed to vote. According to the quota [power division], the Oromos can get elected to public office and share power as a junior partner while the Amharas and the rest of other ethnic groups can only vote and are not eligible for office (2002: 12).

The TGE recognition of Harar as one region was intended to acknowledge the past historical relationships that the city shares with the Ethiopian states (Vaughan 2003: 235). However, after the downfall of *Dergue* regime, the inter-ethnic relation in the city has gone tensioned from time to time although not overtly observed unlike other areas of the country. As some informants explicitly argued, for instance, anti-Ahmara feeling is running particularly high, often resulting in violence. According to Alemu Mola³¹, "the evacuation of the so-called *neftennya* populations from the city that was started in the early 1990s highly threatened the life of many households. There are evidences that validate the opposition to Amharas in the city in 1991 and 1992 that led to mass attack". On the other hand, the combination of three working language groups was definitely a main difficulty to reach a consensus over the city's administration.

³¹ Alemu Mola, Harar, 25 March 2011

The feelings of being disadvantaged by the system and objection to the existing system continue largely by Harari, Amhara and Oromo communities also make the current political situation in the city complex. The Harari repeatedly criticize the continued domination of the regional civil service offices' by Amhara ethnic groups and recently by Oromos. On other hand, the Amhara continually complain the asymmetrical constitutional arrangements that governed the region and the slow and prolonged exclusion from the government job and administration areas. According to some of Amhara youth informants, the exclusion of individuals from governmental jobs area based on ethnic affiliation created a great difficulty to get a job in the region.

The access to employment in governmental offices' are bureaucratically complicated and the penetration of the ethnic based politics made one's effort very difficult, even though one might hold a recognized professional degree at hand. In addition, the difficulty of speaking the required local language at government offices and to some degree religious based discriminatory condition force a large number of skilled man power to migrate in search of employment into neighboring regions and to other parts of the country. Largely, such difficulties are experienced by those who live in the new city of Harar where the majority of the residents are supposed to be children of Amhara migrants.

The Oromo, on the other hand, complain the unequal power sharing that is observed in the regional administration system. According to a small focus group discussion with my Oromo informants, although theoretically the regional constitution gives equal number of power division between the Harari National League (HNL) and Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), the situation remain 'artificial' or counterfeit when it comes to practice. All of the discussion participants reflected their discomfort due to the domination of essential political and administration position by the Harari community representatives. They further argued that the

dominant demographic feature of the Oromo's in the region must be taken into account in both political and administrative positions of the region.

As many informants state and as I also observed during my long years stay in the city and as well as during my fieldwork, if such a situation continues, the feeling of hatred and grievances between these ethnic groups might arise into violence. Here, for some informants the current conditions pose a question on the pronounced portray of the city as 'city of love and tolerance' on media. To date, there is no as such serious problem in the day-to-day inter-ethnic interactions at neighbourhood level, while the situation differs and poses a number of questions at the level of political power and representation.

7.3 Political Debate in the City of Harar

Since the 1990s, conflicts within the Harari community on the one hand and between the two political parties on the other hand dominated the political debate and tensions within the city. Despite the fact that the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) has showed more recognition to Harari ethnic identity question, tension and controversy continued between the Harari National League and OPDO. The main contentious issue, in this case is, the unwillingness of the Oromia National Regional State zone administration of Eastern *Hararghe* to vacate government offices from the city. As some Harari informants argued "the co-administrative political formation between HNL and OPDO created discomfort for the Harari community and thus they must move out from the city".

On the other hand, some Oromo informants argue that, it is better to incorporate the Harari Regional State into Oromia National Regional State. They reason out that, "due to the fact that the region is dominated by the Oromo ethnic group and the city may benefit from better development

in the Oromia Region like other Oromia towns". They further stated that the HNL maintain high political position in the region contrary to OPDO. For instance, most of those high regional government administrative positions in the region were mainly dominated by HNL members.

In general, the undeniable fact that is observable in the city is the presence of different ethnic groups that came together for trade, agriculture, religious scholarship as well as military service. The complexity of inter-ethnic relations in the city and the boundary maintenance between various ethnic groups was integrated into power struggle between political parties.

7.4 Revitalization on the move

The regional government has been consciously reconstructing the images of Harari identity, language, history, art, culture and heritage. In this regard, efforts are underway to create many tangible structures through which the historical autonomy of the Harari culture is displayed in an organized way. Until the year 2015, the revised Harari revitalization package is intended to achieve eight major revitalization programmes³². Some of the revitalization programmes include Harari language; traditional arts and crafts; Harari history and heritages, and traditional cultural schools, historical mosques and shrines. Here, an attempt is only made to present shortly the current renewal programmes in the city and the role these activities play in shaping the existing inter-ethnic relation.

