



**POST-CONFLICT RECONCILIATION EFFORTS BETWEEN OROMO  
AND GAMO AND GURAGE COMMUNITIES IN BURAYU TOWN OF  
ETHIOPIA (2018-2019)**

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**June, 2025  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**AN ANALYSIS OF POST-CONFLICT RECONCILIATION EFFORTS  
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**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa  
University in Partial fulfilments of Requirements for the Degree of Master of  
Arts in Peace and Security Studies.**

**June, 2025  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declared this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted or presented for a degree in any other university, and that all source of materials used for this study have been properly acknowledged.

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Date

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## **Certificate of Approval**

This is to certify that this thesis prepared by Alemu Tafa Reba entitled “AN ANALYSIS OF POST-CONFLICT RECONCILIATION EFFORTS BETWEEN OROMO AND GAMO-GURAGE COMMUNITIES IN BURAYU TOWNOF, ETHIOPIA (2018-2019)”, A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University in Partial fulfilments of Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Peace and Security Studies. It complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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**Chair of Department or Graduate Program Coordinator**

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## ***Abstract***

*This study looks at the efforts made to bring the Oromo, Gamo, and Gurage communities in Burayu Town, Ethiopia, together after violent clashes in September 2018. The study intends to examine the outcomes of the conflict, the roles of local and governmental leaders, and the efficacy of efforts at reconciliation. A mixed-methods approach was used, integrating quantitative survey data from 300 respondents with qualitative insights from focus groups and interviews. The study assesses social cohesiveness, trust levels, and the results of interventions aimed at promoting reconciliation. Key results expose a paradox; although respondents expressed great confidence in judicial fairness (Mean = 4.19) and belief in the other community's willingness to reconcile (Mean = 4.20), actual participation in formal reconciliation programs remained low (Mean = 1.46). With major psychological and financial effects, the conflict particularly affected the Gamo and Gurage populations. Gumaa and Jaarsummaa were among the traditional conflict-resolution systems that were underused; a top-down approach that limited grassroots involvement hampered efforts at reconciliation. The study comes to the conclusion that hybrid reconciliation strategies that integrate formal and traditional systems prioritize community engagement, and address trauma and structural inequalities are necessary for a lasting peace. In order to close the gaps between policy and community needs, it is suggested that participatory processes be improved, psychosocial support be strengthened, and intercommunal economic collaboration be encouraged. This study adds to a larger body of knowledge regarding peacebuilding in post-conflict societies with ethnic divisions.*

***Keywords:*** *Post-conflict reconciliation, Oromo and Gamo and Gurage conflict, Burayu Town, traditional conflict resolution, social cohesion, Ethiopia.*

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HR	Human Rights
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
PM	Prime Minister
PR	Public Relations

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Ethiopia has a long and complex history marked by various crises and conflicts that have significantly impacted its ethnic communities. In recent years, these conflicts have manifested in urban and peri urban settings such as Burayu town. For instance, during widespread protests in Oromia and later in Amhara regions from 2015 to 2016, over 1,000 people were killed by security forces and many more were displaced due to violence. Reports indicate that more than 2 million Ethiopians were affected by displacement crises between September 2017 and June 2018. (Watch, 2019)

The conflicts in Ethiopia are often rooted in historical grievances and political struggles that have created deep divisions among ethnic communities. The Oromo, Gamo and Gurage groups in Burayu Town are examples of communities that have faced significant challenges due to violence. In September 2018, clashes between these groups led to fatalities and the displacement of thousands, underlining the urgent need for effective reconciliation efforts.

Post-conflict reconciliation is crucial in addressing the aftermath of such violence. It involves rebuilding trust and relationships among communities, which is essential for lasting peace. However, there have been a number of challenges to Ethiopia's reconciliation process, such as poor leadership and low community involvement. There are still a lot of unsolved problems that are simmering beneath the surface, which raises the possibility of more conflict.

The role of both local communities and the government is vital in fostering reconciliation. Engaging community leaders and residents in dialogue can help heal the wounds of the past and create a foundation for a more peaceful future. Understanding the root causes of these conflicts, addressing the trauma experienced by individuals, and promoting cooperation among different groups are key aspects of this process.

This study analysed the reconciliation efforts between the Oromo and the Gamo and the Gurage communities in Burayu Town, focusing on the factors that influence these initiatives and

the roles played by various stakeholders. By examining both the successes and challenges of the reconciliation attempt after the conflict in 2018; this research will seek to offer insights that can guide future efforts towards sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

This historical and socio-political background sets the stage for understanding the complexities of ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia, particularly between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu Town. The 2018 violence underscores the urgent need for effective reconciliation efforts, which this study seeks to analyze. Building on this context, the next section outlines the specific problem that this research aims to address.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

In Ethiopia crisis and conflicts occurred at different time. Those conflicts which happen; had putt continuous instability of peace and mistrusts among some ethnic communities. The negative consequences of conflicts among groups drive the country to different political movements and political struggles. For example, killings over 1,000 protesters by security forces during widespread protests in 2015 and 2016 in Oromia and other regions (Human Rights Watch, 2019) “displacement crisis affecting more than 2 million Ethiopians starting from September 2017 to June 2018. According to internal displacement monitoring centre reports 2018 strong protest in Oromia region which expanded to other parts of the country push and enforced the government to conduct profound reform” (IDC, 2018). These conflicts and crises in the country expanded and being continuous was because of mistreated management of post conflict and unfinished reconciliation process (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Then, to manage and minimize the negative outcomes of this conflict the role of government and local community engagement in the process of post conflict reconciliation is very important. To stop the devastating conflict and brings strong trusts which bears strong relationship among the communities in parts of conflict solving the root cause of conflict and healing the trauma is the crucial efforts of the post conflict reconciliation process part for the researcher. In the Burayu conflict and crisis, there were many unclear and misunderstood issues. For example, according to well-known national newspaper The “Reporter 16 September 2018” reported the source of Burayu victims was the trigger conflict began on Thursday September 13, 2018 involving the local people and those of Gamo, Wolaitta, Gurage and Silte community groups. As the

newspaper says, the groups of youth in the area (Qeerro) were attacking the others. Some news reports in the form of violence which result displacement and fatality on some ethnic groups. The government strongly condemned and tries to stabilize the situation by armed informants. By the local news report in Burayu area alone, authorities reported that 23 people were killed, more than 500 have been injured and over 15,000 were displaced. There were many efforts done to re-established the situation and rehabilitate the displaced communities.

Post conflict reconciliation is a process usually which requires specialized expertise and the fulfilment all some scientific steps. The Federal and regional government attempted to solve the conflict temporarily leaving some aspects of the problem unsolved possibly created challenges for the future. In Ethiopia there are many ongoing internal conflicts among regions and even among different ethnic groups (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003). Reescalation of conflict is very suspicious in the country. The gaps in post conflict reconciliation process should be of high concern. Conflicts can occur in any time. What matters is the type of post conflict reconciliation responses / process fully managed in a scientific way can create strong, trustful among the community and establish sustainable peace. Conflicts and violence among different ethnic is the problem for the country. To solve these problems the way post conflict reconciliation process go through have a gape to bring sustainable peace in the case of research study area (Debisa, 10 Jan 2022.).

The persistent challenge of mistrust, unresolved trauma, and inadequate reconciliation processes indicates the critical need for a deeper understanding of post-conflict dynamics in Burayu Town. To address these issues, the study will focus on key research questions and objectives, which are outlined in the following section.

## **1. 3 Research objective**

### **1.3.1 General objective**

The general objective of the study is to analyze the efforts and its effectiveness in the process of post conflict reconciliation between the Oromo and the Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu Town 2018-2019.

### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

Specific objectives of the study are

- To examine the role of government and local community leaders in reconciliation process.
- To analyse the consequences of the conflict between Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu town in 2018.
- To investigate and analyse the result of reconciliation.

### **1.4 Research questions**

In relation to the above objectives of the study, the researcher will analyse the efforts for post conflict peace building reconciliation process done by the involvement of the government and local community leaders and tries to answer the following question critically

1. What was the effect of the conflict on all the communities in Burayu?
2. What key roles should the government and local community key leaders play in the reconciliation process?
3. What was the outcome of the reconciliation process?

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The significance of this thesis is that it adds in its broad approach to understanding post-conflict reconciliation effort between the Oromo, Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu Town, Ethiopia. The study serves as a critical analytical tool for several key stakeholders. Provides an in-depth exploration of ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms in Ethiopia, Offers insights into the complex dynamics of inter community tensions, analyses the challenges and potential strategies for sustainable peace-building.

The thesis is particularly valuable for Policymakers seeking to understand ethnic conflict resolution Local and federal government officials developing reconciliation strategies Community leaders working to rebuild trust between different ethnic groups Researchers studying conflict resolution in multi-ethnic societies

By systematically investigating the reconciliation efforts in Burayu Town, the research contributes to the broader understanding of how communities can overcome deep-rooted conflicts and work towards sustainable peace. The study's comprehensive approach provides a detail examination of the complex factors that influence post-conflict reconciliation, offering practical understandings that can be applied to similar conflict situations in Ethiopia and beyond.

### **1.6 Scope of the study**

The study's temporal focus is the process of reconciliation after the violent conflict that broke out between the Gamo-Gurage and Oromo communities in Burayu town in September 2018. The study's geographic scope is limited to Burayu City, which is currently governed by Shaggar City in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia after previously being a part of the Oromia Special Zone that surrounded Finfinne (Addis Ababa). On a thematic level, the study looks at the attempts made to bring about stability following the conflict and evaluates the main elements affecting the process of reconciliation. Although the case offers a variety of analytical angles, the efficacy of post-conflict interventions is the particular focus of this study.

The study uses a mixed-methods approach in terms of methodology, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The study examines the reconciliation efforts put in place and the variables that influenced their results, focusing only on the 2018 conflict between the Oromo and Gamo-Gurage communities in Burayu.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

The study has various limitations as it analyse the post-conflict reconciliation efforts between Oromo Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu town, Ethiopia. Major limitations are associated with sampling where the study was unlikely to cover all of the affected communities and stackholders who engaged in this process. For instance, the sampling only covered current residents of Burayu town, which means if some members of the community had decide to move away from Burayu due to the conflict, then they would not be included in the sampling frame. Additionally, data collection for the house hold survey took place during the day, which created a situation where women were under represented from among the respondents. This is because women worked outside of the house collecting plastic waste and fire wood.

### **1.8. Positionality**

The researcher is motivated to study this particular case because of his academic as well as other personal and societal interests he shared with fellow members of the community. The researcher has lived in the place where the selected case had occurred. He has been actively following the development during the conflict period as well as participated, to some extent, in the reconciliation efforts led by the government.

### **1.9. Organization of the study**

This study has five chapters. The First chapter is an introductory part. Chapter two focuses on Review of related literature. Chapter three deals research methodology. Data analysis, interpretation and research finding are in Chapter four. Finally, from analyzed data's, the Researcher draw the conclusions and recommendations under chapter five.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. Literature review

#### 2.1 Concept of reconciliation

##### 2.1.1 Reconciliation

According to various academics, reconciliation is a complex concept with multiple overlapping meanings. Online dictionaries, as is frequently the case, don't provide much clarification regarding how a concept is used in a particular field. However, in this instance, the Cambridge Online Content Dictionary does help us get started for the purposes of this study. The process of restoring friendship between two individuals or groups of individuals following a heated argument or conflict that kept them apart (Kriesberg, 2007). In elaborative way reconciliation is increasingly understood as a dynamic, complex, difficult, long-term and unpredictable process, not an event, isolated act, nor even an end-point or a remote goal to be achieved when war has ended. (Maddison S. , 2016)

Processes and specific facets of relationships between two or more individuals or groups are included in reconciliation. Stated differently, it refers to the relationships between social groups or political entities that were once involved in the conflict as well as between the individuals that make up those groups; it has to do with how a society makes peace with its past as well as how groups and individuals make peace with one another. (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003). This dual understanding, which is the subject of a significant conceptual dispute, is not universally accepted by academics. Additionally, such disagreement may lead to different practical and policy approaches. (Heo, 2012)

Reconciliation is also a concept with multiple meanings, stirring ideological and political debates about translating the concept into policy. In academic work, legal, political, social and religious approaches strongly emphasise the importance of reconciliation. Still, few offer an analytical framework to understand the concept and how it relates to other aspects of peacebuilding Reconciliation is also an old term.

There is no official or generally recognized definition of reconciliation. Reconciliation entails mending and/or repairing ties harmed by oppression and violent conflict. It emphasizes

strengthening vertical ties between individuals and institutions as well as horizontal ties between individuals and social groups. Typically, this entails the following developing a vision of a fair, mutually acceptable and interdependent future

- Recognizing and addressing the legacy of historical violence;
- Establishing more inclusive institutions and structures that are founded on and facilitate a new social contract and transformed relationships;
- Bringing about significant cultural and attitudinal change; fostering social cohesion and trust; and establishing new norms. (Rachel Clogg and Michelle Parlevliet, MARCH 2021)

Reconciliation following protracted and widespread violent conflict is the main topic of this study. Usually, we think of what is commonly referred to as a post-conflict scenario: a settlement has been reached, the violence has stopped, and a regime (stakeholders) is working to rebuild a new society from the ashes of the previous one. Building stronger ties between the events and situations that were previously violent or conflictual is one aspect of that construction task. This Research thesis will concentrate on such specific situations, typically the aftermath of civil violence war brutally oppressed, where the need for reconciliation is most pressing. Finding the truth, justice, forgiveness, healing, and other things are all part of the ultimate process of reconciliation. (Glucksam, 24 Jun 2024). In its most basic form, it refers to figuring out how to live with former adversaries not necessarily to love them, forgive them, or forget the past in any way, but to coexist with them and build the level of cooperation required to share our society with them so that we can all live better lives together than we have separately.

### **2.1.2 Historical Development of reconciliation**

A world grounded in something akin to the Golden Rule a variant of which can be found in all of the major spiritual and religious traditions of the world is what reconciliation conjures up. You will treat me with the same respect and decency if I treat you with it. And only if we resolve the substantive and emotional problems that have caused us to part ways will that be possible.

#### ***Reconciliation in the 2020s***

In the early 2000s, people working on peacebuilding began to understand how important reconciliation is for resolving conflicts. A key essay by Hauss in 2003 highlighted this shift. Today's conflicts are often more complicated than those in the past, with deep-rooted issues that

make them hard to resolve. These are often called "wicked problems" because their causes and effects are intertwined, making simple solutions ineffective. (Haus, 2003)

Moreover, professionals in peace and conflict resolution have started to focus more on local issues. They recognize that mediators who were once seen as neutral outsiders are now part of the community and have their own interests in the conflicts. This change indicates that effective reconciliation needs everyone involved to communicate openly. A good example of this is the ongoing racial issues in the United States, which have deep historical roots and continue to shape society today (Maddison, 2017).

