

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Co-operation and Conflict:
The Case of Argobbas in Shonke Village Oromiya
Zone, Dawa Chefa Woreda

By
Fasika Ferede

02742 ✓

96

December, 2006

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**Co-operation and Conflict:
The Case of Argobbas in Shonke Village Oromiya
Zone, Dawa Chefa Woreda**

**A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**By
Fasika Ferede**

December, 2006

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**Co-operation and Conflict:
The Case of Argobbas in Shonke Village Oromiya
Zone, Dawa Chefa Woreda**

**A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**By
Fasika Ferede**

December, 2006

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

Co-operation and Conflict: The Case of Argobbas in Shonke Village
Oromiya Zone, Dawa Chefa Woreda

BY

Fasika Ferede

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS:**

S. K. Mohapatra

ADVISOR

S. K. Mohapatra

SIGNATURE

Gebre Mesha

EXAMINER

G

SIGNATURE

Kopi Ababro

EXAMINER

K

SIGNATURE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to my advisor Dr.Santos Mohapatra, who devoted his time in reading the essay in draft form and gave me valuable suggestion and constructive criticism for the improvement of the paper.

The completion of this thesis would not have possible with out the generous assistance and encouragement of relatives and friends. I would like to express my gratitude to my wife Sinkinesh Beyene, to my son Kaleb Fasika, to my father Ferede Alemu, to my mother Genet Tessema and to all my family members, for their priceless assistance in moral, financial and material support in my university life. I also heartily thank my informants for their co-operation and willingness in giving all important in formations for the fulfillment of the essay.

My special thanks go to Yidnekachew Tilahun, Zerihun Knife, Seble Kine, Mathiew and Biruk for their material and moral support, which enables me to complete my educational career successfully. The School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University deserves thanks for the financial support it granted me in this research.

I am highly indebted to Haji Mohammed, Shieh Yusuf, Ansha, Fantaye, Misiker, Mohammed Ali, Beshir Kemal and others whose names are too many for inclusion are due special thanks for their support.

Errors, misinterpretations and weaknesses that might appear in this thesis are all mine.

Abstract

Argobba ethnic group is one of the least studied people in the country. This thesis is about cooperation and conflict of Argobba in Shonke village, Amhara region, Oromiya zone Dawachefa woreda thus, aims to add to the scanty information about the ethnic group. The major issues of the thesis are to assess the peace full coexistence that is manifested in prioritizing cooperation, to identify the causes and types of conflicts at intra and inter ethnic level, and hence the indigenous mechanisms in resolving conflicts. This research is qualitative in which I used various data collection methods, I did not rely on a single data collection method rather I tried to triangulate one with the other.

The research out comes indicates that the studied village community prioritize cooperation to conflict and consider violent conflict as taboo and curse that would result famine, drought and other evils. They are characterized by peace full intra and inter ethnic coexistence. In this regard their indigenous conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms played important role. Co-operations and infrequent conflicts are mainly with in intra village and ethnic limitations. Almost all conflicts emerge in the society are resolved with their traditional institutions and not used the formal legal court system except for murder cases of course it is too rare. Religion in addition to claiming the same genealogy contributes in bringing integration among them and with their neighbors to a lesser degree.

The community lived in a segregated village and could maintain its language and culture. They used marriage endogamy as a mechanism for keeping their language as well as to redeem from the danger of loosing their identity. The segregation of settlement, language difference and the social and physical boundaries prohibited integration with the neighboring people. This is further intensified by the language based regionalization policy of FDRE in which the study people disappointed with their children to learn in other language and consider as oppression and denial of rights and as plot to disappear their language. The movement of political parties of the ethnic group for self-administration in the zone and the subsequent permission by the regional state also creates the different attitudes towards one another.

Glossary of indigenous terms

- Abegar:- a person who provides blessings to the ritual participants
- Ageyemeshore:- elders of the village
- Amegadmeshore: - family level dispute settler
- Aruz:- groom
- Debersa:- a system of leasing out oxen for gain
- Deher:- wedding
- Derg:- the military government of Ethiopia which ruled the country from 1974-1991
- Dua:- praying
- Enjadawoleye:- labor cooperation which lasts for full day
- Enkulkul:- leasing out land which isn't exposed to beasts for grain
- Ganger:- a locally made thin bread made from 'teff' or sorghum
- Gat:- women bedroom
- Geso:-labor cooperation which lasts for half a day
- Got: sub division of kebele for administrative purpose
- Hatamo:- bride
- Hosa:- a thing which is not allowed to be performed by the study community
- Kebele:- the lowest administrative unit of the government
- Kedeta:- leasing out land which is exposed to beasts for grain
- Kolo:- roasted grain
- Medew:- reception room
- Megazo:- leasing out land which is not much exposed to beasts for grain
- Qadi:- a religious specialist, judge
- Sedeqa:- food which is provided after a person death by the aggrieve
- Sere:- storing room
- Shaid:- witness
- Temedew wereda:- a room for goats and sheep
- Wereda:- a government administrative unit larger than kebele
- Yefechit:- leasing out oxen for labor
- Yesedaqa ehel:-grain for sedeqa
- Zehuregna:- lunch for geso participants

Glossary of indigenous terms

- Abegar:- a person who provides blessings to the ritual participants
- Ageyemeshore:- elders of the village
- Amegadmeshore: - family level dispute settler
- Aruz:- groom
- Debersa:- a system of leasing out oxen for gain
- Deher:- wedding
- Derg:- the military government of Ethiopia which ruled the country from 1974-1991
- Dua:- praying
- Enjadawoleye:- labor cooperation which lasts for full day
- Enkulkul:- leasing out land which isn't exposed to beasts for grain
- Ganger:- a locally made thin bread made from 'teff' or sorghum
- Gat:- women bedroom
- Geso:-labor cooperation which lasts for half a day
- Got: sub division of kebele for administrative purpose
- Hatamo:- bride
- Hosa:- a thing which is not allowed to be performed by the study community
- Kebele:- the lowest administrative unit of the government
- Kedeta:- leasing out land which is exposed to beasts for grain
- Kolo:- roasted grain
- Medew:- reception room
- Megazo:- leasing out land which is not much exposed to beasts for grain
- Qadi:- a religious specialist, judge
- Sedeqa:- food which is provided after a person death by the aggrieve
- Sere:- storing room
- Shaid:- witness
- Temedew wereda:- a room for goats and sheep
- Wereda:- a government administrative unit larger than kebele
- Yefechit:- leasing out oxen for labor
- Yesedaqa ehel:-grain for sedeqa
- Zehuregna:- lunch for geso participants

Acronyms

CSA: -Central Statistical Authority

FDRE: - Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Plates

Plate 1: Shonke Village

Plate 2: Shonke Houses

Plate 3: The Rugged Topography

Plate 4: Argobba Bride Carried on the Back

Plate 5: Singing on Wedding

Plate 6: Argobba Children on wedding ceremony

Plate 7: Elders on Arbitration

Plate 8: Moulid Celebration

Plate 9: The Famous Mosque at which Moulid Celebrated

Plate 10: Traditional Wear of Argobba Women

Plate 11: Coffee Ceremony after Gesso

Maps

Map 1: Map of Dawachefa Woreda

Map 2: Map of Oromiya Zone

Map 3: Map of Argobba Settlements

Case Studies

Case study 1: Economic cooperation

Case study 2: Land and oxen lease

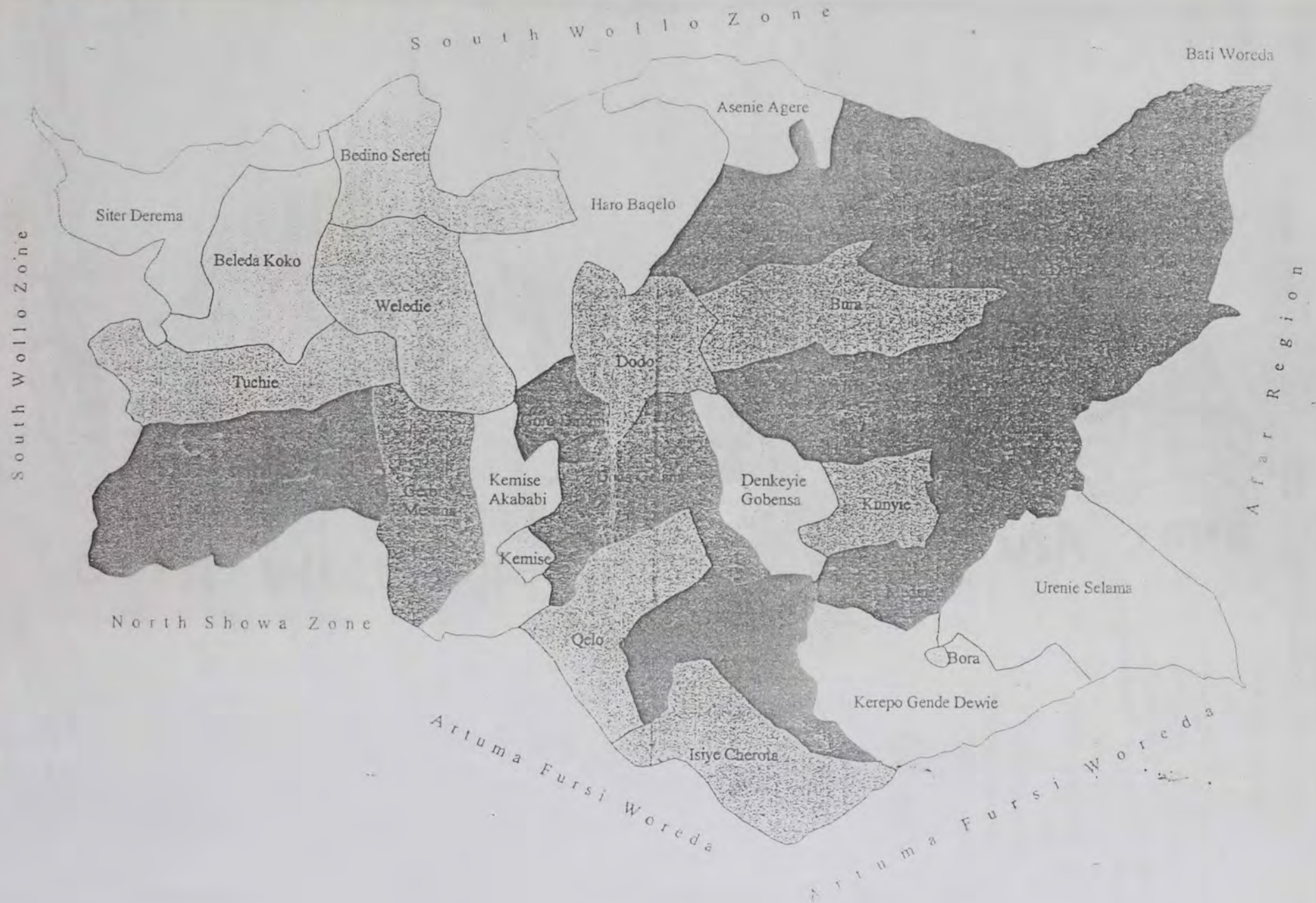
Case study 3: The role of wolyes

Case study 4: Conflict emerging from water

Case study 5: The fear of curse

Case study 6: Criminal Caught

Map of Dewa Chefa Woreda by Kebele



MAP OF OROMIYA ZONE

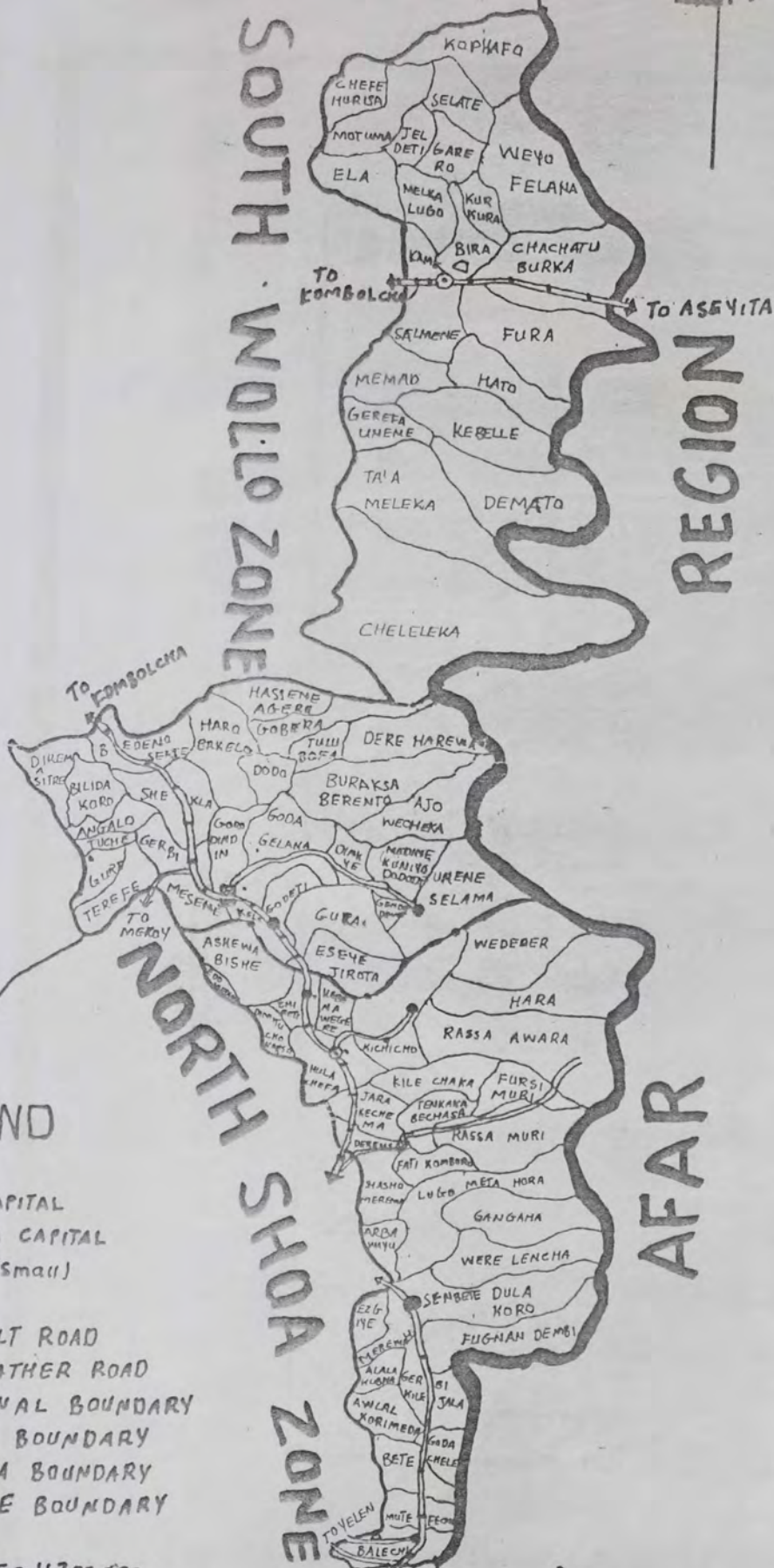


SOUTH WOLLO ZONE

REGION

NORTH SHOA ZONE

AFAR



LEGEND

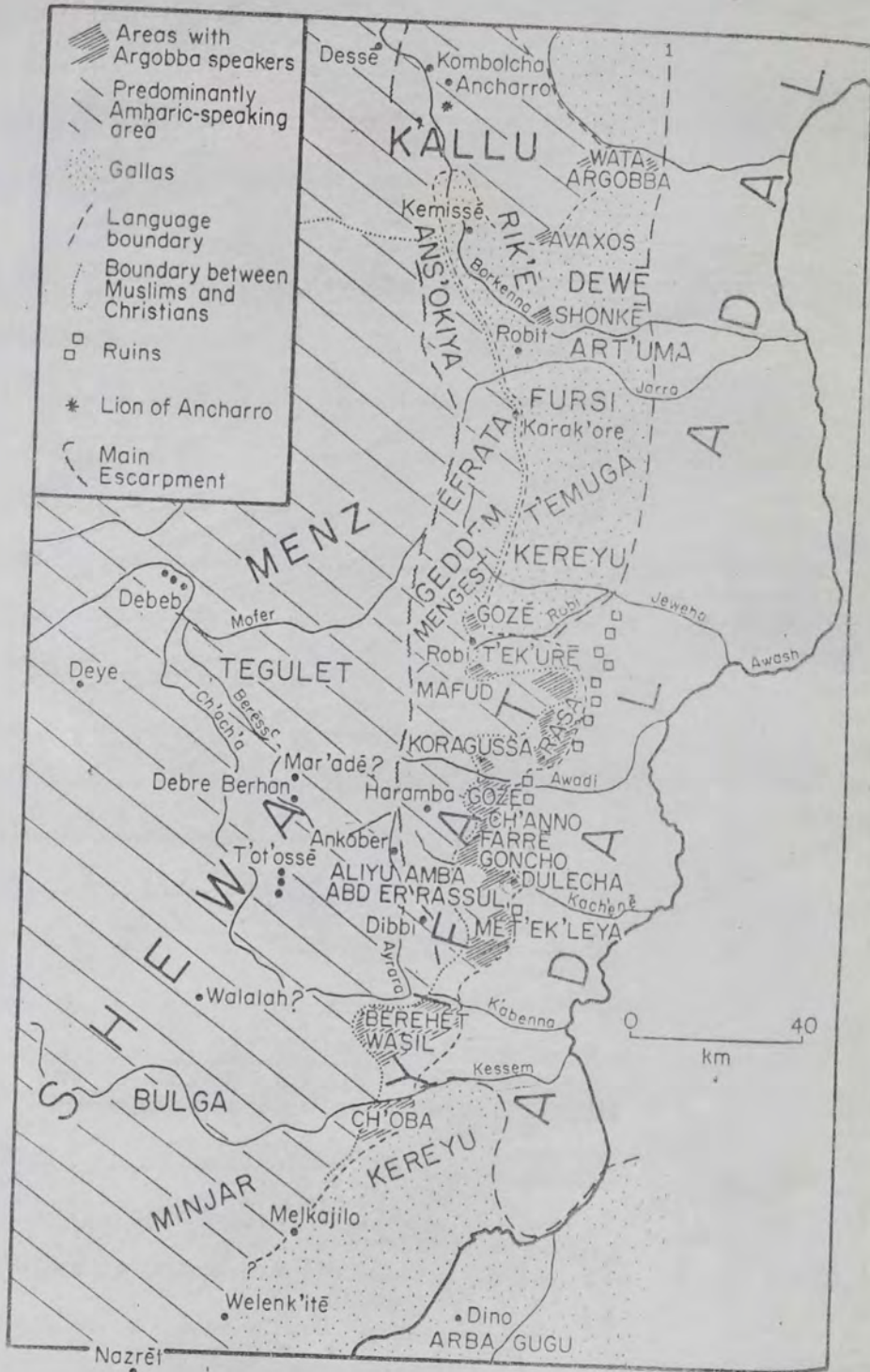
- ZONAL CAPITAL
- WOREDA CAPITAL
- TOWN (small)
- DAM
- ASPHALT ROAD
- ALL WEATHER ROAD
- REGIONAL BOUNDARY
- ZONAL BOUNDARY
- WOREDA BOUNDARY
- KEBELE BOUNDARY