7.4.1 Recent Uses of Symbolic Referents

In the last two decades, the Battle of *Chelenqo* serves as the primary point of discourse within the city of Harar. Symbols of imagery related to the Battle of *Chelenqo* are constantly raised in both political and public sphere. Symbols in fact, remind a memory of invasion and defeat. The Harari

³² The unpublished documents are available in Harari Culture Heritage and Tourism Bureau

National League, which use the representation of *Chelenqo* on its flag always try to fit that imagery into the political field. For instance, the red stripe across the top of the flag symbolize the bloodshed at the battle and the black stripe across the bottom of the flag represents the deaths suffered by the Harari people at the hands of the Christian conquerors.

The current symbolic referentials appear to be contextualized within the broader perspective of a century of foreign domination of the city by the Christian invaders. Likewise, the recent construction of the battle of *Chelenqo* memorial at the *Faras Magala*, the center of the city, by the regional government is aimed at acknowledging the Harari's former reputation and redresses the historical injustice done during the conquest and subjugation by the Ethiopian Empire (See attached photo, annex number 2A).

The construction of this memorial in front of Medhane Alem Orthodox Church brought controversy and tension between the regional government and the officials of the Church. For many Christian community of the city such construction of a long building in front of the church was viewed as the regional government's intention to demolish the church from the centre of the holy city. The hot religious-political contention between the Islamic oriented Harari government officials and the Christian Amhara community on the buildings was temporarily alleviated with the intervention from the federal government. A feeling of ethno-religious subjugation has developed among the Christian Amhara. In this case, an individual informant argues as follow:

The portrayal of Harar as a city of co-existence is sometimes simply hypocrisy. Because Islam is the only religion with the right to expand and build its mosques all over the city while Christianity, particularly Ethiopian Orthodox Church, has been under a continuous pressure to close its churches. In this regard, nearly all 'Adere'

officials wish to see Harar as an Islamic city even if impossible to make it (informant Zelalem Dejen³³).

Besides the public sphere the symbols are also used in local socio-cultural interaction. The Harari communicate their history to the present generation by using symbols that communicate the defeat at the *Chelenqo* and the brutality of the conquerors. For instance, a red soil found in every *Harari gar* (traditional house) symbolizing the Harari bloodshed at the battle of *Chelenqo*. In addition, the *sati baqla*, or *shawl*, is presented to a bridegroom by his father-in-law at the time of marriage, to symbolize the blood of seven hundred young newly married Harari men who went to battle to defend their city from Emperor Menilik's invasion.

Harari and Oromo elders also share the view that the defeat at the Battle of *Chelenqo* led to political, economic as well as cultural subjugation of their people by the then Amhara administration. Despite the fact that Melinik soldiers' face some what an organized defence recruited from the Harari, Oromo and Somali Muslims by *Amir* Abdullahi (the last *Amir* of Harar), still there is a debate especially between Oromo and Harari elders over who bravely defended the region from the external invasions. While the Harari blame that the Oromo people simply accepted the conquest without any challenge, the Oromo counter argue on that the Harari elders invited Menilik with officially written letter. Regardless of the present situation and debate, the oral account of the past century shows the formation of alliance from different local ethnic groups who are mobilized to defend their Muslim city from the northern Christian power (Hassen 1973: 52-53).

³³ Zelalem Dejen, Harar, 17 March 2011

7.4.2 The Harari Cultural and Sheriff Harar City Museum

The Harari cultural museum is constructed to display both the material culture and the ways of life of the Harari community. It is part of the effort of showing one self to the public through the well organized exhibitions. The collections are produced from locally available materials such as leather, wood, and steel. According to Muhammed³⁴, an expert of the museum, "all the displayed materials at the cultural museum show civilization of the Harari community and the historical urban culture of the city since its establishment". Furthermore, it is believed that the culture of the local people may serve as an academic institution for any interested visitor. The display implies the presence of a historically long inter-ethnic interaction between different ethnic groups and it is useful in publicizing the view of Harari cultural and historical domination over their neighbouring groups for many generations.

Besides, there is a fascinating private museum collection called *Sheikh Abdela Sherif Private Museum*. The entire material collection in the museum represents or depicts the cultural diversity of the ethnic groups who inhabits in the city. The museum developed from the collection of its first curator, Ato Abdulahi Ali Sheriff, who beginning from the early 1990s painstakingly acquired objects related to the material culture of the region. Members of the Harari community donated a significant part of the collection. Permanent exhibits of the Sheriff museum include items from Harari, Oromo, Amhara, Gurage, Somali and Argobba groups living in the region. The collection shows everyday items as textiles, jewellery, coins, basketry, weaponry, and much more several objects that belong to prominent historical figures. A rich archive of historically significant manuscripts and music recordings are also on display.

