

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

CUSTOMARY CONTENTION:
THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF PARTIALLY DESPISED
WAATA OROMO IN DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

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Customary Contention

The Power and Authority of Partially Despised
Waata Oromo in Dispute Settlement

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**CUSTOMARY CONTENTION: THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF
PARTIALLY DESPISED WAATA OROMO IN DISPUTE
SETTLEMENT**

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Abstract

My interest to conduct a study on the partially despised Waata was since 1995. I went to the study area for the first time in order to collect data on customary marriage of the Jiddoo Kombolchaa people among Arsii Oromo. In 2001, I conducted another study on their mourning ritual. In August 2004, I surveyed Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu to start a study on the power and authority of the partially marginalized Waata in dispute settlement. To that effect, I used the myth of Waata's origin, their categorization as Oromo, classification as "caste," and I have analyzed it from anthropological *emic* and *etic* perspectives. The change and continuity of Waata's role in dispute settlement, their ritual power of blessings and social status in customary blood feud recompense has also been dealt with.

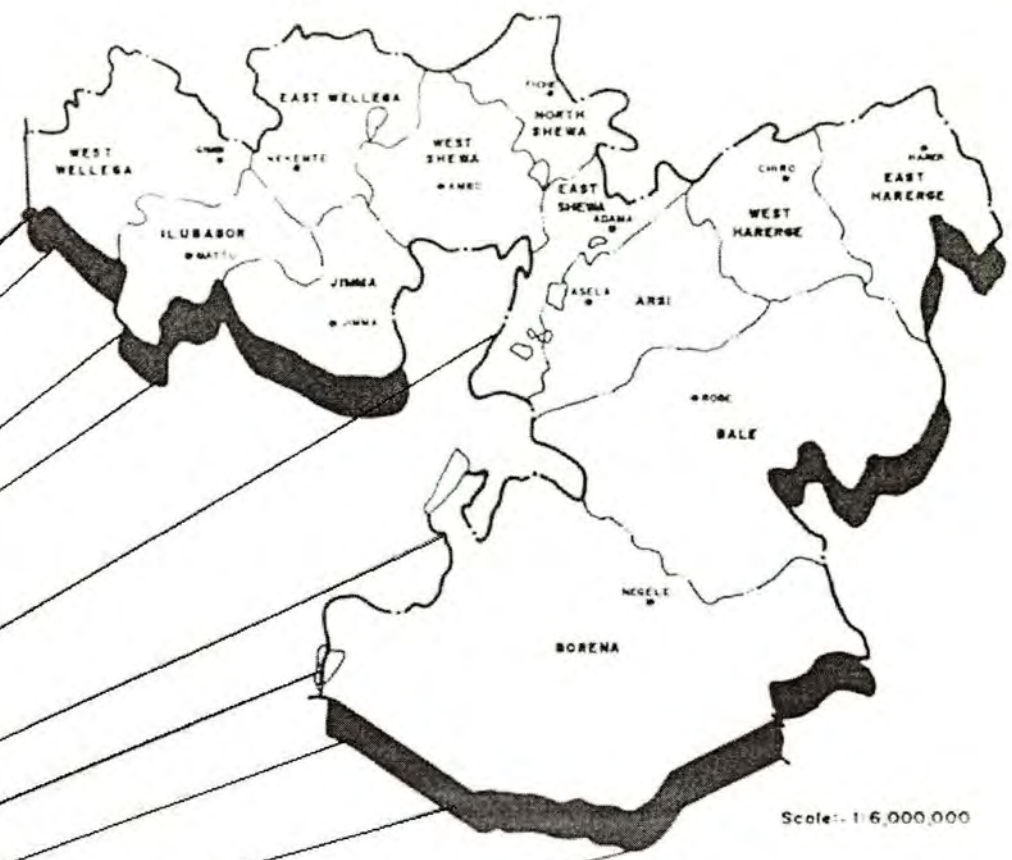
I collected primary data led by two full time field guides. I have reviewed relevant literature throughout my two years stay in the university. The major methods employed were key informant interviews, group discussions, informal talks, observations and browsing through published and unpublished sources. Data were mostly recorded using audio cassettes and taking pictures. Sound records were also transcribed during each night and reorganized for the next day gap filling interviews. Field notes were taken and preliminary analysis of data was made side by side the data collection and transcription. The categories of informants included all Waata community members excluding children below their early twenties, purposively selected elders from Utaa – Waayyuu sub - moiety, local government officials, some experts from culture and legal departments of the East Shoa zone, other distanced minority members and some literates from different backgrounds.

The most important findings of this investigation are: one, Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu Waata seem fulfill only one of the six characteristic features of the "caste" classification. Two, the original forefather of both Waata and Arsii was a person called Banii/Banoo whose younger son, Hoomaa, took the power of the elder, Waayyuu, through *seera* ("law") and left him spiritual power only. Three, Waata and Qaalluu seem one and the same during early times but divided later on. Four, on blood feud recompense ritual Bokkuu, ("chief of Chiefs") slaughters *dullacha keeraa* ("old cattle") while Waata slaughters *hoolaa gurraattii*, ("black sheep"). Five, homicidal cases are reconciled through *fixa gumaa* ritual while recompenses of crimes outside killing are settled through *gumfakkii*. Six, misunderstandings between custom and contemporary legal systems has left some criminals undetected. On the basis of these fieldwork findings, the thesis finally concludes that the despising of Waata and other minority groups is the result of internal division of labor for wise use of scarce resources. The special role despised minorities play in the social system helps to keep the continued existence of the society. Although some scholars argue as if customary activities decline slowly and led to disappearance, it seems from this study that customs undergo some changes and/or bear some symptoms of disappearance but regenerate depending up on local conditions.

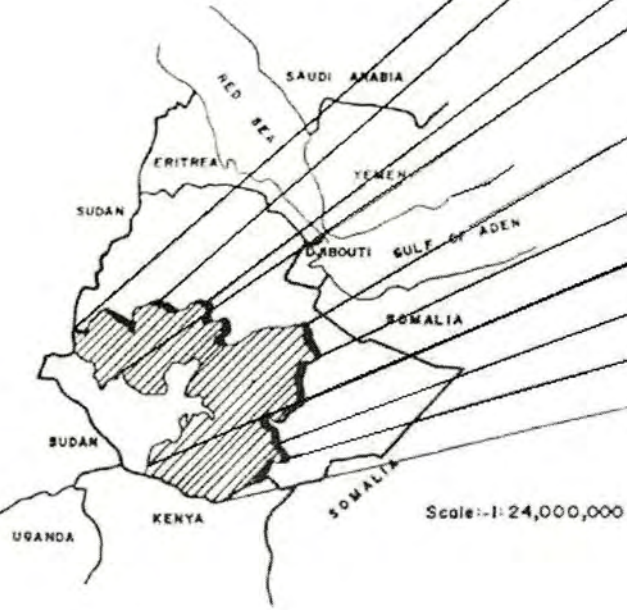
Map - 1

REGIONAL STATE OF OROMIA OROMIA IN ITS REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SETTING

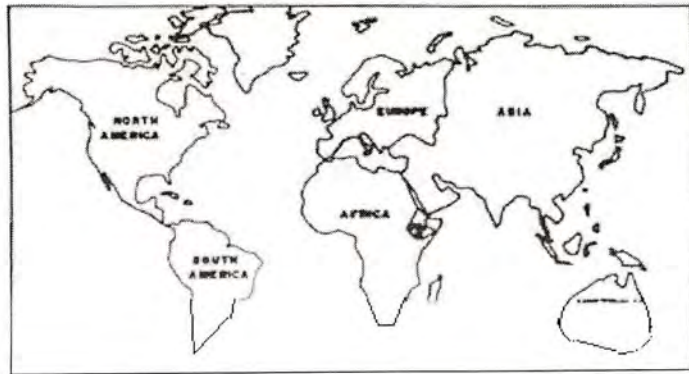
Source: Adapted from Planning and Economic Development Bureau of Oromia
Physical and Geographic Settings (2000)



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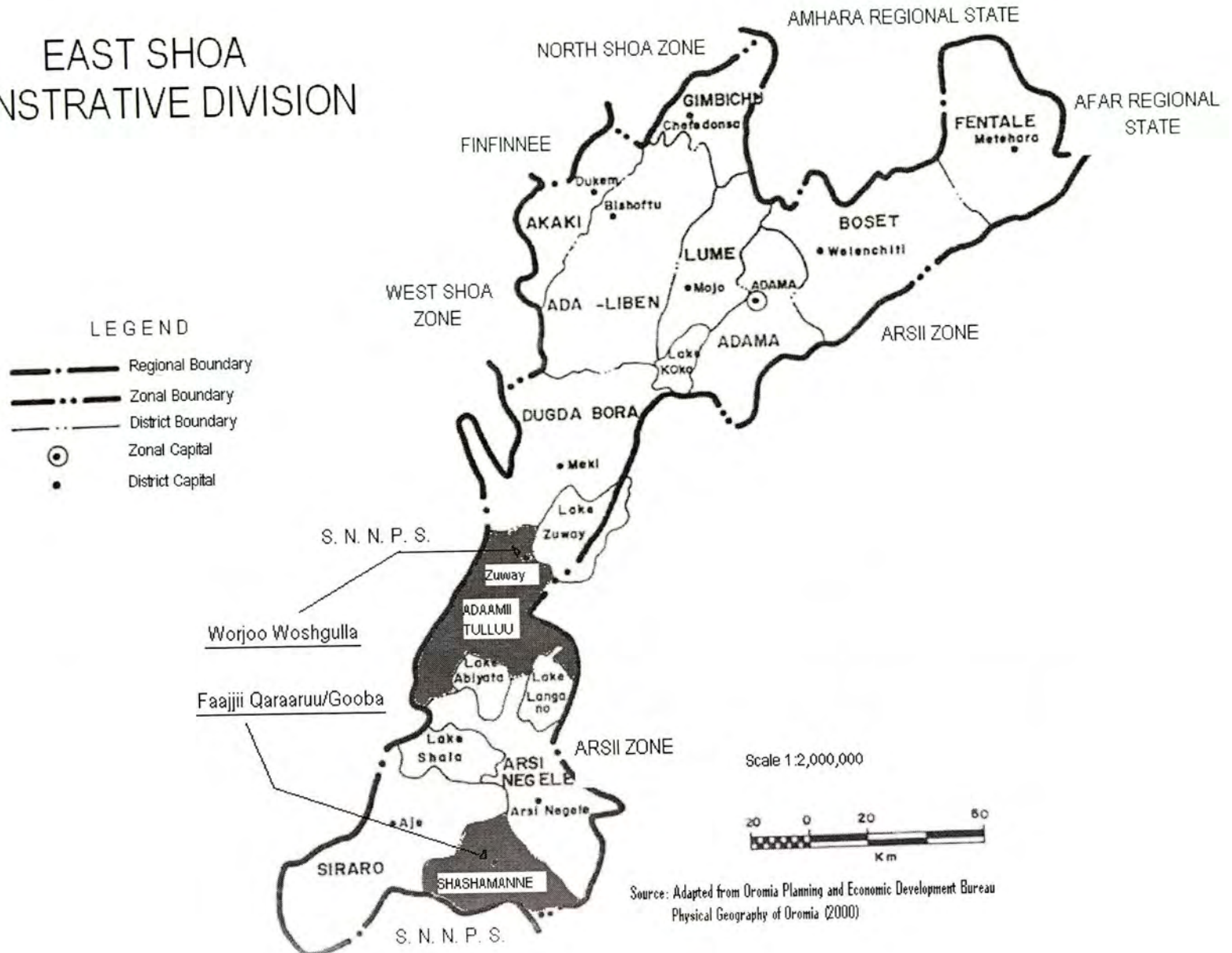


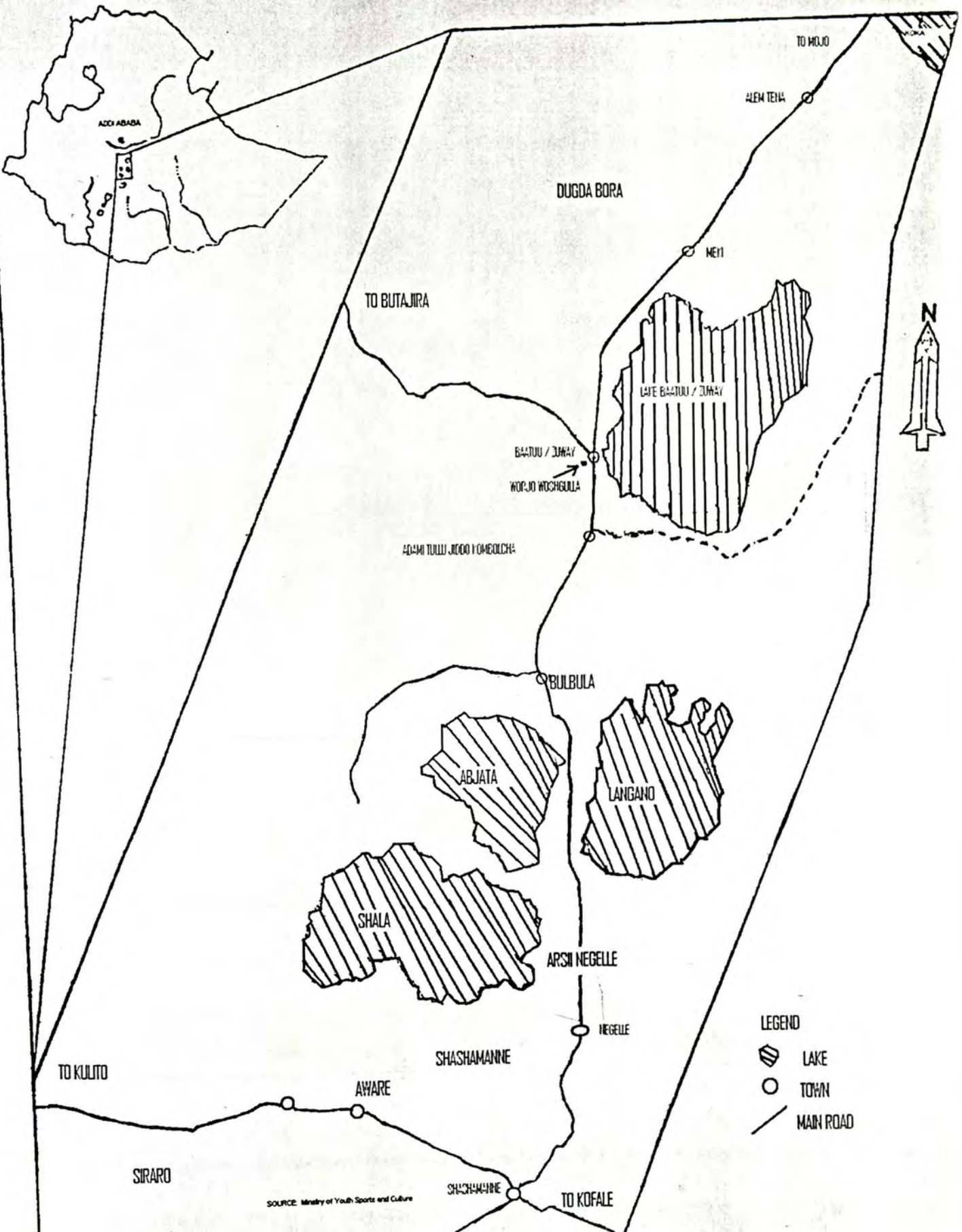
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Map -2

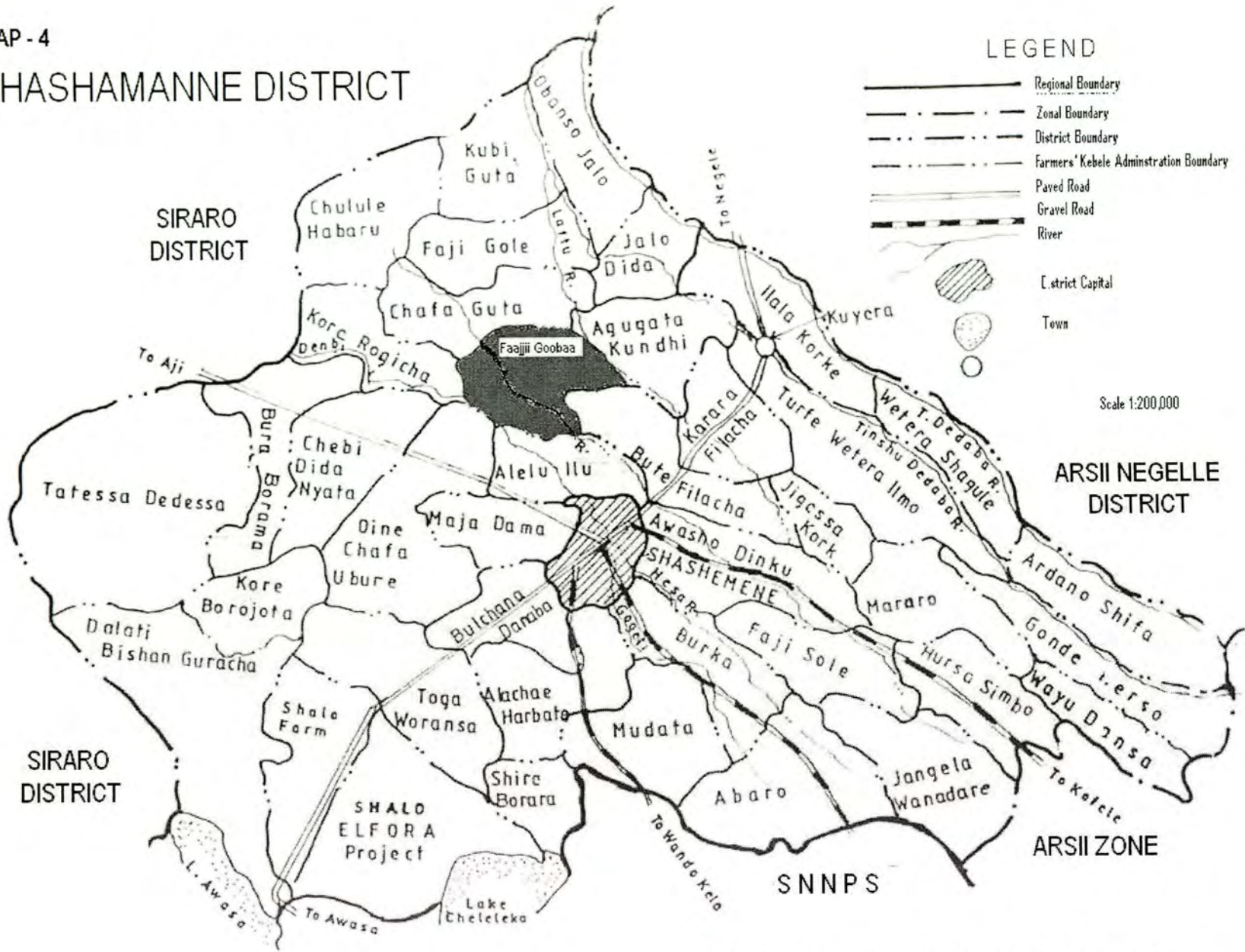
EAST SHOA ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION





- LEGEND
-  LAKE
 -  TOWN
 -  MAIN ROAD

SHASHAMANNE DISTRICT



LEGEND

- Regional Boundary
- Zonal Boundary
- District Boundary
- Farmers' Kebele Administration Boundary
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- River
- District Capital
- Town

Scale 1:200,000

Source: Adapted from Oromia Planning and Economic Development Bureau Physical Geography of Oromia (2000)

SNNPS

SNNPS

ARSII ZONE

ARSII NEGELLE DISTRICT

SIRARO DISTRICT

SIRARO DISTRICT

I. Introduction

The research work conducted under the title *Customary Contention: the Power and Authority of Partially Despised Waata Oromo in Dispute Settlement at Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu Environs of East Shoa* took place among the people commonly called the Arsii. Traditionally, the term Arsii refers not only to today's Arsii zonal section of Oromia Regional State, but it also refers to almost all of the southwestern, central and southern parts of East Shoa zone, too. For instance, people found around Qoqaa, Adaamii Tulluu, Maqii, Baatuu Dambal, Jiddoo Kombolchaa, Arsii Negelle, and Shaashamannee and so on call themselves Arsii. These people trace their lineage and kinship ties along the Arsii Oromo line.

Woshgulla - one of the farmers' kebele administrations (FKA) in East shoa - is located at the outskirts of the zonal central town called Baatuu/Zuway. It is about one hundred sixty five kilometers from Addis Ababa. The second site selected for this research work, Faajjii Qaraaruu, is almost two hundred seventy five kilometers from Addis. People found in the above two localities claim that they came from Qalaxa area. Qalaxa is the name of both a river and the surrounding vicinity situated in Arsii zone. Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu are located to some extent near the Ethio - Kenyan international highway.

Rather than focusing on a single area with a small population size, I preferred to collect data from both Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu areas. By so doing, adequate and sound ethnographic data has been extracted with regard to the role of Waata, and lineage of both Sikkoo Mandoo sub clan and partially despised Waata. Such an attempt helped me to find out the reality behind some claims and customary contentions.

I gave top priority and due attention to Waata and Sikkoo Mandoo because of the fact that the Arsii say *sadeen* Arsii ("the three Arsii brothers") but almost always do not mention the third one. The Waata argue that they are children of the elder son of their forefather named Banoo/Banii who is the forefather of Arsii as well. In addition, some Sikkoo Mandoo group members do not recognize Waata's Oromoness while others admit without any hesitation. Therefore, this study has attempted to respond to such issues on the basis of ethnographic insider's view point (*emic*) and outsider's view point (*etic*) perspectives.

1.1. General Background: Waata communities are found, according to the words of elders, wherever the Oromo live and among these: at Qalaxa (Arsii), Woshgulla (Adjacent to Baatuu Dambal/zuwaay), Qoqaa (Lumee district), Boorana (southern Ethiopia), Kofalee (Arsii), Harar, Bale, Jimma, Dembidollo (West Wallagga) and so on. In each of these areas their number is very limited.

Two of the lineage groups of the Sikkoo Mandoo moiety among Arsii - Utaa and Waayyuu - call the Waata people Warra Waata, meaning(" the Waata family or group"). Utaa and Waayyuu are commonly called by the name Utaa-Waayyuu. They are those whose egalitarian Oromo Gadaa Institution is dominant and functional, too. The partially subdued Waata do not have their own Gadaa institution but reside with and abide by the customary rules and regulations of the other Oromo groups they live with (see Ayehu 2001).

The Boorana Oromo argue that the term Waata is derived from the term *waa haata*. In Oromo Language *waa hadhuu* means throwing away some harming material against some living being. They also note, Waayyuu Banoo as the forefather of Waata. From the other angle, the Oromo call their cattle *Waatilee*. During salutation they ask one another by saying, *waatileen nagayaa?* ("Is your cattle alright?") The Waata blesses the *waatilee* once a year. Therefore, many of the Arsii and Waata community found in East Shoa agree that the term Waata is derived from the Oromo term *waatilee*. Nevertheless, from local people's (*emic*) perspective, the indigenous Waata claim that their naming was performed by their forefathers. In his book *Gadaa: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*, Asmarom (1973: 90) noted that the Waata are the traditional "caste" of hunters and gatherers who are involved in marginalized activities like circumcision, acting as surrogate parents to small children, and pottery.

Male Waata claim that they are sedentary agriculturalists while their females are potters. But, both men and women agree that female do agricultural and homestead activities in addition to pot making. Waata youth help their parents in agricultural works, hunt hippos, prepare whips, and make fish nets and the like. Nowadays, because of land shortage few youngsters migrate to different zones of Oromia, mostly together with elders, so as to generate income.

Due to their very limited land size and continuous encroachment of the "outsiders," like urban dwellers, Utaa and Waayyuu, the Waata are facing the problem of sharing land to their children. That is why their children resort to activities of intensive day labor works to make their living. In addition, with regard to schooling, the young population has decided to make heart felt endeavors. They struggle to escape the vicious circle of poverty through academic achievements and thereby bring about change in their social status. Contrary to

this, the surrounding people generalize their occupation, regardless of sex and age, as pot making only and despise them all.

The Oromo society in general, categorize Waata mostly as traditional Oromo police, ritual experts for fertility of humans as well as animals, blessers, helpers against black magic, mediators, undertakers, and regards them as being gifted with special spiritual and positive magic powers. From one angle, they are highly respected, and from the other, against all these respect, because of their profession, they are despised, dishonored, marginalized and considered as if cursed by God Almighty because of their ancient sin and deviant behavior. This is a method societies prefer to control those people who have vital skills – they favor the discontinuity of their profession. Most of the time distancing such groups is motivated ideologically.

Despite the fact that Waata are vested with positive customary power and authority, they are sometimes ostracized because they are considered as scavengers who are not allowed to participate in any of the traditional elections as both electorates and community members competing for power. Their participation is limited to the areas like resolving *gumaa*, customary institution to resolve blood feud conflicts, keeping offenders and culprits in jail or taking them to Abba Gadaa (local chief), bless the cattle and barren women, lead people while crossing rivers, pray for adequate rain, make whip for Abba Gadaas, and so on.

Generally speaking, even though the Sikkoo-Mandoo groups of Arsii attach all stereotypes to Waata and push them aside as if they are cursed by supernatural force, Waata argue that this is nothing but a character assassination. Waata counter express their opposite opinion by saying that they are from the elder Oromo family whose power and authority has later on partially been taken over through defamation of character. To substantiate this notion though some gap prevails, they count their lineage and kinship ties and attach it to the forefather called Banoo and thereby to the Oromo forefather – Orma.

1.2. Review of Related Literature

1.2.1. Theoretical Perspectives: *Functionalism* and *structural functionalism*, *symbolism* (*symbolic anthropology*) and a model formulated on the basis of two basic concepts, *order* and *conflict*, helped me a great deal in analyzing my data.

1.2.1.1. Functionalism and Structural Functionalism

1.2.1.1.1. General: Functionalism is sometimes referred to as *structural theory*, *consensus theory* or *systems theory*. It is how the parts, structures or systems of society are interrelated in a similar way to the human body. (Selfe and Starbuck 1998: 25).

According to Layton (1997: 27-28), functionalists employed three different definitions of function: 1. There is an interconnection between customs; 2. Using culture as a medium, customs have the function of satisfying individual's primary biological needs; 3. Each custom has its own part to play in the maintenance of the integrity of the social system.

Structural functionalism concentrates on how different traits function to support the continued existence of the society itself. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown is the forerunner of this concept. Generally speaking, structural functionalism led to two perspectives: First, we recognize that socio-cultural systems are mostly integrated, and second, the idea of culture as "super organic" or above and beyond the people who carry it. For Radcliffe-Brown, the continued life of the 'social organism' is the resultant effect of the function of a custom (Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 178-9 cited in Layton 1997: 34).

Radcliffe-Brown is influenced by Herbert Spencer's theory of social evolution. Never the less, Durkheim's influence dominates his work. To Radcliffe-Brown's theory of functionalism, organic analogy is central. He defined functional unity as 'a condition in which all parts of the social system work together with a sufficient degree of harmony or internal consistency (to continue as a system), i.e. without producing persistent conflicts which can neither be resolved or regulated' (Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 181). Radcliffe-Brown identified the fact that the functional unity of a social system was a hypothesis. He argued some degree of opposition or antagonism could prevail between groups within society in every social system (see Layton 1997: 35).

In its modern and more mechanistic form functional theory was set forth at a great length by Durkheim and, adopting it from the social evolutionist called Herbet Spencer. But, some of the statements have most clearly and consistently stated by Professor Radcliffe-Brown. He argues that human societies are natural systems in which all the sub-systems, elements and parts are interdependent. Each of the elements serves in a complex of necessary relations to maintain the whole. The major aim of social anthropology is reducing all social life to laws or general statements about the nature of society that allow prediction. Here the restatement of the insistence that a society can be understood satisfactorily without any knowledge of the past history, focusing on how people behave now within the context of society, is a new term in this theoretical framework (Bohannan and Glazer 1988: 414). This seems an opposition to the argument, in spite of many significant differences, the unilineal evolutionists, the Boasians, and the diffusionists did all agree on at least one point: *the past is important*. Contrary to evolutionists, historicists and diffusionists, functionalists focused on how people behave now within the context of society.

1.2.1.1.2. The Functions of Religion: Selfe and Starbuck (1998: 29) disclosed that shared religion binds people closely together so as to bring about social stability and cohesion. By this they mean, first, religion forms a balanced and cohesive moral community. It is argued that religion is used as a means of protecting individuals from anomie, alienation and the threats of disruptive mass movements, and so maximizes the individual's potential for happiness. Second, the shared religious experiences provided in the words of Durkheim (ibid), the social cement for group unity and consensus are undeniable.

Social identity and membership could also be achieved through religion. For Durkheim (ibid), group solidarity is asserted and become more intense during collective ceremony and ritual. Social identity represent the necessary power of the social group over the otherwise isolated or anomic individual. In addition, the person would be integrated into the society through religion. It is functionally useful for people to grow up identifying with a particular place or nation. A person's sense of national commitment, especially if either religion or nation come under threat, need to be strengthened.

There is also what scholars call collective conscience. Religion is believed to unite people in moral ways. It is such sentiments that produce "value consensus." Such produced conscience could also be generated and maintained through religion. By the same token, Durkheim (ibid) saw society as a moral community, whose members were socialized into accepting appropriate patterns of behavior over time. Such a process is endless because people are always being integrated into new groups, take over new norms, taking in new values and adjusting ones qualities to new patterns of behavior. It is also believed that peoples sharing of moral values bring about an orderly social life. This is the way in which society becomes embedded in the individual.

Socialization and social control is the other major function of religion. This means religion represents the value system of the society. It is a continuous force, which has great contribution to moral and wider social order and stability. It is argued that sacred legitimacy of many of the cultural norms is achieved through religious beliefs.

It is observable that religious beliefs possess their own meaning and purpose to people's lives. There are conditions in which people become vulnerable to various health hazards that they could not control. Such risks and/or dangers would manifest themselves in the form of death, serious illnesses and other hardships prevailing in everyday living. At the times of such crisis situations people get comfort from religious beliefs. Finally, such a meaning and purpose of religion serves as an institution, which gives people the strength to continue, and as an end result encourages the long-term maintenance of society.

1.2.1.2. Symbolic Anthropology (Symbolism): The focal point of symbolic anthropology is to know or investigate the ways in which people understand and interpret their surroundings. It also concentrates on actions and utterances of the other members of the society. It is due to these interpretations that a shared cultural system of meanings is formed. That is understandings shared, to varying degrees, among members of the same society (Des Chene 1996: 1274). Symbolic anthropological studies concentrate on symbols and their processes like myth and ritual. It is in these processes that humans assign meanings to these symbols so as to address fundamental questions that capitalize on human social life (Spencer 1966: 535).

In symbolic anthropological model culture is viewed as an independent system of meaning deciphered by interpreting key symbols and rituals (Ibid). The two major premises governing symbolic anthropology are: 1. "Beliefs, however unintelligible, become comprehensible when understood as part of a cultural system of meaning." 2. It is interpretation that guides action. And, in turn, allowing symbolism to aid in interpreting ideal and material activities. Gemetchu and Kassam - Megerssa in Arnoldi et.al. (1988: 36) noted that "objects of material culture in traditional societies often serve as reifications of the abstract relations that link man and mind to matter."

The traditional focal areas of symbolic anthropology are: religion, cosmology, ritual activity, and expressive customs such as mythology and the performing arts (Des Chene 1996: 1274). There are also other forms of social organization that were not considered before, such as kinship and political organization. But, it is argued today, the study of such types of social forms pave ways for researchers to investigate the role of symbols in the day-to-day activities of group of people (Ibid).

1.2.1.3. Order and Conflict Model: Order model emphasizes on the interdependent parts that are interwoven so as to maintain the sustainability and integrity of the social system. It is basically thought that the parts are in harmony with each other. But, it is undeniable fact that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It is because of the high degree of consensus on social goals and cultural values that maximum cooperation and social integration is able to prevail. Here the complement of these different parts of the system is beneficial. Anyhow, the main question lies on what holds these groups together (Zinn and Eitzen, 1991: 39; Yohannes, 1998: 10).

For instance, the era of the defeat of France by Germany in 1870 - 71 and the formation of the Paris commune could be traced as a prominent example of conflict that manifested social cohesion. At that time, the prevalence of economic and social crises depicted complementary interests that entailed social

cohesion and solidarity. Durkheim focused on social solidarity considering it as a key variable for social action (Durkheim 1938 in Yohannes, 1998: 10).

I assume the above discussion on theoretical aspect suffices for a moment. In addition, I think, most of the research works done on partially despised Waata are not adequate. A number of anthropologists, ethnographers, historians, and travelers wrote on Waata while discussing about potters, evil eyes, hunters and gatherers, ritual specialization, marginalization and generation set egalitarian systems. Consequently, almost all of the works are of bird's-eye-view than specific thorough investigation and deep analysis. Let us then see some major issues discussed in the area.