SCALE = 1:700,000

Source Dawachafo Woreda FED

Nov. 1998

To ADDIS ABABA



Distribution of Argobba Villages

SOURCE MUSLIM PEOPLES, A World Ethnographic Survey 2nd E.

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Glossary of indigenous terms	iii
Acronyms.....	iv
Plates.....	iv
Maps	iv
Case studies	iv

Chapter One

1. Introduction and Research Design	1
1.1. The Study Area.....	1
1.1.1. Topography	1
1.1.2. Climate.....	2
1.1.3. Settlement Pattern	2
1.2. Human interaction	3
1.3. Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.4. Objectives of the study	7
1.4.1. General Objectives.....	7
1.4.2. Specific Objectives.....	7
1.5. Research Questions	8
1.6. Methods of Data Collection	8
1.6.1. Secondary Data.....	8
1.6.2. Primary Data.....	9
1.7. The Research Site and Significance of the Research.....	10
1.7.1. The Research Site.....	10
1.7.2. Significance	11
1.8. Field Experience and Organization of the Thesis.....	11
1.8.1. Field Experience.....	11

1.8.2. Organization of the Thesis.....	13
--	----

Chapter Two

2. Literature Review.....	14
2.1. Co-operation and Conflict.....	14
2.2. The Social Order.....	20
2.2.1. Co-operation/Integration Perspective.....	20
2.2.2. Conflict Perspective	21
2.2.3. Synthesis Perspective	22

Chapter Three

3. Background to the Study Population and Area.....	24
3.1. Historical Origin of the Population	24
3.1.1. The Social Organization and Kinship	29
3.1.2. The Unique Housing Architecture.....	30
3.1.3. Livelihood and Living Standard.....	32
3.1.4. Social Change and Development.....	35
3.1.5. Language	36
3.1.6. Nomenclature.....	37

Chapter Four

4. Areas of Co-operation	38
4.1. Intra-ethnic/Internal Co-operation.....	38
4.1.1. Social Co-operation	39
4.1.2. Economic Co-operation.....	40
4.1.3. Political Co-operation.....	44
4.1.4. Religious Co-operation.....	44
4.2. Inter-ethnic Co-operation	46
4.2.1. Social Co-operation.....	57
4.2.2. Economic Co-operation.....	50
4.2.3. Political Co-operation.....	51
4.2.4. Religious Co-operation	52

Chapter Five

5. Areas of Conflicts.....	54
5.1. Internal Conflicts.....	55
5.1.1. Conflicts Arising from Social Bases.....	57
5.1.2. Conflicts Arising from Economic Bases.....	60
5.1.3. Conflict Arising from Political Bases.....	61
5.1.4. Other.....	61
5.2. Inter-ethnic Conflicts.....	62
5.2.1. Conflicts Arising from Social Bases.....	63
5.2.2. Conflicts Arising from Economic Bases.....	64
5.2.3. Conflict Arising from Political Bases.....	64

Chapter Six

6. Traditional Conflict Resolution and Prevention Mechanisms.....	68
6.1. Conflict Prevention Mechanisms.....	68
6.2. Traditional Conflict Resolution Institutions.....	69
6.2.1. Family Level Elder/Amegadmeshore.....	71
6.2.2. Village Elders/Ageyemeshore.....	71
6.2.3. The Qadi System.....	72
6.3. Conflict Resolution Mechanisms for Internal Conflicts.....	73

Chapter Seven

7. Summary and Conclusion	77
7.1. Summary	77
7.2. Conclusion	80
Reference.....	83

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction and Research Design

This thesis is based on the findings of the research in to the areas of cooperation and conflict, and the traditional institution of conflict resolution among the Shonke Argobba of Ethiopia. The first chapter contains an introduction in which the research problems, objectives, methods of the study are discussed. Organization of the thesis, field experiences are also present in this chapter. The chapter starts with a general background to the study area in order to put the statement of the research problem in perspective.

1.1 The study Area

The study area is found in Amhara Regional state, Oromia Zone, Dawachefa woreda in Esoye Jirota Kebele. Shonke, the study village is one of the seven gots, sub division of Kebele for administrative purpose. The gots of Esoye Jirota kebele are namely shonke, Toleha, Kuni, Jirota, Aselalo, Hatura and Kurkurota. Among the seven gots shonke, Toleha, Kuni and Jirota are dominated by Argobba ethnic groups. However, it is only in shonke that Argobba lived in complete segregation and the language is fully spoken at the public domain. Shonke village is found twenty five Kilometers to the east of the zonal and Woreda capital, Kemise.

1.1.1. Topography

Generally Esoye Jirota Kebele and shonke got in particular is characterized by rugged topography. The study area is bounded with sharp escarpments. The topography is predominantly mountainous.

1.1.2. Climate

According to the Dewachefa Woreda Agriculture and Rural development offices the climate includes 'Kolla', i.e., tropical climate, which constitutes about 89%, 'Woinadega', temperate climate which constitutes 10% and 'Dega', cold climate that is about 1% of the Woreda. The study village is categorized in 'Woinadega' climate with moderate temperature and precipitation. The average rainfall of the study area ranges between 900 mm – 1500 mm. The major rainfall is between the months June and September the rest amount falls in March, April, and May.

The study area may be considered as temperate climatic area in which the average temperature is about 17-18°C. The lowest temperature mostly recorded in months of November, December and January, and the highest temperature is in March, April and May. The climate of the study area is favorable for mixed farming, crop production and animal rearing. The major crops grown are sorghum, 'teff', maize and different legumes as well as 'chat' and cotton.

1.1.3. Settlement Pattern

The settlement pattern in the study area is very close and adjoining one another. The people settled usually on the top of the hills and mountain for various reasons. The farm plots are located some distance away from settlement. The settlement is not in a suitable location and they have no or limited access to different facilities likes adequate water, schools, roads etc... According to the oral history I get from elders of the village the study village was founded by Shieh Ahmed Feki before 800 years ago. How ever, I could not get any written document. The village adopted its name from the famous Shieh Shonke or Abaye Shonke who thought religious education at different places in the surroundings. The residents call their village, "Abaye Hagar", the country of our forefather.

1.2. Human interaction

Human beings interact with their own close society sharing similar social and cultural values, or with the other groups that do not share social as well as cultural values. This human interaction is characterized by cooperation and conflict in order to satisfy their needs.

Inter group relation is the relation ship between different groups and it is manifested in cooperation and conflict in economic, social, political and religious aspects. Groups in conflict would become harmonious with each other and inter group cooperation would be formed when there is super ordinate goal that could be achieved by the cooperation of both of the group members (super ordinate goals as a mechanism transferring conflict in to cooperation (Taylor 1994:51)

Conflict emerges due to struggle over and claims to scarce status, power and resources, in which the aims of opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals, or perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that parties current aspiration can not be achieved simultaneously. Not all social relation ship are easily served and not all perceptions of incompatibility or scarcity are demonstrably wrong, the parties can move to resolve their conflict by engaging in the kind of contention (Knutsson1994: 25). Avruch mentions conflict as characteristic feature of all human societies, and as manifestation of all social relationships. The kinds of conflict resolution are determined by the root causes of the conflict. The causes of the conflict in turn determine the importance of culture and traditional practices in resolving conflicts (Avruch 2004: 24).

Greater participation in the group and greater personality involvement of the members provide greater opportunity to engage in intense conflicting behavior and hence more violent reaction against disloyalty. Intense conflict and group loyalty are two faces of the same relation. In conflict with in a close group, one

side hates the other more intensely or the more it is felt to be a threat to the unity and the identity of the group. Conflict with an out-group defines the boundaries of the in-group.

In local affairs people are capable of solving their problems without resorting to violence because they are convinced that discussion leads to better solutions than force. In most cases societies establish a set of rules by which issues are discussed and solved by collective decisions. Local conflicts are in most societies negotiated by a group of elders who usually follow a general African tradition of giving every involved party a chance to voice their views and interests, discussing as long as necessary to reach a solution with which all parts involved can live. (Pausewang 1994: 29)

Inter ethnic marriage between Shonke-Argobba and Oromo is rare, because Argobba practice endogamous marriage in order to keep and continue their ethnic identity, which is on the verge of disappearance. They used marriage endogamy as the major survival mechanism of their ethnic group. Intra group relation among the Argobba is tight because they practice endogamy and their relation with other outsiders is limited.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Inter-group contact will be associated in harmony with the extent that it involves interaction that is intimate, where there is equal status between inter

groups, where the surrounding social climate is supportive, and where the purpose of interaction is co-operative rather than competitive (Tylor 1994:180)

Argobbas in the study area constitute demographic minority status but they never enjoy the lowest social and political status. They are not excluded from the mainstream social life and characteristic features of marginalization are not observed among them.

In all places where Argobbas lived they constitute demographic lower position and settled in remote areas far from roads. Where they lived in adjacent areas Argobbas are assimilating in to the mainstream or dominant groups. They are dispersed and integrated with different nations and nationalities. Their culture and language is highly engulfed and influenced by different cultures and language like by Amhara, Oromo and Afar (Aklilu 2000:182). Even though they are numerically inferior, Argobbas in the study area keep their identity, language and culture. The study village is the only place where the Argobba language is spoken at the household level.

The interaction of Argobba community with their neighbors in social, economic and others aspect of life is not that much stronger. It is observed that this loose interaction has hindered ethnic integration in the research site. The inter-ethnic interaction is not manifested in strong competition or conflict over resources and co-operation. The competition or conflict and co-operation are more likely occur among the members of the Shonke village.

The absence of conflict cannot be considered as sign of strength and stability of relationships. This idea has explicitly mentioned by Markakis as, the absence of conflict in itself does not indicate the absence of feelings of hostility and mal integration (Markakis 1998:235). The territorial segregation, avoidance of inter ethnic marriage of the Argobbas in Shonke village and the ethnic/language based political structure and its misuse in the study area has widened inter

ethnic difference between the Arggobas and the Oromos. Further more it creates hostile feelings towards each other.

Religion is observed as a source of integrations and unity both at intra ethnic and inter-ethnic level at least theoretically. The study village communities and their neighbors, Oromos are totally adherent of Islam and even there is no other Islamic religious sect in the area, which has spread at faster speed to other areas of the woreda.

The ethnic based politics of the government has given the Oromo to have self-administration in the zone and woredas of the study area. Hence at the local level, that is at kebele level those people who belong to Oromo ethnic groups have taken the administrative posts. Even though in the study area the Argobba ethnic group outnumber the Oromos, they are not actively involving in the local politics and hence they are not empowered. Hence they feel that they are excluded from the local politics and lost their rights and privileges. Bartos and Wehr states that, unequal distribution of privileges and rights may lead to sentiments of hostility, but they do not necessarily lead to conflict. They further mention that hostile attitudes are predispositions to engage in conflict behavior, conflict on the contrary is always a transaction (Bartos and Wehr 2002:37).

Argobbas in the study area live in peaceful co-existence with the Oromos in their adjacent area. In most cases Argobbas do not enter into violent and damaging conflict with their neighbors as well as among themselves. Moreover whenever conflict arises in their surroundings they play arbitrary role. Besides this Conflict in the Shonke village, is settled in religious and traditional manner than bringing to the formal court.

In the study village the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms of Argobbas use the local elders and religious leaders. The village communities believe that

the formal court resolve conflict with punishment, which could not bring long lasting solution to the conflict and they believe that it produces revenge.

Even though overt expression of Argobba ethnic affiliation in language and culture is reduced among the Argobbas out of Shonke village, an Arggobba ethnic identity is still fiercely maintained nowadays in association with the ethnic /language based federal structure. They believe in order to have the opportunity of self-administration, which they consider it as the means to redeem Argobbas language and identity from the danger of disappearance.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General objectives

The general objectives of this study are;

- To contribute to the understanding of socio-economic relationship of Argobbas in the study area as well as with their neighboring ethnic groups.
- To assess the mechanisms of coexistence of Argobbas in the selected village both at intra and inter ethnic level.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To examine the sources of intra village conflicts
- To examine inter ethnic conflicts in the study area
- To describe the Argobbas indigenous conflict resolving mechanisms.
- To assess the study community's cooperation among themselves as well as with their neighbors.
- To analyze the importance of religion, in bringing integration in the study village and with their neighboring people to some extent.

1.5. Research questions

The study seeks to address the following major questions,

- What are the major areas of cooperation at the intra ethnic and inter ethnic levels?
- What are the major areas of conflict at the intra ethnic and inter ethnic levels?
- How do Shonke Argobbas define their relation with the neighboring people?
- How does the study community settle disputes arising at the intra village levels?
- What are the disputes handled within the village?
- Who are the personalities that participate in the settlement process?
- How indigenous conflict resolutions persist despite the influence of the modern legal systems?

1.6 Methods of Data Collection

This study is a qualitative research in which I used different methods of data collection.

1.6.1. Secondary Data

Relevant published and unpublished books and various magazines were selectively reviewed. Relevant secondary data on ethnic interaction are reviewed to have good understanding of the socio-economic relations of Argobbas. Secondary sources were used to obtain background information about the study community.

1.6.2 Primary data

Interviews

Informants were interviewed for collecting parts of the primary data. I selected the informants from the elders of the village who are in the council of elders of the village, elders of the dominant ethnic group in the surrounding area, and concerned individuals from Dawa chefa woreda culture office. Tape-recorder was used when interviews conducted based on the informant's full consent. I used field notes in situations when informants exasperate the use of tape recording. Above all I used to collect primary data using informal discussion on issues my informants restrained from expressing their views during semi-structured interviews for any inconvenience.

Thorough personal interviews, both structured and semi structured interviews were held with selected individuals who are directly or indirectly are believed to be influential. Such interviews helped to gather classified information and gain a clearer picture of the community.

Observation

Through observation wide range of issues could be observed informally in the day-to-day interaction of the people in the village. Moreover I have used participant observation, which is the most important tool in anthropological enquiry in collecting the information in certain events. I have partially observed and participated in some ceremonies and social events in the village community, including marriage, religious ceremonies and labor co-operations when I was conducting my fieldwork. Participant observation helped me to gain trust of the village members. Pictures were taken during primary data collection to enrich the thesis.

Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion was another primary data collection method that was used in the research. The focus group discussion was organized in such a way that was convenient for the discussants to express their views on the causes and common types of conflicts, their ways in handling and resolving conflicts, and the traditional mechanisms of helping each other in different aspects of life more freely. I wanted to take the age, gender and economic status of the discussants in this regard. However due to the strict values and norms of the village, I could not be able to contact women. Women are not allowed to see face to face and greet men except their close cognatic kins.

