

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**SOCIAL NETWORKS, CONFLICT AND  
INDIGENOUS CONFLICT RESOLUTION  
MECHANISMS AMONG THE DERBA  
OROMO OF NORTH SHEWA**

**BY  
DEMISSIE GUDISA**

**ADDIS ABABA  
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## GLOSSARY

Abba Ayyaana	title of the Qallu/Server of the Ayyaana/Spiritual man
Adara-gebrela	pleading in the name of the ayyaana gebrela
Adara higii	pleading in the name of the law
Adara mangisti	pleading in the name of the government
Adara saglan	pleading in the name of the Ayyaana Saglan
Alangee	whip
Hammachissa	taking a newly born child to the Galma for blessing by the Ayyaana
Angafa	elder
Araqe	local liquor
Ararsaa	reconciliation
Ayyaantu	spiritual man/ women (title of the qallus)
Buttaa	abduction
Coqqorssa	kind of grass used for tufta
Chifiree	old women who process adoption
Chole	title for one of the qallus (server of the Ayyaann)
Daaccii	elderly men who conduct guma negotiations
Daadhii	honey-mead
Daasi	temporary shelter made of wood and leafves used for hosting people
Dabaa	bad deeds committed unobserved
Daboo	mutual cooperation for one day work
Dhaala	levitate
Dhaginaa-qabaa	circumcision
Dhicisaa	singing
Dhugoo	earring
Dura taa	chairman
Farsso	home made beer
Fird-shangoo	kebele judiciary
Fo'ataa	mountain
Foolloe	singing at time of gada ritual
Gada	democratic political organization of the Oromo
Gatii-libuu	reconciliation payment (guma)
Guma	Compensation made in cash for homicide

Harkka-dhiqaa	to cleanse oneself from the sin of homicide
Hirphataa	financial charity for guma payment
Irraa-dhaabaa	sudden marriage (unplanned)
Itilee	polished hide used for sitting and sleeping
Jaarsolee	old men
Jaarssa bitaa mirgaa	judges chosen by the plaintiff and the accused to represent each
Jaarssa	old man
Jaarssa Araraa	elderly men who negotiate cases of dispute/ abduction
Jaarssaa-biyyaa	elders of the community
Jaarssa-erguu	the sending of the marriage facilitators
Jaarssa-kadhaa	men sent to the brides home for engagement facilitation
Jaarssa-qixxee	presiding judge
Jaarssa-Waadaa	elderly men who handle dispute resolution/elderly council
Jaarssumma	moot
Kisii	compensation
Lammachaa	young bull
Lukkoo	immediate family members who forward/collect the guma price
Mana-daadhii	the house where honey-mead is sold
Nagaa	peace
Obbeleetti	sister
Qaanqqee	fire cracker
qabsisuu	cursing
qallu	Religious and Ritual leader
qixisuu	younger
Seera	the rules and regulations/the order of the day
Tufta	mercy/forgiveness
Waadaa	agreement
Walwaalechaa	kinship cooperation
Xalayaa-ergaa	asking for marriage by sending letter sending

## PREFACE

Individuals and groups may conflict in a variety of ways. Individuals may conflict with one another over particular interests or status claims on a personal basis. They may also conflict as members of groups, in which case the conflict may be between themselves and particular members of the group or generalized between two or more groups.

As Boissevain (1974:5) described, persons in conflict with others won not so much because they were 'right', that is, had morally the most telling argument or defined more important values than their opponents, but because they had access to influential allies who could bring pressure on their rivals and their allies. Moreover, certain persons seemed to wield great power not because of their formal roles, but thanks to their carefully cultivated but constantly shifting sets of contacts.

Disputes are ways of grouping people together, even if only momentarily, even as they are also an obvious mechanism for keeping people apart. No societies are free from disputes as disputes are the fabric of every day life. The intention of this thesis is to understand how disputes arise, and how they are subsequently handled.

The thesis contains 6 chapters. The first chapter deals with the description of the study area and the people, methodology of the study, objectives, the guiding questions and limitation of the study. The second chapter addresses different theories of social network and conflicts. The overall view of the Oromo people, and the northern Shewa zone Oromo economic, social and political conditions and the *Mulo-Suluta woreda* people with especial emphasis on the study area- Derba- is presented in chapter three.

Chapter four deals with social network, and its role in conflict enhancing or conflict resolving processes. Network as a means of cooperation and means of power rivalry is also included in this chapter. Chapter five addresses major theme of the thesis, which is conflict, and the indigenous mechanisms of resolving them among the Derba Oromo. Case studies are included to support the data gathered from my informants. Chapter six focuses on summary and conclusion of the study.

## ABSTRACT

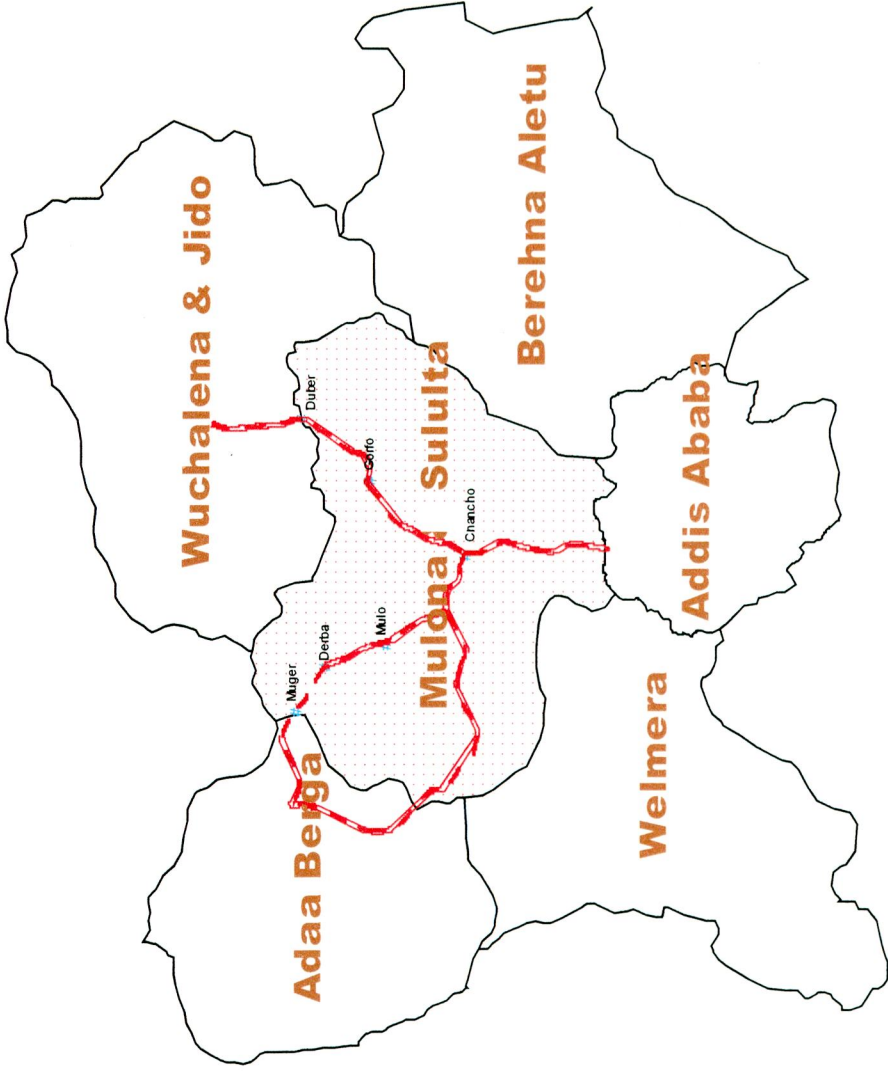
The Oromo of Derba had been engaged in endemic conflicts among themselves through out their history. Homicide and the *Guma* resolution mechanism have continued to the present decade though the imposition of the state laws to ban the indigenous mechanisms is beyond expectation. This thesis attempts to explain the underlying causes, motives, types and nature of Derba Oromo conflict in general. It reviews some theoretical approaches to the study of social networks, conflicting human behavior and demonstrates that the Derba Oromo conflict was rooted in their social structure.

This study clearly reveals that networks play a significant role in conflict enhancing or as a means of bringing peace. Thus, individuals can manipulate their contacts to destroy their enemy. On the contrary, members of lineage could ostracize their members who are provocative and always tend to drag them into conflict. This way avoiding the notorious network member is preferred to entering the unjustifiable conflict with their neighbors.




Among the Derba Oromo *Walwaalechaa* (kinship relationship) is still intact as it fulfills the expected kinship obligations. Moreover, important contacts and coalitions are proved to enable individuals to attain their goals even though the alliance is temporary. Despite the imposition from the government that litigants should take their cases to courts, the people still prefer the traditional *Jaarssumma* (moot) to settle their disputes. Thus, they try to avoid the legal courtroom as much as possible and go to the therapeutic and conciliatory moot.

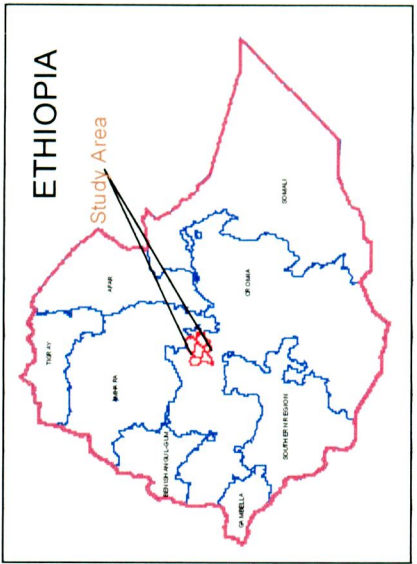
This research has found out that, using the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, the Derba Oromo go to the extent of settling homicide cases through *Seera Waadaa* (Agreement reached among the *Woreda* elderly). This way homicide cases are resolved by the payment of *Guma* (compensation), which is facilitated by *Daachii* (selected elders).

It also shows the role of the *Qallu* in conflict resolution process. A litigant who refuses to settle conflict is forced by the *Qallu* to uphold the approved patterns of social conduct. The *Qallu* is highly respected and feared that if anyone is pleaded by the name of the *Ayyaana* responds quickly. So the *Qallu* institution is visited by its followers time and again not only for spiritual ceremony. The institution serves as the center of dispute resolution. Most of the time people settle their disputes at the *Qallu* center with mutual understanding and the interference of the *Qallu* himself.



**LEGEND**

-  Study Wereda ( Mulo & Sululta)
-  Wereda Boundary
-  Road



**LOCATION MAP OF THE STUDY AREA**

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Society is a group of people that shares values, beliefs and territory. Membership in a society is obtained through birth or assimilation of an outsider. "A society is a group of human beings sharing a self-sufficient system of action which is capable of existing longer than the life-span of an individual, the group being recruited at least in part by the sexual reproduction of members" (Aberle et al.1950 cited in Mayhew 1968:578).

As defined by Seymour-smith (1986:262), a society is conceived of as a human group which is relatively large, relatively independent or self-perpetuating in demographic terms, and which is relatively autonomous in its organization of social relations. Though people can do many things on their own, it is in rare cases that they live alone. They depend on each other for many things. People live together and share resources, which if not utilized properly, can be scarce. This creates interdependence.

The interdependence will constitute a society. In studying society we include its networks, which could be of friends, relatives and workmates. The visiting, bargaining, gossiping and maneuvering that goes on between them, and the impact of these on promotion, ideology, and conflict are all social networks (Boissevain 1974:4). The interaction of a society both among its own members and between neighboring societies could be a force of social change. This results in cultural molding and diversity within a society. Some aspects of cultural change may take place more rapidly than others.

This research focuses on the Derba Oromo, of North Shewa and targets two major areas. One is the social networks among the people under study. I am deeply interested in the interaction between actors that are

governed by this principle. A person's interaction with his social environment as presented by Boissevain (1974:27) is neither wholly self-determined, nor wholly predetermined. So the Derba Oromo, which has its own characteristics in its social relation, was of a great attraction to me.

Society is not always in harmony. There are misunderstandings and conflicts of interest that may result in dispute. If people are tolerant, they resolve their differences without applying force. As Max Gluckman (1969:9) put it;

Men quarrel over many things, cattle, land, women, prestige, indeed over accidents. Or if men don't quarrel, they have differences of opinion about the rights and wrongs of contract, and these differences have to be settled by some rule other than that of brute force, if social relations are to endure. Often, difficulties in dispute arise not over what is the appropriate legal or moral rule, but over how the rule applies in particular circumstances.

People all over the world have exercised different traditional methods and mechanisms in resolving conflicts. The traditional conflict resolution mechanism was my second target in the study of the Derba Oromo. Accordingly, I have tried to explore and find out the types of major conflicts that take place and the mechanisms employed by the Derba Oromo to resolve these conflicts.

## **1.1 Description of the Population and the Study Area**

### **1.1.1 Background Information about the Population**

The livelihood of the Derba Oromo depends on crop farming, which is profoundly influenced by environmental factors. Thus, the difference in distribution and concentration of population can be partially attributed to variations in climate, relief and fertility of the soil. Therefore, in places where there is sufficient rainfall and fertile soil for cultivation, a large number of people are settled. A large number of people live in the altitude ranging between 1000-3000 masl. The population is more evenly distributed on the plateau than in the rugged mountainous areas like in the *Muger* cement raw material quarry area.

Following the recent restructuring of administrative boundaries, *Gulele* and *Beresa* peasant associations were included in Derba, making the latter a wide peasant association with a town by the same name. For the sake of convenience and since Derba is a town, where the cement raw material mining is accumulated, I will use the name 'Derba' throughout my study. This doesn't mean that the lowland and the former *Gulele* and *Beresa* peasant associations are excluded. In fact the study covers the areas as far as *Mulo*.

Derba has a population of about 4030, out of which about 1225 live in the town and the remaining 2,805 live in the rural areas. According to CSA's agricultural sample numeration of 2001/ 02, out of 1225 persons living in Derba town 571 are male and 654 are female. Out of this 866 are Oromo. There are 350 Amhara's, 2 Sebatbet Gurages and 7 Tigrrians.

The Oromo people in general are Christians, Muslims or adherent of the traditional cults and religions. The Derba Oromo are predominantly Orthodox Christians while at the same time practicing traditional rituals. Since 1994, some Protestants have come to the town of Derba with little or no success. According to my informants the members of this newly arriving religion are excluded from different social organizations like *iddir* and *equb*. The leaders of the protestant religion attempted to establish flourmill and retailing shop for their members and the town dwellers to get acceptance. However, they couldn't fulfill their mission because they were frustrated. According to Tesema, the Protestants moved to the lowland area known as *Ada'a Koticha* where they seem to be more successful.

The highly respected *Abba Ayyaanas* in the vicinity like *Chole Gebrela* and *Weraa Saglan Gumbichu*, also condemn this new religious trend as 'alien' and 'imported religion' which they say is "bribing the innocent

Oromo people" to convert. As mentioned earlier, however the *Mekane Yesus* branch of the Protestant religion is making more progress in the lowland area of *Ada'a Koticha*.

### **1.1.2 Research Site**

Derba is located in Northern Shewa Zone of Oromiya Regional State in *Mulo* and *Sululta Woreda*. Derba is found on the plateau, which is located 65 km, North of Addis Ababa at 09° 43' North latitude and 38° 45' East longitudes at 2800 masl. The Derba-Muger cement raw material mining project has two sites. All quarries are found in the *Muger* Valley from where they are connected to the raw material storage area of Derba with the help of 9 km Ropeway (Tesfaye: 2003).

All quarries are found on the left flank of the *Muger* River. *Muger* is located at 09° 48' North latitude and 38° 47' East longitudes at about 1500 masl. *Muger* River is one of the tributaries of Abbay. Minor streams that are found in the area are *Jemmaa*, *Lebuu*, *Doketu*, *Aleltuu* and *Bole*, which are the tributaries of *Muger* River in turn.

Derba is characterized by rainy months from March to early September. March to April is the *belg* period (short rain) while the long rainy season is from June to September. The annual and seasonal distribution of rainfall makes the area suitable for cultivation of vegetables, crops, etc. As the study by Tesfaye (2003:13) indicates the average annual rainfall fluctuates between 813.2 to 1,699.1 mm. The life of the people in *Muger* valley is from hand to mouth as the area is often exposed to recurring drought. The *Ada'a Koticha*, which is just below the highland plateau in the valley, gets sufficient rain.

Derba, the small village town, has been founded as a result of the opening of the raw material storage for the limestone, Gypsum and Silica sand that is extracted at *Muger* valley and transported by the 9 km. Rope way. The small town has a weekly market. On Sundays' people from the surrounding Peasant Associations,

Chancho town (40 kms from Addis Ababa on the way to Gojjam and capital of the *Woreda*), *Rob Gebeya* and Addis Ababa come to the market. The people from the lowland enjoy the market days when and if the harvest is good. The market is one of the places from where conflict erupts. This is because after selling crops the farmers drink *farso* (home made beer) and *tej* (honey wine mead), and then furiously fight with each other.

Derba town is accessible through a 40 km asphalt road from Addis Ababa to Chancho and 25 km all weather road from Chancho. People who come to Derba from the lowland for different purposes come on foot. The quarry workers who want to come to Derba and some sick persons use the Ropeway. Derba town has got a tap water. Electricity is supplied by the cement enterprise both for Derba town and the quarry center at *Mugar* valley, from two 386kilovolt horsepower diesel generators. Priority in the energy supply is given to the factory works and to those who settled earlier in the town. Three flourmills also get electric supply from the above-mentioned generators. The quarry sites workers' households are also beneficiaries (Tesfaye 2003:34).

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

This research is an inquiry into the social networks, conflict, and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms of the Derba Oroma. My discussion concentrates on the way in which inter-personal relations are structured and influenced. As mentioned earlier, persons in conflict with others win because they are not always 'right', but because they had powerful allies. Moreover, certain persons seemed to hold and use great power not because of their abilities, but thanks to their carefully formed and constantly shifting sets of friendship (Boissevain 1974:5).

Conflict is settled in different ways. Traditional African societies used to apply indigenous laws in their administration of justice. Accordingly, the Derba Oromo were and are still using indigenous institutions and

practices of dispute settlement. Local elders mediate minor disputes. Cases that are not settled by local elders call for the *Jaarssa Waadaa* (elderly men who can settle heinous acts such as homicide). Besides the *Jaarssa Waadaa* in certain critical cases the *Qallus* involve in the traditional settlement of disputes.

Settling homicide cases assist to end recurring killings between two lineages or clans. This could be practical only through the payment of *Guma*. Though the majority of the disputes among the Oromo in general and the Derba Oromo in particular were settled through traditional procedures, no study has looked into the rationale behind the persistent use of indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution. These are: a) the social, economic, political and ritual activities that need integration could not be carried on if they are in disputes and b) that forgiveness is a supernatural necessity which is vital for harmonious life. The other thing is that the contradiction and/or complimentary of *Jaarssumma* to formal court among the Derba Oromo are not also studied. Thus, this study is an attempt to bridge these missing gaps.

Like living organism, cultures undergo evolution in order to adapt to changing conditions (Gadaa 1988:15). This is an outcome of the internal social dynamics and external influences. The basic question is the continuity of these traditional institutions in the dynamic world and society. So, this study examines both continuity and change of these traditional institutions of conflict resolution.

Peil and Oyeneye (1998:36) claimed that societies are a tissue of conflicts and loyalties. Friends at one level could turn to be enemies at another based on the question of conflicting interest. Disputes have continued to dominate so much of the description of social interaction that is social network. According to Colson (1995), although they [conflicts] may seem to be out-of-the-ordinary events, they nevertheless mobilize support system and highlight social cleavage. Therefore, in light of the existing conflict among the Derba Oromo, this research looks at the role of social network in enhancing or settling the disputes.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives.

### 1.3.1 General Objectives

- To assess the social networks and its carefully cultivated and constantly shifting characteristics from the Oromo's perspectives with particular reference to the Derba Oromo.
- To investigate the types of conflict which arise among the Derba Oromo and the traditional methods of resolving them in line with the social dynamics.

### 1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this research are to:

1. Assess the social networks and their role in enhancing or solving conflict.
2. Explore the factors contributing to conflicts and the conflict resolution mechanisms employed by the people of the study area.
3. Find out the integration or repulsion between the local conflict resolution mechanisms and the state laws.
4. Identify what makes *Guma* different from other conflict resolution mechanisms and its role in reconciling dispute.
5. Find out and reveal the role of lineages in homicide resolution on both the killer and the victim's sides.
6. Find out the impacts of the cement factory on the people's social network.

## 1.4 Research Questions

1. How do social networks serve in conflicts resolution or enhancing?
2. What are the factors that provoke conflicts?

3. How far are traditional dispute resolution mechanisms contradictory or complimentary with the state laws?
4. What makes *Guma* so special in reconciling disputes?
5. What are the roles of kin groups in conflict enhancing or resolving?
6. What are the socio-political and economic impacts of the Derba *Muger* Cement Factory on the study population?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study of social networks, conflict and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms among the Derba Oromo, could be significant from the following perspectives.

- As this study is the first ethnographic work on the people of Derba, the research will serve as an input for those who want to conduct further study on the people.
- This research can provide valuable information on the sources of conflict and conflict resolving discourses in Derba social contexts.
- It may contribute to the understanding of why people prefer indigenous means of dispute resolution to that of state laws.
- It may initiate the legislators to give enough room for the indigenous values in the law -making process.

## **1.6 Research Methods**

### **1.6.1 The interview**

Two types of interview were used to gather data for this study.

### **1.6.2 Informal Interviews**

After selecting my site I held informal meetings with the people living at the research site. I asked the local people questions whenever conditions were favorable in market place, drinking houses, public gatherings,

association meetings like *iddir*, and saving and credit services for women, development gatherings and so on. This enabled me to select my key informants and gather preliminary data for my study. I identified 6 of my informants through the contact of the informal interviews. The other benefit obtained from these informal meetings was that whenever there was a factual error made by an individual, it was corrected on the spot by others.