1.2.2. Ethnographies

1.2.2.1. Hunting and Fishing: The percentage of the world's population that forage for a substantial portion of their living dropped precipitously, especially over the past five hundred years, in part because of actions of the states, changes in population density, economic opportunities, and state and international socio-economic development policies (Schweitzer, et. al. eds. 2000:1).

In Ethiopia hunting has been experienced since time immemorial. People, from both the royal family and the 'ordinary citizens,' participate in hunting activities. Big animals like lion, buffalo and others were the major hunting games. Abdussamad (1988: 237) noted that, in Ethiopia, hunting was performed both for prestige and status. There are also people who hunt to get some economic benefit. Cerulli (1956: 18) mentioned in his book that the Ingassana used to hunt elephant, lion and buffalos in hunting parties that last for at least three days.

Today whether or not "pure hunter gatherers" still exist is a debatable opinion. On the one hand, there are people who argue that sizable number of people is still foraging to get, at least, part of their subsistence. On the other hand, there is an apposing argument that concentrates on the non existence of "hunter gatherer" in the world today (Schweitzer, et. al. eds. 2000:4). Waata are yet hunters of hippos though not gatherers.

Besides hunting of big games, there are people who largely depend on fishing activity. It is primarily done for subsistence than recreation. But there are also people who do not at all eat fish. For example, according to Cerulli (1956:73) the Didina associate fish with the sky and rain. This is the reason behind their denial of eating fish. Similarly, the Waata are engaged in fishing but do not eat fish.

1.2.2.2. The Term 'Caste' versus Waata and Wayto: "The term 'caste' is itself problematic. Ghurye (1969: 163) notes that 'caste' originated among the Brahmanic variety of Indo-Aryan civilization. It seems to have entered English from Portuguese and Spanish; probably deriving from the Latin *cactus* (pure, chaste) what the term appears to have connoted then was 'purity of blood' or 'racial purity' " (Levinson, 1996:177).

Tuden (1966: 182) underlined that if the term "caste" may be used, it mainly applies to India. Max Weber argues that 'caste is peculiar to pan – Indian phenomenon (Leach 1947: 1). If not to India it can probably be applied to the artisan groups of Ethiopia (Tuden 1966:182 see also Freeman and Pankhurst 2001). There are still others who negate such a notion. Whether the so-called Ethiopian "castes" fulfill the characteristic features suggested or not are still debatable.

In the case of the characteristic features of the "caste" it is noted by such writers as Nadel (1954:21-22) and De Vos (1966:332-33) and show six of the seven characteristics of "caste" listed by Leach (1960:2) leaving the seventh one for Hindu religion. Those characteristics are: 1. Endogamy; 2. Restriction on commensality; 3. Status hierarchy; 4. Concepts of pollution, 5. Association with traditional occupation, 6. "Caste" membership ascribed by birth (ibid).

Depending upon the above mentioned characteristics features Murdock (1959:59) enumerated and identified the scattered hunting peoples who almost certainly represent the lingering remnants of the Paleolithic inhabitants of East Africa as: 1. Boni (Bon, Waboni, Walangulo); 2. Dorobo (Andorobo, Asa, Okeik, Wandorobbo); 3. Kindiga (Hadzapi, Hasta, Kangeju, Tindega, Wakindiga, Watindiga); 4. Manjo, with the Bacha, Fuga, Idenic, Koigi, Kwayegu (Kouayegou), Molsa, Watta (Wayto), and Yidi; 6. Sandawe (Wassandaui); 7. Sanye (Sania, Wasnye, Wassana) 8. Teuso.

Cerulli's opinion, supported by Lewis, disclose that Ethiopian "caste" groups lack common cultural and physical features to be ascribed as having common social and cultural origin. One could face problems to distinguish Wayto from the neighboring Amhara and Agaw (Tecele Haimanot 1984:9). In a similar fashion, Waata are indistinguishable from the neighboring Arsii or other Oromo groups. But, categorization of Waata and Wayto as the so called 'caste' does not seem convincing.

1.2.2.3. Origin of the Waata: Murdock (1959:59) stated that without any mistake, archeological evidence demonstrates the ancient presence of Bushmanoid hunters and gatherers throughout the area as far north as Singa and the Blue Nile, within about 300 miles of Khartoum. Similarly, Castro assumed Waata of

Oromia, Wayto of Amhara, and Manjo of Kafficho as if they are remnants of ancient Negroid aboriginals (Teclé Haimanot 1984:9).

In Teclé Haimanot's work Wayto and Waata are well compared. With regard to these two communities, traditionally, different assumptions were suggested. Some accept that the term Wayto has been derived from their common father called Watto. This Watto is again believed to have been the father of the Waata hunters of Oromo. Such an assumption is repeatedly forwarded by literate people and seen in Amharic literature (Ibid: 16).

1.2.2.4. Causes of Conflict: Among the Ngombe (today's Congo) conflicts arose regularly between men of different lineages either because of relations to wives or else encroachment of hunting territories (Wolfe 1961 cited in Wolfe & Yang 1996:1). Conflicting social relationships, that threaten the harmony of the community, necessarily lead to dispute settlement. There is great difficulty of resolving disputes, because like most social phenomena that have actually transpired that facts involved are difficult to verify (see Hamer 1973:232).

Despite the fact that there are some overlapping of cases and causes, many of the disputes differ from one area to another. Most of the time, environmental variations play paramount role in initiating conflict. By this I do not mean that socialization has no contribution in generating conflicts. The disappearance of property such as livestock, crops, liquor, clothing or money; and the occurrences of sickness are the two main events that prompt a client to consult an Mgonga-of-the Calabash, potentially leading to the beginning of a dispute (Johnston 1976:70). Among the Ab'ala, most of the disputes occurring at the family level involve marriage partners. Firstly, Most of the husbands commit adultery, economic and social neglect. Secondly, disputes also occur as a result of competition over domestic authority (Kelemework 2000:66).

1.2.2.5. Arbitration of Disputes: Arbitration of disputes or conflict resolutions is conducted at two distinct levels - micro and macro. For instance, Kelemework (2000) mentioned that the Ab'ala Afar have their micro and macro level traditional institutions for conflict resolution within the community as well as with *Tigrian* highlanders called *Mablo*. The Ngombe had their own institutionalized ways of resolving or at least managing the conflicts, but violent confrontations were expected from time to time (Wolfe 1961 cited in Wolfe and Yang 1996: 1).

The study of conflict has become a field of study in its own right. But the majority of works in its field concentrated only on macro level conflicts like war, revolution, over water, and inters ethnic ones. In the study of political anthropology, conflicts between individuals' vis-à-vis micro level conflicts and its resolution

outside the governmental legal courts seems marginalized (Yohannes 1998). For example, the ethnographic works of Gulckman (1955); Bohannan (1957); and Fallers (1969), relied on court cases than the actual actors involved in the arbitration (Ibid).

Though categorized as micro level conflict, many of the cases presented for reconciliation have their own complications, need extraordinary mental capacity of local elders, entertain or invite well articulate and persons of mouth feeling words, need forgiveness, assumes mutual aid and cooperation of both the culprit and accuser. Among Sidama " ... a man who as survived two cycles of the generational class system, approximately 65 years, and combines such attributes as perfection of physique and character, great oratorical ability, and a reputation for having resolved difficult disputes" (Hamer 1973: 234). Not only that, but also settlement of deputed endure a very long period of time depending upon the complexity of cases under investigation. As Tuden (1966: 172) noted the Shoa Oromo are litigious people and spend a great many man hours in the arbitration of disputes.

The numbers of elders who get involved in social gatherings of dispute settlement vary depending upon the seriousness of the cases, knowledge, social and economic status of both the offender and the defender. Tuden adds that the number of mediators range from five to a dozen men and the gathering is almost always in a convenient spot in the open air (Ibid).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The term "caste" is commonly used to designate ranked groups within a particular rigid system of stratification, often associated with Hindu India. The term itself is problematic. It seems to have entered English from Portuguese and Spanish; probably deriving from the Latin *castus* (pure, chaste) ... what the term appears to have connoted them was "purity of blood" or "racial purity." "Caste" emerged from an early system of racial classification based upon skin color and concerns with racial purity and intermarriage (Levinson & Ember eds. 1996:177).

In an egalitarian Oromo Gadaa Institution (Asmarom 1973), there is no class differentiation. There is, after all, no such rigid system of stratification in which one acts as an extremely dominant entity and the other categorized as the least subjugated class. In the case of Waata, it was later on that part of their powers and authorities were taken over and they are left with some only.

"Purity of blood" is a racist phrase introduced by European colonizers. Therefore, keeping all other things constant, the categorization of Waata to the "caste" group seems racist, intentionally created pejorative and debatable notion. Besides, out of the six characteristics of "caste" assumed to be applicable to East African

counties listed by Leach – in the case of Waata – most of the characteristics except one could not be applicable. So, I feel, such a case needs sound investigation and convincing substantiation.

In an essay entitled *Special "Castes" in Ethiopia*, it is stated that in many regions of Ethiopia and Kenya (special "castes") can not be distinguished from Amhara, Oromo, Wolayita, Masai, Somali, etc. but in southwestern Ethiopia or in the upper Nile region they show a racially more "Negroid" type in contrast to the majority of the population around them (Eike Haberland 1977:129). Even though these so called "pariah," "despised castes," or "special castes" speak the same language, accustomed to the same socio-cultural tradition, bear similar physical make-up, claim that they are marginalized or pushed aside as if, to the extent that, do not qualify to be human. Whether such a full undermining works in the case of Waata or not needs to be well analyzed.

In a book called *The Status of Craftsmen among the Konso of Southwest Ethiopia*, it is disclosed, on the basis of existing literatures that artisans who are most commonly despised are weavers, smiths, potters, and tanners. It is also sometimes heard that hunters, such as those who hunt hippopotamus of Lake Tana, and the wood workers among the Gurage are also considered inferior (Hallpike 1968: 258). The Waata of Oromo could be categorized under both potters and hippopotamus hunters who partially, in the case of the pot making, lead similar downtrodden or undermined status. Even within these despised people, according to some scholars there is a sort of hierarchy. But, whether such a hierarchy exists among *Arsii* who have vital skills is debatable.

In his article entitled *Shashemene*, Mesfin Getachew (cited in Pankhurst & Armagor 2001) argued by saying the potters occupy the bottom of the ranking. But, they are reluctant to admit it openly even though they are well aware of their position. Never the less, they believe that they are socially superior to tanners (Freeman and Pankhurst eds. 2001: 269-70). The minor difference to this notion is that the Waata openly disclose their being despised by their neighbors. However, they are not superior to the tanners only but to all other craft workers, too.

Scholars like Murdock (1959) used the terms Waata and Wayto interchangeably. Today the term Waata is known in the central, southwestern, eastern, western and southern parts of Ethiopia than any of the northern and northwestern parts of the country. Even though Waata found at Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu say nothing about Wayto, the term Wayto is known among the southerners. But, those who are residing in the northern part of the county know the term Wayto and live with them than Waata. For instance, the French traveler called Guillaume Lejean visited the Wayto community and mentioned the

probability of some relationship with the Oromo group called Waata. Hormuzd Rassam, who was unable to give a satisfactory account of their origin, also agreed with Lejean (see Tecele Haimanot 1984). Therefore, even though scholars like Murdock, Lejean, Cerulli, Hallpike and others came up with some argumentative assertions, tracing back their common ancestral root needs strong substantiation.

The Italian traveler, Piaggia (ibid) agreed with Bruse, Ferret and Galinier that the Wayto had their own language. Cerulli negated their notion and argued that there is no language called Jabarti, *Ye Islam quanqwa* (Moslem language) (ibid.). This works for Waata, too. They do not have their own language but quite a lot of people assume as if they had and to some extent still have. However, they could not trace back the name of the language or prove its existence. Informants claim that the Oromo have only one language – Afaan Oromo (Oromo Language).

Waata claim that from time immemorial they had their own *Gadaa* institution, respected of being the elder son of Arsii, spoke and are still speaking Oromo language, exogamous, had more power and authority than the other Arsii sub-clans, and prosperous group of the Oromo. Even though quite a large number of the Arsii negates this argument many of the people amongst the Sikkoo Mandoo group accept this notion with out any hesitation. It is later on, according to the words of Waata elders, Arsii felt jealous, attached different stereotypes, fabricated myth they used for character assassination in order to take over their traditional power and authority. But the rationale behind all these views needs to be assessed.

Here, we can speak about the definitions of culture, that there is an interconnection between customary roles of Waata and Abba Gadaas. Abba Gadaas would not perform some of the rituals without Waata and Waata would not perform some in the absence of Abba Gadaas. In Oromo culture, many of the ritual activities need not be performed without slaughtering animals, brewing the local hydromel called *booka*, presenting gourd full of milk, and preparation of customary food. Again all these and other traditional religious activities of blessings, anointing butter, and annual celebrations, in turn, work in harmony so as to maintain the integrity of the social system. Waata are people who do not entangle themselves in any of the conflicting situations but rather multi-dimensional socio-cultural actors whose role in the integrity of the system as a whole is tantamount. Researches conducted till now seem not to have adequately discussed the functional perspectives of the Waata role.

Waata men hold *botowaa*, *qorii* ("decorated gourd"), *itillee* ("semi-processed skin") and *lalistuu* ("fresh grass") while engaging themselves in *karaara* per annum. How the Arsii Oromo understand and interpret their surroundings in order to reach shared cultural system of meanings is yet ambiguously understood.

These symbols and the myths Arsii attach to Waata, performances of rituals and their symbolic significance to create social bondage and its interpretation to guide action need thorough investigation.

In this study, examining the origin, lineage, status, power, authority, kinship ties and descent rules is part of the major objective of this paper. I have attempted to disclose whether Waata community's claim has some ground of truth or not serves as a stepping stone to the focal area, Waata's roles in conflict resolution.

Usually, the term "conflict" refers to perceived divergent interests between two or more parties. Conflict, however, does not inevitably lead to aggression. There are various ways of dealing with conflicts, including denying its very existence, negotiating a mutually desirable solution, compromising, threatening, fighting, appealing to the third party, and so on (Levinson and Ember 1996: 238).

There has been a marked variation among human cultures with regard to aggression and conflict. Yanamamo of South America is exemplified as a culture with a high level of human physical aggression (Chagnon 1992). There are also other cultures that have very low levels of violence (Howell and Wills 1989; Montagu 1978). Buid of the Philippines the Chewong and Semai of Malaysia, the Piaroa of Amazonia, the Toraja of Indonesia and certain Zapotec communities of Mexico could be mentioned as some of the areas with low levels of violence (Levinson and Ember eds. 1996: 238).

Among the Oromo the egalitarian Gadaa institution is the principal all inclusive entity. Those offenders, who break Gadaa laws, act against customary rules and regulations, deviate from cultural norms and values, and so on are abided by Gadaa rules. In so doing, Waata are the traditional Oromo police who imprison the murderers, culprits, offenders or any other deviants who act against customary Gadaa traditional law, rules and regulations. Especially, in the case of homicide, sooner the surrender takes place; the Waata who identified the criminal has full right of confiscation. He is authorized to confiscate the material offender used for murder, harming others or any of the criminal acts. Not only that, but also puts off the culprits costumes and wears for himself. Therefore, in older days and to a limited extent now days, too, Waata were/are highly honorable, of a high social status and has been accountable for greater social responsibilities. Later on some of the social responsibilities were diverted to the Sikkoo and Mandoo communities who are accused of forcing the Waata to create separate and/or "false" identity.

I feel, whether the categorization of Waata as "caste" group, Waata's Oromoness, the notion of change and continuity, the paradox of being of a higher social status on ritual activities on the one hand and despised on the other (social life), have neither been totally studied nor probably been well researched. Therefore, I believe it needs thorough investigation to unravel the reality behind this cultural fact.

the 125 Waata (59 from Worjoo Woshgulla and 66 from Faajjii Qaraaruu) out of the total 215 were all interviewed. The selection was made without sex, age, and literacy biases.

- **Observation:** In my stay in these two study areas, as an investigator, I have observed the actual social environment, the prevalence rate of the day to day misunderstandings between the residents and the role of Waata and Utaa - Waayyuu in resolving dispute through mediation.
- **Focus Group Discussion:** In order to arrive at consensus and summarize the whole idea with dependable argumentation, I have organized six focus group discussion sessions at the aforementioned vicinities. Two of the sessions were conducted with Worjoo Woshgulla Waata while the other two were held with Waata residing at Faajjii Goobaa. The remaining two were carried out with Utaa – Waayyuu elders found at both localities. Men and women elders, youngsters above their twenties, literate and illiterate people with oratorical ability were active participants of each of the sections except ones held with Utaa – Waayyuu Gadaa chiefs.
- **Informal Discussion:** There have been situations in which people did not tell truths but had pretended to satisfy my intention especially with their knowledge of being under conditioned environment. There have also been conditions in which individual informants felt shy or did not remember some of the points under discussion and recognized later. These all have been bridged through informal discussion.
- **Observer as a Participant:** Dispute generated from burning of the residential home that was in the process of resolving and has been dealt with via the anthropological method – observer as a Participant.
- **Browsing through Documents and Files:** In the study sites zonal, district and regional offices documents, files and archives that have relevance have been browsed through.

In doing all these, I have recorded all data on tapes during the day time, did the transcription work during the night, prepared myself for more gap filling questions asked on each of the next days, written down unrecorded ideas of informants but in the fresh memory, corrected some errors, and so on.

1.8. Limitations of the Study: The following drawbacks had prevailed while I was on fieldwork to collect data at the selected areas:

- Distortions of some customary concepts and views that stem from cultural intermingling;
- Inadequacy of very few realities due to death or change of the residential areas of some prominent elderly informants who had good reputation as oral historians in the locality;
- Exaggeration or understatement of some crucial ideas as a result of belongingness to a given sub-moiety or lineage and seeking of better acceptance;
- Inadequacy of time and lack of adequate budget to draw more data.

II. Who is Who?

2.1. Adaptation Strategies of Arsii since Ancient Time

During the ancient time, as stated by informants interviewed at Faajjii Qaraaruu, Arsii were pastoralists. In old days some buy heifer and others buy bulls for share breeding. Those who have nothing associate themselves with the haves and raise animals.

Beyond that, *dhadhoola*, ("hunting") was Arsii forefathers' other major source of food. They used to hunt *busaayaa*, ("wild animals") like: *gadamsa*, ("greater kudu"), *borofa*, ("bushbuck"), *goda*, ("goat like wild"), *kuruphee*, ("bush duiker"), *bosonuu*, ("deer") and *xaddee*, ("porcupine") for eating and *leenca*, (lion), *qeerransa*, (leopard), *arba*, (elephant) and *gafarsa*, (buffalo) for *mirga*, ("trophy"). *Mirga* was an old custom of hunting big games to show one's prestige and status. This is the communality that the Oromo had with its neighboring ethnic groups that Abdussamad (1984 in Tadesse ed. 1988:237) in his article *Hunting in Gojjam* stated as it has been conducted for prestige, status and economic benefits. When hunting these animals, in addition to their surroundings, they were employed at far away areas as well. Whether they are engaged on local *dhadhoola* or go to far away areas they used to take care against harming each other under the saying the Arsii use as a general principle *sokossa hindarbatin*, ("do not throw away hearing minor movements alone"). At one time, while conducting *dhadhoola* someone reached the Wolayta country and saw people using digging stick called *dongoraa*. On the second occasion he saw them planted maize. He brought the maize to his village and shaped *dongoraa* from the stick of the indigenous tree called *ejersa*. He tilled the land and saw both pumpkin and maize on it. Then, he harvested too much pumpkin that he started using for his daily meal. Its consumption was under close supervision of men than women. Men assumed women would improperly utilize this precious fruit. Therefore, they used to accumulate it in *gootaraa*, ("granary") and used to consume economically.

Besides, during the old days, Arsii used to drink milk and milk only on breakfast and dinner. For luncheon they gathered wild fruits which were taken as one of the major adaptation strategies. My informants disclosed that even at their teenage, very recently, they used to gather edible wild fruits. This might be because of the fact that since ancient time milking of cow would be conducted only two times a day, in the morning and in the evening. So, gathering was a mandatory activity to get day time meal. This depicts that it was very recently that Arsii started agriculture and began utilizing its production. Informants noted, even

after agriculture has been started, because Arsii were stock friendly, they felt pity of oxen drawn plowing. But they experienced it at its lesser extent. Agricultural products were also very limited at household level even though visitor relatives were also sharing from that limited amount as well.

Later on, dependence on agricultural production increased and agricultural activity was maximized, the forest coverage started to decrease, human population increased, ecological change prevailed and expedition of the neighboring districts decreased. Hence, all these factors contributed to lesser dependence on hunting and gathering.

The Arsii do not claim, before hunting and gathering, the ancient inhabitants of Arsii land were peoples with vital skills. They rather argue Hadiyya, Sidama and Kembata were the previous settlers. Arsii came from the northern part of the country and began to live with them. Later on, the Sidama, Hadiyya and Kembata refused to resolve compensation of blood feud through *fixa gumaa* ritual. Then Arsii chased them away from the area through a traditional mechanism called *sisaa baree*, ("experienced pushing away"). They used to push the aforementioned people up to the place called Baasa. This place still called by the same name and is situated adjacent to Siraaro district. Some Oromo groups who participated in the chasing process, according to the words of my informants, crossed Baasa and are still residing with their "enemy." They completely forgot their identity and live assimilated. Waata pot makers who are given another name in the area are assumed to be among these people. Then after some time a prosperous person, called Tukkee Maammaa, began governing the area. Till very recently the vicinities of southwestern Arsii including Worjoo Woshgulla, Faajjii Goobaa and Faajjii Qaraaruu were called Arsii Tukkee Maammaa.

Sisaa baree had its own customary pushing strategy. Among the Arsii the Qaalluu lineage called Allujaana, holding his eight tailed whip, prays to almighty God; Waata was the one who makes whip and helps Qaalluu in praying; then Bokkuu holds a special spiritualistic whip and points at Sidama and Hadiyya or Kembata, accompanied by Qaalluu and says *siqi*, ("move away"). Then the "enemy" moves away without any resistance.

My Faajjii Qaraaruu informants disclosed that just like the Luba (Gadaa) classes Qaalluu who used to chase the 'enemy' had also five classes. The five Gadaa classes were called Birmajjii, Bultuma, Horata, Bahara, and Roobalee. The Qaalluu were seven in number and were named as five Qaalluu: Sa'immanaa, Funyamura, Adamoonyee, Allujaana, Amiinyaa, Aburoonyee and Aboosara. Among these Allujaana is the leading one. That may be why the Arsii again and again call Allujaana more than any other one of them. This calling of the seven Qaalluu as five is not specific to Qaalluu. People who claim to have been born

from the Gadaa lineages claim that they consider themselves as if five in number but seven when counted: Heebano, Eekkaa, Oliyyee, Wayyoo, Kiboo, Waajji and Weegee.

In sum, with regard to hunting, we can conclude that except minor difference of Waata's hunting of hippo which was specifically related to Gadaa institution and the corresponding division of labor and thereby allocation of scarce resources, all people of Arsii used to hunt wild animals. Today, violating customary rules, even other Arsii lineages have already engaged themselves in hunting hippos and eating its meat, even though they do not make whips.

Keeping this in mind, let us now see the second major domain of Waata community which is similarly an area of contention.

2.2. Waata Women's Knowledge of Pottery

2.2.1. General: Mesfin mentioned that potters are taken by everyone to be at the bottom of the ranking (Freeman and Pankhurst 2001:269-70). Such an argument does not work in the case of Waata Oromo. First and foremost, pot making is Waata women's business and would not include men. This is not accustomed by Waata only and Dieci and Viezzoli (1992: 311 – 12) also mentioned that among Hadiya, Wolayta, Kembata and Gurage, pottery is mainly women's activity. But, their husbands help them for the heaviest tasks like digging the clay, gathering woods and grass, burning and transporting. In the case of Waata these all are none of men's domain. Even though they are despised all together regardless of sex differences because of their pot making, they are not found at the bottom of the ranking. The tanner Cawwaa are more marginalized and are given the lowest down trodden position. Bartels (1975: 13) supported this notion through arguing that 'Faaqii [tanners] are the most despised of all,' and verified this further by mentioning that among craftsmen themselves the Tumtuu [smith] do not marry tanner's daughters. People say the Cawwaa stink, probably they related it with skin processing, but not the Waata; Arsii enters the houses of Waata but not of Cawwaa; they dine with Waata but not with Cawwaa. Mesfin adds that potters are reluctant to admit their position (Freeman & Pankhurst 2001). Of course, People like Waata do not admit because they are not stratified the way he thought. Not only pot makers like Waata but also the dominant Utaa-Waayyuu groups reject this notion. One of my late informants reported me when interviewed that Waata are as respected as Gadaa (Bokkuu) even though they look despised with regard to pot making. Mesfin identified as if they are only socially superior to tanners. Waata are socially superior not only to tanners but also to weavers Cawwaa and Zay, smiths, fishers, fish net makers, and traditional dedicators like Badii. Parallel to that, not only socially but structurally they are also found at the top position.

The Waata contend not with ordinary people with vital skills but rather with the chief of chiefs (Bokkuu) itself. Therefore, what I observed from Mesfin's (ibid) investigation is that he took the case of a few migrant potters found in Shashamanne town and tried to generalize the whole activity accomplished in the vicinity. Had he gone out of the town and visited Waata potters found at Faajjii Qaraaruu and Goobaa, or interviewed them while they were selling their items in the Aleeluu market of Shashamanne, he would have managed to arrive at another sounding conclusion.

There is also another misunderstood notion that Mesfin was not clear about. He stated as if potters were the least numerous groups (ibid. 270). Waata potters are minorities but are not the least of all. The majority of my informants disclosed that the Zay, Adona, and Cawwaa are by far smaller in number than the Waata. It is further discussed on the same page that most potters came from Wolayta, Kembata and Hadiyya. Potters, of course, move from area to area. But Mesfin disregarded the existence of Oromo potters. He discussed about potters found at Shashamanne without saying anything or stating the term Waata at least once in his full essay.

In the same publication Ambaye stated that potters use black, red lime and brown sandy soil (ibid. 292). The Waata women confirmed me the same thing. They dig black soil from *qarqara lagaa* ("banks of rivers"), red lime soil from *gaara* ("hilly areas") and brown sandy soil are scooped from anywhere on the road since the area itself is sandy. They told me that mixing of the soil with the brown sandy one helps to strengthen the object they make. Here under, because we repeatedly deal with the case of pot making, I would like to say a few on how Waata women make pots for this would indicate their skills and knowledge.

2.2.2. How to Make Pots: There are five kinds of pottery items that Waata women produce. They call them: *ottee raasoo*, ("pot for churning"), *ottee marqaa*, (porridge pot), *ottee elemtuu*, (milking pot"), *ottee baasaa*, ("pot for butter extraction"), and *ottee bishaanii* ("pot for fetching water").

In making pots Waata women, first and foremost, put dish like clay tablet that they themselves make for this purpose on the floor. They stretch some torn out cloth in between. Then they bring the mud of three mixed soils and put on the covered clay. They shape it to make any of the above mentioned household utensils. In so doing, they shape it with their hand while simultaneously rolling it with their left foot and keeping it tight with their right foot. After shaping the material they rub the outer part of it with *muka boqqollaa*, ("by product of maize.") Then they again rub the part above its *gurra* ("handle") with a bone of animals. To make it smooth they would again rub it with small yellow egg shaped stone they call *dhiinqaa* they gather while

extracting lime soil from the underground. Then they use circled *kilkillee*, ("flattened iron") is used for smoothening the inner parts. At the end, mouth of the item is rubbed with clothes.

Before burning, the item needs to be proportionately heated. In order to burn the items, they arrange bundles of sticks in the hole they dug, arrange pots on the sticks, again arrange another bundle of sticks on the pottery items already kept in order. Then they set fire on it. When the pots color is changed into red they recognize that it is adequately burnt and insert a long stick into the mouth of each pot and pull them out. What follows, then, is the *dotteessuu*, ("putting garbage and dust on"). They say this helps to blacken the color. The whole activity reaches its conclusive stage when they paint the area under the handle with diluted animals' dung. Unless it is painted this way it will fracture and could not be covered. If it is so, it does not impress buyers, and it is believed that it does not bear proper sound when knocked for checking.

The Waata women claim that their pottery items are the most reputed ones. One could find all of these items in every homes of the Arsii. But, the prices of the marketable items fluctuate seasonally. They say *gatiin bonaafi ganna adda*, ("prices vary during winter and summer"). In order to show what the ups and downs look like I interviewed some of my women informants and summarized what they told me in the following table:

Table 1

Pottery Items and Their Seasonal Price Fluctuations

Price in birr

No	I t e m s	S e a s o n s	
		S u m m e r	W i n t e r
1	Snatching pot	-used to hold milk of four cows at a time 5.00 -three cows at a time 3.00 -two cows at a time 2.00	-Used to hold milk of four cows at a time 2.00 -three cows at a time 1.50 -two cows at a time 1.00
2	Pot for porridge	2.00	0.75
3	Milking pot	1.50	0.60
4	Pot to extract butter	1.00	0.50
5	Pot to fetch water	6.00	3.00

Source: Informants interview

From the above table we could conclude that the prices of the pots differ according to their capacity of holding, amount of raw materials required to produce them and the intensity of labor. For instance, pots for snatching and fetching water are by far larger in size than all other items and their prices also rise

accordingly. Prices also show some incremental change during summer (September and January). This is because holidays like New Year and Meskel and Ethiopian Epiphany are celebrated in these months. Crops are harvested in the months of October to December and then followed by wedding ceremonies held starting from January. Pots used for making porridge also cost up to two Birr in the summer. This amount decreases to seventy five cents during winter as a result of people's less capacity to buy. Pots used to extract butter and fetching water show the same decrease in price. Most of the time, as a result of such incapacitation, people buy these materials during the summer and preserve them to use in winter.

Worjoo Woshgulla women have a capacity to produce fifteen to twenty pots a day. But, according to the words of the producers, due to less demand that stems from more supply of pottery production by migrant potters, they are forced to produce very limited number of pots per day. I have observed women potters who packed three to five items in their synthetic sacks and transport them holding on their back. Some also use donkey carts for transportation, especially at Faajjii Qaraaruu, in addition to the aforementioned ways. I have also seen some women holding unsold items on their back taking them back home on market days. Anyhow, though they are still at lower economic status, nowadays, women pot makers have adopted the indigenous circulating saving institution called 'iqqubii.'

My Waata informants from Woshgulla disclosed that women spend what they earn on daily consumption. There are a lot of men and children who mainly depend on the sale of pottery items than generating additional income themselves. Because of meager earnings of their husbands, replacement of pots by plastic containers, overall inflation and lesser prices, it is observable that, women lead a life full of hopeless poverty. The number of their children is so many, their land size is so small and the temperature of the area is not dependable. That could be the reason behind women's wearing of torn out clothes, walk bare footed or wear sandal shoes and eat no more than once a day even though few eat twice; if it fulfills the local standard of eating. It was the exclusive attachment of both hunting and gathering and pot making that partially blurred Waata's high social status. In relation with all these, under the following section, it is better to argue on Arsii's partial distancing of Waata that enhanced them in denying their identity.

2.3. Partially Denied Identity

Among the Oromo in general and the Arsii in particular *Oromummaa* ("Oromoness") of Waata community have been, to some extent, a debatable matter. The majority of Arsii people recognize Waata's identity of being from the Oromo group while some others negate such a notion. Murdock (1959: 59) categorizes Waata as the still living scattered hunting peoples who almost certainly represent the lingering remnants of

the Paleolithic inhabitants of East Africa. In his enumeration and identification, he listed the fourth category as: Manjo, Balcha, Fuga, Idenic, Koigi, Kwayegu (Kouayegou), Molosa, Watta (Wayto), and Yido.