Case studies

Case studies were used to collect in depth data about the causes of conflicts, cooperation mechanisms and the process of indigenous conflict resolution of the village. The case studies were expected to provide concrete data on the actual experiences of the intra and inter ethnic relation, which is characterized by cooperation and conflict. Case studies were carried out with members of the village community from different social status and age categories who were interviewed for about considerable time on different issues.

1.7. The Research site and Significance of the Research

1.7.1 The Research Site

Due to time and financial constraints, I was obliged to limit the scope of the study in Shonke village. The village was selected because it is the only place in the selected woreda where Argobbas lived in a completely segregated village hence the cultural heritage of the ethnic group is maintained and the language is spoken at the household level by women and children. It is in this village that Argobba language is spoken as first language from the whole ethnic group in Ethiopia. As Stitz Volker mentioned Shonke is also a quite remarkable

because of its unique architecture in the area. The construction of houses, rectangular stone buildings with flat roofs look like that of Harar houses and the house of Harar Argobba (Stitz 1975: 187).

1.7.2 Significance of the Study

Anthropological literature on Argobba is scanty and the ethnic group is not sufficiently explored using anthropological methodology this study aims to fill this gap. Most of the literatures on Argobba are done by other disciplines especially by linguistics. This study will contribute to the uncovered and unnoticed Argobba ethnic group. It will also contribute as an input for further comparative studies in inter ethnic relation ship which is not that much explored and used as document for further researches on conflict and conflict resolution. It can also awaken other social scientists to conduct further studies on Argobba people.

1.8. Field Experience and Organization of the Thesis

1.8.1 Field Experience

The coincidence of the fieldwork with the permission of Argobba special woreda in the oromia zone, where this study was conducted, had significant implication on my fieldwork. I found it difficult to win the confidence of informants initially. The study people considered me as journalist and government agent who came for studying them for facilitating self-administration therefore; they welcomed me happily and respected me as well. The most outstanding example I remember in this regard was one of my informants introduced me with his close relatives as if I were a special envoy by the premier of the country to facilitate self administration for them. It was challenging to convince them that I am neither a journalist nor a government envoy.

When I expressed my intention to my informants and discussants they were not happy and not interested during the first few days of my fieldwork. In addition they were suspicious about the objective of the research because the period of my field research from mid March to mid May was the time when the political quarrels that reached climax due to the acceptance and declaration of Special Argobba Woreda by the Amhara Regional State. They were specially too suspicious and exasperated when I raised issues related to inter ethnic conflicts and told me to leave such issues. Moreover, they were also not comfortable with issues related to some criminal activities like rape, theft and adultery in their society and reply relating issues as a taboo or curse.

Among the other difficulties that I faced during the fieldwork was the problem of punctuality on the appointment date and time. My informants got bored quickly during our discussion in the mean time. Some times they were giving me irrelevant and indirect reply and were refraining for my questions. They were providing so short and some times they were not fully explaining issues to my questions. The other difficulty I faced was restructuring of government offices in which documents were misplaced and the concerned individuals were reshuffled. Even after collecting data from my informants, discussants and observation the most laborious task for me was organizing the fragmentary information in to an organized thesis.

Measures Taken

- Through out my stay in the field I had tried to prove that I was not a kind of person that my informants were suspicious of. I explained to them over and over again that I was simply a student who staggers to pass the rite of passage before completion.
- The restructuring in government offices was the difficult challenge to deal with. However, I had tried to manage to obtain good data from the zone information office.

1.8.2. Organization of the thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one is the introduction part in which the general characteristics of human relation and the research design are discussed. Chapter two is concerned with the literature review that is a springboard for coining theoretical frameworks and framing statements of the problem. Chapter three discusses the background about the study population and area, in which the origins of the population as well as physical and social aspects are raised. Chapter four deals with the community's cooperation at intra village level and inter ethnic level. The causes and types of conflicts emerged internally and with the external ethnic groups that are not overtly observed and damaging most of the time are tried to analyze under chapter five. In chapter six the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms of Argobbas in the study area is observed. The last chapter is on summary and conclusion

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1. Co-operation and Conflict

This chapter presents review of related literature on human interaction that is characterized by cooperation and conflict. I have used models on human interaction instead of grand theories. This is because I found it difficult to find and apply for this thesis.

Cooperation and conflict are two sides of the same coin in human interaction. However, the magnitude of cooperation and conflict depends on the values and norms of the society and differ from society to society. In human interaction there are about three models namely consensus model, conflict model and the synthesis model as the third model.

The basic relationship among ethnic groups can be cooperation on common interest and competition and conflict with each other for scarce resources, prestige and incompatible goals. Societies are integrated each other to fulfill and satisfy their needs but disunity also exists. Some ethnic groups merge with the main stream of the society while others remained in a subordinate position. Minority groups might assimilate and strained to abandon their cultural heritages and taken the majority group culture. In this regard Argobbas in the study area have kept their culture and language and maintain their identities while other Argobbas out side the village and in the village surrounding and elsewhere have abandoned their language and cultural heritages.

According to Taylor, there are four major characteristics of minority groups. The first one is a subordinate minority group that is dominated by a more powerful group. The second group is the minority group, which is composed of

people with similar characteristics that differ from the dominant group significantly. The third groups are minority groups that are stereotyped and systematically condemned by the dominants or majority groups. The last groups are those who are singled out for differentiated and treated unfairly (Taylor 1994:18).

Coser mentions that social relationships involves both converging and diverging motivations, both 'love and hatred' which generally are complicatedly linked. It is often worthless to separate these two elements in concrete reality. The closer the relationship groups experience, the greater the affection and ties, the greater also the tendency to suppress rather than express hostile feelings (Coser 1966: 60-62). In this regard the village community due to smaller number and claiming the same ancestor has closer relationships and they consider as cognatic relatives each other. Therefore they restrain their feelings even though they disappointed each other in the day-to-day activities until it reaches climax.

Barth mentions that interdependence of ethnic groups depends on complementarity of groups with respect to some of their characteristic cultural features. These complementarities in turn give rise to interdependence and symbiosis and it can be also analyzed in cultural ecology that is manifested in different forms. This is mainly manifested where two or more ethnic groups are in contact. They may also occupy different ecological zones hence competition for resources is reduced. Despite minimal interdependence co residence is mainly manifested in trade and religious ceremonies (Barth 1982).

He further mentions that Ethnic groups may hold their own territories independently; in this case there will be competition for resources that involves politics in the border. The other manifestation is that ethnic groups may exchange goods and other services living in different niches but in close interdependence. Finally the same author mentions ethnic interdependence is

manifested in partial competition in the same place (Barth 1982:18-19). Further more Barth explains that, if two populations are ecologically interdependent, as two ethnic groups in a symbiotic relationship it implies that any variation in the size of one must have important effect on the other (Barth 1982:20). Similarly Argobbas minority status (numerically) in the study woreda affects them to be engulfed and dominated by their majority neighbors in various aspects. Whenever ethnic relationship is stable over long periods and particularly where interdependencies are close, it implies that there is demographic equilibrium (ibid 24). Contrary to Barth's argument, even if there is no demographic balance between Argobbas and their Oromo dominant neighbors, there is relative elongated stable ethnic relationship or at least there is no such violent conflict and extreme hostility despite close interdependence in the study woreda.

Even though some societies exhibit more tolerance than others, in every type of social structure there are possibilities for the incidence of conflict. This is because members of a certain group of society bring claim over scarce resources, prestige or power position that can bring competition (Coser 1966:151). Argobbas are characterized by their peaceful coexistence with their adjacent peoples; in most cases they avoid violence with tolerance and arbitration.

Markakis prioritizes political realm than economic for potential occurrence of competition hence it is the key to obtain strategic social and material resources and also a path to power (Markakis 1998: 235). This is clearly observed in the study area. In the study area Competition over resources is not common between the two ethnic groups. Rather it is political quarrel for the local administration at least between individual members of the two ethnic groups. Internal social conflicts that concern goals, values or interests that do not contradict the basic assumption upon which the relationship is founded tend to be positively functional for the social structure (Bernand 1983: 15).

Members of an ethnic group feel commonality, a sense of sharing the same material and social perspectives. This ethnic identity itself defined in the process of interaction, which is manifested in cooperation, competition and confrontation (Markakis1998: 236). Assefa further states that factors that influence and indicate ethnic identities are geographical boundaries as well as social boundaries (Assefa 1995; 14).

Bates and Rassam define ethnic groups as follows;

Ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristics of organizing interaction between people. Ethnic groups are not merely based on the occupation of exclusive territories. Dichotomization of persons as member of another ethnic group implies differences in criteria for judgments of value, common understanding and mutual interest (Rassam and Bates 2000:7)

Bartos and Wehr (2002:12) describe that conflict and handling conflict associated with appearance of homosapiens and as old as human being himself. Conflict and handling conflict is folk knowledge that is used continuously in every day life. This knowledge is shaped within generations; as humans learn better to interact with minimal cost. Handling conflict is simply one of the life skills we learn and practice. Some of us do it better than others.

The major source of conflict is due to incompatibility of goals, a society can reduce conflict with understanding the reason for incompatible goals, social injustice, role conflict and value differences .At the same time a society can develop tolerance for 'healthy' conflict. Both attraction and repulsion between groups are essential for social integration. Hence a healthy society or social group keeps equilibrium of cooperative and oppositional relation (Bartos and Wehr 2002: 148). Nnoli states that in most cases there will be competition over scarce but important resources like land and the application of political,

religious, administrative and economic power, if there is spatial proximity between two or more ethnic groups. The other source of conflict is the need to influence in language and religion of one's own environment (Nnoli 1989:17). Besides these Bartos and Wher explain that population pressure is the other possible cause for conflict. They further elaborated that each new born human has additional human need while resources remained limited and thus potential for emergence of conflict (Bartos and Wehr 2002:2).

Markakis explains that Ethnicity is another factor for emergence of conflict. Most of the time conflicting parties belong to groups having different ethnic or clan identity. But other factors provide fertile ground for ethnic conflict; mostly ethnic conflicts have objective nature (Markakis 1998:217). The Argobbas in the study village have developed norms and values that discourage overt conflict and damaging violence. Their safety valve institutions helped to prevent violence conflict and resolving disputes peacefully. Even though there is no overt conflict and violence between the village community and their neighbors, it does not mean that there is no hostile feeling towards each other. The hostile feelings are mainly emerged due to the rivalry over the control of the local administrative position and the obligatory use of Oromo language by Argobba children as instructional media at the school.

The absence of conflict cannot be considered as sign of strength and stability of relationship. Closeness gives rise to frequent occasions for conflict, but if the participants feel that their relations are weak, they usually avoid conflict, fearing that it might endanger the persistence of their relation to each other (Markakis 1994:85). Similarly Simmel cited in (Cosser 1966:82) states that the absence of conflict in a relationship couldn't be taken to show the relationship is firm and safe. The absence of conflict in itself does not indicate the absence of feelings of hostility and rivalry and hence the absence of elements of strain and mal integration.

Anthropology like psychoanalysis and sociology plays important role towards the explanation of conflicts. Malinowski writes 'aggression like charity begins at home.' Aggression is the byproduct of cooperation. Like Simmel and Freud, Malinowski argues that antagonism is the central part of intimate social relations that is the by-product of cooperation. On the other hand as opposed to this Simmel and Freud, Malinowski states that hostile behavior also exists more readily in close social relationship beyond feelings (Coser 1966:63)

There are three general reasons for contest in the distribution of resources. The group may believe that, the group is treated unjustly, do not have enough to live decently or it has confrontational culture or personality (Bartos and Wehr 2002:47). There are also three reasons why two parties may have different values. These are, because they play different roles, because they have been separated from each other, and because their groups differ in size and technology (Ibid 2002: 48).

A tendency for single groups monopolize certain sectors of community life is evident and overtly manifested in the study area. The administrative machinery in the local politics is in the hands of the Oromos. The local political organization exhibits two dominant components. At the lower level the government administration is represented by Kebele and Gote governors, officially appointed local judges, and Quadis who are the religious specialists and the elders in the study community.

Coser says "cooperation provides dependence, and with holding cooperation provides each party with a means of coercion and of opposition against the other. Thus interdependence is at the same time a check against the breaking of consensual agreement and basis for that conflicting behavior which is not likely to have disruptive consequences"(Coser 1966: 76).

Groups that are engaged in continued struggle tend to lay claim on the total personality involvement their members so that internal conflict would tend to mobilize all energies and affects of the members. Hence such groups are likely to tolerate more than limited departures from the group unity. In such groups there is a tendency to suppress conflict. While groups which are not involved in continued struggle with the out side are less prove to make claims on total personality involvement of the membership and are likely to exhibit flexibility of structure. The multiple internal conflicts that they tolerate may in turn have an equilibrating and stabilizing impact on the structure (Tylor1994: 180).

Leif believes that not all social systems in which individuals participate segmentally allow the free expression of antagonistic claims. Social systems tolerate or institutionalize conflict to some degrees. There is no society in which any and every antagonistic claim is allowed immediate expression. (Leif 2000: 27)

2.2. The Social Order

Theories of social order give emphasis to explain how social structures and organizations are integrated and maintained. Consensus/ cooperation and conflict are the two major perspectives of social order. The adherents of both models consider people as basically social animals; unable to exist out side the society, but these models are different in their views of the nature of the society. In human interaction conflict and consensus are two faces of the same coin. But due to different factors the magnitude of these may vary from society to society. The duality of the society regarding the two models can be considered as the third perspective, namely the synthesis perspective.

2. 2.1.Consensus/cooperation Perspective

Proponents of this perspective argue that most members of a society share the same values and norms. Cooperation is not only necessary, but also rewarding

and as a result society is basically secure. Peil explains that conflict and violence may emerge from time to time, but they are controlled and eventually overcome because the goals of the society can be more efficiently breach through other relationships like reliance and cooperation that persevere even in times of conflict (Peil 1977:33).

This perspective emphasizes the interdependence of members of a society and the necessity of working together. Members of the society must adapt to their environment, attain their goals, interest new members in to the functioning whole and manage tensions as they arise. It also believes that Parts of society are in harmony, they cooperate because of similar or complementary interests and because they need each other to accomplish those things beneficial to all. The most famous consensus theorist was Emile Durkheim

2.2.2. Conflict/coercion Perspeticve

.The Adherents of this perspective argue that values and norms are not the same for all members of the society but vary according to position and subsequent interests. Many forms of social organization provide more benefits for some groups than for others and conflict between individuals and groups is to be anticipated. Social control is not an expression of group compromise, but suppression of feelings. Adherents of this perspective agree that society has certain functions to fulfill, they are interested in the conflict resolution mechanisms for various problems and the way these solutions affect groups with in the society (Peil 1977:34). According to this perspective society are basically in competition with each other because some things that people desire like wealth, status and resources are always in inadequate therefore competition and conflict are present to all societies. The most famous adherents of this perspective are Marx and Dahrendrof according to Peil.

2.2.3. Synthesis Perspective

As a third perspective there is considerable merit in the view that all societies contain elements of both model and that conflict can be functional to the system and need not lead to change. Conflict is inevitable because individuals and groups make claims on economic, prestige and power resources, which cannot all be satisfied. Loosely structured groups tend to be reasonably tolerant of conflict because members do not share all the same interest and balancing one against the other promotes the stabilization and integration of the group. Taking one model alone may result in defective perception and interpretation of society, but taken together, they complement each other and present a complete and realistic model. A synthesis that combines the best of each model would appear, therefore, to have the best perspective for understanding the structure and process of society. Conflict with other groups often promotes integration; conflict with in the group may disappear until the external threat has been disposed of.

Many intellectuals like Eitzen and Zinn agree on the duality of social life and suppose an underlying unity of each of these perspectives that all the sections necessarily occur together. Consensus theorists are rather more willing to accept the presence of conflict than conflict theorists are to agree to the presence of a measure of consensus. However, consensus theorists tend to refer to strain or damage than conflict, implying that this is something dysfunctional which the system will soon overcome, rather than a basic characteristic present in all societies. Conflict theorists are inclined to assume that any absence of overt conflict is temporary and due to an inadequate understanding of the real situation (Eitzen and Zinn 1993:45).

However, it seems more reasonable to take these two perspectives as emphasizing certain characteristics, one of which may predominate in a particular society at a specific time, both are usually present. In the study

Argobba village even though both conflict and cooperation involves as they are common and inevitable in human interaction, due to the social structure and the safety valve institutions that prevents and resolves conflict whenever it occurs among the village members or with the neighboring people, the consensus perspective predominates in the general interaction. In understanding the nature of the society, both the consensus and conflict models should be considered. For example, by accepting the two perspectives are not mutually exclusive, the problem of change in the consensus model becomes much easier to handle. It may be easier to introduce change in a society in which there is a basic consensus as to goals than in a society where there is considerable conflict over goals.