³⁴ Mohammed, Harar, 16 March 2011

7.4.3 Basketry- as Harari Identity Marker

Harar is known for its basketry. We can find various basketry products that are made by the ethnic groups in the city. However, the traditional arts and crafts particularly the basketry work is still considered as one of the identity markers of the Harari community. They are prepared for display in almost every Harari *gidir gar* (big house). According to Umma Amina³⁵, previously mothers used to teach their daughters how to make and decorate a basket in an appropriate manner. However, between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s, a sharp decline in weaving among the younger generation of women became evident.

In spite of this, by the late 1990s, there was also an attempt to preserve the material culture of the Harari people, and provide a forum for groups of Harari women to gain greater economic self-reliance through craftwork. As a result, the three women's weavers associations that were established within the old walled city of Harar at that time are still functioning. These fairly recently formed Harari women's craft unions contributions to the preservation of the Harari way of life is great. In line with this, until currently, basic basket making remains a skill common to the majority of Harari girls and women. For instance, at every Harari wedding ceremony, every mother-in-law still expects from her daughter-in-law a particular basket called *hamat mot* which is said to symbolize the respect and thankfulness of the son's wife. The making of baskets with complex decorative arrangements of geometric patterns and designs remains a rare craft and hence a high-valued good of Harari culture.

7.4.4 Codifying the Harari Language (*Ge Sinan*)

Another attempt to reconstruct the culture and history of the Harari community was codifying the local language. Since 1990s the regional government has been engaged in an effort to codify the

³⁵ Umma Amina Shash, Harar, 20 March 2011

Harari language (*Ge Sinan*). It aims at producing a working alphabet for the language and writing the first educational material in this new script. According to an informant, who works at office of 'Ge Sinan Language Department', the "effort indicates the need to restore the capacity of the Harari language which was undermined by the Amharic language that dominate as the state language for more than a century". Before the beginning of the codification work, there were great debates as to whether the Harari language had owned its own script. In this regard, three options were presented for choices each with its own advantages and disadvantages. The three choices are: the use of Amharic, Arabic or Latin alphabets (Gibb 1997: 66-67).

The feeling of being oppressed by the then Amhara government systems with its imposed language is still reflected both in the current regional government officers and on the local people who led to the abandonment of the use of the Amharic script. The historical and political domination associated with the Amharic languages script forced them to narrow the choice to either the Latin or Arabic script. Even though the Harari community have had strong belief of Arab ancestry and that Arabic is extensively closer to the community as languages of Qur'an, the use of foreign language reduced the choice and the Latin alphabets was finally chosen.

Such effort brought the introduction of the first texts in the educational curriculum by the new *Harari Harifiyaach* language and distributed to primary schools in the mid of 1990s. While before five years it was an option to learn the Harari language in both primary and secondary schools, today it is an obligation for every student to learn the language at least as a subject. The newly rewritten constitutional law of the region (written in the years of 2009) also put forward that in the coming years, Harari and *Afaan Oromo* languages are the working languages of the Region. In addition, there is a great ambition and much exertion by the regional government to make Harari

language as the national language in the region. In order to achieve the plan, there enormous work is undergoing to standardize the language.

Despite such efforts, many problems are encountering the project to achieve the intended target. One of the major problems was the ethnic exclusivity and the focus on boundary maintenance by the Harari community which limits the expansion of the language outside the community. This is vividly seen still where an individual might be excluded from the community social life if he or she is unable to articulate the language well. In addition, the absence of the alphabets in the languages made the effort tenuous and borrowing of other alphabets created a difficulty in phonetic and translation of Semitic languages. Although the effort to revitalize or renew one's history, language and culture is not considered to be particularistic and extremists, however, different circumstance should be taken into account in this regard.

7.5 Ethnicity in the Contemporary Ethiopian Politics

As discussed in the previous part of this chapter, the post 1990s federal system allowed numerous groups self-administration and while denied others. Here, I maintain the view that ethnicity is a flexible concept, which is suitable to different manipulation. In this case, elders might use it as a bond for group cohesion, by community leaders as a mechanism of exclusion of others in resource and power distribution and by political elites as instrument of mass mobilization and manipulation of the existing system.