### **1.6.3 Formal Interviews**

Formal interviews were conducted with key informants using semi-structured questions, which served as guidelines but were open not to curb the flow of information. I had sixteen key informants. Four of the informants were elderly men who had enough experience in dispute settling. Outside these *Jaarssa waadaa* (elderly men of the community who settle dispute), two *Qallus*, (religious and ritual leaders) were interviewed. Three other informants were women who were serving in Savings and Credit Association for the women when the data for this study was collected. In addition three middle-aged farmers from the Peasant Association and two rural-based professionals in the Derba-Muger Cement Enterprise were interviewed. The last two were young fellows in their early twenties who were bachelors to see their views about the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. The interviews held with informants were recorded with the consent of the informants and transcribed. I conducted one to one interviews as well as focus group discussions with some of the informants.

### **1.6.4 Case Study**

Conflicts are routine in Derba and its vicinity. Elderly men (*Jaarssa*) settle minor disputes. If the conflict is serious and the disputants cannot settle it easily through the intervention of neighboring elders, then they call for *Jaarssa Waadaa*. *Waadaa* is an agreement, which was reached among the representatives of the *woreda* elders and consists of specified guidelines and rules on how to handle homicide and other dispute cases. The *Jaarssa Waadaa* is the highest traditional body to conduct the *Guma* compensation and

reconciliation, when homicide takes place. Sometimes the *Guma* procedure may take more time than expected. Sometimes the *Jaarssumma* (negotiation) may break up due to misunderstanding. I have 10 case studies to support my data out of which three focuses on *Ayyaana's* role in peace settlement. One case deals with saving and credit provision and its economic advantage among the Derba Oromo women. Three cases focus on social networks as conflict or peace in enhancing mechanism and rivalry. Two cases compare the advantage and disadvantage of cooperation work among the Derba Oromo. The last case deals with homicide and *Guma* compensation.

Because of ethical reasons all personal names were substituted by pseudonyms in case studies. In addition to this, because of the sensitivity of certain cases the real names of certain informants were replaced by invented names. As I am using informants' first name only, readers who are interested in the informants' detailed information can refer to the attached appendix of the informants.

### **1.6.5 Participant Observation**

As this is one of the appropriate methods of gathering valuable information I took part as an observer in an event of reconciliation of disputants. The participant observation helped me to get a better understanding of the insider views and knowledge, no less the experience. This way I observed the annual spiritual ceremony celebrated at the *Galma* of the *Qallu (chole Gebrela)* and had the chance of interviewing two *abba Ayyaanas*.

### **1.6.6 Secondary data**

I attempted to assess related literature concerning the Oromo people in general and the Shewa Oromo in particular, to have a background history of the people. Pertinent studies carried out by different scholars on social network and conflicts were reviewed to set the context of the study. In this respect Jeremy Boissevain's (1974) study on networks, Manipulators and coalitions under the title "Friends of Friends" and

several studies on conflict served as a point of departure for the analysis made regarding the Derba Oromo. To reveal the causes of conflicts and the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms and the impact of social network I have referred to documents. Government interventions and the types and rate of conflict were consulted with the documents from the *woreda* court and police station.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study**

The limitations of this study starts with the shortage of time and financial constraints. Although I have tried to gather as much information as possible for the study, I would have gathered more pertinent information had it not been for the above mentioned reasons. The other serious problem was the restriction imposed on me by the Derba Peasant Association officials and the *Mulo* and *Sululta Woreda* Administrative body not to freely move among the farmers.

They wanted to control my movement by assigning men from the *Woreda* administration to go with me from house to house. This was, as I have understood later, related to the Addis Ababa University (6-Kilo Campus) Oromo students' questions of rights and the political tension that existed from mid-January through February 2004. When I challenged them saying that this was against the ethics of research, the *Woreda* administrator wanted to harass and force me change my study site. So I had to do all my work through personal contacts with the farmers when and where the respondents could feel free for discussion.

However, care has been taken to treat the obtained data in depth. I therefore hope that the findings of this study will give readers the necessary insight they might wish to obtain from an academic endeavor such as this study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Social Network

As Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology defines it, the term network refers to individuals (or more rarely collectivities and roles) who are linked together by one or more social relationships, thus forming a social network. Examples of relationship links include "kinship, communication, friendship, authority, and sexual contact" ( 353-354).

According to the Dictionary of Anthropology (1986:208) the study of networks is that of interpersonal relationships and the manner in which these are arranged to form a pattern, which we may term a social network. Whitten and Wolfe (1974) (as cited in Seymour-Smith 1986:208) define a social network as:

a relevant series of linkages existing between individuals, which may form a basis for the mobilization of people for specific purposes, under specific conditions. According to this definition, networks may coincide with, cross cut or exist apart from specific social institutions. The study of network formation and the mobilization of networks may thus be carried out in different contexts: and at different levels; within a formal organization, within a community, within a dispersed set of persons linked by some common interest.

Nadel (1971:304) says, "Network is the interlocking or relationships whereby the interactions implicit in one determine those occurring in others." As Jeremy Boissevain (1974:24) puts it:

The social relations in which every individual is embedded may be viewed as a network. This social network may, at one level of abstraction, be looked upon as a scattering of points connected by lines. The points, of course, are persons, and the lines are social relations. Each person can thus be viewed as a star from which lines radiate to points, some of which are connected to each other. These form his first order or primary network zone. But these persons are also in contact with others whom our central person does not know, but with whom he could come into contact via members of his first order zone. These are the often important friends-of-friends.

The use of the concept of network in a specifically theoretical context rather than as a vague analogy is comparatively new. The theory applies to a variety of levels of analysis from small groups to entire global

systems. To be sure, there are emergent properties at different system levels, but these are extensions of what can be done at a lower level and not entirely different forms of organization.

The historical development of the use of the concept of network in a specifically theoretical context starts with Radcliffe-Brown in "Structure and Function in Primitive Society" (1952) in which he states "but direct observation does reveal to us that these human beings are connected by a complex network of social relations. I use the term "social structure" to denote this network of actually existing relations" (cited in Mary Noble 1973:3-4).

Barnes (1954:39-58) in his study of a Norwegian fishing village conceived of social network as a field of social relations. The network was essentially concerned with interpersonal links rather than with the definition and analysis of group membership. He distinguished between the unbounded social network and the bounded social network, centered on a single person, ego. The latter he called 'set'.

The number of persons an individual can send messages to is far greater than the number of persons he actually knows-those located in his first order zone-because each of these, potentially at least, can act as a relay to place him in touch with many others (Boissevain 1974:25).

A person's network thus forms a social environment from and through which pressure is exerted to influence his behavior; but it is also an environment through which he can exert pressure to affect the behavior of others. As Boissevain (1974:27) puts it, it is the reservoir of social relations from and through which he recruits support to counter his rivals and mobilizes support to attain his goals.

Epstein (1961) as cited in Mitchell (1973) distinguishes between effective and extended networks. The effective network is made up of those people known to ego who also are known to each other. The extended network includes people who are known to ego but not to other members of ego's network and who in turn know other people.

The linkages between persons in a network may be examined in terms of their structural diversity, the goods and services exchanged, the direction in which these move, and finally, the frequency of interaction (Boissevain 1974).

## **2.1.1 Structural Criteria**

Perhaps the most significant structural criteria of social links are size, density, centrality and cluster.

### **2.1.1.1 Size**

As Boissevain (1974:35) argues, the most important structural criterion of a person's network, whether total or partial, is its size. This is because the other criteria are calculated as a proportion of the total possible or actual links in the network. The size indicates the persons whom he had met, and had dealings with in the recent or distant past.

### **2.1.1.2 Density**

The degree to which the members of a person's network are in touch with each other independently of him is also an important index. This index has been called the density of a network. As Boissevain (1974:37) pointed out the extent, to which links, which could possibly exist among persons, do in fact exist potentially. It is hence an index of the potential communication between parts of the network and thus of the quantity and types of information (about ego or others) than can be exchanged. It must be stressed, however, that network density is simply an index of the potential not of the actual flow of information.

### **2.1.1.3 Centrality**

Centrality is an index of the degree to which a person is accessible to the persons in a particular (non-ego centric) network. Every person is naturally at the center of his own personal network. Centrality is not only an index of a person's accessibility, but also of the number of communication paths, which pass through him (Boissevain 1974: 40-41). The most centrally located person in a communication network receives and directs the largest number of message and because of this, has the most influence.

### **2.1.1.4 Clusters**

Clusters are segments or compartments of networks, which have a relatively high density. The persons forming clusters are, relatively speaking, more closely linked to each other than they are with the rest of the network. Conversely, a cluster may be viewed as a compartment of a network, which has a relatively low ratio of external relations as compared to internal relations (Boissevain 1974:43). Clusters of interaction that are not necessarily named or instituted attract continuing attention. Clusters are thus often recruited out of different activity fields.

## **2.1.2 Types of Networks**

### **2.1.2.1 Dyad**

According to the Dictionary of Anthropology (1986:86) dyad is a personal relationship, which links two actors. The analysis of dyads and the manner in which these combine and ramify within a social system is central to the study of social network.

When defining dyad the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (1994:136) says that; the dyad, a group of two members, is the smallest possible social group. If one person opts out the group ceases to exist. Two people can form an intimacy not found in larger groups, but the dyad also involves other basic elements of

social exchange, such as rivalry, reciprocity, and power. Dyad indicates the relationship between two persons or actors, which form the ego-centered network.

### **2.1.2.2 Inter-personal Environment**

Let us then consider all the people connected or related directly to a given person and call this "the interpersonal environment" as Kadushin (2003:2) calls it. These persons in the neighborhood also have their own interpersonal environment, and so on. The immediate environment is called "the first order zone"; those who constitute the environment of persons next to the first order zone are called "the second order zone", etc (*Ibid.*).

### **2.1.2.3 How Far Does The Interpersonal Environment Extend?**

While in principle there can be an infinite regress of zones, e.g. third, fourth, fifth ... n, the impact of each zone on the focal individual node declines exponentially (*Ibid.* P.3). For most purposes, the number of effective zones is between two and three; that is, whatever is being studied, individuals or organizations, past the third zone objects or nodes have relatively small effects on the focal individual or structure. Nodes in the second and third zones can have a 'pull' on first order relationships.

## **2.2 Conflict**

Conflict results from competition between at least two parties. A party may be a person, a family, a lineage, or a whole community; or it may be a class of ideas, a political organization, a clan, or a religion. Incompatible desires or aims occasion conflict and its duration may be distinguished from strife or angry disputes arising from momentary aggravations. The function or purpose of many conflicts appears to be the control of food and re-production through the control of territory and the maintenance of well-organized dominant hierarchies that serve to reduce the amount of fighting in a group (Ciba Foundation 1966; cited in Nader, 1968:236). The Dictionary of Anthropology defines conflict as: Primary source of stimulus for social

change, for when it cannot be handled by institutionalized Mechanism of dispute settlement, the opposing parties will be forced to create new strategies either to resolve the conflict or avoid the situation which produces it (Seymour-Smith, 1986:51).

Conflict is a multidimensional social process that operates in many different contexts and results in a variety of consequences. The simplest as well as the most elaborate display of conflict behavior is defined by its function, by the part it plays within a system of human activities, and by the ideas and values attached to it (Nader 1968:237).

The late 1980s and the 1990s saw increasing attention to the perceptual and psychological aspects of conflict behavior and conflict resolution, to indigenous, cultural, and religious/spiritual resources for dispute resolution.

As Schellenberg (1996:78) argued conflict has been studied over centuries by many great minds. However, a more systematic study has been possible only since the Twentieth Century. This was possible because of the emergence of political anthropology as a special branch of social anthropology.

Developments in political anthropology in the 1960s and 1970s have shifted interest from the focus on systems to micro issues of process and decision making. With the significant contributions of Victor Turner and Philip Gulliver, anthropologists began to pay special attention to issues of conflict, rebellion, power and so on (Kelemework 2000:14).

The major theories of conflict, primarily influenced by the structural functional theory of social organization and only indirectly by the psychoanalytic theory of personality, have assumed conflict to be a valid generic

term (Nader 1968:237) for many diverse phenomena in a society. The structural-functional approach to the study of conflict or aggression emphasizes the social structural sources of conflict, the functions of conflict at various structural levels, the mechanisms for resolution or control of conflicts, and the various behavioral means for communicating conflict (*Ibid.*).

Theoretical controversies over the subject of conflict and its resolution have survived a long history of the study. From the very outset, scholars did not agree upon whether conflict is a disjunctive process or societal (Dejene 2002:11). Durkheim (cited in Sipova, 1989) considered conflict as an abnormal phenomenon. The term he used to describe it was anomie or pathology. On the other hand, Wilson and Kolb (1949), (cited in L. Closer, 1964) believed that conflict has a disjunctive effect.

Shellenberg (1996:9) states that, conflict is neither bad nor good, but one of the essentials in human social life. Gluckman (1956) and Gulliver (1963), agree in that society lives not without conflict. Nanda (1994) as (cited in Dejene 2002:12) also share this view that conflict is a part of social life and society is impossible without it. According to Marxist perspective, conflict is regarded as an important part of the social system. It is the expression of underlying contradictions, which will initiate the transformation of the society itself (Zinn and Eitzen 1991:40).

### **2.2.1 Sources of Conflict**

Throughout the history of the study of conflict, the question of controversy among the scholars was, whether the aggressive behavior is an inborn (innate) human quality or a reaction to social, political and economic factors (Nader 1968).

Schellenberg describes such an approach as individual characteristic theory that focuses on the

individual and his acts, rather than the context of the act. According to Schellenberg (1996:43), this approach emphasizes the genetic instance of social behaviors. Lorenz (1966) and Ardrey (1961, 1966), (cited in Tadesse, 1988:2) argue and popularize this approach, that human violent behavior is inherited. For them, man inherits the biology of aggression that is natural and universal to vertebrates.

With the rise of scholars like Gregor (1990) and Roberchek (1990) who presented ethnographies of peaceful societies like the Buid, the Semai and the Xingu, the former idea that conflict is an inborn human quality has thinned away and received sharp criticisms. Based on this belief that societies could live harmoniously and are relatively peaceful, Montagu (1968, 1978), (cited in Tadesse 1988:3) reported that there are several hunter-gatherer societies of Africa, which are said to be relatively peaceful and not in conflict.

Tadesse (1988:3) further illustrated that a given society or individual persons could be peaceful and/or violent across time and circumstances. Thus, these ethnographic works have effectively helped to refute the inborn-based explanation of the sources of conflict.

Conflict theorists are typically categorized according to which inequalities they prioritize. Marxist theoreticians give priority to economic inequalities. In their view, all societies are marked by the conflict of social classes sometimes overt, sometimes covert, but always the major source of stability and change in society. There may be laws that benefit everybody, but mostly "the general interest" is a fiction that covers up class interest. "Justice" and "fair play" are public relations for a system that actually protects private property and treats transgressions against the upper classes much more seriously than transgression against the lower classes. (<http://www.d.umn.edu/~bmork/2306/Theories/BAMconflict2.htm>)

Where Marx believed that social class is the most basic division in any society, Max Weber saw conflict as having many possible bases-including social classes, but also religion, race, ethnicity, and more. Weber saw conflict as eternal, although it could take new forms (*Ibid.* P.2).

Other scholars have attempted to explain why the local groups of some cultures are internally more peaceful than the others in relation to social structure with special emphasis on residential pattern, descent system and marriage rules. Thoden Van Velzen and W. Van Wetering (1960), as (cited in Dejene 2002:14) developed the fraternal interest group theory. This power group that constitutes related males residing close together responds aggressively whenever the interest of one of their members is affected. Based on this theory the authors concluded that in societies with power groups, conflicts are more often, and peaceful conflict resolution is less probable for the disputants have the group that is ready to support them through thick and thin.

Other scholars come up with completely different ideas. They argue that not residence but the entire social structure are responsible for conflict. Based on this confirmation theory, Dillon (1980) (cited in Otterbein 1994) has come up with different research result. Despite the presence of fraternal interest groups, the Meta of western Cameroon stigmatized the act of retaliation.

Some researchers sought to locate the source of conflict in deviant individuals and thereby began to study the legal processes by which deviants are identified, controlled and reformed. Other theorists located the source of conflict in the definition of deviant act. Lodhi and Tilly (1973), (cited in Collier, 1975) contended that the rate of crimes against persons have some connection with cultural rules about the use of personal violence.

Another much more pronounced issue in legal anthropology is the Rules versus Power debate. In his analysis of Lozi law, Gluckman (1967:78) looked for the 'rules' of the cases to understand their outcomes. Not only was Gluckman preoccupied with the normative framework, but he also saw conceptual

parallels between legal ideas found in Africa and those in other systems. His overall attempt was seemingly to show that Africans were as logical and intelligent as Europeans (*Ibid.*).

Bohannan (1967) accepted Gluckman's appreciation of African culture but with criticism. He criticized Gluckman's comparative approach by insisting that every culture constitute a particular context with its own unique conception of and response to disputes. Bohannan rather valued the importance of using indigenous categories and terms in ethnographic description and analysis.

### **2.2.2 Conflict as a Source of Change**

One key assumption in this field is that conflict is not necessarily negative or evil. Most peace builders perceive conflict as often leading to needed change and therefore potentially creative force that can generate new options for solving existing problems. As Gulliver (1979:168-9) indicated, the outcome of a dispute leads to reconciliation and the restoration of social harmony considered to be the ideal condition for human beings. Moore (1977:159) also argued that, the outcome of disputes, like the outcome of rituals, should be the creation of a community of individuals at harmony with one another. Differences in opinions, incompatible goals, and competing interests are not inherently destructive forces, although they often lead parties to engage in violence or other exclusionary behavior toward the other side. When such behavior takes place, other aspects of the existing relationship between the disputing parties are marginalized or destroyed. Thus, according to Abu-Nimer (1999:3) though conflict itself is a natural process, it can lead to either constructive or destructive outcomes, depending on the way in which parties approach the issues in contention and one another. The conflict resolver's mission, then, is to help the parties identify potential avenues for change that accommodate the interest and needs of all the parties.

### 2.2.3 Forms of Dispute Processing

Given the proposition that conflicts are both disruptive and inevitable, how can a social system persist as a going concern? Gluckman (1956) (as cited in Nader 1968:238) takes the position that conflict need not disrupt a social system, that, indeed, it may contribute toward the maintenance of society. He points out that struggle between the Zulu princes of South Africa for the throne occur within a continuing social system. In this example, as Ghuckman puts it, "the society directs and controls the quarrels through conflicts of allegiance so that, despite rebellion among the Zulu, the social system is re-established."

This way, the forms of dispute processing have emerged as a point of discussion in legal anthropology. Gulliver in his book "*Dispute and Negotiations*" (1979:1) states that in every society, there are mechanisms of dispute settlement. Bohannan (1967: XV-XVI) emphasized this view by saying "society is impossible without control of conflict." Gulliver (1975:379) contends that the sedentary populations who are settled in one place could not easily avoid their enemies as opposed to the pastoralists who are usually on the move.

There are various modes of prosecuting quarrels. Scholars such as Schellenberg (1966), Bohannan (1967) and Gulliver (1979) (as cited in Dejene 2002:16) categorize the mechanisms of conflict resolution into two: the violent and the peaceful. The violent mechanism includes war, self-help and duel, whereas the peaceful mechanisms include avoidance, burying the dispute in the symbolic process, negotiation, mediation, arbitration and adjudication, each mode having its own characteristics.

Hizkias (1999) cited in baechler (2002:572), proposed a broad spectrum of conflict handling mechanisms. According to his proposal mediation and reconciliation are the major prevention and transformation tools. The level of mutual participation in search for solution goes from low to high. The low level for conflict handling is suppression of it by force. Adjudication, arbitration and negotiation are conflict management

mechanisms. Negotiation is carried on by two parties whereas adjudication and arbitration is carried by a third party. Mediation and reconciliation are the best conflict prevention and transformation mechanisms. As Hizkias indicated the "transformation" notion suggests that traditional and innovative conflict management approaches are complimentary instead of placing traditional and alternative methods as separate and unconnected modes.

An understanding of the ways in which conflict is resolved is particularly relevant to an understanding of the functions of conflict and its expression. Levine (1961) distinguishes five forms of conflict indicating behavior: physical aggression, public verbal dispute, covert verbal aggression, breach of expectation, and avoidance. All of these forms may be found within the same culture.

There are a number of ways to manage conflicts. Since old age our forefathers have used traditional ways of conflict management. The best way of avoiding conflict is preventing the occurrence of the conflict. If avoidance or physical aggression doesn't successfully resolve a conflict, the use of a third party to achieve settlement by arbitration, compromise, or adjudication are likely certain institutionalized forms of conflict resolution. Such as councils, courts, go-betweens, or "crossers", perform these functions (Nader 1968:240). The style of conflict resolution derives from a society's structural principles of human association.

The conditions, which define the presence and use of specific controlling procedures are various. Greater density of population and the dissolution of family authority and power that accompanies the development of a centralized state system may strengthen adjudication procedures in place of mediation or arbitration. In short, the procedural aspects of legal organization are more developed as political organization becomes more specialized (Nader 1968).

A more comprehensive approach to the occurrence, function, control, and resolution of conflict may be achieved by examining the life cycles of particular conflicts. The processes through which a conflict may pass may be found to be inherent in the type of conflict. Various mechanisms are employed within the same society to heal breaches of peace. These actions may range from informal arbitration to formal legal machinery or to the performance of public ritual. Mystical beliefs and ritual action, rather than judicial machinery are particularly effective in dealing with disturbances arising from processes inherent in the life cycle of a group (Nader 1968:241).

#### **2.2.4 Proper Addressing of Conflict**

Conflicts need proper solutions before they are changed to the worst degree. If conflicts are not addressed properly they escalate to violence. If conflicts reach a degree of violence, a high amount of property destruction and even loss of human life will follow. Any person's concern in avoiding conflicts or managing conflict from the point of natural or human resources is that, the results of any violent conflict will be the destruction of natural and human resources. If conflicts are not addressed properly the rules that were set in any community or country will be broken and no one is willing to respect the laws and the regulations.