Conflict with in closely knit groups like kin groups are less easy to tolerate hence more often suppressed. In closely-knit members they find it difficult to withdraw, so they try to maintain at least the appearance of consensus. When conflict break out in such groups, it is generally more intense than in loosely structured groups because it is based on accumulated grievances and hostility in which the occasion for the conflict is only the last straw (Cosser 1966:69). Argobbas in Shonke village are close kins either cognatic or affinal kins hence most of the time they do not enter in to overt conflict because they suppress it. This suppression of conflict develop hostile feelings and my informants told me that overt conflict is infrequent but if it breaks once it is severe and damaging. Group members are more personally involved in the conflict and its resolutions are more important to them.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Background to the population and the Study Area

3.1. Historical Origin of the Population

There is no clear and certain available record about the historical origin of the Argobba ethnic group. There are two major oral traditions in the society about the origin of the word Argobba, which became the name for the ethnic group. The first oral tradition says that the word Argobba derived its name from Amharic word 'Arab Gebba' which means the Arabs entered. Even though the study community believe that these people came from South Arabia to Ethiopia during the Seventh and eighth century, according to Sidney the exact time when Argobba ethnic group immigrate to Ethiopia is not well known (Sidney 1984:50).

The second oral tradition that I got from Argobba elders is that the correct name of the ethnic group is not Argobba rather it is Hargobba. 'Har', stands for silk and 'gobba' to mean to sit. Therefore the word Hergobba is given to the ethnic group in association to their traditional clothing made of silk and sitting on silk covered materials.

Argobba claim their genealogy with the first followers of Prophet Mohammed who came as refugee to Ethiopia during the religious war of the seventh century. For Argobba their history and the introduction of Islam to Ethiopia are one and the same(Aklilu 2000:174).The informants from the studied village community also claims their ancestors as the same as it is mentioned in Aklilu's research.

Geographically Argobbas live in a wide range of distribution, predominantly in Amhara, Afar and Harari regions. The two groups of

Argobba are Northern and Southern Argobba. According to Sidney, Argobbas are Muslim people whose population size is reduced to two small and separate populations less than 9000 (Sidney 1984: 49).

However there is big variation between Sidneys' and recent studies on socio economic status of Argobba in three Zones of Amhara Regional State alone is estimated to be 358,000. However, the Argobba people according to the 1994 census were about 62, 626 (Mussa 2003: 9)

All of the Argobba people live in the hilly areas at the foot of the slopes of the rift valley. The northern Argobbas bordered in the west by Amharic speaking people and in the east by Afar speaking people (Sidney 49).

Stitz surveyed the northern Argobbas settlements in long chain of villages in which some are connected each other while others are isolated among different people. The Argobba villages stretched from the southern banks of Kessemer river to the northern banks of Robi through Choba, Wasil, Berehet, Metekleya, Channo, Gussa, Rasa and Mafud, and to the north of Goze one enters what at present is an area of purely Oromo population, After crossing Oromo zone of Jile, Fursi and Artuma one does again found an Argobba village, Shonke (Stitz 1975:187).

The Southern Argobba who numbered about 3000 undoubtedly derived from the northern group. These villages located on a ridge which forms an area southeast of the old Muslim city of Harar (Sidney 1984: 49) Similarly Leslau mentions south of Harar there is a region inhabited by Argobbas. They were originally from Ifat, a region northeast of Addis Ababa, however, they do not speak Argobba their language is Oromo (Leslau, 1957: 36)

The main economic activity of Argobba in the study area is agriculture; their advanced agriculture is distinguished in the prevalence of terraced field. The northern Argobba villages constitute the eastern the eastern edge of the area of settled agriculturalists. The Argobbas in this region occupy 'weina dega', temperate climatic Zone. The Argobbas devote more care to their fields than their neighbors.

According to Stitz the occurrence of terraced fields and cultivating of cotton, 'chat' and coffee, the predominance of Islam and the distribution of ruins in the area which are at the present settled by the Oromos and Amharic speaking population, Islam and Argobba must have been more wide spread in the past than today. There can be no doubt that at least the long stretch of 'weyna dega' land temperate climate from Kessem to Robi rivers once was settled continuously by Argobbas, Since this region directly corresponds the old Yifat Sultanate of medieval period (Stitz 1975:19).

The diminishing importance of the area and the decrease in population due to the crop failure and famine resulted in the abandoning of the terraced fields. Migration from Argobba villages to the towns along Dessie- Addis Ababa road has also reduced the population density (Ibid 188).

The language of Argobba is one of those languages, which belongs to the Semetic languages of Ethiopia. It is closely related to Amharic; the working language of Ethiopia. The language of Argobba is on the verge of disappearance and spoken only in Shonke village as first language where children and women do not speak any other language other than Argobbigna. However, in some other villages few elders speak the language with difficulties.

The residents of Dawachefa woreda, where the research site is found are mostly Oromos and few Argobbas are settled and distributed in scattered manner in so many villages as well as in towns and semi towns with in the woreda. Besides this there are also Amharas settled mostly in towns. The Argobbas and the indigenous Oromos in the woreda are adherents of Islam the rest of the population, i.e., Amharas are Orthodox Christians mostly while the newly arrived Oromos to the area who serve, as civil servants are mostly Protestants and orthodox, Christians.

Argobbas are numerically inferior to their neighboring ethnic groups because they are highly dispersed. Majority of Argobba people are settled in remote areas far from roads. Argobbas are assimilating in to the mainstream or dominant groups where they lived in the adjacent areas. They are dispersed and integrated with different nations and nationalities. Almost in all cases Argobbas constitute minority groups, i.e. numerically, their culture and language is highly engulfed and influenced by different cultures and languages like by Amhara, Oromo and Afar (Leslau 1957: 156).

Mussa, who studied the Argobba in 2003 claims that the exact number of Argobba ethnic group is not well known. This is partly due to their integration with other people. Some times they identified their ethnic group as Yifat, Dobba, Walasma, Abasiya, Kalu etc... instead of saying Argobba in Amhara region, where this study was conducted. All of which are the sub branch of Argobba but wrongly considered and identified as Amhara and Oromo and due to the settlement of majority of Argobba in very remote areas far from roads (Mussa 2003:8).

Argobbas in Dawachefa Woreda lived in peaceful coexistence with other ethnic groups mainly with Oromos in their adjacent area. In most cases

Argobbas do not enter in to violent conflict with their neighbors. Moreover, when conflict emerges between ethnic groups in their surrounding areas Argobbas play arbitrary role. They settled conflicts emerging with in the Argobba ethnic group in religious and traditional manner than bringing to the formal court. Argobbas are dominantly strict Mohammedans hence violent conflicts are rare and usually religious leaders and elders resolve conflicts.

The interaction between Argobbas and Oromos in Dawachefa Woreda presents most of the characteristics of a symbiotic inter-relationship. The interrelationship between Argobbas and Oromos is not a segementary opposition between ethnic groups striving to monopolize similar ecological niche. There is no serious competition over resources that contribute to both the hostility and the creation of violent conflicts. The similarities in their ecological niche have helped not to bridge the boundary but to strengthen, in most cases Argobbas do not differ with regard to the general life style, both are Muslims thus interact on religious occasions. Even though Argobba people constitute minority group in all places they live, there are no clear manifestations of marginalization, rather they are highly respected and wanted for affinal relation by the majority groups, because they are highly disciplined, highly devoted and possess religious knowledge.

In towns there is more or less complete assimilation in to technological and economic system. Even though overt expression of Argobba ethnic affiliation in dress and language is reduced, an Argobba ethnic identity is still fiercely maintained nowadays in association with the ethnic/ language based federal structure in order to have the opportunity to have a segregated political administrative woreda which enables the ethnic group to administer itself and to develop its own culture, language and

identity to redeem the danger of disappearance. Generally in the towns new way for ethnic interaction has been created. Amalgamation is more pronounced in

Argobbas do not enter in to violent conflict with their neighbors. Moreover, when conflict emerges between ethnic groups in their surrounding areas Argobbas play arbitrary role. They settled conflicts emerging with in the Argobba ethnic group in religious and traditional manner than bringing to the formal court. Argobbas are dominantly strict Mohammedans hence violent conflicts are rare and usually religious leaders and elders resolve conflicts.

The interaction between Argobbas and Oromos in Dawachefa Woreda presents most of the characteristics of a symbiotic inter-relationship. The interrelationship between Argobbas and Oromos is not a segementary opposition between ethnic groups striving to monopolize similar ecological niche. There is no serious competition over resources that contribute to both the hostility and the creation of violent conflicts. The similarities in their ecological niche have helped not to bridge the boundary but to strengthen, in most cases Argobbas do not differ with regard to the general life style, both are Muslims thus interact on religious occasions. Even though Argobba people constitute minority group in all places they live, there are no clear manifestations of marginalization, rather they are highly respected and wanted for affinal relation by the majority groups, because they are highly disciplined, highly devoted and possess religious knowledge.

In towns there is more or less complete assimilation in to technological and economic system. Even though overt expression of Argobba ethnic affiliation in dress and language is reduced, an Argobba ethnic identity is still fiercely maintained nowadays in association with the ethnic/ language based federal structure in order to have the opportunity to have a segregated political administrative woreda which enables the ethnic group to administer itself and to develop its own culture, language and

identity to redeem the danger of disappearance. Generally in the towns new way for ethnic interaction has been created. Amalgamation is more pronounced in

to the gate; greet three times saying 'Asalamelekhum' and then they enter home. After inviting them to sit on the guest bed, the female's father asks them the purpose of their visit. The elders stand and explain their issue by saying "give your daughter to our son who are given to us by Allah". After hearing his positive reply the elders sit and drink coffee and they announce the girl whom they want for their son. By this time the female's father cannot refuse to betroth his daughter to the son whoever he is.

When the betrothal period ends and the wedding date approaches the male's father goes to the female's parents and asks to take her. This happens when she is twelve or thirteen years and reaches for marriage. Finally her father expresses his willingness and decides the wedding day.

Unlike their neighbors and other ethnic groups dowry in Shonke Argobbas is too simple. The dowry is one Sandal shoes and head Scarf whether the groom is poor or rich. However, he can do what ever he likes after the wedding day. The bride's father buys ornaments, bracelet, neck lece and cloth for his daughter. The Argobba couples in Shonke village live with the husband's kin in which the residence is virilocal. The new groom builds his own house on the land given to him from his father.

A man is permitted to marry more than one woman by the religion as long as he has sufficient wealth and able to administer more households. However, practicing polygamy is too rare in the village due to low standard of living, which makes this marriage difficult. It is also reported that there is no marriage by inheritance in the village.

3.1.2. The Unique Housing Architecture

Argobbas in the study village build their houses on the top of the hill. They live in a small densely populated village called Shonke. Houses have not

compounded or possess too small compound. The village is surrounded by sharp escarpments and has only two gates to enter and exit from it. The houses are constructed from stone and mud, of which the wall is made up of stone and cemented with mud and the roof is made from stone, wood, and soil. The shape of the house is rectangular and partitioned in to four rooms. The roof is leaned with four to six olive wood pillars, in which olive wood is lied up on the pillars and covered with properly piled stones. Over the stone cover sand is filled and covered with soil in its outer part. The roof is slightly inclined in its one side in order to protect rainfall from getting into the house. A wood made rainspout is attached on one side of the roof that brought rainwater from the roof to the ground.

The houses are build vertically starting from the bottom of the hill to the top following north to south direction. The buildings are in a chain and very close to each other, often sharing walls hierarchally step by step from the bottom to the top. A person can move or up stair up on the roof of the houses from one tip of the village to the other end.

The houses of the village look like flat rectangular mountain when observed from far place, modern sky rocketed building approaching the village. However at the arrival to the village it is bounded and isolated with sharp escarpments except narrow sides in the east and west direction. The entrance road to the village is stretched from north to south, which divides the village into two. On the sides of this road there are no other tributary roads. Entrance to the houses is following the only road and turning to the left or right when reached the desired house.

In the previous times the residents of the village used thin cotton made thread to protect the village from their enemy attack. They tied up the thread from one end of the gate to the other at night. The village residents have their own

method to enter to the village with out snapping the thread. If the thread is turn off it is the sign for a new comer enters to their village hence they would be alert and search the enemy in the village.

The rooms of the house are partitioned with wall made from stone that is cemented with mud. The houses have three to four rooms. Medew, located in front and it is serves as saloon and adults and guests sit or sleep and served also as dinning room, the permanent stone-grinding mill is also found. Gat, used for women bedroom, kitchen in which food prepare and other services took place. Temedew woreda, is a room where coughs, goats and sheep are kept. 'Serreabet', is found inside the gat used for property storage. The houses have one or two doors depending on the size of the house. In Shonke village there are about two hundred fifty houses, which have unique architecture from the common house building of rural Ethiopia.

One of my informants aged about eighty years old told me that the exact period of the houses construction is not well known. He told me that his grand father told him the houses were there when he was kid. They constructed their houses with stone to protect themselves from attack and used as fortress. Previously when Oromos and Amharas attacked Argobbas, their houses were burnt and they were killed. Therefore in order to protect themselves from attack, they built houses from stone that resist fire and bullet on the untouched top hills.

3.1.3. Livelihood and Living Standard

Even though they produce coffee, which is almost used for home consumption Shonke Argobbas have low standard of living. However there is no major living standard difference between them and their neighbors. Their agriculture is subsistence due to land fragmentation and decreasing soil fertility, mountainous topography and lack of interest and knowledge to use modern agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, selected seed, technologies and etc...

Lack of road infrastructure inhibited them from providing their products to the market. They sell coffee and 'chat' to a small scale by which they bought industrial products. Due to rugged topography they practice traditional labor intensive and hand hoe production tools. The study communities spend much of their time on improving their agricultural production by building traditional terraces and expanding their farmland and by clearing bushes to overcome farmland scarcity.

Except in bad harvest time in most cases the study community does not purchase food grains. But it is observed that the community is in a high shortage of money. Even in good harvest time they produce not much more than their subsistence, hence their income is minimal. Lack of women participation on income generating activities makes the situation intensified. Even though few individual have better economic situation generally they are poor. In addition to these absence of saving and credit associations and traditional economic institutions such as 'ikub' contributes a lot to the low improvement of their living standard.

The study communities main expenditure items are clothes and land tax. Most women and children do not wear shoes and children wear apron, which is shared among two of them. The community has limited habit of engaging in different income generating activities rather than working on their farmland. They did not want to migrate to towns in search of labor work.

Water borne diseases and others are observed and reported in the village. Due to unprotected drinking water the community utilizes unsafe water. Lack of land around their house and the rocky nature of the ground for toilet construction have also contributed to this problem. Moreover, limited awareness towards obtaining environmental and household sanitation and

insufficient health facilities have contributed to poor health condition in the area.

Regarding education the community has little or no awareness of its advantage. But very few children are attending school as their parents fearing money punishment by the local administration. The study community believes and perceives that modern education could change their children to Christianity and depart from them. Even they thought that if their children attend the modern education they might abandon traditionally respected assets of the village. Above all imposing Oromiffa language, as media of instruction at the expense of their language became the major cause of low enrollment as informants explained; they feel as their rights are abused.

The traditional cloth of Argobbas is made from cotton spin by women and produced by traditional weavers. Women's dress is fully white and it is decorated with various colors embroidery in the front side from neck to the bottom tip. The circumference of the front side from neck dress to the bottom tip is decorated with small metals balls. Married women put waistband made from different threads and cotton materials. But now a day due to interaction with towns the traditional wearing is limited among the elders.

Generally in the study area poor soils, lack of adequate rainfall, mountainous topography, selling food grains immediately after harvest and buying later when the price is high contribute a lot to the community's low standard of living. Low income has resulted in poor food intake and housing this in turn leads to poor health and consequently low productivity and low income. In addition to these shortage of farmland, illiteracy, traditional farming techniques, drought and government neglect to provide appropriate infrastructure and social services contribute to the lack of progress.

3.1.4 Social Change and Development

All societies experience some change in their social structure and culture over time. Ideas, norms and institutions spread from one society to another because they are interaction with other societies that do things somewhat differently, no society is stable or static. Even the most isolated society has some changes from time to time as its members adjust to varying environmental conditions or invent new types of doing things (Peil 1977: 283-85) .

The influence of trade when they went to market places is the most important factor that brought change through which they became in contact with people having different ideas and experience. Previously wearing trouser was considered as taboo, however now a day even though almost no village member wears trouser, they have some attitudinal change towards it. Wearing trouser was and is considered as being Christian. Even their cattle bolt when see a man dressed in trouser. I had also experienced a similar thing that children cry and run away when looked at me in my arrival to the village in the first day. Even adults feel comfortable and belongingness and considered their culture is being respected when I started dressing apron starting from the second date of my arrival.