Similarly, Asmarom categorizes Waata as an endogamous community of hunters (1973: 54). On the other hand, in his attempt of subdividing the Borana moieties, he categorized Waata under the Karrayyu sub-moiety of the Dayyu clan which is found under the Sabbo moiety. Again, the group he called Wate are stated as electors who are one of the fifteen sub-lineage groups of Bokkicha together with Waayyu and Badii (Ibid.). Here we have to understand that Asmarom did not put the Waata under the Kallacha lineage. If we pass to another famous scholar in the study of Borana, Baxter, who spelled out Waata as Waarata and mentioned that they are the endogamous hunting and smithing caste, whose ancestor found to be the first Kallu. Even though I disagree on usage of the term 'caste', it is argued that not only finding out but Qaalluu and Waata seem to be one and the same. My Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaru Waata informants told me repeatedly that they are not merely Waata but also Qaalluu. This could be substantiated through: first, Qaalluu women who use the same materials and believed to work as potters among Gurage (Ambaye 1997) and Waata women are pot makers among Oromo. Second, there seems no power contention between Waata and Qaalluu except helping and referring cases to each other. Third, they are both possessors of spirits and one does not interfere in other's activity. Fourth, Menelik baptized Imam Muhammad Alii and Imam Abbaa Waata of Warra Iluu nominating Waata as religious leader (Trimingham 1965: 122 – 3) while he appointed Qaalluu from Boorana (see Asmarom 1973). It seems Qaalluu and Waata were seen as one and same. Fifth, Waata used to anoint and offer oath to Bokkuu at a place called Karaara, near Kofalee, whereas Qaalluu anoint and provide oath at Madda Walaabuu, Negelle and other similar areas. This implies that they were both leaders of the Muuda ceremony of oath giving. Hence Qaalluu and Waata's similarity prevailed not only today but during the ancient time and later on separated by Bokkuu's favoring of the group named Qaalluu and partially marginalizing Waata through attached myths of curse. The division may also help the Bokkuu to minimize the power mongered claimant Waata's number to minority.

The Waata community now residing in Woshgulla, Baatuu Dambal, and Fajji Qararu, around Shashamanne, openly discloses that they are still hunters of aquatic animals like hippopotamus including fish but fish not for eating. They strongly undermine the importance of fish and unravel that it is the favorite food of the 'Laaqii,' (Zay) community whom Waata despise most. One of my key informants further argued that, in addition to food habit, no Waata enters homes of the Zay.

It is reasoned out by some scholars like Cerulli (1956), Murdock (1959), and so on that many of these so called "artisans" gained their subsistence as hunters and gatherers: to a certain extent forced by their economic situation, and partly because they represented remnants of autochthonous cultures who lived originally as hunters and food gatherers before they came into contact with other culturally more developed peoples (Haberland 1977: 130).

Waata's hippopotamus hunting case does not seem to stem from alarming economic situation. Most probably their political responsibility of being Qaalluu pushed as a driving force. As Dinsa Lepisa (1975: 55) puts it *alangee* is the symbol of judiciary. Bokkuu and Abba Gadaas do not make any decision without holding *alangee* ("whip made of hippos' skin") probably because though they took the power of Waata the artifact represents the elder, on wedding ceremonies and during the time of war people ride horse using *alangee* that symbolizes manly activity, *alangee* is hanged over roof immediately besides bed in order to signify the prevalence of a man's household headness to have the sole right of penetrating into the bed room.

So as to get the favorite skin of a hippo Waata has used to hunt it. In addition to its toughness, such a skin might be preferred to imply high status through making it from rare animals' material. And in turn, there were no traditional religious restriction to eat hippos' flesh. Had it not been based on such a tradition, Boorana would have not given their bachelor prospective Abbaa Gadaas to be raised by Waata and the Utaa and Waayyuu sub-moiety would have not eaten hippos flesh today. It is obvious that most of the taboos are not easily avoidable. For instance, Oromo forefathers refrained from eating donkeys, dogs, cats, rats and the like. This is still taboo among existing Oromo people and does not seem to show some change.

The second view point, remnants of autochthonous cultures, of Eike Haberland (ibid.) seems emanated from Euro-centrism. Those whom he termed original hunters and food gatherers are, according to him, cultures of uncivilized, non developed jungle men. He assumed hunters and gatherers as backward people who later on made relations with non hunting developed societies and then used to forgive their forefathers tradition. This has again developed from erroneous western mentality of ethnocentrism. Every culture is the best, more favorable and exciting in the spectacles of the indigenous practitioners and bad, unfavorable and not exciting in the glasses of the outsiders. So, Haberland's reasoning seems out side the notion of cultural relativism.

The Waata do not exclusively depend on hunting. To some extent, just like other Oromo lineages, through time they developed dependence on agriculture, too. No informant was able to trace back the exact time at which their forefathers started farming and stock breeding but they can state that they learnt agricultural techniques from their neighbors. Besides agricultural works, women make pots. But, pottery is none of men's business. In two of the focus group sessions I conducted Waata men found at Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu proudly spoke that pot making is women's area of concern since ancient time. This is one of the magnificent features of their gender-based division of labor – men perform field-works like agriculture while women are engaged in homestead activities like pot making. Girls help their mothers while boys assist their fathers. Waata reveal that fishing and fishnet making is more of youngsters business. Due to shortage of land some youngsters migrate from Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu to towns like Baatuu (Zuwaay), Maqii, Qoqaa, Kofalee, Shashamanne and Arsii Negelle in search of day labor. According to some informants, sometimes, elders also accompany them.

The neighboring people of Waata, different lineages and sub-lineages of the Sikkoo-Mandoo moieties generalize the occupations of either men or women Waata as pot making only. They use this categorization to marginalize Waata. Elderly key informants I interviewed told me that Waata are the most cursed people ever seen on Arsii land who had been ordered by Waaqa ("sky God") to make pots. In order to substantiate the notion behind the curse, these informants told me the following myth they heard from their forefathers.

Myth 1.

Waatni bara durii dureessa qanani'aa ture. Akkuma Arsiwwan biroo Gadaa dhuunfaatti qaba ture. Filuus ta'e filatamuurratti mirga guutuu qaba. Booda garuu, qanani'uun amala balleessee Waaqaan morke. Cidha qopheessee Waaqa affeere. Innis kabajee gaafa cidhaa dhaqe. Waatnis aannan dhugamee hindhumu jedhee yaade affeere. Haa ta'u malee, Waaqni dhugee fixee, kanumaa affeerraan keessan jedheen. Eeyyen kaa! Jedhan. Kanumaan Waaqni deebi'ee gale. Gaafa biroo Waaqnis cidha qopheessee waame. Dhugaatiin inni qopheesse qabee tokkittiitti. Waatni marri garuu dhugee fixuu dadhabe. Dhugaa! Jennaan quufneerra jedhan. Egaa amma qabeenya ittiin namorkitan akkan argutti waan qabdan maraa dirreetti naaf yaasaa anis nan yaasaa jedheen. Oggaa isaan yaasanis bineensa bosonaa itti yaasee fichisiisee dhaltii tokkittiin hafte. Dhatittiinis baqattee hara seenuudhaan roophiitti jijjiiramte. Dhumarrattis, durii iyyuu morkii keessantu kana isinitti fideetii kanaan sichi isin abaareera. Ottee hojjechaa bulaa ittiin jedhe. Ottee bultee cabdu hojjennee attamitti jiraanna jedhanii gaafatan. Cabsee itti argisiisee, deddeebistanii cabsaafi hojjechaa jiraadhaa ittiin jedhe.

Its literally meaning is

Ancient Waata were the prosperous honorable people. They also had their own Gadaa institution just like other Arsii Oromo moieties. They had full right to elect their leaders and be elected. But, later on their extreme prosperity initiated them to arrogance and conceit. As a result, once upon a time, they organized a feast and invited Waaqa. God accepted their invitation and arrived on time. Waata served Him milk. They assumed that the feast is more than enough. Unexpectedly, God drank whatever they prepared. "Is it the only meal you people prepared for the feast?" He asked. "Obviously!" they replied. Then, without any additional enquiry God went home back. In turn, on the other occasion, God organized His own feast and invited Waata. The milk He prepared was in a single gourd but the Waata were unable to drink it up. God encouraged them to consume more. They rather replied, "We are satisfied." He asked them to employ all cattle population they have. They did so. But, God also employed all kinds of wild beasts he ever created and made all of the Waata's cattle eaten by those beasts except one cow. That cow ran away and dived into the lake to be turned into hippo. Finally God said, "It is your arrogance that led you to such a competition. You are normless. So that, this moment on you are all cursed people. From now onwards make pots and live on it." "How could we live on pot making since it easily breaks?" the 'cursed' group asked. He displayed how pots break through breaking one of the pots made. Finally, God answered, "It always breaks and you will make it throughout.

This myth is repeatedly told by all members of the Utaa – Waayyuu sub – moiety members residing at both Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu. There is also another myth I heard told in other eastern areas of Arsii I noted in my conclusive remark. Both do not tell us that Waata are the down trodden people since ancient times but rather magnifies their upper social status. Their competition with God shows not their weakness and marginalization but status above all other living beings of that time. The ideological sanction itself implies that they were banned once and for all through frustrating mechanism of non response and reclaim. The other fact is that considering hippo as the hybrid of the ancient cow connotes none polluting edibleness. Similarly, they have nothing they told us about Waata's non Oromo origin and rather capitalized on their half-done undermining through curse.

On the basis of this, Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu Waata are seem to be neither aware of their association with *Oromduro*, ("proto-Oromo") inhabitants of East Africa nor accept the doubt stated by Temam (1996: 6) about their non assimilation and being the remnants of the medieval populations that have completely been replaced by the Oromo. They claim that Oromo itself is one of the wings of the ancient Cushitic inhabitants of East Africa and Waata is an Oromo found among the original settlers of the area under discussion. Just like Asmarom's categorization of Waata, Waayyuu and Badii among the Karrayyuu

sub-moiety of Boorana, some Sikkoo-Mandoo informants of Waata at Woshgulla categorize themselves together with the Utaa and Waayyuu sub-moieties of Sikkoo and Mandoo moieties. Negaso (2001) also mentions that Waata is included in one of the nine Borana groups.

There is one of the great misunderstandings that most scholars are unable to resolve is that they view Waata from the point of view of women's pot making and try to generalize the whole thing. Waata need to be seen from the point of view of the two great systems of the Oromo society. These two, the moiety system and the Gadaa system, interact with one another (see Asmarom 1973: 10, 50 – 120). Asmarom further explains by saying all Gadaa ceremonies are performed by Gadaa leaders for Gadaa classes while the *muuda* ceremony is performed by hereditary leaders of the kinship system. Heading of Muuda is not the sole domain of Qaalluu. For instance, memorizing its pitiful customary action did underway in the very recent past, not more than three decades, Arsii people speak that there was a place called Karaara, around vicinity called Kuyyera. Until very recently, my informants argued, the *muuda* ceremony was conducted under the anointing ritual leadership of Waata at this specific place. But now days due to upper hand and strong opposition they faced from the Muslim community such a ceremony has been abandoned. Muslims note that it is a sin conducted against the rule of Islam. Therefore, many people are not clear with the notion that, among ancient Oromo ritual experts, Qaalluu and Waata had most likely been one and the same. Abba Muuda – a common name for Qaalluu, the ritual leader of Boorana, applies to Waata, too, in Arsii. In Arsii many of the Gadaa rituals are not performed in the absence of both Waata or Qaalluu and Abba Gadaas. It is in relation to this that Haberland (1977: 131) confirmed the despised and pariah groups had few if any political rights and were forbidden to participate in public meetings and were not members of the Gadaa system. This notion seems generalized at a fast pace. Whenever we think of system as a whole, according to the words of some informants, Waata are found among other Arsii lineages. Through the lineage I stated above Waata are active participants in electing their representatives even though they do not get the chance of being elected and holding offices.

Not only Islam but also the penetration of Orthodox Christianity brought about some changes on the local culture. Amhara and other ethnic groups residing in the locality derived the term Qaalluu and established centers of traditional healers like what is locally known as Awliya and believed to have possessed spiritual power under the name Qaalicha. Most people unintentionally misunderstood the two terms and consider the Qaalicha healers as if they are purely of Oromo Qaalluu origin. Through time, this made them forget their original Qaalluu institution and its accompanying muuda ceremony.

From the other angle, the Waata community strongly argues that Oromo language is their language. In a similar fashion like the Wayto which travelers like Piaggia, Bruce, Ferret, and Gardiner argued to have their own language called *Jabarti/Ya Islam Quanqua* literally means Muslims' language (see Tacle Haimanot 1984). Many people assume as if Waata are also speaking different language. All of my Arsii informants unravel that there is no language specific to Waata. Of course Haberland (1977: 129) argued, "There is no one example of a group speaking a different language from that of their hosts. The so called 'dialect' of the Manjo in Kafa is nothing but slang with no more than some hundred words difference." Even such a minor difference is none existent in the case of Waata.

The other witness worth mentioning is Waata's religion. At this very juncture if someone asks them what their religion is, those at Woshgulla immediately claim Orthodox Christianity. They all internalized that Christianity is the State religion. Therefore, they assume following of Christianity as showing loyalty to the ruling class. On the other hand, Waata found at Faajjii Qaraaruu are Muslims. It seems that Islam penetrated into this area than the Baatuu Dambal locality. Never the less, I understood that Waata are not clear with the doctrines of both religions.

The Coptic Christian or Muslim Waata, among others, render due regard to their traditional Oromo religion. The supreme deity of the followers of traditional religion was and still is the sky-God. Trimmingham (1965:257) mentioned this as a common belief system of the Cushitic of the plateau region. Among the names of God he stated the Waaqa of Oromo, Wa'a of Hadiya, Ebba of Somali in general and Waq of Somalia are some. But, he underlined the title of Yero, Waq, and Ebba were transferred to Allah when they became Muslims. The Waata community, just like other Oromo groups, still follows the traditional religion they inherited from their forefathers. They ritualize it through *warra ayyaana*, *irreecha*, *dhibaayyuu*, *ateetee*, and others. So, the Waata Oromo of Arsii juxtapose between traditional religion on one side and late comers (Christianity and Muslim) on the other.

The clothing style and hair dressing types are another area of comparison. The elders I interviewed from both Utaa-Waayyuu and Waata noted that no difference would be observed between both groups with regard to clothing style. In the ancient time they were all wearing traditional semi-processed leather garment. Today except a few this is changed to dress, trousers, shirts, coats sweaters and over wearing of shawl. Hair dressing style is still more of customary action. Women wear towards backbone elongated long, black and fabricated head scarf.

With regard to food preparation, again no variation is prevailing. For daily consumption or on celebrations of rituals they prepare local customary food and beverages like: marqaa, micciiraa, marmaaree, caccabsaa, finiina, bulluqa, ittittuu, o'ituu, areera, baaduu, booka (daadhii and bulbula), dhuka, and the like. Waata's favorite beef of hippo is prepared in a similar way that other Arsii lineage cook or else gets it to consume raw just like meat of any kind.

Matters categorized as *laguu* ("prohibitions on calling the names and/or inedible food stuffs") are also common. 'Together with other cultural mechanisms, food avoidances have been utilized in Dawro to demarcate different social categories and groupings' (Behailu & Data in Freeman & Pankhurst 2001: 108 – 9). Previously, in a similar way, eating hippos flesh was particular to Waata. Today a large number of the Arsii men found around Hara Dambal (Lake Zuway) hunt hippos in equal terms to Waata. The mismatch between population and availability of food items brought about changes in food habit among Utaa-Waayyuu groups and generated rarity of hippos. The other change prevalent from the side of the Waata is that due to Christianity and Islam they have already started eating fish that was taboo in old days.

There are various portions of meat Arsii lineages do not eat. For instance, every of the members of lineage called Weegee do not consume liver. They stopped eating it because one of their group members died off being choked by liver. The Oliyyee lineage members do not eat muscles and Moomajjii sub-lineage of Waata as well. My Waata informants noted starting from the day the muscled bull one of their members bought made its Waata owner fall down they avoided it. Eating of tongue is also forbidden among the Habarnoosaa lineage of Waata. They ignored it considering the fact that people insult each other using their tongue. Similarly, Golla sub-lineage of Waata never consumes heart of any of the animals. According to these lineage members heart symbolizes blood relationship. One member of the Golla killed his own brother and became reason for heart avoidance.

From all these we understand that food avoidance is not homogeneously decided societal, moiety or sub-moiety value that governs all members or used to distance people. It is rather a decision made at a lineage, sub-lineage, family or individual level due to one or the other reason.

2.4. "Big – Men" Misidentified as "Caste"

Citing the works of Nadel, De Vos, and Leach in his book entitled *Social Stratification in Africa* Tuden (1966:182) listed seven criteria for caste leaving the seventh one for the Hindu religion. Here under these criteria are going to be treated one after the other in order to indicate some facts that need to be taken into consideration and draw some approval or disapproval.

2.4.1. Endogamy: Murdock (1959: 59) argued, '... groups numbering several thousand, survive as endogamous pariah castes of hunters among the various Cushitic...' The Waata community members argue that before Arsii attached different stereotypes to the Waata people, they used to be exogamous. There are a lot of Waata elders whom I interviewed and asserted to me that Waata's endogamy has some relation with the formulation of *seera fixa gumaa*, ("the customary laws of compensation for conflicts of blood feud"). They say this valued customary law does not allow any Waata man, who is believed to have spirit possession, to spill any other Arsii's blood. If any Waata marries a girl from any Arsii lineages, he is expected to deflower. It is known that deflowering entails pouring of blood that Waata is not allowed to and vice versa. Arsii or Waata men who violated this law would face an attack of leprosy. Elders say *inciccita* ("his flesh would be torn down into pieces"). One of the elders affirmed that 'this is Waaqa's not reconsiderable decision on those who violate customary laws.' Here male are given the right to take virginity of only their own girls that God allowed them to do so.

There is also one major argument that Utaa-Waayyuu men raise with regard to marriage relations and exogamy. If a Waata marries a girl from their lineages, she will give birth to a half Utaa-Waayyuu and half Waata child. Then, in such cases, it is very difficult to label the new born baby. Regarding the role played by Utaa-Waayyuu and Waata in taking the leadership position, *fixa gumaa*, *karaara*, blessings, pot making and other socio-cultural division of labor it becomes very difficult to identify. Gadaa elders argue, in the ancient time, Bokkuu had well analyzed reason of including the case in their customary law. This seems a mechanism to sustain and not to mix one who plays the role of shaving and protecting the whole Arsii from leprosy with governance. One of my informants disclosed, "it is impossible to mix medicine with non curing things and rather useful to use medicine as a medicine."

The under mentioned mythological tradition that every Utaa – Waayyuu and Waata elders repeatedly mention with regard to endogamy could also be mentioned as the other reason:

Myth 2.

Roophiitu lagatti due. Intalli ammo fuuti hari'a. Namichi fiigee dhufee, "Waata rumbuu rumbaatee roophiin duutee, intala hari'a gurguramtu kam faana baata?" jedheen. "Hodha! Intala fuudhanii mana quufaatti galan ani roophii bultee shamtu dhiisee dhaqaa?" jedhee roophii qalachuuf lixe. Oggaa inni qalatee deebi'u intala jalaa gurguranii 'eegan. Kanumaan waa'ee gurgurtaa irratti addaan bahan.

Its literally meaning is:

A hippo was killed in the lake. The wedding ceremony of a girl was also on that day. Somebody came and said, "Hippo's killing and the wedding ceremony overlapped. Which one do you prefer to attend?"

"Oh!" said the Waata man, "they will take the girl to the home where festive meal is adequately prepared. I do not leave the flesh of a hippo that could be rotten within a day." Then, he went away to slaughter his hippo than attending the marriage ritual. At the time he came back the girl was sold (got married). This was the point of departure with regard to marriage.

Nobody knows the time at which this mythology was made-up. Anyhow, after the practicality of the mythology, Waata resorted to endogamy. But, this does not mean brothers and sisters or any other close relatives marry one another. My informants strongly resisted such a misconception through further explanation. Those who are residing at Woshgulla make marriage arrangements with those who are found at Qoqaa or Faajjii Qaraaruu vicinities. Similarly, those who are living at Kofalee go to Maqii and vice versa. This implies that Waata male marry Waata female. But, they go far away in order to find their people who are from different sub-lineages. On the other way round, this is similar to the Utaa-Waayyuu sub-moiety lineage members who count their descent to arrive at the one beyond seven generations. The one worth mentioning is that they are all Oromo who are looking for another Oromo to create affinal relations. However, it sounds erroneous to categorize the whole society as endogamous. Ancient Egyptian kings and their royal families were endogamous to the extent that parallel cousins marry each other. Never the less, they were not categorized as special castes. Therefore, Waata's case does not seem exceptional.

Today Arsii people marry from despised people like Cawwaa, Badii and 'Bukke.' Almost all of the marriages conducted with these people are not official, ceremonial and patrilocal. They take them away from their residential area to where their close relatives are found and visit them temporarily. Whenever the local people ask some one from which lineage group he got the girl or the woman, he simply responds that she is from far away area. Then the surrounding people conclude that she is not a member of the Boorana ("pure Oromo") clans but rather from that of the Gabaro ("assimilated others"). From this one could conclude that, had the number of girls from people with vital skills not minimum, Arsii would have married more of them.

Therefore, depending upon the view points of my informants, it is possible to classify Waata peoples' marriage alliance into three: they had been exogamous in old days; after the mythological tradition, they marry from bands and locality other than their own; and lastly, at present, those who are creating marriage alliance with other Arsii lineages with minimum restrictions. The future trend of this people also seems to bring about some changes and will be expected to widen the horizon of exogamy.

My Waata informants told me that nowadays youngsters from both the Utaa-Waayyuu and Waata, especially, the educated people, those who migrated to urban areas and other better – off groups who have

relatively better access to information are marrying one another without any discrimination. Not only the despiser Utaa-Waayyuu but also the partly distanced Waata has already started marrying from the despisers.

2.4.2. Restrictions on Commensality: It is stated that "caste" groups were ritually unclean. Corporal contact with them, even unintentional, causes a dangerous ritual pollution which has to be purified by a complicated ritual (Haberland 1977: 131). In the case of Waata, other than participation in ritual the leadership position is their area of concern. On dispute settlement rituals, they eat together with the communitas, bless, and take part in singing and dancing. In the absence of Waata, Abba Gadaas from any clan, sub-clan, and/or lineages have no customary right to lead the ritual. Waata elders claim is that this leadership responsibility is a religious accountability vested on them by Waaqa that nobody violates.

In fact on the occasions of Gadaa assembly, while conducting *Gadoomsa* ("circumcision ritual of *rite-de-passage*"), *irreecha* ("lake side religious ritual"), and the *dhibaayyuu* ("ceremonial thanks giving ritual") the Waata do not sit by the side of Abba Gadaas, Kuusaa, and other local chiefs to eat from the same dish and drink together. But, this is not special to Waata. Each group has its own area of sitting and ways of being served foods and drinks. For instance, all participants have their own special area, Bokkuu ("chief of chiefs") need to take the central position, Abbaa Gadaas from different clans and lineages create the second circle of sitting, youth participants are required to stand up surrounding the sat down elders and women need to stay at *galma* (under tree booth). All Abbaa Gadaas and Bokkuu are required to wear *Kallacha*, a phallic metal horn at the Gadaa culmination ceremonies (Baxter ed. 1978: 167) and hold *alangee* ("whip made of hippos' hid") to symbolize their political status, power and authority.

At the time of serving food, *dabballe* ("youngsters at Gadaa I grade") do not sit together with Abbaa Gadaas to have the same dish. Again Abbaa Gadaas do not eat with women but rather bless the dish and pass it over to *galma* ("hall") for *dabballe* and women to eat it. In Oromo culture, even at the family level or whenever neighbors invite each other to celebrate a given ritual children are expected to eat separately. It is customarily said *maaddiin ijoolleefi maanguddootaa addadda*, ("children's and elders dishes are separate"). Therefore, not eating from the same dish is a culturally proscribed and valued action.

There is also another customary activity that deserves to be mentioned as a priority. Among the Oromo, butchery of cattle and/or edible wild animals and dividing up their meat is a common practice. From the parts of the slaughtered animals one free hind quarter is Waata's share. Starting from ancient times, as I have already discussed with Waata, Utaa, and Waayyuu chiefs, any of the Oromo *ibidda*, *warra*, *balbala*,

mana or *gosa*, ("hearth, family, door, house, and moiety/ sub-moiety/ clan") respectively (see Asmarom 1973) are obliged to perform it. In the case of Waata's non existence in the locality, this portion of the meat need to be hanged on the outer part of butchers' huts ceilings. This stems from the assumption that in their patrol of the surrounding area Waata would come across and take it away. Because of its cultural proscription Waata also expect and look for it. Most of the time, they come across and collect the meat from its respective position on time. In rare cases, if Waata are not around to perceive it and the meat stays hanged for about two days, the slaughterers would bring it down and consume it. So, this is also another very important implication for their common practice of sharing the same food item.

The other way of sharing food items prevails during the *karaara* ritual. Through this blessing Waata pray to Waaqa ("Almighty God") for favor and protection against danger, for calves to breed in a higher rate than ever and not to die, for the cows teat not to be blunt and in order to give more milk, for the owner's peaceful daily release of his cattle, for the peaceful grazing and protection against dangers during their passage of each day, and the like.

After being blessed they all believe that, God would respond immediately and enable people with such problems bear a child and/or get all other things they wish to obtain. Here, therefore, we understand that the assertion of impurity that takes place as a result of intentional or unintentional contact does not work from the view point of Waata.

2.4.3. Status Hierarchy: "Special castes differ from their host society far more by their position than by their activities as artisans and professional hunters" (Haberland 1977: 131). He adds that through stating as a common opinion that these people are human beings of an inferior category.

It is possible to see Waata's status from two different angles. First, they are honorable ritual experts whose political status is parallel to the Abba Gadaas of Utaa-Waayyuu sub-moieties. They are, as both Utaa-Waayyuu and Waata elders avow, Waata are at the extreme top position of the hereditary post. It is partly not taking the case of men but only because they are husbands of pot maker women and eat hippos' meat that they are found at their other downtrodden extreme position. This is not peculiar to Waata only. There are other skilled groups found at extreme higher statuses.

... in those regions, which one perhaps can regard as the centers of origin of African ironwork, such as the western Sudan, the smiths do not have at all a social inferior position, but are highly esteemed. They are regarded as the descendants of the great heroes in the time of the creation and they are priests and religious leaders (ibid).

Secondly, there is no, as such, clear cut status hierarchy between the despised groups of Arsii. However, some argue that especially at the time of *fixa gumaa* ("clearing conflicts of blood feud"), Waata ranks first, Cawwaa second, Badii third and Bukkee the least. Waata do not recognize the hierarchical classification itself and Arsii, too, show some reservations in the case of Waata's categorization with the marginalized minorities. Hence, it is not the cultural association with Hinduism that brought about ideological rejection of caste but lack of religiously – sanctioned hierarchy of occupational groupings that play one of the forerunning roles (Pankhurst 1998: 11). Tsehay Berhane – Selassie (1991: 19) also adds that the deficient in clear 'religious sanction' is an absent 'determining element for the applicability of the 'caste' concept (ibid.)

In terms of the old days' economic status of Waata, of course, as the informants noted, they had equal access to land and live stock herding. After attachment of the stereotype they resorted to hunting of hippos and making of fishnets. Later on, during the Derg ("Ethiopian military junta toppled in 1992") regime they got better opportunity of access to land. Similarly, the Hadicho potters of Sidama have access to land while the Awacho (tanner – smiths) do not (Haileyys 1997: 35). Not only land but also able to raise more number of livestock. But, today they argue that their children have less access to land due to shortage of both cultivable and arable land. Many of them have been obliged to migrate or else serve as day laborers in Baatuu, Qoqaa, Arsii Negelle, Shashamane and Adaamii Tulluu towns. Some of them also resorted to schooling in which they are showing some improvements in economic and social statuses. One of my informants revealed that their age mate is today a lecturer in one of the universities found in northern part of the country; some became medical specialists while some others are trying their best to attain additional statuses all the way through similar vertical social mobility attained in the course of achievement. However, other things remaining constant, there are no magnificent economic super ordination and subordination between the Utaa-Waayyuu and Waata farmers. Waata are as poor as other majority Arsii families.

The other area of status comparison is an interrelationship with regard to customary cooperative organizations like jigii, daboo, afoosha, daadoo and 'lqqubii.' In his article entitled *Traditional and Modern Cooperatives among Oromo* Tesema Ta'a noted, 'voluntary self help organizations of reciprocal mutual support stem ... at least in part, from the Oromo dislike of loneliness which they think of as the beginning of death itself (in Baxter et. al. eds. 1996: 202).

Tesema defines Jigee as 'slightly different type of association from daboo, in that it is based on close family ties. It is the help given to parents-in-law by sons-in-law' (ibid). Through such a system able-bodied young

Waata male and female help the elderly people through cultivating their farm land, looking for grasses that their cattle could graze, girls prepare food, wash clothes fetch water and collect firewood for senile people whose wives passed away or vice versa.

My informants noted that Arsii sub-lineages that are found surrounding Waata: Abbayyii, Allujaana, Allabasho and Weege exchange labor and help each other with Waata through daboo. Through daboo 'head of a household requests the labor of several able bodied men and women in the community to work on his farm' (ibid: 205). Any member of the lineage groups asks his neighbors regardless of some association to lineage membership or despising. Waata families found at Worjoo Woshgulla go and ask especially from Abbayyii because they are found adjacent to their village. They come and help them and vice versa. Before the 1979 resettlement program Weege were closer to Waata because of area proximity. After the resettlement more contact is established with Abbayyii than Waata.

Especially, construction of residential houses, harvesting of yearly production (mowing teff, collecting maize, and so on) are the exemplary area of cooperation. Waata claim that houses they construct are stronger and long lasting. Because of that their neighbors need assistance of the Waata. The Waata also need to be assisted. On such special occasions the Arsii prepare food and drinks they consume together and Waata as well. But, today, because of conversion Waata at Faajjii Goobaa into Islam and those at Worjoo Woshgulla into "Christians" changes are prevailing. Just like similar heads of the magnet followers different religions repel each other and creating some social boundaries of differentiation than marginalization that stems from knowledge of special skills.

The other area of cooperation and daily interaction is through borrowing of oxen, agricultural implements, daily items of consumption, and the like. From each other, informants noted, an individual with *baaqqee*, ("single") ox is mostly forced to borrow another ox he uses for plowing. Agricultural implements broke and peasants get incapable to replace them immediately. Water, onion, pepper, salt and other items needed for daily preparation of stew are also what Waata and other Arsii lineages women exchange.

From customary social organizations afoosha, ("self help organization for burial of the dead and mourning ritual") is the other major area of concern. Arsii burial rites are not at church yards but rather at selected areas within the farm land. Lineage members bury one another at one specific area they select and change only if it is not favorable for additional grave. It is observable that, in most cases, more than five generations are buried encircling the tombs of their forefathers. I observed that Waata and Qaalluu have their own burial rites just like other Arsii lineages. The shape, size and materials used to dig the grave,

clothes used to wrap the corpses and cover the tomb are all the same. The Qaalluu and Waata carry the corpses of Arsii lineages and vice versa. They weep for one another; attend mourning rituals and bury one another's dead. Today, afoosha is the indigenous organization of social bondage organized by Arsii neighbors regardless of any discrimination.

Compensation of blood price for a killed member of the group is again the other area of cooperation. Haberland (1977:131) mentions that the despised had few, if any political rights. The recompense like blood price for a killed member is meaningless in comparison with the other majority. The customary law of *fixa gumaa* stands on direct contrary to this view point. I would like to discuss the whole customary laws and steps of it in the coming chapter.

In sum, I could say that there is, as such, no strictly demarcated status hierarchy that hinders socio-cultural interaction between Waata and other Arsii lineages. Keeping this in mind let us now see the forth criteria and attempt to discuss it.

2.4.4. Pollution: Is the ideologically sanctioned food taboo attached to food, objects and people (see Levinson & Ember 1996: 1045). The concept of pollution seems to be the most fearsome criteria people use to repel the despised groups. For instance, Haberland puts in such a way that the tasks of these marginalized communities are vital for the welfare and existence of the society. However, it also involves some degree of fear and awe or some belief that their powers are combined with unclean and/or spiritually degrading qualities (1977: 129). This unclean thing seems attached to a kind of alien belief system that is assumed to distort the belief system of the majority of the population with whom the despised communities live. Informants from Waata and Utaa-Waayyuu do not draw any ideologically driven boundary between Waata and other Arsii lineages. In old days Arsii were all followers of traditional religion who had been ritualizing under the leadership of Waata and/or Qaalluu. Even though changes are coming as a result of Islamization and Christianization, many features of customary action are still functioning. Both men and women ritualize Ayyaana ("ancestral cult"), irreecha, dhibaayyuu and women independently celebrate ateetee and the like. All these are performed by both Utaa-Waayyuu and Waata without any discrimination. Hence, they have nothing to say about polluting one another. 'Some authors claim that in the southern ... context notions of pollution and impurity are weak, and are not clearly contraposed to notions of purity and sacredness' (Freeman & Pankhurst 2001: 16). 'The Boqallas of Konso whom they consider 'regional priests' are perceived as 'quintessentially sacred' (Hallpike 1972: 248).