For reconciliation to work, it's essential to engage in honest dialogue. Well known and figures like Archbishop Desmond Tutu have shown how important this kind of communication is for understanding and healing. John Paul Lederach, a significant figure in peacebuilding, emphasized in his work that reconciliation is an ongoing process that helps communities move past tensions (Lederach J. P., 1998) additionally, restorative justice focuses on repairing relationships rather than just punishing wrongdoers, addressing the root causes of conflicts, such as systemic inequalities. Recognizing the concerns of marginalized groups while also understanding the views of those in power is crucial for achieving lasting peace. (Maddison, 2017)

### *B. Twenty-First Century Insights*

Lederach's contributions have been foundational, but our understanding of reconciliation has evolved significantly. It is now a core element of many ambitious and holistic peacebuilding initiatives. The field has shifted away from a focus on despair and negativity what George Lopez termed "Gloom and Doom 101" toward constructive solutions that address the root causes of conflict. (Lederach J. P., 1998)

Recent developments emphasize the concept of positive peace, promoted by the Institute for Economics and Peace (Glucksam, 24 Jun 2024). This broader perspective on reconciliation acknowledges its importance within the larger framework of peacebuilding, recognizing that effective reconciliation efforts are crucial for fostering long-term stability and understanding among conflicting parties. Reconciliation has become a vital process in contemporary peacebuilding, requiring a complex approach that considers historical injustices, promotes

dialogue, and seeks to build equitable relationships among all stakeholders involved. (Auerbach, 2005)

### **2.1.3 Types of reconciliation**

#### ***A. Social reconciliation***

Reconciliation is often described as a “societal process”, emphasizing its nature as a collective effort that involves the entire community. This term reflects the understanding that reconciliation is not limited to formal agreements or political dialogue; rather, it encompasses a wide range of initiatives and activities that engage different groups within society. (Heo, 2012)

The term social reconciliation is frequently used to highlight this broader spectrum of processes. It refers to efforts that mobilize local civil society and address the needs and experiences of various conflict-affected groups (Daly and Sarkin, 2007) Social reconciliation contrasts with political reconciliation by focusing on the everyday members of society; those who have either benefited from or been victimized by the dynamics of conflict and systemic inequality. (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003)

This inclusive type acknowledges that reconciliation involves not only leaders and policymakers but also ordinary individuals who play a crucial role in the healing process. By embracing social reconciliation, we recognize the importance of engaging the vast majority of people, including both beneficiaries of the system and its victims. This holistic perspective ensures that reconciliation efforts are grounded in the lived experiences of the community, fostering a deeper and more meaningful path toward societal healing and unity. (Maddison, 2017)

#### ***B. Political reconciliation***

Political reconciliation is often contrasted with social reconciliation, highlighting a process that tends to be restricted to the political elite, including political activists and state agents, with its reach limited to a minority. However, not all scholars agree with this elite-centered perspective. Political reconciliation encompasses processes that should ideally occur at all levels of society, recognizing the need for inclusivity. (Heo, 2012)

At the local level, tensions can arise between traditional authorities and newly elected leaders, illustrating the dissonance that can exist within political structures. In electoral contexts, agreed negotiations may be employed to resolve disputes, and similar collaborative arrangements are often necessary when drafting or amending constitutions, particularly regarding governmental structures. These elements are integral to political reconciliation and necessitate the initiation of processes within the political sphere. (Maddison, 2017)

As scholar Andrew Schapp notes, “political reconciliation” is not merely about restoring an idealized vision of community. Instead, it begins with an understanding of the present as the foundation for a future community. This approach emphasizes the importance of creating a political space where conflicting memories and expectations can interact, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the past and its impact on the present. (Bloomfield and Barnes, 2003)

In this way, political reconciliation is about acknowledging diverse perspectives and fostering dialogue among all sectors of society. By doing so, it aims to cultivate a shared understanding and facilitate the construction of a cohesive political identity that reflects the complexities of the community.

### *C. National versus State Reconciliation*

Definitional distinctions are often made between “state reconciliation” and “national reconciliation”. Scholar Holly Ackerman provides clarity on these terms “National Reconciliation” is refers to a process of accommodation and reintegration among a previously divided people. (Hackerman, April 2015) It emphasizes healing and unity within a unique community, focusing on the collective experiences and identities that have been fractured by conflict. (Heo, 2012)

“State Reconciliation” In contrast, is the process which involves accommodation and reintegration at the government level. It focuses on institutional efforts to address conflicts and grievances, often through policy changes and formal agreements. (Heo, 2012)

Ackerman also distinguishes between “reconciliation” and “transition”, particularly in the context of political studies related to democratic processes. She notes (Heo, 2012)that reconciliation is generally considered a more protected process than transition.

While transition often involves broader political changes and may focus on power dynamics and governance, reconciliation is deeply associated with individual transformation and local action. It encompasses both institutional and collective processes aimed at fostering understanding, healing relationships, and rebuilding trust within communities. (Heo, 2012)

So, understanding these distinctions helps clarify the different dimensions of reconciliation as both a societal and governmental struggle, emphasizing the importance of addressing both individual and collective needs in the aftermath of conflict.

#### *D. Gumaa system*

Gumaa is an indigenous conflict resolution and peace-building mechanism within the Oromo society, recognized by different names across various Oromo tribes; such as “Gondooroo” among the Guji Oromo. This system primarily addresses homicide cases, facilitating dialogue between the perpetrator's family and the victim's family. (Debisa, 10 Jan 2022.)

The Gumaa system is essential to upholding victims' rights and fostering communal harmony. It works on the tenet that those who cause harm, like murder or damage, must make amends to the victim. In addition to being necessary for justice, this compensation is also necessary to keep the parties involved from becoming even more irate.

Gumaa is a cultural dispute resolution technique that seeks to preserve social norms and values while re-establishing harmony. By resolving grievances through compensation, it seeks to ensure peaceful coexistence among community members. For example, a hyena may threaten a person who kills one until they give them livestock, such as a cow, donkey, or sheep, in exchange. This demonstrates the close relationship that exists between Oromo cultural customs and conflict resolution.

Moreover, Tamen (2013) argues that the reliance on Gumaa reflects either a resistance against a legal system perceived as unjust or highlights inadequacies within that system. The dependence on Gumaa may stem from the inaccessibility of formal legal avenues or the inability of those systems to deliver justice in line with the Oromo philosophy of conflict resolution and peace-building.

The Gumaa system exemplifies a form of “cultural reconciliation” that not only seeks to resolve conflicts but also strengthens community bonds and upholds traditional values. Through this mechanism, the Oromo people navigate conflicts in a way that reflects their cultural identity and social cohesion.

### *E.Jaarsummaa*

In the Oromo Gadaa system, “jaarsummaa” is a vital process of dispute resolution, often referred to as the "elder's institution." This process involves a neutral third party who mediates between the disputants, fostering dialogue and understanding. The mediators, known as Jaarsa Araaraa (reconciliation elders), are respected figures within the community, possessing the experience and skills necessary to facilitate conflict resolution (Getachew, 2019, July 26–28) .

Community elders play a central role in this process, as they are typically closer to the parties involved in the conflict. They engage in discussions rooted in the norms, values, and laws of the Oromo tradition. As noted by (Dejene, 2002), the guidance provided by the Abbaa Gadaa (the leader of the Gadaa system) carries a binding authority. Disregarding these traditional norms is viewed as disobedience, reinforcing the importance of adherence to cultural custom.

In order to resolve conflicts and disagreements within families and communities, elders are entrusted with maintaining the traditional rules outlined in jaarsummaa. Their goal is to maintain social harmony, peace, and security. Firdissa highlights that the Gadaa system's dispute resolution enables both the victim and the defendant to quickly and locally obtain justice and the truth. (Blen, 2013)

The Gadaa system has long served as a peaceful and amicable means of settling disputes, following fair and just procedures that promote social justice and the right to be heard. Jaarsummaa has been practiced for generations, effectively resolving conflicts not only among the Oromo but also with neighbouring communities. This reconciliation and arbitration system is deeply embedded in the Oromo tradition, contributing significantly to social stability and unity throughout history (Ketema, 2020).

However, the cultural practice of jaarsummaa is facing challenges in contemporary society. Many individuals are increasingly turning to formal court systems for dispute resolution, often neglecting this profound cultural heritage. This shift poses a risk to the traditional

mechanisms of peace-building that have historically maintained relationships and fostered community cohesion among the Oromo people. The ongoing vitality of jaarsummaa is crucial for preserving cultural identity and ensuring sustainable peace within the community.

#### *F. Reconciliation through symbol*

Reconciliation through symbols plays a crucial role in promoting multiculturalism and unity amidst diversity. Symbols serve as powerful representations that can foster a sense of shared identity and belonging among different groups. (Kaufman, 2006)

In the context of international competition, national symbols and emblems often reflected in team jerseys and athletes' attire are prominently displayed. For example, South Africa's re-entry into the international sports arena after the end of apartheid provided a unique opportunity to use sports as a means of illustrating the nation's political transformation. The concept of South Africa as the "Rainbow Nation" encapsulated its commitment to multiculturalism and unity. (Kristine Höglund and Ralph Sundberg, 2008)

Sports not only showcased new symbols of unity but also facilitated the creation of national myths that celebrated this transformation. A notable moment occurred during the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, where the South African team, composed of both white and black athletes, symbolized the country's new inclusive identity. This representation served to bridge historical divides and fosters a collective spirit among the diverse population (Kristine Höglund and Ralph Sundberg, 2008).

Through such symbolic gestures, reconciliation can be advanced, as they promote shared narratives and collective memories that honor diversity while emphasizing common goals. These symbols help to forge connections among individuals and communities, paving the way for a more harmonious society that acknowledges and celebrates its pluralistic nature.

#### *G. Reconciliation through sport policies*

The end of apartheid in South Africa marked a significant shift in the structure of sports, abolishing segregated sporting codes that had previously governed participation. Under apartheid, there were separate controlling bodies for different racial groups, which led to significant disparities in athletic development. This segregation resulted in a stark divide in the quality of sports, where white athletes benefited from superior resources and opportunities

compared to their non-white counterparts. The African National Congress (ANC) recognized these inequalities, especially following the end of minority rule. (Kristine Höglund and Ralph Sundberg, 2008)

A notable illustration of this disparity was seen during the 1995 Rugby World Cup, where only one black player was included in the South African team. This lack of representation highlighted the systemic barriers that prevented broader participation from black and colored athletes. Even in 2007, when South Africa triumphed in the Rugby World Cup, only two players on the squad were not white, underscoring the ongoing dominance of white players in the sport. The underlying issues stemmed from unequal access to facilities, training, and competitive opportunities, which continued to affect the landscape of South African rugby. (Kristine Höglund and Ralph Sundberg, 2008)

The integration of sports in the post-apartheid era serves as a vital avenue for reconciliation, promoting unity and healing among South Africa's diverse communities. By addressing these historical inequalities and fostering inclusive participation, sports can play a crucial role in bridging divides and building a more equitable society (Kristine Höglund and Ralph Sundberg, 2008).

## **2.1.4 Approaches of Reconciliation**

### ***A. Instrumental Approach to Reconciliation***

The instrumental approach to reconciliation is characterized by a relational framing of the reconciliation process, coupled with a clearly defined set of goals. This approach emphasizes the relationships between distinct groups, either by explicitly acknowledging their collective identities or by framing reconciliation as a process that resides within the dynamics of these relationships. (*Glucksam, 24 Jun 2024*)

Goals within this model are typically institutional or policy-oriented. They may include initiatives such as passing new laws, reforming existing institutions, or establishing commissions and mechanisms related to transitional justice. In this context, reconciliation is viewed as a tangible outcome associated with the achievement of governance or legal objectives, resulting in an agreement among stakeholders to set aside their grievances. (*Murphy*)

dialogue about a variety of issues that often extend beyond specific historical conflicts, addressing broader concerns related to everyday life. (Glucksam, 24 Jun 2024)

Dialogical reconciliation does not impose conditions or expectations; it is not directed toward a specific outcome. Drawing on the philosophy of Martin Buber, this approach values the act of dialogue itself as a critical component of the process. (Lederach J. P., 2003) It allows participants to engage in interpersonal exchanges that transcend mere self-presentation, fostering a deeper connection characterized by empathy and mutual understanding.

This approach facilitates meetings aimed solely at learning about one another's experiences, encouraging participants to explore common ground and shared narratives. Some initiatives may engage communities in their local contexts, while others might encourage participants to meet in neutral settings away from their familiar environments, promoting a more open atmosphere for discussion. (Glucksam, 24 Jun 2024)

The dialogical view of reconciliation is distinct in its emphasis on empathy-building interactions that are not tied to national problem-solving or political agendas. Its ambitious yet flexible goals, along with a longer time horizon, set it apart from more instrumental approaches. While many reconciliation initiatives may impose specific targets and success metrics aligned with transitional justice policies, the dialogical approach prioritizes the autonomy and agency of participants, allowing them to guide the discussion gradually, even if this comes at the expense of immediate productivity or alignment with externally defined objectives. (Habermas, 2013)

### *C. Restorative Approach to Reconciliation*

The restorative approach to reconciliation emphasizes relationships within a community rather than between different groups. This approach is often implemented by organizations that aim to renew traditional structures and develop practices for local conflict prevention and resolution. (Joanna R. Quinn, 2006) Activities within this framework range from rebuilding lost cultural infrastructures to empowering local traditional leaders to engage actively in addressing community issues. (Lederach, 1997).

A key assumption of restorative reconciliation is that local and traditional knowledge, along with community governance systems, can enhance societal resilience, particularly in preventing and resolving conflicts. These social and cultural structures often suffer erosion

during extended periods of conflict due to factors such as displacement, poverty, and physical destruction. In some cases, traditional practices and community leaders are directly targeted, further undermining the community's cohesion. (Glucksam, 24 Jun 2024)

The loss of cultural connection and local leadership continues to impact communities long after violence has ceased, highlighting the need for restorative efforts in peacebuilding. Organizations involved in restorative reconciliation often take on a facilitative role, focusing on the process rather than imposing specific outcomes. (Joanna R. Quinn, 2006)

This approach also encourages a reflexive focus on integrating former victims and perpetrators within the same community, fostering dialogue and understanding. Reconciliation activities aim to destigmatize conflict resolution practices, utilizing traditional structures and empowering local leaders. (Glucksam, 24 Jun 2024) For instance, organizations with a track record of reintegrating former child soldiers often see these individuals elected to community leadership positions, demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach.

Restorative reconciliation pursues its goals through a combination of individual and social trauma healing, psycho-social support, and training for community cohesion facilitators. These efforts are designed to enhance the resilience of the communities they serve, ensuring that local leaders are equipped to foster unity and address conflicts in constructive ways.

### *Transformative Approach to Reconciliation*

Transformative reconciliation places a strong emphasis on addressing the practical needs of communities, encompassing areas such as physical, psycho-social, economic, and educational requirements. Unlike other approaches that may delve into historical events or political contexts, transformative reconciliation focuses on the present and future, seeking tangible societal changes (Ross, 2004).

This approach recognizes that reconciliation is intricately linked to social and economic conditions within communities. Instead of scrutinizing the past, it aims to foster progress and development, encouraging communities to envision and work toward a better future. (Glucksam, 24 Jun 2024)

While similar to restorative reconciliation in its reflexive nature, transformative reconciliation is distinguished by its open-ended goals, which are framed in progressive or developmental terms. This means that the objectives are not strictly defined but are adaptable, allowing communities to pursue diverse paths toward growth and improvement.

Transformative reconciliation seeks to empower communities by prioritizing their immediate needs and aspirations, fostering an environment conducive to long-term development and positive change. (Glucksam, 24 Jun 2024)

### *E .Experiential Approach to Reconciliation*

The experiential approach to reconciliation represents a distinct category that challenges both relational and reflexive characteristics typically associated with other reconciliation frameworks. Unlike the previous approaches, this model does not promote specific goals or outcomes. Instead, it blends relational and reflexive perspectives, emphasizing the importance of the reconciliation process itself. (Bronwyn Anne Leebaw, 2008)

Activities within this approach are not dialogical in a formal sense, nor are they therapeutic in a clinical context. They do not tie to specific policies or measurable benchmarks. Rather, they are driven by a deep, intimate understanding of reconciliation as an everyday practice. The primary focus is on the experiences and emotional ripples generated during interactions, with no ulterior objectives beyond the act of engaging itself. (Glucksam, 24 Jun 2024)

This present oriented approach seeks to create spaces where individuals can confront emotional and narrative differences within their communities. It encourages normalizing everyday interactions with "others," improving an environment for self-reflection and personal responsibility.

I refer to this framework as “experiential reconciliation”, inspired by its unique emphasis on present experiences and aligned with a similar psychological approach that utilizes emotional experiences as catalysts for internal and relational change. Through this lens, reconciliation becomes a continuous practice centered on the lived experiences of individuals, promoting connection and understanding in the moment.

### **2.1.5 Barriers of reconciliation in post conflict**

Common obstacles to reconciliation processes include lack of trust, unresolved trauma, Political instability and inadequate legal framework.