Shonke Argobbas have been sending their children to modern school since the last four years. The community sends only one of their children this is mainly because they fear that if they don't send their they will be punished by the local administration as they have limited awareness on the advantage of education, which in turn resulted in minimal social change.

Primarily Argobbas produce cloths they wear, but now turned to wearing factory-produced cloths, which is relatively of high quality and comfort.

In previous time the village elders arbitrated all affairs of the village including murder cases. Although currently murder cases are infrequent, due to

government enforcement they are transferred to the formal court found in Kemise town, the capital of the Woreda rather than handling and resolving by elders.

In the study village development interventions initiated by government or non-governmental organization, which can bring economic and social change, are very limited. As informants told me some years before a non-governmental organization called World Vision had tried to construct hand dug wells for potable water supply in the village. The organization was trying to start implementing its project with out consulting the community because of this reason the project has failed as the community refused it because they were suspicious that the organization has its own hidden agenda to spread Christianity in the village.

It is observed that there is high resistance towards using contraceptives. Though, some informants explain that the majority of the community changed their attitude toward children vaccination.

3.1.5. Language

Linguistically Argobbas are related to Semitic language family, under which Amharic, the working language, Tigrigna, Guragigna, Aderigna are categorized (Bender 1969). According to Tesfaye Argobigna is one of the most endangered languages there is high degree of linguistic exchange and assimilation going on (Tesfaye 2000:157). Similarly Aklilu explains Argobba are being assimilated and speak the languages of the larger society in which they live like Amhara, Oromo and Afar (Aklilu 2000:182). In the research site the language is not widely spoken but used at household level. However the language where it survives at household level faces another danger in which children at school are forced to learn in oromigna language that contributes for the avoidance of their language through time. The language of the dominant and majority group in the area will

develop at the expense of Argobbigna if the situation continues. Argobba language has no alphabet and literature yet alphabets are under preparation.

3.1.6. Nomenclature

Nomenclature in Shonke Argobbas is associated with the religion and custom. The common names in the village are Nura Hussein, Mohammed Awel, Abdulkerim and Kedir for males and Muntaha, Merema and Keria for females. Nomenclature is mostly associated with dates of birth; for example, males born on Tuesday are called Nura Hussein, those born on Wednesday and Saturday can be named as Abdulkadir and Kedir respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Areas of Co-operation

This chapter discusses the areas of cooperation of Shonke Argobbas within their village and at an inter-ethnic level. It tries to mention the different aspects and dimensions of cooperation both at intra and inter-ethnic levels. The Argobbas' geographical proximity as well as their total circumscription by their Oromo neighbors in the study area allowed them to have social, political, economic and religious cooperation with their neighboring people.

Argobbas in Shonke village have cooperation both with their intra and inter-ethnic groups. Cooperation is largely at an intra-ethnic level. At least their intra and inter-ethnic interaction is observed in the absence of serious and overt conflict.

The social relationships are likely to involve both 'love' and 'hatred' which generally are intricately linked. One frequently dislikes the person one loves; hence it is often difficult to separate co-operation and conflict in concrete reality (Bernard 1983:60). Conflict over power, politics and resources is present to all societies. But the form it takes varies considerably from society to society. Some societies prefer or prioritize co-operation for mutual advantage more than conflict (Peil 1977: 290).

4.1. Intra Ethnic Co-operation

Ethnicity refers to a social group or group identity that an individual ascribes to him or herself and that is also accepted by others. It is the basis for the formation of categories that are rooted in socially perceived differences in origin, language and/or religion. In many aspects, ethnicity resembles descent ideology: it stresses one's origin or descents, as part of one's social identity is usually ascribed at birth (Bates and Rassam 2000: 1). While such an

awareness of the past is a source of unity, it also emphasizes that which potentially sets one segment of the population apart from the other. Ethnicity and identity are mostly based on the notions of shared kinship, history, culture and language. Small societies, who claim the same descent and kinship trust each other, communicate better and facilitate mutual co-operation. Ethnic group membership can structure access to resources and inter group interactions and co – operation.

4.1.1. Social Co operations

All Argobbas in Shonke village consider, as they are cognatic kins, descended from a common ancestor. All the village communities know each other by their names. Their relation ships or cooperation are based on being belonging to the same descent and the same kinship. There is no serious resource or other kind of competition among them that led to violent and damaging conflict.

There is no social or economic organization for funeral and mourning in Shonke village. But it does not mean that there is no co-operation for funeral and morning in Shonke village and other social and economic problems. The informants justified the absence of social or economic organization that it is not important for the village because the village community belongs to the same decent and have close cognatic relationship. Therefore all members of the village consider such problems as their own concern hence the entire village communities have the responsibility and obligation to help and Co-operate whenever difficulties and problems happen.

In Shonke Village the person who lost member of his/her nuclear family member by death is helped by providing firewood, water, coffee and 'yesedeqa ehel' (Cereals needed for serving on mourning) and shroud if he is not in a good economic position. When a member of the Argobba village dies it is announced for other Argobba communities in the surrounding villages. Argobbas in Shonke

village and the surrounding villages come for funeral and mourning to express their condolences. The mourning ceremony in the studied village lasts for two weeks. Those who attended the funeral and come to express their condolences are served with food and 'Kollo'. There is no tradition of money offering to the aggrieved in the village community.

In Shonke village Argobbas also help and co-operate each other during wedding. The village communities co-operate each other by providing water, firewood and cereals needed for wedding purpose.

Argobbas in Shonke village produce coffee for their consumption and to some extent for sell. They drink coffee twice or three times a day with their neighbors in the village, which are cognatic or affinal kins, each other. On the coffee ceremony they discuss and share ideas in various social, economic, political and religious issues.

4.1.2. Economic Cooperation

Argobbas in the study area have their own way of economic co-operation when members of the village community face economic difficulty. For example due to bad harvest or other reason if member of the community needed grain, other member of the community who have good storage of grain distribute grain from the storage usually kept under ground far from their house at the farm place. There may be up to five years yield in the underground storage. Those members of the village debt grain will replace when they are able to replace it. The replacement has its own order. The people who take the grain do not replace the grain with equal amount and the debtor does not receive with equal amount rather the debtor receives by reducing some amount. This is because the grains given from the ground storage have some amount of moisture, and if it is dried up in the sun the amount will reduce therefore the debtor do not want to receive extra grain.

The Shonke Argobbas have their own intra ethnic labor co-operation. The intra-ethnic labor co-operation is especially for agricultural activities and house building. The two types of labor exchange in the village are 'Geso' and 'Enjada wolye'. Gesso is half day agricultural and house building labor cooperation. 'Geso' starts from 9 am in the morning and lasts at 1 pm. 'Geso' is called for labor co-operation for agricultural activities like ploughing, harvesting and house building. The number of persons involve in the 'Geso' depends on the nature and amount of the work (activity). The person who calls the people for 'Geso' prepares and offers the local bread and coffee for break fast on the place where 'Geso' takes place. Through this type of Co-operation the village communities work in turn for each other.

The other labor exchange co-operation among the Shonke Argobba village communities is 'Enjada Wolye', which lasts for full day. It is also a labor exchange Co-operation mainly for agricultural and house building activities. In this case the feast is wider and the activity also. For house building the professionals for the traditional house building summoned. They are summoned for "telema", to make the basement of the house. In the morning at about 8:30 there is coffee ceremony for the professionals and at the end of the break fast there is blessing. The 'Enjada Wolye' starts after the blessing by the 'Abegar' and elders. The basement of the house lies by the professionals and the piling of the stone continues. At about 1 pm those people invite for 'Enjada Wolye' stop their duty and start the 'Zehur Salat'. At the end of the 'Salat' the lunch that is called 'Zehuregna' or 'Kenegna' offer. The Lunch is 'Injera' with butter that is spiced with pepper. In the afternoon from 'Zehuregna' to down the 'Enjada Wolye' continues. At the end of the day the dinner will be prepared and provided by the person who called the 'Enjada Wolye'. The building of the house is not completed in a day. When the building of the house completed the big dinner feast is prepared and cattle is slaughtered for the feast.

The community also helped each other when cattle enter in to the cliff that is common in the village due to the rugged topography of the area. If a person's cattle enter in to the cliff any member of the community who observe will went and slaughter before it is perished and announced to the owner of the cattle. The slaughtered cattle will be bought with an individual in three hundred or four hundred birr and distribute with small amount of purchase that equalizes the amount he spent. The money is given to the looser immediately. Those who bought the meat give the money after fifteen days. However, if the person is well economically he distributes the meat for his neighbors. The following case study can illustrate the situation.

Case Study 1: Economic Cooperation

Abdurahman, 38 years old farmer says;

In 2002 my ox entered in to tehe cliff when I was at kemise town for buying household goods. The village people who observed the situation went to the cliff and slaughtered before it died and perished. Because I was not in shortage of oxen I ordered the meat to be distributed among my neighbors and the surrounding residents from all organs to partake.

The village community also helped each other through land and oxen lease or rent. If a person has no oxen he can rent oxen from the retired elder who cannot plow, this is called 'Debersa'. The one who lease ox give four quintals of sorghum each carrying fifty kilograms per ox. The other form of ox lease is 'Yefechit', in which the leaseholder plows two days for the owner of the ox and one day for himself manner. There is also land lease in which owner of the land can rent for a person in shortage of land. 'Enkulkul', the land that is not in the periphery and exposed to wild animals' destruction leased and in return the owner of the land and the leaseholder distributes the yield equally. 'Megazo', the land which is not that much exposed for wild animals' crop destruction in this case the yield is distributed two third for the land owner and one third for the leaseholder. The third type of land lease is called 'Kedeta', in which the land

is located at the periphery and highly exposed to wild animals. In the return the landowner receives five to six quintals of sorghum each contains fifty kilograms and the rest for the leaseholder.

Case study 2: Land and Oxen lease

Kedir, a farmer informant aged twenty five testifies the importance of such co operations as follows:

After I married before five years, I received plot of farmland from my father, which is not enough to lead and administer my home. The land I got was too rugged hence not much favorable for agriculture and this was further intensified by the absence of oxen, which is in chronic shortage in our village. Therefore, I should look for the land lease, 'Kedeta', and oxen lease, 'Debersa'. In return I gave four quintals of sorghum per ox after harvest for the owner of the oxen. I also leased the periphery land, 'Kedeta', which is exposed to wild animals that devastate the crop. For 'Kedeta' I return five quintals each fifty kilograms after difficult protection of the crop from wild animals day and night. With 'Debersa' and 'Kedeta' I can improve my life and I now have an ox and goats.

The division of labor between sexes and ages organizes the daily activities of the Argobba village communities in the study area. Men are responsible for every agricultural activity, collecting firewood from the forest and providing the needed things from the market, generally men are engaged in economic rewarding activities. Women are responsible for house hold duties including cooking, child care, preparing grain powder with stone mill at home and fetching water from water springs owned by the village community. Children's task is cattle keeping and helping in agricultural activities and other duties at their home. Women are excluded in so many aspects of the community life; their domain is limited at home.

4.1.3. Political Co-operation

Societies in the studied village are not interested towards the local level politics. Most of the informants reported that, Argobbas refrained and have less participation in their local level politics, only a few individual members of the family are eager and interested to participate in the political issues in their locality. However the community cooperates to implement government works. Argobbas in the study area administer themselves with their indigenous institutions, the 'Qadi' system and 'Ageyemeshore' than the local government office. Most aspects of their life are lead by their traditions in which they resolve their conflicts, perform their agricultural activities even they do not use manufactured fertilizers, prefer and educate most of their children in religious school with their own traditional ways etc...

4.1.4 Religious Co-operation

Religion in the study area is observed as a source of integration, unity and their identity among members of the village community as well as with other Argobbas in other villages. In the village rituals are performed at the household level and group level. At the household level there are rituals for moulid and for the well being of the family. Rituals are also performed at the village level in association with agricultural production two times a year, before farming starts and after harvest, which is called 'ziara' . In addition to similar origin, language and history, a common religion helps to hold together a group of people and co-operate each other, who might other wise be competing economically and/or politically (Peil 1977: 163). Religion may help to integrate a society, especially when all members share the same religion. On the other hand, religious pluralism has often led to conflict because people who belong to a certain religion consider and accept his faith contain the ultimate truth find it difficult to be tolerant of those holding other beliefs (Ibid: 179)

Most aspects of social life in Shonke including mourning and wedding ceremonies are associated with the religion. The community's customs and traditions are according to the Holly Koran. But it doesn't mean that all their day-to-day activity is according to the religious doctrine. In some aspects they share similar aspects to their neighboring societies.

Every kind of difficulty and problem occurred in the village is tried to resolve in religious terms. Illness is treated and cured with 'dua' or pray. If a member of the community sick it is announced to the 'wolyes' to make 'dua' for the sick. The religious leaders go to the sick and pray for Allah to cure from his sickness.

Case study 3: The role of Wolyes

The following is an instance of how an informant aged about forty-five explained the role of 'wolyes' in solving their problems.

My son was sick and suffered seriously from epilepsy in which through time his lower body part was paralyzed. I called wolyes to my home in order to make dua, pray by providing them chat and coffee and finally my son get cured. When they made dua sheitan, Satan that caught my son and suffered him started to cry and wollyes ordered the satan to release and went out from my son. From then on my son is healthier and argues that all evils and diseases are caused by sheitan.

The village communities have religious co-operation when drought occurs. The elders, 'Quadi', 'Abeggar', and other religious leaders come together and pray for rain. On these praying cattle is slaughtered. Threats of illness, agricultural failure and disturbances and the like in inter personal relations give rise to calls for help.

Religious beliefs are important in solving integrative problems because they legitimize value patterns and they suggest why certain values should be

preferred (Peil 1977: 162). The role of religion in integrating individuals to the society and the interaction between religious institutions and economic institutions is demonstrated in the study area.

The village community practiced local religious custom in addition to the practices of their world religion, Islam. They believe in both systems. As adherents of Islam they celebrate two religious holidays like other Muslims. These are Id Alfitir and Id Aladah with similar ceremonies. In addition they celebrate their own local religious customs like birthday of Prophet Mohammed.

The Shonke village Argobbas celebrates the holiday called Ziara twice a year. The first Ziara is celebrated in October, the season in which grains are riped. Before harvesting the inhabitants of the village brings what they have in a common place and the elders make dua. After this dua the peasants collect and harvest their yields. This is done to provide members of the village who have not farm due to various reasons and needy people to taste the yield of the year. On this day all members of the village community come together regardless of sex and age.

The second Ziara is celebrated in December or January. This is prepared because it is the season when ploughing starts. Every peasant brings wheat he has including animals for slaughter for the dua before ploughing starts.

4.2. Inter-Ethnic Co-operation

Inter-ethnic relationship is manifested through various aspects like co-operations and conflicts in religious, economic and social matters. Even though Argobbas in Shonke village have economic, social and religious interaction to some extent with their majority Oromo neighbors, who possess different language, culture, origin and history. The village communities in the

study area constitute demographically minority status they can survive and continue to keep their ethnic identity, segregate territory, language etc...

Even though Argobbas in the study area constitute demography minority status there is no clear manifestation of marginalization. They are not excluded from mainstream social life. Pankhurst puts marginalization, as manifested in restrictions on social interaction, exchanges, food and drink consumption, segregation in burial, submissive greetings etc. (Pankhurst and Freeman 2001:3).

Inter-group contact will be associated with harmony to the extent that it involves interaction that is intimate, where there is equal status between inter groups, where the surrounding social climate is supportive, and where the purpose of interaction is co-operative rather than competitive (Tylor: 1994, 180). The Argobbas interactions with their Oromo ethnic group neighbors are not manifested either in strong competition and conflict over resources and power or social and economic interaction and co-operations in the study area.

4.2.1. Social Co-operation

Argobbas in the study area live in peaceful co-existence with their Oromo neighbors. In the place where Argobbas lived, they are very respected by other ethnic groups because most Argobbas are disciplined, respect people and possess deep religious knowledge hence they became religious teachers and leaders not only in their village but also in other places. Argobbas resolve their internal problems with their traditional as well as religious institutions before it transfer to violence and damaging conflict. They also resolve conflicts in other ethnic groups.

In the study area there are no places of social interaction like drinking houses, because they are strict adherents of Islam. The most common places of interaction in the area are mosque besides its religious place.

The studied village communities do not have strong social relationship with their Oromo neighbors at funerals, wedding and other aspects of social life. The social life is mainly limited with in their segregate settlement pattern. The total inhabitants in the ethnic village are not exceeding two hundred fifty households. The Argobba ethnic group in Shonke village posses their own land, water springs, burial places, mosques which prevents strong social contact with other ethnic groups to some extent.

There are no restrictions on entering one another's home or eating together even though it is infrequent. Whenever Argobbas and Oromos meet they greet each other. Argobbas of Shonke and Oromos communicate with Oromo language, which is spoken by a few male adults of the Shonke village and the others at least greet with Amharic language. In the study village Women and children speak neither Amharic nor Oromo language.