#### **2.2.5 Traditional Mechanisms of Enforcing Decisions**

The agents of traditional modes dealing with disputes, the sanctions to be imposed and decision enforcing mechanisms are vital points related to conflict resolution.

In traditional societies varieties of institutions and personnel may function as agents of conflict resolution (Dejene 2002:20). Scholars like Gluckman (1956), Evans-Pritchard (1940) argue that these agents lack coercive force to support their decisions. Settling dispute within traditional institutions is not that much encouraged by the governments. They want to apply their own legal institutions like police and court.

The traditional agents of conflict resolution impose sanctions. Pospisil (1967) asks whether, really, the form of sanction or the effect of a sanction is more important.

In the traditional system, there are special rules and procedures. The rules include how to start the issue, discuss, and raise constructive options to resolve the conflict. These rules, which were, established through long years of experience, were not coded. They were not put in order. As time passes by and generations replace generations the abiding traditional rules of a society loose ground. They loose strength because they are not consolidated and there is no enforcing body of the rules among the people. Because of the lack of coding, the rules are not consolidated. To overcome these consolidation problems the *Waadaa* assembly has written down the rules so that it could be applied uniformly throughout the *Woreda* of *Sululta and Mulo*. The signed agreement has been distributed to all *Waadaa* elders in the *Woreda*.

As J.Hamer (1972:237) shows, among the Sidama, elders enforce their decisions by ostracizing a person who refuses to accept a verdict. The cause for the application of a sanction is the failurity to respect the code of conduct. Sanctions differ from community to community. In some communities the sanctions are very harsh while in the others they are lenient. In most cultures sanctions are very strong and are able to prevent anyone of the community member from becoming lawless. Due to fear of ostracization people accept the community's code of conduct.

Many scholars have accepted that rituals have the power of reinforcing collective sentiment and forming group cohesion. Gluckman as cited in Lewellen (1983:9) states that the rituals are not simple means of expressing feelings but also symbol that assert the priority of the system over the individual.

Despite the availability of various modes by which disputes are handled and the performance of extremely elaborated rituals to mark conflict resolution, scholars have revealed that disputes are not often resolved. Schellenberg (1996:22) argues that neither peaceful nor violent mechanisms of conflict resolution can always perfectly resolve issues. Even though decisions are made and agreement reached the parties often complain and feel that it has been unfairly treated. Anyway building sustainable relationship is vital.

Sustainable relationship can be achieved only when disputing parties have reconciled their past histories, recognized their present differences, and agreed upon a future vision for staying in relationship. The sustainability of conflict resolution settlements requires that they provide mechanisms for the parties to resolve future differences and conflicts peacefully through mutually negotiated agreements.

### **2.2.6 Waadaa Guideline and Rules**

The year 1999 was a period of political and social turmoil in Derba and around *Muger* valley. The major reasons were a) a man labelled as “bandit” by the local officials was making opposition movement around *Muger* river and had become influential. The “bandit” Agaree was also suspected of being a strong supporter of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and was chased by government armed forces. Among the people of Derba and the vicinity there were mixed feelings. Some were in favor of OLF and sung in praise of Agaree. Others were in favor of Oromo Peoples Democratic organization (OPDO) b) during the transition namely the fall of the derg and the coming to power of the Ethiopian people's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) most men in Derba town and all the male workers of the Muger – Derba Cement Factory were armed to defend their vicinity and the factory as well.

In 1999 the tension between the peoples in favor of the two political organizations escalated and when the suspected OLF supporters were imprisoned in *Fitche* – capital of the north Shewa zone –retaliation from the friends of the imprisoned got severe.

It was during this turmoil that the *Qallu* Agaree Tullu proposed for the call of a meeting of the elderly men of the *woreda* to resolve this and other social problems of the area. The *woreda* officials, from whose hands the matter was slipping agreed on the proposal and sent out message. Elderly men of different Peasant associations where gathered in different parts of the *woreda* and this assembly which aimed to restore peace in the area was named *Waadaa* (promise). Finally, the *Waadaa* agreement ended in making guideline and rules that is applied throughout the *woreda*. As my informant Tesema indicated the *Waadaa* agreement is found in the hands of *Waadaa* elders of each Peasant Association and is referred to when necessary.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE DERBA OROMO

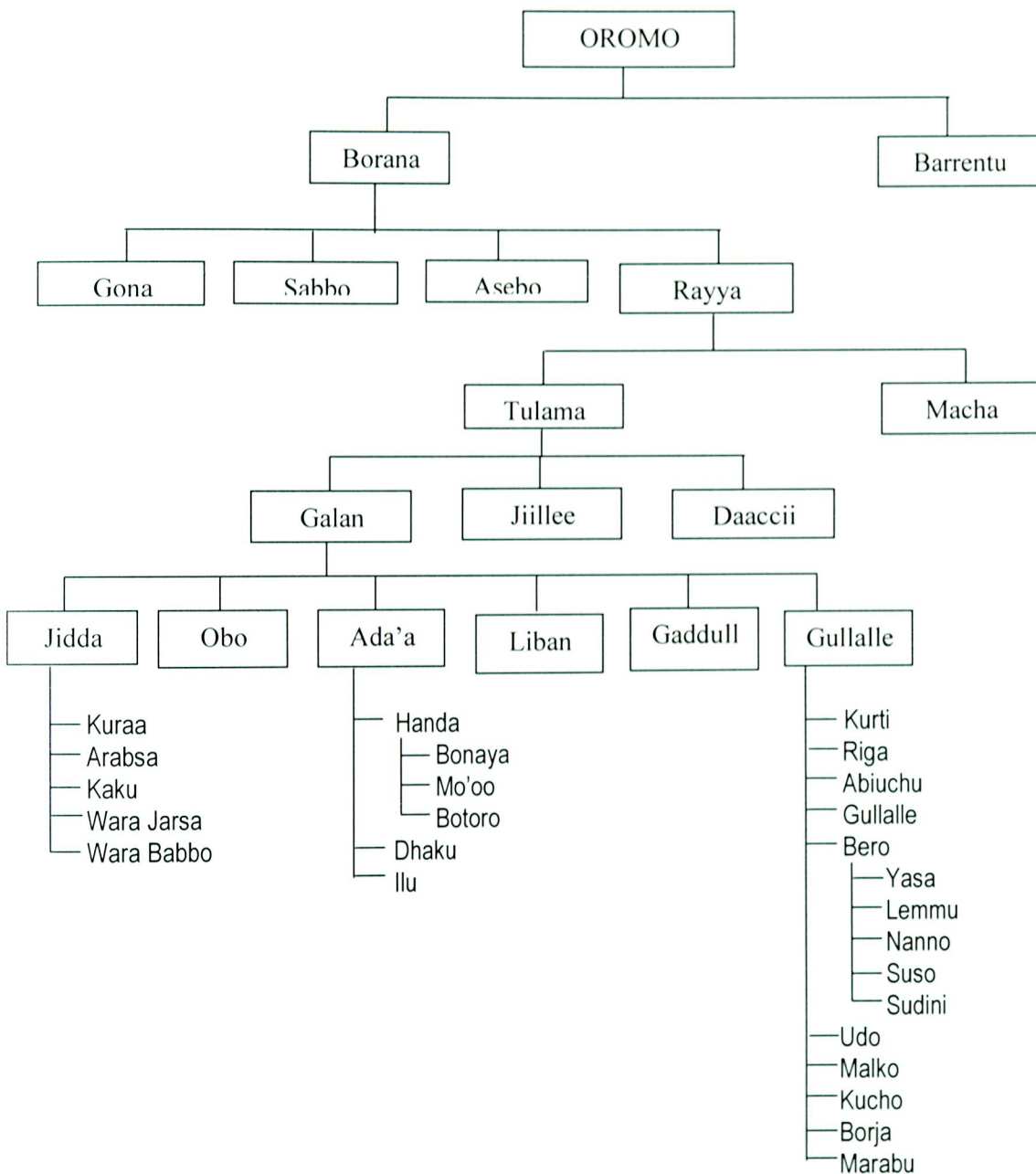
#### 3.1 History of the Oromo: - An Overview

The Oromo are one of the Kushitic speaking groups of people with variations in color and physical characteristics (Gadaa 1988:4). The Kushitic speakers have inhabited northeastern and eastern Africa for as long as recorded history (ibid). The Oromo make up a significant portion of the population occupying the Horn of Africa (Gadaa 1988:1, Asmarom 2000: xii). Different areas have been indicated as places where the Oromo developed or differentiated into its own unique community of people or ethnic group (Braukamper, 1980) (Cited in Gadaa 1988:7).

According to Gadaa (1988:8): -The Oromo are said to be of two major groups or moieties descended from the two 'houses' (wives) of the person represented by Borana and Barentu. Borana was senior (*angafa*) and Barentu junior (*qutisu*). The descendants of Borana and Barentu form the major Oromo clans and sub-clans. The Oromo have several clans (*gosa*, *qomoo*).

The Oromo nation has a single common mother tongue and basic common culture. Oromiya is a regional state with an estimated population of 23,704,000 and an area of 353,006.81 square Kilometers (CSA, July 2003). Agricultural sector is the biggest employer of the economically active population in the region. It is characterized by extremely small holdings, mostly private peasant holdings, dispersion of cropland holding, traditional farming, and low level of literacy among the holders (CSA, July 2003).

### 3.2 Kinship Structure of Derba Oromo



✧ Adopted from LATINISA HIDDA OROMOO by Banbeto Busha 1994

✧ Informants from Derba Oromo

✧ Alemayehu Diro, 2004

According to Gemetchu (1996:93) the Oromo are divided into five groups that compose the Oromo nation. The five groups are Raayyaa and Assebu, Macha and Tulama, Sabbo and Goona, Sikko and Mando and Itu and Humbana.

On the other hand according to Asmarom and other scholars the Oromo are divided into two moieties that are *Borana* and *Barrentu*.

The Derba Oromo trace their descent from *Galan*, one of the three sons of *Tulama*. *Gelan* had six branches. They are *Jidda*, *Obo*, *Ada'a*, *Liban*, *Gaddulla* and *Gullalle*. According to my informant *Tesema* the Derba Oromo are a combination of *Jidda*, *Ada'a* and *Gullalle*. *Kura* of *Jidda*; *Handa*, *Dhaku* and *llu* of *Ada'a* and *Gullalle* are settled in Derba, the *Muger* valley and the vicinity. *Jidda's* sons *Wara Jarsa* and *Wara Babbo* are well dispersed in northern Shewa. The *Gullalles* are also found in and around Derba though their numbers are not significant. Derba and the *Muger* valley where the quarry takes place are predominantly settled by the *Ada'a* Oromo.

According to oral history descendants of *Ada'a* were able to settle on this vast area because land was then controlled by fire. The leader of a clan sets fire and he controls the land from the place the fire was set up to the area where the fire extinguished.

*Ada'a* kindled a fire after gathering the kindling at a place called *Wayu* near *Muger* River. It is said that the fire went towards west of *Muger* up to *Enchini* and Haratiyo River (near Enchini town), and up to *Bargaa* (Spring water) [commonly known as *Adda'a Bargaa*]. The fire, as it is said, went up to *Fo'ataa* (Mountain of *Walmaraa*) and then went out. But my informant *Debeso* said that, a bit of *qaanqqee* (fire-cracker) had been carried up to *Wacacaa* where it went out.

According to my informant Kebede, the Derba Oromo border with *Mulo* Oromo on the West. *Selallie* and *Ada'a* share *Muger* River as a common border on the North. On the Southwest are found the *Macha* Oromo. On the East it shares common boundary with *Abitchu* Oromo, which is one of the branches of *Gullalle*.

### **3.3 The *Qallu* Institution and the Gada System**

The Oromo, both in the highlands and lowlands, maintained their ties through various institutions. Among these institutions, the most important were the *Qallu* institution and the *gada* system.

#### **3.3.1 The *Qallu* Institution**

Before the introduction of Christianity and Islam, the Oromo people practiced their own religion. They believed in one *Waqayoo*, which approximates to the English word God. As Gadaa (1988:10) put it; " The Oromo *Waq* is one and the same for all. He is the creator of everything, source of all life, omnipresent, infinite, and incomprehensible. He can do and undo anything. *Waqayoo* is often called *Waq* for short ". Earlier the *Qallus* were considered as supreme ritual leaders and had the position of adviser and ritual expert in the *Gada* system. They possessed the exclusive prerogative of legitimizing the different *gada* officials, when a new *gada* group is initiated into the politically active class. One of the most significant of their duties is the performance of the *Muda* ritual (Knutson 1967:142).

The *Qallu* institution is one the most important in the Oromo culture and society and is believed to have existed since mythical times. The *Qallu* institution was responsible for directing the Oromo traditional religion. As (Mohammed 1990:6-7) pointed out, the *Qallu* institution and its relation with *Waq* were the core of traditional religion. The *Qallu* institution, which is believed to have existed since mythical times began to fade among the northern shewa Oromo with the weakening of the contacts between the Oromo in the northern part and southern regions. The southern Oromo area was regarded as the ritual center for all

Oromo groups. The increased intercultural communication of the northern Shewa Oromo with other ethnic groups and the political situation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ethiopia have led to the emergence of the *Qallu* institutions as we find them now in Derba and the vicinity.

As Gadaa (1988:20) indicated the *Qallu* institution has political importance, even though the *Qallu* himself does not possess political power as such and religion is distinctly separated from politics. The *Qallu* village is the spiritual center. Where political debates are organized for the candidates for the *gada* offices. Thus he plays both a spiritual and political role in the *gada* system. The place of worship of *Qallu* ritual house is called the *Galma*. Each *Ayyaana* has its own *Galma* and its own special ceremonies. People visit the *Galma* for worship once or twice a week. At this time, as Gadaa pointed out the followers dance, sing and beat drums to perform a ritual called *dalaga* in order to achieve a state of ecstasy, which often culminates in possession. It is at the height of this that possessing *Ayyaana* speaks through the *Qallu*'s mouth and can answer prayers and predict the future (Gadaa 1988:21). The *Qallu* are highly respected and feared among the Derba Oromo. People who are pleaded upon by the name of the *Ayyaana*, "*adara Gebrela*"(asked in the name of *Gebrela*) or "*adara Saglan*"(asked in *saglan's name*) respond much quicker than when they are pleaded upon by the law "*adara Higi*"(please respect the *law*) or "*adara Mangisti*"(asked in *government name*).

### **3.3.2 Gada system in Derba.**

The Oromo have a very rich culture, fostered by the size of the population and large land areas with diverse climatic conditions. Gadaa (1988:10-11) has the following to say in connection with the *gada* system: -

One highly developed self-sufficient system, which has influenced every aspect of Oromo life, is the *gada* system. It is a system that organizes the Oromo society into groups or sets (about 7-11) that assumes different responsibilities in the society every eight years. It has guided the religious, social, political and economic life of Oromo for many years, and also their philosophy, art, history and method of time keeping.

Asmarom who has done his research on *Gada system* emphasizes this truth by saying

The *gada* system was a traditional institution, which directed the social and political life of the Oromo people. The *gada* system is an institution that represents an extreme development of the type of social structure. The *gada* system is that the newly born infant boy always enters the system of grades exactly forty years behind the father, regardless of the age of the father (1973:51).

The *gada* system has served as the basis of democratic and egalitarian political system. Under it the power to administer the affairs of the nation and the power to make laws belong to the people. Every male member of the society who is of age and *gada* grade has full rights to elect and to be elected.

Though the *gada* system is considered as one of the most fascinating socio-political structure of Africa that even influenced the lives of other people like the Sidama, Walayita, Konso, Gedeo etc. (Gadaa 1988:15), it has undergone evolution in order to adapt to changing conditions.

According to Asmarom (1973:12), the system that seems to have worked ideally for small groups then, with a large group spread over a wide territory the *gada* system did not work effectively. Scholars like Gadaa give other factors to the decline of the system. These are: -

1. The protracted wars that preceded the onset of colonization of the Oromo people. Because of the insecurity imposed by such wars coupled with distances involved to go to the *Gada* ceremonies to change the leadership, the *Abba Duulas* (fathers of war) stayed on their post for much longer period than required by the *gada* rules.

2. The coming of a new beliefs and religions. The politico-religious aggression that took place in the expansion of Islam and Christianity has affected the culture of the Oromo people very much.

3. The changes in the mode of living of several Oromo communities. In many parts of Oromiya a settled agrarian mode of life developed fast and the people practiced both mixed agriculture. These and

other related factors led to the emergence of a new social system, which created a significant pressure on the *gada* system.

The *gada* system among the Derba Oromo is of course alive. But this *gada* system is not as colorful as it is used to be generations back. According to oral history that my informants told me, there came three brothers to the Derba vicinity. It is said that they came from *Madaa Wallabu*, The original homeland of the Oromo. The *angafa* (eldest son) went north (which is now Selallie), *Kan giddutti dhalate* (the middle one) stayed in the place what is now known as *Ada'a Koticha* (an area surrounded by three rivers), and the *qixisuu* (the youngest) went westward (towards the direction of present day *Macha*) and settled there.

According to this legend, the eldest son refused to carry on the *gada* ceremony. The youngest carried on the *gada* ceremony and prepared great feast. The middle one also followed the footsteps of his younger brother. My informants related this legend as a factor why the *Selallie* Oromo do not celebrate *gada* at present.

There are still other elderly men who agree with the fact that the *Selallie* Oromo do not celebrate *gada* but justify the cause otherwise. According to these people, "during the reign of King Sahle Selassie, Ras Darge Seifu was appointed to be the governor of *Selallie*. It was Ras Darge who stopped the *gada* celebration from being functional in *Selallie*. His successors Asfaw, Seyoum and later Ras Kassa carried on the mission of dissolving the *gada* system in *Selallie*.

Concerning the *gada* system in Derba it is carried on to a certain extent. But people don't follow the strict rules of handing over power to the next age grade at a special ceremony at a special place and time. Those men who enter the *gada* class or *Luba* do not make rituals and celebrate it with the people, as they cannot

afford money to carry on the ceremony. Sometimes they pass the ritual period and make minor preparations in the following *gada* period.

As Mohammed (1990:10) indicated, except among the Borana in southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya, where the *gada* system is still a living institution, it is impossible even to reconstruct fully the names of the original *gada* grades. The five *gada* age-grades known among the Derba Oromo and the vicinity are: *-Itti-Makoo, Dabbalee, Foollee, Doremaa and Gada (Luba)*.

As to why the *gada* system in Derba is not carried on according to the tradition, many people see the reasons as follows: -

1. The protracted wars and the onset of Abyssinian colonization like in Selallie had affected the *gada* system in Derba, but could not absolutely dissolve it.
2. The absence of the outstanding features of the *gada* system, i.e., the check and balance mechanisms. As Astme Georgis (cited in Gadaa 1988:16) confirmed, the Oromo political power was replaced by a centralized unitary system of government which "outlawed" the major *chaffe* meetings in the Oromo areas conquered. Bartels (1983) also noted, "*Gada* was gradually deprived of by Amharas most of its political and judicial powers and reduced to merely ritual institution. Even the social aspects, that are the ritual and ceremonial aspects, have not been left to the people. The observance of *gada* ceremonies has been prevented by proclamation.

### **3.4 MARRIAGES AND THE FAMILY**

#### **3.4.1 Marriage**

As my informant Kebede indicated marriage is often more a relationship between groups than one between individuals. People in Derba don't just take a spouse, they assume to a group of in-laws obligations of

exploring the background, behavior and attitudes of the spouse. Residence is virilocal (a woman leaves the community where she was born). The newly married women face the prospect of spending the rest of her life in her husband's village with his relatives. According to my informants, descent group members often contribute to bride wealth when marriage takes place. The people believe that bride wealth compensates the bride's group for the loss of her companionship and labor.

Among the Derba Oromo marriage is given high values. A father is not only choosing a wife for his son, but a whole group of people with whom his own family will become *sodda* (in-laws). This means, they treat each other as relatives (*fira*), as Holcomb (1973:08) stated. As my informant Beriso indicated, once the two families are tied together through marriage *sodda* call on each other whenever either family needs more assistance. If a member of a family dies, all the in-laws share the occasion together. At time of disaster or bad happenings both families share the grievance of each other and support the victim materially.

Usually wedding takes place after harvesting and before planting being as plenty of crops are available at the time. The invited guests at the wedding will pay at least 5-10 birr each to help defray expenses. The kin groups make contribution to the cash payments for the parents of the girl that is paid by the boy's father.

Virginity is highly valued and the girl will not be tempted to give it up before her marriage as this ruins the family and the girl's reputation. As my informant Tesema confirmed, if the girl lost her virginity, the groom has every right to beat the girl, and send her home. But now beating of girls who had given up their virginity has decreased a lot.

### **3.4.2 Family**

Cultural anthropologists have identified two fundamentally different types of family structure. These are nuclear family and the extended family. Consisting of husband and wife and their children, the nuclear

family is a two-generation family formed around the conjugal or marital union. Extended families consist of two or more families that are linked by blood ties (Ferraro 1998:209,kottak 1994:332).

Though there are two types of families, my emphasis will be on the former one. Murdock (1949:1) defines family as "a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. Ferraro (1998:193) explains family as " a social unit characterized by economic cooperation, the management of reproduction and child rearing and common residence. "

When we come to the Derba Oromo, as my informant Dhabba indicated the family is as stated by Ferraro, the social unit, which shares common residence and economic cooperation. Family members, both adults and children, recognize certain rights and obligations towards each other. Family in Derba contains one adult male, one wife and a number of children. There is no permanent separation of husband and wife usually. As opposed to Borana woman who has a lover outside her marriage (Asmarom, 1973:19), the *Derba* woman doesn't dare to have a lover. Let alone making the relationship between lovers a reasonably open matter, the suspicion that his wife had a love affair leads to the violent action of the husband, which could result, in manslaughter of the suspected man. Outside of this, as Badhadha reported there are various reasons for the stability of the family. The most important of these ties are the children born to them and the land size, which will further be sub-divided if they go apart. Women occasionally assist their husbands on farm activities like weeding and harvesting. Women cover most of the household works. Children assist their parents in the household works or outside it.