I argue that in many cases, the emergence of ethnic consciousness and mobilization in the current Ethiopian context may not be due to inherent primordial sentiments, but due to social, political and economic reasons. However, primordial factors such as common descent, ancestral linkage, language and the like have become a foundation for nurturing of solidarity and political

mobilization by the elites. Ethnicity manifests different characteristics under various circumstances.

There are many ethnic-based political organizations that are legally registered in Ethiopia (Vaughan 2003: 35-38). In almost all cases, the claims for ethnic mobilization and solidarity have been made in the context of redressing injustices of the past, claiming self-administration, developing their culture and usage of languages which were ignored in the past. However, these claims are more of a demand for social status, political power and economic benefits (instrumental) rather than preserving relationships that make a bond from generation to generation, speech, custom, and so on (primordial). Nevertheless, these primordial attachments have been exploited to advance these social, political and economic objectives. This has inclined to create a prolonged difference that could expand and has opened a scene for further exclusion and discrimination.

The manifestations of ethnic identity should also be understood as situational group characteristics rather than fixed or innate phenomena. For many of Harari community, for instance, the recent revitalization of Harari ethnic identity is not newly created. Yet, largely, their neighboring (particularly Oromo) people rejection to the claim of Harari's ethnic self-identification forced members of the Harari community to activate already existing elements. According to some Oromo informants, the Harari (*Adare*) are not distinct ethnic groups rather they were part of the local Oromo community who inhabits the city before many centuries. In this regard, Vaughan also discussed the disagreement between political parties in the early 1990s on the status of Harar. For instance, "The OLF [Oromo Liberation Front] position was that Hararis were 'urbanised Oromo' and that Harar formed a natural zone capital within Oromia NRS, with no reason to exist as a separate entity." (Vaughan 2003: 233)

Nowadays, many of Harari community realize the past Oromo-Harar relationship despite claiming that Harari is a distinct group in contrast to their neighboring groups including the Oromo, whom considered as long time 'neighborhood brothers'. However, Harari ethnic identity has been shaped by the Oromo for centuries and that the Oromo's forced membership to Harari's community made the latter's to revitalize their ethnic identity and boundary maintenance between these groups. Yet, the revitalization of ones' ethnic identity becomes also formed by the changing social, economic and political circumstances within the city in general and Harari community in particular.

In short, ethnic boundaries between the four groups were maintained during the interaction between the members ascription by others as distinctive from the members of the other group. The strong interaction between these peoples and in some regard the presence of flow of personnel across ethnic boundaries through economic and cultural practices confirm Barth's argument that "interaction in such a social system does not lead to its liquidation through change and acculturation; cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence" (1969: 10-11).

In the current reality, political elites used markers of ethnic identity such as language, history, tradition, and common memory of oppression in their pursuit for their political mobilization. Nevertheless, it is erroneous to assume that the current system is responsible for the formation of ethnic identity among the diverse ethnic groups in the country. Rather, it is used as a way to manipulate the existing system and as instrument of mass mobilization. The four major ethnic groups of the city demonstrate that ethnic identity is rooted in social organization, history, religion and culture and economic life.

For instance, the relatively good socio-economic circumstances enjoyed by many of the small Harari ethnic group over their neighboring peoples serves as one way of self-identification from

the majority. The construction of the old wall and shared distinctive and defined language, culture, territory, history, and mercantile economy have marked out the Harari community from the others. They have engaged in prestigious professions such as trade rather than in farming or other forms of manual labor, hosting expensive wedding ceremonies, and displaying material wealth in dressing, etc.

In sum, the manifestation of various features of ethnicity is highly situational and ethnic identity takes different forms based on the changing conditions. Ethnicity is flexible and circumstances can shape or change the symbolic and social boundaries that define the ethnic group. Ethnicity is therefore dynamic and changes according to new circumstances. Furthermore, manifests itself through activation by some agents. While the history of the country set a base for activation of ethnic identity, ethnic federal policy officially recognized it.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

8.1 Boundary Maintenance

This study indicates that the four ethnic groups maintain their ethnic boundaries regardless of interaction and interdependence. The mechanisms of boundary maintenance differ from group to group on the basis of their culture, tradition, religion, political and social organizations and so forth. As I discussed in this study, the Harari emphasize on descent, Islamic religious adherence and self-identification and ascription by members as basic criteria for eligibility into the *afocha* association, which in turn signifies group membership.