Common places for interaction between the Argobbas in the study area and their Oromo neighbors are too limited. The major places for interaction are the local kebele administrative station and the mosque where the two ethnic groups interact some times. The two ethnic groups do not have burial or other kind of economic associations together. The studied village communities are endogamous in which inter marriage with other ethnic group is forbidden or rare. Argobbas in the village married with their own village members or other Argobbas from other villages. Even if Argobbas are minority demographically there is no social marginalization in the study area.

Argobbas in the study area do not want affinal relation ship with the Oromo; they overtly reasoned out that if they inter- married with other ethnic group

they might lose their ethnic identity. More over they consider endogamy as a mechanism for keeping their language, culture and identity. They believed that the whole Argobba ethnic identity, language is endangered and engulfed by other cultures and languages. They believed that it is only in their village that the community keeps its language and culture. However, in my stay in the area I can understand that they have some sort of ethnic prejudice in which they are pure that belongs to the descendants of Qurash family, the close relatives of Prophet Mohammed. To the contrary the Oromos wanted to intermarry with Argobbas mainly because the amount of the bride wealth needed to marry an Argobba girl in relation to their own ethnic group is small only one sandal shoe and scarf. And Oromo youth also wanted Argobba girls due to their beautiful physical appearance.

The segregation of the Argobbas in the Shonke village widens inter-ethnic differences between the Argobbas and the Oromos. Especially there is no contact between Argobba women and children with the other ethnic group. Women and children are limited with the ethnic boundary of their village; women never went to market or other places all things needed for the household from the market and the other places are provided by the husband.

Even though there is no close social and economic relationship and ties between the Argobba village community and the Oromos as the group, very few individuals from both groups have close social and economic relationships. In my stay in the area I can observe that individuals from the two ethnic groups establish close ties and chat for different purposes at one another's house.

The inter-ethnic relationship is not that much seen in competition /conflict over scarce resources or other aspects of co-operation. Most aspects of co-operation are more likely observed among the members of the Argobba village community.

4.2.2 Economic Co-operation

Argobbas in the study village and their Oromo neighbors possess their own ethnic land and produce similar products due to similar ecological niche. Argobbas of Shonke bordered in one side by smiths who belongs to Oromo ethnic group discriminated both by Oromos and Argobbas. Smithing in the study area is considered as despised occupation, and Argobbas and Oromo consider smiths as if they possess evil eye.

Shonke Argobbas have economic interaction and co-operation with the smiths in which they buy their products, and smiths' in turn buy chat from Argobbas. There is also another economic exchange and co-operation, smiths repair agricultural instruments through out the year being paid by Argobbas in kind only after the harvest mostly about 50kg sorghum. Argobbas in the study area have some sort of economic contact with their neighbors. Argobbas interact with their Oromo neighbors for example when they wanted to repair knives, ploughs and other agricultural instruments. Argobbas bought their agricultural instruments from their Oromo neighbors who engaged in smithing at their workplace with few distance from their village. The market area is located at Chereti and Kemisse, which are about twenty kilometers and twenty five kilometers apart from the village respectively. Due to the mountainous physical feature of the area and because of the absence of transportation Argobbas in Shonke do not usually go to marketplaces.

The two ethnic groups, the Oromo and the Argobba do not influence each other in economic terms because they produce almost similar things and occupy the same ecological niche. The two ethnic groups do not have local saving and credit associations, burial or any other type of economic ties in common. There is no labor exchange co-operation between them. One ethnic group does not be sharecropper to the other. Inter-ethnic economic co-operation between Argobbas and Oromos is too rare or almost nil as my informants reported and I

can observe in my stay in the village. Almost every type of co-operations is with in intra-ethnic limitation.

Trading with the immediate Oromo neighbors is rare in the study village. Argobbas sole production are agricultural yields; cereals, chat, coffee, cotton which are produced mostly for consumption due to land scarcity and because largely dependent on rain. There is no market place in the vicinity, even there is no single retailing small shop. Both ethnic groups buy salt and other household needed factory products from either Chereti or Kemisse.

4.2.3 Political Cooperation

The local level politics makes the two ethnic groups to be more divided and widen their differences after the introduction of ethnic or language based politics by the government. The ethnic federalism of the current government makes the two ethnic groups to be suspicious and disappointed towards one another. Especially the Argobbas in the studied village feel that they are treated unjustly. The domination or control of the local politics and administration is the major source of dissatisfaction or conflict. This situation has developed hostile feelings with in the village community. As I can understand from observation and my informants explained to me, the local administration and political situation treated them unjustly and denied their rights in terms of the use of their language at the school.

The studied village communities believed that Argobba language is now spoken only in their village at the household level. They complain that their children are obliged to learn in Oromo language that makes their language to be endangered further. They like their children to learn in their own language or in Amharic, which is close to their language of course categorized in the same language family, that is, Semitic language family.

The informants and discussants told me that they send their children to the school just to escape from punishment by the local administration. They justified the situation that their children reached the upper grades since the satellite school is opened in their village which is up to grade grade four, however, their children know nothing about what they learnt due to language barrier and hostility. Therefore they think that they loose two things by sending their children to school, first they loose their children labor and secondly their children get nothing from the school. Even if the language has its own contribution for their feeling in this regard, I think their opinion towards modern education contributes larger share. My informants and discussants state that they do not like to send their children to school because they believe that modern education makes their children "Christian" in their words and wears trouser. In the discussion with the teachers at the school I can understand parents complain is appropriate and children are at the school simply to fulfill the number of the class and because they are obliged by their parents.

Despite the hostile feelings the two ethnic groups come together with their representatives at the local administration. They conduct meetings at the local kebele with the Oromo language, which dissatisfies Argobbas , because not all Argobbas can communicate with this language. But the Argobbas in the study area cooperate to implement the government policies and decisions at their local level.

4.2.4. Religious Co-operation

The interaction/cooperation between the Shonke Argobbas and the Oromos in the study area is more in religious terms than economic, social and political aspects. The economic and social interaction of Argobba village community with their neighbors is very loose. This loose interaction prohibits the ethnic integration in the research site.

Religion is observed as a source of integration, unity and their identity for the village community. There is no other sect of Islam what they called Wahabia, fundamentalists, in the village as well as in their neighboring Argobba and Oromo Villages; which they dislike. In Shonke, which is very small village there are about three mosques.

Theoretically Argobbas in the study area believed that all Muslims are brothers. Hence, their Oromo neighbors are considered as brothers because they are Muslims. However, Argobbas undermine them due to their latent religious position and knowledge. I observe and understand from my informants that despite religious similarity that helps for co-operation and integration, practically it does not refrain from hostile feelings towards each other. As Nnoli states, when ethnicity is politicized and political power are used for socio-economic competition between ethnic groups, hostility is inevitable. (Nnoli1989: 24)

During my field work I happen to observe and understand that the religious co-operation between the two ethnic groups; when Prophet Mohammed's birthday (Moulid) was celebrated for three days starting from April 10. This religious holiday is celebrated at the Argobbas Mosque in every year with great feast. I was invited on the celebration with my Argobba friends. The celebration starts at 4:00pm with Asur salat and continues overnight with different religious ceremonies and songs. Pilgrimages come from different places from Harar, Addis Ababa, and Nazareth and from the surrounding towns. About twenty cattle are slaughtered. On this holiday Shonke Argobbas are host and they served their guests including their Oromo neighbors with food and other facilities. On this occasion people from Argobba and Ormo villages of the surrounding come together and pray and celebrate Moulid for three days over night by chewing chat. In my two days presence on the celebration I do not observe any intra or inter ethnic conflict.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Areas of conflicts

This chapter presents the types and nature of conflicts among the Shonke Argobba at both intra and inter ethnic levels. Even though it is difficult to differentiate conflicts in to social, economic, political strictly and since they overlap sometimes, I tried to discuss conflicts that emerge in the study area in a separate portion.

Human beings have been learning about conflict throughout its history and development. It is folk knowledge, used in every day life through out his development. That knowledge is created with in generation as humans learn better to interact with minimal cost (Bartos and Wehr 2002: 1). The basic causes of conflict in human society are economic deprivation and social subjugation. In a human society conflicts will always be there between individuals, groups, ethnic groups because of differences of opinion, clash of interest, establishment of superiority etc. social injustices are constant sources of discontent, giving rise to conflicts.

Avruch explains conflict as a characteristic feature of all human beings, and as manifestation of all social relationships (Avruch 2004: 24). Similarly Coser states that conflict emerges in every type of social structure because individual and groups claim to scarce resource from time to time that creates rivalry (Coser 1966: 152). The two broad causes of conflict are scarcity of power and resources, which mostly leads to struggle between individuals or groups, and perceived divergence of interest which mostly leads to negotiation or agreement. Conflict is a struggle not only for status but also for scarce resources and significant social change (Himes 1980:12). Conflicts can be categorized in to internal and external.

5.1. Internal Conflicts

Conflict within the group may help to establish unity or reestablish unity and cohesion where it has been threaten by hostile and antagonistic feelings among the members (Coser 1966:153). However not every type of conflict is likely to benefit neither group structure, nor that conflict can subs serve both functions for all groups. Internal social conflicts that concern goals, values or interests that do not contradict the basic assumption upon which the relationship are founded and tend to be positively functional for the social structure. (Tylor 1994:151).

People who have many common features often do one another worse or worse than the outsiders. The more we have in common with another as whole persons, however, the more easily will or totality be involved in every simple relation to him. In this situation if a quarrel arises between individuals in such an intimate relationship it is often so passionately expansive. Thus a greater intensity of conflict can be expected in those relationship in the participants have been lead to suppress hostile feelings.

In conflicts within a close group, one side hates the other more intensely the more it is felt to be a threat to the unity and the identity of the group. Greater participation in the group and greater personality involvement of the members provide greater opportunity to engage in intense conflicting behavior and hence more violent reaction against disloyalty. In this case intense conflict and group loyalty are two faces of the same relation. The more frequent the interaction, the more occasions for hostile interaction (Coser 1966:73). However, frequent occasions for conflict do not necessarily led in frequent conflicts. The close relation ship and strong affective mutual attachment of the participants helps to avoid conflict. Later on the suppression and avoidance of conflict may intensify the conflict if it once breaks.

The three general reasons why two parties possess different values are, having different roles; they have been separated from each other and difference in size and technology. For an open conflict to emerge, there are two main contributions, the formation of conflict groups and sequence of events that ignites conflict action. Retaliation often involves greater violence than used by the opponents (Bartos, Wehr 2002:35).

All group relations have positive elements of attraction (cooperation) and repulsion or conflict. However, the forces of social integration usually tend to outweigh forces of coercion. Society wants to stay together and thus ignores or suppresses conflict rather than acknowledging and using it. Conflict can take either a Co-operative or coercive path.

5.1.1. Conflicts arising from Social Bases

In most cases violence and damaging conflicts are rare in the study Argobba village. The village communities avoid overt conflict through fierce norms and values of the community against violence, which passes from generations to generations. Every parent teaches his children about the destructiveness of conflict hence teach the importance of peaceful co-existence and tolerance. They teach their children violence and conflict would result famine drought and other evils. Therefore the siblings are so peaceful, avoid conflict and developed tolerance.

Dispute can emerge during the wedding ceremony between the groom's entourage and the bride's family and relatives. When the groom's entourages release shout/cry/ that invites quarrel with the bride's side. When the brides' side hears this shout they close the way to the bride and prevent the groom's entourage and enter to the bride. This happens between adolescents of each side. In this situation dispute or conflict may occur between the two parties.

Most of the time this kind of conflict emerges with the other Argobba village adolescents, but mostly this doesn't transform to violence and damaging conflict.

The Argobbas in the study area do not intermarry with other ethnic groups. However there are some exceptions those individual members intermarry out of their ethnic group by breaking the norm and values of their village. In situations if the Argobba woman marries other ethnic group and gets divorce later she can return to her village and remarry with Argobba man. But if she gives birth from her former marriage, the individual born from other ethnic group is not allowed to marry with Argobba woman. This person will marry from his father's side. In Shonke, Argobbas trace their descent in their father line. They are patrilineal. In this situation conflicts or disputes may occur in relation to inheritance, land litigation etc.

Even though divorce is not that much common due to various reasons the couples can divorce if they cannot agree each other. According to their custom the couples can not divorce after they give birth two children. The other source of conflict in the village is due to children and wives. The disagreement between children and wives can transform to large-scale conflicts between the male /husbands by siding their respective children and wife.

Conflict also can occur in association with marriage. For example if the bride is not found to be virgin. In the study village girls are expected to be virgin and avoid sex before marriage. Early age marriage is a mechanism in preventing and keeping the communities tradition in this regard. Specially girls if they are not found virgin at marriage they loose their dignity, however, there is no severe punishment or exclusion because the couples are close relatives mostly they are cousins. Even the male and the relatives keep the secret and the couples continue their life hence maltreatment of the wife is not common.

Latent disputes may occur between the husband and wife due to poor food making skill, failure to prepare and offer food timely, lateness in fetching water etc

Springs can also be source of conflict in the village community. The source of water for household purpose and their cattle are communal and private waterwells springs. There is shortage of water in the village especially during seasons where there is no rain. The communal spring is dug by the community, protected and developed and owned by the community. Every member of the village community can use this spring in responsible manner. In the communal water spring small-scale disputes can occur between children and woman due to keeping the turn. And some times this dispute between children and women can develop and reach up to the male or husbands of the respective parties. Privately owned water springs can also generate disputes among members of the village. These private water springs are dug, protected & developed by individuals on their farmland. Only their respective owners use these kinds of springs. The owner has the right to prohibit. The prohibition of the private spring is particularly in drought seasons. During rainy seasons the owner would not prohibit the well and every body can use it. In months when water is scarce if a person fetches water from private springs without the permissions of the owner it can lead to conflict.

Case Study 4: Conflict emerging from natural resource- Water

Beshir, middle aged informant express the incident of the conflict which emerged some ten years ago as,

Before Ten years during the months when shortage of water occurs and the water wells dried up I was conflicted with a person that fetch water from my personal well with out permitting me. Further more the person do not apologize me for his wrong rather he insulted me. I was tempered and bit him with the stick on his head and he was stained with blood. He accused me and the elders punished me three

hundred birr and a goat to be slaughtered for his bloodshed as compensation.

5.1.2. Conflicts arising from Economic Bases

Property inheritances may generate disputes in the village. Young men are eager to inherit their father's property. According to the customary principle of the village male children are entitled to inherit their fathers' property, especially when they are married and started their own life. In this situation children might argue over the uneven distribution of the property. Property inheritance disputes even arise after the death of head of the family. Especially inheritance disputes are intensified between children born from different wives. This is too rare because the study community is endogamous, marrying more than one wife is allowed by their religion but they usually marry one.

When the head of the family dies the land is distributed for members of the family usually to male children. The land and his wealth divide according to his will and wish. According to the village custom the mothers' side are not consider as real relatives. Decent is traced on fathers' line there fore; women are not appropriate for inheritance.

Family members, father, mother and their siblings form an economic unit, producing goods and services to satisfy their basic needs. Cooperation is essential but also family's experiences conflict from time to tie due to various reasons (Peil 1977:93). Land litigation also arise dispute. Conflict often breaks because some family members feel that they have been unfairly nested. The claimer could raise his claim before or after he is separated from the family mostly with marriage. The dispute over land is raised mostly after the death of head of the family. Land is owned as private property that is used for farming and grazing. There is also communal land in the village. Land conflicts might involve the whole family.

5.1.3 Conflicts arising from political bases

The local political issues have less probability to generate conflict in the study area. The magnitude is also too limited. Most inhabitants of the village are not aware about the local politics. Some individuals who involved in the local administration quarrel each other. It is a matter of benefit, because those who involve in the local politics get some benefits like per diem when they are called for meetings, trainings etc... by the woreda. Above all they are eager to handle the rifle and they are also responsible to lead the safety net programs of the government to develop infrastructure in their locality to which they recruit their own favorites to get benefit from the food for work grain.

The intense conflict emerged in the village at the down of the Derg regime. The then government agent of the village was fired and wounded slightly by member of the village who claim that he was mistreated by the agent at his power. However, the agent in return fired and killed his opponent. This conflict may transform to family level and the grievances last long.

The local level politics could not enter the community in to conflict with government. The communities do not refuse government policies; they are simply submissive to the government both at local level and national level as well. They consider, political affairs are not their concern.

5.1.4. Other Conflict causing Factors

Under this category I put murder, retaliation, adultery, theft, robbery, plunder, and rape that are considered as criminal acts by the study community.

Murder is regarded as the serious criminal act and the murderer is out casted by the village communities. Murder is not allowed for any reason. In some cases conflicts may lead to murder for various reasons. For instance in the village

murder occurred between brothers due to adultery. A person killed his brother because he heard a rumor that his brother has sexual relation with his wife. He waited and caught red handed on his wife and killed him on the spot. Murder also may occur due to retaliation.