### **3.5 Types of Marriage**

The recognized types of marriage in most African countries are: the Customary, Religious and Civil marriages. Out of these three types of marriage I will focus on the customary one. Customary marriage is a

type of marriage that takes place according to the tradition of the people. Out of these customary types of marriage *Saddeeta*, *Irra dhaaba*, *Butta*, *Dhaala* and *Walgara* were practiced among the Derba Oromo.

### 3.5.1 Saddeeta

In the past the *saddeeta* type of marriage was fixed by the agreement of the two parents. It was believed that the girl inherits her parent's honesty, trustworthiness, hardworking and sociability. So getting parents who fulfill these criteria was tiresome and time consuming. Relatives and neighbors take part in finding the exact match for the would-be groom. Making a solid relation through a marriage with a better-off family is the ambition of all parents. If the wealthy family is not available, cementing the relation at least with one's own equal was the dream of every parent. So the *Derba Oromo* used to take their time in selecting partner to their boys. The father takes time to reach a conclusion since he is choosing not only a wife for his son to whom his family will become in-laws (*Soddaa*) as Holcomb (1973:109) puts it. It is rather the whole family of the girl with whom the boy's family is going to establish a long lasting tie.

In the past the *Jaarssa Kadhaa* used to go to the girl's home during the dusk. The elderly people have *baala irrecha* (leaves of a wood considered to be holy) and ask the girl's parents to let them enter the fence. As soon as the elderly men enter the compound they hand over the leaves to the father. They inform the bride's parents why they came and who sent them. Parents of the girl don't give an out right answer even if they knew the boy and at heart felt happy. As my informant Kebede said, the parents of the girl will say '*Firaan hin marianna*' (let's discuss it among family members). This is because the parents of the girl also want time to weigh the characteristics of their would-be son-in-law and the family background because the two young couple is to establish a close and long-lasting tie. Thus, the mate must be chosen carefully.

Formerly, in *saddeeta* type of marriage it was only symbolic things that were given as bride wealth.

According to Tesema "*Beera Kalaale* (old woman), *Dubra*, (girl), *Anaan* (milk), *Damma* (honey) *Dhadha* (butter) and green grass" was sent to the girl's house with the *jaarssa kadaa*. Later the bride wealth began to be paid in cash and cattle.

*Xalayaa erga* (*Waraqetaa-erga*) is a modern form of *saddeeta* type of marriage arrangement in which, instead of sending *jaarssa Kadhaa*, a letter requesting the consent of the parents is sent to the girl's father. Here, what the *jaarssa Kadhaa* does is that it simply gives the letter to the girl's parents. If the letter does not get a replay within a week it means accepting the proposal. This "deviation" as my informant calls it, from the traditional process of sending *jaarssa kadhaa*, is mostly observed around the town of Derba. In fact it is unwise to call it "deviation" as tradition is subject to change through cultural diffusion as well as from within. To strengthen this concept Giddens (1992:2) argues saying that, it is a myth to think of traditions as impervious to change. Traditions evolve over time, but also can be quite suddenly altered or transformed. If I can put it this way, they are invented and reinvented.

But it is simply wrong to suppose that for a given set of symbols or practices to be traditional, they must have existed for centuries. Endurance over time is not the key defining feature of tradition, or of its more diffuse cousin, custom. The distinguishing characteristics of tradition are ritual and repetition. So *Xalayaa erga* is an evolved form of *Sadeeta* that is exercised at large nowadays.

### **3.5.2 Irra Dhaaba**

*Irra-dhaaba* type of marriage is a surprise marriage. As my informant Tesema indicated this type of marriage is carried on to shorten the longer time of waiting one's fiancée for marriage. Some parents allow the marriage between the couples but delay the wedding time by saying that the girl is too young to

shoulder household responsibilities, or they say that they are giving the boy time for preparations. If the boy loses his patience he sends elders (*Jaarssa kadhaa*) with *Kallacha*

(*Sacred* and symbolic material usually made of bronze that is held when going for *Irra dhaaba*) When the elders reach the girl's house they say to the father "*kallacha baasnne isin kadhanaa, Kallachi Kobaa hin deebi'u*" (we came with holy and respected symbolic gesture which is sacred to return bare handed) to ask for the girl's hand. The parents, who are afraid of the *kallacha* and the elders, give the girl to the boy.

The other reason to go for *Irra Dhaaba* type of marriage is to beg a girl whose parents seem to be unwilling to give their girl under normal *saddeeta* marriage. As my informant Debeso indicated, parents who wait for the right husband and return *Jaarssa kadhaa* several times, agree to give their daughter in marriage on seeing the *kallacha*. The third reason for this type of marriage is the failure of already arranged marriage. This is if the girl runs away due to her own reason her fiancé resorts to *Irra Dhaaba*. The fourth and last reason for this type of marriage is the sudden decision of a boy to marry immediately. In this case there may be an urge from the parents especially if they are old, to see their son having a child while they are alive. If the boy's father had passed away the mother always try that the boy take a wife and have children while she is alive. This way the boy who was un-interested in marriage all of a sudden sends elderly men to find him a wife. This surprise type of marriage known as *Irra Dhaaba* is not widely practiced as it used to be among the Derba Oromo nowadays.

### **3.5.3 Butta (Abduction)**

*Butta* (abduction) type of marriage is one form of marriage among the Derba Oromo though its practicality is decreasing a lot. *Butaa* could take place if a boy is not allowed to marry a girl. The girl's parents may not allow the relationship between their daughter and the boy. This time the boy with his friends wait for the girl and abduct her. Then the boy sends elderly men (*Jaarssa Araraa*) to the girl's parents and differences are

settled. If the abduction takes place on return from market, the youth on the girl's side would open a fight and there is a possibility of injury or death of men from both sides. Now *Butaa* (abduction) is highly condemned by the Derba Oromo. If a person abducts a girl, the *Jaarssa Waadaa* doesn't sit for reconciliation. Government institutions fine the abductor and his collaborators. According to the *Wadda* agreement the abductor would be handed over to the police. Then negotiation will be carried on by the *jaarssa araraa* for settlement of the dispute between the two families.

*Dhaala* (levirate), *Nadhaabi* (sororate) and *Walgaraa* (woman exchange) types of marriage, which were once famous, are now out of practice, especially since the signing of the March 1999 *Waadaa* Agreement by all elderly representatives of the *woreda* Peasant Associations.

### **3.6 *Guddifachaa* (Adoption)**

Guddifachaa is a cultural process by which, childless parents adopt children from other families regardless of their ethnic background. Adoption has been a common practice for centuries among the Oromo of Ethiopia (Bekele 1958:311; Sisai 1992:11). Among the Derba Oromo society adoption is most common and has its own well-established system and procedure. The needs for adoption is well accepted and it is still practiced. The main reasons why the Oromo adopt children are: -

- 1: To keep the continuity of parental line so that it may not break at any time due to the non-existence of a son and to have a successor who inherit their property. When a family is unable to get male child from the biological father or mother, they adopt male child from another family. If a married Oromo dies before leaving a son, the widow has to adopt a boy that will be considered as the heir of the deceased.
- 2: The second reason for adoption is an economic motive, which has two characters.

- a) When poor parents are not able to bring up their children, the relatives or the neighbor will take the children for adoption.
- b) The believe that the boy take care of his mother at old age initiate the adoptive father to take a son so that his wife (adoptive mother) is taken care of at old age.

A family with only female children may get deserted when all daughters are married. To overcome this problem a family with only female children is forced to adopt male child. A family with a number of sons adopts a daughter to reduce work burden of the wife. According to my informant Nega, male children were and still are widely adopted than female. Besides this, as Debeso confirmed, in some instances in the past, an Oromo clan adopted a neighboring non-Oromo clan recognizing it as part of the Oromo ethnic group. Parents can give away their son only if they have more than two sons. As my informant Tesema confirmed young children were more preferable in adoption.

Most preferred *guddifachaa* type among the Derba Oromo is adopting one's sibling's male child. When adopting the baby boy, the adopting parents give in return certain gift. The gift is supposed to be handed over to the parents through the old women called *chifirees*. This symbolic gift is believed to be an exchange for the adopted son. According to W/o Godeti, the adopting parents do not enter the house of the parents of the child during the *guddifachaa* ceremony. The old woman on the parents' side take the child from the mother and pass him to the second old woman (*chifiree*) on the side of the adopting parents. The adopting mother takes the child from the second old woman. This is assumed to create a gap between the adopting parents and biological parents. This is done so that the biological parents think that the child is in the hands of non-relatives as the old women are alien to both parties.

### 3.7 Oromo Religion

Blakely et al (1994: 10-14) argue that, religion is a 'means-to instrument' for national and cultural identity, for dealing with evil and for promoting community values. At present we find three religions among the Oromo people. They are the traditional religion, Islam and Christianity (Bartels, 1983:14, CSA 1996).

The traditional divinity is both one and, at the same time, also many. The supreme being what they call *Waqqa* (God) is the creator of all things and the source of all life (Bartels 1983:14). According to Mohammed (1990:7), *Waqqa* was both the sky God and the sky itself, manifesting the dual nature of the two moieties within the nation. It controlled fertility, peace and life giving rains, which were the *sine qua non* for farming and pastoral society. Bartels (1983:89) also agrees in a similar way. He states that '*Waqqa*' has a double meaning. The first being 'sky', i.e., the vault of the sky as we see it. The second approximates what is meant by the English word 'God'. The traditionalist Oromo believe in one supreme God they call *Waqqa*. The *Waqqa* is regarded as the creator of everything on the earth. This belief has been among the Oromo long before the teaching of Orthodox Christianity and the Islam religion.

With regard to Islam we find Islamized Oromo in Harar, in Arsi and in the West around Jimma, in large numbers. The degree of Islamization differs markedly between the various groups (Bartels 1983:14).

It is very difficult to say exactly when the Oromo people took Christianity as their religion. But it is possible to guess that it is related with the expansion of the Oromo people into the central highland area of Ethiopia after the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The expansion resulted in cultural integration with the Amharic and Tigreña speaking people of the area.

Though it is very difficult to put the exact figure of the Christian, Muslim or traditional believers in Derba, one can deduce from the population size by religion for *Mulo* and *Sululta Woreda*. Out of the total 133,950 persons in the *Woreda* the traditional believers are 1392, the Muslims 437, Protestant and Catholics are 419 people, and the Orthodox Christians 131,505(CSA 1994).

Though the majority of the Oromo in Derba are Orthodox Christians, they tend to be still in favor of the traditional religious and philosophical thoughts. *Waqa* is the source of all powers and dwell in heaven. According to one of my informants, 'there is an invisible spirit that functions benevolently in the area maintaining close vigilance over the inhabitants.' That spirit is what they call "*Ayyaana*".

### **3.7.1 Ayyaana**

Gemetchu (1996:93) argues that *Ayyaana* is what systematizes the Oromo religious and philosophical thought and oral tradition. Some say that, a number of spirits are collectively called *Ayyaana*. Knutson's (1967:53) argument, as shown below, tends to confirm this. "*Waqa* is one, but the *Ayyaana* too, are *Waqa* in a way. It is therefore that I do not like it when you call the *Ayyaana* super human. Are they merely super human? They are much more: They are something of *Waqa*. It is in the many, many *Ayyaana* that *Waqa* himself comes close to us and that we are united to him."

As Knutson (1967:53) indicated much of the contact between man and the supra human takes place through the cult of special divine 'agents' whose general name is *Ayyaana*. Bartels in his study of the "Oromo Religion, Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia" carries a supportive concept to Knutson about the *Ayyaana*. He in particular states that, It is clear from the foregoing that the concept of *Ayyaana* comprises more than just the idea of a super human power dwelling a person, an animal or plant. It is "something of *Waqa*" in a person, an animal or plant making them the way they are, a particular manifestation of the devine, *Waqa* as creator and as source of all life (1983:118).

According to my informant Debeso Borishe, the *Ayyaana* is regarded as the "spiritual and political head of the people. This strengthens what Knutson (ibid) found out that says, *Ayyaana* can possess men or, as the expression is, descend upon men. The *Ayyaana* punish individuals who violate the norm or rules against stealing, killing or harming of the weak."

There is cultural oscillation that may be described as the simultaneous observance by the Oromo of beliefs and practices. This means that we observe Christianity and *Ayyaana* elements in the tradition, which normally are found to be contradictory in many other contexts. The priests of the Orthodox Church in the vicinity have often tried to shake off the Oromos indigenous faith and values, but they do not still seem to be successful. Conflict between the two sets of values, beliefs and practices, i.e., between Christianity and *Ayyaana* put them into an oscillating position. Yet as I have observed the people tend towards their indigenous faith and values. Though they go to churches, respect the church leaders, due consideration is given to the rules and regulations of the *Ayyaana*. They immediately respond when called by the *Ayyaana*. The call of the *Ayyaana* usually takes place through the *Qallu*. The process of this call takes place in two ways.

1. If the individual who is supposed to report to the call of the *Ayyaana* is living far away from that vicinity the *Qallu* sends a letter to the person to report immediately.
2. If the person is living in the vicinity, a messenger is sent to relay the call of the *Qallu*.

The *Qallu* is the spiritual leader of the traditional religion of the Oromo people. He is the highest priest that interprets and preserves the laws of the *Waqa*. He is regarded as the father of the Oromo and the source of Oromo customs and traditions (Mohammed 1990:6).

Among the Derba Oromo, the *Qallus*- the ritual and religious leaders- provide the primary integration for the larger population. In addition to leading the ritual affairs, they play important roles in political, economic, judicial and recreational life. Government officials sometimes relay their political messages to the people through the *Qallus*.

There are many *abba Ayyaanas*(*Qallus*) in the *woreda*. To mention few of them: *Saglan, Gebrela, Michaela, Abba Muta, Abba Daka, Mariam Dule, Olla, Offa Abukoo* and *Haadhaa Abiyu*. I had a chance to meet two of the *Abba Ayyaanas in the Woreda*. One of them is *Mekonnen Gemechu* (the *Chole* of *Gebrela Dore*) and the other is *Agaree Tullu* (*Ayyaantu Olla*).

I met the two *Abba Ayyaanas* to check with them how rituals take place in their *Galmas* (ritual centers) and to get certain information on traditional dispute resolving mechanism. I had the chance of observing the ritual ceremony that took place at the center of *Chole Gebrela*.

As Lewis (1966:99) indicated, a *Qallu* maintains several centers, returning more often to his primary headquarters. This holds true for *Mekonnen Gemechu* (*Chole Gebrela*) who has two major ritual centers at *Dore* (primary headquarter) and at *Jimole* built on a high hill.

The *Qallus* have hierarchies among themselves. The *angafa* (eldest) *Abba Ayyaana* promotes his junior after serving him for a certain time. After getting the blessing of the *angafa*, the junior establishes his own *Galma* (ritual center) and start practicing. The oldest and highly respected *abba Ayyaana* (*Qallu*) in the Area is the "*Saglan*" which is commonly known as "*Saglan Gumbichuu*." Then comes "*Gebrela Dore*". He had promoted *Offa Abukoo* after he himself was blessed and promoted by *Saglan*.

The *Abba Ayyaanas* have different and unique characteristics of themselves. They never expose themselves to the people's gathering. They don't shake hands with peoples. They don't enter a house where there is mourning. They don't enter a house in which a new baby is born until long after the birth of the child. Those people who have entered a house where there is mourning or the house of a mother who has newly delivered a child is not allowed to enter into the *Galma* of the *Ayyaana*.

### 3.7.1.1 Chole Gebrela- Mekonnen Gemechu

Mekonnen Gemechu, a young man of 27, is the *chole* (server of the *Ayyaana*) *Gebrela*. He was a seventh grade student in Addis Ababa when he inherited the spirit from his grandmother *Ayyaantu Gebrela*. At her death the spirit passed on to Mekonnen. Mekonnen argues saying that, 'the *Ayyaana* is an ancient belief that came from *Melka Tullu*, *Oda Nebee* and *Cheffee Tumma*.'

According to Mekonnen, though he didn't see the *Ayyaana* (spirit) with his naked eyes when the spirit rests on him he speaks what the *Ayyaana* fills into his head. The *Ayyaana* fulfills peoples' wishes. Mekonnen said that, "the *Ayyaana* gives everybody according to his own work. *Namni gari ojete, ini [Gebrela] Gari godafi; ho hamaa te'e hamaa argata*" (if a person does good things, the return from the *ayyana* will be good. But if he is devilish the consequence will be bad).

### 3.7.1.2 Ayyaantu Agaree Tullu

Agaree Tullu is another server of the *Ayyaana*. He calls himself, "*Ayyaantu*" (chosen by the *Ayyaana*). He serves the *Ayyaana olla*. Agaree pointed out that the "*Ayyaantu*" could pass the judgment of the *Ayyaana* as he is commanded. He further went on saying "we" are serving the purpose of the *Ayyaana* as well as the government in peace building. "We" chair *Jaarssa biyyaa* to settle disputes among the Oromo people. "We" facilitate the '*Guma*' settlement mechanism. "We" work as *dure taa Jaarssa Waadaa* (chairperson of the *Waadaa* elderly council).

### 3.7.2 The Ritual Feasts

The *Abba Ayyaana* or the *Ayyaantu* celebrate certain days in the year in the name of their respective *Ayyaanas*. During those particular occasions, their followers visit the *Galma* for worship. *Galma* is the most important building, which is used for worshipping. Each *Ayyaana* has its own *Galma* and its own special ceremonies. The *Galma* is usually located on a hilltop, hillside or in the middle of large trees (Gadaa 1988:20). On the day of the gathering, the followers' dance, sing and beat drums to perform a ritual called *Dalaga* in order to achieve a state of ecstasy, which often culminates in possession. It is at the height of this that the possessing *Ayyaana* speaks through the *Qallu's* mouth and makes judgment and predicts the future.

On those special days of worship the *Qallu* prepares ritual feasts for his followers. Ritual ceremonies of slaughtering animals and blood sacrifice take place in the name of the *Ayyaana*. The *Qallu* spends a lot of money to prepare the ritual feasts, though the followers make minor contributions. Because of this expenses it is said that "*Qaallun Iyessa* (the *Qallu* is poor). During this ritual feasts, people pass the night in the compound of the *Galma*. During my fieldwork I was able to observe the ceremony, which took place at *Jimole* in one of the centers of *Chole Gebrela*. The occasion took two days and an estimated 600-700 people participated.

### 3.7.3 *Qabsisuu* (Cursing)

People gather for recreation and high feasts in the ritual center of the *Qallu*. They gather there in large number to hear what the *Qallu* has to say and the elders ask for blessing of the country and its people. The elders pray for the wellbeing of the rulers, crops, cattle etc and their offerings (Lewis 1987:99). By the same token people go to the ritual centers when they are in dispute and when they want to make *Qabsisuu*

*Qabsisuu* takes place when a person does wrong to a family member, a friend or a neighbor. If a man fails to return the property or the money he borrowed, the creditor will condemn the debtor in front of the *Ayyaana* when the *Qallu* is possessed. This is known as *Qabsisuu* (cursing).

Most of the time people settle their disputes at the *Qallu* court with mutual understanding and with the interference of the *Qallu* himself. As Lewis (1987: 676-7) pointed out the plaintiff who gets no satisfaction from his opponent may go before the spirit, at a time when it is possessing the *Qallu* and curses his opponent, asking the spirit to 'catch' him.

The plaintiff goes directly to the *Galma* of the *Qallu* and falls on his knee in front of the *Abba Ayyaana* possessed by the spirit. The plaintiff explains what had happened to him and asks the *Ayyaana* to show him some kind of miracles. If he goes to *Ayyaana Gebrela*, he would ask saying, *Ya Gebrela! Hori kiyaa Na galchi, Yoo Kana naaf gotee tumalessan harkisaa duffaa* ("Oh! Gebrela, please help me retrieve my property. If you help me in this I will bring you a castrated sheep). The *Ayyaana* responds by saying *siif haa ta'u* (Let it be for you).

If the opponent is induced to settle the dispute the cursor is supposed to swear a counter-oath (*Tufta*) releasing him before they go to the *Qallu* (Lewis, *ibid.*). Unlike Lewis Debeso says the *tufta* takes place after reaching the ritual center and confirming their agreement to the *Qallu*. Then the cursed person pays 3-6 birr for the *tufta* and the blessing of the *Qallu*. Getting the *tufta* and the blessing of the *Qallu* indicates the settlement of the dispute. Then *Qabsisuu* is to be removed. After that they can eat together from the same dish.

As Debeso Borishe pointed out, People who beg the *Ayyaana* to curse their offenders do not necessarily go to the *Galma*. They can beg or curse from their home. People believe that if a person curses somebody genuinely, the probability of the cursed person to be affected is high.

If and when the man who is cursed feels that he is sick or suspects that he had been cursed, goes to the *Ayyaana's* house and asks for mercy. He pays for the *tufta* (forgiveness) of the wronged person. If the cursed person admits that he had repented heartily, the wronged person will chew *Coqqorssa* (a type of grass) and spits towards the cursed person 8 times. *Tufta* is a means of erasing the cursing. After *tufta* the dispute is settled.

A person, who has cursed a friend or somebody, will not shake hands with the cursed one. They will not eat together, though they can verbally communicate. If something happens to the cursed person before the *tufta*, the cursor goes to the *Ayyaana* and reports the case. Then the *Ayyaana* calling the cursor and close relatives of the cursed will settle the matter.

### **Case 1**

Jote (39) and Daadhi Megersa (34) were siblings. They lived in the same vicinity, in the same Peasant Association. Both were married, and *Abba Warraas* (household heads). One day while Daadhi was working in his backyard his grain was destroyed by Jote's cattle. Daadhi asked his brother to compensate for the crop he had lost. When Jote refused, Daadhi went to *Saglan gumbichuu* and cursed his brother. Jote died after seven months of the *Qabsisuu*.

Although Daadhi was offended with what Jote did, he was very sorry because he lost a brother. He couldn't attend the funeral ceremony because he had cursed his brother and the *tufta* rite didn't take place. So Daadhi remained at home while his neighbors went to bury Jote.