#### ***Lack of trust***

This is often due to past injustices, violence, or betrayals that have eroded trust between conflicting parties. Rebuilding trust is a slow and challenging process, requiring open communication, transparency, and consistent actions that demonstrate commitment to change. Without trust, parties may be unwilling to engage in dialogue, share their experiences, or make compromises, all of which are crucial for reconciliation. (Maddison, 2017)

#### ***Unresolved trauma***

Victims of conflict often carry deep emotional wounds that can make it difficult for them to forgive or move forward. This trauma can be passed down through generations, perpetuating cycles of hatred and violence. Addressing this trauma through counselling, truth-telling and reparations can be a crucial part of the reconciliation process (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003).

#### ***Political instability***

In many post-conflict societies, political institutions may be weak or corrupt, and power struggles can erupt, leading to further violence and instability. This can make it difficult to establish the necessary conditions for reconciliation, such as rule of law, human rights protections, and democratic governance. Moreover, political leaders may manipulate ethnic or sectarian tensions for their own gain, further undermining reconciliation efforts (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003).

#### ***Inadequate legal frameworks***

In some cases, the legal system may not be equipped to deal with the complexities of past atrocities, such as genocide or war crimes. This can result in impunity for perpetrators and a lack of justice for victims, which can fuel resentment and hinder reconciliation. In other cases, laws may be used to suppress dissent or marginalise certain groups, further exacerbating social divisions. (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003)

### *Lack of resources*

Reconciliation processes often require substantial financial, human, and institutional resources. These include funds for reparations, skilled mediators, and institutions to oversee the process. In resource-poor settings, these may be lacking, making it difficult to carry out effective reconciliation.

## **2.2 Violence**

The concept of violence is complex and ambiguous, encompassing physical and psychological injury, crime, and socio-political discrimination. It is often presented in various collocations, reflecting divergent interpretations and the difficulty in achieving a universally accepted definition. (Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C., 1979)

The concepts of violence in the paper are categorized into two major pathways: violence as a condition of human nature, involving psychobiological vulnerabilities and instinctual drives, and violence as a consequence of a damaged psyche, encompassing self-regulation and attachment issues.

Violence in the context of identity is a multifaceted phenomenon that intertwines personal, social, and historical narratives. It manifests through various forms, including physical confrontations, symbolic violence, and hate-based actions, often rooted in the struggle for identity recognition and preservation. The violence in Ethiopia, particularly in the context of identity, is deeply intertwined with the country's ethnic federal system established in the 1990s. This system has not only politicized ethnic identities but has also led to significant inter-ethnic conflicts, as various groups vie for autonomy and control over resources.

## **2.3 post conflicts Management**

The post-conflict management system plays a crucial role in addressing and mitigating the underlying sources of conflict that persist within societies recovering from violence. Understanding these sources is essential for developing effective strategies that promote lasting peace and social cohesion. One significant source of conflict lies embedded in the social structures themselves, where competition for power and status creates cyclical and endemic tensions. This fragmentation is often rooted in deep-seated divisions based on social categories such as religion, language, and ethno-political affiliations. (Maddison, 2017)

As interests become polarized and divided, they are further complicated by the cross-pressures of various group memberships, including professional associations, sports leagues, and social clubs. These dynamics highlight the complexity of identity formation, which serves to mobilize certain groups against others while maintaining rigid boundaries. (Corradetti C, Eisikovits N, Rotondi JV , 2015)

The way individuals perceive themselves and others is heavily influenced by their identities, which can lead to destructive conflict when threatened. By examining these interrelated factors, we can better understand the mechanisms that sustain conflict in post-conflict environments and the critical need for comprehensive management strategies.

### **2.3.2 Levels of Reconciliation in post conflict management**

#### ***A. Replacing Fear by Non-Violent Coexistence***

When the shooting stops, the first step away from hatred, hostility and bitterness is the achievement of non-violent coexistence between the antagonist individuals and groups. This means at a minimum looking for alternatives to revenge. (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003)

In order to move toward such coexistence, victims and offenders must first be released from the crippling loneliness and self-centeredness that they frequently endure. This entails fostering or reviving communication both within and between victim and offender communities. Religious institutions, NGOs, and political and community leaders have a big role to play in this. Programs for such emancipating communication can be started or maintained by them. If those directly involved are not yet ready to speak, they can also start a conversation as symbolic representatives of victims and offenders. (Rigby, 2001.)

This stage of the reconciliation process does not end conflicts. Though they agree to disagree and use less violent methods to resolve old and new conflicts, individuals, groups, and communities remain adversaries. One option is to trade private retaliation for retribution by a legally-bound organization (like a criminal court). (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003)

### *B. When Fear No Longer Rules: Building Confidence and Trust*

Then, in due course, coexistence evolves towards a relation of trust. The victim and the perpetrator must both regain confidence in themselves and in one another in order to proceed to the second step of the process. (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003) Over time, coexistence develops into a relationship based on trust. Both the victim and the perpetrator must regain their self-confidence and mutual trust in order to proceed to the second step of the process. (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003). A post-conflict society must establish a minimum of functional institutions, such as a nonpartisan judiciary, an efficient civil service, and a suitable legislative structure, in order for trust and confidence to genuinely grow. This requirement ties a policy for reconciliation to the numerous other tasks involved in moving from violent conflict to lasting peace. (Rigby, 2001.)

### *C. Towards Empathy*

Empathy is demonstrated by the victims' readiness to hear the justifications for their animosity toward the people who hurt them and by the perpetrators' comprehension of the resentment and rage of those who were harmed. The work of truth commissions, which separate fact from fiction and truth from myth, is one way to make this possible. (Schmitter, Philippe and Javier Santiso., 1998) Such commissions may also result in an official recognition of the injustice that has been done. Since it gives people unbiased chances to view the past in terms of shared suffering and shared responsibility, telling the truth is also a prerequisite for reconciliation. The understanding that victims and offenders have a shared identity as survivors and human beings and must just get along is even more crucial. (David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, 2003)

The literature review has highlighted the multifaceted nature of reconciliation, the barriers to post-conflict peacebuilding, and the role of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. Building on this foundation, the next section introduces the theoretical framework that will guide the analysis of reconciliation efforts in Burayu Town.

## 2.4 Theoretical framework

### 2.4.1. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)

Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), imagines that individuals develop a significant part of their self-concept from their membership in social groups, such as ethnic, cultural, or religious communities. According to this theory, people categorize themselves and others into in-groups (groups they belong to) and out-groups (groups they do not belong to), which can lead to intergroup bias and conflict (Ibid). In post-conflict settings, intergroup conflicts often arise from the polarization of group identities, where individuals perceive their own group as superior and the "other" group as inferior or threatening (Hogg, 2016). This theory is particularly relevant to the study of reconciliation between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities, as it provides a framework for understanding how group identities contribute to conflict and how they can be transformed to encourage peace.

The questionnaire in this study explores trust, belonging, and interaction between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities, which are key components of social identity. For instance, questions such as "How much do you trust members of the other community?" and "Do you feel a sense of belonging to the broader Burayu community?" directly relate to the dynamics of in-group and out-group perceptions. By analyzing these responses, the study can identify how group identities influence intergroup relations and what strategies can be employed to reduce intergroup bias (Hogg, 2016).

For the success of reconciliation, interventions should aim to reduce the salience of divisive group identities and substitute a shared identity. This could be achieved through community-building activities that emphasize common goals and values, such as joint economic developments or cultural exchange programs (Gaertner, & Dovidio, 2000). Additionally, public awareness campaigns could highlight the shared history and interdependence of the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities, thereby reducing stereotypes and promoting mutual respect (Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R., 2006). Such strategies align with the principles of SIT, which emphasize the importance of re categorizing in-group and out-group boundaries to create a more inclusive social identity (Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C., 1979).

### 2.4.3. Transitional Justice Theory

Transitional Justice Theory focuses on how societies address past human rights violations and promote reconciliation through mechanisms such as truth commissions, reparations, and institutional reforms (Teitel, 2003). This theory is particularly relevant to the study, as it provides a framework for understanding how the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities can address the grievances and injustices that fueled the 2018 conflict in Burayu Town. Transitional justice seeks to balance accountability for past wrongs with the need to rebuild social trust and foster long-term peace (Lederach J. P., *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*, 1997). By addressing the root causes of conflict and providing redress for victims, transitional justice mechanisms can contribute to healing and reconciliation in divided societies (Hayner, 2011).

The questionnaire in this study explores the role of government and community leaders in reconciliation efforts, as well as the effectiveness of reconciliation programs in addressing the root causes of the conflict. Questions such as "What specific conflict resolution mechanisms were implemented immediately after the September 2018 incident?" and "Do you believe these programs have addressed the root causes of the conflict?" align with the principles of transitional justice. By analyzing these responses, the study can evaluate the extent to which transitional justice mechanisms have been implemented and their impact on reconciliation. For example, if respondents express dissatisfaction with existing programs, this may indicate a need for more comprehensive and inclusive approaches to transitional justice (Hayner, 2011).

To promote reconciliation, transitional justice mechanisms should be inclusive, transparent, and participatory. This could involve establishing truth and reconciliation commissions to document the experiences of victims and perpetrators, providing reparations to those affected by the conflict, and reforming institutions to address systemic inequalities (Teitel, 2003). Additionally, efforts should be made to involve all stakeholders, including victims, displaced individuals, and community leaders, in the design and implementation of these mechanisms (Lederach J. P., 1997). Research has shown that inclusive and participatory approaches to transitional justice are more likely to achieve lasting reconciliation, as they ensure that the needs and perspectives of all affected parties are addressed (Andrieu, 2010).

#### 2.4.4. Social Cohesion Theory

Social Cohesion Theory emphasizes the importance of trust, shared values and a sense of belonging in holding societies together (OECD, 2011). In post-conflict settings, rebuilding social cohesion is critical for sustainable peace, as it fosters resilience against future conflicts and promotes collective well-being (Colletta, N. J.& Cullen, M. L., 2000). This theory is highly relevant to the study, as it provides a framework for understanding how the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities can rebuild trust and foster a shared sense of identity in the aftermath of the 2018 conflict. Social cohesion is particularly important in ethnically diverse communities, where historical grievances and economic disparities can undermine trust and cooperation (Putnam, 2000).

The questionnaire in this study measures key indicators of social cohesion, such as trust, sense of belonging, and participation in community events. Questions such as "How would you describe the current relationship between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities?" and "Do you feel a sense of belonging to the broader Burayu community?" provide valuable insights into the state of social cohesion in Burayu Town. By these responses, the study can identify factors that contribute to or hinder social cohesion and recommend strategies to strengthen it. For example, if respondents report low levels of trust or belonging, interventions could focus on fostering interpersonal connections and shared community values (OECD, 2011).

Reconciliation programs should prioritize initiatives that promote trust, shared values, and a sense of belonging. This could include community dialogues, joint cultural events, and inclusive governance structures that ensure the participation of all community members (Colletta, N. J.& Cullen, M. L., 2000). Additionally, efforts should be made to address economic disparities and other structural factors that undermine social cohesion. By fostering a shared sense of identity and purpose, these initiatives can contribute to long-term peace and stability (Putnam, 2000)

**Table 2.3.1.** Common Dimensions of Social Cohesion. Adapted with permission from Schiefer and vander Noll [32], 2012, Bertelsmann (Moustakas, 2023)

Dimension	Description	Sub-Dimensions
Social Relations	Quality and strength of relations between groups and individuals	Social networks; participation; trust; mutual tolerance
Sense of Identification	Feelings of attachment or identification to a social entity	Feelings of belonging
Orientation towards the common good	Feelings of responsibility for the common good and compliance With social order.	Feelings of responsibility; acceptance, and compliance with social order
Shared values	Shared, commonly held values across societal groups	Value consensus; preference for values that enhance cohesion
Equality and Inequality	Level of equality in the distribution of social and economic resources	Distribution of resources; diversity; social exclusion
Quality of Life	Objective and subjective levels of quality of life	Psycho-social well-being, physical health, living conditions

#### 2.4.5. Conflict Transformation Theory (Lederach, 1997)

Conflict Transformation Theory, developed by Lederach (Lederach, 1997), emphasizes the need to address the root causes of conflict and transform relationships, structures, and cultures that perpetuate violence. Unlike traditional conflict resolution approaches, which focus on ending immediate violence, conflict transformation seeks to create sustainable peace by addressing the underlying drivers of conflict (Lederach J. P., 2003) . This theory is particularly relevant to the study, as it provides a framework for understanding how the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities can move from conflict to sustainable reconciliation.

The questionnaire explores the challenges to reconciliation and the role of government and community leaders in promoting long-term peace. Questions such as "What do you think are the biggest challenges to reconciliation between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities?" and "What role do you think community leaders should play in promoting reconciliation?" align with the principles of conflict transformation. By analysing these responses, the study can identify the root causes of the conflict and recommend strategies for

transforming relationships and structures. For instance, if respondents highlight economic disparities or political marginalization as key challenges, interventions could focus on addressing these structural issues (Lederach, 1997).

Reconciliation programs should focus on addressing the root causes of the conflict, such as economic disparities, political marginalization, and historical grievances. This could involve promoting inclusive economic development, reforming political institutions to ensure equitable representation, and fostering dialogue between community leaders (Lederach J. P., 2003). Additionally, efforts should be made to transform cultural narratives that perpetuate division and violence, replacing them with narratives of shared identity and mutual respect (Galtung, 1996). By addressing both the structural and cultural dimensions of conflict, these initiatives can contribute to sustainable peace and reconciliation.

Reconciliation programs should prioritize initiatives that promote trust, shared values, and a sense of belonging. This could include community dialogues, joint cultural events, and inclusive governance structures that ensure the participation of all community members. Additionally, efforts should be made to address economic disparities and other structural factors that undermine social cohesion. By fostering a shared sense of identity and purpose, these initiatives can contribute to long-term peace and stability.

#### **2.4.6. Trauma Healing and Psychosocial Recovery**

Post-conflict reconciliation often involves addressing the psychological and emotional trauma experienced by individuals and communities. Trauma healing is essential for rebuilding trust and social cohesion, as unresolved trauma can perpetuate cycles of violence and hinder reconciliation efforts (Hamber, 2009). Trauma, whether individual or collective, can manifest as fear, anger, mistrust, and a desire for revenge, all of which can undermine efforts to build lasting peace (Staub, 2006). This theory is highly relevant to the study, as it provides a framework for understanding how the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities can heal from the trauma of the 2018 conflict. Addressing trauma is not only a moral imperative but also a practical necessity for sustainable reconciliation (Herman, 1997).

The questionnaire in this study touches on individual and collective trauma, particularly in the context of victims and displaced individuals. Questions such as "What mechanisms were created to address individual and collective trauma?" and "How were victims and displaced individuals involved in the reconciliation process?" provide insights into the psychosocial impacts of the conflict. By analysing these responses, the study can identify gaps in trauma healing efforts and recommend strategies to address them. For example, if respondents report a lack of accessible trauma support services, this may indicate a need for more comprehensive and culturally appropriate psychosocial interventions (Hamber, 2009).

Reconciliation programs should incorporate psychosocial support services, such as counseling, trauma healing workshops, and community-based support groups. These initiatives should be culturally sensitive and inclusive, ensuring that all affected individuals have access to the support they need (Staub, 2006). Additionally, efforts should be made to involve trauma survivors in the design and implementation of reconciliation programs, as their participation is critical for ensuring that these programs are effective and sustainable (Herman, 1997). Research has shown that survivor-centered approaches to trauma healing are more likely to foster trust, restore dignity, and promote long-term reconciliation (Lederach J. P., 1997).