Adultery and rape, even though these are not common there are some cases that led to conflict. My informants are shy or not willing to elaborate the occurrences, they reported or explained that generally they consider as it is curse and taboo in religious terms and custom. My informants and discussants told me to jump these issues when I was trying to discuss about it with them.

Theft cases are also considered as taboo and curse in the village community. My informants justify this, their cattle are not put in the barn at night, and cattle pass the night in the forest, no one steals. Their granaries are not also inside the home or their compound rather it is in the farm place in the well.

One of my informants told me that before twenty Years two members of the village stole goats from the village. They were caught and out casted in the community because they violet the norm and value of the village. They leave the village by themselves because they know that they could be excluded from social life. They never return back to the village since the last twenty years.

5.2 Inter- Ethnic Conflicts

Group boundaries are established through conflict with the out side, so that a group defines it self by struggling with other groups. Internal cohesion is likely to be increased in the group that engages in outside conflict. Coser by referring Simmel states that in the course of conflict new rules are continuously created and old rules modified. Conflict is a mechanism through which adjustment to new conditions can be brought about. Societies dispose of mechanisms to

channel discontent and hostility while keeping intact the relationship with in which antagonism arises (Cosser1966: 155)

In former times the Argobaa ethnic group was in conflict with other ethnic groups like Amhara and Oromo. They fired their houses and killed them. However, nowadays there are no land or boundary clashes or cattle raids with their neighboring Oromos. As my informants the Village community does not enter in to fight with the neighbors for any reason. They occupied their clearly defined territories; in which they do not interfere and cross the boundary for grazing or other purposes, they respect each other.

In every type of social structure there are occasions for conflict, since individuals and subgroups are likely to make rival claims from time to time to scarce resources, prestige or power positions. But social structures differ in the way in which they allowed expressive to antagonistic claims. Some shows more tolerance of conflict than others (Tylor 1994:78). In this regard Argobbas of the study area consider conflict and violence as violating the norms and values of the community. Moreover they consider overt conflict as taboo and curse. Hence the village communities are characterized by tolerance, patience and prioritize listening than talking. Every family taught their children about the adverse effect of conflict, which can cause physical injury and anger from Allah that brings drought and famine that challenges the well being of the community.

5.2.1 Conflicts arising from Social Bases

Even though there are occasions for conflicts in every human beings interaction, the way they treated conflicts and the degree of tolerance in avoiding overt and damaging conflict varies from society to society, depending on the social structure and customs. The Argobbas in the study village do not

consider a person having fighting behavior as a hero and they do not have traditional enemies. Therefore overt conflicts are not frequent with their neighbors. Their neighbors due to their fierce religious stand, which helped them to be accepted as peaceful, disciplined and devoted to Allah, respect them. Inter marriage that could be a factor for conflict with their neighbors is also abandoned. Peaceful coexistence becomes a distinctive character of the ethnic group not only in the study area but also elsewhere where they lived with the adjacent neighboring people.

Argobbas in the study village sometimes come in to conflict when they meet their neighbors even though it is not transformed into damaging and overt conflict. Their neighbors termed them as Argobbati which means a person that fears quarrel.

5.2.2 Conflicts arising from Economic Bases

Argobbas in Shonke village occupied their own ethnic land whose boundary is clearly demarcated and known by members of the village as well as by their neighbors. Both the Argobba and their Oromo neighbors do not claim land litigation beyond their territory and border trespassing is also not raised. Trading activities or relationship between them is also too limited which reduces the other opportunity for conflict to be emerged.

5.2.3 Conflicts arising from Political Bases

Depending on the political motives and aspirations each group in power wants to promote, ethnic differences are either denied or overstressed (Assefa 1995:i). Differentiating one group from the other in the study area contributes to cultural diversity or difference and disunity. Due to ethnic differences the boundaries of each group are based on identities and these boundaries are not limited to the land territory. These boundaries are manifested in marriage

system and other aspects of life. Ethnic identity may serve to organize the inequality differentiated by their language. Argobbas in the study village feel that they are disadvantaged group in many aspects.

The local politics become a new source of inter-ethnic conflict in the area after the introduction of ethnic/ language based federalism. They feel language based federal system is practiced wrongly. This makes the Argoobba ethnic group to be disappointed and believe that these unequal privileges and denial of rights become the major source of conflict not overtly observed or contributes to the development of hostile feelings. The FDRE constitution ensures the rights of nations, nationalities and people rights on article 39. According to this article every Ethiopian nation, nationality and people has the right to speak, write and develop its own language and the rights to explain, develop and spread its own culture and history. Every Ethiopian nation, nationality and people has the right to have self-administration and to have equitable representation in different administrative structures. However, despite these constitutional regulations the Argoobbas are denied their constitutional rights as they reported.

Nowadays the local level politics became the major source of quarrel between the Argobbas representative at the kebele administration and the Oromo chairman of the kebele. Due to their numeric superiority Argobbas claim the administrative position but it is in the hands of their neighbors.

The local level politics makes the two ethnic groups to be more divided and widen their difference due to the wrong application of ethnic based politics in the area. It contributes to see one another suspicious and disappointed them. Argobbas believe that they are excluded from politics and they are treated unjustly. In the study area the local politics and administration are dominated and controlled by the Oromos.

Inter ethnic conflict or competition is mostly manifested in the local administration, which is characterized by political quarrels between individual members of each ethnic group. Other members of the ethnic groups do not engage in conflict, which is observed overtly; but it helps to develop hostile feelings one another. This feeling is especially intense among the Argobbas. Just as adding fuel in to the fire the hostile feelings are aggravated and intensified with Argobbas movement and attempts for self-administration and the consequent permission by the Amhara Regional State. This was happening while I was conducting my fieldwork in the area.

The Oromos do not like this attempt for self-administration. In my stay in the area the administrative bodies of Argobbas and the Oromos of the kebele were quarrelling each other and the magnitude of the quarrel had increased after the acceptance of the Argobba self administration by the regional state. The regional state allowed a special Argobba ethnic woreda by selecting kebeles from the surrounding weredas namely, Dawachefa woreda , Bati woreda and Kalu woreda based on the continuous/ uniform settlement pattern . However, in the study area even though Argobbas constitute demographic superiority the area is not included in the newly formed woreda because Argobba villages here are not found in a continuous settlement manner. Between the Argobba ethnic group villages there are Oromo villages.

The research site deserved and recognized as a center for Argobbas culture and heritage and history. The site is the only place where Argobba language is fully survived and used at household level by children and women. Women and children in this village do not know any other languages. This decision creates different feelings among the Oromos and the Argobbas. The Argobbas feel happiness and sadness simultaneously. They feel happy because their village is recognized to be center of history and culture for the whole ethnic group and as the same time they Feel sad because they expect nothing in administrative terms in their locality and suspicious that the Oromos will suppress them

further because before the proclamation Argobbas were eager and they were expecting self-administration in their locality. On the other hand the Oromos feel uncomfortable with Argobbas recognition and self-administration acknowledged by the regional state because they are suspicious that due to demographic superiority of the Argobba in the kebele they might take administrative position.

After the recognition of Shonke as cultural and heritage center, there was restructuring and reshuffling of government appointees. This was happening while I was conducting my field work in the area. Argobbas consider this reshuffling was consider as a systematic plot, in which it is aimed to remove the influential and aware Argobba representative at the kebele, and they suspect that it is a preparation for suppression.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Traditional Conflict Resolution and Prevention Mechanisms

6.1 Conflict Prevention Mechanisms

This chapter discusses the conflict resolution institutions in the village and people involved in the conflict resolution process. I tried also to include the punishments and fines passed by the local arbitrators on the wrongdoer. The conflict resolution process in the village is also discussed in this chapter.

Conflict prevention is referring to the activities that inhibit or hinder the occurrence of conflict, conflict prevention the occurrence of conflicts. Even though in any interaction between, individuals, groups or ethnic groups there will tend the possibilities for the occurrence of conflicts Conflict Prevention plays important role in reducing the occurrence of frequent conflicts. These conflict prevention mechanisms are also termed as safety valve institutions. Bartos and Wehr describe the safety value institutions as important tools to maintain the social system by preventing the probability of the occurrence of conflict by reducing the scale of the conflicts before transforming in to damaging serious conflicts (Bartos, Wehr 2004:160)

Argobbas in the research site have traditional mechanisms of conflict prevention. Every family has the responsibility to teach his children to refrain from crime and violence. These moral values are accepted by the village community and considered as their distinctive characters. The children are taught to observe themselves as brothers and sisters. They thought the importance of forgiveness. The council of elders, religious leaders taught to avoid conflict among each other and with the out-group. According to the village custom crime and conflict would bring Allah's anger hence they would

be punished by drought and famine. Violent Conflict and crime are regarded as taboo and curse among the members of the village.

Conflict prevention mechanisms are used to divert or neutralize hostility. The village community teaches their children about the destructiveness of violence and conflict. Conflict could lead to physical injury, hurting or killing the opponent or destroying property. It can also weaken the opponent by inducing fear, shame or guilt through actions like jeering or using derogatory names (Himes 1980:103). The primary consequence of an actual injury is to decrease the opponents' ability to continue the conflict.

Bartos and Wehr state the importance of safety valve institution in limiting and controlling conflict. They explain the role of collective bargaining, the judicial system, social roles like mediators, elders, reconcilers and the social norms like fairness, justice, equality, non violence permits conflict at minimal cost (Bartos, Wehr 2002: 161).

6.2 Traditional Conflict Resolution Institutions

Generally traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Africa are associated with the socio-political and economic situations and life styles of the societies. These traditional institutions are derived and belong to the culture and history of the respective African people. Hence these mechanisms are unique to each community in various ways. The major conflict resolution mechanism in Africa is through indigenous system (Rabar and Karimil 2004).

Avruch mentions that conflict resolutions are determined by the nature and causes of conflicts. The causes of conflict in turn determine the importance of culture and traditional mechanisms in conflict resolution (Avruch 2004:24). There are different mechanisms of resolving and managing conflicts. Amongst

them indigenous mechanisms are widely practiced in African context generally and among the study Argobba village particularly.

Societies have capabilities in solving their problems/ affairs in peaceful manner and understand discussions and negotiations bring better solutions than force. Most of the time societies have their own sets of rules and norms in which problems are discussed and solved by collective decisions. In most societies elders in the general African tradition negotiate the local conflicts at any level. In this negotiation every concerned party has the opportunity to express views and interests and discuss as long as an agreement is reached to solve the problem (Pausewang 1994:29). Similarly the studied village communities have the tradition in which individuals choose to discuss their problems and pass decision after consulting with their traditional conflict resolution institutions hierarchically. This is done according to the nature of and type of their problems.

The traditional conflict resolution mechanisms try to resolve conflicts locally instead of reliance in external dispute resolution mechanisms. The traditional conflict resolution mechanisms help to control the result of the conflict and avoid or reduce retaliation. The local conflict resolutions possess moral status, seniority, neutrality, good personality and respect to the community. Decisions reached by the local institutions are acceptable and respected by all concerned bodies. The traditional conflict resolution institutions in the study area lack power and the means to enforce the resolution adopted, however, the community accepts decisions as final Verdict by fearing the curse. The decisions of traditional resolution institutions largely depend on the good will of the society as well as the fear of curse, which the community believes it will reach up to seven generations.

Case study 5: The Fear of Curse

Nurhussen, middle-aged farmer informants testifies the above situation as;

During the 1984 famine and drought that affected our village, two members of the community stole goats from the village however; they were caught by the village community hence nothing is concealed. Because the two individuals know the values of the village and by fearing curse went out from the village and they never returned back to their village since then consequently, their descendants also becoming in desperate situation.

The indigenous institutions for conflict resolution among the studied Argobba village include family level elder, village elders and the Qadi system.

6.2.1 Family Level Elder/Amegadmeshore

In Shonke village the family is composed of the husband and wife with their children in a neolocal residence i.e. nuclear family. The residence is virilocal where the couple lives with the husband's kin. The head of the family is the husband; he is the administrator of family matters and property and controls the economic matters. He provides the entire household needs materials. The father arbitrates all family disputes between children and between children and their mothers. If a dispute occurs between the husband and wife, or between father and children the extended family or neighbors they arbitrate according to their closeness. The oldest person in the household usually husband has the right in controlling economic and other important matters.

6.2.2. Village Elders/Ageyemeshore

The village elders are selected depending on the moral status, knowledge and social recognition of individuals in the village. Women are not included in the village elders. The village elders constitute the old men and the young men based on their knowledge, oratory skill and good discipline. In the studied Argobba village the village elders solve almost every kind of conflicts. The village

communities try to resolve conflicts at the grassroots levels or family levels, however, if they couldn't resolve the cases are refereed to the village elders.

The village elders are accessible, culturally acceptable and morally binding. The elders form the basic component of the conflict resolution mechanism in the village. The number of the elders sitting for conflict resolution and arbitration ranges from three to ten: depending on the cases and availability of elders. If elders are below three they do not sit for arbitration. In every decision the elders called the Qadi and discuss with him and ask his approval before they pass their judgments. For example disputes between husband and wife are tried to be resolved by the elders and if they fail to arbitrate they refer to the Qadi, Qadi tries to arbitrate and hear 'shahid' or witness and finally allow divorce. Elders have no right to arrange divorce.

6.2.3. The Qadi System

Argobbas in Shonke village has their own traditional administration called the Qadi system. Any problems and conflicts are resolved and approved by the Qadi system. The system is closely associated with their religion. The highest judicial authority is in the hands of the Qadi. Qadi is a leader in religious ceremonies, who facilitates 'deher', wedding and approves the divorce. After getting estimation from elders Qadi distributes the property among the off springs when their father dies. He gives land for those who have no share from the communal land. He administers justice according to sharia law. In property affairs the Qadi discusses with the elders. The Qadi system is considered as the constitution of the village, and the Qadi as the interpreter of the constitution. Almost all affairs of the village are decided and approved through this system.

6.3 Conflict Resolution Mechanisms for Internal conflicts

In the studied village communities conflict and conflict resolution is mostly intra ethnic than interethnic levels. The traditional conflict resolution is effective in dealing with settling conflicts at grass roots over property rights, inheritance, and other social issues.

The elders pass their judgment and ethical pre-eminence to find acceptable solution for the issues. Decisions are mostly based on consensus among the elders and render on the spot unlike long, frequent and boring appointment of the formal court system. Resolution may include forgiveness and mutual release of the problem and the arrangement of compensation according to the case.

The traditional conflict resolution mechanisms use the local elders and community based decision-making mechanism to resolve conflicts with in the community. My informants and discussants have reported the importance of the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in relation to the formal court system that it avoids revenge, teaches forgiveness prioritizes the social norms and values than punishment and keeping the social norm.

The elders serve as a court with broad and flexible powers to interpret evidence, impose judgment and manage the process of reconciliation. They incorporate consensus building. The conflicting parties accept guidance and advice from the elders and accept the decision reached by the elders. The disputants in the village participate in the conflict resolution process. As observed at the place where conflict resolution takes place, the disputants do not enter in to direct confrontation during the process, no one is allowed to interrupt the speech of the conflicting party during his turn to express idea to the elders. Elders hear the cases of conflict from conflicting parties separately and then they also hear

witnesses. In this village with few exceptions all cases are treated and resolved by the traditional mechanisms. The elders after examining the cases from conflicting parties and witnesses make the wrong doer and the wronged to forgive each other and swore to avoid revenge. Depending on the intensity of the case they also put their oath by putting their hand on the Koran.

The conflicting parties accept the elder's judgments because the judgment is reinforced by the beliefs and fears in curses and the ensuing consequences. Most of the judgments or fines and punishments vary according to the cases, there are no defined and uniform fines and punishments, and it varies from forgiveness, money punishment or providing goat. Most of the time after reconciliation the wrong doer pays money to buy goat or provide goat, and slaughter it on the judgment place under the tree. The elders and the conflicting parties eat together that is considered as the sign of avoiding enmity among them.

The village community believe that some individuals who are included in the elders posses supernatural power to curse the wrong doer if he is not willing to accept the reconciliation. These individuals who possess supernatural force to curse are called 'wollyes' by the society. The wollyes also possess supernatural power to pray for difficulties, illness, and barren etc.

In the study village Family level conflicts can occur between husband and wife, Parents and their children due to inheritance, job allocation etc. The father resolves the family level conflicts. However, if the father involves in the conflict close relatives may arbitrate. In most cases family level conflicts are resolved at the household. Issues that cannot be arbitrated at family level are referred to the elders. Such cases are mainly inheritance cases after the death of the family, i.e. land disputes between off springs.