Nevertheless, boundary maintenance should never be seen as a direct corollary of exclusion of the others. An important point of emphasis, particularly in these cases is the dualism of the relationship as group dichotomization and complementarization. The study demonstrates that Oromo, Amhara, Harari and Gurage peoples are different in many respects but at the same time share some elements of commonalities, which enhanced their coexistence for a long period in history. The economic interdependence, cultural practices such as inter-ethnic marriage in some regard, participation in various voluntary associations as well as adherence to similar religious institutions are the main common areas of the inter-ethnic interaction between these groups. These diverse ethnic groups lived in relatively harmonious coexistence for centuries tolerating their differences but complementing their similarities.

This is a good indication that ethnic differences by themselves do not bring about tension and conflicts between diverse ethnic groups. Boundary maintenance and dichotomization are part of a day-to-day social interaction between different ethnic groups and do not lead to group hostility. Nevertheless, ethnicity is an instrument of generating antagonism and tensions between

dichotomized groups. Once stimulated for a particular goal ethnicity becomes a main tool in order to exclude one group from the 'others' and serves as a means to manipulate the existing system by 'ethnic elites'. In this regard, shaping of boundaries by changing areas of emphasis based on circumstances ethnic identities and boundaries make ethnicity a fluid and changing process. In this process, past ethnic cultures are modified through new histories in order to achieve present needs.

8.2 Migration and Inter-Ethnic Relation

The settlement of individuals and communities does not always correspond to ethnic and administrative boundaries. It is evidently impossible to maintain an ethnic homogeneity particularly in the urban contexts because of migration. The same is true in Harar where thousands of Ethiopians lived together because of years of forced and voluntary migrations. The study indicates that most of the time a migrant relies on his or her kin-based networks, either kin-based or associations-based, to adjust to the new urban setting. These networks have served as a forum for socialization and relationships for different individuals and groups which manifest particular characteristic of urban lives. Hence, the success of an individual largely depends upon his or her successful manipulation of the available networks at various levels of interaction. For instance, involvement in a voluntary associations may seem an easy accomplishment, however, these associations are very important both in the intra and inter ethnic group social relationship in the city.

The study also shows that at the early stage of adaptation to the city, migrants are usually manipulating the kin-based networks and ethnic identity intensively. However, this network is very crucial for some ethnic groups than others. For example, the Gurage migrants highly depend upon their ethnic groups members, particularly on close kin than the Oromo or Amhara. Nevertheless, I am not concluding that the Oromo or Amhara migrant does not rely on members of his or her

ethnic group. As I have tried to show, the Oromo seasonal migrants, most of the time, reside in places largely inhabited by Oromo. These places are used not only for the fulfillment of the primary needs of the migrant such as food but also vital in creating contact for employment in the future.

The pattern of migration experience differs from one ethnic group to the other. For the Gurage, migration to urban areas is a usual practice that suits the features of the rural way of life. Due to this fact, the presence of members of the family or close kin in town is very common among the group. In contrast, the Oromo and Amhara people are usually forced to migrate due to shortages of farming land, frequent drought, failed marriage or rural poverty.

Furthermore, the significance of ethnic identity is manifested in different circumstances. For instance, the utilization of voluntary associations by different groups is one way of manifestation of one's ethnic identity. Although voluntary associations are found among all the ethnic groups, they are more important in some groups than in others. There are also conditions at which ethnic identity is of less importance in social interaction between members of different ethnic groups. In this regard, social relationships among neighborhoods in the city are governed more by sharing compounds and the available common resources than by ethnic identity.

8.3 Ethnic Federalism and Inter-Ethnic Relations

In this study, I have argued that in order to understand the politicized ethnicity in Ethiopia, it would be necessary to view the historical evolution that shaped the modern Ethiopian empire. The context of the empire building and the subsequent political, economic and social policies attained by various governments play an important role.

The manifestation of ethnic identity differs mainly in the following two parallel ways. On the one hand, ethnicity has been expressed differently in different contexts. This means the importance of ethnic identity in cultural spheres like marriage and in political spheres like competition for the control of political power is different. In other words, expression of ethnic identity varies because of the fact that it is both an identity marker and an instrument of social action. Ethnicity is an instrument and the extent to which ethnicity can be salient is determined by the context in which it is used. However, ethnic identities could also be manipulated to intensify conflict situations by broadening the scope of a minor dispute among individuals or groups and appealing to the larger for active or passive responses. This is what I tried to show in describing the dispute between individuals that led to the death of the municipality officer.