Haberland (1977:131) noted that on attending mourning rituals or on wedding ceremonies, they have to sit down on great leaves and eat from broken vessels which are to be destroyed later. After systematically asking them their notion on mourning and wedding interactions, I did tell them that I read what I have paraphrased above. They all laughed at me and mentioned that in their culture people do not sit on leaves. They would rather eat on them or put on their head during rain. Especially, during the open air rituals like circumcision for *rite-de-passage* and Gadaa assembly people use leaves as dishes. Those who make pilgrimage take part in long distance trade and participate in warfare to protect their nation against attack use leaves growing at the banks of rivers to drink water. Broken vessels are totally not used for dining and drinking by both Utaa-Waayyu and Waata. They would rather use such materials to serve milk to cats, to dry on seeds of pumpkin, cabbage, linseed, and/or throw it away in the garden. Haberland adds, "Meeting the commoner on the road ... kneel down and turn away their faces" (ibid.). Waata are honorable "policemen" who detect criminals, patrol day to day activities of the local people, mediate conflicts and keep peace. They are descent people whom the cross-byers salute and admire their activity and give them due-regards. No special action is expected from every member of the residents when meeting Waata. Similarly, the Chinacha group, now exclusively potters, had a higher status under the Wolayta kingdom (Freeman & Pankhurst 2001: 18). Therefore, no such discriminatory action of pollution is prevalent among Waata.

2.4.5. Association with 'Traditional' Occupation: I have attempted to note, in the preceding parts, that the Utaa and Waayyu sub-moieties generalize pot making as if it is the hereditary occupation of both men and women. But, in other cultures, 'pottery is the only despised female occupation (ibid: 30 – 1). The Kanshee sub-lineage members of Faajjii Qaraaru say *Wattiyyeen ottee hojjetti* ("She (Waata) makes pot.") They prefer pronouncing Waata men in a feminine term. Similarly, this is noted by Kassam and Bashuna as, Borana refer to both Gabra and Waata by the female pronoun (*issi*); they accord the male pronoun (*issa*) to themselves, as first-born. The Waata consider it a derogatory term used for undermining their status. One of my Waata key informants who felt dissatisfied by what he heard said, *issi nuun jedha*, ("he calls us 'she!'") The other area of concern that vexes the Waata community members is that dominant groups do not recognize Waata men's agricultural, stock breeding and other similar activities. But, Waata strongly resist this notion through stating *ottee dubartiitu hoja*, ("pot making is women's industry.") They even add that, not only ignoring pot making but also men do not control the income women get from the sale of pots. By the same token, non Waata communities of Arsii, without any ideal differences, associate Waata with hunting, pot and fish nets making; Badii with "first aid," Cawwaa with tannery and smith; and 'Laaqii' (Zay) with fishing, boat making, and weaving. Except Waata's partial refusal, all other despised groups

internalized their association with these customary occupations. Never the less, carpentry is, as informants stated, no ones special business. It is the activity of every Arsii men.

Hence, except associating pottery to women, Waata men openly disclose that they are customary occupational specialists in the areas of hunting hippos, making whip from hippos' hid, till land, making fish nets and catching fishes from lakes, and raise cattle.

2.4.6. Membership Ascribed by Birth: Hallpike (1968: 260) noted that among Hauda son and daughter learn vital skills of their community from their father and mother though there are no prohibitions in clearing a different trade. Of course, in most societies, membership in traditional occupations of pottery, smith, tannery, weaving, making fishnets, hunting of hippos, fishing and making boats are all ascribed by birth. The only difference is that wood work is, as I have already stated, the business of all Arsii men.

Arsii do not consider Waata as singers by profession. Parallel to that singers are not categorized as despised group among Arsii. This probably stems from all Arsii peoples' love for song, dance and a lot other plays. Utaa and Waayyuu people, regardless of age, sex, social and economic status sing and dance on marriage ceremonies; they have specified songs for marriage ceremonies, they also have songs of prayers for *ateetee* ritual, *dhibaayyuu*, *karaara*, clitoridectomy, *irreecha*, cultivating, weeding, harvesting, threshing and after successful hunting. Hence, it is just like wood work I mentioned earlier – it is nobody's business.

In relation to this, among Konso Mana, potters are classified as announcers of death (Behailu & Data in Freeman & Panchurst ed. 2001: 123). Announcing a person's death is again not specific to any one group of the Utaa-Waayyuu. Most of the time, such an activity is performed through sending any envoys to the relatives found afar.

2.5. Waata vis-à-vis People with Vital Skills: As elsewhere in eastern Africa and southern Asian countries like India, China, and others, despising of people is no peculiar with only one specific group. In a similar fashion in Arsii, though its degree varies, marginalization of people with vital skills is not specific to Waata. There are other subgroups like: Badii, Zay ("Laaqii"), Cawwaa and 'Bukkee'.

2.5.1. Badii: Of all informants I interviewed, no one showed any hesitation about Badii's *Oromummaa* ("Oromoness"). They all argued Badii that are marginalized only because they are giving "first aid" to people who are choked and/or strangled. Their marginalization is not as hard as Cawwaa and 'Laaqii' who are completely out of *balcha*, ("purity"). All of my Utaa-Waayyuu informants argued that Badii helps not only

human beings but also the cattle population of the Arsii. Whenever anyone of their cattle faces such a problem their owners search for them and seek solutions. On their immediate arrival they aerate the nose, mouth or ears of the cattle and bring about immediate relief. It is believed that such a special power is vested on Badii people only. They say Badii ("disappear"). Then on such a problem is believed would never prevail again.

Badii's life style, routine occupation and co-existence, economic, social, political and ideological make up is not different from that of any other Arsii lineages because they themselves are part and parcel of it. They could elect and be elected. Nevertheless, the despising emanates from their capability to make the above mentioned problems disappear.

2.5.2. Zay: The Zay community whom the Arsii pejoratively call 'Laaqii' claim to have come from the highlands of the north. They count their partilineal descent line along Semitic roots. They speak a language that slightly differs from *Siltigna*. The Zay are approximately 10,000; some of them live on the three islands of Lake Baatuu (Zuway): Tulluu Guddoo, Xaddacha, Fundurroo and Gelila. Majority of the Zay live with surrounding Oromo communities who encircled the lake. The remaining others live in Baatuu and Maqii towns (Henze 1972, 1973, 1989; Tesfaye 1988 in Zerihun 2001)

The Zay are known in their production of what Arsii call *yabala*, ("boat") and weaving. In addition, fishing and making fishnets are also their areas of concern. Even though Ketebo (1999:11) mentioned weaving as their major occupation that they use for bartering, my Waata informants who are performing their business of hunting on the same lake note that fishing and boat making is their major occupation. My informants noted that they were peculiarly known by their weaving product called by Arsii as *wandabee*, ("t-shirt like costume"). Pankhurst (1998:31) noted in his article '*Caste* in Africa' that endogamous weavers living anywhere rank highest. Such a sweeping statement would probably lead scholars to confusions. Even though there is no strict stratification, roughly the Zay weavers are below Waata and Badii.

In old days Arsii despise Zay just like the people called Cawwaa. They consider them unclean or impure due to their close association and dependence on Lake Baatuu. Especially, weaving, fishing and boat making pressed them to be pushed aside as unclean. Ketebo (1999: 11) stated that the isolation of islander Zay from the mainland was made possible by the existence of fish in abundance. This is an ancient fact that Zerihun Doda (2001: 33) disproved by noting that today there is a universal complaint regarding decline in fish production.

During time immemorial all Utaa-Waayyuu lineages including Waata did not enter into the Zay's house. Later on Emperor Menelik's invasion helped them to settle on the open land. Then, through time they even began interactions with the surrounding Arsii lineages including Waata. It was not the Arsii only who decided not to enter into the Zay's house and interact with them; the Zay themselves do not want to create any relation with the Arsii.

Besides, as Arsii do not marry from Zay, they also do not want to make any affinal relation with Utaa-Waayyuu as a whole including Waata, Cawwaa, Badii, and any other non Zay. Arsii believe that the Arsii man who marries a Zay girl would indulge himself into poorness or extreme bankruptcy. Ketebo (1999: 12) mentioned as if the Zay have been largely endogamous even after Menelik's conquest. The Zay who live on the island of Lake Baatuu are not largely but exclusively endogamous. They select affine from the other Zay sub-groups. Unless abducted they do not want to marry from any other people. But, Arsii lineages and Zay members residing on the mainland equally marry each other.

My Waata informants told me the myth through which the 'Laaqii' (Zay) community settled on Lake Baatuu islands and decided not to eat with the Waata. They put their mythological tradition in the following way:

Myth 3:

Laaqicha achii as laaqu roophiin ari'ee jedhan. Afaan isaa bali'aa sana banee itti fiige. Yabalarratti isa caccabsinaan Laaqichi achirratti alba'e. Asumaan 'ani lamuu isa mitii kan isa nyaatellee naaf irmii' jedhee lagate. Kanas gosa isaatti labse. Waan kanaan irmii nu godhatteef yoo maaddii isaanii tuqnellee in gatan.

Its literary meaning is:

The hippo chased away the Zay while he was driving his boat strait to it. The hippo opened its huge mouth and run strait to the Zay. It crushed him over the boar he was driving and made him defecate. Because of this the Zay said, 'now on not it (hippo) but eating with the one who eats its flesh is a taboo for me.' He declared this to his lineage members. As a result of this taboo, if we touch their dishes they discard it as useless.

The above statements give a picture of nothing but societal customary solution to resource based misunderstandings. The Zay live on hunting fish than on hippo. Among Waata, eating fish is the despised Zay's tradition than to Waata. Waata elders argue that eating fish is a taboo in their forefathers' culture. On the other hand, eating of hippo is a taboo for the Zay but hippo is Waata's favorite food. It also seems that a culturally proscribed delimitation of a sort of boundary between the two groups of people. It seems this might be preferred as a valued alternative to protect scarce resource conflicts that emanates from inequitable distribution. We could also assume that it was a means of keeping the sustainability of the

limited resources. Had that culture been continued up to now, today's unnatural decrease of fishes and hippos would have not been prevailed.

There are also some verbal assaults like funny satirical sayings that Waata and Zay exchange while performing their activities at Lake Baatuu (Zuway). Elders noted, the Waata say, "*Laaqicha laagaan cabe waan laaqqatu dhabe.*" ("The Zay whose sound track has broken is left with nothing to extract.") In addition, because the Zay always sail on lake and his body is seen all the time watered, they add, "*Laaqicha 'eegee bisaanii, bisaan keessa 'oola.*" (Zay, whose tail is watered always found in water"). The Zay, in response say, Waata *botowaan cabe waan karaarratu dhabe*, ("Waata whose *botowaa* has been broken is left with no *karaara* ritual to be held").

There is also a saying that Waata invited Zay for luncheon by saying, "*Kottuu dhiana nyaadhu.*" The Zay responded by saying, "*Dhiana Waata abbumatu nyaata.*" ("Waata's lunch should be eaten by the owner himself"). The Waata say that person's statement made us not to eat together till today.

Most probably the outsiders (*etic*) view point is that fish is a taboo for old day Waata and hippo for the Zay. Eating one another's food seems breaking the customarily proscribed classification of using scarce resources. Therefore they used to attach myths and sayings that could help protect themselves against reacting on to one another's resources.

There are two major points that we derive from the above mentioned humorous sayings. First, as the dominant groups undermine special skills and occupations of the dominated, the distanced groups also scold each other on the basis of their customary occupation. Second, they strictly follow one another's success or failure in production and create jokes as refreshment from boredom.

Arsii say, *Baajjiifi Laaqiin gaafaan gadi*, ("the curve horned cattle and the Zay are under horn.") It means the curve horned cattle do not fulfill the criteria of horn while Zay, none assimilated, could also not fulfill that Arsii. Here the Zay respond to what Waata say but not Arsii.

Not only with non despised Arsii lineages but also with all other people with vital skills that Zay do not create marriage alliances. The male Zay do not marry Waata, Cawwaa, Badii and Bukkee girls and vice versa. But, today Arsii lineages are violating the customary law through abducting Zay girls.

2.5.3. Cawwaa: Ketebo (1999: 13) stated that the major occupation of the despised Cawwaa is tannery and they also take part in smith, pottery and other arts and crafts. The Cawwaa found at Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Goobaa is also mainly engaged in tannery. But pot making is the exclusive domain of the Waata. In

addition to processing hid and skin that Arsii use as a bed sheet, customary costume and making of household items; the Cawwaa are engaged in melting iron. They also do just like other Arsii lineages, carpentry works for their own household consumption. Since it did not require capital equipment, it was largely carried out – with considerable expertise – by the ordinary peasantry rather than by specialist craftsmen (Dieci and Viezzoli eds. 1992: 267).

Abba Gadaa claims that the Cawwaa are Oromo *qulqulluu*, ("pure Oromo"). They take part in every Gadaa rituals, assemblies and ceremonies. They are even active participants in *gumaa* ritual second to Waata (see under *fixa gumaa*). Tamam (1996: 6) mentioned as if there is no doubt about Waata and Cawwaa groups categorization as remnants of the medieval population that have completely been replaced by the Oromo. Here not only foreign scholars but indigenous investigators like Ketebo, were influenced by Temam's assertion and misconceived Waata's and Cawwaa's identity by saying, "... including the assimilated Hadiyya – Sidama cluster as well as the caste groups of Waata and Cawwaa were influenced by the [Gadaa] System" (1999: 15). That of the non Oromo Hadiyya and Sidama seems sounding. But, Ketebo made two mistakes: One, he did not quote unquote the debatable term "cast". This shows that he accepted and independently categorized them as 'caste' groups that Europeans used. Second, he disregarded local chiefs insiders (*emic*) view points and classified the elder Oromo ritual leaders as assimilated non Oromo. Not only that but he also separated the active participant ritual leaders from the Gadaa ritual and considered them outsiders who had learned the system from the Oromo. This implies that Ketebo did not collect adequate data and well analyzed it to come up with convincing and unbiased conclusion. Even though the Cawwaa has such a role and valued social responsibility vested on them by the Seera Oromo (Oromo Law) and other Oromo lineages claim they are Oromo. Some scholars like Trimmingham consider them as pre-Oromo who were not absorbed by Oromo. This scholar's pre Oromo view point has some connotation of detaching them from their ethnic group and considering them as if they were people who lived in the area before Oromo settlement. Had it been mentioned as Orom-duroo ("proto-Oromo"), it would have been accepted by elders and Oromo scholars as one of the ancient settlers of the forefathers of Oromo who settled at Mormor (the original homeland of the Oromo). Otherwise, such a notion could be rejected as rootless individual's assertion than throwing light on truths.

Just like Waata, there is a mythological tradition the Arsii attached to Cawwaa to use as a justification for their endogamous marriage.

Al tokko haadholeen Arsii tokkoon tokkoon ilmaan dhiiraa sadii qabatee dhufte. Ijoolleen sun dargaggoomanii fuudhuu barbaadan. Intala fuudhan dhabanii anillee haadha na gurgurtaa jedhanii walii

galan. Namni lachan walgurgurani sadaffaan haadha ofii waliin hafee ishuma fuudhe. Gosti Arsii marri kana dhaga'e. Achumarraan isin siachi abaaramtaniittu. Cawwaa gogaa bocu jedhanii maqaa itti baasan. Namoonni tokko tokko batti ittiin jedhaniiru kan jedhanis jiru. Siachi akka gogaa ajaa'aa jedhaniin. Kanumaan hanga yoonnaatti ajoofteefi waliin isii walfuutee hafte.

Its literally meaning is:

Once upon a time some three Arsii mothers came accompanied by their three sons. The boys reached adult age and wanted to marry. Because there were no girls in the area they decided to make marriage alliance with one another's mother. The two exchanged and one had been left with his own mother. He had no alternative except marrying his own mother. He had done so and other Arsii lineages heard about it. Then on, the Arsii called them the cursed Cawwaa who process skin. Some say they were additionally called batti("hated"). They cursed them by saying, 'now onwards stink like hid and skin.' It is because of this that they are still stinking and resorted to endogamy.

First and foremost, this myth reminds us one major thing. They were Arsii before wrong deeds of crating non valued affinal relation. Negative action against proscribed societal norm made them face the problem of marginalization. Second, the number of women is intentionally made odd number. Had it been even, these boys could have easily exchanged their mothers and nobody fails to find a woman. Therefore, shortage of women seems deliberately created in order to satisfy their predetermined need of attaching the stereotype. Third, it is cultural that Arsii create marriage alliance with, most of the time, at least four women. There are also observable happenings in which Arsii elders mention women give birth to more than ten children. That means approximately in a single family there are many occasions in which around forty children are found. Again in turn approximately nearly half of these children would be girls. Then, even though there are some variations between today's and old time's condition, how could we get convinced that girls were not found in the area? Forth, it is not because they possessed some wound on parts of their body but only because they are categorized as those who process skin that Arsii say they have bad odor. This also seems a mechanism drafted to alienate people with vital skills from the rest of the society and keep the continuity of specialization.

2.5.4. 'Bukkee': Impotent is defined in *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* as, '(of man) unable to achieve an erection and therefore unable to have full sex.' (Hornby ed. 2003). The term 'Bukkee' is a pejorative term related to sexual taboo that no Arsii calls in the open public. They are people from any of the Arsii sub lineages but despised for the sole reason that they born impotent. There is no as such exaggerated attachment of marginalization differences like that of Cawwaa except being considered by men as womanish. This is the resultant effect of the fact that 'Bukkee's' role is that of the women than men.

Arsii men do not recognize 'Bukkee's' manly roles because they could not establish their own family. In addition, 'Bukkee' themselves incline to women's activity so as to survive. They prepare their own food, collect fire wood, fetch water and perform other homestead activities because they do not have wives to help them. Utaa – Waayyuu elders say 'the only thing that differentiates 'Bukkee' from women is the mustache seen on their face.' Therefore, they are categorized with the subdued cursed people and act as the final participant in the dispute settlement. The 'Bukkee' have no craft work of their own to which they are specifically categorized and to be reasoned out pollute other members of the society.

2.5.5. Wayto: Richard V. Weeks (1984: 852) tells us about the hunter gatherers and fishermen Wayto of Lake Tana through categorizing them as one of the rare remnants of the pre-agricultural African peoples. He also adds that they constitute one of the few instances in the world of Muslims. Of course it is believed by many authorities that Wayto were the ancient Cushite settlers prior to Semitic arrival in the area. But, the late comer Amhara derisively relates a tale that the Wayto and Qimant Agaw of North Tana were originally spawned from wood. There are also elder Amhara informants who believe that they have evolved from the sea (Zalalem 1986: 2). The Oromo believe that coming out of the sea or river relates to fish, hippos and other aquatic animals than human beings. Therefore, many of my informants consider such a notion as a stereotype attached by chauvinist highland rulers.

Tecele Haimanot (1984: 16) noted on the basis of his terminological analysis that "... the name Wayto was derived from *wahata*, the Geez verb of its Amharic equivalent *wataw* – meaning he has swallowed it." As I have attempted to argue in the first chapter of this thesis, the term *waa haata* from which the naming Waata originate is derived from the Oromo term *waa haadhu*, ("throwing away some harming material against some living being"). I agree with Tecele Haimanot's *wahata* as the original term for both Waata and Wayto. But, I am hesitant enough on its relation with the Semites Geez. Cushitic language could never be assumed to derive their naming from Semitic and vice versa. How could people who came later name the original settlers? If that is believed to be so, it would lead us to incredible view that Wayto followed the arrival of Semites and connotes that Wayto had no name before Amhara's arrival. Or else, if such naming is the one made later, that would be contemporary identification than related with ancient origin.

Weeks (1984: 852) stated the myth of Wayto's origin being ancient Israel. Aleka Taye (1972), on the other hand, mentioned that Wayto whose ancient name was Watto came to their present area at about 2360 B.C. He further argued that at about 3400 B.C. there were great famine in Egypt and Sudan. Hence, the drought affected Wayto who were residing in these two countries came to the fertile Tana and Abbay areas in

search of food. This notion is somehow, except the time fixation, related to the authorities view I state in other chapters that Oromo originated somewhere around Egypt, Sudan or Israel and coming downwards settled around River Abbayya claimed by Oromo elders as Mormor.

In Aleka Taye's Amharic publication part of the Wayto continued residing around Lake Tana while the remaining others went to Keffa and changed their name from Watto to Waata. In a similar fashion, those remained at Tana changed their naming from the original Watto to Wayto (ibid: 35). This statement has corner stone of truth that scholarly publications I note in the forthcoming chapters on Oromo coincide with. Similarly, Negaso (2001: 38) confirms that the Morowwa Oromo who were confused with Falasha may live in the upper Tekeze River in the 16th c. According to authorities, in addition to the original Oromo movement from the north to the south, Wayto valley is found in southwest, there are some groups known by the name Waata living in the lower region of the Tana River in Kenya (Heine 1981:9), Waata – just like other Oromo lineages – believe to have come from the north, and Oromo elders repeatedly mention that Waata found in Gurage, Keffa, Dawro and other areas crossed to these localities during the time Oromo chased non Oromo from the Arsii land.

There is also another view point Cheese Man stated by noting that he has been told by Wayto elders he interviewed. " ... Emperor Menelik II took some Wayto families from Lake Tana to Lake Zuway to make and work Tankwas and their descendants are there now" (1968: 93). Though stating exact time is a bit difficult, Waata found around Lake Baatuu (Zuwaay) are assumed to settle in the area long before Menelik's invasion of the south. It is undeniable fact that the grain of truth I assume one could get from this view is, Waata found at Worjoo Woshgulla are descendants of their ancestral relatives called Wayto who came from their original Lake Tana shore and make *yabala*, ("boat made of papyrus") even though now days they are not as active as ancient time.

In sum, it is still observable that Wayto and Waata's similarity is multi directional that is manifested through: living at the banks of lakes and rivers, hunting hippos, making different materials from hippos' hid, ways of constructing temporary houses from papyrus reeds, participation in dispute settlement, classification as marginalized minority, association with Fuga of Gurage, Waata of Keffa, Waata Mana of Dawro and on and on.

Table 2.

Similarities and Differences between Wayto and Waata Communities

T o p i c	W a y t o	W a a t a
1. Similarities:		
▪ Origin myth	- Israel, Egypt and Sudan; - Amhara say originally spawned from wood and river.	- Some argue that they are Oromo who came from Egypt and Sudan;
▪ Habitat	- Original Oromo group who are one of the original settlers of the north; - Today found at Lake Tana shore and further inland with Amhara.	- Oromo who came down from Mormor found around Lake Tana and River Abbayya; - Today found wherever Oromo reside and mostly live at banks of lakes and rivers.
▪ Religion	- Aboriginal traditional (before 18 th c.); - Muslims (since 18 th c.)	- Traditional Oromo religion (since ancient time); - Muslims; - Christians (after Menelik's invasion).
▪ Population Size	- As many as 2000 (1984)	- Large unknown number dispersed throughout Oromo land; - Approximately around 100 – 200 at one specific location.
▪ Language	- Cushitic (more related to Agaw); - Some scholars argued as if Jabartii was their original mother tongue; - Amharic (since mid 19 th c. due to separation from their ethnic relatives).	- Cushitic - Oromo
▪ Marriage Type	- Exogamous (ancient); - Endogamous but counting up to seven generations; - Marry from different bands.	- Exogamous (ancient); - Endogamous but counting up to seven generations; - Marry from different bands.
▪ Building Block	- Patrilineal band and patrilocal residence	- Patrilineal enclaves and patrilocal residence
▪ Mode of Adaptation	- Hunters, gatherers and fishermen (since ancient time); - Cultivators, craftsmen and fishers (contemporary).	- Hunters, gatherers and stock breeders (since ancient time); - Limited hunting of hippos, cultivators, craftswomen and fishnet makers.

▪ Work with Papyrus	- Men gather papyrus reeds, bundle them and make boat called tankwas	- Men gather papyrus reeds, bundle them and make boat called yabala.
▪ Major Animal for hunting	- Hippopotamus	- Hippopotamus
▪ Social Status	- Despised potters, minstrel singers, mine and hammer to shape flat lava stones for grinding, whip makers and fishers.	- Despised hunters, women pot makers but marginalized together with men, whip and fishnet makers; - Ritual leaders who claim to have been elder Oromo son.
<u>2. Differences</u>		
▪ Political Institution	- Informal council of male elders from whom the local chief is elected	- Informal council of male Gadaa elders out of which Waata serves as a ritual leader alone
▪ Interaction	- With non related Semitic ethnic majority who fully marginalize them	- with their own ethnic majority but partially despised
▪ Concepts of Pollution	- The neighbors still consider hippo to be ritually polluted	- In old days Arsii consider hippo polluting but now changes are prevailing and other Arsii lineages started hunting to eat
▪ Overarching Laws, Rules and Regulations	- Formal laws, rules and regulations under the assigned local administrators in consent with Wayto elders	- More of Gadaa laws, rules and regulations though declining from time to time and seem replacing by formal ones.
▪ Ritual Expertise	- Very limited and mostly concentrate on anointment of victory of hippo hunting	- Leading position especially in fixa gumaa, karaara and other blessings
▪ Women's Ritual	- No	- Ateetee in which they hold sinqee and move together with their husbands for <i>faateffannaa</i> .
▪ Recent Gender Based Specialization	- Women make basketry from Tana swamp grasses; - Men mine and hummer to shape flat lava stones for grinding.	- Youngsters began making fishnets, vertical mobility through schooling; - Women started organizing themselves; into 'Iqqub' and engage in trade

Sources: - Cheese Man, R. E. (1968). *Lake Tana and the Blue Nile*;
- Weeks, Richard V. (1984). *Muslim Peoples*;
- Zelalem Anteneh. (1986). *Wayto*;
- Informants interview.

Murdock's (1959:59) tracing of Waata and Wayto as people of the same origin seem sounding. On the basis of Guillaume Lejean and Hormuzd Rassam, (Tacle Haimanot 1984: 17) noted the term "Wayto" has been derived from the common father 'Watto.' 'Watto' is also believed to have been the father of the Waata

hunters among the Oromo. In the preceding chapter I have tried to show that Waata claim to have been born from their forefather called Waayyuu Banoo. Waayyuu Banoo is an Oromo term that could be derived from the root word *wayyooma and banuu*. *Wayyooma* has, in turn, meanings like "better," "cure," "advisable." Banoo is also derived from the word *banuu*, means "opening," "showing the path," "leading to way out." Then the combined word Waayyuu Banoo can be translated as "showing the path to healthy life," "leading to betterment," "opening advisable way out." I do not think that the living Wayto community members, who probably forgot their forefathers' ancient language, raise claims on Waayyuu Banoo as their forefather. Most likely, because those who knew the custom and tell ancient origin myths passed away long ago and/or forgotten Cushitic traditions of oral history due to centuries of time passage, or being assimilated with non Cushitic culture. They might have no orientation on such a term and could not understand it that way. But rather Adaru, whom Tecele Haimanot mentioned, whose wife is remembered as Montafla, is accepted as the founding father of the whole Wayto community (ibid: 15). This could probably be a recent tracing than related with myths of ancient origin. By the same token, the Waata residing at Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu neither know the existence of people called Wayto by reason of their centuries of alienation nor accept Watto as their ancestral father. But, there are some terms very related with Watto like *wattallaa'uu*, ("feeling dizzy"), in some of the Oromia zones *Waattolee*, ("name of a person") are common terms.

This or that way round, except centuries of separation from one another and distortions prevailing due to alienation, the aforementioned notion would not tell us anything about its direct relation with Wayto or Waata except highlighting some hints of Watto's Cushitic and probably Oromo origin and terminological research. But, this is believed to pave ways for future thorough investigation that could lead us to further relationships..

III. Power and Authority of the Three Contending Leaders

3.1. The Tripartite Leading Entity

This is the chapter under which the Utaa – Waayyuu Gadaa Institution, the Qaalluu Institution, the Waata's karaara sacrament and other similar customary roles and their correlation to one another are treated in relation to case histories.

3.1.1. The Utaa-Waayyuu Gadaa Institution: According to Asmarom (1973), Gadaa is one of the most astonishing and instructive turns the evolution of human society has taken. He also notes that it represents one of the most complex systems of social organizations ever devised by the human imagination. Ideally, no Oromo is outside the Gadaa system of government (Dinsa 1975: 13). Baxter (1978: 151) defines Gadaa as the ancient, enduring and complex system of age-grading that has also served as the basis of uniquely democratic political system. Gadaa is also seen as both a political and religious institution (Blackhurst in Baxter & Armagor eds. 1978: 245).

The Arsii, that experienced Gadaa for long, constitute one of the largest, probably the largest, branches of the Oromo society inhabiting predominantly the Arsii – Baalee regions, southern Shoa and western Hararge. They are divided into hundreds of patrilineal *Gosa* (clans) (Lepage ed. 1994: 585).

Arsii say *luba shanan* ("the five lubas"). By *luba* it means the five Gadaa that take the leading position after eight years. Every *luba* leads for eight consecutive years and then transfers its power to the subsequent class after the election conducted on *bahima Gadaa* ("Gadaa assembly"). Utaa-Waayyuu chiefs told me that the term Gadaa refers to both the class and the clan chiefs 'in office' including Bokkuu, the chief of chiefs itself. It is because of such a conception that Asmarom (1973) noted the term Gadaa as the one to which univocal interpretation cannot be given. It is also agreed by most people of Arsii that Gadaa is the elder not by birth but is socially accepted and customarily codified as status. As a rule not only at higher statuses but 'in each minor lineages the genealogically senior member occupies a special position' (Knutsson 1967: 60).

In (KATO 2004: 310) the contributors of the publication stated that Arsii or Arsee is the son of Ambeto and Ambeto is also, in turn, that of Daayyuu. One of my Abba Gadaa key informants disregarded this idea and corrected by saying Arsii or Arsee is Ambee's son, Ambee is Ambaayyoo's son, Ambaayyoo is Hoomaa's

son and Hoomaa is that of Banii. Finally, he concluded, Banii is nobody's son but that of *uummata* ("the public at large"). This senile informant has counted his own genealogy as:

Muusaxafaa – Leegoo – Waawoo – Sheelli'oo – Gonshii – Tulluu – Kambaataa – Borcoo –
Kanshee – Ariiroo – Gurraachaa – Yaayyaa – Utaa – Arsee – Ambee – Ambaayyoo –
Hoomaa – Banii – Uummata.

Most probably, the one he stated Uummata refers to the Oromo people's forefather called Orma who is believed to be the body segment of Horo. Whatever the case, Banii is the ancient and original forefather of all Arsii lineages. Parallel to this, Waata, as I have stated before, claim that the name of their original forefather is Waayyuu Banoo. Though not as full as the above one, one of the Waata elders counted his descent as:

Hirphoo – Tufaa – Guyyisoo – Xagagoo – Himbaabas – Bariisoo – Tuffee – Raaboo –
Galatoo – 'Eebbisoo – Badhaadhoo – Badhaasoo – Ukee – Tukee – Badhaasaa - ... -
Waayyuu – Banoo.

Here, as one of the proofs for Waata's Oromo root, I understood that all names listed above are Oromo terms non distinguishable from Muusaxafaa's stated above. Even there is no difference between Banoo and Banii stated earlier. Linguistically, the terms Banii and Banoo are one and the same because of the fact that proper names in their vocative forms that have suffix elements 'oo' and 'ii' are *masoo*, ("fluttery") of high vowels that could replace each other. For instance, among Boorana Oromo terms '*abboo*' and '*abbaa*' for father are used interchangeably (Stroomer 1995: 50). Therefore, Banoo/Banii is the common forefather of Waata and other Arsii lineages.

Here we arrive at the core contentious notion over which the Waata and Gadaa 'fight.' Waayyuu and Hoomaa seem the two sons of the forefather Banoo/Banii. Almost all informants I interviewed believe that Waata's forefather is the *angafa*, ("elder") while Arsii's is the *maandhaa*, ("younger"). Hence, cognizant of the notion under discussion, Waayyuu of Waata is the elder son whose power and authority had been taken over by *seera* ("law") just like that of Mandoo (elder) whose power had been taken over by Sikkoo (younger) and later on rearranged as Sikkoo-Mandoo at the time immemorial naming of the moiety system was conducted. Besides, the still existing name of the Utaa – Waayyuu Gadaa Institution itself would most probably imply reorganization of the ancient Waayyuu – Utaa that could depict Waayyuu's elderness. Hence, among Oromo to be called first implies recognition of the first born. Therefore, this seems to be a condition under which Waata had been banned from Gadaa ruling power and resorted to spiritual leadership.

Among other things, I prefer to divide Arsii into moieties, sub-moieties, lineages, sub-lineages and families. There is a commonly pronounced phrase *sadeen* Arsii, ("the three Arsii brothers"). But instead of calling all names of the three brothers they call the two, Sikkoo and Mandoo, by whom the two gigantic moieties called. In a book *Seenaa Oromo Hanga Jaarraa 16^{fa}* these two moieties are pronounced as sub-clans. But, the third 'confidential' moiety is also disclosed. It is stated in this publication that some call the third moiety Manna. There are also others who claim Hawaso as the third one. Again some others mention Galaachaa while the remaining others state as Haadiyyaa (ibid: 311). Who ever it might be, the Waata argue, the third one is from the banned descent line of the Waayyuu Banoo.