Land disputes and property inheritance are common types of conflicts in the studied village between close kins. Land, on which the basic livelihood of the community depends, is owned by purchase or division at the death of the father or separation from the family due to marriage. The resolutions of these problems are by the village elders. The elders are chosen by claimants based on their knowledge of the history of that family. The conflicting parties accept the decision of the elders as compulsory and final. My informant told me that the village elders resolve all these types of disputes.

When the conflicts are resolved there is no standard or uniform punishment or fines passed by the elders on the judgment for the conflicts. It varies according to the conflict and the amount of the damage or hurt. For example if the conflict results physical injury by swear or sword depending on the level of the injury the fine and punishment could be up to one thousand birr and slaughtering goat or sheep to the injured until the injured recovers. In the study area no cases are transformed to the formal legal court except criminal acts, specially murder cases.

Cases recognized as criminal acts by the community like murder are not arbitrated or resolved by the local conflict resolution methods. If the village member kills a person the community will be catch him and he will be transferred to the police and the case will be observed and resolved only through the formal legal court.

Case Study 6: Criminal Caught

Mohamed, aged 55 illustrate,

Before ten years a certain person killed his brother in the village. The killer heard the rumor that his young brother adulterates his wife while he was at his farm. He followed up him continuously from the time he heard the rumor to caught red handed. One day he caught his brother at his home, his brother told him the rumor is

false and consider her as sister but he fired and killed him in side the compound. After killing he tried to escape but the community after hearing firing, surrounded him and caught and brought to the police which is found twenty five kilometers at kemise town, to be judged and punished by the formal legal court.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. Summary and Conclusion

3.1 Summary

In the literature part it is indicated that every community experience cooperation and conflict in the day to day life. Cooperation and conflict could be in economic, political or social terms. In the case of Shonke Argobbas cooperation is predominant and conflict is infrequent and not damaging. Both Cooperation and conflict are mainly at intra village level.

Cooperation and conflict are inherent in all societies. In any society both integrating and stabilizing forces as well as mal integration and change exists. However, the degree of these forces may vary from society to society some societies prioritize cooperation to conflict and others the vice versa (Bernard 1983:28). The studied community prioritizes co-operation and peaceful co-existence in this regard and considers conflict as taboo and curse that would bring famine, drought and other social evils.

Societies experience Co- operation and conflict. They Co- operate because of similar or complementary interests and because they need each other to accomplish those things beneficial to all. These things are mainly production, distribution and consumption of goods, and security issues. Members of a society are also in competition with each other on resources, power which are always in short supply (Eitzen and zinn 1993:43)

Society not only controls our movements, but also shapes our identity, our thought and our emotion. The structure of society becomes the structures of its individual members. The individual's identity is socially bestowed human beings are socially determined. The society we lived affects our perception and behavior. In the study village internal and external conflicts are infrequent.

They are characterized by peaceful intra and inter ethnic co- existence. The strict Values and norms of the community helped them to avoid violence and overt conflict.

All societies have the potential for cleavage and conflict. There are two contradictory models of social order, the co- operation and conflict models. The former model views society as basically co- operative, consensual and stable. While adherents of the later conflict model assume society is fundamentally competitive, conflictual, coercive and radically changing. Research found out that even though the balance between these two models is not accurately equal, the community faces the duality of the two models in intra and inter ethnic interaction.

Argobba are now intermingled both through marriage and shared culture with the neighboring Amhara, Oromo and Afar peoples. Shonke Village testifies that language and culture have not become extinct. Nowadays Argobbas are assimilated and speaks the languages of the larger society who lived in the adjacent areas. That is why Argobba accepted the study village as center for culture, language and heritage of the ethnic group.

The village community cooperation is mainly manifested in intra village level. Even though Argobba do most of the work by them selves, they employ communal labor for activities such as farming, house building and religious Celebrations. They are self reliant in every way; as informants and discussants mention. The only thing they want from out side is salt. They produce their own implements except those implements made from iron and clay, which they consider, as despised jobs. Contrary to most societies in the study village weaving is not considered as despised job.

The community practice marriage endogamy, marriage with in the group, However, there are parts of the village community who are considering to

possess evil eyes hence excluded from marriage ties. In their terms it is 'hosa', prohibited to intermarry with them. Interestingly they are only excluded from marriage; they can participate in very aspect of life in the village. Marriage is also 'hosa' between those who sucked from the same breast.

The study Village is segregated and their social and physical territories are clearly demarcated hence their cooperation with the neighboring ethnic group is too minimal. Nowadays due to the local government the interaction with their neighbors become possible to a lesser degree at individual level.

Besides belonging to the same ancestor, in the study village religion has important factor for integration both at the village level and with the neighboring people to some degree. The religion of the village community as well as their neighbors is Islam that created a sense of brother hood at least theoretically. At the village level the mosque is the major place of interaction in which most adults go to the mosque daily and all adults for the 'Juma salat', on Friday. Religion also creates the sense of integration with their neighboring people. Even though Argobbas and Oromos do salat separately at their mosques it is never become a source of conflict between these two ethnic groups. As I observed in my stay in the area there was no other faction of Islam in their area, which them called 'Wahabia', fundamentalist Islamic sect, that they dislike most. I was invited with my Argobba friends on the Celebration of prophet Mohammed's birthday (Moulid) that took place in Argobba mosque. By the time I had observed that despite their language differences both ethnic groups celebrate the holiday together. They come together and pray salat, eat food provided by Aggobbas and chew chat through out the night. I had never observed conflict at intra and inter ethic level during this celebration.

7.2 Conclusions

The economic activity and the main source of livelihood in the study village are mixed agriculture. People everywhere are competing for resources they need or want to ensure or enhance their livelihoods. But the dimensions level and intensity of conflict vary greatly. Conflicts over resources can take place at variety of levels from within the household to societal scales. The intensity of conflict may also vary. In the study village the distribution of resources and allocation of new farmland is done by the qadi, the head of sharia court at the village level. He performs this task after discussing with the village elders. The allocation of farmland by the qadi system greatly reduces conflict over resources in the village. The study communities are characterized by peaceful co-existence and are strict Mohammedans.

The research found out that the community's attitude towards conflict and violence is negative in which they consider conflict as taboo and curse that would result famine and drought. Conflict with the out group is also too rare and it is mainly due to the local political administration. Elaborate methods of intervening conflicts are common in intra ethnic conflicts than in inter ethnic conflicts.

In the village the three major conflict resolution mechanisms/institutions namely the Qadi, the village elders/Ageyemeshore and the family level elders/Amegadmeshore play important role in conflict resolution. Conflicts are not common in the community, their conflict prevention mechanisms has helped them for the resolution of conflicts. Conflict resolution institutions and conflict prevention mechanisms rely on good will of the society to adhere to its ruling. The study community uses their indigenous conflict resolution institutions to resolve conflicts arise in their village. The only criminal act that is not observed and resolved by the local institution is murder. Eventhough murder case is too rare; it is transfer to the legal formal court. The village

community consider the formal legal court as it produces revenge and unable to bring real reconciliation. Hence they rely and depend on their traditional conflict resolution institution.

Old men, religious leaders and young men are included in conflict resolution process in which old and young men are selected based on their knowledge and oratory skill. However, the role of women and children is limited in conflict resolution as well as on economic affairs of the households. They are totally excluded from important community decision-making processes. Women and children are not heard despite their role in precipitating conflicts.

Social groups have mechanisms to ensure conformity, mechanisms of social control. The socialization process is one of these ways by which individuals internalize the norms and values of the group. Persons are taught what proper and appropriate moral is. However socialization is perfect this process is generally so powerful that individuals conform, not out of the fear of punishment, but because they want to. To cope with this, social groups exert external control that is reward and punishment (Eitzen, Zinn 1993: 163).

Most of the time, Argobbas do not enter in to conflict. If conflict emerges they resolve by using their indigenous mechanisms. They never prefer and go to the formal court except for murder cases, which is too rare. Their neighbors also consider them as peaceful, respected people and devoted to their faith. They do not wish others property and they are not allowed to be taken their property with others.

The social and economic ties of Argobba in the study area with their neighbors are too minimal. They do not make any social ties with their neighbors especially in marriage. Economically they have some ties with their neighbors, which are manifested mainly in buying and repairing agricultural instruments.

The study community resides in their own socially and physically segregated village. Their house building style, language, norms and territory are different from their neighbors. These situations contribute for mal integration. Moreover the language based politics/regionalization, which forced them to communicate in Oromo language at local government for official purposes and as medium of instruction at the schools widen their differences.

The movement of Argobba political parties for self-administration and the subsequent permission by the regional state widen the differences further. These social and physical distances between the two ethnic groups become barrier for close and personal contact. Even though some children attend their education in the same school Women and children do not have any opportunity to mix and communicate each other. Despite the medium of instruction is Oromo language, it does not help to bring integration rather it produces sense of hostile feelings and denial of their rights.

References

Unpublished Sources

Documents

Dawa Chefa woreda Health Desk, 2006. 'Health Extension Survey'. Kemise.

Ethiopian Government, 1994. 'The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia'. Addis Ababa.

Oromiya Zone Administration, 2000. 'Study on Argobba Ethnic Group'.
Kemise.

Oromiya Zone Culture, Tourism and Information Department, 1996. 'Study on the Historical Origin of Argobba Ethnic Group.' Kemise.

Published Sources

- Aklilu A. 2000. 'A Short History of Argobba', in Annales D' Ethiopie. Vol. XVI Paris the Maisonneuve ET Larose 15.
- Assefa T. 1995. Ethnic Integration and Conflict: The Case of Indigenous Oromo and Amhara Settlers in AAROO Addis Alem, KIRAMU Area, North-eastern Wallaga. M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University.
- Avruch, K. 2004. Culture and Conflict Resolution. USA, United States Institute of Peace.
- Barth, F. 1969. (eds). Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Bartos, J. and Wehr, P. 2002. Using Conflict Theory. Cambridge University Press.
- Bates G. and Rassam A. 2000. Communal Identities and Ethnic Groups. New Jersey, Pearson Education, Inc.
- Bender, M.L. 1969. "Distribution and Classification of Ethiopian Languages: Cushitic and Omotic". In Fleming, H.C and Bender, M.L. Language Survey of Ethiopia (mimeographed). Addis Ababa.
- Bernard, T.J. 1983. The Consensus- Conflict Debate. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Central Statistical Authority, 1991. Report on Census of Population and Housing. Addis Ababa.
- Coser, L. 1966. The Functions of Social Conflict. The Free Press, New York.
- Eidheim, Harald. 1969. "When Ethnic Identity is a Social Stigma". In Barth Fredrik (eds). Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Eitzen, D.S, and Zinn, M.B. 1993. In Conflict and Order. Sixth Edition, A Division of Simon and Schuster, Inc.
- Himes, J. 1980. Conflict and Conflict Management. Athens, University of Georgia Press

- Knutsson, E. 1982. "Dichotomization and Integration". In Fredrik Barth (ed). Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, Nye Intertrykkas, Norway.
- Leif, O. 2000. Livelihood Conflicts: Linking Poverty and Environment at Causes of Conflict. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Department for Natural Resources and the Environment.
- Leslau, W. 1957. Arabic Loan Words in Argobba (South Ethiopia). In Journal of the American Oriental Society Vol. 7.
- Markakis, J, 1994. Ethnic Conflict and the State in the Horn of Africa, In Fukui and John Markakis (eds)., Conflict and Ethnic Interaction.
- _____, 1998. Resource Conflict in the Horn of Africa. The Cromwell Press Ltd., London.
- Mkangi, K. 1997. Indigenous Social Mechanisms of Conflict Resolution in Kenya. Nairobi, University of Nairobi.
- Mussa Y. 2003. The Need to Protect the Rights of Minorities in Ethiopia with Special Reference to Argobba People. (Senior Essay in Law, Civil Service College).
- Nnoli, O. 1989. 'Ethnic Conflict in Africa'. CODESRIA Working Paper Series 1/89. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Pankhurst, Alula, Dena Freeman. (eds). 2001. Living on the Edge. Addis Ababa, Department of Sociology and Social Administration.
- Pausewang, S. 1994. The 1994 Election and Democracy in Ethiopia. OSLO, Norwegian Institute of Human Rights.
- Peil, M. 1977. Consensus and Conflict in African Society. Edinburgh, Longman Group Ltd
- Rabar B. and Karimi M. (eds). 2004. Indigenous Democracy. Intermediate Technology Development Group. Eastern Africa.

- Reminick, Ronald A., 1983. Theory of Ethnicity: An Anthropologists Perspective. Lanham, University Press of America.
- Sergew, Hable Selassie. 1972. Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270, Addis Ababa.
- Sidney, W. 1984. "Argobba". In Richard V.Weeks(ed.). Muslim Peoples, a World Ethnographic Survey 2nd. Ed.
- Spencer, T. 1965. Islam in Ethiopia, 2nd ed., London.
- Stitz, V. 1975. The Western Argobba of Yifat, Central Ethiopia in Proceedings of the First USA Conference on Ethiopian Studies.
- Taylor,D,M. 1994. Theories of Inter group Relation. 2nd. Ed. USA West Port, Prager Publishers.
- Tesfaye,H. 2000. History and Culture of Argobba'. In Annales D'Ethiopie. Vol. XVI Paris the Maisanneuve ET Larose 15.



Plate 1: Shonke Village



Plate 2: Shonke Houses



Plate 3: The Rugged Topography



Plate 4: Argobba Bride Carried on the Back



Plate 5: Singing on Wedding



Plate 6: Argobba Children on Wedding Ceremony



Plate 7: Elders on Arbitration

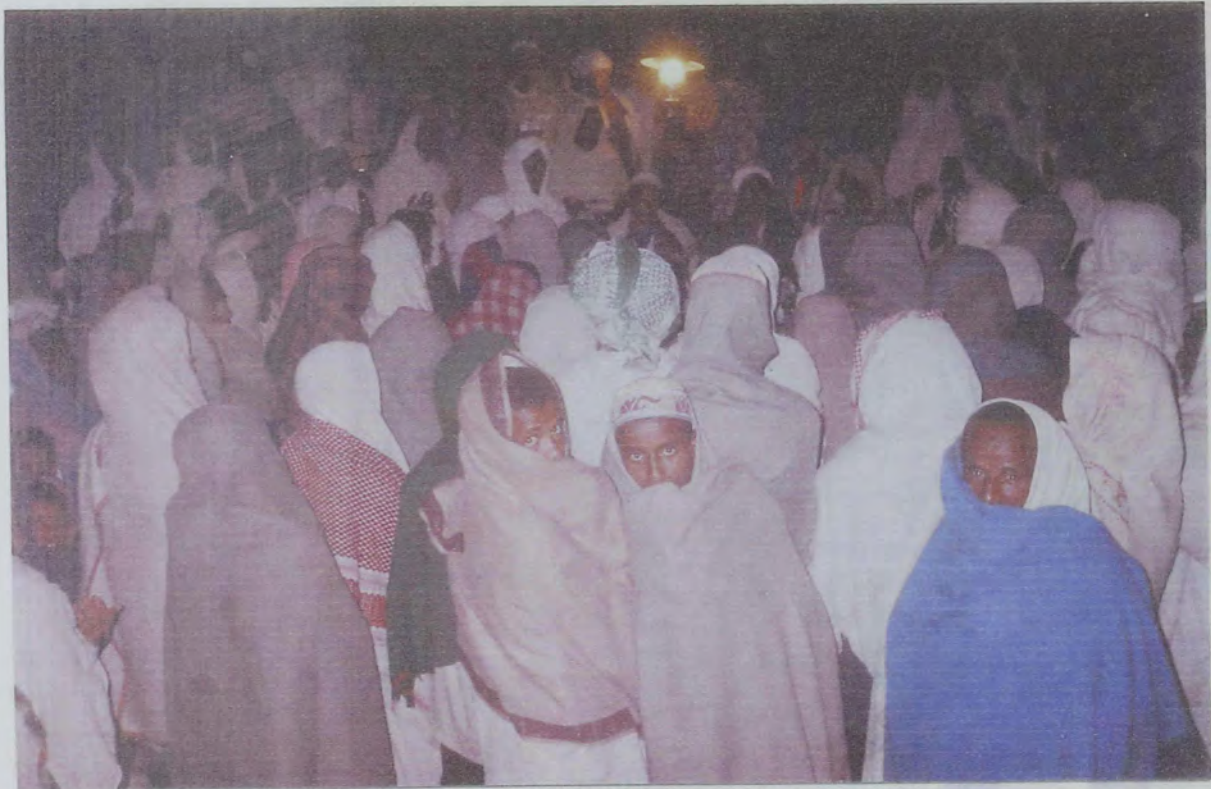


Plate 8: Moulid Celebration



Plate 9: The Famous Mosque at which Moulid Celebrated



Plate 10: Traditional Wear of Argobba Women

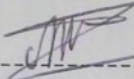


Plate 11: Coffee Ceremony after Gesso

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name Fasika Ferede

Signature  _____

Date of submission December 2006