In line with this, the salience of the ethnic question can endanger some groups and can provoke conflict. The situation can be further complicated by the role of the elites who are capable of articulating strategies to achieve their personal ends. Presently, the Harari and Oromo 'ethnic elites' largely control the political administration of the region, thus creating the opportunity for some elites especially those belonging to demographically smaller groups to control the demographically larger population. On the whole, it can be said that ethnicity is primarily political. However, it is expressed in many ways, not all of which have a political nature. Ethnicity also has different importance in different contexts and situations. It is never static and ethnic identities can and do change to such factors as inter-ethnic marriages and migration. In line with this, the following quotation also consolidates the point of emphasis:

Ethnicity is not a historical given at all and in fact a highly adaptive and malleable phenomenon. In response to changing conditions, the boundaries of an ethnic collectivity can expand or contract, individuals move in and out and even share membership in more than one community. The very content, symbols and meaning of a particular collective identity can and do evolve. In effect, ethnicity is dynamic.

not a fixed and immutable element or social and political relations (Cashmore 1996: 123).

The use of ethnicity alone as a key instrument of organizing the state has created a number of inter-related problems. For instance, the federal constitution did not take into account how the establishment of ethnic federalism would affect the inter-ethnic relationships between various communities in the city. This problem has been strengthening by the primordialist definition of ethnicity that existed in the constitution. Consequently, after the institutionalization of federalism in the city the historical harmonious social relationships between ethnic groups were changed. The Harari community's use of their recognized autonomy to maintain their power in the region limited the right of other inhabitants who are the majority in terms of number. As a result, there are tensions in the relationships between these groups in the city.

Besides, the Harari and the Oromo were recognized as dual governors of the regional state. Thus, the region has been under a coalition government of the OPDO and the HNL. However, power sharing between the two ethnic organizations has remained unequal, whereby the Harari control key offices such as the president and the secretary of the regional administrative council. In addition, this arrangement excludes about 35 percent of the total regional population from political power and representation. Thus, there are tensions between these two ethnic groups who dominate the structures of the current regional state, as well as between these two and those who are totally unrepresented.

I am arguing that ethnicity in Harar has taken two dimensions. The daily social interaction between different ethnic groups at the neighborhood or local level is to be less disruptive. However, the political competition between 'ethnic elites' with regard to power and representation is antagonistic. However, it is erroneous to assume that the latter category does not affect the inter-

ethnic relationships in the city. In general, in understanding inter-ethnic relations in Harar in particular, two important elements need to be emphasized. These are, the importance of the history of the city and the recent politicization of ethnicity that intensified competition between the groups. In conceptualizing ethnicity in the context of multi-ethnic societies, it is crucial to take into account the complex and dynamic historical processes.

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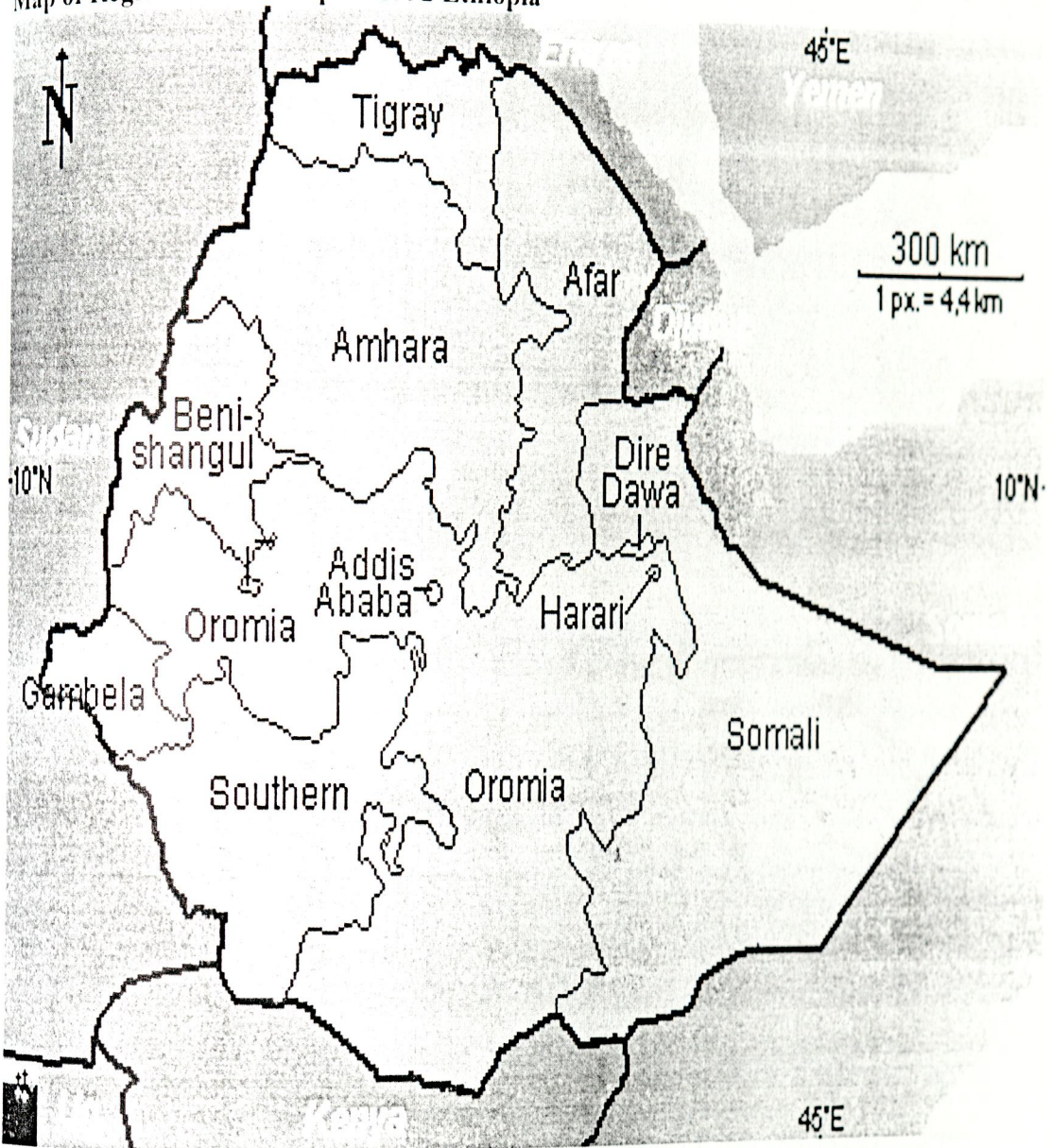
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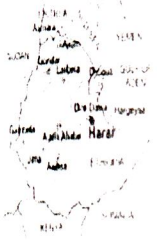
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Appendix 1A
Map of Regional States of post-1992 Ethiopia