On one of the focus group discussions, they disclosed that the third one, the elder of Mandoo and Sikkoo, is from the despised groups. That is why other Arsii lineages do not want to disclose him openly to the public. Most probably, this notion has some relation with Banii's elder son, Waayyuu, whom the Waata consider their forefather and elder brother of Hoomaa. I assume that Hoomaa was the younger son of Banii who led the decision making process in attaching stereotypes and made Waata hand administrative power over. This could also lead us to the saying of *Waaqa Arsii sadeenii*, ("the God of the three Arsii brothers"). In relating God with Arsii the Waata have also the leading role. This might be the reason behind experts (ibid. 132) conclusion as the third one might either be Manna or Orom-duroo, ("proto-Oromo"). We have to also remember that there are Dawaro potters named Manna in the southern part of the country. In addition, among Manna in Dawaro there is a group called Waata Manna who is considered a homeless group of potters (Behailu & Data in Freeman & Pankhurst 2001: 122). My Kanshee informants claim that such groups of people are Oromo who crossed the border line of the war front during the ancient times and assimilated in the culture of people other than in the Oromo. So, even though they are called by different names in different localities, most likely, these people are children of the Waata, elder son of the three Arsii brothers whose seniority was partially denied, banned by customary constitution, given ritual responsibility but categorized as the despised group. Hence, it seems that the term Manna might have some relation with Waayyuu, elder son of Banii or elder of the Arsii's forefather called Hoomaa.

Whenever we extend this division further, we see that the Sikkoo-Mandoo moieties have also sub-moieties. Among them Utaa-Waayyuu is the sub-moiety formed in the names of the two brothers whose decent line is counted along Mandoo: Utaa and Waayyuu. Utaa and Waayyuu have also their own lineages and sub-lineages. According to my Utaa-Waayyuu informants lineages found under Utaa are named: Abburee, Allujaana, Aboosara, Habarnoosa, Oliyyee, and Kanshee. Waayyuu lineages are also called: Hambeentuu,

Gallichoo, Wiincituu, Xaajituu, and Arroojjii. These lineages have their own independent or joined Gadaa institutions in which every sub-lineage participates.

Under the Utaa-Waayyuu Gadaa institution are seven but called as *Gadaa shanan*, ("the five Gadaa") named in their order of birth as: Heebano, 'Eekkaa, Liyyee, Wayyoo, Kiboo, Waaji, and Weegee. Each of these Gadaa is elected turn by turn every eight years and stay in office of the *luba shanan*, ("the five luba") called: Birmajjii, Bultuma, Horata, Bahara and Roobalee. Birmajjii is the *angafa*, ("elder") while the other four mentioned sequentially are the *maandhaa*, ("younger brothers"). The Qaalicha shanan, ("the five Qaalluus") who lead the *muuda* ceremony of anointing Abbaa Gadaas are also seven in number: Sa'immanna, Funyamura, Adamoonyee, Allujaana, Amiinyaa, Aburoonyee, and Aboosara. Sa'immanna is the elder in the order of birth but Allujaana was nominated and valued as the socially recognized elder.

3.1.2. The Spiritual Leaders

The Qaalluu and Waata are the two spiritual leaders of the Utaa – Waayyuu Gadaa Institution. They function under Qaalluu Institution and *Karaara* ritual discussed under respectively.

3.1.2.1. The Qaalluu Institution: 'The office of great Qaalluu stands above all the Gujii ... and serves to unite them through Gadaa' (Hinnant in Baxter 1978: 208). Qaalluu are considered to be the spiritual leaders of the Oromo religion. The Oromo believe that Waaqa communicates with the laity through the *ayyaana* ("spirit") possessed by Qaalluu. Depending on context, *ayyaana* has five different meanings: first, in part divine being; second, equality, character or personality; third, guardian divinity of the family *ayyaana abbaafi ayyaana haadhaa* ("father's divinity and mother's divinity"); fourth, luck or good fortune; fifth, day, in particular festival day (Knutsson 1967: 54). Lambert (1983) noted that the Oromo believe and respect the words of Qaalluu just like Muslims and Christians believe and respect for Prophet Mohammed and Jesus Christ respectively. In western Shoa in the 1960s the ritual centers of the Qaalluu had become major sites of religious and judicial life, as well as centers of recreation (Lewis in Taddese 1989: 675).

One of my Qaalluu informants, whose lineage is from the elder Allujaana, articulated at Faajjii Qaraaruu that the ancient people asked Qaalluu what he wanted to have. The Qaalluu replied that he wanted to stay as Qaalluu. Arsii forward such a reason for Qaalluu's alienation from routine administrative duties and inclination to spiritual leadership. This might also be the case behind the saying *Allujaanni luba malee lubbuu hinqabu*, ("Allujaana has a luba but not a soul"). This means Allujaana does not act as a living being that performs worldly activities but rather a spiritual agent appointed by Waaqa to perform anointing of the

lubas. '...Social bridges between Man and Divinity are to be found in the Kallu institution' (Knutsson 1967: 60).

As stated by different scholars like Knutsson (1967), Asmarom (1973), Baxter (1978) and the informants the Qaalluu's main domain is leading the *muuda*, ("anointment") ceremony of the *lubas* appointed to the Gadaa office. As my Qaalluu informants noted at the time of *muuda* the Qaalluu calls each of the *lubas* from their *galma*, ("hall") by saying:

<i>Qaalluu</i> – <i>Birmajjii godoo?</i>	<i>Qaalluu</i> – Birmajjii found in your hut?
<i>Birmajjii</i> – <i>Waannana Dhala nuu birmadhu;</i>	<i>Birmajjii</i> – God! Enable us get additional children;
<i>Qaalluu</i> – <i>Bultuma godoo?</i>	<i>Qaalluu</i> – Bultuma found in your hut?
<i>Bultuma</i> – <i>Waannana dhala lubbuu nuu bulchi;</i>	<i>Bultuma</i> – God! Protect the soul of our children;
<i>Qaalluu</i> – <i>Horata godoo?</i>	<i>Qaalluu</i> – Horata found in your hut?
<i>Horata</i> – <i>Waanni dhala sa'aa namaa nu horsiisi;</i>	<i>Horata</i> – God! Enable us raise more cattle and get additional children
<i>Qaalluu</i> – <i>Bahara godoo?</i>	<i>Qaalluu</i> – Bahara found in your hut?
<i>Bahara</i> – <i>Waanni dhala bara nagaan nu baasi;</i>	<i>Bahara</i> - God! Help us pass the year peacefully;
<i>Qaalluu</i> – <i>Roobalee godoo?</i>	<i>Qaalluu</i> – Roobalee found in your hut?
<i>Roobalee</i> – <i>Waanni dhala rooba naggaa nuu roobi.</i>	<i>Roobalee</i> – God! Give us a peaceful rain.

In the Oromo term, Birmajjii and *birmadhu* have some similarities in pronunciation but vary in meaning. Hence, while the two entities meet, it sounds like reading poems. But, such local terms and expressions could not fit and attract in English in the manner it takes the attention of the Oromo. Any how, it is in this way that Qaalluu gives recognition to the five *lubas*.

Here we do observe some overlaps in customary powers of Qaalluu and Waata. The Qaalluu is hearing to the inquiries of each *luba* and transmitting the inquisition of the leaders to the Almighty God. Later he is also expected to receive God's response and tell the people back. 'What gives a Kallu his eminent position is rather a combination of ritual capacity and certain moral qualifications. The later make him, in contrast to most other people, *kulkulu*, 'pure and clean' (Knutsson 1967: 67). Parallel to this, the Waata is also ordained by God to bless cattle, men, women, and children and pray for peace and prosperity of the general public. It is because of such powers that Waata found at Faajjii Goobaa mention the seven Qaalluus called the *Awaa torba*, ("the seven Awaas") as: Damine, Adamoonyee, Allujaana, Madarshoo, Waata, Sa'immanna, and Qallallee. Here, they argued, Waata and Qaalluu are the same people who perform a similar activity except some customary division of labor set by Gadaa forefathers. They added, the 'Heebano, the elder lineage of

Qaalluu institution in the area give oath to Bokkuu together with these seven Awaas. Consequently, in this case the concept of pollution that does not apply to Qaalluu denotes non applicability to Waata as well.

My informants disclosed that Qaalluu prays during *sisaa baree*, ("customary way of chasing away non Arsii from the Arsii land"). The Bokkuu stretches his right hand showing his eight tipped whip and says, *siqi*, ("move back"). Dejene (2002: 35) underlined Gulas [Macha Oromo term for Abbaa Gadaas] indicate whip is an instrument for threatening and punishing. Qaalluu orders the '*diina*,' ("enemy") in this way before the Abbaa Duulaa, ("war leader") is ordered by Bokkuu for fighting. This was the forerunning psychological frustrating mechanism Arsii used to make the Hadiyya, Sidaama, and Kambaata retreat from the area.

There is one similar cultural activity we observe between the two spiritual leaders, Qaalluu and Waata. Just like Qaalluu, the Waata also do not participate in killing of people and be killed by others. The major responsibility vested on them by Waaqa was keeping peace through asking God to stabilize misunderstandings by way of making people not to retaliate and engage on taking revenges. They wish the conflict could be harmonized by peaceful means than skirmishes and murder.

Ambaye (in Freeman & Pankhurst 2001: 292) noted that in Woliisoo Qaalluu women work as potters. Using this notion as a spring board I asked the Allujaana whether their women make pots or not. They replied pot making is the sole domain of Waata women and not of Qaalluu. But the way Qaalluu potters make pottery items at Woliisoo is almost the same to that of Waata women. The minor difference I observed is that Qaalluu women use small splinters of wood for smoothing the outer part whereas Waata women found at Worjoo Woshgulla use bone for the same purpose. Most probably the abundance of trees in Woliisoo area and its non existence at Worjoo Woshgulla could be taken as a good reason for such a variation. Again Qaalluu women mix some kerosene or butter (*ibid.*) while Waata women use rubbish and dust to smear it on pottery items to make the red item black when fired. Even materials that Qaalluu women produce are similar with that of Waata except for their naming them differently and some additional varieties. This or that way round, just like Qaalluu and Waata men's religious ritual leadership, Qaalluu and Waata women have some similar duties that could lead some to the assumption of their being from the same root.

There are also factual evidence that depict the notion that spirits of Qaalluu have probably more uninvestigated relationship with that of Waata. Someone committed murder on Waata and tried to hide the case from other Waata. Such secrecy was the mechanisms used by some people not to pay compensation of blood feud. Even though the lineage members of the passed away Waata heard some rumors, it had been left unresolved and Waata left it to God's response. But, the criminals themselves faced some

catastrophes and went to the homes of the Qaalluu and asked for the Qaalluu's spirit to tell them the reason behind the problem they faced. In such cases, informants note, Qaalluu's spirit tell them about their previous unresolved case they have with the Waata and refer the case back to the Waata men than seeking solutions or asking its spirit to tell him reason behind the later case. The following case history that my Waata informant told me depicts such a notion.

Case 1

At one time I was attacked by drunkard Arsii. They hit me and I got washed with my own blood. I prayed to God for He will avenge on behalf of me. This fellow kept the case hidden and used to chew chat with one of our sons. He had tried to cover the case and act as an innocent and friendly neighbor through approaching our members. Unexpectedly, on a given day his pregnant wife faced the problem of uninterrupted bleeding and vomit. His mother said, "God did this on a fertile woman because of some confidential reason. Go to the Qaalluu for raaga, ("prediction"). He did what his mother ordered him. The Qaalluu said, "It is the blood of the Waata that is harming your wife. You are coming here to seek fala, ("solution") but you are instead creating falafala, ("evil") on yourself and your family as a whole. You are trying to hide the case from the Waata but not Waaqa. You are burning yourself." Then, he went back home, appealed the case to Waata through declaring that he is regretting. We accepted the case and with his transportation cost I went from Woshgulla to Qoqaa and amidst our journey the culprit showed me fresh grass, spat on it and gave me saying, "The blood spilling over is not only of me but of you. Please! Take me away from such a horrifying situation." I arrived in their home. They slaughtered the black sheep, made me wear clothe he wore on the day of hitting; they bought me additional trousers and shirt, anointed me butter, girded me up with cloth waist band and sent me back home. Then onwards he and his family members have not faced any problem.

The above case depicts that the Qaalluu's spirit does not entertain problems created due to some negative reactions locally called *cubbuu* ("sin") made on Waata. Without getting any hint about the crime committed on Waata the Qaalluu's spirit could discover and refers the case back to Waata itself for the corresponding solution. Knutsson (1967: 67) noted that 'he [Qaalluu] must respect traditional taboos and ritual observances ... and ... follow the rules of *duga*, [truth], and avoid the acts of *cubu*'. But, other cases which are unrelated to Waata could be solved through prophecy or performing *itti tufa*, ("spat on"). Thus, due to the fact that spirits of the two communicate, no Qaalluu interferes in the cases that harm Waata and/or far away from customary action. No such cases could also be left without treatment or unresolved.

As I have stated earlier on their *karaara* ritual the Waata pray for barren women and sterile men, peace among couples, the cattle population and the community as a whole. This has some correlation with what Baxter (1965 in Baxter & Armagor 1978: 155) mentioned as, "themes such as the myths of the Kaallu, or symbols of complementary opposites such as virility: fertility or material vigor: gentleness, are repeated

again and again." This seems, again, an area where activities of Qaalluu and Waata overlap. Parallel to this, by means of the relationship of the Boran nation through Qaalluu to God, the source of rain and fertility, they pray for adequate rain (ibid: 162). Waata men and women do the same thing through *faaximaa*, ("women's river side praying ritual"). Especially, women take the initiative through *ateetee* ("women's ritual") performed by holding *sinqee* (large thin ritual stick held by women").

In order to get apparent vision of Waata's famous ritual activity and some clear vision on multi dimensional similarity between Qaalluu and Waata, let us now discuss Waata's prominent ritual, the *karaara*.

3.1.2.2. Waata's *Karaara* Ritual

3.1.2.2.1. Blessing the Cattle Population: It is a valued socio-cultural sphere that the Waata makes a yearly visit to barns of Arsii farmers in order to bless their cattle through *karaara* ritual. On his arrival women should accept him from the gate holding milk full of gourd. After entertaining him through presenting food and drink, the household head presents him a black sheep and he slaughters it. Throughout the night they enjoy milk, food and drinks and feel content hearing repeated blessings of the Waata man. Sheep is the symbol of peace (see Bartels 1983: 236). Black color is preferred so as to associate *karaara* with secret abdominal color of the Waaqa and symbolize Waata's power and authority vested on him by the Creator. Oromo say *gurraacha akka garaa Waaqa*, ("as black (hidden) as God's stomach or the color of the sky"). Some say this connotes that nobody knows what God's intention is but simply waits for His grace; the same for Waata man who is expected to come up with good fortune. One could also expect rain from black ("cloudy") sky. The term *Oromon garaan gurraacha*, ("the stomach of the Oromo is black") also seems to be derived from the spiritual relation between Oromo beings and supernatural power. Hence, the meaning attached to slaughtering of black sheep is reflection of the Waata as stabilizer angel of the Almighty God.

The *karaara* takes place on the onset of the yearly summer season. Mostly it starts in the month of June and ends in September. It is known that cattle get more grass for grazing, every Arsii farmer stays in his locality and Waata are also available in the vicinity. Mostly Waata are provided with horses or mules to arrive at the areas of concern. But, no Waata anticipates these animals for transportation in cases of absolute poverty; they would make round trips to and from the homes of people blessed on foot.

In performing such an activity, members of the Utaa – Waayyuu sub – moiety lineages visit the residence of Waata once every year though there are some exceptions. They take appointments to take him to their home. My informants underlined that many of these inviters come from far away areas. In such a condition

they come with their horses or mules for Waata go on it and the inviters walk on foot on their way back home. This is due to the fact that Waata are among honorable chiefs who need to deserve due respect.

Any how, mostly, it is on the basis of the household head's invitation or his self initiation that the ritual is conducted. The Waata goes to Arsii homes holding his honorary stick called botowaa which is covered with mandhcha from the top. He holds botowaa and fresh grass with his right hand and decorated gourd with his left hand. Botowaa symbolizes the socio-cultural power and authority of Waata. Mandhcha is made of hid torn into pieces and knotted as the upper cover of botowaa. It symbolizes Waata's special dealing with the cattle population of all colors. The abundantly found wet and fresh grass also shows good wish for the incremental change of the family size, wetted continuity of the generation and satisfying life. Similarly, the decorated gourd symbolizes wishes for more milk production through continuous breeding of cows. Not only that but Waata himself who holds all these artifacts is also a symbol of an 'angel' who transmits or materializes God's endowments for the Oromo people in general and Arsii in particular.

On the next day, the Waata blesses cattle found in the corral. Through his blessing he asks the Waaqa's favor and protection for one's cattle, calves to breed in a higher rate than ever before and not to die, for the cow's teat not to be blunt and able to give more milk, for the owner's peaceful daily release of his cattle, for the cattle graze peacefully, and on and on.

In old days Waata's yearly visit of the corral and blessing was mandatory. Sooner he arrives at each of the corrals; he would start singing a specifically designed customary song. He says:

<i>Hirrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr ... diddiir!</i>	<i>Let cattle move hear and there;</i>
<i>Haa horan loon, haa horan loon;</i>	<i>Let cattle breed, let cattle breed;</i>
<i>Warri loonii nagahee, warri loonii nagahee;</i>	<i>How are you the owners? How are you?</i>
<i>Loonii odolee loonii;</i>	<i>Beautiful cattle population;</i>
<i>Nagahee bobbaan nagumaan 'ooli.</i>	<i>Pass the whole day peacefully;</i>
<i>Nagahee bobbaasee abbaan loonii;</i>	<i>Let the owner deploys his cattle peacefully;</i>
<i>Nagahee bobbaa koo Goobanaa Goddee;</i>	<i>Let Goobanaa Goddee (prosperious person) deploys his cattle peacefully;</i>
<i>Nagahee bobbaa warra naa tolee;</i>	<i>Those who entertain me accordingly lead peaceful deployment;</i>
<i>Nagahee waakkataa moonaan ontee.</i>	<i>The corral of the mean would be left empty.</i>
<i>Faachoo filee, waanyoo ciree;</i>	<i>Beautiful tail and interesting breakfast;</i>

Gudoolee jabbii dhaltuu iji haa jaamtu.

*Let the eyes of the sorcerers turned
blind.*

This is a song that depicts best wishes for the owner of the corral, an inquiry to be awarded and a sort of curse to evil eyes and sorcerers who could harm the cattle population. It is believed that those who are not submissive and do not act according to such a ritual and mistreat the respected Waata will end up in an empty kraal.

The aforementioned blessing is conducted at the gate of the barn. In order to enter into the kraal, the Waata man needs permission from the owner, especially the husband. Then, entering into the kraal, he touches each and every cattle with his botowaa and moves them. The notion behind dislocation is that, they believe, each and every footprint of the cattle will be filled with additional cattle population.

In the corral, again, similar to Baxter's (cited in Baxter & Armagor 1978: 155) observation that Boran society sometimes appears to float on a river of prayers and blessings, another blessing is conducted. In Afaan Oromo, ("Oromo Language") he says:

*'Ooburri hoo loonii horaa,
Gaariyyoo, hee warri loowwanii 'eebbisee;
Waatni siilatti jedhee,
Gaariyyoo, hee warri loowwanii 'eebbisee;
Hootuu sifeessi jedhee,
Gaariyyoo, hee warri loowwanii 'eebbisee;
Gaariyyoo, budiyyoo, sangoo dhala raadaa'
Abbaan bonaa ganna waada.
Haa horan loon!*

*'Ooburri hoo loonii taawa tabeettu hinteettu,
Gaariyyoo, hee warri loowwanii 'eebbisee;
'Ooburri hoo loonii taawa tadidde hinbeettu,
Gaariyyoo, hee warri loowwanii 'eebbisee;
'Ooburri hoo loonii Waatni waatilee kolbaa,
Gaariyyoo, hee warri loowwanii 'eebbisee;
'Ooburri hoo loonii Waata waatilee kormaa,
Gaariyyoo, hee warri loowwanii 'eebbisee;
Gaariyyoo, budiyyoo dhala raadaa,
Bonaa ganna waadaa.*

Its literally meaning is:

*Let the dotted cattle breed well,
I bless owners of the cattle;
Waata says you get additional dotted cattle,
I bless owners of the cattle;
I wish the milk poured out of the teat satisfies you more,
I bless owner of the cattle;
The owner of the dotted, light white ox of the heifer,
Toists during both summer and winter;
Let the cattle breed!
The cattle are dotted; those who know cattle would not stay at one place;
I bless the owner of the cattle!
Those who reject breeding of cattle do not know any'
I bless owners of the cattle!*

When the blessing is over, a woman presents milk mixed with boiled butter filled in traditional material called *kuree*, ("decorated and fumigated small container made of gourd"). The Waata drinks it and sprinkles over the cattle and the household members. This activity is followed by the *Dhibaayyuu* ritual to be performed early in the morning of the next day. On this occasion favorite local hydromel, *booka*, filled in a pot, yoghurt filled in a gourd, soft grass, and *bixxillee*, ("small flat tined local bread") are presented and kept in front of the Waata for another blessing.

Sometimes, Waata men would go to far away districts on foot and face the problem of coming back before dusk. In such cases they ask any of the roadside residents to allow them pass the night with them. This has also its own customary way of asking and getting permission. My informant from *Worjoo Woshgulla* Waata put it in the following manner:

*Bulchi!
Abbaan loonii sa'a lama keessa buli!
Waan horatte keessa buli!
Waatahu dhufee hin na'in!
Falfalli kuftee hin ka'in!
Waata bulchi! Jedha.*

Its literally meaning is:

*Allow me to pass the night!
Let the owner of the cattle stay in between two cattle!
Live within the resources you accumulated!*

It is Waata's arrival, you do not feel fearful!

Let the sorcerers who fall down do not rise up!

Allow the Waata to pass the night!

In Oromo culture, guests are said to be *keessummaa Waaqaa*, ("guests of the Almighty God"). Nobody denies the inquisition of passing the night together. Here, among others, Waata's inquiry gets due regard. All people of Arsii know what the special role of Waata, the reason behind his journey and consider his arrival as a spiritually guided one.

On such occasions, in the night, a ram or a hegoat that depicts peace of the family is slaughtered for the guest. Then the Waata starts blessing. After being blessed the household head, mostly the husband, makes a vow. He promises to award him a bull or heifer next year. Whenever the forecasted time is over, usually in winter, he calls the Waata and hands the award over. If in case, some deviants ignore Waata's inquiry of passing the night, he will keep silent and passes to the next adjacent door. Waata believes that even if he keeps silent, God will punish the deviants. Especially, the household head that is expected to respond to Waata's inquiry would face serious problem that might reach up to loss of life. In one of my focus group sessions Waata elders disclosed that in very rare cases they would encounter people who hide themselves in inner rooms sooner they hear Waata's arrival and pretend as if not in home. In such occasions the skeptical Waata man hides himself in the garden and creates humorous sound. Then they burst into laughter and apologize as if she/he did not hear his sound. This would mostly happen in the homes of the poorest of the poor that could not make any vow.

One thing we need to recognize is that, similar to pottery which is solely women's trade, all blessings done on the karaara ritual and getting some grants are all men's business. Waata women have no right to participate in such rituals. Therefore, this is where we see a socio-culturally proscribed gender role differences between the two sexes.

3.1.2.2.2. Blessing Barren Women and Sterile Men: The *dhibaayyuu* ritual takes place the next morning of the karaara ritual. On this occasion the Waata inquires booka and milk filled in gourds or any other material in accordance to the economic status of the family. The famous fresh grass would also be there. Sooner he receives the grass and or presentation is over, he starts blessing the husband and his wife.

After the *dhibaayyuu* ritual, the Waata blesses not only cattle but also barren women and sterile men. On this occasion, too, Waata is presented milk, slaughters black sheep, sits down stretching forward his two feet, orders the whole people to sit down in the same way, puts fresh grass on couple's laps, sprinkles the milk given him in a gourd on lineage members as a whole, deeps his finger into blood of the goat and

anoints forehead of the couple and prays for peace. This dotting of blood, Waata elders note, implies the couple is considered *gogaa*, ("dry"). She bleeds through delivery just like the blood they dot, let them see her genital bleeding, and the forehead is chosen to mean *adda godhu*, ("get the chance of success"). The Waata man blesses by saying, "let next year your lap bears a male child, your breast produce milk, your barn filled with cattle, the Waaqa makes you prosperous, and so forth." After being blessed, they all believe that God immediately responds and enable them bear child and get all other things they are ambitious to acquire.

3.1.2.2.3. Cursing: The Waata do not take cursing as their main domain and power vested on them by God to exercise it on people. It is rather only in cases where deviant individuals violate their personal rights; exercise some unexpected immoral or non-valued actions that harm societal norms that they curse people. It is believed and accepted among Arsii that Waata's curse would be materialized within a short period of time. Let me put one of the curses my participants disclosed:

Case 2.

In our area, Worjoo Woshgulla, before some years somebody's sheep was stolen by two brothers. The claimant noted that he has already intended to appeal the case to Qaalluu. Waata elders told him that since Waata itself is the Qaalluu, searching for another Qaalluu is nothing but time consuming. They told the Waata man to wake up early in the morning accompanied by virgin girl and curse the thief. He materialized what he was told to do so and said, "you slaughtered my sheep using sharp blade, let the sharp blade harm you!" The thieves whom this claimant cursed died with in a short time. One of them was killed by his own brother's kicking on his belly. The other one was shot down during the Arsii Sidama inter-ethnic fighting.

It is understandable from the above case that Waata's primary intention is exercising positive power vested on them by Waaqa. But, in some exceptional cases of harmful actions against individual Waata or their community, they curse people. Among Arsii it is believed, the power vested on them for blessing also works in the case of cursing. Any how, it seems that cursing is used as exercising of punishing power over disobedient persons who need to be eliminated. They use different mechanisms of integration and resort to cursing as a last resort only.

IV. Indigenous Conflict Resolution

4.1. Causes of Aggression and Conflict among Utaa-Waayyuu: Reasons behind aggression and conflict could not be exhaustively treated in this study. But, I prefer to focus on some major ones that seem more relevant and observable in Utaa – Waayyuu day to day activities.

4.1.1. General: Anthropologists' view points on conflict and aggression differ. Evolutionary theory, ecological influences, social structure, culture and personality, socialization possesses, ideology, politics, economics and political economy are among these dissimilar perspectives (Levinson & Ember 1996: 239).

Whether anthropological perspectives vary or not, 'some conflict is a result of competition over scarce or desired resources (Brown & Schuster in Levinson & Ember 1996: 239). Roberchek (1990 cited in Dejene 2002: 13) ecological functionalists (for instance, Harris 1972; Gross 1975; Ross 1978; Ferguson 1984) underlines that material causes are the final arbiter of human behavior. Similarly, Lewis (1989: 674) notes economy as primary cause of disputes among the Ambo Oromo. Even though I could not assert that this applies to all Oromo society, I feel it has some ground of truth. My informants from Faajjii Qaraaruu put the *daangaa* ("farm land boundary") conflict as the forerunning cause of conflict. But, I do not think this problem of the Arsii people is the one they inherited from their forefathers because land had been of gosa, ("clan") since ancient time. It is the kind of conflict they adapted from the highland Ethiopian ruling people at the time of their penetration into the south. They experienced it after Menelik's invasion and compulsory conversion of communal land into private holdings of the ruling elites. Any how, prior to Menelik's invasion, there were people who were killing one another. People who develop hatreds that stem from accuse of the encroachments, pull out one another's seedlings and aggravate the case from time to time. One of my informants told me causes of conflict related with seedlings as *buqqisee balleessa*, ("pulls out and dismisses"). Such disputes were, anyhow, resolved through peaceful means (Abbas 1982).

Though there are such exceptional cases, Gulliver (1979: 268 – 9) stated that dispute 'occurs in a cultural context and a social situation that have been previously established.' One of the most experienced customary act among Oromo since ancient time is *loon baafachuu*, ("stock raiding"). This is not considered looting; it would rather be categorized as vanguardness, bravery and manly activity. Most of the time stock raiding are not applicable between the Arsii and thereby Oromo in general. It is rather an inter-ethnic action taken upon outsiders like: Sidama, Gedeo, Hadiya, Kembata, and other neighboring ethnic groups. Sometimes intra-ethnic raiding would also prevail by outlawed individuals. Hence, victimized people wait for

such fellows and if they catch them red handed, they will automatically show their counter bravery through murder.

Bridal theft or capture was the prevalent customary form of marriage among the Limbus as among other populations in the east Nepal (Sagant 1970; Allen 1987). Similarly, *Buttaa*, ("abduction") is the other major area of loss of life among Arsii. Traditionally *buttaa* is not valued kinds of marriage but favored as a last resort. Those *ilma xinnaa*, ("the kid/ poorest son") who could not pay *gabbara* ("bride price"), who could not organize wedding ceremony, probably whose parents passed away before he reached puberty, and the one whom parents and relatives of the girl he has fallen in love are despise or looked down upon resort to abduction. The one Caplan (1995) mentioned as Indreni young men abduct or 'steal' unmarried girls after drinking and dancing together also coincides with Arsii sub-culture of the Oromo. On such type of happenings the males' lineages get proud of their bravery while females' lineages consider it undermining of their dignity. Therefore, counter action would end up in deaths of one or both of the group members. They hit one another in the open air using ulee, ("customarily held decorated stick").

Widow inheritance is another area of murder. Among Gibb "rights over women" (including sexually motivated conflict) was by far the largest single cause of disputes (Tadesse 1989:674). Traditionally immediate younger brothers have customary right to marry their elder brother's wives. But, due to one or the other reason either the widow or her relatives refuse the inheritance. This might stem either from the poverty or misbehavior or old age of the inheritor. Sometimes even pre death closer contact between the younger brother and the wife of his brother matters in inheritance. If they had strong relationship prior to her husband's death, she might accept without any hesitation.

Nowadays, in the case of inheritance, there are some changes even if continuity is also there. Women are rejecting inheritance (see Ayehu 2001). Some do not totally want to entertain such an inquiry. Others respond after making intensive discussions with their close relatives. I came across a Waata woman who decided by herself to stay with her children throughout her life without being inherited. But, sometimes, women who refused the culturally proscribed rule would make some kind of confidential sexual contact with a person from other lineage. Such cases might entail unexpected assassinations of either both or one of the two newly associated mates or would extend its fringe to inter – lineages level.

Drinking is the other area of conflict that would end up in losses of ones life. The incidence of violence is high, especially since the great increase in brewing and consumption of beer from the 1960s on (Caplan 1995: 72). Two relatives, friends, or age mates who are either inviting each other or have seen one another

in the drinking rooms murder each other. Traditionally, besides its recreational value, some people's *geerarsa*, ("bragging") made after drinking would cause conflicts. Then, one of my informants noted, *geeraree harka waltara*, ("murder after bragging").

The Muslim Faajjii Qaraaruu Waata men told me one thing I did not assume to hear. In old days it was assumed as if chewing of chat ("stimulant leaf") was Muslims' business only. And, still now some argue that more Muslims are habituating this activity than Christians. Among them there are many Muslims who prefer to chew with their wives only. While performing the ceremonial chewing, sometimes, women expect *afaan kaa'a*, ("mouth tip") from their husbands or in rare cases vice versa. (Caplan: 147) noted about such happenings through telling us '... marital fluidity resulting from the behavior of young people, the relations between affiances were often fraught and conflictual.' Hence, due to negligence of one of the young people, the one neglected takes unexpected harsh measure and commit irreversible crime of murder.

During the ancient time, adulterous affairs were done behind closed doors that no one could easily detect or seriously think about. As time passes this situation has been changing and couples began hunting each other's activity. Today Arsii men and women are more serious about their sexual relations. Nobody considers adultery as a normal activity that could not harm the family but rather believed and criticized that it could entail family disintegration. Consequently, in cases of disloyalty the husband employs all his efforts or the wife does the same thing and retaliates in cases of red hand. This is a situation in which one of the couples loses his life.

Some individuals are extremely generous in nature while others are remarkably mean. There are also some who do not stand at both extremes but hold positions in between. There are also some who work hard and generate more income while others sit idle and aggravate their abject poverty situation. But, lazy individuals mostly feel jealous and attempt ways of devastating the resources of their hardworking neighbors. For instance, while I was doing my field trips of collecting primary data, I heard that some four years back a person from the Kanshee sub-lineage of Utaa sub-moiety burnt the home of a hardworking comparatively better off person from another sub-lineage called Aboosara. On 16 March 2005 I had planned and arrived in the morning to interview some informants I had an appointment with. But, unexpectedly I came across the surrounding people gathered around the FKA office. I asked them the reason behind gatherings of such a big crowd. They replied someone's home was set on fire in the mid night of 15 March 2005. I have seen the ashes of the burnt home, interviewed local chiefs and elders and understood that the action stemmed from jealousy.