## **Conclusion**

By integrating these theoretical frameworks, the study can provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for post-conflict reconciliation between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu Town. Each framework offers unique understandings into the dynamics of intergroup relations, the root causes of conflict, and the strategies needed to promote sustainable peace. Together, they form a strong theoretical foundation for analysing the effectiveness of reconciliation efforts and recommending evidence-based interventions.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### 3. DESCRIPTIONS OF STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

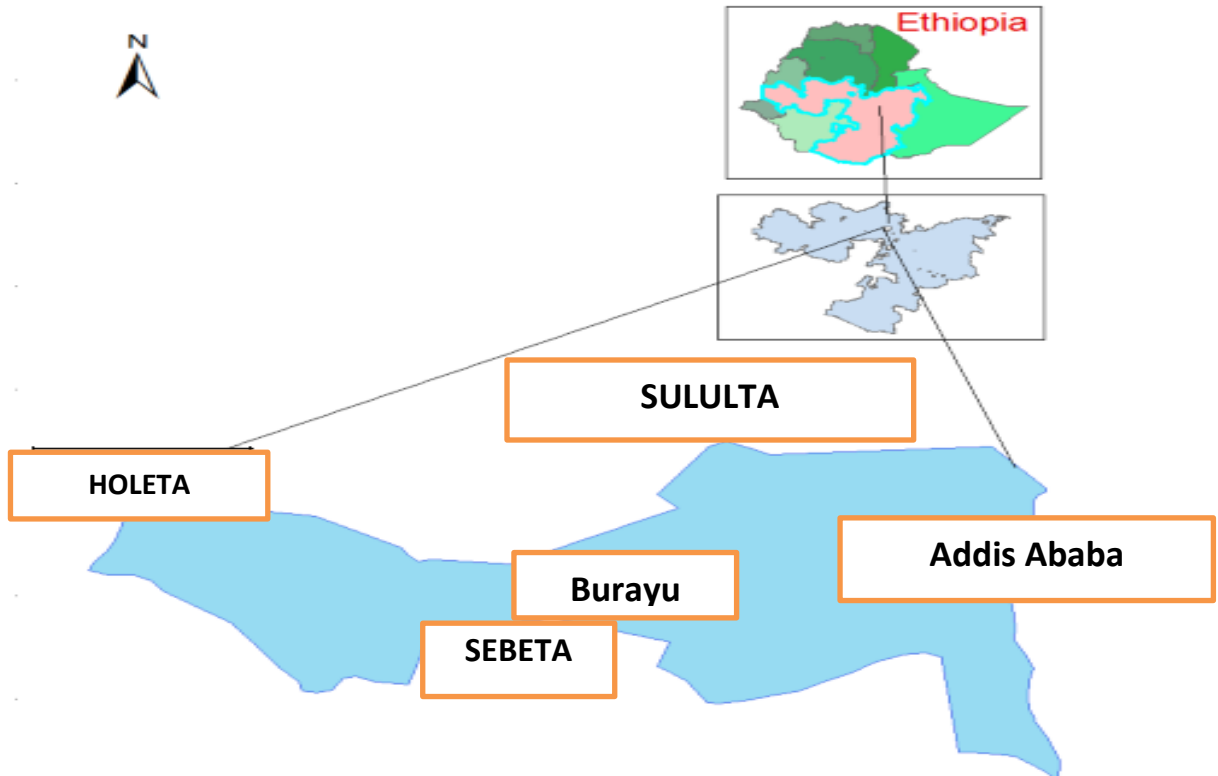
#### 3.1 Background of the Study Area

Burayu is one of Oromia regional state city which found in the south west to the country centre of Addis Ababa. The town is found on the road to Ambo-Welega -Asosa 12 k.m from Addis Ababa, having six kebele(Gefersa Nono,Gefersa Guje,Gefersa Burayu,Laku keta ,Melka Gefersa and Burayu Keta).The Towns boundaries neighbouring werdas and city administration was to the east with Adis ababa ,share boundaries with Wolmera werda,south with Sebeta Awas and to the north with Sululta wereda administration boundaries. The areas of the city were totally 9057Hec.and the total population of the city based on the central statistics of the country estimated to 375,349.

According to the burayu town communication information before the establishment of the town it was a forest area. The city was formed in 1946 by the man whom called Girazmach Robi Kelecha who was th land lord of Burayu areas. Burayu gains the name from the tree which called Burayu which grows in that area. The ancient living community in Burayu were the Gulele Oromo communities who ruled under the Geda system. Burayu is geographically found 2450-2600 above sea level. The city have many historical places which tourist attracted to sea.Melka atete ,galima Anfo ,Gefersa dam,Kolobo Forest and Dire Guje are few of them.

The demography of the city according to the city in information is from the total population of 375,349 Male=199,013 and Female 176,336 and the number of religion Ortodox=35%, Muslim 25%,Waqefeta =4% and Protestant 36%.

Now a day the city became the centre for many manufacturing industries and different service canters. The city became the preferable place for the job seekers of youths from different areas of the country. In regard of peace and security the values of the community give s priority for peace and traditional structure like Abagedas ,Hadha Sinke and Qeros etc. are gives a solution for security problems



Understanding the historical, demographic, and socio-political context of Burayu Town is very important for analysing the reconciliation efforts following the 2018 conflict. With this background established, the next section states the research methodology, including the population, sampling procedure, and data collection methods.

### 3. 2 Research Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the reconciliation efforts between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu Town. The qualitative component focused on participants' views and experiences, while the quantitative component will provide statistical data to support the findings. The mixed-methods approach is particularly suitable for this study because it allows the researcher to:

- Explore the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals affected by the conflict (qualitative).

- Measure the extent of reconciliation efforts and their impact on the community (quantitative).

- Triangulate data from different sources to increase the validity and reliability of the findings.

### 3.2 Population, sample size and sampling procedure

The study had been target individuals directly affected who live in the areas by the 2018 conflict, including community members, local leaders, government officials, and representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The population will include both Oromo and Gamo and Gurage community members. The total population is 375,349.

#### Sampling Procedure

1. Quantitative Sampling: A random sampling technique will be used to select a representative sample of community members. The sample size will be determined using a statistical formula to ensure it is large enough to provide reliable results.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{375,349}{1 + 375349 \times (0.05)^2}$$

$$n=400$$

n=requerd sample size

N=population size

e= margin of error (expressed as a decimal)

2. Qualitative Sampling: Purposive sampling, particularly the snowball-sampling technique, will be used to select key informants. This method is appropriate for sensitive topics, as it allows the researcher to identify participants through informal networks. The first key informant will be identified through informal conversations, and subsequent participants will be recommended by previous informants.

### 3.3 Types and sources of data

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, both primary and secondary sources of information had been consulted. In regard to Primary Data Surveys will be conducted to collect numerical data on the extent of reconciliation efforts, levels of trust between communities, and the impact of government and local leader interventions for Quantitative data. And also In-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) will be conducted to gather detailed insights into the reconciliation process, challenges faced, and the roles of various stakeholders for the Qualitative data parts.

As a Secondary Data Existing literature, reports, and documents related to the 2018 conflict and subsequent reconciliation efforts will be reviewed to provide context and support the primary data.

With the data sources identified, the next section describes the specific methods and instruments that will be used to collect primary data. These tools will enable the researcher to gather rich, nuanced insights into the reconciliation process.

### 3.4 Methods and instruments of data collection

In this study, both qualitative data and quantitative data collection tools had been used. The following data collection tools will be used:

**A. Surveys** which structured questionnaires were administered to a random sample of community members to collect quantitative data on reconciliation efforts and their impact.

**B. In-Depth Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including community elders, government officials, and NGO representatives, to gather qualitative data on their experiences and perceptions.

**C. Focus Group Discussions FGDs** will be organized with groups of community members to facilitate discussions on the reconciliation process and identify common themes and challenges.

Having outlined the data collection methods, the final section of this chapter explains how the data will be analysed. The thematic approach will ensure that the findings are presented in a way that aligns with the research objectives and questions.

### 3.5 Methods of data analysis

The study used a mixed-methods approach to data analysis, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions had been analyzed thematically. This involved careful interpretation of meanings and contexts, alongside organizing and summarizing the data in relation to the research questions.

Quantitative data had been gathered through structured surveys, allowing for statistical analysis to complement the insights gained from qualitative methods. The integration of these data types had provided a comprehensive understanding of the reconciliation efforts between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities.

All data collected in the local languages Oromo and Amharic had been translated directly into English by the researcher. Efforts were made to preserve the originality and clarity of the information during translation. The researcher presents the findings in a descriptive, reflexive, and narrative format while maintaining the integrity of the original content. Additionally, the analysis incorporates secondary sources to further support and enrich the findings.

With the methodology clearly defined, the study is well-positioned to explore the reconciliation efforts in Burayu Town. The next chapter will present the findings, followed by a discussion of their implications for post-conflict peacebuilding in Ethiopia and beyond.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND

#### DISCUSSION

##### 4.1 The conflict and the reconciliation process

In September 2018, in Oromia region the incident of violent clashes happened in Burayu town which is located near Addis Ababa, between Ethnic Oromo youth and minority group of Gamo and Gurage Communities. This conflict happened during the period of political reforms or transition under the current Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in the second half of 2018. The political reform also brought different instability and political crisis which resulted in the death and displacement of many people was one of the pushing factors. According to Human Right Watch reports, during the time of widespread protests in Oromia and later in Amhara regions from 2015 to 2016, over 1,000 people were killed by security forces, and many more were displaced due to violence, and it indicate that more than 2 million Ethiopians were affected by displacement crises between September 2017 and June 2018 (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

There was different antigovernment protest coming from Oromia which caused Former Prime Minister Hailemariam to resign, resulting in the coming of PM Abiy Ahmed to power (Maasho, 2018). In the early stage of the reform the government opened the door for different political parties spread in different parts of the world to come back to their homeland, calling for reconciliation and unity of the country. The Government lifted all bans on opposition groups, released political prisoners and persuades ethnic reconciliation. One such exiled opposition groups was the Oromo Liberating Front (OLF), which had been fighting as an insurgency for Oromo self-determination.

The return of OLF leaders From Eritrea on 15 September 2018 sparked mass demonstrations across Oromia (Maasho, 2018). While the celebration of these political liberalization events was taking place, they became a trigger to ethnic tensions. Two of the popular parties OLF and Ginbot 7 welcoming celebrations heightened the tension leading to violence. Many Oromo nationalists viewed the capitals expansion into Oromia territory which was previously proposed under the controversial Addis Ababa Master plan as a form of land

dispossession. This resentment was directed at minority communities perceived as beneficiaries of past displacement of the Oromo by the expanding city. The violence started on Sunday 15 September 2018 after two days it expanded to Burayu.

The incidents first happened “between two popular celebratory rallies by contrasting opposition movements, Ethiopia’s deadly communal violence spread” (Tesfaye, 2018). The groups started violent confrontation on Sep. 13, as residents prepared up Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) flags in preparation for the return of the group’s main division two days later. Individuals from the Oromo and Gamo ethnicities fought in and around Burayu especially the place called around Charrata, Ethio-Shekela and Medanialem, a town in Addis and Oromia state near the northwest boundary of Addis Ababa, the federal capital. Amnesty International reports said that it “observed that social media was awash with hate speech against non-Oromo groups in the three days preceding the rally” (Amnesty International, 2018). Still there are disagreements on the triggers of the violence. Most eyewitnesses, including the researcher agree that the competition between these two popular parties initially clashed between youth groups, rapidly escalated through social Medias. This led to the targeting of the property of minority groups and leading to the displacement of many people. According to the government police report 23 were killed and many were displaced from their home due to the violence. The displaced population fled primarily to Addis Ababa, overwhelming temporary shelters in the capital. Some reports escalate the number of fatalities and displacements.

Businesses and shops were looted and people attacked by mobs of Oromo youth who stormed through streets targeting homes of ethnic minorities. The immediate trigger for the violence was also the perception of land invasion and ethnic marginalization, with Oromo youths attacking the homes and businesses of ethnic minorities, chanting slogans that demanded these groups "leave our land" (Maasho, 2018). This was sudden and it did not take many days but the devastation was so high.

Ethiopian government urgently intervened in the conflict by stabilizing the tension by deploying security forces in the area. The Oromia regional police commission head, Alemayehu Ejigu was accused of being too late to intervene; he rejected the accusation and responded by saying that those behind the violence do not represent anyone and they had no cause other than theft. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed condemned the violence labelling the perpetrator as “cowards”.

The Burayu violence of September 2018 had immediate ripple effects across Ethiopia, exacerbating ethnic tensions and triggering retaliatory attacks in other regions. In the days following the clashes, reports emerged of similar ethnic-based violence in towns like Ambo, Adama, and even parts of Addis Ababa, as fear and mistrust spread (Reuters, 2018; Ethiopia Insight, 2018). According to the report on Borkena Over 60 people were confirmed killed in Burayu alone, while thousands primarily Gamo, Gurage, and other non-Oromo minorities were displaced, seeking refuge in makeshift shelters and churches (Borkena., 2018, September 16). The report of government and Amnesty International shows 23 people were killed in the incident. (Amnesty International, 17 Sept. 2018). According to Al Jazeera reports the conflict also deepened on political divisions, with opposition parties like the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) trading accusations over responsibility. Some Oromo nationalist groups framed the violence as a response to historical marginalization, while others, including federalist parties, condemned it as targeted ethnic cleansing (Al Jazeera, 2018).

The government's response combined security measures and political dialogue. By late September, federal police and military units were deployed in Burayu and surrounding hotspots to quell further violence, though critics argued the intervention was delayed (Amnesty International, 17 Sept. 2018). Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed publicly called for calm; attributing the conflict to "forces trying to derail reforms," while Oromia regional president Lemma Megersa assured accountability (Africa news, 2018). Also as the report of Federal Police commissioner Zeynu Jemmal said 400 people had been arrested in connection with the weekend ethnic clashes (Amnesty International, 2018).

The researcher participated in the process of reconciliation, as one of the representatives of local government. At that time the researcher was the chairman of one vulnerable kebele. The Oromia Regional Government initiated reconciliation efforts in late September 2018, aiming to restore trust between the Oromo, Gamo, and Gurage communities. The process involved multiple stages, beginning with mediation by regional government representatives, elders (Aba-Gedas), religious leaders, and youth representatives (Qerros). Public discussions were held in Burayu and surrounding areas, where victims shared their experiences and community leaders emphasized the need for coexistence. Also these groups went to Arbaminch and made a

discussion with Gamo zone government and community representors. The government also facilitated rehabilitation programs, providing aid to displaced families and repairing damaged infrastructure.

The approach of the reconciliation was the incorporation of cultural rituals, such as the Oromo Irreecha festival and the Gamo Meskel celebration, which served as platforms for symbolic unity. These events allowed all communities to confirm shared values and publicly bind to peace. The process continued until January 2019, with follow up meetings to strengthen the progress. Official report has been not publicly released, rather regional authorities declared the reconciliation successful in reducing tensions.

This chapter focuses on the data presentation, analysis, and findings of the study. In relations to this, the researcher used codes which represent the respondents name places for their keeping privacies. The cod used are the later combined with numbers. For an example I1 and I2 means Interviewee 1and Interviewee2.The same for FGDs(Focus Group Discussion),In this connection, the researcher used codes in place of the respondents' names to keep their privacy. To ensure ethical rigor, participants' identities were anonymized using alphanumeric codes (e.g., I1 for Interviewee 1, FGD2 for Focus Group Discussion 2), as detailed in Chapter Three. The analysis integrates qualitative themes (drawn from interview/FGD transcripts) with quantitative descriptors (e.g., demographic distributions, response frequencies) to provide a detail understanding of the reconciliation process. Thus, the data obtained through a Quantitative and Qualitative were presented and analysed in light of the research objective.

## **4.2 Descriptive Analysis**

The questionnaire was organized into three sections to collect data: demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents, Trust between Communities, Social Cohesion and Effectiveness of Reconciliation Programs. Under this section, questionnaires were analyzed.