Two days after Jote's death Daadhi went to *Saglan gumbichuu's Galma* and asked to settle the dispute with Jote's family members. Jote's wife paid 3 birr for the *tuffa*. Daadhi chewed the *coqqorssa* and spit 8 times towards Jote's family. After the *tuffa* Daadhi went to the cemetery and cried heartily. He blamed himself for the death of Jote but it was irreversible.

### **3.8 Hamachisaa (Blessing and Naming)**

*Hamachisaa* is presenting a baby child for the blessing of the *Ayyaana* within 30-32 days of birth. The *Qallu* embraces the child and bless saying "*Nama gudda ta'i, Hori, fayya ta'i* (be a big man, reproduce, be healthy). After taking the child spiritually into his own family, the *Ayyaana* gives a name that suits him. Names like *Bulcha, Dughumaa, Jalene, and Yatatuu* are only some of them. For example, the *Ayyaana* calls loudly saying "*Kan sibulchau ha sita'u, Bulcha jennen*" (let him support you at old age, we named him *Bulcha*.) If the child is a girl the *Ayyaana* name her saying "*Jalane, Ya sigudatu*. (We like her, let her grow up.) After the blessing and naming ceremony of the child is over, the *Ayyaana* grants permission to the parents to baptize the child in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. This means that the *Ayyaana* has accepted the child as a new member of that particular spirit's family.

As *Hamachisaa* is accepting of a child into the family of his own followers by the *Ayyaana*, parents of the newly born child don't go to burial places until the *Hamachisaa* takes place. So between the birth of a child and *Hamachisaa* ceremony the parents of the child will take maximum care to observe the taboos such as attending funeral ceremonies and visiting a lady who has newly delivered.

### **3.9 Economies, Social Status and the Role of Women**

With regards to the problems of the Third World Countries Hyden (1983:196) indicated, shifting cultivation and bush fallowing are less possible. This shows that there is shortage of land. According to the Land Use study conducted in Agricultural Sample Survey of 2001/02 in the whole of Oromiya, the average area per

holder is 1.8 hectare. This indicates that the farmer-land-holding ratio is very low. If we deduce this general truth of Oromiya farmland shortage to Derba, the Derba Oromo has small family holding farms. As my informant Badhadha pointed out, most farmers rely on traditional oxen plough using family labor.

According to my informants, poverty is wide spread among the Derba Oromo. Poor soils, lack of rainfall, the necessity of selling food immediately after harvests and buying later when the price is high, lower the income of farming families. Rural women are unable to take advantage of educational opportunities that might improve their farming and child-rearing practices.

### **3.9.1 Economic Activity**

According to Dhaaba, women in Derba are burdened more than ever with agricultural activities in addition to domestic chores. They are responsible for weeding and harvesting as well as cooking and gathering of firewood. With the increase in family size, wives are required to work more and more in agricultural production in addition to the home management.

According to my informant Godeti, "wives are now required to work on farm fields, producing crops for consumption and the market but having no control over the income earned". As Nigussie indicated, "a new division of labor has emerged in which the men have ceased performing most agricultural tasks, especially weeding, which today is regarded as female occupation."

Changes in the division of labor in this area are partly due to the fact that more and more men had entered into trade activities, especially for those living in and around the town. As Badhadha said, "many of the young unmarried men who are involved in charcoal selling earn cash for their expenses. They don't work on their parent's farmland and do not contribute any labor work. This forces the mothers to spend a lot of time outside the home management on their farm."

As it is natural in the other parts of rural Oromiya, so also in Derba, there is division of labor between men and women. Accordingly, men mostly spend their days outside the home. Women attend to the management of the household and their children. But in due time men began to engage themselves in new economic activities especially burning of charcoal. These off-farm economic activities of the men had pressurized the women to spend more time on farmlands besides the management of the households.

### **3.9.2 Social Status**

Women are generally restricted to the domestic realm. According to Debeso women don't take part in any peace negotiation of *Guma* and other disputes. According to Kebede, even if minor dispute resolution is held in her home as a matter of chance, the wife has nothing to say during the sessions when the affairs of the dispute are discussed. They don't have any role in the ritual reconciliation of people (*araarsaa*). The senior decision-making body of *seera Waadaa* also does not include women to sit as elders. Of course, as Debeso puts it, "a woman plays a leading role in educating young people and, indeed, in encouraging adults to live by a certain set of value. In some cases this leads women to exert great pressure on male relatives, including their own sons." This is done using informal forums and personal discussions.

According to Badhadha a wife is expected to obey her husband's directives. She is under the complete formal authority of her husband and no party outside the homestead could interfere with his treatment of her except the bureaucratic law enforcing bodies - police and the court.

### **3.9.3 Women's Savings and Credit Association**

The Women Savings and Credit Association was established in Derba town in July 2002. According to Worknesh Tolla, the Chairperson of the association, experts from the *Woreda* went to Derba town, and after continuous assessment of the women's livelihood established Women's Savings and Credit Association in

the town. The savings and credit association began to function with 28 members. Now the members have reached 40. The Derba Women's Savings and Credit Association was established with three basic objectives. First, saving and credit provision in itself is assumed to contribute to a process of individual economic empowerment through enabling women to decide on matters related to savings and credit use. It is assumed, according to Mulugeta, organizer of the association in Derba, women will invest in their own economic activities, either in agricultural production or in micro-enterprise. Secondly, women's economic empowerment is assumed to lead to women's and their families' increased well-being. Thirdly, this economic empowerment is further seen as enabling them to re-negotiate changes in gender relations.

Based on these objectives, the 40 members had about 149,000 birr loan till February 2004. According to Mame Hitsanu, accountant of the association, the group-based program has enabled the members to build 'social capital' through developing and strengthening their economic and social networks.

Some of the women were engaged in trade activities while others in animal husbandry. Eight out of the forty members were able to build new houses. Ten of them bought pairs of oxen for families. According to Mame, "the money is changing the living standards of the households". The *woreda* had taken this association as a living example and is trying to expand it both in the town and in the rural areas within the peasant association. "They are getting economically independent," as Mame indicated. After talking to the organizer, the chairperson and the accountant of the association, I went to the ordinary members to get their view about the association. The following case study is based on my discussion with two founding members of the association.

## **Case 2**

Abebech Wordofa and Taye Tolcha are married couple with a son who is one year old. Taye is one of those landless young farmers, who used to work as a daily laborer in the town.

Abebech was also preparing *Tella* (local beer) for those who need going from house to house. In addition, she used to sell firewood. Finally, they moved to Derba town in 2000 and were living in the chairman's compound. Though they worked hard their income was from hand to mouth. As soon as the Savings and Credit Association was organized Abebech joined it. As one of the founding members of the association she got the first chance of getting 1000 birr loan. Taye and Abebech, a hardworking couple, planned how to make the money profitable. Taye bought 7 goats and 5 sheep, 3 months ahead of the Ethiopian New Year of 1996 E.C (2003). He fed them well and brought them back to the market for sale during the New Year. He got a profit of 350 birr from the twelve goats and sheep. Abebech who had bought butter with the rest of the money also got 265 birr profit selling for the New Year. They paid back the loan and the second time she got 2000 birr loan.

That money was divided into two parts. One part for buying sheep and goats that could be sold back. The other part was meant for buying grain during the harvest time. They succeeded to pay back the initial money with interest and got loan for the third time. Now Taye and Abebech have built their own tin-roofed house and are doing their business beyond the limit of Derba town

### **3.10 The Muger Cement Factory and Its Social and Economic Contributions**

When the cement factory went operational in March 1964 as Addis Ababa Cement Factory besides the skilled workers who came from different places, the unskilled daily laborers were hired from the area. After some time, the daily laborers who started their work in *Kentere* (the quarry area) were transferred to Derba.

Few peasants and factory workers inhabited Derba town, which developed with the expansion of the factory, initially. Later on, workers in the factory and peasants from the surrounding area began to build houses in the town and it began to grow. With the growth of the population, the factory built an elementary school for the children of the workers and the town dwellers. It also opened another elementary school at the quarry site. The building of the school has enabled the children of the town and the vicinity to get education. Many children who started their education in Derba elementary and junior secondary school have graduated from different colleges in the country. Extension classes are given to the town dwellers and the factory workers.

Adapting themselves to the area, the new comers (Amharas, Tigrians and Gurage) began to interact socially with the indigenous Oromo of the town. Inter-marriage began to take place and this has given the outsiders a chance of observing the Oromo culture more closely. This has attracted the newcomers to adopt some of the cultural and ritual activities in the area.

The people in Derba, Gulele and Berresa Peasant Association are also introduced to certain technological products. The factory, which is using generators to run its work, is supplying electric light to its workers living in the town from 6 - 10 pm. Other town dwellers are also benefiting from the electric supply of the factory. An electric flourmill was established for the public by the factory. In addition, the factory supplies electricity to 2 private flourmills with minimum charge.

When the Oromo Development Association constructed a tap water supply for the town dwellers, the factory contributed a lot for the construction of the water line and the building of the 'bonoo' (central supplying stations), which are planted at seven different places in the town.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOCIAL NETWORKS AMONG THE DERBA OROMO

This chapter deals with social networks of the people under study. All of us have problems we share with friends, family members, peer groups or workmates. The ways in which interpersonal relations are structured and influenced are different. Individuals design their own way to attain their goals and solve problems. As Boissevain (1974:4) puts it, networks are "the basic stuff of social life."

According to Boissevain there are networks of friends, relatives and workmates. The visiting, bargaining, gossiping and maneuvering that goes on between them; the impact of these on promotion, ideology, and conflict; the operation of neighborhood and work place cliques and factions are what people are talking about when raising the topic of networks.

The concept of personal network thus provides us with a way of viewing social relations. Boissevain (1974:25) explains network by saying, "Diagrammatically, a network is similar to a communication circuit: it indicates that certain persons are in touch with each other. These links are thus potential communication channels, but it must be established empirically that messages do in fact flow along them."

According to Boissevain (1974:27), a person's network not only forms a social environment from and through which pressure is exerted to influence his behavior, but it also forms an environment through which he can exert pressure to affect the behavior of others.

In his influential work on network, Boissevain emphasizes the influential elements of social network. Accordingly the necessity of frequency and duration of interaction, the size, density, and degree of connection, centrality and clusters in social network of a person are of primary importance (*Ibid.* 34-45).

According to Boissevain, environment, age, climate, ideology, kinship, power, occupation, education, geographic and social mobility have their own influences on social network (*Ibid.* 67-89).

Values, organizations and institutions can prescribe network relations. Often, when relations are prescribed, they are given a name. Named role relationships, especially kinship relationships, generally specify not only the rough contents of the relationship, the obligations and expected behaviors - but also the patterning of the relationships -the expected network past the first order zone. Informal or non-prescribed or non-instituted relations are, however, correlated with the formal or prescribed relationships.

A very important pioneer work in the network field is that of Milgram (1967). He lays out the "small world problem" in which the size of one's immediate circle of acquaintances is chained to the size of the immediate circle of those acquaintances, and so on, which allow one to reach certain targets far removed from one's immediate kin. In the most often cited work in the network field, "The Strength of Weak Ties" (Granovetter 1973) shows how network relations with individuals one does not know very well connected one with persons who are not members of one's immediate circle and thus one gets information about jobs about which one would not otherwise know. As was stated by Kadushin (2000) networks are compared with traffic jams. You can see the cars that surround you but it takes a helicopter to get above the mess and see the entire picture.

#### **4.1 Social Network as Conflict Enhancing Mechanism**

The connections or relations among people sometimes serve as a means of conflict enhancing mechanism. The network of friends or relatives is sometimes used to make certain arrangements in which an individual using the backing of his network takes a swift counter measure against his enemy who had formerly attacked him or threatened him. Apart from this, people with a large network of friends take desperate action without investigating the consequences when it fires back. To make my argument clear I will present a case study that shows how social network enhances conflict.

### Case 3

Muleta and Hunde who are both in their early 30s were brought up in the same village of *Ada'aa Koticha*. Obviously misunderstanding and quarreling over different issues are common among many people in many localities. This misunderstanding especially at the later adolescence age is related with serious fightings. So was the case between Muleta and Hunde. Muleta was strong and agile compared to Hunde.

Now both Muleta and Hunde are heads of households and responsible community members in their respective residential areas. But, whenever they met, Hunde used to raise for discussion, how Muleta was making a fool of him when they were young. Hunde seems to uncover and deal with the brutal past. Muleta who was not looking into the matter negatively asks Hunde, why he was always talking about their young age which is way past and emphasizes that they should discuss about their current life and how they could mutually assist each other as old friends.

According to my informant Nega, Hunde used to respond with certain reservations towards Muleta's suggestion. He used to recall that he had a bleeding heart that doesn't accept Muleta's friendship. Muleta who was always sympathetic towards Hunde used to say that there were good memories that they shared and begged Hunde to think of him as a brother. But the pleading of Muleta got no room in Hunde's mind.

Two months after their last meeting in December 2003, they met on their way to Derba town. Muleta was going to catch a transport to Chancho. Hunde was going to Derba market. They started to go together till they reached Derba.

On their way Muleta told Hunde that he is planning to go to Mulo town for a wedding of his cousin that would take place in a few days after that day. Suddenly, Hunde got interested and began to interview Muleta when and where exactly the wedding was to take place and when he planned to go. The Sudden interest of Hunde didn't surprise Muleta, because he thought that his old friend was forgetting his grievances. Muleta told Hunde that he was leaving after 15 days for *Mulo*. When they arrived at Derba, they went their own ways-beading farewell to each other.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day Hunde went to Mulo and informed his younger brother Dekeba, that Muleta was to come to the town and asked him to arrange a team, which could take revenge on his behalf against Muleta. Dekeba, agreed and Hunde returned home. A week before the wedding day Muleta went to Mulo town to assist his cousin in the preparation for the wedding. Since the arrival of Muleta at the town Dekeba used to follow Muletas movement with his friends. But nothing happened till the day of the wedding.

On the day of the wedding 8 youngsters broke into the *dasi* (temporary but substantial construction built for the occasion) of the wedding and began *dhichisa* (singing and dancing). Knowing that they were not invited guests people tried to drive them out but they refused. When Muleta came out of the house of the groom, these youngsters turned their faces to his direction and began to dance and asked him for money.

Muleta who had no knowledge about the youngster's intention, told them to come back later, as he was busy at the time. But, all of a sudden they started to beat him with sticks and Muleta fell down. In the mean time, other family members and relatives of the groom who had observed the incident fought back. The boys began to run away after striking certain innocent people. A person with a gun fired his rifle and one of the boys was caught and taken to the police station. As it was later discovered, the boy disclosed to the police that, it was Dekeba who sent the youngsters. Hunde thought that the incident

would not be traced back to him as the revenge took place through his brother and his network far away from his own residence. This way network had served as a means of conflict enhancing mechanism.

## **4.2 Networks as a Means of Enhancing Peace**

Networks not only serve as a means of enhancing conflict. They also serve as a means of enhancing peace. A clan member who is provocative and always tends to quarrel with people is advised by elders not to fight against outsiders since he could drag them into unnecessary problems. If the advised person could not be in line with the wish of his relatives the kin members ostracize him. This is what is done among the Derba Oromo when a provocative lineage member is against their interest. It shows how much, the people of Derba care about peaceful coexistence with neighbors and the community.

To elaborate this, I present the case in which a disabled farmer, who has been a prey for continuous harassment of a thief, was saved through a friend. The story goes as follows.

### **Case 4**

Kassa is a middle-aged man of 42. He is the head of a family and has 4 children between the age of 13 and 6. Before Kassa was disabled while serving as a soldier, he was a strong and a well to do farmer. Now, because he is disabled he gave up the farming activity. He leased his farmland and kept the livestock. He fattens oxen and sells them. He has a lot of chicken, goats and sheep. He is a hardworking veteran.

Diriba is one of the young men known in and around Derba town for their bad conducts. He is engaged in theft and fighting. He attacks Kassa time and again by stealing his sheep and goats. Kassa tried to negotiate peace through local elders. Diriba got outrageous and refused to negotiate. When leaving the place he called out to Kassa, and told him that he would repent it since he defamed him. One Sunday morning in September 2003, when Kassa was to let out the sheep and goats out of the sheepfold, he

found out that 3 rams and 2 billy goats were missing. He suspected Diriba was involved but couldn't go to the *kebele* or police because he did not have evidence against him.

Kassa thought over the matter seriously. He had only one option to keep Diriba away. He went to his friend's home and told him the case. His friend Eticha went to the lowland of Muger and met a friend who is a shifta (bandit).

Five days after Eticha met him, the shifta came to Diriba by night and knocked his door. Diriba wanted to know who was knocking and the reply was "that they were strangers, who wanted to do business with him concerning Kassa and told him to let them in if he was interested. Diriba opened the door with the expectation of an enemy of Kassa who could be a friend to him. The bandit and his two collaborators entered and closed the door. Diriba was tied to the pillar of the house. The shiftas tortured him and gave him an ultimatum to return what he had stolen from Kassa. He was ordered to respect Kassa. Lastly, he was warned not to say a word about them. Finally, when they left his home, the chief shifta told Diriba that if he fails to meet the deadline he would suffer the consequence.

They left him around 2 am and went to Eticha's house to inform what has happened and tell Kassa that he should wait exactly 30 days for his animals to return. Diriba came to Kassa's house at around 7 pm with 3 rams and 2 Billy goats and one ewe as a gift after 18 days. He called Kassa and said to him: "put them in the sheepfold, I got them in the forest on my way home". Kassa drove them in.

Then after, Kassa lived peacefully and Diriba left the area. Knowing his bad characteristics and that he was advised time and again, there was no reaction from his family and clan members. They took the measure for granted. After I was told this story I met Kassa who said to me, thanks to God and friends or rather important "friends-of-friends" as Boissevain (1974:24) calls them.

### 4.3 Network of Cooperation

Social network is very crucial as most rural activities are performed by families and households or by the wider group of village clusters. As Tesema (1996:208-209) argues; "the Oromo have very rich traditions and experiences in cooperative activities. They enjoy working together for increased productivity, mutual benefit and really feel comfortable with each other." One of the activities, which need cooperation, is *deboo*. *Deboo* is an economic and social means of mutual help in which the head of a household requests the labor of several able-bodied men and women in the community. It is important to note that the *deboo* help is given according to a person's agreeable manners, love of friends, generosity and sociability (Aguilar 1996:190).

According to my informant Tesema a wealthy person who is greedy, who always attacks the poor peasants and have no good social interaction with his neighbors, even if he is going to lay a fabulous feast, very few go to his help. Even those who go to assist him never work heartily on the field. So a man's manner in the interaction process and social network is of crucial importance in getting support of mutual assistance.

From this we can conclude that in rural areas where labor support to each other is decisive in the life of the farmers, nobody would be allowed to be out of the norm of the society. On the other hand, those who are willing to offer their labor in mutual assistance, even if they cannot prepare modest feast, every community member will be willing to assist them whenever they need helping hands. Here the network depends on a reciprocal help of each other. These farmers help each other in turn before the seasonal timetable is over.

Based on this norm of the society, I will present two cases, which emphasize the need for cooperation between the Derba Oromo, and the measures taken against those who do not cooperate. According to Debeso the two cases indicate the reaction of the people and the outcomes.

### Case 5

Hordofa is a well-to-do farmer with a mule, three pairs of oxen and more than 30 heads of cattle and a lot of goats and sheep. He had inherited about one and a half *gasha* (about 30 Hectares) before the 1974 revolution from his deceased father. Hordofa who was not happy, with the confiscation of the rural land and establishment of the peasant associations used to participate in many cooperative works, not himself, but through his hired laborer.

In 1989 his farm employee ran away to find another job in the nearby town. His children were too small to provide any labor service. He couldn't lease his farmland (4 hectares after the rural land distribution to the peasants) because he cannot feed eight people, namely his two wives, five children and himself from the lease income alone.

He started to participate in cooperative works like *debo*, but was not whole-heartedly participating. He takes rest every now and then while the others worked singing and joking. At the end of each work, he never went to the host's home for the feast of the *debo*. He did not lend his oxen or donkeys to any neighbor.

In 1992 Hordofa asked the neighboring farmers for *debo*. About 30 farmers came to assist him. All worked on the field and harvested the grain. Following the tradition, he asked the participants to drink *farso* (local beer) in the field, but the people refused saying that they would go to his home after the work was finished and enjoy the feast there. Around 3 pm they finished the work and every farmer went to his own home. Hordofa was left alone with his feast. He got furious and went to the elders in the

community to ask on his behalf why the people did that. When the elders talked to certain individuals they got the answer and Hordofa understood his fault. Hordofa slaughtered a bull and invited all his neighbors with the elders and apologized for his non-cooperative behavior of the past. The apology was accepted and every body enjoyed the feast.

Learning good lesson from his neighbors' reaction to his non-cooperative behavior, Hordofa is the first person to respond to any type of cooperative call nowadays. He even gives his mule to a neighbor whose household member is sick, to transport him/her to the clinic.

As Debeso attested, Hordofa became one of the famous farmers, who have shaped even his sons to grow in a cooperative manner. He responds quickly to any societal call of mutual assistance.

### **Case 6**

Ayele is a poor farmer, holding less than a hectare of farmland. He inherited the land from his father. Ayele has four children. He farms his land, exchanging oxen for his labor. The quality Ayele has got is his hardworking and punctuality whenever he is called for any cooperative work.

To overcome his financial problems Ayele works as a hired laborer. But, if he is called for any cooperative work, be it building a house or farm activity he would be on the spot ready for work. During farming season every community member in Derba is willing to give its helping hands to Ayele. So, his land is cultivated without any problem.

The elders of the community gathered and discussed the condition of Ayele and the assistance they could provide him. They contributed money and bought him an ox. His wife, Haadhabiyya who is a member of the Women's Savings and Credit Association has been granted a loan and was able to buy

another ox. Now Ayele owns a pair of oxen. He goes to any cooperative work with confidence and works whole-heartedly.