According to the words of the FKA officials an individual who was attacked in the mid-night has been accusing some people who have always been showing sort of rootless hostility. The FKA office imprisoned about four persons and investigating the reason behind the conflict. But, in between, such unexpected devastating attack was happened on the victims by the lineage groups of the accused. Local militia men tried to keep some other suspected persons in jail. But, the lineage members of the claimant chased the accused away using spheres, stones, sticks, and other traditional materials. Kebele officials were still hesitant that additional attack could be launched in the next night. It is due to such a fear that they appealed the case to Shashamane District Administration to send them police force that could detect the criminals, lead their case to contemporary legal courts and stabilize it through forceful action. Gluckman (1967: 434 – 5) bickered that even though courts employ efforts of restoring good relationships, some litigants remain hostile and disputes continue to erupt. One thing worth mentioning is that the traditional role of the Gadaa Institution that could harmonize the problem through Bokkuu and Waata's mediation was ignored. So as to show their dissatisfaction, in addition to murmuring of elders, some armed peace keepers intentionally released imprisoned individuals and reasoned out as if jail break prevailed.

Generally, land shortage, farm land boundary, stock raiding, abduction, widow inheritance, intoxication, minor misunderstandings, adultery, jealousy and so on are major causes of conflict at Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Goobaa areas. Among others, conflicts emanating from land shortage I would discuss next were a hot issue at the time I collected data.

4.1.2. Land Shortage and Sub-lineages Conflict: Fast population growth rate that entails extreme shortage of land would lead to conflict that endangers peoples lives and create devastating problems on the existing scarce resources. Among Utaa-Waayyuu such conflicts were used to be resolved through different arbitration mechanisms. Now days, the implementation of customary dispute settlement mechanisms are also in a state of serious impediments. The under mentioned cases depict prevalence of such a problem.

Case 3.

Among the sub-lineages found under the Utaa-Waayyuu sub-moiety of the Arsii Kanshee is the dominant one that claims to have an ownership right over the land of Faajjii Qaraaruu and Goobaa areas in general. Harimanna is an Arsii lineage that came from the Laanganoo area. In 1988 member of the Kanshee set fire on the empty home of one of the members of Harimanna. Harimanna got frustrated and left the area to Laanganoo. They said let God avenge the criminals on behalf of us.

This case gives a picture of the fact that victim minority, who could easily be attacked, feel fearful of applying the case to both the Bokkuu and local government office. So, customary police role is ignored and

the Farmers Kebele Administration leaders, similarly, feel an attack would also be launched on them. Never the less, they daily talk about the matter as if making some attempts of resolving the conflict. In such conditions, since the dominant group do not want to hand over any of its members accused as a criminal, take additional offensive measures and further retaliation if actions are taken, commit most of the social crimes during the night time and harass the victims, it is hardly possible to take corrective measures. Litigation would also aggravate the situation than harmonizing the case.

Case 4.

In 1992 an empty home of the Mannankaba member residing together with the Kanshee was burnt. That house was also burnt by Kanshee lineage members. They appealed the case to the local government office. The administrators led the case to local chiefs for arbitration. Their attempt ended up in vein. There is a saying, 'minority lineages should flee whether they take life or be assassinated.' Because of that, this group again said, 'let God avenge the criminals on behalf of us' and began migrating to their original locality.

Just like the preceding case, it was not traditionally resolved or litigated. Elders did not carry out their social responsibility accordingly. Hence, it is possible to say that whether they are members of the same ethnic group or not scarcity of the natural resources is creating pressure on peoples' peaceful and mutual coexistence. Similarly, the materialization of customary or contemporary laws, rules and regulations fall under question. Aggravation of the situation would in the long run necessitate reconsideration of customary laws, analysis, remaking and promulgation of contemporary laws, rules and regulations.

Case 5.

On 15 February 2005 another home of the member of the Mannankaba group was burnt at 7:00 p.m. The major cause of the conflict was assumed to be the misunderstandings created between two women. They fought each other and one of their member's teeth was fractured. This is assumed to be the immediate cause while resource conflict is the latent one. Their major intention was sending back the Mannankaba group to their area of birth, Arsii Negelle area.

This case is somewhat harsher than the above two. Informants disclosed that offenders closed both door and windows from the outside. All family members had been in danger of assassination. Had the household head not broken the door through hitting it with an axe, they would have been died all. Their struggle to get out of the house forced them consume more time and did not give them chance of saving their household furniture from devastation. Not only that but also three days later, on 18 February 2005, according to some rumors, the previous offenders burnt their own kitchen so as to divert the attention of the government officials who appealed the case to Shashamane District Administration. Local chiefs were making some trials to resolve the case peacefully. But, both the government officials and the victims argue

that there are people from the same sub-lineage group of the offenders who pretend as if they are mediators to treat both parties on equal terms. Some of the Kebele officials told me that the Kanshee guard released some of the suspected people they kept in jail saying prisoners unexpectedly broke the jail. Therefore, offensive measures taken are showing some changes from time to time and harming the continuity of the customary gumaa institution. Anyhow, had the tradition fully functioning, elders would have arbitrated conflicts in the following way.

4.2. The Arbitrator Local Chiefs: The levels of dispute settlement and policy making (*songo*) are four to five among Sidama (Hamer 1973: 234). Among Shoa Oromo, people who are litigious and spend a great many hours in the arbitration of disputes, the lowest level of their arbitration is within the community and involves gatherings of five to a dozen men in a convenient spot in the open air (Tuden 1966: 172). Among Utaa-Waayyuu of Arsii the lowest level of arbitration does not require the prevalence of at least five individuals. If a single Waata man, who serves as a traditional police, intervenes in between two individuals who hit each other by saying, '*ani Waata wal hin ajjeesinaa!*' ("I am a Waata man; do not kill each other please!") They quiet their fighting and reach reconciliation through single Waata man's mediation; this is the first level.

The second level would include two to three elders. It is locally called *jaarsa qe'ee or warraa*, ("household or village elders"). What differentiates it from the first one is that the first conflict could be between any two individuals of the society; whereas the second one is mediation of more closely related household members only.

Arsii call the third level *jaarsa gosaa*, ("elders of the sub-lineage"). The number of their members could be three to five. Arsii's *jaarsa gosaa* is called *jaarsa araaraa* among Matcha Oromo. The *jaarsa araaraa*, according to Knutsson (1967: 128) mediate disputes concerning loans, marriage conflicts, conflicts between landowners and sharecroppers, bride price disputes and certain forms of antisocial behavior.

The fourth group is the *jaarsa biyyaa* ("community elders") institution that is reputed in its elders' well articulated, matured, respected and active representative of each lineage. These people are called upon lineage members' encountering of unexpected and/or non experienced threat they say *gaafa galee waamaman*, ("called when threat enters into the community"). Their number is no more than ten.

The fifth and final level is the *fixa gumaa* ritual in which unlimited number of people from many lineages participate. At this stage, cases that harm not only individuals but the community as a whole are taken into consideration. This is the level I seriously deal with in the parts that follow.

Anyhow, in all these levels the term *qixxee*, ("equal terms") is materialized as a guiding principle while terms like *jaarsa qoraa*, ("investigator elders"), *jaarsa muraa*, ("decision maker elders"), and *huursanii dubbachuu*, ("mass talk") that emanates from public sanction applies to *fixa gumaa* only.

In resolving disputes the red handed disputants either tell the reason behind their quarrel or prefer some reservations if it seems confidential. The elder asks both parties for the case to be handled by him or through other levels mentioned above. The quarreled either say you yourself could resolve it or respond *biyya waliin nuu argi*, ("you add some community elders and see it together"). At this spot, he would tell them the day on which he comes back accompanied by other elders he sends envoy to, take an appointment and part from the dealings sooner *buna dhaabuu*, ("coffee ceremonial invitation") expected to be held in the home of one of the disputants, mostly the elder, and in some of the cases any one of the neighbors they did not quarrel with is over.

On the appointment day, he arrives together with some two or three elders if it is the case to be dealt with by *jaarsa qe'ee*. If the case is a bit serious the elder leads it to *jaarsa biyyaa* and gives them the chance to nominate some two or three reputed *jaarsa*, ("elders") from each lineage. They prefer to meet under *Odaa*, ("sycamore") or *xaddacha*, ("acacia") trees. These trees are preferred because they are considered as *Arsii* forefathers' gathering places. They have shades, a symbol of generational expansion and continuity and temperate area surrounded by fresh grass they badly need for ritual. But, nobody thinks the more the number of elders the more the solution. One of my informants from *Kanshee* lineage said, "*Guddateef birbirsi cidha hinbaasu!*" ("Podocarpus' hugeness does not mean suffices for ritual entertainment"). This means that limited reputed number of orator individuals who know *seera Oromo*, developed some knowledge of reconciliation and respected by their rational thinking could do a lot than a big crowd of those who lack all these.

Tuden (1966: 172) noted that mediators are not necessarily old or rich men but the ones respected for their disinterested attitudes, intelligence, concern and willingness to devote the necessary hours. Among *Utaa-Waayyu* age limit is a mandatory precondition. People, approximately below their early fifties, could not be included in the *jaarsa qe'ee* and levels above that. They are considered less experienced, not adequately matured to make rational decisions and need more assistance to materialize *seera Oromo*. Besides, no elder shows less willingness and sorrow for the time they devote to reconcile people. Conflicts arising even between two fellows are considered *dhimma ambaa*, ("community's affair") and not looked down upon as an individual matter. Therefore, each elder asked to litigate such a case takes it as his own personal problem

and devotes whatever time needed. There are, therefore, times at which the elder cancels pre-arranged programs of his own and sits for resolution. If he has any crucial problem that harms his life, he will appeal to the council of elders and get permission than abstaining from the settlement.

Hence, as I have attempted to note, keeping the whole community's peace is not the sole responsibility of Waata. Abbaa Gadaas, Qaalluu and any other passer-by elders of the community are all responsible to do it. One of my Abbaa Gadaa informants mentioned that if any Abbaa Gadaa comes across people who fight one another, he approaches them and asks why they are quarreling. They immediately talk to one another by saying *nama ambaatu dhufe*, ("community leader comes") and then stop fighting. This respect emanates from two major reasons: one, Gadaa is a valued governing institution that is led by Abbaa Gadaas who materialize the *seera Oromo*, ("Oromo law,"). Second; elders are well experienced, knowledgeable and rational fellows who could treat problems accordingly; third, as Bartels (1983: 229) noted, *nagaa Oromo* – peace of the Oromo is protected. Here, Waata's case is a bit different. It is believed that God delegated the authority to prevent quarrels and resolve misunderstandings mainly to Waata. Even Qaalluu's authority is more of seeking solutions to the already happened problems through *Ayyaana*, and or digging out confidential reasons behind skirmishes and forecasting what would happen in the future through *raaga*, ("forecasting"). Therefore, authority for immediate stoppage of conflict is vested on Waata followed by Abbaa Gadaa and Qaalluu and other lineage elders.

Finally, there is one major thing that one of my Abbaa Gadaa informants noted. At this very juncture, there are as such very limited elders who are keeping the continuity of their forefathers Gadaa culture. In contemporary Arsii society the so called elders are bringing about changes that could harm *seera Oromo* that sustained societal integration. Some people might be irrational, may not treat people in equal terms, or they might be without adequate knowledge of *seera Oromo*, they may mix up traditional and customary ways of life, and may not be fearful of Waaqa's wrath.

4.3. Gumaa and Gumfakkii Defined

Among Arsii Oromo there are two kinds of cases that need to be reconciled and compensated in accordance to the customary laws of the Gadaa institution. The first one is the case in which people murder each other or commit acute cases that seriously harm the physicality of a person and interrupts his working capacity but reconciled through recompense. Such cases are categorized under *gumaa*. Knutsson (1967: 128) defined *gumaa* in his study on Matcha Oromo as 'reconciliation after homicide carried out by two

parties under the supervision of a gula and a Qaalluu.' The second one is the case that is the creation of harms on others but not as serious as *gumaa* and locally called *gumfakkii*, ("murder like").

4.3.1. *Gumaa* or *Gumaa Galoo* Ritual: In egalitarian Oromo Gadaa Institution's Seera Oromo in general and Gadaa Arsii in particular matters classified as *gumaa* are distinctly listed. For instance, *lubbuu* ("soul"), *gubaa*, ("firing out ones residential building"), *ilkaan cabsuu*, ("pulling out teeth"), *ija jaamsuu*, ("putting some one out of sight"), *ijoollee ibidda biratti badde*, ("children who were left around fire and lost their life"), *haftittiin*, ("raping unmarried older virgin girl"), *miila muruu*, ("amputating ones legs"), *harka muruu*, ("amputating ones hands"), *quba harkaafi miilaa muruu*, ("amputating ones hands and legs fingers"), and other similar ones are categorized as *gumaa*.

For example, among all other things, on the basis of the data collected from my key informants interview, let us discuss how *gumaa qubaa*, ("reconciliation of amputated fingers") is treated. Except one all of the fingers have their own names. They are called *abbuddicha*, ("thumb"), *arraabbicha*, ("forefinger"), *mooticha*, ("middle finger"), *moggicha*, ("little finger") and the fifth one (ring finger) has no name among Arsii. The one who amputates any one of the aforementioned fingers except the ring finger should be fined to pay five heads of cattle each. The unnamed finger has no *gumaa*. My informants mentioned that compensations are not claimed for nameless elements. Clearing of such blood feud cases has its own proscribed procedure that would thoroughly be discussed next.

4.3.2. The *Gumfakkii* Ritual: In Oromo Gadaa Institution, as I have stated above, there are cases in which individuals or groups would be harmed but their cases could not be considered *gumaa*. According to customary Gadaa rules and regulations such cases are categorized as *gumfakkii (seera)*. It means they need not to be treated and claimed in accordance to the rules of blood feud compensation which are more serious.

4.3.2.1. General: The *seera* includes crimes committed against *golga* ("bed rooms"), *korma*, ("bull/heifer"), *malkaa*, ("river basins"), *karaa*, ("roads"), *gabaa*, ("markets"), *bitimaa*, ("kraal bolt"), *fe'umaa*, ("strap of leather used in fastening a load"), *geejiba*, ("materials used for transportation"), *dhaltii*, ("cows"), *qanafaa*, ("decorated leather forehead band"), *mutaa*, ("plaiting bodkin"), *lafee namaa cabsuu*, ("breaking someone's bone"), and others are all categorized as *gumaa* or *gumfakkii*. Hurting someone's bone does not mean crime committed against single individual. It is locally called *dugugguruu ambaa cabse*, ("he hurt the back bone of the clan"). So, the one who hurts someone's hand or hands, leg or legs without harming his eye or eyes, without pulling out his tooth or teeth is considered hurt the bone of the whole society that is believed

to serve societal integration. Culprits who commit such crime are going to be penalized by the compensation of five to seven heads of cattle depending upon the seriousness of the criminality. In the society, left hand is more valued than the right hand. Among Arsii left hand is considered as a peaceful one that defends the individual against attack than harming in the way right hand does. Others also argue that, at his old age, senile man who sleeps with his old wife holds her in his right arms and uses his left hand to insert his male organ into her female genital. Otherwise, it is believed that, she undermines him of incapability of erection. Therefore, penalty of the left hand surpasses.

Similarly, the criminal who gets into somebody's house so as to loot, involve in vagabonds activity of robbery or lifting is considered not only thief but also enemy of the whole members of the Arsii clan. Elders unveil that Arsii does not open his fellow neighbors' *karraafi bitimaa*, ("kraal and bolt"). Looting of properties found in market areas or during peoples journey towards market is unlawful.

The one who enters into *golga*, ("bed room") is considered normless or mannerless. It is considered an action against couple's dignity and assumed to interrupt continuity of that specific lineage. By the same token, thefts made against *malkaa*, ("Specific River bed area assigned for rituals") are also well thought-out illegal acts. The one who involve himself in such activities, without any knowledge of the *ambaa*, ("local council") gets penalized. He is obliged to pay five heads of cattle that Utaa-Waayyuu customary law orders. Keeping this in mind let us have a look at another crucial *gumfakkii*, burning home.

4.3.2.2. Burning the Residential Home: Arsii say house is *shafaxa*, ("holds various confidential things in it"). There could be a lot of things that one finds in the home of a person. Materials, living organisms, artifacts and household furniture: *utubaa*, *gulantaa*, *dhakaa*, *fe'imaa*, *mutaa*, *Qanafaa*, *raammoo*, *lukkuu*, (hen") are assumed to be found in the room before the fire was set on and should all be compensated in accordance to *seera*. They all are calculated seven cattle each. But, these and all other burnt out living bodies or materials cost need not exceed fifty heads of cattle in which the whole is considered *gumaa*.

For that matter house is constructed through one of the indigenous self help organizations called *daboo* by the whole members of the society, *ambaa*. Individuals who reside in the house are also members of the *ambaa*. So, one of the artifacts that symbolizes the existence of *ambaa* should mean intending to disintegrate societal existence. Further arguing on house, the Arsii say that humans have two tombs. One of them is the one from which people come out daily while the other is the one from which no one comes out, house and tomb on grave. Hence, no one is allowed or it is immoral and unlawful to burn area where people hide themselves.

Why materials found in the living home have *gumaa* has its own symbolic meanings. If we discuss some of them we could describe them as: *utubaa* is the pillar that holds up the roof of the house of the *ambaa* from the centre. *Arsii* houses are constructed in such a way that the highest peak of the ceiling is situated in the central position, the pillar is by far huger and longer than all other woods used for construction, all traditional huts are round shaped, walls are mud-thatched, roofs are covered by *caffee*, ("lush meadow"). *Abbaa warraa*, ("husband") is mostly represented by *utubaa manaa*. Both the household head man and the pillar are supposed to hold the house up. As the house does not stand up without its pillar, the household could not sustain with the absence of its breadwinner head. It is due to such a reason that the huge chair of the husband is mostly situated under the pillar. Except him no household member is allowed to sit on. Hence, the burning up of *utubaa* is equated with the death of the breadwinner household head, bad luck, and demolition of the whole life of the family.

Golga is another area that symbolizes not the simple cohabitation that is accustomed among Europeans or the simple room in which beds of the young boys or girls are found. In *golga* couples meet in the night or sleep in beds only at times they need or obliged to do so. *Golga* symbolizes socially accepted, culturally valued and customarily approved and legalized marriage relation. It is also a respectful area where mandated couples process ways of keeping the continuity of the generation. Therefore, it is an area where entry is strictly forbidden except authorized couples or begot children. Not sleeping in the bed but sitting on the sides of the bed is a taboo not only for non relatives but for close relatives, too. Anybody, who performs such unlawful activity, need to be punished. Giving more emphasis to *golga* there are various sayings among *Arsii* out of which *gola keessa golgaan jira*, ("there is a secret (bed) room within the inner room").

Dhakaa, a stone used as a grinding mill is also considered one of the sources of the family life. Without a mill grinding of grains food is unthinkable. Such a stone is symbolized as the major source of food items, demolishing of the stone mill could also be further defined as contributing to harming the continuity of the generation. Children who could not stay without food for days face the problem of hunger and adequate food. So, burning the flat lava stones used for grinding found in the living home means being a culprit that harms a lot of people and endangers the very existence of all clan members.

Fe'ima is another very crucial symbolic material. It is using this material that pack animals are loaded and unloaded. It is associated with transportation, bartering or exchange, social interaction of visiting relatives who are found far away, and helping one another at the time of food shortages or famine, and so on.

Hence, loss of such a material means just like the above mentioned ones, associated with the life of the community members.

The forefathers of the Oromo society render due attention to artifact called *mutaa*. Without *mutaa* it was very difficult to sew saddles badly needed during war time. Prior to the invention of sewing machine people had used to sew their clothes using *mutaa*. My informant noted the meaning attached to *mutaa* by saying, *mutaan ambaaf hodhiti*, ("plaiting bodkin is used to sew for the entire community"). Therefore, loss of the rare *mutaa* diminishes its number and thereby contributes to harm that disturbs proper functioning of the clan. Parallel to this, as I treat hear under, there is *gumfakkii* in creating marriage alliance.

4.3.2.3. Obligations of Affinal Relations: There are different types of marriages. Among them *adda baanaa*, ("literally separation") is the one. On the *adda baanaa* day the girl's father do not say I have never sold you her teeth, eye, hands, and/ or legs. There is a traditionally recognized wedding day on which her father, mother and close relatives altogether say and bless both couples in sending them to patrilocal residence.

On the day of resolution, the wedding day, on the day of *buna qalaa*, ("delicious toasted coffee mixed with butter"), on the occasion of transferring *geegawoo*, ("bride price"), on *gaanyaa galgalaa*, ("the bride and groom make first sexual contact"), on *gaafa wayyaa dachaa*, ("day on which the traditional costume is handed over"), on the day of *dachaafata*, ("regretted begs excuse") they bless in the following manner and hand the girl over.

<i>Faatee rabbi sii dhaga'i</i>	...	<i>dhaga'i Waaq;</i>
<i>Kan dageette nagaan 'oolchi</i>	...	<i>'oolchi Waaq;</i>
<i>Kan 'oolchite nagaan bulchi</i>	...	<i>bulchi Waaq;</i>
<i>Kan cammeessaa 'oolchi</i>	...	<i>'oolchi Waaq;</i>
<i>Soddaa maanyaaf godhi</i>	...	<i>godhi Waaq;</i>
<i>Harka walqabate kana addaan</i>		
<i>hinbaasin</i>	...	<i>hinbaasin Waaq;</i>
<i>buna kana kan ilmaaf intalaa</i>		
<i>godhi</i>	...	<i>godhi Waaq;</i>
<i>Kan durbii karaa adeemtuu godhi</i>	...	<i>godhi Waaq;</i>
<i>Gosa kiyya kan haadha isaaf</i>		
<i>dhaltu kana ol ar'ii bulchi</i>	...	<i>bulchi Waaq;</i>
<i>Haadha ishii sana bulchi</i>	...	<i>bulchi Waaq.</i>

Its literally meaning is:

<i>Hear our praying God</i>	...	<i>Hear it God;</i>
<i>Enable hearers pass the day peacefully</i>	...	<i>God enable pass them peacefully;</i>
<i>Enable hearers pass the night peacefully</i>	...	<i>Enable them pass peacefully;</i>
<i>Enable them get happy</i>	...	<i>Enable them happy;</i>
<i>Enable us get better father-in-law</i>	...	<i>Enable us God;</i>
<i>You do not separate those who hold</i> <i>Each hand in hand</i>	...	<i>You do not separate God;</i>
<i>Make this coffee that of the couples</i>	...	<i>Make it God;</i>
<i>Make it for which the girl makes journey</i>	...	<i>Make it God;</i>
<i>Keep in your own home my kin that gives</i> <i>birth to your mother</i>	...	<i>Keep her God;</i>
<i>Enable her mother-in-law live longer life</i>	...	<i>Enable her live God.</i>

This blessing is of good will for couples. After blessing in such a way he adds some reminders of the customary law and the root causes of some conflicts that could lead them to disputes by saying, according to the words of informants interviewed: *Waan Arsiin ambifatu ambifadhe; ijaafi ilkaan sitti hin gurgurre, naa laalladhu; gaafa ilkaanni cabe gumaa warraati, gaafa intalli duute gumaa warraati hubadhu*, ("I have already kept for myself what Arsii do not give to others; I have not sold you her teeth and eyes; have a look at her please. On the day you harm her eye or eyes sight or kill her it is our *gumaa* ("you are going to be punished according to gumaa customary rules").

Therefore, materialization of harmful traditional practices that would entail loss of parts of body, curtailment of her normal life style and/or murder would lead to *gumaa* ritual. Under bitter conditions even retaliation would follow. Here we understand that Oromo rule or Arsii rule in particular forbids the manifestation of harmful traditional practices. But, today some of the Arsii are violating this traditional rule and taking harsh and extremely agonizing measures on women and their children. They rape lily children, amputate and sometimes kill them. But, recompense for assassinated female is half less than that of male. As I noted above, one who murders a man pays one hundred heads of cattle but that of female is only fifty. This is due to the fact that Arsii believe killing of men is dismantling the home of *ambaa*, creates loss of breadwinner, interrupts continuity of the generation and leaves the society without leaders and/or inheritors. For this reason, Arsii say *dubartiin kan alagaati* ("women are of non relatives"). This saying implies that they move away to build others *ambaa* and loosing women does affect their husbands' lineage than their parents'.

4.3.2.4. Widow Inheritance in Relation to *Gumaa*: Elders I interviewed from Utaa-Waayyuu sub-moiety noted that marriage and death are *seera*. Hence, the one whose elder brother died has full right to inherit his brother's wife. One of my informants said, *nikaa itti hidhatee bulcha*, ("he administers her through attaching what is traditionally called *nikaa*, valued marriage contract). It is only and if only the inheritor hates her, says I do not want to live with her or shows some dissatisfaction, the next younger brother is recruited for inheritance.

The widow has no right at all to react against or refuse the inheritance. This is due to the fact that any member of the lineage groups' wife is lineage's wife. Therefore, she is obliged to be abided by the lineage's laws than her own will and aspirations. Her views are mostly considered her parents' lineage's notion which is alien to Utaa-Waayyuu. If, in case, she says, "let me tell you my preference, I do not want to marry his younger brother, or any other," she would be forced to either live with her children without any husband or else go back to her village of birth. Nowadays, this case is showing some changes. Women have begun refusing such decisions and started to be inherited on the basis of their own good will (see Ayehu 2001). But, homicidal crimes related to women's refusal and/or inclination to marry some other persons' would be categorized *gumfakkii* and its fine reaches at least five heads of cattle.

Parallel to this, in old days the mourning ritual of widowed women lasts for almost three years. Later on this is lessened to two and today to one year because of its agonizing consequences. It is not cultural to marry *niiitii gufufaan jirtu*, ("the unclean one in a mourning situation"). A person who inherits such a distressed woman found in mourning ritual is accused of committing *gumfakkii*. He is obliged to pay seven heads of cattle in the form of fine. Not only paying this amount but also ordered to make divorce. Then the transfer of a woman to the right person, brother-in-law would take place.

In a similar fashion, making sexual contact with one's wife found in a child bed and have not yet completed it is considered criminal act of *gumfakkii*. *Sun seera ambaa osoo hin ta'in seera dhaheessa ambaati*, ("that is not the rule of the community but rather the rule on those who deviate from norms"). This is also similar to the case of a woman found in her grief ritual. Such criminals are fined to pay five heads of cattle.

4.4. The Role of Bokkuu and Waata in *Gumaa Galoo*

The term *gumaa galoo* is a combined word derived from two Oromo terms called *gumaa* and *galoo*. *Gumaa*, as stated earlier, has the meaning of 'compensation for conflicts of blood feud' and *galoo*, in turn, derived from the root word *galaafachuu*, ("assassinating"). Therefore, *gumaa galoo* is translated as 'recompense for conflicts arising out of murder.' It is an alternate term for *fixa gumaa*.

If *Arsii* kills *Arsii* *Waata* keeps the criminal in jail. It is locally called *ona galtii goda galti*, ("imprisoned in an empty room"). Then the chief of chiefs of the *Gadaa* institution, *Bokkuu*, releases him out of prison through the local process called *goda/ onaa baasa*. The criminal is expected to fulfill *Gadaa sodda qaba*, ("Gadaa has burial reward") and *Waata cabbii qaba*, ("Waata has shaving reward").

"... The *Semai* of Malaysia appeal to their headman for the mediation of interpersonal conflicts, and all involved parties and their kin come together to talk about the dispute until all negative feelings have been aired and a resolution reached (Levinson & Ember 1996: 238). Among *Utaa – Waayyu*, as soon as the information is disclosed to *Gadaa*, he calls upon *Waata* and says *arsoomsi*, make him *Arsii*, which means shave the hair found all over his body and imprison him. On such occasion, it is the right of the *Waata* to confiscate all materials the criminal possessed at the time of the criminal act. For instance, the clothes the murderer wore, the spear or any other ammunition he used, including whatever he holds either to sell or exchange with someone need to be transferred to the *Waata* man. Besides, it is said and supposed that any *Arsii* who would come across the assassinator before being seen and confiscated by *Waata* face the health problem of leprosy. Therefore, the murderer runs to see either *Waata* or *Bokkuu* and if he comes across *Bokkuu*, he will send the criminal to *Waata*.

After the completion of *irraa baasuu*, ("clearing the blood") the *Waata* man leads back the case to *Bokkuu*. *Bokkuu* asks the *Waata* whether he has accomplished the whole prerequisite or not. After getting the required response from the *Waata*, *Bokkuu*, in turn, arranges extraordinary meeting of the *Gadaa* institution and the next step would follow if only *Waata* responds accordingly. Under normal conditions *Bokkuu* leads the assembly and reaches decision in the following customary procedural way of passing resolutions.

<i>Gadaa sodda qaba</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Waataa cabbii qaba</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Amma arsoomeeraa</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Amma gumaa saa ni fixataa</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>

Najala jiraa --- muramte;
 Hindarbatan jedhaa --- muramte;
 Hinguban jedhaa --- muramte;
 Hinmuran jedhaa --- muramte;
 Shanan Arsii itti ergaa --- muramte;
 Warra ajjeefataa sanitti --- muramte;
 Gadaa sodda qabaa,

Waataa cabbii qabaa,

Dhiheessaa Gadaatii,

Dhibbaan sirraa fixaa,

Jedhee itti ergaa --- muramte;

Oggaa kana warri sun illee in caqasa

Amma reebuu sitti hin jiru,

Waraanuu sitti hinjiru,

Jedhee itti himaa --- muramte.

Its literally meaning is:

Gadaa needs compensation for burial --- decided;

Waata needs compensation for shaving --- decided;

Now he is under the control of Arsii --- decided;

Now he is going to compensate for the blood feud --- decided;

He is under my control --- decided;

They will not throw anything --- decided;

They will not burn anything --- decided;

They will not cut any --- decided;

I will send them the five Arsii --- decided;

To the murderers --- decided;

Gadaa has burial compensation,

Waata has shaving compensation,

He runs away to Gadaa,

I will send an envoy that he should compensate

by paying hundred heads of cattle, --- decided.

Victims attentively follow all these processes and Bokkuu orders them:

Now on you should not hit and you should not take

any offensive measure --- decided.

It is only if all these sequential procedures are fully fulfilled that the victimized lineage members consider the case is properly dealt with and expect to end up with sounding results. First of all, Bokkuu orders lineage members of the murderer to hand over *korma awwaalaa*, ("bull of the burial") and *wayyaa awwaalaa*, (burial clothe"). It is after recognizing his submissiveness that the culprit is expected to renounce. He presents three heads of cattle to the victim group in the name of *ija dhiigaa*, ("eyes of the blood"). These three cattle are expected to be *qanani'aa*, ("well fed"). The remaining cattle population is transferred in the name of *gumaa*. The offender is not expected to transfer the total 103 heads of cattle at once. His lineage group's capacity is taken into consideration and is expected to be handed over within one or some more months. This is a day on which appointment is made for the *guyyaafi buyyaa* ("ceremonial day"). For the day of the final *gumaa* ritual the assassinator and his lineage members brew hydromel, cut vernonia microcephala, bitter testing leaf is shook out, black sheep, milking cow, old cattle, the three heavy cotton blanket and others should get readily available.

The next step would be the murderer's slaughtering of a black sheep and chopping it down without anybody's help. Black symbolizes wishes of stabilizing the murder in the name of Waaqa, good luck, brighter future and expression of sky God. Then the assassin is expected to pull out its lung, puts *mitoo*, ("spacing head") and *bitoo diimtuu*, ("red bracelet") on the belly of the slaughtered animal and then rubs his eyes with it. Pulling out lung shows the assassin no more breaths in the way he did at the time of killing and forgives anger. The bracelet is red to show that they are dealing with a case of spilled blood which would never be repeated, no more throwing spear or any other harming material that spills blood in the same way while the head and bracelet represents inquest of transfer to peace and alliance. Rubbing of eyes is again associated with clearing the criminality observed through murder and wish to see each other as relatives. Then, together with his lineage members, he stands turning his face back. Again, in turn, a younger brother of the deceased or any one selected and the victimized group members follow activities of the assassin and perform the same thing to show that they have already accepted what it symbolized. Now this is a stage in which they are all expected to step over the dead body to show the transition. Never the less, eating the meat of this animal is a taboo. Its skin is also thrown away as useless. It is locally said *halaalatu nyaata*, ("hyenas would eat"). From the insiders (*emic*) perspective it is believed that all evils and sin are transferred to the animal and eating of its flesh would bring back the evil spirit that led the two group members to criminality.