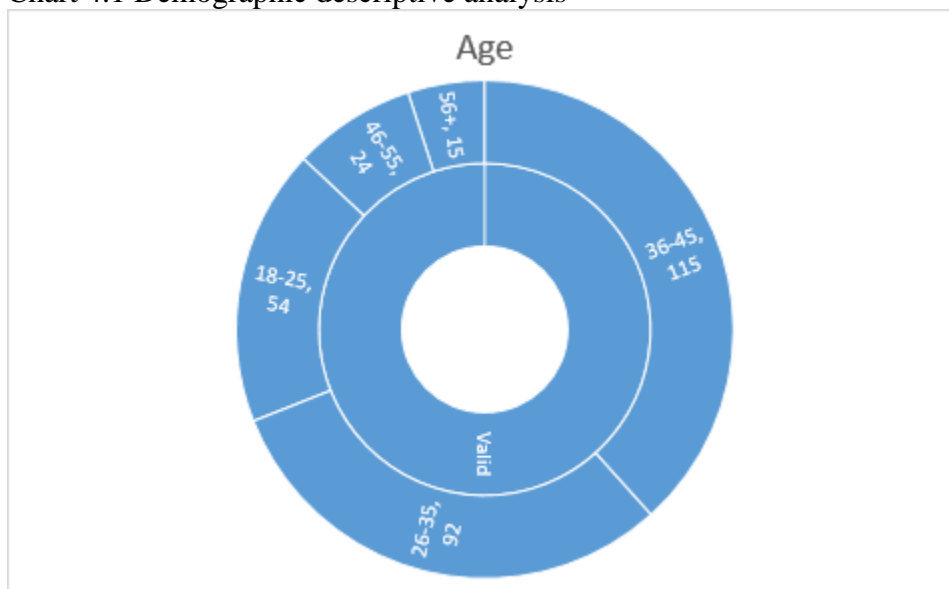
As previously stated for this study 400 sample households were requested to respond the questionnaires and for Interviewee. Out of these total targeted groups 300 were respondents for questionnaires. Out of 309 respondents 300 of they are usable; this indicates that there is no response rate bias. This is due to the fact that the researcher has ben used people whom supports in the selected area to collect the data there was no a problem of drop of data. Thus, further

discussions are made using 300 respondents who gave valid responses for the questionnaires and 16 were interviewee and 44 FGD participants.

### 4.3 Demographic analysis

The basic information on sampled Respondent's is shown in table 4.1. Of 300 questionnaires were found usable, 225(72.8%) were male respondents while 75(24.3%) were female respondents. The predominance of male respondents suggests traditional gender roles in conflict resolution, where men often dominate community decision-making processes. Even though the targeted groups were the affected and willing to respond the imbalance of number may affect the inclusivity of reconciliation efforts, necessitating targeted engagement with women to ensure equitable participation.

Chart 4.1 Demographic descriptive analysis



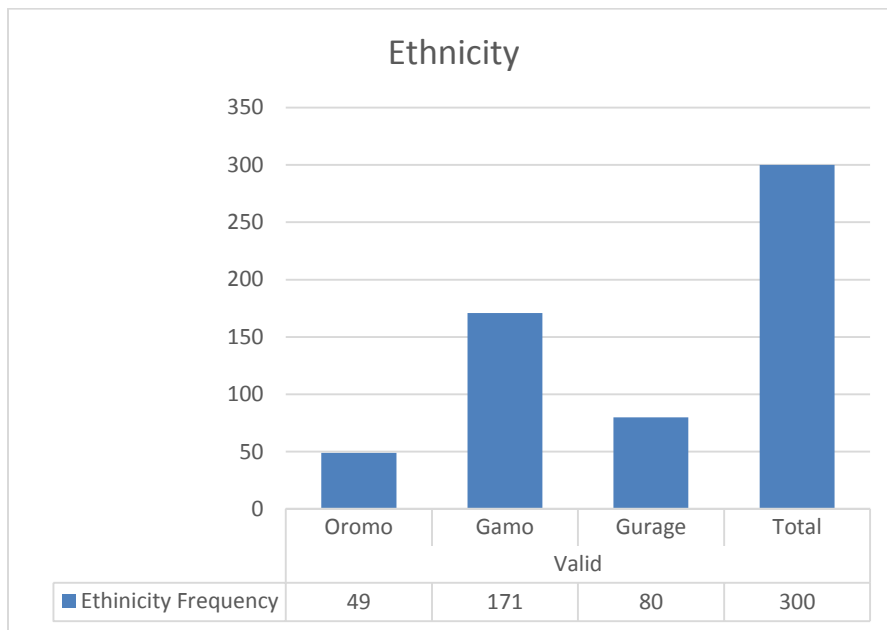
Source :Own survey(2025)

37.3% of the respondents were below the age of 35, the majority in this category, 92 respondents, are between 26 and 35. A nearly equal number of respondents, 37.2 are between the ages of 35 and 45. Very few respondents, 7.8% and 4.9% were between 46 and 55 and above 56, respectively. 72.8% of the respondents are male while only 24.3 % are female. During the data collection data collectors experienced a situation where most Gamo community male members

worked traditional weaving from home while women worked outside collecting plastic waste and fire wood. This created a situation where the data collection during the day made women inaccessible.

According to Heo reconciliation encompasses the wide understanding and planning for the effectiveness. These age groups were an opportunity for these processes (Heo, 2012). Younger populations (18–34 years) also constitute a significant portion (47%), suggesting that intergenerational dialogue is essential for sustainable peacebuilding.

**Chart4.2: Ethnicity**

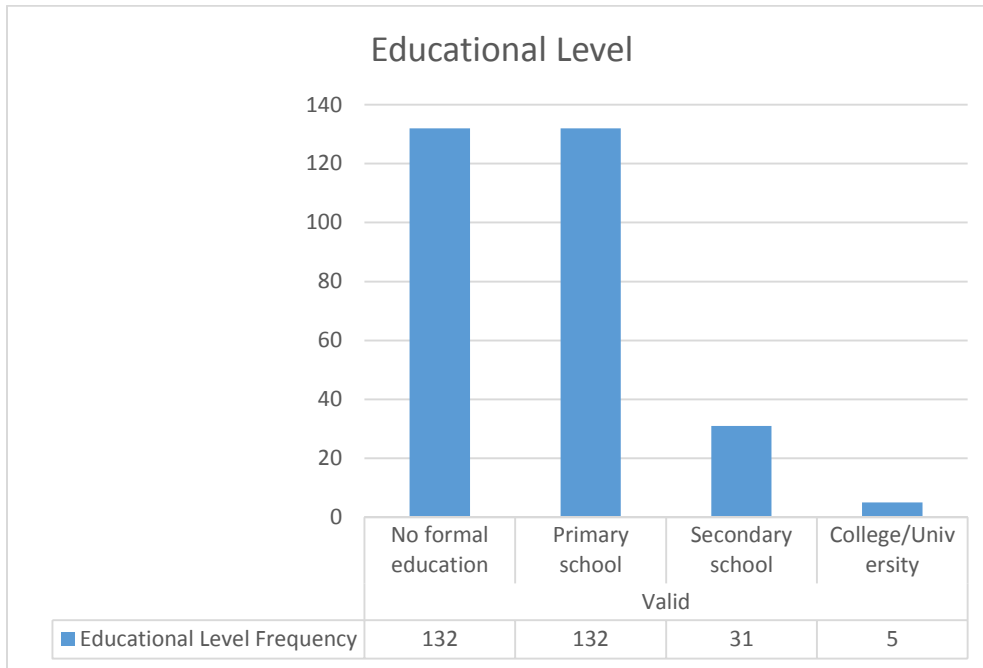


Source: Owen Survey

The other fact that Ethnic Group 2 constitutes 55.3% of respondents reflecting a good representation of groups that were disproportionately affected by the 2018 conflict in Burayu Town. As the Interviewee I1 & I4 indicated “The *conflict directly targeted us (Gamos), all the Qeros were saying at that time “where are Dorzes” and we did not see other ethnic communities except some Gurage communities”*

So this overrepresentation of Gamo communities in post-conflict research is likely not coincidental but rather a direct consequence of their highly exposure to violence, displacement, and economic harm.

**Chart4.3:** Educational Level



Source: Owen Survey

The other important demographic data analysis is the educational level of respondents. It provides an important indicator of the potential for certain methods over others for effective engagement in post-conflict reconciliation efforts between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities. A large percentage of participants, 132 individuals (42.7%), reported having no formal education, while another 132 (42.7%) completed primary education. This high percentage of respondents with limited educational backgrounds requires a well-adjusted approach and a tailored effective communication strategy between political elites leading the reconciliation and displaced communities. AS I5 reflected

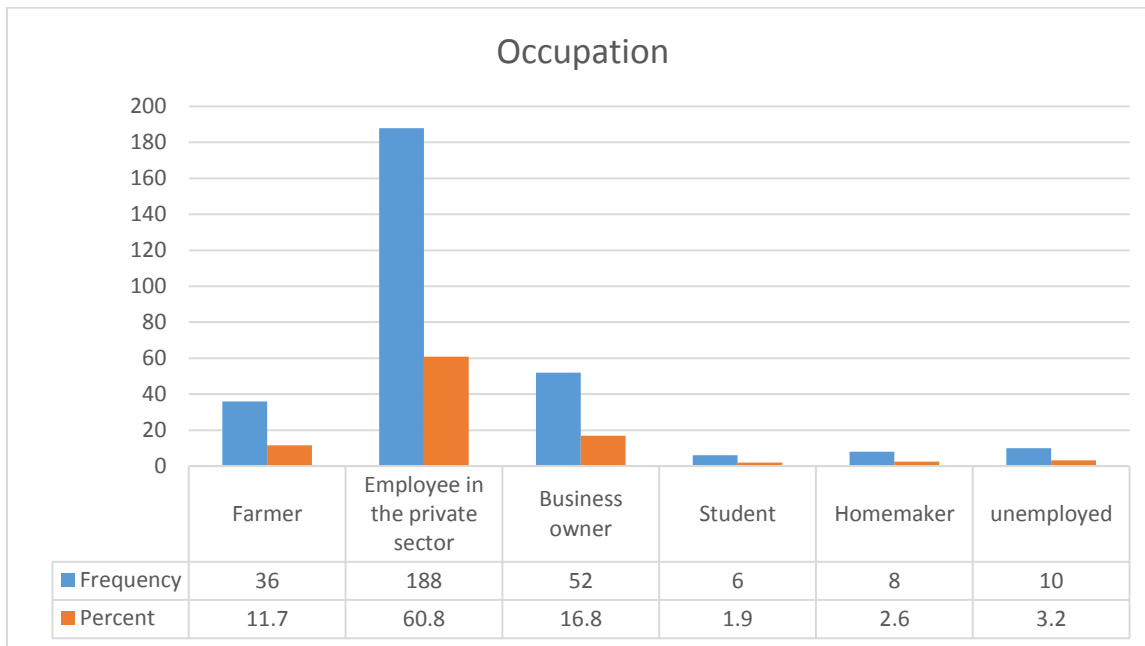
*“When violence became calm and higher leaders made discussion with us in a settlement camps; many of our community who affected couldn’t address their problems and even rejects negotiation without their benefit analysis”*

These data convince that how respondents perceived that education matters in the reconciliation effort. And on the other side only 31 respondents (10.0%) achieved secondary

education, and a mere 5 individuals (1.6%) have higher education. This inequality also indicates a significant gap in educational failure that could affect the community's ability to engage in informed discussions about peacebuilding.

The low levels of educational achievement suggest that reconciliation efforts should prioritize educational initiatives to address structural inequalities. By providing training and resources, stakeholders can empower individuals with the knowledge necessary to participate meaningfully in reconciliation processes. Additionally, engaging those with higher education could facilitate mentorship and leadership within the community, helping to bridge the gap for those with less formal education. Ultimately, addressing educational disparities will be crucial for raising an inclusive environment where all community members can contribute to the healing and rebuilding process following conflict.

**Chart4.4: Occupation**



Source: Owen survey

The other demographic analysis is occupation among respondents indicates on the economic engagement of the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities in the context of post-conflict reconciliation. A significant majority, 188 individuals (60.8%), reported to be private sector employees, with further investigation I was able to learn that respondents were referring to self-

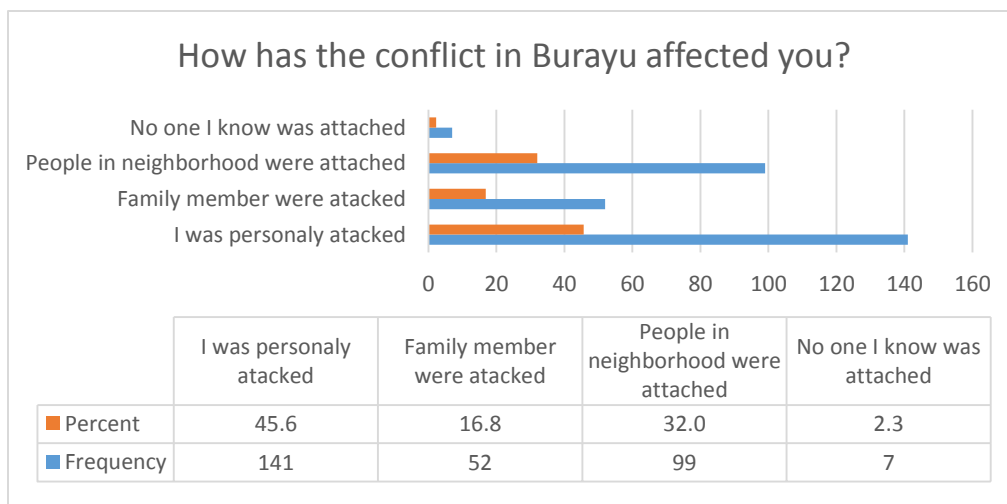
employment as ‘private sector’ employment. This shows emphasizing a strong reliance on informal employment that may raise economic instability yet creates opportunities for community interaction. Additionally, 52 respondents (16.8%) are business owners, indicating a strong entrepreneurial spirit that can facilitate economic cooperation and trust-building between the two groups. Conversely, farmers make up 11.7% of the respondents, emphasizing the importance of agriculture in the local economy and the potential for addressing land-related issues in reconciliation discussions.

The data also reveals that a small percentage of respondents are students (1.9%) and unemployed individuals (3.2%), suggesting that these groups, although small in percentage, may feel marginalized in the reconciliation process. As I2I6 responds

*“the day of the conflict was horrific and also very tuff during the reconciliation was for us because any concern was given for those who has family and those who have a business, psychologically we were traumatized, all priority was given to those economically well peoples”*

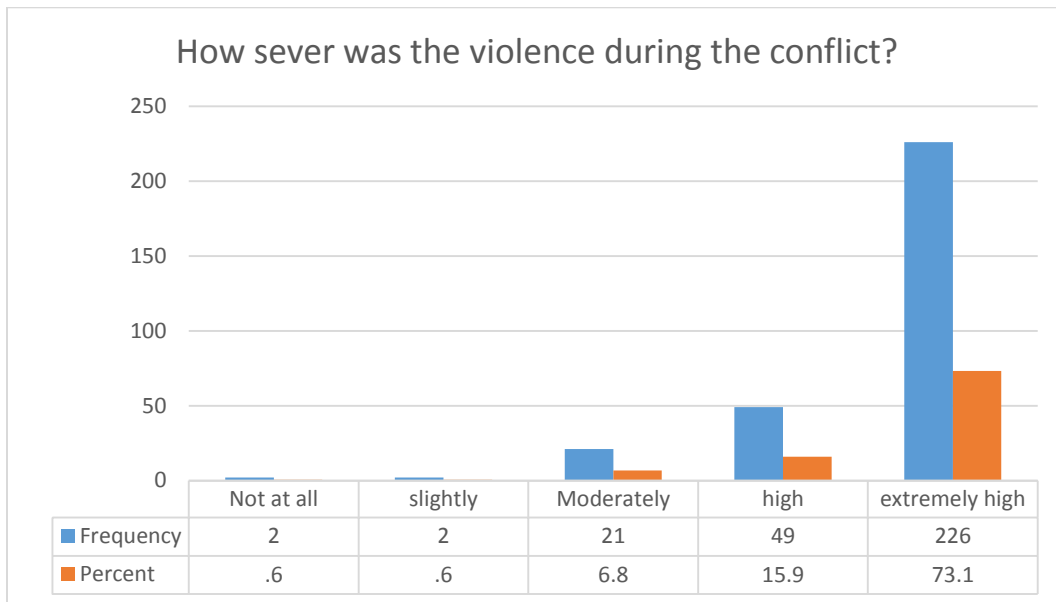
Involving students and the unemployed in dialogues is important for ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented. Furthermore, homemakers, who constitute 2.6% of respondents, play an essential role in nurturing community ties and values, making their insights valuable for reconciliation efforts. Understanding the occupational dynamics within these communities is dynamic for developing targeted strategies that promote healing and collaboration in the aftermath of conflict.