From these two cases we can understand that cooperative works, in the rural areas are essential in people's lives and the network of cooperation depends on the reciprocal response a person provides to others.

#### **4.4 Walwaalechaa (Kinship Obligation)**

Peoples and Bailey (1991:213) indicated that; "People may want to call on their kinfolk to help them clear the land or construct dwellings, to help them in a dispute or feud, to offer hospitality when they are away from their communities, to attend and provide economic and emotional support at their weddings, or to pay respect at their funerals". They expect much from their kinsfolk since they form the core of small-scale societies. Kinship relation and network is prominent in this sense. As all descendants are not residing in the same vicinity it is hardly possible to get a helping hand from a relative to clear the land or construct a dwelling. Instead, neighbors living in the same area can do better in this respect. Still there are matters, which need the assistance of distant relatives rather than the immediate neighbors. For example, in dispute, feud, the attending to and providing with economic and emotional supports at weddings, paying respect to a relative's funeral or being on the side of the aggrieved are expected more from relatives.

Kinship relations could be kept intact only through the respect of kinship obligations. Kin members have different obligations. During weddings relatives are expected to support their kin in kind (cattle, sheep, goat or grain) or in cash. This is used for the feast or for the bridewealth. If by any chance this economic support is impossible the emotional support and labor service is inevitable. Absence from the wedding of a relative's son/daughter is inexcusable. When information of the wedding is disseminated among the kinfolks every kin member makes himself /herself ready for that particular occasion.

Not fulfilling one's obligation could result in ostracism or banning of that particular kin member. Even if she/he is a destitute, she/he has to show her or his concern by being present in the gathering.

According to my informant Seboka, when a member of the kin dies, the relatives of the deceased gather at one of the dwellings of his or her sons to mourn and an enormous feast is served. This proves what Peoples and Bailey (1981:213) said about most African peoples mutual assistance. "They bring massive quantities of food, in olden times enough to feed themselves and other guests for several days. They mourn, sing religious songs and generally try to comfort the closest relatives of the dead person."

This is exactly what is observed among the Derba Oromo and what is called *Walwaalechaa*. *Walwaalechaa* is a kinship tie, which involves economic and social obligations both on the mother and father's side. Kin groups have to help each other and cooperate during marriage, quarrels and mourning. Members of kinship groups are responsible for contributing and paying blood compensation for murder (*Guma*). According to Nigussie whenever relatives come to express their condolence, they come with certain amount of grain that could enable the family of the dead person to cover funeral and related costs. If the residence area of the kin member is far away from the locality of the mourner the one who come for condolence may give cash. This way they lean on each other at a time of crisis. The major thing observed among these relatives during the period of crisis is the speed at which the information circulates among the kinsfolk and the quick response obtained from them.

The mutual assistance (*Walwaalechaa*) is not only during mourning. According to Debeso, wedding is another area where kinsfolk show their assistance to each other. Even if the final scrutiny for the girl or the boy to be taken as a daughter-in-law or son-in-law is the work of the father, all the kinsfolk will be informed about the forth-coming wedding.

The information could be released at least six months earlier from the time of the planned wedding. All kin that had been informed about the wedding at least visit the parents of the bride/groom and discuss the plan of the wedding. During this visit the relatives promise to offer different gifts, which could either serve for the wedding day or that could be taken by the bride/groom to her/his new home.

According to Nigussie, in olden times parents who prepare for the wedding of their daughters/sons used to fully depend on the kinsfolk for the feast. One would promise an ox, while the others bring butter, barley or *teff*. Relatives used to gather in the house of the eldest member of the kin and discuss what they could contribute for the wedding. This was done to give each relative the chance to choose what he could contribute. According to Kebede, today, not much is expected from relatives, as life is getting hard for all. Of course, the information could be relayed as it is the tradition and the gathering of the relatives is a must. They physically help in the preparation as the preparation for the wedding undergo according to the financial position of the parents. Of course those who can afford come with certain gifts.

#### **4.5 Social Networks and Rivalry**

Perhaps the most important characteristic of a personal network is that it is composed of persons linked in a large variety of ways. As Boissevain (1974:28) argues, "the social relations that link people derive from the many different activity fields in which each participates."

Social relations form a shifting pattern, as they are not static, but dynamic. People always strive to gain freedom from social and physical constraints while on the other hand they try to pursue their goals by obtaining power. Concerning a person's network and the environment that exerts pressure upon an individual, Boissevain (1974:27) writes:

A person's network thus forms a social environment from and through which pressure is exerted to influence his behavior; but it is also an environment through which he can exert pressure to affect the behavior of others. It is the reservoir of social relations from and through which he recruits support to counter his rivals and mobilize support to attain his goals.

Under this sub-topic, social network and rivalry, I want to show the role of two actors concerning the question of Development in the area, the stand of the other committee members assigned to study the development projects and the actor's social networks and how they use the network to influence on prioritization of the projects. The two actors are Bulcha Dendecha and Ararso Dekeba.

### Case 7

Bulcha lives in the small town of Derba. He is the fourth child of a farmer and has four brothers and two sisters. Though he started to work in the cement factory as a daily laborer, now he is the chief of security of the Derba branch of the *Muger* cement factory. He is also the chairman of the local workers association and an executive committee member of the *Muger* Cement Factory Workers Association. He has no formal education except that he is able to read and write through his own effort. He is now attending evening classes in grade 5.

Bulcha has a heartily outgoing character with his fellow workers, the branch management, and the dwellers of the town. He is the treasurer of the St. Michael Church Fund Raising Committee. According to Badhadha, Bulcha is a person who had inherited an extrovert personality from his father and he is exuberant.

Ararso Dekeba was born at a place called *Aleltu* in Derba *Gulele Beresa* Peasant Association. He is the first child to his parents. Ato Dekeba is a well-to-do farmer who was able to send Ararso to school when he reached the school age. Ararso completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Chanco and returned to Derba. On returning to Derba he was elected, first as secretary, and then as chairman of the Urban Dwellers' Association. He stayed in office for 5 years. Ararso is now living in Derba town. He is a trader. According to Debeso, though he has good conducts, Ararso is an introvert person who does not mix with the people much outside his family, except few selected friends.

When Ararso was the chairman of the Urban Dwellers' Association Saturday was the market day of Derba. The market place was also out of the town, in *Aleltu* the birthplace of Ararso. The town dwellers were complaining about the distance that they had to walk to reach the market place. Because of this they established their own market in the town. As it was a small market it was active everyday. Slowly but surely the market began to grow. People from different localities began to come to the new market. Traders from the surrounding towns and from Addis Ababa bring goods and buy grains and other products of the area. The Derba market began to flourish while the *Aleltu* market started to shrink.

According to Badhadha, it was at this time that Ararso tried to suppress the market of Derba town indirectly. He accused the town dwellers of establishing a market in the heart of the town, which covers large area that would have been given for people in need of building residential quarters.

The *Woreda* Administrator came to Derba to assess the situation and talked to the elderly people of the town and peasants from the surrounding community and asked for their opinion. According to Tesema Koricha who was present as a delegate of the town dwellers at the time, has the following to say about the visit.

It was the peasants' representatives, not the town's that preferred the Derba market, because they were getting fair price for their products as merchants were coming to the market. Based on this tangible fact the administrator agreed to the continuity of the Derba market. But the market day was changed from Saturday to Sunday, as Saturday was a market day in Chanco. This way Ararso lost the first challenge on the development of Derba town.

This took place 4 years ago. That time, while Ararso was fighting for the possible advantage of *Aleltu* growing into a town around the market. Bulcha was one of the coordinators of the town dwellers to bring the market to Derba town. It was in this incident that the two men began to be rivals and more interested to be influential over the people.

According to Dhaba, overtly Ararso and Bulcha are friendly to one another; they eat together and work together. But underneath, each was using his networks to build his own cult and to make the other out of the competition. This is clearly reflected in the debates they engage in during the meetings of the development committee members.

Bulcha and Ararso were elected to serve in Derba Development Committee in 2001. The two men have different life experiences. Bulcha is a peasant boy who returns to his homeland and renews his social contact with his family and the society of the vicinity at least once every 6 months. Ararso, on the other hand, since the time he returned from school has remained in Derba town. Though his relatives and people from Aleltu come to his home he doesn't go there because his parents had also moved to Derba town.

Bulcha brought his two brothers to Derba town through which his parents and birthplace relations are serviced periodically. Both Bulcha's brothers are living around their elder brother. Guracha is employed in the cement factory and Gelelcha is a trader, who buys and sells cattle, sheep and goats. The above-mentioned younger brothers of Bulcha often go to the peasant area with messages from Bulcha. Since he married 10 years ago, Bulcha has made shift in relationships. His ties with his own family and friends were serviced by his brothers.

On the other hand Ararso who married from the town and whose parents had moved to the same area where he is living has strengthened his ties with his own family. Most of his friends are either married or has left the area.

Bulcha has a brother who is a government employee in Addis Ababa. His contacts are very fine. He is an academician with good relations with medical doctors, police officers, judges, and many government officials through college relations and through marriage affiliation. Bulcha is very friendly with his bosses

and, to borrow Boissevain's phrase (1974:126) "He knows where the devil sleeps" - there is not much that he does not know.

Ararso, though friendly is more reserved in his dealing with people. He tends to continue his former smooth relations with the *woreda* administration. In the town of Derba also he has more contact with the leaders of the *kebele* officials and his commitment in public service is minimal except in the Development Committee of the town.

As members of the Development Committee of the Derba town both Bulcha and Ararso want to prioritize their personal interest through the agendas individually with the support of the members of the committee. They are fighting out their way to win the leadership.

Bulcha who had reached the middle of the ladder in his career had to use his fine contacts to fulfill the projects designed by the Derba Development Committee. He married a girl from one of the well-known and respected families in *Mulo*. Over a span of a year or two his wife's family and all their kinsmen gave Bulcha the respect a son-in-law deserves. He grows cash crops such as coffee, mango and avocado and buys grain and butter when the price is fair and sells when the price goes up. He had installed a flourmill in the town. Bulcha's network is anchored both in the rural and urban areas.

Ararso's network is anchored in the urban area and his relation with the farmers of his birthplace seems that of patron-client relationship. He lends them money during the summer time and they repay him in kind (grain) during harvest time.

Bulcha climbed many rungs on the economic prestige ladder in his life, moving from farmer's son to security head of a factory's branch. Well-off financially, with a big house, a good salary, a fat bank

account (about 20 thousand birr as I was informed) and daily based income from selling vegetables and the income generated by the flourmill.

Ararso's upward movement has been much less pronounced, though he had succeeded in life. He has a transport vehicle run by his younger brother. He spends much of his time in his shop.

It was on 17 July 2001, that the development committee was having a meeting in the *kebele* office. The agenda was what to prioritize from tap water, electricity or telephone and to report to the *woreda* administration, so that with the full participation of the population and the assistance from the Oromiya Regional State Development and Rehabilitation Bureaus they could get one of these services. The committee members were seven. There was a debate among the members, some in favor of electricity, others in favor of tap water and still others in favor of telephone.

Those in favor of electricity withdrew their proposal because the people couldn't afford the money that will be charged by the Ethiopian Electric Light and Power Authority to pull the electricity to Derba town from Chancho or Fitcha. According to my informant the choice was between tap water and telephone. Ararso led those in favor of the telephone. Bulcha led those in favor of tap water. Finally, after a heated debate the committee decided in favor of tap water.

The committee wrote a letter to the *Woreda* Administration Office and was waiting for the response. In the mean time, according to Belete, there was a rumor circulating in the town saying that, they had a river nearby and their problem was how to reach their relatives in the capital and elsewhere. They used to say that the tap water won't be worked even within five years and regretted that they should have given priority to the telephone service.

Bulcha, on hearing this rumor went to Addis Ababa and talked to his brother with a letter from the *woreda*. It was a question of gaining or losing respect in the community. He had a limited choice. His brother, Waggari, took the letter and went to Oromiya Development and Rehabilitation Bureau and talked to a friend. The friend presented the letter to his boss and got it approved. Bulcha returned with two letters, one for the Zonal Administration Office and the other for the *Woreda* Administration Office confirming the request. The swiftness with which his brother solved his problems greatly impressed Bulcha himself.

This way, as confirmed by my informant Kebede who is still a member of the committee, Derba town got tap water starting from November 2001. This was fulfilled through the social network of Bulcha.

After I was informed about these two persons, knowing that the two rivals were both living in the town of Derba I decided to talk to both separately. When I talked at first to these two rivals both Bulcha and Ararso independently, they seemed friendly and did not want to give me the actual picture of their interest and struggle, and what made them so rivals. But when I went to talk to both for the second time, I was able to extract a new version of the cause and how the rivalry of the two ended. This time it was only Bulcha who was willing to be interviewed.

According to the dialogue we had, Bulcha suspected Ararso of being corrupt. When Ararso was the chairman of Derba *kebele*, the *kebele* had sold eucalyptus trees. A rumor was circulating in the town that the money, from the sale of the trees, did not reach the hands of the *kebele* treasurer. Having this information in mind Bulcha began to use his networks to sort out the truth. He wanted to know what exactly happened to that money from the sale of the eucalyptus trees. So Bulcha kept two different sets of contacts serviced: those for the minor problems and those for the major problems. Concerning the

minor problems with those useful contacts located in various fields, he started to follow up what Ararso talks about him.

As to the where about of the money from the sale of the eucalyptus trees Bulcha began to cultivate the relations necessary for investigation. So he went to Chancho and tapped the information to a man whom he thought one day he would be useful in helping him resolve major problems. This extremely important contact in Bulcha's network is a person who is ready to crucify corrupt people. He is a government employee who had direct access to some of the top men in the government. So, Bulcha formed coalitions with this man to attain his goal of removing Ararso. This temporary alliance for a limited purpose had effect on Ararso's life.

As Bulcha confirmed to me, exactly after 20 days of Bulcha's contact with this person in Chancho two auditors were sent to Derba town to find out the expense and income of the Derba town, auditing by going back to the time of the former *Kebele* officials. They interviewed the former *kebele* leaders including Ararso, the then treasurer, the current chairman and the development committee members.

This way, after gathering enough information about the sale of the eucalyptus trees they went into the auditing work. The auditors traced that the trees were sold for 29,575 birr. It was confirmed that the money was paid for the *kebele*, but did not reach the hands of the treasurer. It was attested by the former *kebele* officials that it was Ararso who dealt with the traders who bought the trees.

According to Nega, Ararso became guilty for receiving and not transferring the money into the account of the *kebele*. He was charged for corruption and is waiting for his trial. His transport vehicle was also held by court decision temporarily and is now working under the control of the Development Committee

that is chaired by Bulcha. The hostility of these two men ended in such a way that Bulcha through his contacts and the weakness of Ararso won his victory over his counterpart.

#### 4.6 Women and Networks

Network is also important among the Derba Oromo women. Outside the closest relatives, women form a group of friends who support and rely on each other in every situation of need. So close is the emotional and social bond between the friends, that their relationship is one of quasi kinship, and is formally expressed in the use of kin terms like *obbeleetti* (sister), *adadoo* (aunty) and the like. All major events in a woman's life, such as marriage, divorce, the birth and naming ceremony of children, and sickness and death in her family, require her close friends' presence and their help with all domestic chores that must be attended to in these circumstances.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISPUTES AND DISPUTE RESOLVING MECHANISMS

Each society deals with dispute differently. Some go to government institutions while others resolve their conflicts through indigenous mechanisms of their own. The degree of conflict varies from minor cases like quarreling of children to serious cases like homicide. In this respect, the method applied to resolve quarrels, disagreements and conflicts also vary.

Gulliver (1979 as cited in Caplan 1995:3) says that, disputes are ways of grouping people together, even if only momentarily, even as they are also an obvious mechanism for keeping people apart. Caplan (Ibid: 4) strongly argues saying that; "disputes are often not resolved at all". This argument could apply to disputes that could be settled through arbitration. The negotiation between two parties especially that is held in traditional way, undoubtedly results in creating harmony.

#### **5.1 Source of Violent Characteristics**

There are evidences (Greenfield et al, 1980 as cited by Gadaa 1988:5) that at least by the ninth and tenth centuries there were Oromo communities around Shewa. Oromo and Amhara people inhabit North Shewa zone of Oromiya Region. It is obvious that the Oromo had penetrated far into Gojjam, Gondar, and Tigray as early as the seventeenth century (Beguinot, 1911 cited in Asmarom, 1973:8). This Oromo movement into the central highlands of Ethiopia was associated with a rapid process of cultural incorporation. The Oromo intermingled with the conquered populations as frequently as they also absorbed them. In this process as Asmarom (1973:9) puts it, the Gallinna-speaking [Oromo-speaking] region of central Ethiopia developed into a veritable cultural corridor. It opened up extensive cultural exchanges between societies, which would have otherwise remained isolated and atomistic.

When we come to the North Shewa zone of Oromiya we observe a lot of cultural exchanges between the Amhara and the Oromo people. The *Mulo* and *Sululta Woreda* is highly integrated with the *Woredas*

of *Derra*, *Ensaro Wayu* and *Merhabite* of the Amhara regional state where extensive cultural exchanges between the Oromo and the Amahara takes place.

In my study *woreda* and the adjacent Amhara *Woredas*, marriage between the Amhara and the Oromo is common. That is why we find mixed ethnic groups in the above-mentioned *woredas*. Because of this integration, the culture of these two big nations of Ethiopia-the Oromo and the Amhara-are similar in certain cases like marriage, conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms. This cultural similarity is acquired through cultural communication among the people.

The way people are socialized makes them react easily to conflict or tolerate dispute. It is obvious that through socialization children see the prestige attached to parenthood and leadership. They learn what their society considers worthy aspirations, and seek to fulfill them in their own lives by following in the footsteps of parents and adults or persons they consider to be role models.

As I have observed among the Derba Oromo agents of socialization (parents, kin, big boys) shape the children in such a way that they react very fast and quickly to any misunderstanding between people.

This violent character and lack of patience makes the Derba Oromo a bit peculiar compared with the tolerant behavior and peaceful coexistence of the other Oromo groups among themselves and with their neighbors. This is not to say that the Derba Oromo is totally violent and anti-peace. It is among the youngsters that the violent character is reflected mostly. The elderly people are always trying to pacify contradictions that could end in conflict.

## 5.2 The Causes of Conflict

What are the disputes about? On one level they are about material goods-rights to land and other forms of property. The other angle of dispute is of course, about social relations. Quarrels between men and

women, particularly marital partners are worth mentioning. The reason for quarreling may be jealousy or adultery, insult and injury or it may be about wealth or property.

Naturally life does not run smoothly and quarrels are frequent. As there are minor clashes there are serious crimes. When we examine the causes of conflict among the Derba Oromo, serious crimes such as homicide, assaults leading to serious injury, cattle theft and adultery are mentioned and they are of serious offenses. Minor cases are damage caused by cattle to growing crops, land encroachment, inheritance, elopement, and impregnation damages, abduction and physical violence exploding in drinking houses. Sometimes minor cases that could have been resolved through negotiation escalate into serious offenses and may claim human life.

According to my informants and sources from the police officials and the *woreda* prosecutor, the *woreda* court examines disputes of different matters. As Sergeant Diriba, head of the *woreda* police station at Chancho town said; "people appeal and report different cases to have legal backing. The intention of this is to get the backing of the law if they fail to settle their matters at local forums and decide to return to the court. Other than this, every farmer prefers traditional mechanism of solving dispute to that of legal government institutions. "After the witnesses testify at the police station, the plaintiffs usually return to their residence and, the elders take over the matter. The *Waadaa* elders create harmony between two disputing families through reconciliation even in homicide cases. According to the Police Officer, "it is the town dwellers who usually tend to go to government institutions like the police station and the *woreda* court rather than the farmers.

### **5.3 Indigenous Institutions for Resolving Conflicts**

#### **5.3.1 Jaarssumma: (Moot)**

According to Ferraro (1998:254), moots that are found in many African societies serve as a highly effective mechanism for conflict resolution. Moots are informal airings of disputes involving kinsmen and

friends of the litigants. Moots generally deal with the resolution of domestic disputes, such as mistreating a spouse, disagreements over inheritance or the non-payment of debts owed to kin or neighbors. Though the responsibilities of the moot seemed minor for an outsider they go to the extent of settling major conflicts, even homicide. This is what is called *Jaarssumma* among the Oromo.

*Jaarssumma* (moot)- an assembly of elderly men of the area- is the most famous traditional institution of the Derba Oromo in resolving conflict. It has always been employed to relax the tense conditions, which could burst out between families, friends, neighbors, spouses, communities, etc. In *Jaarssumma* the involvement of a third party is vital to pacify the escalating differences. The elderly men are expected to enable the disputants to arrive at an amicable settlement. As my informant Tesema indicated *Jaarssumma* is voluntary and is initiated by kin groups, friends and/or neighbors of either the plaintiff or the defendant.

### 5.3.2 Root of *Jaarssumma* (moot)

The origin and history of mechanisms of solving problems of disputes is not known. But some people believe that it has its own history. Agaree Tullu a renowned *Ayyaantu (Qallu)* in the *Mulo* and *Sululta Woreda* says, "In olden times if a man killed a person intentionally throwing a stone, the elders would order the person who wanted to take vendetta to use the same tool. If the murderer had killed by two stones, two stones are used against him. If by chance he escaped the stones he would walk away free". As my informant Debeso pointed out, "*Jaarssummaan amaa umaa namatti boodatti adeemaa*" (the history of conflict resolution through elderly men goes as far back as the creation of human beings).

There is a gross difference in the meaning and application of the term *Jaarssa* and *Jaarssa Waadaa*.

For a man to be designated as *Jaarssa* he has to fulfill at least two criteria.

- a) He must be head of a household, and
- b) He must be good at family management

*Jaarssa Waadaa* is a person with an adequate knowledge of the *Seera Waadaa* (the *Waadaa* agreement) that enables him to resolve conflicts that are beyond the abilities of the *Jaarssas* (elderly men of the vicinity). *Jaarssumma* totally depends on the nature and characteristics of the conflict situation. Elderly men from the vicinity solve minor cases like spontaneous clash, disappearance of small properties, minor misunderstanding at a time of drinking. Cases like homicide, casualties that have led to serious injuries, serious marital conflicts that could come as a result of adultery, rights to land and the like require the calling of *Jaarssa Waadaa*.