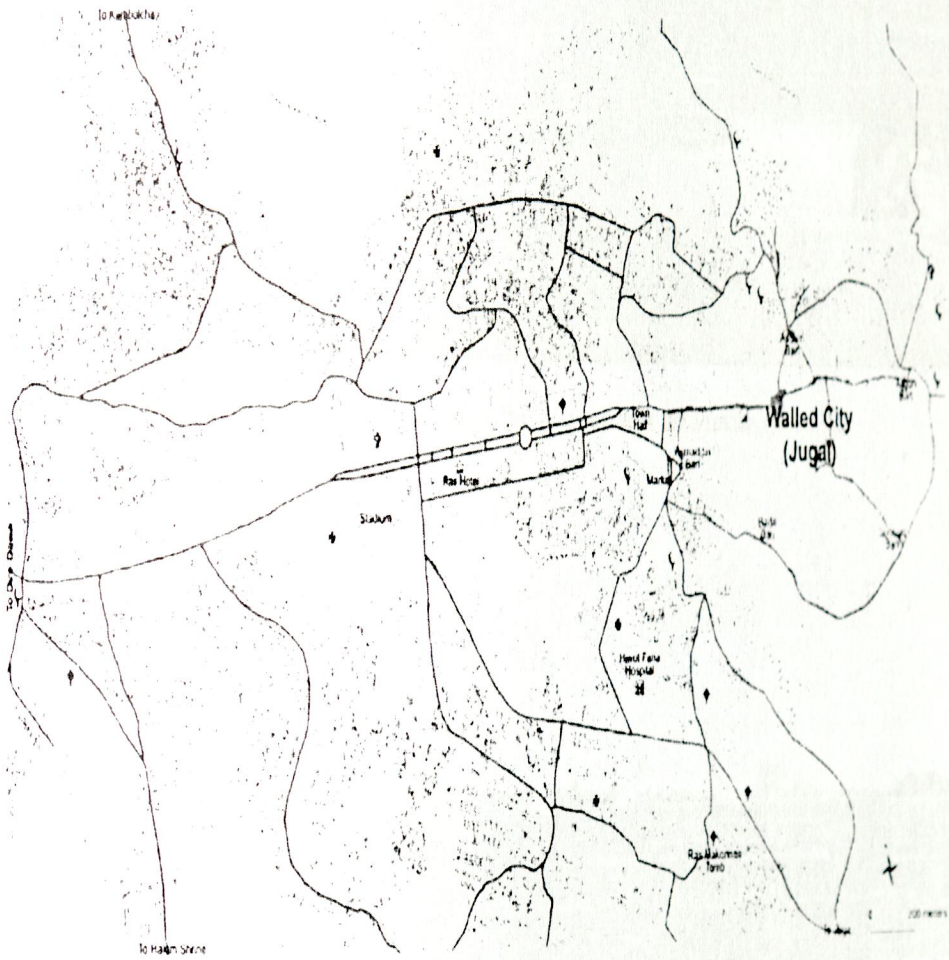


Source: <http://fotw.net/flags/et.html>



Harar in Maps: Atlas of the Ancient Walled City of Ethiopia

THE CITY OF HARAR



International Scientific Cooperation Project
Supported by the European Union

ISBN 88 8326-007-4

Source: Harari Culture Heritage and Tourism Bureau

Appendix 2A

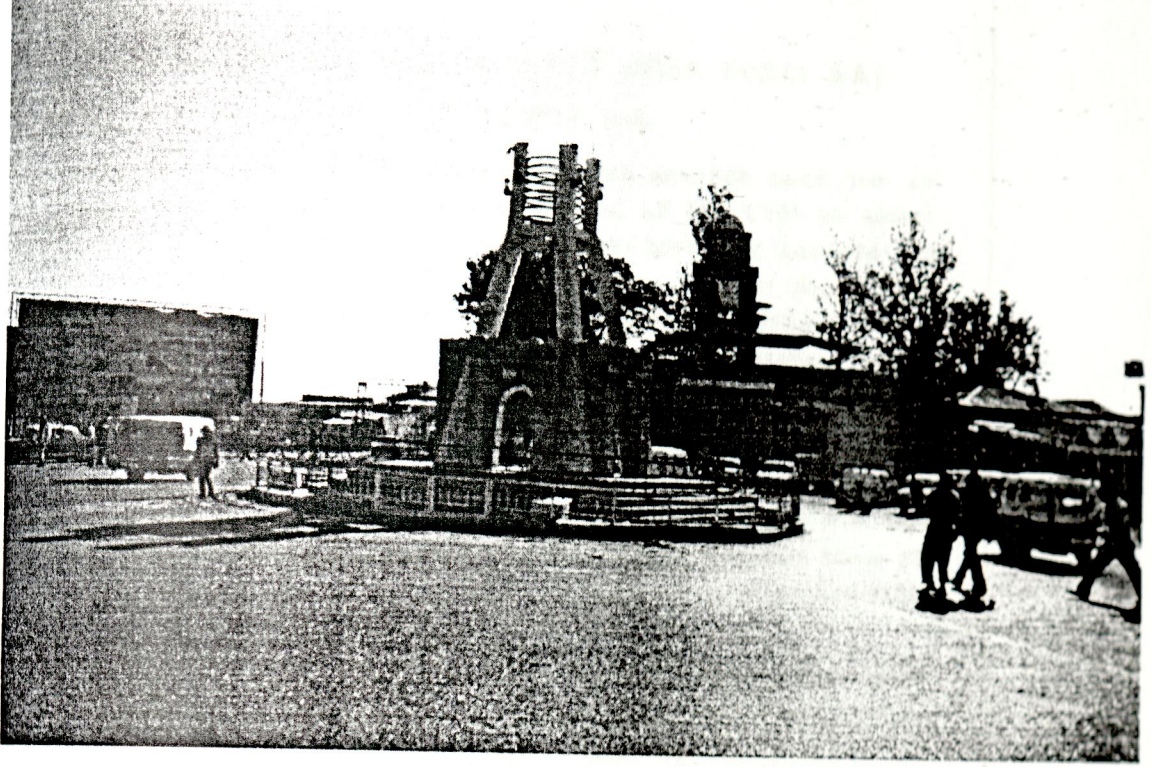


Photo 1. The Statue of the Battle of Chelenqo at the city center of Harar

Appendix 2B



Photo 2. Shewa ber- the damaged market center in the city of Harar

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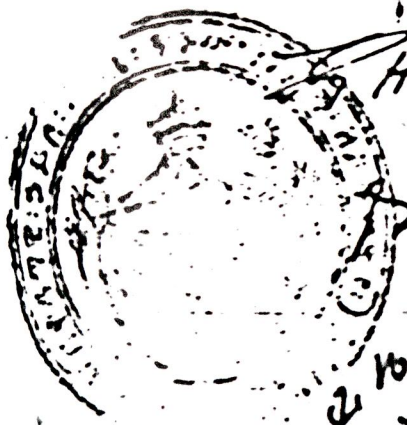
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4. Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not presented for a degree in any other university. All sources of materials used for the thesis has been duly acknowledged.

Name: Buzuayew Hailu

Signature: 

Date of submission: July/ 2011

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as University advisor.

Name: Dr. Fekadu Adugna