**Chart4.5: Description of Conflict severity**



**Source:** Own Survey

The bar graph presents four distinct experiences resulting from the Burayu conflict. The highest proportion of respondents, 45.6% (141 people), experienced personal attacks. This was followed by attacks on people in their neighbourhood (32.2%, 99 people) and attacks on family members (16.8%, 52 people). The smallest proportion, just 2.3% (7 people), knew no one who was attacked. This distribution reveals the deep and widespread personal impact of the conflict on the community.



Source: Owen Survey

The data from Chart 4.5 reveals a striking contrast: while violence in Burayu was perceived as highly severe (mean = 4.65), its personal impact was relatively low (mean = 1.92). This paradox suggests that the conflict was deeply embedded in social structures, where systemic divisions ethnic, religious, or political fuelled violence without uniformly affecting all individuals. Structural conflict theory explains this as a result of competition for power and resources, where certain groups bear the brunt of violence while others remain insulated due to cross-cutting social affiliations (Galtung, 1990). FGD<sub>1</sub> participants raised that “*when the violence occurred only our communities were under attack; there were people intentionally identify our residence and gave a direction for the violators to harm us*” The cyclical nature of such conflicts means they persist as long as structural inequalities remain unaddressed.

Identity politics further clarifies this disparity. The high severity of violence indicates rigid in-group/out-group boundaries, where opposing groups brutalize each other, justifying extreme measures (Tajfel, & Turner, 1979). However, the high personal impact suggests that many respondents may have psychologically distanced themselves from the conflict, either due to strong in-group protection or desensitization to recurring violence. According to social identity theory, which suggests that people minimize harm to their own group while exaggerating threats from outsiders, reinforcing polarized divisions. (Hogg, 2016)

According to David & Barnes's (2003) argument the politicization of identity likely intensified the conflict, with elites manipulating ethnic or religious differences to consolidate power. The uneven personal impact implies that violence was strategically targeted; leaving some group's untouched while others suffered disproportionately. Such tactics are common in divided societies, where identity-based mobilization creates asymmetrical conflict experiences, masking the full extent of suffering in aggregate data.

State legitimacy and nationalism play a crucial role for effective reconciliation effort. In Burayu there are multi-ethnic communities lived, these conflict may reflect tensions between sub-national identities and a state failing to mediate them. A lack of inclusive governance can turn identity differences into violent fault lines. To break this cycle, policies must address structural inequalities, promote intergroup dialogue, and strengthen state legitimacy to prevent elite exploitation of identity divisions. Only then can the gap between collective violence and personal impact be bridged.

#### **4.4 Trust between Communities**

This section discusses trust levels and the correlation of trust with various independent variables in contemporary settings, 6 years after the conflict and post conflict reconciliation process took place.

**Table 4.3.1: Descriptive Statics of Trust between Communities Variables**

		<b>Trust</b>					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	
1	(Constant)	2.205	.678		3.251	.001	
	Age	-.053	.051	-.056	-1.032	.303	
	Gender	.032	.124	.014	.260	.795	
	Ethnicity	.275	.094	.184	2.928	.004	*
	Educational Level	-.176	.076	-.131	-2.332	.020	*
	Occupation	-.129	.052	-.161	-2.479	.014	*
	How long have you lived in Burayu Town?	.197	.079	.145	2.482	.014	*
	How has the conflict in Burayu affected you?	.214	.062	.211	3.435	.001	*
	How sever was the violence during the conflict?	.136	.087	.098	1.558	.120	
	Have you participated in the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo-Gurage community in Burayu town?	-.234	.085	-.177	-2.758	.006	*
	How effective do you think the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo-Gurage community in Burayu town have been in promoting reconciliation?	.194	.078	.142	2.482	.014	*
	Do you believe these programs	-.135	.067	-.123	-2.015	.045	*

have addressed the root causes of the conflict?						
Do you believe these programs addressed (eg. Truth-telling or giving Compensation) for those victimized communities by this conflict?	.257	.132	.129	1.953	.052	
a. Dependent Variable: How much do you trust members of the other community (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage)?						

\* < > 0.05

Source Owen Survey

The data reveals critical insights into intergroup trust dynamics between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu. High confidence in judicial fairness (Mean = 4.19) and belief in the other community’s willingness to reconcile (Mean = 4.20) signify a robust foundation for Social Cohesion Theory (OECD, 2011), where institutional trust and shared norms enable peaceful coexistence. However, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) clarifies limitations: the dominant influence of Ethnicity ( $\beta=0.184$ ,  $p=0.004$ ) confirms persistent in-group/out-group boundaries. Counter intuitively, higher Educational Level ( $\beta=-0.131$ ,  $p=0.020$ ) and specific Occupations ( $\beta=-0.161$ ,  $p=0.014$ ) correlate with lower trust, suggesting socioeconomic factors reinforce divisive identities rather than foster shared belonging.

A critical paradox emerges in reconciliation efforts. Despite positive baseline attitudes, abysmal program participation (Mean = 1.46) exposes a crisis in Transitional Justice implementation. Regression results deepen this contradiction; while perceiving programs as effective increased trust ( $\beta=0.142$ ,  $p=0.014$ ), actual participation correlated with lower trust ( $\beta=-0.177$ ,  $p=0.006$ ). Crucially, believing root causes were addressed also reduced trust ( $\beta=-0.123$ ,  $p=0.045$ ), indicating programs fail to deliver substantive, inclusive justice (Teitel, 2003). This goes with Conflict Transformation Theory (Lederach J. P., 1997), it indicates unaddressed structural drivers like economic disparities or political marginalization. The near-significant role of victim compensation ( $p=0.052$ ) further suggests unmet reparative needs.

Table4.3.2

<b>Business</b>						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	3.028	.613		4.936	.000	
Age	-.058	.046	-.070	-1.260	.209	
Gender	-.094	.112	-.047	-.839	.402	
Ethnicity	.278	.085	.209	3.268	.001	*
Educational Level	-.049	.068	-.041	-.718	.473	
Occupation	-.150	.047	-.212	-3.190	.002	*
How long have you lived in Burayu Town?	.032	.072	.027	0.452	.652	
How has the conflict in Burayu affected you?	.200	.056	.222	3.541	.000	*
How sever was the violence during the conflict?	.091	.079	.074	1.153	.250	
Have you participated in the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo-gurage community in Burayu town?	-.172	.077	-.147	-2.236	.026	*
How effective do you think the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo-gurage community in Burayu town have been in promoting reconciliation?	0.134	0.071	0.111	1.905	0.058	
Do you believe these programs have addressed the root causes of the conflict?	-0.09	0.06	-0.093	-1.495	0.136	
Do you believe these programs addressed (eg. Truth-telling or giving Compensation) for those victimized communities by this conflict?	0.283	0.119	0.16	2.379	0.018	
A Dependent Variable: How much confidence would you have if you had to have do business from the member of the ethnic group other than yours?						

Source : Owen Survey

The regression reveals that Ethnicity ( $\beta=0.209$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) remains the strongest predictor of business confidence across groups, aligning with Social Identity Theory's emphasis on in-group/out-group dynamics influencing economic behaviour (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Occupation significantly reduces confidence ( $\beta=-0.212$ ,  $p=0.002$ ), suggesting economic competition reinforces intergroup divisions. Notably, belief in victim compensation ( $\beta=0.160$ ,  $p=0.018$ ) boosts business trust, supporting Transitional Justice Theory's claim that material redress repairs relational fractures (Teitel, 2003). Conversely, participation in reconciliation programs again correlates with lower confidence ( $\beta=-0.147$ ,  $p=0.026$ ), indicating programs fail to translate into economic trust is a critical gap for Social Cohesion (OECD, 2011). The non-significant Education and Residence Duration indicates ethnicity and justice perceptions as primary economic drivers.

Table 4.3.3 feels safe interacting with members of the other community

<b>Safety</b>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.464	.702		3.511	.001
	Age	-.077	.053	-.080	-1.449	.148
	Gender	-.050	.128	-.022	-.393	.695
	Ethnicity	.296	.097	.193	3.049	.003
	Educational Level	-.120	.078	-.087	-1.531	.127
	Occupation	-.187	.054	-.228	-3.470	.001
	How long have you lived in Burayu Town?	.152	.082	.109	1.854	.065
	How has the conflict in Burayu affected you?	.125	.065	.120	1.932	.054
	How sever was the violence during the conflict?	.147	.090	.103	1.626	.105
	Have you participated in the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo-gurage community in Burayu town?	-.186	.088	-.138	-2.124	.035
	How effective do you think the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo-gurage community in Burayu	.190	.081	.136	2.350	.019

town have been in promoting reconciliation?					
Do you believe these programs have addressed the root causes of the conflict?	-.183	.069	-.163	-2.643	.009
Do you believe these programs addressed (eg. Truth-telling or giving Compensation) for those victimized communities by this conflict?	.364	.136	.178	2.668	.008
a. Dependent Variable: Do you feel safe interacting with members of the other community (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage)?					

The regression analysis examines factors influencing safety perceptions in Burayu Town, assessing their significance. Ethnicity ( $\beta = 0.193$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), occupation ( $\beta = -0.228$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), and beliefs about reconciliation programs significantly impact feelings of safety. Notably, the belief that programs addressed root causes ( $\beta = -0.163$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ) and victim compensation ( $\beta = 0.178$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ) are crucial. Age, gender, and educational level show no significant effects. The model indicates that ethnic identity and perceptions of reconciliation efforts play vital roles in community interactions, highlighting the need for effective conflict resolution initiatives.

Through the glass of Conflict Transformation Theory, the moderate perceived effectiveness of reconciliation programs (Mean = 2.47) indicates that there has been some success in transforming relationships, yet significant challenges remain. The low level of participation and limited suggestions for improvement (Mean = 1.49) imply that the reconciliation initiatives may be perceived as top-down approaches, lacking inclusivity and local ownership. True conflict transformation requires a shift in power dynamics and the active involvement of local stakeholders, including elders, women, and youth. From my Interviewee I<sub>7</sub> words suggests this idea

*“Both the affected communities and the perpetrators were not actively involved in the process rather some peoples who had no direct connection with the problem were engaged in the process and we were part of the problem but not part of the solution most of us were ignored and neglected”*

By engaging these groups in the design and implementation of interventions, programs can raise a sense of ownership and empowerment. The data underscores the need for participatory approaches, such as shared economic ventures or joint peace councils, to move

beyond mere superficial coexistence toward achieving sustainable structural change. Without deeper engagement, the existing trust remains fragile, leaving the potential for latent tensions to resurface.

**Table 4.3.4:** feels a sense of belonging through different social, religious and cultural practices

<b>Belonging</b>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.371	.848		2.797	.006
	Age	-.115	.064	-.097	-1.790	.075
	Gender	-.164	.154	-.058	-1.062	.289
	Ethnicity	.434	.117	.229	3.692	.000
	Educational Level	-.054	.094	-.032	-.569	.569
	Occupation	-.184	.065	-.182	-2.823	.005
	How long have you lived in Burayu Town?	.179	.099	.104	1.812	.071
	How has the conflict in Burayu affected you?	.330	.078	.257	4.226	.000
	How sever was the violence during the conflict?	.184	.109	.105	1.687	.093
	Have you participated in the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo-gurage community in Burayu town?	-.203	.106	-.121	-1.911	.057
	How effective do you think the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo-	.020	.097	.011	.203	.839

gurance community in Burayu town have been in promoting reconciliation?					
Do you believe these programs have addressed the root causes of the conflict?	-.269	.084	-.194	-3.221	.001
Do you believe these programs addressed (eg. Truth-telling or giving Compensation) for those victimized communities by this conflict?	.155	.165	.061	.943	.347
a. Dependent Variable: Do you feel a sense of belonging through different social, religious and cultural practices to the broader Burayu community after reconciliation?					

Source : Owen survey

The regression analysis reveals that ethnicity ( $\beta = 0.229$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and conflict impact ( $\beta = 0.257$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) significantly influence feelings of belonging in Burayu. Occupation also shows significance ( $\beta = -0.182$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ). Age, gender, and program effectiveness do not significantly affect this sense of belonging.

From a Trauma Healing and Psychosocial Recovery perspective, the modest effectiveness of current reconciliation programs and the low levels of engagement suggest that unresolved collective trauma may be a significant barrier to progress. Effective reconciliation requires addressing emotional wounds and encouraging empathy, which is crucial for moving past mere coexistence. The current efforts seem to be caught between Level 1 (non-violent coexistence) and Level 2 (trust-building), where fear has diminished but deep mutual understanding is still lacking. One of women Interviewee

*I<sub>11</sub> "I am living alone. There is no incident that happened after the reconciliation in these area but my children and some people whom I know still did not come back to their home because their psychology is hurted and have not t healed, that problem needs additional work"*

To advance reconciliation efforts, programs should incorporate trauma counselling, intergenerational storytelling, and symbolic justice initiatives, such as memorials. These approaches not only acknowledge past grievances but also create spaces for healing and dialogue. Trust building activities, like cross community labor sharing or cultural exchanges, could further solidify progress and raise deeper connections between the communities.

**Table4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Social cohesion**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How much do you trust members of the other community (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage)?	300	1	5	4.12	.972
How much confidence would you have if you had to have do business from the member of the ethnic group other than yours ?	300	2	5	4.20	.863
Do you believe that members of the other community are willing to reconcile (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage)?	300	1	5	4.20	.947
Do you feel a sense of belonging through different social, religious and cultural practices to the broader Burayu community after reconciliation?	300	1	5	3.76	1.230
Do you think mixed marriages with other communities (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage) strengthen or weaken social harmony?	300	1	11	1.34	.861
Valid N (listwise)	300				

Reconciliation must grow from passive tolerance to active empathy to ensure long-term resilience against renewed conflict. This means transforming the existing attitudes of trust into

tangible actions that promote deeper relationships among community members. By focusing on participatory, inclusive, and trauma informed approaches, the Oromo, Gamo and Gurage communities can cultivate a stronger context for reconciliation. This will not only address historical grievances but also lay the groundwork for a shared future, characterized by mutual respect and collaboration. Developing a comprehensive strategy that combines emotional healing with structural changes will be essential in creating a sustainable peace that prevents the recovery of conflict.

This analysis of trust dynamics between the Oromo, Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu reveals significant influences on intergroup relations. While certain occupations and higher educational levels are associated with lower trust, indicating socioeconomic divisions, ethnicity and the impact of conflict are important factors in building trust. Low participation reveals shortcomings in the application of Transitional Justice, even in the face of favorable sentiments toward reconciliation initiatives. These programs' efficacy is paradoxically correlated with lower levels of trust, indicating unfulfilled reparative justice needs. Moving beyond simple coexistence to sustainable peace requires a change to inclusive, participatory approaches that address collective trauma and encourage empathy in order to promote true reconciliation.

#### **4.5 Social Cohesion**

Source: Own Survey

This analysis try to find and explore the social cohesion between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu Town by integrating key dimensions of social cohesion theory. Understanding these dimensions' social relations, sense of identification or sense belonging, shared values, equality and inequality, and quality of life provides a comprehensive framework for assessing the effectiveness of post-conflict reconciliation efforts.

##### **4.5.1 Social Relations**

The value and strength of relationships between groups are critical indicators of social cohesion. The data reveals a high trust score of 4.12, suggesting strong social networks characterized by mutual tolerance among community members. This trust is vital for strengthening collaboration in post-conflict settings, as it allows individuals to engage more openly with one another. Furthermore, active participation in community events indicates willingness to bridge ethnic divides, reinforcing social ties and promoting cooperation (Tajfel &

Turner, 1979). Such engagement not only develops interpersonal relationships but also cultivates a sense of community resilience.