One of the conflicting parties or any person, a kin, a neighbor or a friend of one or both of the parties involved could call the *Jaarssa Waadaa*. Elderly person of the *Waadaa* who is well informed about the matter could take the initiative to call the first meeting.

### **5.3.3 Criteria for Selecting *Jaarssa Waadaa***

Any member from the *Jaarssa Waadaa* group who is in good terms with both parties could be selected to investigate the matter at hand. If one of the selected gentlemen has any prior (old) grudge with one of the conflicting parties, the disputant who proposed that elderly man to represent him in the conflict resolution has to replace him by another.

According to Tesema, social and economic status, wisdom and age are the main criteria for being selected as *Jaarssa Waadaa*. The experience of the gentleman in resolving conflict is also a big issue. As Memere Abebe attested, "If the elderly man has no good reputation among the people, no matter what experience he has, he is not likely to be selected for resolving the conflict". As my informant Debeso Borishe-himself a *Jaarssa-Waadaa* pointed out, "It is very rare that a gentle man be of bad reputation and is not selected to resolve a conflict".

Economic status of the *Jaarssa Waadaa* is crucial because *Jaarssumma* is a time consuming and laborious work. To become a *Jaarssa* one has to have ample time. If the man has to engage himself in public service, his farm activities have to be covered by family members or agricultural workers. So, it is very hard for a lonely person without assistance to provide public service and at the same time, work on his farm as Yohannes(2002) indicated. Yet there are economically weak but wise men that involve in resolving disputes.

A *Jaarssa* should primarily be knowledgeable of the culture and the procedure of carrying out *Jaarssumma*. Being a good negotiator is a result of repeated exposure to several social responsibilities. As Yohannes (ibid) pointed out, "those who repeatedly prove themselves in the resolution of conflicts, demonstrate their wisdom and knowledge." They are the ones who will be selected for this position.

#### **5.4 Procedure of Jaarssumma**

According to Kebede the elderly men usually assemble in churchyards, *kebele* compound or under the shade of a big tree. *Jaarssumma* in Derba often takes place on Sundays or on Saint days like St. Mary, the Holy Savior, St. Gabriel and St. Michael. According to Tesema "the parties concerned choose churchyard because it is a quiet and undisturbed area. Besides this the elders prefer the churchyard to that of an individual house to remind the disputants how God, the father of love, excused his enemies and they should follow His examples strictly. They use *kebele* compound only when they take the case of two disputants from the hands of the *Fird shengo* (*kebele* judiciary).

The *Jaarssa qixxee* (the presiding judge usually selected by both disputants or by the elderly men themselves) sits in the center of the *Jaarssa Bitaa mirgaa* (gentlemen of the left and right nominated by both parties each). The presiding judge fixes the date of the meeting in the presence of elected elderly men and the plaintiff and the defendant. In addition to this, the presiding judge could invite other people also. As Lewis (1989:675) indicated, "those invited are those who are listened to, are noted for their

altruism, their willingness to give off their time and good sense, and for their judgment abilities (not for their wealth)."

The elderly men usually begin their work of the day with the prayers. The presiding judge gives the first chance of prayer to the oldest member of the group. Then every elderly man gives his blessing and prayer in turn. According to Tesema, "Blessings and prayers continue until the presiding judge feels all are mentally engaged in the process at hand". When the atmosphere is conducive the judge then allows the disputants to present their cases. First the plaintiff, then the respondent presents their cases. As Lewis (ibid) presented, "frequently they send the litigants away while they listen to their opponents." The purpose of this is to discourage heated arguments that could aggravate the contradiction that had occurred if both were present on the same forum at the same time.

There is no limited time for discussion. It goes on as long as necessary or as long as the presiding judge, who is generally, involved as much as the others, suggests that it is time for the parties to leave in order that the panel discusses the matter and suggest a solution.

The presiding judge announces the verdict of the *Jaarssa Waadaa* in the presence of the litigants or disputing parties. The *Jaarssa Waadaa* verdict orders the guilty party to give compensation to the wronged person. The oldest man present on the spot, then pronounces blessings again and offers thanks to the *Jaarssa Waadaa* and the disputants for the restoration of harmony within the parties, and asks that all continue to act with good grace and unity.

### **5.5 People Prefer Jaarssumma to Formal Court**

*Jaarssumma* differs from the more formal court system in that elderly men from the community administer it. Unlike the more formal court system, *Jaarssumma* is held in the home area of the litigants rather than in public places. Ferraro's study about moots preference to formal court system of

government in most developing societies strengthens the above-mentioned finding about *Jaarssumma*. According to him, elderly people in any society work out an equitable settlement between the disputant families unlike the strict legal decision of the court. Ferraro (1998:254) ably demonstrated this fact in his work by saying that: -

All parties concerned (elders, litigants, witnesses, and spectators) sit very close to one another in a random and mixed fashion. This is in marked contrast to more formalized courts, which physically separate the plaintiff, the defendant, and the judge. The range of relevance in moots is very broad in that, the airing of grievances is more complete than in formal courts of law. Whereas in formal courts the judge controls the conduct of the proceedings, in moots the investigation is more in the hands of the disputants themselves. Moots do not attempt to blame one party unilaterally, but rather attribute fault in the dispute to both parties. Finally the sanctions imposed by the moot are not so severe that the losing party has grounds for a new grudge against the other party.

In his study of indigenous institutions of conflict resolution among the Ab'ala Afar of north-eastern Ethiopia, Kelemework (2000;75) have proved the mentioned fact : "an Afar has two main options for resolution and settlement of dispute. Resort to the modern system of state courts or recourse to the indigenous Afar institutions of conflict resolution. Most Afar, however, seem to opt for the latter option."

Conflicts that require *Kisii* (material or monetary compensation) and conflicts that do not require *kisii* are both treated at the same forum and simultaneously. Under the moots, the party found to be at fault is required to pay a small fine, or is expected to give the wronged party a token gift, and is required to make a public apology. That is what brings the restoration of harmony.

As Poddefsky and Brown (1991: 167) argued the ritualized apology of the moot symbolizes very concretely the consensual of the solution. The public offering and acceptance of the tokens of apology indicate that each party has no further grievances and that the settlement is satisfactory and mutually acceptable. Poddefsky and Brown have further shown that, "The coercive tone of the courtroom hearing limits the court's effectiveness in dealing with matrimonial disputes, especially in effecting reconciliation.

The moot, on the other hand, is particularly effective in bringing about reconciliation between spouses. This is because the moot is not only conciliatory, but also therapeutic“.

According to my informant Seboka people of Derba prefer *Jaarssumma* (moot) to courts because of the following additional reasons. The differences and quarrels between the farmers are solved in a private local court among the people they know well. Unlike the courtroom where the charges are disclosed to all present in the courtroom, the confidential nature of *Jaarssumma* limits the publicity. Thus disputants are willing to settle their differences in their locality. Those farmers who are integrated in social, economic, political and ritual activities among each other want to keep their secrets to themselves. So they avoid the court.

As Yohannes (2000:171) pointed out, “farmers who share kinship ties and marriage alliances, social and cultural practices see few reasons to accede or appeal to external authority or use of courts. Very few instances whereby the people are forced to appeal to government officials are cases such as homicide, tax evasion, land allotments, conflicts with *Kebele* leaders, etc. Other than these they deal with it by themselves.”

Transporting a defendant to the court (which is usually at *Woreda* level) is expensive and tiresome. On the other hand *Jaarssumma* is faster and cheaper. There is no court expense such as hiring of a lawyer.

The conflicting parties choose their own moot. The decision given by the moot is intended to avoid enmity between the disputants. In opposition to the enforceable court decision, the moot’s decision is flexible and responsive to the particular needs of the conflicting parties. Reciprocal needs of the conflicting parties are served whereas the court passes strict legal decisions. *Jaarssumma* doesn’t force

a person to enter into recognizance signing. They only want rectitude of each individual of the conflicting party.

Unlike the hearing of a courtroom where the verdict is read aloud to be heard by both parties and the public, in the case of moot after the reconciliation, the parties and spectators drink together to symbolize the restored solidarity of the group and the rehabilitation of the offending party. As Poddefsky and Brown (1991) indicated, the robes, wits, messengers and other symbols of power which subtly intimidate and inhibit the parties in the court room, by reminding them of the physical force which underlies the procedures, are absent. Because of these reasons, people prefer the moot hearing that takes place in the familiar surrounding of a home to formal court.

## 5.6 The Ayyaana Court

The Derba Oromo believe in that the *Ayyaana*, is able to affect the lives of humans vitally and immediately. As Lewis (1989:675) puts it, *Ayyaana* can give one aid for any problem, or they may cause any sort of misfortune including death. The *Ayyaana* may be addressed through prayers or curses, or more effectively, through speaking directly to them on those occasions when they possess the mediums, the *Qallu*.

Every *Qallu* center in Derba and the vicinity serves as the center of conflict resolution. A large number of people gather in the ritual centers of the *Qallu*. As Lewis (1989:676) indicated, "the ritual centers of the *Qallu* are major sites of religious and judicial life, as well as centers of recreation." Cases, which cannot be settled at local level or those, which need *tufta* (mercy / forgiveness) are totally left for the *Ayyana*. Every *Qallu* carries on the judicial ceremony in its *Galma*. The number of people who visit the *Galma* for judicial cases varies according to the reputation the *Qallu* has.

A person called to the court of the *Qallu* by the plaintiff does not hesitate a bit. If the opponent does not respond on time the accuser may curse him saying "*Gooftaa koo waan ati gootu natt-agarsisii*" (Oh! my lord, show me what you can do!). Once the plaintiff accused his opponent and cursed him they will not eat together again until some spiritual signaling (illness, accident) is seen on the accused and he asks for apology. The cursed person never takes time to ask for an apology once the *Qallu* calls him and if he has offended his accuser. The cursed person asks for a counter-oath (*tufta*) by admitting his fault and paying the necessary money for the ceremony, to drop the catch of the spirit (*Qabsisuu*). The cursed person embraces his accuser after the settlement of the dispute and the blessing of the *Qallu*.

The Derba Oromo believe that lying in the court of the *Qallu* will result in misfortune. According to my informant Debeso, a person with a grudge, be it with family, neighbors, or friends is not allowed to enter the *Galma*. If people could not settle their differences at *Qallu* court, the disputants either appeal to government courts or "to the spirits themselves" Lewis (1989: 675-6).

### Case 8

The time was the end of December 2002. Muleta, a young man of 29 had got good harvest of the year. On certain Monday, the market day at Mulo town he went to relax after a year round farm work. On his way back from the market Muleta met Fekadu and Abba Biyyaa, 16 and 14, playing near his house. Muleta, intoxicated accused the boys of attempting to break his door and steal. The answer of the boys was simple. "We are not thieves." Muleta took this as humiliation and struck the two boys one after the other. Fekadu and Abba Biyyaa who were seriously wounded died after four and ten days, respectively.

Because of this incident, the parents of the two boys took counter measures and burnt, the house of Muleta's mother, as they couldn't get him. Muleta left the area and became a fugitive. But he became antagonistic against the *Jimole* area, residents (the place of the incident). People targeted were the lineage and clan of those who burnt his mother's house. *Jimole* is the place where the second *Ayyaana*

court (*Galma*) of *Chole Gebrela* is found. Muleta took revenge and burnt 17 houses within 13 months. He took desperate measure and the people were frustrated.

Officials from the *Mulo* and *Suluta Woreda* administration and police officers tried their best to trace the where about of Muleta. He burns 1-2 houses every month. The moment the arson is reported the police forces were sent to the area but they could not catch Muleta.

Finally, the *woreda* administrative officials and the police officers went to *chole Gebrela*, the young *Qallu*. They asked him to assist them to catch Muleta. The young *Qallu* promised that he would make Muleta submit but does not need any police force around. With this understanding the government officials returned to Chancho.

As I was informed by *chole Gebrela* he sent a messenger to Muleta. Muleta came to the *Galma* after midnight the next day. The *Qallu* condemned his aggression and advised him to submit to the government institution. The *Qallu* told him that, "he would help him in the submission." Muleta accepted the advice of the *Qallu* and promised to go to Chancho to turn himself in. The *Qallu* gave him a man to escort him. Muleta went directly to the police station and reported that he was the one wanted from *Jimole* vicinity and submitted. This way the *Qallu (chole Gebrela)* had played a pivotal role in the peace keeping of the people. Muleta who believes that the *Ayyaana* could do anything, responded to the call of the *Qallu* positively. The *Qallu* extradited the criminal Muleta and peace was restored in the area.

Now Muleta is in Fitcha jail waiting for his trial. To restore the peaceful relationship between the lineages of Muleta and the murdered boys, the *Waadaa* elders have started the negotiation process. As to the *Qallu – Chole Gebrela* – he got more respect from government officials as a peace-loving one and among his followers as powerful as he made the criminal submit very easily.

## 5.7 Homicide

Homicide refers to those interpersonal assaults and other acts directed against another person and that occur outside the context of warfare and that prove fatal. As some psychologists believe "Killing one's antagonist is the ultimate conflict resolution technique, and our ancestors discovered it long before they were people (Daly and Wilson 1988: ix).

Though killing one's opponent, is believed to be an ultimate solution of conflict according to Daly and Wilson, here we focus on "the endeavor to resolve a dispute between them and to discover a mutually acceptable and tolerable outcome" (Gulliver, 1979: xiii). Even if the dispute ends with a homicide, resolving conflicts or settling a case of homicide will assist to end recurring killing between two lineages or clans.

People always try to avoid homicide as much as possible. If it is impossible to avoid killing, they want to get solution for the blood of the victim as soon as possible. Ending of homicide case could become real if kinsmen of the deceased are willing to stop the idea of revenge. So, elderly men take the initiative to bring the two sides together through negotiation.

Gulliver (1979: xiii) indicated that negotiation is one kind of problem solving process, one in which people attempt to reach a joint decision on matters of common concern in situations where they are in disagreement and conflict. If negotiations are to be successful - that is, if an outcome can be discovered that each party can accept and agree to - then initially at least one of the parties must have been mistaken in his assessment of what he would be prepared to accept.

**Table 1: Type of Crime Committed in the Mulo and Sululta Woreda**

Year	Homicide		Robbery		Theft		Assault		Disabling		Embezzlement		Fraud		Rape		Rule breaking		Other crimes		Total												
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T										
1998/99	24	4	28	16	0	16	60	8	68	76	4	80	20	4	24	19	-	19	16	15	-	15	90	16	106	25	16	41	361	52	413		
1999/2000	26	3	29	22	-	22	71	11	82	60	8	68	18	1	19	18	3	21	23	1	24	17	-	17	96	18	114	19	16	35	370	61	431
2000/01	32	8	40	29	3	32	46	4	50	80	9	89	19	-	19	17	-	17	12	2	14	12	-	12	80	16	96	17	4	21	344	46	390
2001/02	18	0	18	12	-	12	48	42	50	90	6	96	14	3	17	8	-	8	16	-	16	8	-	8	90	11	101	25	6	31	329	28	357
2002/03	20	4	24	9	-	9	48	4	52	80	1	81	10	-	10	12	-	12	23	2	25	5	-	5	40	5	45	70	12	35	312	26	338
2003/04*	16	-	16	18	-	18	40	1	41	76	2	78	11	2	13	7	-	7	12	1	13	3	-	3	48	6	54	34	4	38	265	16	281

Source: Mulo and Sululta Woreda Police Station May 2004

\*2003/04 crimes reported to the Woreda police up to April/2004

**Table 2: Criminal Cases that got Decision by the Woreda Court**

Year	1998-9		1999-2000		200-01		2002-02		2002-03		2003-04	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Number of files presented to court *	176	102	150	98	146	89	178	96	163	100	134	80
Number of closed files	58	40	58	32	49	39	40	52	60	32	50	26
Court decision	4	74	8	52	1	57	4	82	8	63	4	***
Reconciliation	4	74	8	52	1	57	4	82	8	63	4	***
Dropped charges **	4	74	8	52	1	57	4	82	8	63	4	***
Unclosed files	74	52	52	82	57	82	82	63	63	63	63	63

Source: Mulo and Sululiat Woreda prosecutor's office, May 2004

\* All homicide cases are sent to the zonal court. The killers are not convicted by woreda court

\*\* Charges are dropped because of different reasons

\*\*\* The 2004 cases would be examined up to July and postponed until September 2004 is not yet known

Table 1 shows the types of crimes committed and reported in the *woreda* when we see the aggregated crime rate of each year we can automatically say that from 1998/99 – 2003/04 the crime rate has gone down. Here the reader has to be cautious to reach the conclusion as the table shows only the reported type and number of crimes. In table 2 the reader can see criminal cases that got decision by the *woreda* court. As homicide cases are decided by the zonal court it is impossible to say how many cases had got verdict.

### 5.7.1 Ritual Resolution in Homicide Cases

The resolution of homicide cases is a lengthy process involving the coordinated action of *Waadaa* ritual specialists and agents of the killer and the victim. Whether deliberately or accidentally, and regardless of whether the killer and victim were kin-the first action of the killer is to leave his home.

Bartels (1983:238), in his study of peace making after manslaughter among the western Oromo of Ethiopia had emphasized the law of mutual avoidance.

Even if the people concerned were previously on friendly terms with one another, they now must stop talking, trading and eating with each other. They could no longer drink from the same river. They could no longer herd their cattle together. They had to forget all friendship there was between them, until peace had been made. If they failed to do this, they could contract leprosy. The law applied to the whole of both lineages.

For the sake of peace and settlement of the dispute, the Derba Oromo take all the above stated measures. But the core reason for leaving one's residential area temporarily and stopping of friendly relations with the victim's relatives is not for fear of contracting leprosy. It is the fear of the vendetta from the side of the victim, which could be an obstacle to the peace making that, could be carried out according to the *Seera Waadaa*. The immediate family members of the killer leave their area of residence for fear of revenge by any close relative of the victim.

On the other hand, unlike the Meta people of the United Republic of Cameroon where "the killer was required to let his hair grow without cutting it to symbolize his disgrace" (Richard 1976:292), in Derba,

the slayer shaves his head. He does not cut his nails. Fire is not lighted in his house. He sleeps on the rough side of the *itilee* (hide). He does not make sexual intercourse with his wife and his farmland will remain unploughed till the matter is settled.

According to Tesema three to five days after the death of the victim, elderly men from the killer's side go on the top of a hilly place and call out so that the victim's clan or lineage could hear and respond. The elderly men plead for the ritual settlement of the killing. The dialogue between the two sides goes on as follows.

X – *Daachii* (gentlemen) from the side of the killer who plead for peace in the name of the killer

Y – *Daachi* (Notable men) from the victim's side who negotiate in the name of the victim

X begins speaking to Y

X - *Igziyoo! Igziyoo! Igziyoo! Waqaaf,*

*Laffaf, Isinitis Iyyannaa*

Y- *Waaqqatis, Laffattis, Nuttis*

*Maalif Iyyitanii?*

X – *Kan du'e takka du'ee Waaqniis*

*Lubbu issa haamaaruu! Foonisaa*

*Lafatti yaa makamu Kanjiru namatti*

*Yaa makmaamu jenneti isinitti iyyanaa*

*Guma bassu barbaanna nurraa fudhaa.*

*Fonii Isaa Lafatii Yamakamu! .*

Y – *Mee wara du'aa wajjin mariianna*

*Deebii isinitti himnna*

Oh! Oh! Oh! We plead to God, the  
Earth and You

why do you plead to God, the earth  
and us

The dead is once dead! Let God have  
mercy on his soul! Let his body rest at peace!

Let the living one return to the community.

We beg you. We want to pay compensation

Take it from us.

let us consult with the family of the victim!  
we will let you know their response

This way the communication for reconciliation starts. The *Daachii* (elderly men of the *Waadaa* who facilitate and negotiate the settlement of the *Guma*) from the victim's side go and consult with the relatives of the dead person. Whether you pay or collect it, *Guma* is the responsibility of the clan

/lineage/. So the family members call upon the clan members for decision-making. If they want to settle the further eruption of the killing, they will agree to take the *Guma*. If they want to take revenge on the killer or on a family member they will say, "No, we will not take the *Guma*." This is a sign of danger and the slayers relatives also start to take precaution. If the answer to the pleading is "Yes, we will accept the *Guma*", the *Daachii* will relay the message to the kin of the killer to start the negotiation.

The clan's agreement on the matter of homicide is decisive because of two reasons.

1. If the answer to the request of *Guma* is "no" it means certain members of the clan are ready to avenge. If any one says "no" there is no further discussion among members of the clan as that particular individual could go on by himself to take revenge. So this time the obligation of the clan members is to back the person who wants to avenge his kin blood, and not to turn their faces away.
2. If the response of the clan members is "Yes, we will take the compensation" they continue the negotiation. As mentioned earlier, *Guma* is partly the responsibility of the clan members whether they pay it or take it. The clan members contribute 50 per cent when they pay and they share 50 percent if they are accepting the *Guma*.

The *Guma* has two parts. One is the "blood" money that is paid because of the death of a person. They call it "*Gatii Lubbu* (price of the soul). This money is shared among the members of the clan. The other is the compensation of the expenses like hospitalization, medicine, autopsy, coffin and burial expenses. This is simply the refunding of the expenses of the family of the deceased. As mentioned earlier, if the response from the side of the victim is "Yes" the first day of reconciliation talk will be fixed. Then the discussion goes on until the *Guma* is finalized ritually. The discussion takes place at a riverbank. As Nega conferred to me, the negotiators from both sides don't cross the riverbank to the other side, until the ritual day. If the crime committed is in the same village they usually negotiate at church compound or under a shade of a tree.