After doing all these, the accuser and accused accompanied by their lineage members, move towards the kraal. They need to cover their head with shawl to show that they have not completed the process, knot

dibicha keeraa, ("old cattle") at the gate to symbolize as (Bartels 1983: 235) noted to show that the killer is as weak as an animal of lower value, present hydromel that stands for replacement of bad odor by aroma, bring *heebicha*, ("*vernonia microcephala*") and hold *heexoo*, ("leaf of a plant that has bitter tasting") to show the past hatred that needs to be put back. Women stand at two extremes without having a look at their 'enemy.' They are yet obliged to uncover their head shawl. Then these women mix the *heexoo* with hydromel and sprinkle over the crowd. It is only after this step that both groups mix. They touch the back of the bull, they are ordered to sit down facing one another, see each other for the first time since the assassination, remove the shawl coverage, rub their faces with their own clothes and finally sit down when they are ordered to do so. Sooner than they sit down Bokkuu slaughters *dullacha keeraa*. They extract intestine of the cattle, stretch it and knot the two right hand thumbs (the body part actively involved in murdering) of the murderer and brother of the murdered or his uncle. Then the Bokkuu says:

<i>Kan somba daalachaati</i>		
<i>Kan hoolaa gurraachaati</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Ati garaafi gara, ka bitooti</i>		
<i>Fuuti marti kan guyyaa heexooti</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Guyyaa heebichi cabe</i>		
<i>Ammaa amma haraarmteettaa</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Ati armaa, ati dhiigaa</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Garaa Oromo dhiigaa jedheeraa</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Lamuu ija keessa walin laaltuu</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Lamuu ati waan wal kadhattellee</i>		
<i>Wal hin dhoggattuu</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Harmaafi garaa</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Garaafi 'aannanii</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Ati dudda duuba taataa</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Achi garaafi dharraa taataa</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Wayyaa tokkicha uffattee,</i>		
<i>Harma taatee bultee,</i>		
<i>Nyaattee dhuddaa jedhee muraa</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Seera murtii ambaatii</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>
<i>Fudhanne jedhani</i>	---	<i>muramte;</i>

Its literally meaning is:

<i>It is that of light white's lung of black sheep</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>You trust one another,</i>		

<i>Marriage is of the heexoo day</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>The day on which heebicha is cut</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>We reconciled you now</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>You are the breast</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>You are the blood</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>I say you are from the womb of Oromo</i>		
<i>related by blood</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>You never stare at one another</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>You never deny what you beg one another</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>You are breast and stomach</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>Stomach and milk</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>You need to stand from the back</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>You become stomach and need</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>You wear the same clothe</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>Live together as breast</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>I decide you eat and drink together</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>This decision is of the community</i>	---	<i>decided;</i>
<i>They said we accept it</i>	---	<i>decided.</i>

Next to this decision Bokkuu separates the assassin and brother of the murdered by cutting the knotted intestine if they are from different lineages or unknot if they are from the same.

After doing all these, the communitas altogether eat *gumaa foonii*,* ("hunk meat chopped into pieces,"), drink whatever prepared for this ritual and shake hands. They wake up early in the morning and cut meat into small strips, separate parcels of meat among the executioner. Then murdered and assassin eat from the dishes of each other. Then on they act as the same hand, they will not retaliate, they will not react confidentially, they salute each other whenever they pass by, they feel shy on contacts as one of the marks of respect, they borrow materials from each other while needed, help each other on hardships, and totally respect one another.

This is the end point at which peace is restored and social interaction regenerates. In Gulliver (1979: 168-9) terms the outcome of the dispute leads to reconciliation and the restoration of a social harmony considered

* the very phrase from which the term *gumaa* is derived

to be the ideal condition for human beings. So much so that, the very term dispute settlement carries connotations that matters at issue have been dealt with and will no longer disturb normal relationships (Caplan 1995: 66).

On the other hand, if any Waata assassinates any other non despised person from Arsii lineages, shaving will not be conducted. Waata lineage of the assassinator gives cattle, sprinkles hydromel, to create reconciliations and then departs. No ritual is expected in the absence of one of the leaders. Elders note that Waata's killing of other non-marginalized Arsii happens in very rare cases and many argue that it is almost non-existent. This is because of the fact that Arsii believe Waaqa ordered Waata not to spill Arsii's blood.

Parallel to this, if Arsii kills any Waata, no hair shaving takes place. The recompense of the blood feud would be accomplished in the same manner to that of the Waata. Again, no Arsii is allowed to tip out blood of the Waata let alone through murder but in any other way.

If Waata kills another Waata, the despised group of tanners called Cawwaa shaves but has no right of leading ritual because it is fully despised. Here no need of gumaa ritual except making some minor recompense through negotiation and reconciliation. Waata community members assert that such a crime could never take place and taken as a catastrophe and wrath of the vexed Waaqa if it happens. They argue that this law was made for the sake of solving problems that could happen all of a sudden.

In case of Cawwaa's killing of each other the impotent group called 'Bukkee' has the sole responsibility of shaving. Again, the compensation and reconciliation would be conducted through mediation of their own Cawwaa elders.

Lastly, in the case of 'Bukkee's' homicidal act of another 'Bukkee' hair shaving is banned. They locally call *hoolaa gurraattii gufuutti diranii hobolaan (halaalli)* nyaata, ("the black sheep would be tangled on a stumbling block in the name of recompense and hyena eats it"). Here shows that 'Bukkee' is the highly despised of all other marginalized minorities.

4.5. Indigenous Gumaa versus Formal Legal Institutions: among Oromo in general and Arsii in particular the contribution of indigenous Gumaa institution has been tantamount in resolving disputes. This institution has a contribution of clearing the blood feud conflicts on sustainable basis. It is ritualistic, customary law as well as religious focused, conducted on the will of both the claimant and defendant, the issue is societal than individual and free from bias, partiality, corruption, negligence, sanction and self

interest. '... if the parties to a dispute dealt with at *araara* ("arbitration") are unwilling to settle according to the recommendations of the mediators, there are no sanctions available other than those of negative public opinion (Taddese 1989: 674)

Parallel to this, activities of the formal legal institutions like government courts stand negative to the indigenous ones. Death sentences, life long imprisonment and fines could not resolve homicidal cases on sustainable basis. The existing laws, according to the words of some professionals in the area, penal codes and procedures functioning in our country are, according to the words of my informants in the area, blue prints of the developed countries like France and England. While drafting these laws due emphasis was not given to indigenous local cultures. The contribution of knowledgeable and well trained professionals who need to participate on multi-sectoral basis was also minimal. For instance, in the 1992 constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Article 91 Sub-Article 1 it is noted that 'Government shall have the duty to support, on the basis of equality, the growth and enrichment of cultures and traditions. ...' (FDRE 1995). But, according to professionals from law I interviewed, the article on peoples' culture is impractical because of its vagueness. This constitution gives recognition to customary religious courts like Qaadii, ("Sheria Court") which was existent before but not to Gumaa institution that had not got such a recognition before the new Constitution. Anyhow, Article 78 Sub-Article 5 discloses:

'pursuant to Sub-Article 5 of Article 34 the House of Peoples' Representatives and State Councils can establish or give official recognition to religious and customary courts that had state recognition and functioned prior to the adoption of the Constitution shall be organized on the basis of recognition accorded to them by this Constitution (ibid).

It states that regions have full right to draft their own constitution, some of the laws, and rules on the basis of the Federal Government's Constitution, laws and rules. But, openly observable veracity is that regional governments directly translated the Federal ones than making modifications of their own. For instance, keeping all other things constant, exemplifying the recently promulgated Oromia Family Law which is the exact translation of the Federal Government suffices.

The other reality behind the defects of the legal courts is that they are institutions which were established to deal with criminal cases. They impose articles written on penal codes than playing mandatory role or emphasizing on reconciliations. Similarly, courts and indigenous conflict resolving institutions have no joint activity except their limited relation with community elders in dealing with family disintegration and other minor cases. Even that is based on free wills of judges, some exceptional cases non related to crime and undefined or non systematized relation. Otherwise, it is legally proscribed to jointly seek solutions to homicidal cases together with local chiefs in charge of *fixa gumaa*. It seems this is the negation of

protection of indigenous cultures stated above and strengthening the one proclaimed under Article 78 Sub-Article 1 that reads 'judicial powers, both at Federal and State levels, are vested in the courts (ibid.)

More specifically, Waata's power and customary authority is denied by formal legal institutions. As I have attempted to explain earlier Waata are customary policemen who imprison culprits. But, I actually observed that the FKA officials appealed the case of burnt house to district police ignoring the indigenous local culture of mediation lead by Bokkuu and Waata. For the time being kebele officials have tried to keep the suspected criminals under close supervision of the local militia men the officials recruited than the customary Waata. People rejected systematically and local chiefs repeatedly asked the FKA and district administration to treat the case from indigenous culture point of view. This implies that actions against culture seem difficult to resolve and lack of coordination and integration of the two institutions aggravate the situation than bringing about peace and reconciliation. Nevertheless, Government officials overlooked their inquisition and the problem stayed unsolved.

One of the government officials I interviewed from the legal formal institution noted that they hear some rumors on which homicidal cases are customarily resolved by the general public through reconciliation. He further noted that unless some claimant visits courts and accuses the culprit they do not do anything and the hidden practicality of culture would continue. But, if they appeal to legal institutions, professionals will treat the case according to penal code articles and make decisions. In such cases regression or elderly cultural activities do not serve anything. According to the words of the Legal Department Head of Adaamii Tulluu Jiddoo Kombolchaa Zone, socio-cultural dispute settlement endeavors might help them live peacefully, create mutual understanding, and enable them coexist without vengeance.

On the other hand, lawyers disclosed that the formal legal institutions' laws, penal codes, rules, regulations and procedures functioning now need some modifications. Thorough investigation through the so called multi-disciplinary approach needs to be applied. Such more practical experiences are, in the words of professionals in the area, materialized in developed countries like United States and are bringing about exemplary results. Forces should only be used as a last option than serving as a preliminary measure. It is on the basis of such an experience sharing that, as came across, the EPRDF Government has started doing research on the area under discussion. National scholars nominated from respective disciplines like law, sociology, social anthropology and so forth are collecting, analyzing and interpreting data so as to arrive at sounding findings that could probably seek solutions to aforementioned social problems of the family and thereby society in general. This seems a sound way to materialize Article 34 Sub-Article 3 that

reads 'the family is the natural and fundamental unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state (ibid: 11).

Due to hidden misunderstandings prevailing between customary dispute settlement and formal legal institutions and other similar reasons I have attempted to discuss above some cases I would like to argue under remain unresolved.

4.6. The Unresolved *Gumaa Galoo*: According to customary practice of the Arsii Gadaa institutions, not only the ordinary members of the society, but also Abbaa Gadaas themselves are entitled to pay compensations of blood feud in the case of their killings of other members of the society.

One of my Key informants told me that among Kanshee one of the sons of Abbaa Gadaas killed some other Abbaa Gadaa's son and refused to settle the dispute through *fixa gumaa*. This case is mentioned in the words of the murdered son's father as:

Case 6:

Kan amma Abbaa Gadaati jettanii dubbattan kunniin mucaa kiyya kan barate asuma Caffaa Guutaatti waamee ajjeese. Haaddatuu didee akkasittiin dhiiga isaatiin taa'a. Mana Murtiittan iyyadha jennaan bitti yaa'ee na dhorge. Gadaan ambuma qofa haada taanaan biyyan baha jennaanis qabanii na dhoggani.

Its literally meaning is:

The one you are calling Abbaa Gadaa assassinated an educated son of mine calling him out here at Caffaa Guutaa locality. He refused to shave and still living together with the sin of blood. I have attempted to take the case to Government court but large crowd of the community went up and prevented me from doing so. Additionally, I said, if Gadaa shaves the community members only and do not get shaved, I will rather prefer to migrate. Again, the community members hindered me.

This implies that the community members are waiting for customary response of the assassinator for long. Had it been in old days, they would have forced him to do so. If he is unwilling, they will apply the cultural *awwaar kaasa* method of chasing him away. Asmarom (1973: 90) noted that 'no Borana is allowed to spill the blood of an Abba Gada' and Arsii added no Abbaa Gadaa is allowed to spill any of the Arsii's blood. They included a law is applicable on all members of the society regardless of social status. Today, *awwaar kaasa* could not be applied due to formal legal law. This victim is not applying the case to the formal legal institutions because he wants to resolve through *fixa gumaa*. The public at large also feel that the problem could not get final solution of recreation except the imprisonment of the criminal that could generate continuous revenge. Therefore, lack of coordination between the customary way of life and formal legal

institutions and fixa gumaa's lack of recognition left the murderer unasked. This would also be cited as harming 'seedling' which could bear 'poisonous' grain that would manifest the possibility of taking souls of a lot of people.

V. Reflections on Cases vis-à-vis Theory

5.1. Gadaa Utaa – Waayyuu: Functionally Analyzed: The term function may be defined as any condition, any state of affairs, and resultant from the operation ...' (Sills et. al. 1968). As mentioned in chapter one, functionalists stated three different definitions of function. Their first definition tells us about an interconnection between customs. From the Oromo Gadaa institution's point of view in general, and Gadaa Utaa-Waayyuu in particular, at times, the leadership position is held by the Gadaa class and two ritual leaders (Qaalluu and Waata) who support the Bokkuu. There are interwoven customary activities that these entities are authorized to lead and actively participate in.

The Bokkuu is an elected leader who stays in the Gadaa office for consecutive eight years. In these years, he is entitled to perform all administrative activities out of which dispute settlement is one of the major ones. In resolving disputes he calls on extraordinary meeting of the Gadaa assembly locally called *bahima bahuu*. He reaches consensus with Gadaa leaders, they make decisions and he leads the *fixa gumaa* ritual from its starting point up to the end. But, Bokkuu does not do anything without being anointed by the Qaalluu right from being elected. He does not call for assembly without the *cabbii cabsa* custom of *fixa gumaa* ritual being completed by Waata, Cawwaa, Badii, or Bukkee, before indulging oneself into the whole process of dispute settlement. Besides, before on set of *fixa gumaa* ritual, the customary police need to confiscate costumes and materials the assassinator used for murder. Again, on assembly, the Bokkuu does not lead any of the decision making processes without holding *alangee* made by Waata. His slaughtering of *dullacha keeraa* is also meaningless without Waata's slaughtering of black sheep and vice versa. The Qaalluu and Waata, two sides of the same coin, are ritual leaders and *angafa*, ("elder or senior members") who lead every ritual together with Gadaa (see Knutsson 1967: 67). There are lots of interwoven activities performed by these three leading bodies. Therefore, of course, customary actions are interconnected.

By the same token, the three leading elites – Gadaa, Waata and Qaalluu – do not stick to one customary activity, *fixa gumaa*, only. For instance, on a wedding ceremony they are all attending, the Bokkuu, Waata and Qaalluu together with Abbaa Gadaas bless the couples. Again, on the occasion of helping one another through voluntary self help organizations these three elites, according to their order of seniority, bless repeatedly. During the *faateffannaa* rituals conducted at river banks and *ateetee* ritual performed by women, their men counterparts follow them and participate through blessing even though women who hold *sinqee* take the leading position on such *communitas*. During rainy seasons when both human and the

cattle population are highly affected by prolonged draught the ritual experts, Qaalluu and Waata, take the leading role in praying to Waaqa, but again Bokkuu and Abbaa Gadaas also pray on their own. If there is no rain, there will be no fresh grass; if there is no fresh grass, the cattle can not survive; cattle's survival is the major factor for the agricultural activity, milk, butter and meat production. Butter anointment and sprinkling of milk are also very crucial for blessing. So, all customary activities that presuppose each of these things and a lot others are interrelated.

Second, functionalists argue that using culture as a medium; customs have the function of satisfying individual's primary biological needs. It is in order to denote such a fact that Malinowski said culture, better than natural selection, satisfies innate biological desires of man (1947: 33 in Layton 1997: 33). On every Gadaa assemblies of Utaa-Waayyuu, the *dhibaayyuu* ritual, *ateetee*, wedding ceremonies, gatherings of the community elders, and *fixa gumaa* ritual food and drinks are prepared. For instance, presenting milk in gourds, hydromel, slaughtering animals and preparation of all other edible things that satisfy individuals' primary biological needs is mandatory.

More specifically, Waata processes hippo's hid and produces alangee that the Abbaa Gadaa and Bokkuu hold during decision making, the bride groom also holds it on wedding ceremony. The Abbaa Duulaa further more holds it during war time and the household head hangs it over the wall besides his bed. Waata kills hippo not for the only purpose of making alangee out of its hid. He also satisfies his own as well as his families' and relatives' primary biological needs through parceling hippos' flesh.

Besides, as stated in the preceding chapters, on the *karaara* ritual the primary proposes of Waata is blessing the cattle population of Arsii per annum. This ritual has also another latent function. The Waata man who visits the home of the cattle owners' and for whom milk is presented at the gate by the household head woman sprinkles the milk first and then drinks it. He shares the meat of the black sheep he slaughters because he dines together with the family members when he passes the night with them. In addition, he is to receive the will, either bull or heifer, that the husband, avows to give him sometime with in a year. These and all other gifts that the Waata man is bestowed on the blessing ceremonies like blessing of sterile men and infertile women conducted a day after the *karaara* ritual or on any other occasions altogether satisfy his and his family's primary biological needs. The Waata man, besides getting satisfied and resolving conflicts on infertility, facilitates sexual pleasure of couples through arousing their ambition of begetting a child.

On *fixa gumaa* ritual, as noted earlier, both Bokkuu and Waata slaughter *dullacha keeraa* and *hoolaa gurraattii* respectively. On such occasion Bokkuu and Waata eat together with people gathered from both

the claimant and defendant lineages. The Waata man, on the other hand, takes the sheep home and shares it with his community members. He does it because of the fact that the sheep is associated with the clearance of the blood of the deceased that no other Arsii except the spiritual leader who protects them against leprosy is entitled to eat. On *fixa gumaa*, people enjoy not only with meat but also with the specially prepared *booka*. This would again manifest the satisfaction of biological needs besides its ritualistic value.

Whenever we extend the *fixa gumaa* ritual there is also a creation of marriage alliance and the *harma hodhaa* custom between the two reconciling groups in order to strengthen their intimacy and protect them against one another attack. Under normal conditions, because of either economic status or despising each other, there could be some probabilities in which the two lineage groups would not allow the two couples marry each other. But as a result of murder, through such affinal relation youngsters from the lineages who might love each other even prior to assassination but stayed without disclosing it to their parents satisfy their individual biological needs of sexuality. That could also contribute to keeping the continuity of the generation.

Third, functionalists further argued by stating that each custom has its own part to play in the maintenance of the integrity of the social system. For Radcliff-Brown the function of a custom was the contribution it makes to the continuing life of the 'social organism' (1952: 178 – 9 in Layton 1977:34). Parallel to this, according to Lwellen (1983: 6 – 8), structural functionalists view society as an equilibrium system whose component parts play a role in the maintenance of the whole. Among Utaa-Waayyuu of Arsii, had the *fixa gumaa* not being materialized by Bokkuu and Waata, had the community as a whole not reached consensus on organizing ritual, the retaliation be gets retaliation, anomie and anti social behaviors would have taken upper hand and finally societal disintegration might have prevailed.

Similarly, Waata's *karaara* ritual plays a significant role in integrating the social system. This could be manifested through two different ways. First, some of the Arsii assume that their cattle population would not show fast increase, cows' teats go dry, unexpected epidemic like what is locally called *gandii* prevails and wipes out cattle, and calves may also get sick or die as a result of *falfala*, ("sorcerers") evil deeds. Hence, Waata's blessings conducted on *karaara* ritual, *dhibaayyuu*, infertility and the like is believed to seek solutions. It is obvious that Waata and Qaalluu powers and authorities are more related to religious ideology than structurally mandated one. They make themselves free from evil deeds and harmonize societal miscalculations by ways of agreement under the umbrella of the almighty God, Waaqa materialized through their agency. Second, societal social sanction ratified in *Seera Oromo* decided under the

leadership of Bokkuu also plays a vital bondage role in keeping the continued existence of the society. Through such a role Waata harmonizes aggravations of some misunderstandings that could possibly happen between neighboring lineages and lead to conflict and then dispute.

As Radcliff-Brown further elaborated, a sufficient degree of harmony stated in chapter one, that no unresolved persistent conflicts would arise in the social system. As an example it is preferable to state the contentious power relation prevailing between Gadaa and Waata of Utaa-Waayyuu. Gadaa is *maandhaa*, younger by birth but took the power of Waata over through seera, ("law"). The minority Waata does not yet accepted this power relation. But, even though such a misunderstanding is prevalent in the system, the society continued to exist without any conflict and an attempt to harm one another. For that matter, there is a socio-culturally preconceived notion that Waata are religious leaders who do not involve themselves in any antagonism with society members. Therefore, ideologically sanctioned and preordained social authority plays greater role in the sustainability of the social system. But Waata's claim, as Radcliff-Brown also argues that some degree of opposition or antagonism between groups was an essential feature of every social system (Lyton 1997: 35).

Totally, the whole inclusive societal Oromo Gadaa system in general and *fixa gumaa* sub-system, elements like the individual mediator local elders, the Qaalluu institution and Waata community, parts like the culprit and the offender, individual Waata men, the Abbaa Gadaas, lineage group members, women sprinklers and all other participants activities are interdependent. Each of the elements major domain is not restricting oneself to reconcile disputants but rather serves in a complex of necessary relations to maintain social system as a whole.

5.2. Oromo Religiosity as Social Cement: 'The reasons for the persistence of Gadaa, despite ... changes are to be found in the religious significance of the system which is largely independent of the changing political environment (Baxter & Armagor 1978: 79). As stated earlier, shared religion binds people closely together so as to bring about social stability and cohesion. The Oromo religion of a belief in a monotheistic, one supreme deity, called Waaqa (Dejene 2002: 36) has been practiced since ancient time. Utaa-Waayyuu elders disclose that disputes that could threaten stability, if not handled carefully were hardly dealt with and sustained the most secure and/or interrelated society. The state of anomie has been socially sanctioned through intensive socialization and trust on customs. In so doing, every Utaa-Waayyuu lineages assure some truthful reality by saying '*kun dhugaa Waaqaati*,' ("this is a truth in front of God").

The Qaalluu and Waata's activities in rituals and Gadaa's dependable leadership role protects lineage members of the attacked from alienation. The ideologically sanctioned breast sucking and marriage alliance I discussed earlier also interconnect disputants than making them memorize the past event of murder, pull them away from the suspected loneliness and looking for avenge. Conversely, the ritualized recompense and oath pave ways for due regard and respect for each other, unprecedented intimacy and mutual concern than alienation. The disputants do this not because of their personal feelings but rather attributable to the fear they have for the oath they made in the name of the divine Waaqa. This is a reason behind Emil Durkheim's notion that shared religious experiences provide social cement for group unity and consensus.

Collective ceremony and rituals like Gadaa assembly, observance of *ayyaana Waaqa sanyii*, ("ancestral cult"), *fixa gumaa*, *karaara*, *muuda* and *dhibaayyuu* are *communitas* in which different lineages actively participate, are orderly and sequentially perform. On such ritual activities youngsters learn their forefather's preserved custom, some Oromo terminologies that are not applicable in daily activities are memorized, artifacts and costumes are displayed and food and drink that the society members recognize their deliciousness are consumed. These all are related to Waaqa's generosity, His spirits prevalence under the agency of Waata and Qaalluu. In doing all these, every member of the society participate whole heartedly so as to show their group solidarity through oneness. These are special occasions on which Arsii manifest their social identity over anomic individuals. Therefore, religion serves as social glue that would integrate all people ideologically. It is such a bondage that strengthens Oromo identification with Odaa tree under which ritual activities are performed, free democratic discussions are conducted, praying and blessings take place and qualify as a nation that protected itself against threat.

Customary Oromo religion is a sentiment that produced 'value consensus.' All members of the society used to be socialized in accepting appropriate patterns underlined by the Gadaa institution. This creation of moral community has been an endless process started at time immemorial, prevailing today and will continue in the future because it is an endless process. But, elders disclose that external pressures played greater role in bringing about some changes in the roles of Waata and forced Arsii people to juxtapose between customary Oromo religion and Christianity or Islam. More specifically, the rapidly expanding Islamization has been playing greater role to the waning of the Arsii Oromo Gadaa institution and its religious values supplementing the past highland government's blazing through invasion and dismantling of customary institutions. As a result, the previous societal moral values embedded in individuals seem waxing and waning from time to time. This in turn is weakening the socialization and social control of the customary religion that has been serving as a continuous force and sacred legitimacy of the cultural norms.

The other crucial notion behind Arsii peoples' religious faith is that they believe assassins who see other Arsii before seeing Waata would create health hazards of being affected by leprosy. So, Waata has been assumed to have ritual power of protecting Arsii people against leprosy through applying its ordained special religious power. Hence, Waata's power of protecting people against leprosy paved ways to inclination on Waata and helped to maintain social integrity. Qaalluu has also spirit possession of protecting its people from death, serious illnesses and other health risks existing in day to day life. Utaa - Waayyuu people of Arsii have been getting relief and comfort through Waata and Qaalluu's power. Accordingly, belief systems play the role of strengthening people to persist and encourage them to act for long term continuance of the society.

5.3. Utaa-Waayyuu Ritual Symbolism

In his article entitled *Religion as a Cultural System* one of the prominent authorities in the theoretical framework of symbolism defined symbol as, 'in some hands it is used for anything which signifies something else to someone: dark clouds are the symbolic precursors of an on coming rain' (Banton ed. 1985: 5). Symbols could also be represented in different forms, among them: material culture or artifacts, living beings that are manifested either ideologically or actually and different colors to which meanings are attached to can be mentioned as an example. Among these, the Waata men themselves, material culture and colors are the ones to be dealt with.

5.3.1. The Waata Men and Women: D. Sperber (1975 in Seymour – Smith 1986) indicated the Anglophone approach to the study of symbols as 'actor rather than the message and the message rather than the code.' Here top priority is given to the actor than message and code. In line to this, Waata people are considered those who possessed special spiritual and magic positive power. They are symbols of The Creator who thinks good, wishes good, feels pity and is believed to treat all people in equal terms. I feel this is the reason behind Waata community members' special character: they feel shy, are not talkative, do not involve themselves in harming any member of the society, and associate everything to Waaqa's actions.

Even though they are ideologically, to a very limited extent, distanced because of their women's pot making, all Arsii would search for them on bad days. It is believed and valued that all Arsii communicate with God through Waata and Qaalluu whom I believe two faces of the same coin. Therefore, these people are the living symbols of the Arsii Oromo Religion.

One thing worth mentioning is that in Kenya Waata place the body of the deceased (male or female) in the grave in such a way that the head points to the west and the face to the south while their neighbor

Mijikenda, on the other hand, bury their mortal remains by placing the head on the eastern side with the face turned north (Heine 1981: 10). Most probably this, southern direction, may symbolize the direction their forefathers who used to follow their own ancient religion penetrated through while making movement towards the south. The western direction, on the other hand, might depict the western part of the country through which their forefathers traveled while moving into the south. Parallel to this, ancient Arsii also used to bury their relatives' corpses putting its head in the western direction but locate their faces to the north than the south. This is because, elders argue, southern direction is the direction groups of their ancestral lineage members followed when moved into the south. Western direction is most probably associated with their ancestors' burial rite claimed to have put at Mormor situated somewhere around Lake Tana. On the other hand, baptism introduced putting the head towards the direction of local Coptic Christian Church. After the introduction of Islam other Arsii lineages are burying in the same way Mijikenda does to denote where *Ka'aba*, ("black stone believed to have come down from the heaven among Muslims") is found. Faces the corpses were positioned to the north probably to keep continuity of their forefathers' tradition showing original settlement area, Mormor. Here it seems that some mixture of contemporary religion and traditional belief system overlapped. But, there are also some elders who claim that, in old days Arsii, all dead bodies were used to bury face down.

5.3.2. Spiritual Artifacts of the Waata: 'Every object ... stands for more than itself. Being the product of triple act of transportation, it revolves in a many-dimensional world, the contours of which are fully visible only to the culture bearers (Gemetchu & Kassam in Arnoldi et. al. 1988: 36). Parallel to this, as mentioned earlier, Waata men hold botowaa during their yearly karaara ritual. Botowaa is a decorated and well shaped stick whose height is approximately no more than a meter and half. On top of the botowaa white, black and red colored cattle skins cut in small strips is tightly knotted. According to the words of my Waata informants, the stick symbolizes Waata men's power and authority vested on them by Waaqa. Again dissimilarly colored skins symbolize their dealings with all kinds of the cattle population regardless of color and Waata's inherited sole authority of the community to conduct annual blessing of the cattle.

Similarly, Waata men's botowaa is accompanied by decorated calabash whose hanger is made of skin. This calabash implies Waata men's wish for more breeding of the cattle and thereby possession of more milk production. Most probably, it would also depict their wish to drink milk after blessing and sprinkling.

Alangee is the other artifact that has strong attachment to ideological symbolization of Oromo religion. First, its primary function is to be held by Bokkuu and Abbaa Gadaas who lead the decision making and judgment

process of the Gadaa institution. While deciding and/or judging the chiefs sling the alangee and say, '*kun dhugaa Waaqaati!*' ("This is truth in the name of God") (See Dinsa Lepisa Abba Jobir 1975). This signifies that leaders' truthfulness is evidenced through symbolization of the whip made by Waata men. Second, the bridegroom holds it on the wedding ceremony to assert that he has taken away the girl accepting and being submissive to Gadaa rules and values in protecting her against danger and managing her according to *Seera Oromo* which is under the auspices of Waaqa. Third, alangee is also held by Abbaa Duulaa symbolizing that he is authorized to command the warriors fairly in order to gain final victory by the will of the generous Almighty God.

Besides, as I have tried to note in the earlier chapters, Waata man makes special alangee that has eight tails for the Qaalluu to hold it. Number eight symbolizes Qaalluu's authority to anoint Abbaa Gadaas and Bokkuu who stays in Gadaa office for eight years. It also shows the spirit possession being above everything else just like a highly valued and conventional number eight followed by nine which is the limbo stage for Oromo (see Taddesse 2000). And thereby Qaalluu and only Qaalluu holds whip of this type because of the sole reason that the spirit of the ancestral cult is possessed by him. For instance, Qaalluu used to hold this whip during the *sisaa baree* of pushing out non Oromo who refused to be abided by Oromo customary law from what Arsii claimed as the Arsii land. The pushed away people left not because they were afraid of the human Qaalluu as awfully created frustrating miraculous creature but due to fear they had for the spirit believed to be possessed by the Qaalluu. The materialization of Qaalluu's spirit was also manifested through showing the symbolic representative, eight tailed alangee.

5.3.3. Color Symbols: In his article entitled *Color Classification in Ndembu Ritual* Victor Turner noted that the only tripartite color classification for which Ndembu possesses primary term are white, red and black. He further described terms for other colors are either derivatives from these or consist of descriptive and metaphorical phrases (Banton ed. 1985: 47 – 8). These colors are the most vital ones in Oromo color classification as well, among which black comes from the forefront, red follows and white stands last. Here under I would like to treat each and every one of these colors and meanings attached to them in relation to Waata sequentially.

5.3.3.1. Black: A. M. Vergiant unveil that among Manja (Mandja) black (in the form of powdered charcoal) is devoted to death, a symbol of impurity (ibid.: 56 – 7). Oromo culture in general and that of Utaa-Waayyuu in particular stands contrary to this notion. Black symbolizes the hidden belly of creator Waaqa, vanguardness, good wish, clarity, purity and happier life. It is said, *gurraacha akka garaa Waaqaa*, ("black

like God's belly and/or surface of the sky"). The insiders' view point towards the belly of God connotes God's non visualized, good will for living creatures, innocence, harmlessness and simplicity. It is also said, *Oromo garaan gurraacha*, ("Oromo's belly is black") signifies Oromo's good will for significant others, internal purity, innocence and harmlessness like the Creator. The Oromo term *fuula gurraacheffate*, ("he faced him blackening his face") implies innocent person's being harmed, attack that generated anger and heartened decision to fight and harm somebody else.

"For Ndembu, 'to die often means to reach the end of a particular stage of development, to reach the terminus of a cycle of growth. ... English idiom which perhaps hits off the Ndembu sense best is 'to have black out.' 'Death is black out' – a period of powerlessness and passivity between two living states (ibid: 61). Among Utaa-Waayyu of Arsii death is nothing but exhausting the period of dramatic worldly life and meeting the Waaqa *Gurraacha*, ("black God"). That is why wife of the deceased say, *Waaqatu narraa fudhate*, ("God has taken him away from me") instead of saying he has died, the dissatisfying term that connotes complete annihilation and disappearance.

As stated earlier Waata slaughters black sheep than any other color. He is an agent of the black Waaqa; he kills the animal so as to achieve the desired goal being ordered by His spirit. The spirit of the black invisible alien force also needs to be materialized through sheep created having the color of the Creator. In so doing, black also symbolizes good wish for peace and integrity through clearing of blood feud.