#### 4.5.2 Sense of Belongingness

Feelings of belonging play a significant role in developing a collective identity within the community. The average score of 3.76 regarding attachment to the broader Burayu community indicates a growing sense of Belongingness among respondents. This attachment is essential for mitigating ethnic divisions and encouraging a unified social entity. As individuals develop a stronger sense of belonging, they are more likely to adopt an orientation towards the common good, embracing responsibilities that contribute to community welfare and compliance with social norms (Moustakas, 2023). This shift in orientation is crucial for long-term stability and peace.

#### 4.5.3 Shared Values

**Table 4.5:** Descriptive Statistics community shared Values

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How often do you participate in community events that include members of the other community?	300	1	5	1.39	.875
Do you think mixed marriages with other communities (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage) strengthen or weaken social harmony?	300	1	11	1.34	.861
Valid N (listwise)	300				

Source Owen Survey

The descriptive statistics reveal low participation in intercommunity events (mean = 1.39 on a 1-5 scale) and mixed perceptions of interethnic marriages (mean = 1.34 on a 1-11 scale), indicating limited interaction and cautious attitudes toward deeper social integration between

Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities. According to Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory, such findings suggest that structural and relational barriers persist, hindering meaningful engagement (Lederach, 1997). The low means and the small standard deviations reflect entrenched divisions, requiring interventions that increase dialogue and trust-building at the grassroots level. Lederach emphasizes the need for platforms that encourage sustained interaction, which could gradually shift perceptions and reduce intergroup prejudices.

The acknowledgment of shared values as a potential unifying factor aligns with Lederach's emphasis on identifying common ground in conflict transformation. While respondents may be uncertain on mixed marriages, the recognition of shared values presents an entry point for reconciliation efforts. Lederach's framework suggests that leveraging these values through storytelling, joint community projects, and leadership engagement can raise relational networks that transcend ethnic divides. By strengthening these shared norms, communities can move beyond superficial coexistence toward transformative social cohesion, where collaboration balances divisive interests. This approach aligns with Lederach's vision of conflict as an opportunity for constructive change rather than mere resolution

## **4.6 Effectiveness of Reconciliation Programs**

### **4.6.1 Inclusiveness**

The data indicates a low participation rate in the reconciliation programs, with a mean score of 1.46 on a scale of 1 to 5. This statistic climaxes a significant barrier to inclusiveness, as many community members either did not participate or were minimally engaged. Effective reconciliation requires broad participation from all segments of the community, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are represented. I<sub>7</sub> words stated:

*“Both the affected communities and the perpetrators were not actively involved in the process rather some peoples who had no direct connection with the problem were engaged in the process and we were part of the problem but not part of the solution most of us ignored and even including in the process of giving compensation”*

The limited engagement suggests that outreach strategies may not be effectively reaching all community members, particularly marginalized groups who may feel excluded from the reconciliation process.

Respondents expressed scepticism about the programs' ability to address the root causes of conflict, with a mean score of 2.05. This scepticism points to a perceived lack of inclusiveness in the program design and implementation. If community members feel that their needs and concerns are not being adequately considered, they are less likely to engage in reconciliation efforts. To substitute a more inclusive environment, program designers should actively ask feedback from a diverse range of participants ensuring that the programs reflect the unique challenges faced by different groups within the community.

The average score of 1.75 for suggestions on future improvements indicates that while participants may have ideas for improving the reconciliation process, they may not feel empowered or encouraged to express these suggestions actively. This lack of engagement can be a significant barrier to inclusiveness. To address this, reconciliation programs should create structured opportunities for community members to voice their opinions and recommendations. This could include focus groups, community forums, and anonymous feedback mechanisms that allow for open dialogue without fear of revenge.

**Table4.6:** Descriptive Statistics of Effectiveness of Reconciliation Programs

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How much confidence would you have in the fairness of the judge, if you had a court case and the judge was from an ethnic group other than yours ?	300	2	5	4.19	.981
Do you believe that members of the other community are willing to reconcile (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage)?	300	1	5	4.20	.947
Have you participated in the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo-	300	1	5	1.46	.737

gurance community in Burayu town?					
How effective do you think the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo-gurance community in Burayu town have been in promoting reconciliation?	300	1	5	2.47	.715
What improvements would you suggest for future	300	1	3	1.49	.711

Source : Owen Survey

With a mean score of 2.47 regarding the effectiveness of the programs in promoting reconciliation, there is a clear indication that while some participants recognize the reconciliation efforts made, many feel that these process have not fully met their expectations. “in the participants of **FGD2**

*“We were assuming that as the government prepare and finish all the needed things in the process but it was not as we expect, the process hadn’t kept our priority...”*

This perception can stem from a lack of comprehensive engagement with all community stakeholders. Inclusiveness requires that programs not only target specific groups but also encompass the entire community, including those who may have been historically marginalized or overlooked. Ensuring representation from various demographics such as youth, women, and economically disadvantaged individuals can enhance the relevance and acceptance of reconciliation efforts.

The average score of 2.12 for addressing issues like truth-telling and compensation for victims further underscores the need for inclusiveness. Many respondents feel that these critical aspects have not been adequately addressed, leading to feelings of discontent. An inclusive approach would prioritize the voices of victims and marginalized groups, ensuring that their

experiences and needs are recognized within the reconciliation framework. Incorporating victim testimonies and perspectives into the reconciliation process can create a more holistic understanding of the conflict's impact and increase a greater sense of community ownership over the healing process.

The analysis of inclusiveness within the reconciliation efforts between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities reveals significant gaps that need to be addressed. Low participation rates, scepticism about program effectiveness, and inadequate mechanisms for community input highly indicates the challenges of creating an inclusive environment. To improve the impact of reconciliation intervention process, it is essential to engage all community members actively, ask diverse perspectives, and especially prioritizing the needs of marginalized groups. By increasing a more inclusive approach, reconciliation programs can build trust, promote cooperation, and ultimately contribute to sustainable peace in Burayu Town. Ensuring that all voices are heard and valued will be vital for the success of future reconciliation efforts.

#### **4.5.2 The Role of Government**

To begin with, the data illustrates in table 4.5.1 important insights regarding community confidence in judicial fairness. With a mean score of 4.19 on a scale from 2 to 5, respondents expressed a high level of confidence in the fairness of judges from different ethnic backgrounds. This finding suggests that community leaders have successfully changed an environment where cross-ethnic trust in judicial processes is established. Such confidence is crucial for reconciliation, as it indicates that individuals believe they can seek justice impartially, regardless of ethnic identity. The implications of this trust extend beyond individual cases; they create a foundation for broader dialogue and cooperation among communities. In the context of Conflict Transformation Theory, this level of confidence can be seen as a positive shift in relational dynamics, where the judicial system is viewed as a neutral facilitator of justice rather than a tool of oppression (Lederach J. P., 2003).

The willingness of community members to engage in reconciliation is equally crucial. The survey results indicate that a mean score of 4.20 for the belief that members of the other community are open to reconciliation. This optimistic perception suggests that community leaders have effectively communicated messages of hope and collaboration between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities. Such perceptions are highly important for initiating

dialogue and building bridges across ethnic divides. In accordance with Transitional Justice Theory, raising a willingness to reconcile can lead to greater accountability and truth-telling, essential elements for healing historical wounds (Teitel, 2003). However, while optimism is present, it must be translated into concrete actions and initiatives to ensure that the reconciliation process is meaningful and lasting (Hayner, 2011).

In unambiguous contrast to these positive indicators, the statistics reveal a troubling trend regarding participation in reconciliation programs. With a low mean score of 1.46, it is evident that a significant portion of the community has not engaged in these initiatives. This lack of participation raises critical questions about the effectiveness of outreach strategies employed by government and community leaders. It suggests that, despite a willingness to reconcile, individuals may feel alienated or disempowered in the reconciliation process. This disconnect is concerning, as the success of reconciliation efforts largely hinges on active community involvement. Understanding the barriers to participation is essential for grasping the broader context of reconciliation efforts and the role of leadership in overcoming these obstacles.

The perceived effectiveness of the reconciliation programs is another area of concern, with a mean score of 2.47 indicating scepticism about their impact. Respondents appear to question the ability of this intervention to promote genuine reconciliation between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities. This scepticism not only undermines the credibility of the programs but also reflects a broader need for reassessment of the strategies employed by leaders. According to Trauma Healing and Psychosocial Recovery frameworks, effective reconciliation requires programs that address the psychological and emotional needs of individuals affected by conflict (Staub, 2006). Without such considerations, programs may fail to resonate with community members, leading to disillusionment and disengagement.

In addition to addressing these immediate concerns, it is essential to consider the feedback from community members regarding potential improvements for future reconciliation effort initiatives. The low mean score of 1.49 regarding suggested improvements indicates a lack of input from those directly affected by the reconciliation process. This absence of community voice is alarming, as it suggests that leaders may be making decisions without adequately consulting the very people they aim to serve. This disconnect can intensify feelings of alienation and skepticism towards reconciliation efforts. For reconciliation to take root, it is imperative that

community leaders recognize the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives and increasing an environment where individuals feel valued and heard.

#### **4.6.2 Community leaders' role (Elders, Aba-Gedas, Religious leaders )**

The survey data from Burayu town reveals a paradox while respondents express high trust in judicial fairness (Mean = 4.19) and a strong belief in the other community's willingness to reconcile (Mean = 4.20), actual participation in formal reconciliation programs remains low (Mean = 1.46). This disconnect suggests that formal mechanisms may lack cultural quality or significance, emphasizing on the need to integrate indigenous conflict resolution systems like Gumaa and Jaarsummaa or other traditional mechanism where community elders play a central role (Dejene, 2002). The Gumaa system, with its emphasis on restorative justice through compensation and dialogue, aligns with the survey's finding that trust exists but structured engagement is weak. By involving elders as mediators, Gumaa could bridge this gap, offering a culturally familiar framework to transform passive trust into active reconciliation (Debisa, 10 Jan 2022).

The Jaarsummaa institution further complements these findings by providing a participatory model for dispute resolution (Dejene, 2002). Survey respondents rated the effectiveness of existing reconciliation programs as moderate (Mean = 2.47), indicating that top-down approaches may be insufficient. Jaarsummaa, however, relies on respected elders (Jaarsa Araaraa) to facilitate dialogue rooted in Oromo norms, ensuring that resolutions are both legitimate and community-owned. This aligns with Conflict Transformation Theory, which emphasizes shifting power dynamics to local stakeholders (Lederach J. P., 1997). Given the survey's low participation rates, incorporating Jaarsummaa could revitalize engagement by embedding reconciliation within trusted cultural structures rather than external initiatives.

However, the survey also hints at a declining reliance on traditional systems, mirroring the broader challenge noted in the literature the wearing down of Jaarsummaa due to a preference for formal courts. These trend risks undermining the social cohesion evident in the surveys; it scores high interpersonal trust. To counter this, government should hybridize modern and indigenous systems for example, by training elders in trauma-informed mediation (addressing Level 2 reconciliation: trust-building) while legally recognizing Gumaa settlements. In fact there are initiative started legally establishing traditional courts in all kebeles. Such an

approach would align with the Oromo philosophy of restorative justice, ensuring that reconciliation efforts are both culturally grounded and institutionally supported.

The data underscores that community leaders, elders and mediators are crucial in sustaining reconciliation. Their role in Gumaa and Jaarsummaa provides a missing link between the survey's reported trust and the lack of program participation. By formally integrating these systems into peace building efforts, Burayu could pull existing cultural capital to move from coexistence (Level 1) to empathy (Level 3). Without this, even well-intentioned programs risk remaining ineffective, as they fail to align with the community's deep-seated traditions of conflict resolution and collective healing.

#### **4.6.3 Community involvement**

Community involvement is a critical component of the reconciliation process, particularly in multi-ethnic societies. The data reveals that participation in reconciliation programs is indicating low, with a mean score of 1.46 on a scale from 1 to 5. This statistic indicates that a significant portion of the community feels disconnected from these initiatives. Involvement in reconciliation programs is essential not only for encouragement trust but also for ensuring that the voices of all community members are heard. Without emphatic participation, efforts to mend relationships and build bridges between groups may weaken, leading to a perpetuation of mistrust and division.

The willingness of community members to reconcile is promising, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.20 regarding beliefs about the other community's openness to reconciliation. This optimism suggests that, at an individual level, many people are ready to engage in dialogue and collaborative efforts. However, the gap between willingness and actual participation indicates the need for effective strategies to translate positive attitudes into action. Community leaders must address the barriers preventing individuals from participating, such as feelings of alienation or uncertainty about the effectiveness of existing programs.

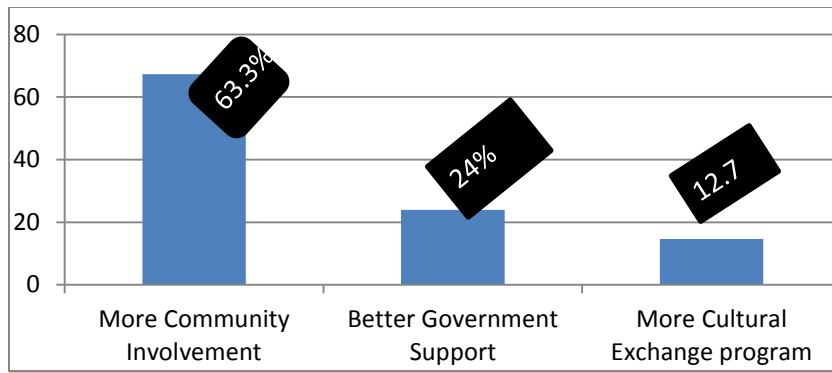


Chart 4.1 Future Improvement Indications

The perceived effectiveness of reconciliation initiatives is another area that impacts community involvement. With a mean effectiveness score of 2.47, there is evident scepticism about the impact of these programs. This uncertainty can deter individuals from participating, as they may question whether their engagement will lead to meaningful change. For reconciliation programs to gain traction, they must not only be designed to address the community's needs but also demonstrate tangible outcomes that resonate with participants. Building credibility through successful initiatives can encourage greater involvement from those who may currently feel dissatisfied.

Lastly, the low score of 1.49 for suggestions on improvements indicates a concerning lack of community input in shaping these programs. When community members feel excluded from the decision-making process, it can lead to disengagement and a sense that their perspectives are undervalued. For reconciliation efforts to be truly effective, it is crucial that leaders actively seek and incorporate feedback from the community. This inclusion raises a sense of ownership among participants, encouraging them to engage more deeply in the reconciliation process and ensuring that process are responsive to the actual needs and aspirations of the community.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Conclusion

The post-conflict reconciliation process between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu Town after the violent clashes in September 2018 has been thoroughly examined in this study. A mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative insights from focus groups and interviews with quantitative survey data from 300 respondents has produced important findings about the roles of different actors, the complex consequences of the conflict, and the complicated results of reconciliation efforts. Key findings from the data analysis are summarized in the conclusions, which are organized to address the particular goals of the study.

This research has conducted an extensive analysis of the post-conflict. The government's role in the reconciliation process was found to be both important and challenging. On the one hand, the implementation of official legal procedures and initiatives for reconciliation offered a crucial structure for resolving disputes. Even when judges had different ethnic backgrounds, the comparatively high confidence in judicial fairness (Mean = 4.19) indicates that institutional efforts to guarantee impartial justice were somewhat successful. In the post-conflict setting, where ethnic bias in court proceedings could easily jeopardize reconciliation, this finding is especially important. Nevertheless, the top-down execution of these government-led programs limited their efficacy. However, the top-down execution of these government-led programs limited their efficacy. A notable discrepancy between policy design and community engagement is demonstrated by the remarkably low formal reconciliation program participation rates (Mean = 1.46) and moderate assessments of their efficacy (Mean = 2.47). Many participants voiced doubts about whether these initiatives sufficiently addressed the underlying causes of the conflict or involved impacted communities in a meaningful way.

Traditional dispute resolution procedures mediated by local elders or (Aba Gedas) and religious leaders showed more cultural relevance and community acceptance than the official government approach. Many community members trusted the well-known frameworks for conflict resolution offered by the indigenous Gumaa and Jaarsummaa systems, which have their

roots in Oromo traditions of restorative justice and group decision-making. Instead of using punitive measures, these traditional mechanisms placed an emphasis on communication, restoration, and re-establishing social harmony. However, as more community members resorted to formal legal processes, the study also found a worrying trend of decreasing reliance on these systems. This change runs the risk of undermining generations-old local peacebuilding capabilities and significant social capital.

The consequences of the 2018 conflict were severe and disproportionately affected the Gamo and Gurage community, who constituted 55.3% of survey respondents despite being a smaller demographic group in Burayu. This overrepresentation in the study sample reflects the targeted nature of the violence, with many Gamo and Gurage respondents describing systematic attacks on their homes and businesses. The economic impact was particularly devastating, with numerous families losing livelihoods and property. While the perceived severity of violence was rated extremely high (Mean = 4.65), the reported personal impact was surprisingly low (Mean = 1.92). This paradox may indicate psychological coping mechanisms, including distancing or normalization of violence, or it may reflect that some community members were insulated from the worst effects while others bore the brunt of the trauma.

Disparities in education have been identified as a major obstacle to efforts at reconciliation. Many community members lacked the literacy and critical thinking abilities required for intricate peacebuilding processes, with 42.7% of respondents having only completed primary school and another 42.7% having no formal education. A number of interviewees reported having trouble expressing their experiences during reconciliation discussions or comprehending court proceedings. In attempts at reconciliation, this educational disparity led to power disparities, favouring those with more formal education who were better able to negotiate bureaucratic procedures and express their opinions. As economic reintegration became entwined with reconciliation, the respondents' occupational distribution 59.9% working in the private sector and 16.8% owning their own business also had an impact on post-conflict dynamics.

The outcomes of reconciliation efforts present a complex picture of partial success and persistent challenges. On the positive side, the relatively high levels of intergroup trust (Mean = 4.12) and belief in the other community's willingness to reconcile (Mean = 4.20) suggest that

coexistence has been largely restored. Many respondents expressed confidence in engaging in economic transactions across ethnic lines (Mean = 4.20), indicating that basic social and economic interactions have resumed. However, deeper forms of social integration remain elusive. Participation in joint community activities was minimal (Mean = 1.39), and attitudes toward interethnic marriages were ambivalent at best (Mean = 1.34). This suggests that while superficial coexistence has been achieved, genuine social cohesion remains a distant goal.

Formal reconciliation programs' effectiveness was rated as moderate (Mean = 2.47), and common complaints included that they did not sufficiently address victim compensation, truth-telling, and the inclusion of underrepresented voices. According to a number of focus group participants, these programs were meaningless exercises that put temporary stability ahead of long-term recovery. Their efficacy and legitimacy were further constrained by the absence of significant community input into program design (Mean = 1.49 for suggestions on improvements). This top-down strategy helps explain why traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have a limited impact and stands in stark contrast to their more participatory nature.

Psychological and emotional dimensions of reconciliation emerged as particularly under addressed in current efforts. Many interviewees described persistent trauma, fear, and unresolved anger that continue to affect community relations. One female participant's account of family members who refused to return to Burayu due to unhealed psychological wounds illustrates how unaddressed trauma can undermine reconciliation. The absence of comprehensive psychosocial support within reconciliation programs represents a significant gap in the peacebuilding process.

Significant generational disparities in perspectives on reconciliation were also identified by the study. Younger participants (18–34 years old) showed both greater scepticism about current approaches and greater openness to interethnic relationships, whereas middle-aged respondents (35–44 years old) were most abundant in the sample and frequently held leadership positions in efforts at reconciliation. This generational gap implies that although current efforts at reconciliation may have temporarily improved relations between groups, they have not been able to involve younger members of the community in ways that could maintain peace in the long run.

Economic factors were deeply intertwined with reconciliation dynamics. The conflict aggravated existing inequalities, with marginalized groups such as the unemployed (3.2%) and students (1.9%) feeling particularly excluded from reconciliation benefits. Several interviewees noted that economic priorities often overshadowed justice concerns in reconciliation processes, with compensation and livelihood restoration becoming contentious issues. The intersection of economic inequality and ethnic identity continues to pose challenges for sustainable peace.

The study also found significant differences in perspectives on reconciliation between generations. While middle-aged respondents (35–44 years old) were most prevalent in the sample and often held leadership positions in efforts at reconciliation, younger participants (18–34 years old) demonstrated both greater scepticism about current approaches and greater openness to interethnic relationships. This generational divide suggests that while recent attempts at reconciliation may have improved relations between groups in the short term, they have failed to engage younger community members in ways that could sustain peace in the long term.

According to the study's findings, the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu have made great progresses toward re-establishing fundamental levels of trust and coexistence, but the process of reconciliation is still ongoing. While traditional systems struggle with dwindling relevance, formal mechanisms' accomplishments have been limited by their top-down implementation and lack of community ownership. The conflict's effects are still felt today in the form of unresolved trauma, educational barriers, and economic inequality. Going forward, attaining lasting reconciliation will require a more integrated strategy that addresses structural injustices and psychological scars while integrating the advantages of formal and traditional systems. The results emphasize that justice, understanding, and a shared commitment to a shared future are all necessary for true reconciliation in addition to the absence of violence.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

The study's findings emphasize both the progress and continued challenges in reunifying the Gamo and Gurage and Oromo communities following the conflict in Burayu Town in 2018. In light of the collected empirical data and the theoretical frameworks of social identity, transitional justice, and conflict transformation, the following comprehensive recommendations are made to aid efforts at reconciliation and advance enduring peace.

### ➤ **Implementing Hybrid Conflict Resolution Methods**

The study shows that traditional conflict resolution methods like Gumaa and Jaarsummaa are still relevant and effective, but it also shows that they are gradually dwindling because people prefer formal legal procedures. A hybrid strategy should be used to address this, which first formally recognizes traditional systems within the legal system. This might entail setting up dedicated sections in local courts where qualified elders and attorneys mediate cases, especially those involving conflicts between communities. To ensure cultural relevance while upholding legal standards, the Ethiopian government should establish explicit guidelines for the complementary use of formal and traditional systems.

Secondly, puts traditional leaders' capacity-building initiatives into action. Training in modern mediation methods, human rights concepts, and trauma-informed conflict resolution strategies should be provided to elders and Aba-Gedas. By doing this, they would be better equipped to handle contemporary issues of reconciliation while maintaining the cultural authenticity of indigenous customs.

### ➤ **Improving Procedures for Participatory Reconciliation**

The data shows a substantial discrepancy between the actual participation in reconciliation programs and the community's willingness to make amends. To close this gap: Each kebele should establish community-based reconciliation councils with representatives from all demographic groups, including women, youth, elders, religious leaders, and business owners. These councils would act as ongoing forums for discussion, tension monitoring, and the execution of regional efforts toward reconciliation. To guarantee that all opinions are heard, their composition should mirror Burayu Town's demographics.

Regular truth and storytelling forums that offer secure settings for victims and offenders to exchange stories are necessary. Restorative justice principles should guide the creation of these forums, emphasizing recognition of harm rather than retaliation. Special attention should be given to creating separate spaces for women and youth to share their unique conflict experiences.

### ➤ **Examining the Economic and Structural Aspects**

The study shows how post-conflict tensions are exacerbated by educational and economic inequalities. Develop targeted livelihood support for the most impacted groups, especially displaced people and those who lost their businesses during the violence, as part of a comprehensive economic reintegration program. Vocational training, microloan schemes, and cooperative business projects that purposefully pair people from both communities are a few examples of this. A dedicated fund for intercommunal business endeavors ought to be established by the local government.

### ➤ **Psychosocial Support and Trauma Healing**

Its psychological aspects are largely ignored. Establishing community healing centers with qualified counselors and traditional healers should be part of a comprehensive mental recovery plan. In addition to conventional methods of care, these facilities would offer counseling and support groups. Specialized programs for children and youth must pay particular attention to intergenerational trauma.

Create memorial sites and commemorative activities for initiatives aimed at symbolic reconciliation. All design processes should be consulted to ensure that the instructions don't bring up memories of conflicts. Additionally, artwork could serve as healing tools and landmarks in the process of reconciliation.

### ➤ **Interventions by the Government and Policies**

Policy frameworks that are supportive are necessary for sustainable reconciliation. All ethnic groups in Burayu Town should have their rights formally recognized and protected by local ordinances passed by the government. This includes actions taken to combat hate speech and discrimination in the workplace and public services. To plan and oversee all reconciliation efforts, a municipal reconciliation office ought to be set up.

Establish a phased program of reparations that addresses both symbolic justice and tangible losses. The most vulnerable victims should receive immediate humanitarian aid, and then there should be long-term reparations linked to community development initiatives. Mechanisms for

routine evaluation and modification in response to community input should be incorporated into the program.

➤ **Making Use of Social and Cultural Capital**

Both communities' rich cultural traditions offer untapped potential for healing. Initiatives ought to: Encourage intercommunal cultural festivals that honor common customs and produce fresh examples of hybrid culture. Cultural leaders from both communities should work together to organize these events, which should offer chances for joint artistic production.

Create programs for reconciliation through sports, with a focus on young people. Relationships can be forged across community boundaries through interethnic sports leagues, coaching exchanges, and competitions. Every neighborhood in Burayu Town should have equal access to sports facilities.

➤ **Observation and Assessment**

To guarantee that efforts at reconciliation are successful and long-lasting; Reconciliation indicators, such as trust levels, the frequency of intergroup interactions, and security perceptions, should be monitored over time in a longitudinal study. Reconciliation programs should be regularly adjusted based on this data.

Institutionalizing community feedback systems would enable locals to assess efforts at reconciliation and suggest enhancements. Regular town hall meetings, and suggestion boxes, for feedback are a few examples of this.

Burayu Town's road to lasting reconciliation necessitates a multidimensional strategy that respects conventional dispute resolution techniques while tackling modern issues. Through the implementation of these interrelated suggestions integrating policy changes with cultural revitalization, economic development with psychosocial healing, and institutional reforms with grassroots initiatives communities can transcend coexistence and achieve true reconciliation. The success of these efforts will depend on sustained commitment from all stakeholders: community members, traditional leaders, government officials, and civil society organizations working in concert to build a shared future.

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# Appendix I

## Leading questions prepared for Respondants, in depth interview and Focus Group Discussion.

### Dear Respondent,

These questions are prepared for the purpose of conducting research under the title “*AN ANALYSIS OF POST-CONFLICT RECONCILIATION EFFORTS BETWEEN OROMO AND GAMO-GURAGE COMMUNITIES IN BURAYU TOWN, ETHIOPIA*”, for fulfilment **Master of art in peace and security studies**, at Addis Ababa University, Institute of peace and Security studies. The research focuses on analyzing post conflict Effort of Reconciliation Ethiopia. Specifically, the study focuses on the Conflict and crisis happened at Burayu town, in September 2018. Therefore, its purpose and objective is limited to gather information to be used only for the purpose of the same research. The information you will provide in this interview will be kept confidential and will be utilized only for the purpose of the study; your authentic response is highly valuable for the achievement of the objective of this research. Then, the study will not be possible without your partnership and participation.

Therefore, I kindly request your participation by providing genuine information which is very imperative for the success of the study.

**Thank you in advance for your cooperation!**

### Section 1 Demographic

1. Age. 1. 18-25 2. 26-35 3. 36-45 4. 46-55 5. 56+
2. Gender. 1. Male 2. Female 3. Other
3. Ethnicity. 1. Oromo 2. Gamo and Gurage 3. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Education Level. 1. No formal education 2. Primary school 3. Secondary school
4. College/University 5. Postgraduate
5. Occupation. 1. Farmer 2. Government employee 3. Employee in the private sector
4. Business owner 5. Student 6. Homemaker 7. Unemployed
6. How long have you lived in Burayu Town? Less than 1 year  1–5 years  6–10 years   
More than 10 years
7. How has the conflict in Burayu affected you?

1. I was personally attacked 2. My family members were attacked 3. People in neighbourhood  
Were attached 4. No one I know was attached

8. How sever was the violence during the conflict?

1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. Moderately 4. Very much 5. Completely

## **Section 2 Trust Between Communities**

A. How much do you trust members of the other community (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage)?

1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. Moderately 4. Very much 5. Completely

B. How much confidence would you have in the fairness of the judge, if you had a court case  
and the judge was from an ethnic group other than yours [if the respondent is Oromo insert  
Gamo and Gurage, and vice versa] (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage)?

1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. Moderately 4. Very much 5. Completely

C. How much confidence would you have if you had to have do business from the member of  
the ethnic group other than yours [if the respondent is Oromo insert Gamo and Gurage, and vice  
versa] (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage)?

1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. Moderately 4. Very much 5. Completely

D. Do you feel safe interacting with members of the other community (Oromo/Gamo and  
Gurage)?

1. Never 2. Rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Always

E. Do you believe that members of the other community are willing to reconcile (Oromo/Gamo-  
Gurage)?

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

### Section 3 Social Cohesion

A. How would you describe the current relationship between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage Communities in relating with the relationship of pre conflict?

1. Very poor
2. Poor
3. Neutral
4. Good
5. Very good

B. Do you feel a sense of belonging through different social, religious and cultural practices to the broader Burayu community after reconciliation?

1. Not at all
2. Slightly
3. Moderately
4. Very much
5. Completely

C. How often do you participate in community events that include members of the other community?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Always

D. Do you think mixed marriages with other communities (Oromo/Gamo and Gurage) strengthen or weaken social harmony?"

1. Strengthen significantly
2. Somewhat strengthen
3. No effect
4. Somewhat weaken
5. Weaken

Significantly

### Section 4 Effectiveness of Reconciliation Programs

A. Have you participated in the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage community in Burayu town?

1. Not at all
2. Slightly
3. Moderately
4. Very much
5. Completely

B. How effective do you think the reconciliation program done between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage community in Burayu town have been in promoting reconciliation?

1. Not effective at all
2. Slightly effective
3. Moderately effective
4. Very effective
- 5.

Extremely effective

C. Do you believe these programs have addressed the root causes of the conflict?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

D. Do you believe these programs addressed (eg. Truth-telling or giving Compensation) for

Those victimized communities by this conflict?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

E. What improvements would you suggest for future reconciliation programs?

1. More community involvement
2. Better government support
3. More cultural exchange programs
4. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 5 Open-Ended Questions**

1. What do you think are the biggest challenges to reconciliation between the Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities?
2. What role do you think the government should play in promoting reconciliation?
3. What role do you think community leaders should play in promoting reconciliation?

### **Section 6 Leading questions prepared for in depth interview and Focus Group Discussion.**

#### **Dear Respondent**

- To analysis what key challenges were faced in the process of reconciliation effort in the city.
1. What does reconciliation mean to you?
  2. Why does reconciliation need in post conflict societies?
  3. What activities needs in reconciliation?
  4. How do you describe the challenges occurred in reconciliation effort?
  5. Describe a reconciliation effort challenges you had and how you try to handle it?
  6. Do you explain the strategic role of conflict reconciliation in the process of reconciliation?

Effort?

- To assess the roles of government and local community leaders in post-conflict reconciliation between Oromo and Gamo and Gurage communities in Burayu Town.

Government Leadership

1 How effectively did local and federal government agencies respond to the initial conflict?

2 What specific conflict resolution mechanisms were implemented immediately after the September 2018 incident?

3 How transparent were government communication efforts during the reconciliation process?

4 What resources were allocated for community healing and reconstruction?

5. How did local community leaders facilitate dialogue between Oromo and Gamo and Gurage groups?

6. What traditional conflict resolution methods were employed?

7. How were community trust-building initiatives organized?

8. What challenges did community leaders face during reconciliation efforts?

Stakeholder Engagement

9. How were victims and displaced individuals involved in the reconciliation process?

10. What mechanisms were created to address individual and collective trauma?

11. How were youth groups engaged in peacebuilding activities? Sustainability Evaluation

12. What long-term strategies were developed to prevent future conflicts?

13. How are inter-community relationships monitored and supported?

14. What accountability measures were established to ensure continued cooperation?

## **Recommendations Section**

15. What additional support do community leaders require for effective reconciliation?
16. How can government interventions be improved in future conflict scenarios?