5.3.3.2. Red: C.M.N. White unraveled that 'red is symbolic of life and blood in various Luvale contexts.' He also mentioned red fruits and trees are on permanent basis associated with fertility and life (1961: 15). Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaru Waata's customary activities support this notion. Among Oromo it is mostly associated with blood, fire, lean meat and eyes.

In Ndembu ritual red is a symbol of life, joy and health. The natives rub themselves with red for dancing and those who are sick pass it frequently over their bodies (Turner in Banton ed. 1985: 57). On the occasion of blessings the infertile men and women Waata men anoint foreheads of the couples with blood of the black sheep. Here Waata elders told me, red color is associated with the notion that 'let blood comes out of your genital through giving birth to male children.' Through blood anointment, it is believed that, Waata's activity changes the infertile or locally called *gogaa*, ("dry") beings to fertile or *jiidha*, ("wet") beings. Elders add that it symbolizes *dhiiga argi*, ("see blood") through begetting children.

Red color also connotes ones activeness through associating people with fire. In Afaan Oromo it is said, *intalli kee ibidda taate*, ("your girl becomes a 'fire' "). It means she is active enough. Her area of activity

could be judged from her high mental caliber in her conversation with people, fast energetic performance and/or even sometimes more sexual feeling she shows through her body movement.

Among Utaa-Waayyuu, just like other Arsii sub-moieties there are different ways through which red color is preferred next to black. For example, on fixa gumaa ritual *diimina*, ("lean raw meat") or *affeellaa diimaa*, ("boiled 'red' (lean) meat") is preferred than boiled fatty one. People say it is not possible to eat much amount of fat because it blocks ones desire of eating more. It is also assumed that eating lean meat generates physical strength.

Almost all peoples' eyes redden whenever they feel angry. That also represents ones vex reached its climax and just on the verge of taking offensive action or retaliation unless treated in some way. It is mostly assumed and agreed on that one who weeps get relief from his anger while the other who stays red eyed get relief if only he takes some avenge action. Hence, red eyed people are assumed stubborn, energetic and obstinate. Most of the time, men who stay red eyed without weeping are praised as having manly behavior while those who weep are gaze at womanish. There is an inquisitive Oromo saying, *maal akka nadheenii imimmaan dhangalaafta?* ("Why are you spilling your tear like women?"). Women's white (dry) tear is associated with empty, lack, poverty, harming incidence and useless attempt. Therefore red color is more valued than white.

5.3.3.3. White: In his writings about the Chokwe of eastern Angola, Baumann asserted that they associate white color with life, health, moon light and women. Here red stands in contrary to white and symbolizes sickness, the sun and men (Turner in Banton 1985: 48). This is again different from Utaa-Waayyuu's conception of white color. Arsii elders disclose that white color is associated with dry, empty, poorness, sickness, lack of something very important and nakedness. Among Oromo the season in which rain delays, the cattle and human populations feel angry is the one in which people say, *daaraa taane*, ("we are turned into ash"). It means a dry season in which people and plants are in shortage of food and water that entails decrease in lively look. And the sky turned white symbolizes that cloud that would bring about rain is not observable. It is known that, reversely, during the rainy season Oromo associate black with sky covered with cloud, the environment look fertile and all living things and beings brighten.

By the same token, empty house in which poor family lives is also associated with white color. It is said, in addition, *in addaatte/ saakachoofta*, ("you are turned white"). This stems from the fact that those who have anointed themselves with butter glitter while the have not stay dry. Similarly, well fed people's face transpire while that of hungry ones turn dandruff. Again, in turn, the body weight of the dandruff decreases from time

to time and people call such individuals *qooraa deeme*, ("he is undergoing drying out"). And dry wood, for instance, turns into ash through burning or rots through time. This symbolizes that dry things turn to white and whitened poor also fall sick and finally dies out. Therefore, white is the sign of evil and death.

5.3. Utaa-Waayyuu from the View Point of Order and Conflict: In a similar fashion to functional interconnection that supports the continued existence of the society, order model also focuses on interdependent parts that keep integrity of the system as a whole.

It is observable that Utaa-Waayyuu Gadaa system constitutes different parts like: the five leveled mediator elders, the *karaara* ritual, the *fixa gumaa*, different blessing ceremonies and a lot of other rituals and ceremonials which are in harmony with each other. But, individual as well as societal benefit is not limited to mere combination of these different parts. The society is able to protect itself against outsiders attack, protected its forefathers' culture which has been under continuous imposition of the outsiders, preserved its language and able to develop it further because of the fact that the whole is more than performing each and every ritual and customary activities. Utaa-Waayyuu peoples love and their Gadaa institution which is the symbol of their Oromo identity and generated maximum cooperation.

This social bondage and maximum complementarities prevailed not only because of the availability of order but also due to the prevalence of the conflict itself. T. S. Eliot notes, 'I may put the idea of the importance of conflict within a nation more positively (Gluckman 1991: 2). As a result of the happening of conflict like murder elders repeatedly meet, confab, raise argumentative ideas and engage in debates so as to arrive at consensus. They come across some cases which were not recognized at the time of law making and these could help them improve their *Seera Oromo*, ("Oromo Law"). On each of their meetings they raise some issues none related to prevailing case and additionally deal with that. They could also share some new ideas they heard from non Oromo neighbors or any other assimilated people and consider vital for reconsideration.

Therefore, conflicting situations that are assumed to harm societal integration could also benefit the society and contribute to its sustainability.

VI. Findings and Conclusion

Much of this thesis writing has been devoted to presenting some probably untouched or under researched and detailed data about Waata of Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaru and analyzing it from different perspectives. Now, it is the task of this chapter to try to pin point few major findings and then conclude the whole thing.

6.1. Major Research Findings: In my presentation of the data I have already exhausted, I think I came up with some findings. I have also attempted to reflect these outputs on theoretical perspectives and models. Here under, I would like to summarize some of my major findings.

i. **Characteristics Features of the so Called "Caste":** From my thorough investigation I came across that Waata at Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaru fulfill only one of the six characteristics features, membership ascribed by birth.

First, In the case of endogamy, tracing back the oral tradition of Arsii Oromo forefathers, every Utaa-Waayyuu sub-lineage members agree that Waata were exogamous during the ancient time. Even nowadays Waata society south of Malindi in Kenya is divided into nine exogamic units which can be called 'clans' (Heine 1981: 10). But, among Arsii their custom was banned by attachment of the stereotype, curse. Since the time of curse, one thing Waata and other Arsii lineages agree on is that Waata marry another Waata after counting seven generations. This in turn is what all Arsii lineages are accustomed to and nothing special to Waata.

Many other Arsii reason out that, above all, Waata abstained from marrying other Arsii lineages due to their religious role of not spilling out any of the Arsii's blood and vice versa. In a similar fashion, the problem of labeling half Waata new born baby is also there. Mixing the blood of the ritual leader with that of the laity is ideologically sanctioned. But, such categorization is nowadays showing some changes even though continuity is also there. Otherwise, it is not categorization of craftsmanship and/or hunting that hindered Waata. Arsii began to marry from the Waata and Waata started creating marriage alliance with Arsii as well.

Both Waata and Arsii refrain from marrying close relatives and select affine counting seven generations which is allowed in many cultures. Therefore, many people do not believe that endogamy is the criterion that contributes to partial marginalization of Waata.

Second, with regard to restrictions on commensality, Arsii do not believe that intentional or unintentional contact causes ritual pollution. The Abbaa Gadaas raised in the homes of the Waata surrogate parent themselves are brought up eating the food Waata eat (including hippo's meat) that other Borana abhor eating (Belete 1999: 13). Therefore, who pollutes whom? Additionally, on rituals like: *fixa gumaa*, *karaara*, *dhibaayyuu*, *ateetee*, and all other rituals Waata consume food and drink together with other communitas and take part in blessings, singing and dancing without any discrimination.

Third, among Arsii, considering Waata as human beings of inferior category seems erroneous. They are still religious ritual leaders of high social status and big-men who claim to have born elder but gave up their Gadaa leadership power and abandoned its institution by the later on formulated *seera*. Therefore, status differentiations stated by different authors seems non applicable in the case of Waata.

Fourth, there is no unclean thing from the part of the Waata that could spoil Arsii's belief system. Arsii also do not have any alien belief system that disregards Waata. In contrary, Arsii Oromo traditional religion and other rituals are led by Waata and/or Qaalluu. After Islamization and Christianization, as usual, Utaa-Waayyuu and Waata have continued performing every religious ritual regardless of any discrimination. Additionally, since ancient time, there is no special materials Waata use to eat on and drink with.

Fifth, Hunting is not the sole occupation of Waata and all Arsii used to practice before their knowledge of agriculture they learnt from their neighbors. Arsii associate both men and women Waata with the customary occupation of pot making. Waata men reject their notion and claim that pot making is the sole domain of Waata women. So, categorizing non pot maker Waata farmer and stock holder with their pot maker women is hasty.

Sixth, it is clear that membership of Waata community to customary occupations like: hunting, pottery, making fishnets and so on is ascribed by birth. Waata men learn the knowledge of agriculture, stock breeding, hunting, making fishnets and boats from their fathers and women learn the art of pot making and other agricultural and homestead activities from their mothers. Hence, this is the only criterion best fits to Waata community in general. If this is so, then what does the relation between Waata, Gadaa and Qaalluu look like?

ii. **Oromo, Waata and Wayto**: Using research findings of a lot of scholars and my informants' interviews, as a stepping stone I have attempted to discuss that Oromo people's original homeland was what the Arsii call Mormor found around River Abbayya (Blue Nile River) located in the north. In view of this, almost all of my

Arsii and Waata informants claim to have come from the north. In a similar fashion, Wayto believe to have come from the north which is assumed by some authorities in the area as Egypt and Sudan.

Authors wrote that Watto is the original father of both Waata and Wayto. Waata community found at Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaru know nothing about either the term Watto or the people called Wayto. But, Wayto people claim that their lineage members, at different times, moved to areas called Kafa and around Lake Zuway and are still living there. Arsii also believe that many of the despised minorities found in Kafa and other southern regions are Oromo who moved to these areas during the *sisaa baree*, ("pushing away the 'enemy'") from the Arsii land and got assimilated through time.

One thing worth mentioning is that much of the adaptation strategies, craft specialization and food habits of Waata and Wayto seem similar except few ritual leadership, language and some other customs that generated through time as well as alienation there of. However, Wayto's more similarity of language and culture with Agaw than the Amhara, to some extent, depicts their blood tie with Cushite.

Therefore, most probably Waata and Wayto are the same people who have Cushitic or Oromo descent line but whose relation faded through time as a result of alienation that entailed assimilation.

iii. Waata, Gadaa and Qaalluu: These three groups of leaders are those who play harmonious leadership role and thus keep the sustainable integrity of the society as a whole. But, there are harmless contentious power claims between Waata and Gadaa whereas they are all from the same descent line.

a. Waata and Gadaa: Waata claim that their forefather, Waayyuu Banoo, is the elder son of Hoomaa Bani of Arsii. Here shows that linguistically the two last letters 'oo' and 'ii' are high vowels that would replace each other and used interchangeably. Therefore, Banoo/Banii is the name of the original forefather of both Waata and Utaa-Waayyuu or the whole Arsii community.

Almost all Waata and Gadaa informants agreed that Waayyuu is the *angafa*, ("elder"). But, Hoomaa is the one who took over the power of Waayyuu through *seera*, ("law"). Hence, just like Sikkoo – Mandoo moiety in which elders agree that Mandoo is the *angafa* while Sikkoo is the *maandhaa* in which the later took over the power of the former through *seera*, almost all elders agree that *Waata's* first birth is undeniable. But, after being banned from Gadaa ruling power Waata resorted themselves to spiritual leadership and were forced to partially quiet its *angafummaa*, ("elderness").

b. Waata and Qaalluu: Waata bless Arsii's cattle population through annual *karaara* ritual; bless sterile men and barren women. Side by side to *karaara*, they lead the *fixa gumaa* ritual together with Gadaa

and perform the *dhibaayyuu*, *ateetee* and other religious rituals and pray to Waaqa, ("God"). Qaalluu, on the other hand, make the Gadaa take oath through *muuda* ceremony, pray to Almighty God and bless people. But, one major thing we need to give due attention to is that Waata claim during the ancient time they were one and the same with the Qaalluu people who possess spirit and used to perform the same customary activities.

As evidence to their oneness, Waata elders state the following:

- Waata used to perform the *muuda* ceremony at a place called *karaara* near Kofalee prior to the introduction of Islam. But, with the coming of Islam and conversion of the local people mosque was constructed at that specific place and the customary activity was banned;
- At Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu Waata women are pot-makers. Similarly, in the other areas like Woliisoo Qaalluu women whom Arsii believe to have crossed the Arsii boundary during *sisaa baree* make pots. The way these far away women make their pots is also almost identical;
- Just like Waata Qaalluu people do not take part in any of the assassinating people except keeping peace through reconciliation and safeguarding the continuity of the society.

Hence, due to this and other similar reasons they were one and the same during the ancient time and specialized later on. However, Bokkoo or Gadaa and Qaalluu are not the same but seem more closer, intimate and none contending.

c. **Gadaa and Qaalluu:** Gadaa and Qaalluu informants disclosed that there is no contention of power between them. They add, after classifying the ancient leader into two, Waata and Qaalluu, Gadaa (Abbaa Gadaa) favored the non-claiming Qaalluu and does not use the term '*isii*,' ("feminine derogatory term") or attach any stereotype. Majority of them state that the sequential ranking of the two including Waata would be: 1. Gadaa, 2. Qaalluu and 3. Waata. But, Waata informants claim had it not been decided by Hoomaa during the ancient time, they would have been ranked as Waata and Gadaa. They emphasize that no ranking is required for Qaalluu because Waata and Qaalluu were one and the same in old days. Some others would also argue that had Gadaa rules not declared, the elder Waata would have been continued as a single administrative and ritual leader or through time the society would have developed its own other classificatory mechanism.

iv. **The Karaara and Blessing Rituals:** The Waata bless the cattle population of Arsii at least once a year holding the honorary stick called *botowaa*, having mandhicha from the top, decorated gourd and fresh grass in his hands. Among Arsii Waata's absence from conducting the *karaara* and blessing is associated with

Waaqa's neglect and forces the Arsii go to Waata's home and bring him to his residence to perform the ritual.

A day after the *karaara* ritual the Waata man conducts the *dhibaayyuu*, ("decorated river side or under tree blessing"). Again, if possible just on the same day or a day after blessing of the barren women or sterile men (if there is a need for that) *dhibaayyuu* ritual will take place and finally the household head declares his vow of transferring heifer or bull.

Waata people do not involve themselves in any of the activities that harm people. Similarly, Waata do not curse people unless obligatory conditions that force them to do so would be created. Otherwise, societal expectation and Waata people's major domain is peaceful coexistence and reconciliation that would contribute to overall societal integration.

v. Waata and Bokkuu in *Gumaa Galoo*: In clearing of blood feud through ritual named *Gumaa Galoo* Waata shaves the hair of the murderer through the process Arsii termed as *Arsoomsuu*. One who does not pass in this process is believed to have faced serious illness of leprosy.

On *fixa gumaa* Bokkuu knots the two right hand thumbs of the murderer and younger brother of the murdered or his uncle with intestine of the *dullacha keeraa* and cuts it after making decision if they are from different lineages and unknot it if they are from the same lineage (close relatives).

In *fixa gumaa/ gumaa galoo* ritual the Bokkuu slaughters *dullacha keeraa*, ("old cattle") where Waata man slaughters *hoolaa gurraattii*, ("black sheep"). This notion stands contrary to some investigators view that notes *dibicha keeraa* is slaughtered by Waata. On *fixa gumaa* ritual, all Arsii including Waata, consume what is prepared for the ritual regardless of any discrimination except the black sheep strongly related to spilling blood and is believed to be eaten by the spirit possessor, Waata only.

In addition to *fixa gumaa*, if Waata man appears in between the two disputants who are hitting each other and says *ani Waata adaraa Waaqa wal hin ajjeesinaa*, ("Please, I am the Waata man who is asking you in the name of God! Do not kill one another"), they will quit their fighting and get reconciled by this ritual leader. Traditionally, Waata man is considered customary police of the Utaa – Waayyuu Gadaa Institution.

6.2. Concluding Remark

In my attempt to wind up my discussion, analysis, reflections of theories, models and argumentative view points, I would like to sequentially deal with main topics coined as: the alien term caste, origin oral history, customs of myth attachment, customary role of the despised Waata and customary belief system.

The Alien Term 'Caste': In the previous chapters, I repeatedly stated that the term 'caste' is a foreign and debatable notion attached to the colonized peoples by colonizers for its contribution to their implementation of European divide and rule policy. In a similar fashion, the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty devised the same discriminatory society in countries like China. They divided people in 'caste-like' systems from top to bottom: Mongols, Color eyed and other non Chinese, northern Chinese, and southern Chinese. This implies that such a categorization could be created not only in terms purity of blood or craft specialization but also in terms of physiological structure and geographical location (Ah Xiang 2004). He added the Chinese communist system is also categorized as 'cast system' due to its cruelty and rigid policy. Opposing all other notions, there are also some who attest that 'caste' is an ethnographic category which refers exclusively to a system of social organization peculiar to Hindu India (Leach 1979: 1). Weber supports this view by saying, 'caste ... is the fundamental institution of Hinduism' (Girth and Mills 1947: 396). Hence, the term is more of political, social or economic classification. But, even though I do not agree, some argue that as a sociological category it may denote almost any kind of class structure of exceptional rigidity (Leach 1979: 1).

Contrary to this notion, the local people like Utaa-Waayyu of Arsii seem to have used the strategy of distancing Waata not to loose their women's contribution of pot making and men's making of whips and fishnets. Not only had that but also created a mechanism of not mixing the role of spirit possessed ritual leaders with that of the laity. In addition, leaving hunting of hippos to Waata, eating of fish to Zay, and so on protected them against confronting on scarce resources and their wise use. It is breaking of this customary rule that nowadays entailed hardly existence of hippos and minimization of fish, which were in old days abundantly found in Baatuu Lake.

Besides, according to H. Lewis (1970), Todd (1978) and Amborn (1990), craft developed through internal differentiation and specialization within a given population (cited in Freeman & Panchurst 2001: 20 – 21). With regard to Waata this seems more sounding and convincing. Waata whom Arsii recognize their Oromo origin and substantiate through counting of descent line I mentioned earlier make whips, pots and fishnets mainly because the society needs these all items for its proper functioning and continuity of its culture. It is also factual that humans survival before the art of pot making and the number of people who specialize on certain kind of craft need to be limited in order to avoid excess production that incurs wastage of labor. Hence, elders were more rational and wise in expanding areas of specialization than less utilization of the then limited labor force.

Myth of Origin of Waata and Wayto: myths of origin differ from area to area regardless of ethnic background. For instance, even among Arsii themselves, those who are found around Worjoo Woshgulla and Faajjii Qaraaruu argue that Waata has been cursed due to its arrogance. Those who reside in the central and eastern part of Arsii associate the curse with mischievous act Waata committed violating their agreement of the confidentiality of slaughtering donkey and eating its meat at a given time of famine. Again, as Belete (1999: 12) noted, the two brothers, Waata and Boorana, were employed to tend cattle. The elder, Waata, was less interested in tending cattle and more inclined to hunting while the younger, Boorana, outshined his brother cattle treatment. Hence, their parents who preferred stock breeding than hunting chased this elder son out of their home to live in bush and named him Waata. Therefore, within Oromo itself various myths are attached to Waata's half marginalization.

The customary elements we recognize from the above traditions of myth are: one, Waata were elder son of the Oromo forefather; two, Waata were prosperous people whose richness led to misbehaving; three, Arsii and Waata used to eat together prior to myth attachment; four, among both Arsii and Boorana the position of being *angafa*, ("elder or first born") was transferred from the elder to the younger, and this transfer just like sterile polluter who argue that craft specialization are imposed on them by king (Freeman and Pankhurst 2001: 307) Waata seem experienced the same imposition from Bokkuu; five, stock breeding and hunting were the common old day activity of both Waata and Arsii. Hence, in addition to other factors, these are indicators for Waata's Oromoness, first born and previously non despised elder son playing leadership role. In relation to this, it could also be concluded that myths are later day creations that might be modified through time or created anew.

Oromo Religion Conceptualized: The Matcha Oromo's conception of blood demonstrates that blood is life; life is conferred by Waaqa and is under His domination (Bartels 1983: 229). Additionally, Bartels forwarded further analysis by saying that Waaqa demands *safuu*, ("respect"). In the case of violating *safuu* and killing each other Waaqa withdraws from anyone except self defense.

This notion reminds us that it is nobody's right to take someone's possession by force. Hence, the soul of some Oromo being is believed to have given by Waaqa who has the right and power to give and take away. That is why Arsii say *lubbuu Waaqatu uuma, Waaqatu fudhata*, ("God is the creator of soul as well as the one who takes it away"). So that, one who puts himself in place of God, assumes that he is powerful enough and employs power not vested on him is considered criminal whom God refuses to bless. Not only has that

but also punished him through indulging him/her in the illness of leprosy. For this reason, this is a religious social sanction ideologically driven by society to protect people against homicidal act.

This indigenous culture and religiosity has undergone some changes due to migration of the highlander ruling classes to the southern and central regions. These migrants came together with their Coptic Christian belief system that has, through time, penetrated into local peoples' culture. This is, therefore, one of the major reasons for the decline in Waata's Oromo religious roles. Parallel to this, Islamization played its own crucial role in creating some impositions on indigenous ritual activities. In the process of preaching Islam they employed notions of convincing people that their traditions are backward, harmful, against the rule of Allah and were a way to hell than heaven. Hence, those who got convinced by Orthodox preachers have begun following it and thereby used to show that they comply with the rules and regulations of the government. But, they also juxtapose between the two, Oromo Religion and Christian or Oromo Religion and Islam so as to keep continuity of their customs.

Customary Role of the Despised Waata: Among the customary roles of Waata, blessing the cattle population through the ritual named *karaara* and their reconciliation role in the course of *fixa gumaa* take the leading position. Abbaa Gadaas or any other local chief do not participate in *karaara* ritual. It is the sole domain of the Waata community members who are believed to possess spirit. This role, which is believed to be related with Oromo religious belief system, has contributed a lot to keeping peace, feeling comfortable, creating non frustrated citizens and enable society members work hard so as to sustain integrated socio-cultural system. People categorize the *karaara* ritual as the yearly averting of all bad spirits, sorcery and evil deeds and protection against potential dangers that could harm both the cattle and human population.

The *karaara* ritual seems declining especially among the town dwellers. This might be the reason behind many elders who repeated blessings by saying "*aadaan badde haa deebitu*," ("let the old culture appear once more"). For instance, the fast expansion of the Baatuu town and migration of different ethnic groups to the area has brought about social and cultural intermingling. Never the less, among Arsii the remotest the locality is, the more observance of the *karaara* ritual. Hence, I do not feel that *karaara* ritual completely disappears but rather continue hand in hand with changes prevailing from time to time. This is manifested through even people who seem abandoned the culture that they look for Waata in hard times like famine, epidemic that wipes out the cattle population and some other catastrophes that could harm the continued existence of the society. Some elders argue that resource scarcity has contributed a lot to the decline of

karaara ritual as well. The mismatch between fast incremental change in population size and available resource hinders people's capacity of entertaining *Waata* and transferring vows.

The customary police role of *Waata* and reconciling disputant fellows through *fixa gumaa* is also showing some changes even though it is not fast in declining as the *karaara* ritual. This decline stems from various major reasons:

Starting from south if one moves northwards, it is obvious that functioning of the *Gadaa* system decreases. Such decrease would also entail corresponding decline in sub-systems like *fixa gumaa* and deterioration of their elements. By this I do not mean that the *Gadaa* system does not show revivals. After fall of the *Derg* regime activities of the *Gadaa* system have been showing improvements. But, still lack of recognition of the *fixa gumaa* ritual, imposition of codified legal system and disregarding the local culture would contribute to its decline. People do not have clear conception of the modern law, they feel externally imposed reaction against their local culture, wish to stay with their own grounded customary law that they properly internalized, argue that contemporary law do not resolve conflicts on permanent basis, they wish to preserve their forefathers ritual that benefits the *communitas* beyond settling disputes and they argue that their ritual is not individualistic. Hence, reconsidering and giving due attention to the local culture that keeps social bondage and amending the contemporary law seems more beneficial than sticking on codifications.

Some members of the society feel dissatisfied because of the fact that neither the local culture nor the codified law is functioning accordingly. Many of the crimes and disputes stay undetected and unsettled due to the prevalent gap. This has again contributed a lot to decline of *fixa gumaa* that entails non conformity of the criminals. But, elders are trying their best to stabilize cases through arbitration than moot and recompense.

Similar to the aforementioned notion, resource scarcity, labor intensiveness and limitation of time are playing their part in the decline of *fixa gumaa*. On *fixa gumaa* ritual depending upon complexity of cases one hundred, fifty, twenty five and/or so on heads of cattle are required for recompense; brewing of the local drinks like *booka*, slaughtering of cattle like bulls, old cattle and sheep and buying of clothes are costly. Again, ups and downs of people in life so as to survive together with their numerous family members on their fragmented land is requiring more time than the habitualized custom. It also necessitates looking for additional means of generating income. Never the less, through internal dynamics, had the *fixa gumaa* ritual functioning as properly as before, the society could have materialized some changes that would harmonize life on the basis of the existing situation.

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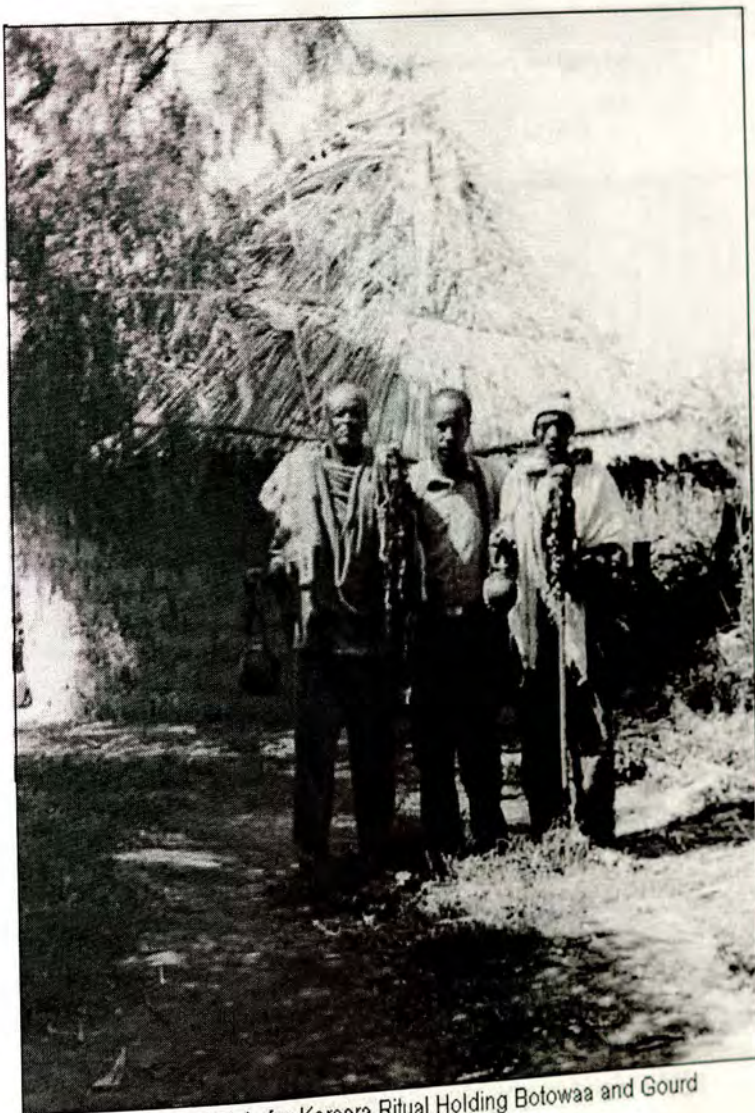
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Picture - 1



An Interview with Worjoo Woshgulla Waata Key Informants



Waata Men Ready for Karaara Ritual Holding Botowaa and Gourd



Yaataa Women at Faajjii Qaraaru/Gooba with Their Pottery Items

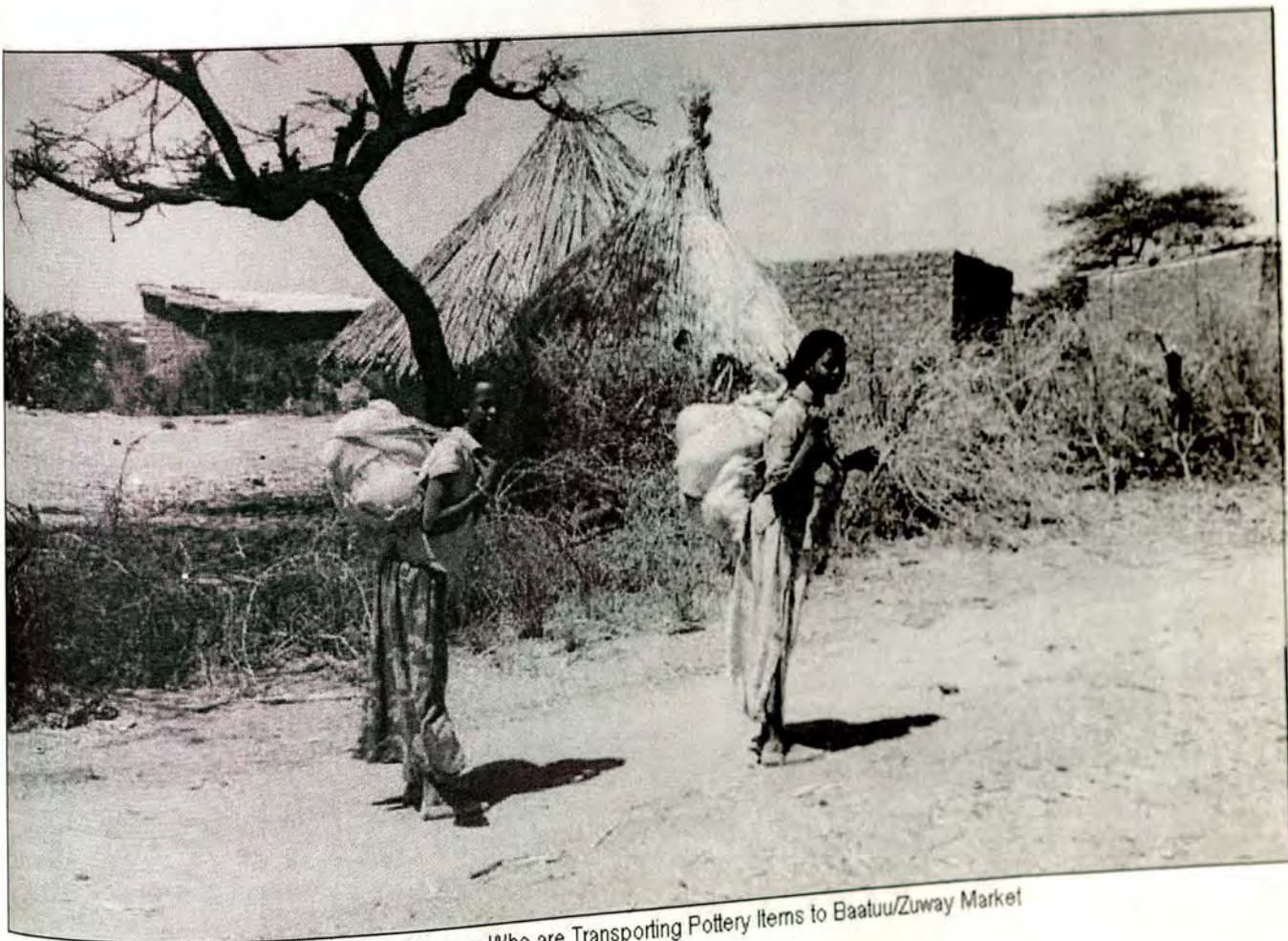


Wives of a Single Yaata Man with Their Finished Pots Ready for Aleelu Market (Faajjii Qaraaru/Gooba)

Picture - 3



Waata Widow Who Refused Inheritance and Living with Her Children



Waata Women Who are Transporting Pottery Items to Baatuu/Zuway Market



Worjoo Woshgulla Waata Younster Performing Fishnet Making



Fishnet Ready for Hunting or Sell

Picture - 5




Faajjii Qaraaruu/Goobaa Residents Burning off the Burnt Shelter of Their Neighbor



Family Members of Whose Shelter was Burnt

DECLARATION

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

Name Ayehu Lezesse
Signature 

Place and Date of Submission:

Addis Ababa University

June 2005

Confirmation

This thesis can be submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date _____