Before the dialogue starts the *Jaarssa Waadaa* praise *Waq* for his will to bring the two parties for negotiation. Then the victim's family is blessed for their willingness to negotiate. After that the killer's negotiators praise and bless, the *Daachii* of the victim's side for their effort to convince the relatives of the victim for the *Guma*. There will be an equal and positive response from the negotiators of the victim for the effort made by the *Daachii* of the killer for their effort to stop further homicide on both sides. Then they enter into the formal discussion of the agenda how to settle the matter.

The discussion starts by the killer's *Daachii* who declare that they take full responsibility for what had happened. According to my informant Tesema, the oldest person of the *Daachii* on the side of the killer says, "we admit that killing a man created by God is a sin, we came here to ask for forgiveness in the name of the killer! He repented and is sorry! He believes that it is the devil that pushed him into such kind of mistake! Please forgive him from the bottom of your heart for slaying his brother." Then the elderly man from the other side will say, "Let God have mercy upon him! We came here to the *Waadaa* to negotiate because the family of the victim is willing to forgive him. So let us proceed with the negotiation." With this agreement the negotiation goes on.

### 5.7.2 The *Guma* Process

*Guma* is the highest stage in dispute settlement process. It serves to settle a homicide case, which if left unresolved, could produce a chance of revenge and the continuation of killing again. Once the negotiation started it takes its own course and time depending on the availability of the compensation money and the response of the clan of the killer.

The amount of money paid as compensation depends on the condition of the killing. If the killing had taken place intentionally and brutally the *Jaarssa Waadaa* decides the highest compensation agreed upon by the *Waadaa Seera* (Agreement). This is the money, which is paid as the "price of the soul". Fifty per cent of this money is shared among the clan members while the immediate family of the victim

takes the remaining fifty per cent. The money that goes directly to the pocket of the immediate family of the victim includes any expense related to the victim's death, plus moderate amount of money to compensate the labor service that the deceased would have given to the family had he been alive.

Once the amount of money is determined, the killer's agnates start to make substantial contributions for the compensation. The first thing to do for the killer's agnates is to call a clan meeting to discuss the matter. Then they start to collect the compensation money. The *Datchii* on the side of the assassinated person add up all the expenses to be compensated. Once the amount of money to be compensated is known negotiation goes on infinitely until money collected is at hand. When the money is complete the *Datchii* on the side of the killer show a sign of readiness to the other party.

The payment of *Guma* will not take place until six months because the victim's family needs time to forget their deceased one. As Debeso pointed out "it is very difficult for the victim's relatives to eat together with the killer. According to the notable negotiator, Tesema, people consider it as collaborating with the killer if the *Guma* is accepted immediately after the incident. Furthermore, elders say "*ijji nulaaltuu, ijji namicha du'ee yaaburqittuu*. (Let the eye of the dead that watches us leave the sockets). So what the *Jaarssa Waadaa* does since the first pleading is to facilitate the actual reconciliation time through several meetings.

In olden times, the compensation for a homicide was 100 *Tegera* (Maria Theresa Thiler) birr. Eighty thilers were paid for the blood-price, and twenty thilers was tax for the government. In later ages (early 20<sup>th</sup> C) the *Tegera* birr was replaced by *Amole Chew* (salt Bar). But, nowadays the blood money is paid in paper money, i.e., Ethiopian birr. The payment reaches from 5000-8000 according to the type of the killing. When a man kills a kinsman or a close neighbor, the matter is closed by compensation, often on a reduced scale that will be offered soon. If the homicide occurs intentionally and it is committed brutally

more compensation is expected. According to the right granted by the *Waadaa* institution, the *Waadaa* elders decide the amount of money to be paid. Verdict is reached by general agreement between the *Jaarssa Waadaa*. Before the payment of the *Guma* takes place, a series of rites designed to cleanse the killer and to bring together the two families once again is performed.

### Case 9

Gurmu and Tufa were cross-cousins who lived near by each other in *Ada'a koticha*. One day in 1994 the wives of the two cousins started fighting over children. When Gurmu came home from work his wife told him about the incident. Raged Gurmu went to Tufa's house and started verbal abuse. A little while the verbal abuse was transformed into striking each other with sticks and the neighbors had to interfere. Gurmu went home bleeding. His head began to swollen and as a result died after 12 days of the incident.

Tufa was advised to leave the place temporarily and *Waadaa* elders handled the case even without reporting the case to the police. Ritual purification was performed and *Guma* was paid. After the reconciliation process it was decided by the lineage that Tufa should leave the place for good so that vengeance could not erupt. Tufa left the area and went to Addis Ababa to live with his brother. After eight years stay in Addis Ababa Tufa returned to his home and rejoined his family.

The killer's relatives bring a young bull known as *Lamachaa* - which has never been used for plough and they slaughter it at a riverbank. The slaughtered bull's skin will not be taken off. The eldest *Jaarssa Waadaa* pierces the intestine on two sides and through these holes the culprit and an immediate kin of the slain shake their hands. This is the first step to end the overt hostility between the two families. This shaking of hands is known as *gongomaa*. This symbolizes the ritual reparation on the killer's side. Through the *gongomaa* the killer cleanses his hands off the impurity. This *Harkka-baafannaa* (cleansing

one's hands) or *Harkka-dhiqaa* (washing hands) takes place without turning their faces to each other. Both men cover their faces. This act of shaking hands according to Richard (1976: 292) served to establish a barrier against anyone who might try to reopen the case for revenge by saying that the reconciliation had not been properly done.

According to Nigussie, on the day of the *Guma* the killer will bring an ewe and the victim's immediate relative slaughter it. Together with the slaughtered ewe they throw away 3 fifty cents coin and the knife by which the sheep was slaughtered. The blood of the ewe is a sign of repentance in which it is said by the society of Derba that "the culprit tried to expiate his crime and that of the evil that pushed him to the assassination. The sheep's blood is to replace the blood of the victim that the devil has drunk. A poor person takes the meat of the ewe. The blood of the ewe is to represent that both sides have agreed to stop latent enmity by shading the blood of the symbolic ewe jointly.

According to Tesema the slaughter of an ewe is an oath for the kin of the slain in which they say solemnly "if I try to avenge here after, let God end my line of reproducing like the ewe I have slaughtered."

On returning home from the riverbank, a lamb will be slaughtered in the house of the killer by the victim's immediate kin (a son, brother or a cousin). The killer will hold the head while the slain's kin slaughters the lamb. The meat will be roasted. The two parties will have one end of the roasted meat each in their hands and the oldest of the Waadaa elderly man will cut the meat in the middle. Both men will eat their part. This ends the enmity, because it is said they have eaten together.

After eating in the killer's house they go to the house of the victim's immediate kin who represents his clan and slaughter a ram. This is a sign of the end of sorrow that has come to the clan as a result of the

death of their brother. After this ritual ceremony, there is no more mourning. The mediation also comes to an end.

The final thing is the warning given to the killer by the immediate family members of the slain. In front of the *Jaarssa Waadaa*, they limit the movement of the killer by ordering him, not to appear in their village as he could make them angry and any relative could take a desperate action against him. He is told also which markets to avoid because they often go to that particular market place. As my informant Debeso told me: -

The territorial limitation is highly supported by the Derba Oromo. This act of not seeing each other often will cool the intention of taking a repulsive action on the killer by the victim's kin. In due time the victim's relatives forget the killer. The territorial limitation has no fixed duration. But depending on the incident of the killing it may take two to three years. If the killer neglects this warning and appears in the restricted areas he is liable to his own death.

As for the compensation and the payment of the blood money the two sides do not take from each other. There will be two *Lukoos* who facilitate the exchange. The *Lukoo* (the one who brings the money collected by the killers' clan) will hand it over to the other *Lukoo* (the one who collects the money in the name of the slain). The *Lukoo* who hands over the compensation has to count the money again and again. If the money by any chance is short of the amount fixed, the other *Lukoo* throws it to the ground. If the shortage is proved the first *Lukoo* is fined *birr* 50 because he is given the final role of reconciliation, which ends the mediation. Failing to count and recount the money and making everything smooth is the responsibility of the *Lukoo* of the killer.

Apart from the clan members contribution of the blood money or *Guma* as my informant Agaree Tullu pointed out, there are still men who go to market places to raise money by begging for the compensation. The killer puts a chain on his left hand and begs the by-passers. Every one who passes by throws a coin or *birr* on a piece of clothe under the foot of the killer. This kind of begging money for compensation is called "*hirphataa*". People don't directly give money to the killer, because they believe

that he is still a criminal till he pays the blood money or the *Guma*." The killer begs by saying " *Lubbuu namatu harkka Kiyatti badee, mee waan Guma nagargaaraa* (A man's life was lost in my hands! Set me free by donating for the *Guma*).

As *Ayyaantu* Agaree Tullu informed me, in some areas like *Kore Roba* Peasant Association, in and around *Mulo* in the same *woreda*, the tradition of not eating with their right hands - the one with which they assassinated - is still observed. The man who has killed another fellow, even after the *Guma* is paid doesn't eat with his right hand because he "considers his right hand as his enemy that has caused him the killing." Because of this a person eating with his left hand is identified as a killer. Of course, this doesn't include the naturally left handed people, which work and eat with it.

### 5.8. Dhaba

*Dhaba* is a criminal act committed in the absence of any witness. The *Derba Oromo* believe that even if a crime is committed in the absence of witnesses the *Waqqa* or the guardian spirit or the *Ayyaana* takes revenge of the victim's blood that cries to the spirits. According to *Derba Oromo*, though the man who is believed to have committed a crime is dead, his family's settling the grievances with the victimized families is crucial. As *Tesema* indicated, "if this reconciliation is ignored, the family members suspected of *Dhaba* will result in dispute and disintegrations among themselves. Bad happenings continue on the family until the *Dhaba* is settled in the *Galma* of the *Ayyaana*." As my informant *Debeso* said, "the blood of the victim is avenged by *Waqqa* until the spiritual ceremony of reconciliation is concluded by *tuffa* (excuse) for the family of the person suspected to be a criminal."

This belief indicates that no matter what the circumstance of the crime is, ritual reparation and redressing the breach is very crucial. This indigenous dispute settlement mechanism is believed to bring together families with grievances and to have a lasting peace. In the absence of this dispute settlement

mechanism people of Derba say that, "that family will perish." The following case of Nigussie and his family is one, which shows us the effect of not settling the *Dhaba* on time.

### Case 10

Nigussie Kassa was an Amhara who had married an Oromo woman called Chaltu Telila. Nigussie, a hard working farmer had four sons and 3 daughters by his wife. Though he was a hardworking man, Nigussie had the habit of having affairs with different women while still in marriage. In addition to this, Nigussie was not flexible and does not accept other peoples' views. Because of this, he used to get into disputes with individuals and sometimes slaps or shoots people in drinking houses.

Fikadu was one of those victims of Nigussie who had been shot on his leg in 1999. Though Fikadu had taken compensation for the medical expenses and physical harm encountered, he was waiting for the right time to take revenge.

Nigussie Kassa was also suspicious of his concubines that other men visit them. In November 1998, Nigussie got up from his bed in the middle of the night and went to Tewabu, one of his lovers for surveillance. He did not get into the house, but stopped at a close distance to observe if someone was coming out of his concubine's house.

As a matter of coincidence, the younger sister of Tewabu, Aselefu was coming out to the latrine with a *netella* (traditional scarf) on her head. Nigussie thought that it was a man who put a *netella* over his head to disguise his identity. He aimed at and shot Aselefu. She was seriously injured and was hospitalized. As my informant Tesema told me "the matter was settled between Tewabu and Nigussie and it was forgotten before going to legal institutions.

On the other hand Fikadu who had been wounded by Nigussie was waiting patiently to avenge Nigussie. Two years later, in 2001, Fikadu gave money to a friend to invite Nigussie a drink so that he could take his revenge. The man did as was instructed by Fikadu. Around 6p.m Nigussie intoxicated, was on his way to go home, when Fikadu shot and killed him.

After the murder of Nigussie dispute between his sons escalated. This was because knowing that Nigussie was a rapacious man who had been in dispute with many people, either his wife or his sons did not try to settle the *Dhaba* committed by him. Because of this negligence of ritual reparation of *Dhaba*, 8 months from the death of Nigussie, Serious disputes began to be exhibited between his two sons. Though the pretext was the sharing of property as *Ayyaantu (chole) Gebrela* pointed out, "the boys were haunted by the spirits of the victimized people who antagonized Nigussie. The dispute was between Dejene, the eldest and Getahun, the younger brother, who were living in the same compound with their late father. One was running for the other's throat. According to their sister Woineshet: -

Getahun was very notorious, who usually attacked Dejene. One night in December 2002, Getahun went to Dejene's house and called him out. Dejene, a married man who knew his brother's character, refused to go out and told Getahun that they would discuss the matter the next morning. Getahun, who was determined to quarrel with his brother, started kicking the door. Dejene came out with his gun. Getahun began to come nearer and nearer to strike while Dejene was retreating. Lastly, Dejene was cornered, and before Getahun could strike him, shot and killed his brother.

*Guma* was paid and it was decided among the family members that Dejene move to *Gumbichu* (outside the Derba vicinity in the same *Woreda*) and live there. Dejene became a hardworking and successful businessman. He got wealth, but his behavior changed a lot. Once a decent husband and father who loved his family, now he began to pass half of the night in drinking houses. The wife was fed up of waiting for him up to midnight. As Tolcha, the other brother of Dejene said, "One night Dejene went home late and knocked at his door. His wife was asleep and she could not open for him on time. When she opened the door he began to provoke her as if she was having an affair with another man. She

ignored him and was to go back to her bed when Dejene, who was drunk and jealous, shot her from behind. Lucky was his wife Alemitu, who survived the bullet after being hospitalized.

The next day, Dejene began to feel frustrated for what had happened the night before. He thought he had killed her. In the afternoon he took a hand grenade, pulled the pin and slept on it. He committed suicide before anyone could catch him.

Chaltu (the wife of the late Nigussie) and her children worked towards reconciliation at the *Galma* of the *Ayyaana Gebrela* with those families whom Nigussie was in dispute or those who claim that Nigussie had humiliated them. This was done by the guidance of the *Qallu* who dispatched letters to the relatives and neighbors who had once been in dispute with Nigussie. Every person called to the *Galma* confessed truly why he/ she had grievance with late Nigussie. The family members of the late Nigussie got *tufta* (excuse) and were blessed after all the reconciliation ceremony was over. The Derba people believe that, had it not been for this indigenous mechanism of settling the disputes, the rest of the late Nigussie's children would have ended in the same way as the two brothers.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Theory is always simpler than reality. Even when it seems terribly complex, it is still simplistic, as compared to the range of factors, operating as conditions, as means or as ends in any actual concrete situation (Viner 1953:1) and at the same time controversial.

In all societies that have been studied there is a competition for scarce and valued resources. As Boissevain (1974:228) asserted, for many reasons some people control more resource than others do. This enables them to influence the actions of others, if need be, against their wishes. Those who control the valued resources are obeyed because they wield more power. But the temporary submissiveness will not last long. Violence against the rules of the powerful will take place. This means conflict which is a fact of life will rise among the society. Conflicts of interest are not always inter-ethnic alone, they are also observed within a group.

As indicated earlier in the literature review chapter scholars have emphasized the importance and role of social network in any society. A carefully cultivated but constantly shifting set of contacts enables people to bring pressure on their opponents. These temporary coalitions seemed to play an extraordinarily important part not only in political and economic activities, but also in the daily round of social relations. Social networks, which are usually dismissed as informal organizations, are not only the source of many social problems. They also form the raw materials with which they must solve these problems.

Intentionally or not, a man keeps a balance of different categories of people with whom he is connected in different ways. When conflict breaks out between two inhabitants of a village, each of the two rivals try to find adherents among the other inhabitants. Exploiting to the utmost the existing relationships, based on kinship, affinity, locality and friendship, they form their respective factions. In the case of Derba Oromo, social network serves as a means of conflict enhancing mechanism among certain groups. This group takes the law into its own hands and become power group that doesn't see things critically. As I have revealed in my ethnographic data, networks are used to facilitate social and economic obligations among kinship. Above all networks guarantee a person's rights and security of moving independently within a society irrespective of his physical weakness or strength.

Classified secrets which otherwise could have been impossible to get, fall in the hands of people through necessary contacts and social networks. Cases that are attached with justice can be moved forward at a faster rate or could be pulled back for years through the proper channel of social network. Networks play a decisive role in conflict resolution and stabilizing peace. Networks are the basic stuff of social life. The interpersonal relations could be used in conflict both to aggravate the dispute as we have seen earlier or to enhance peace. If an individual is provocative and is suspected to drag his network members into unnecessary clashes, he would be advised to refrain from his evil deeds. If he does not listen, his lineage or network members in the interest of peaceful coexistence with other people will ostracize him.

Networks among the Derba women are deeply rooted. The women meet and discuss different issues and find solutions for their problems. Not only do they discuss their problems, they stand together and assist each other when the need comes.

In addition to these life crisis events, frequent visits provide occasions for relatives and friends to develop, maintain, and demonstrate their solidarity and to meet other women who do not belong to their own circle of friends. Women of Derba have started to organize themselves in Women's Savings and Credit Association, which enabled the members to own money on which they have exclusive right to control and manage. This economic empowerment of women leads to increased wellbeing for themselves and their families.

Marriage is given due consideration among the Derba Oromo. The father of the groom uses his network to assess and find out the best bride for his son. Marriage is not a matter of two couples only. The *sodaa* (in-laws) relation is very crucial. To meet this demand the father activates all his contact till he gets the right girl from a decent family, as this relation is believed to bring additional respect to the household.

As Gadaa (1988:15) argued, the *gada* system, which has served as the basis of democratic and egalitarian political system, in most communities suddenly, and in a few cases gradually, had declined. The *gada* system that has guided the religious social, political and economic life of the Oromo for many centuries has declined among the Derba Oromo because of different factors. The most important factor for the decline is the change in the social, economic and political life of the people. The coming of new beliefs and religions are other factors for the decline. This way the Derba Oromo has become predominantly Orthodox Christians. Being Orthodox Christians did not keep the people away from following the traditional religion. The *Qallus* are highly respected. The *Ayyaana* are believed to reveal hidden homicide cases. If Homicide remains hidden it results in supernatural punishments that affect the lineage members. The *Ayyaana* not only reveal the *Dhaba* (hidden homicide case), but also involve in dispute settling.

As my ethnographic finding revealed, government officials also use the *Qallus* to capture outlaws and to settle disputes. The *Qallu* negotiate families and *Guma* reconciliation in their own *Galma*. With the collaboration of the *Waadaa* elders, the *Qallus* settle conflicts according to the *Waadaa* agreement of March 1999, which is recognized by the administration of the *Mulo* and *Sululta Woreda*.

The *Seera Waadaa* (rules set by the elderly men's assembly) comes in line with the bureaucratic laws. According to my informants since 1999 abduction had decreased dramatically because the *Seera Waadaa* had made the bridewealth very minimum, the fear of which used to lead young men to abduct girls rather than asking formally for marriage. The *Waadaa* agreement has lessened, to borrow Assefa's phrase, the "financially costly arrangements" of marriage (Assefa 1995:137).

There are different and controversial theories concerning the causes of conflict. Conflict is not necessarily negative or evil. Most peace builders consider conflict as often leading to needed change and therefore potentially creative for it can bring about new options for solving existing problems. Though conflict itself is a natural process, it can lead to either constructive or destructive ends, depending on the way in which the disputants approach the issue.

Looking at conflicts from a historical perspective reveals changes and continuities in dispute settlement processes, and changes in relations between informal and formal institutions (Pankhrust 2003:61). Every dispute occurs in a cultural context and a social situation that have been previously established. The outcome of negotiation inevitably has consequences for the disputants themselves and most probably, for other people connected with them (Gulliver 1979:268).

Regardless of the controversy on the causes of conflict, there are agreements on the mechanisms of handling the conflicts that every society has its own ways. In this respect, I have made attempt to

present traditional mechanisms applied among the Derba Oromo. The mechanisms of dispute settlement have changed overtime with more cultural incorporations and the pressure from the government towards replacing the indigenous mechanisms with the codified government laws.

Based on these facts, currently there are two different forms of implementing justice among the Derba Oromo: The indigenous mechanisms and the bureaucratic court. Surprisingly the Derba people prefer the traditional mechanism to that of the government court as discussed earlier. As Pankhrust (2003:61) indicated, "institutions created by the state and accountable to it have become increasingly intrusive in local affairs and have tended to marginalize or co-opt local informal institutions. And yet, the tendency to cope with the traditional mechanisms of resolving disputes withstanding the pressure from the government institutions is highly appreciated."

Earlier the chosen forum was usually a neighborhood *Jaarsumaa*, in which contenders presented themselves as members of kinship groups, which confronted each other, with senior men from each group stating and restating the grounds of contention and what might be an acceptable solution. Disputes continued to dominate so much of the description of social interaction because they mobilize support systems, highlight social cleavages, and are argued in terms of general morality. As Gulliver (1979:168-9) pointed out, the outcome of dispute leads to reconciliation and the restoration of a social harmony considered to be the ideal condition for human beings. The Derba Oromo believe that restoration of social harmony could only be gained from the indigenous mechanisms rather than the government courts. In courts, disputes are contents that test relative strengths and weaknesses and provide a mapping of the social forces with which they themselves contend. If people carry their quarrels into a public arena, they do so because they expect to gain some thing from the encounter, if only the humiliation of the opponent.

The Derba Oromo sense that, if they turn to the court, to which they come as an individual, it restricts their freedom of action by its own procedures and the threat of power of the state if they disrupt its formality or refuse to accept decisions.

The attention given to dispute settlement and its setting assumes that the appropriate outcome to negotiation is the restoration of good relationships. They seek a remedy for a particular ill rather than a recipe for getting along with their neighbors or kin. So in a society like the Derba Oromo whose members have multiple on-going relationships with one another it is impossible to be in continuous conflict as the court verdict could take more time than the traditional *Jaarsumaa* (Moot).

The other major reason why the Derba Oromo prefers indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms to that of government courts is that, the court asks the plaintiff to pay hearing fee for the file to be opened. This is an expense, which the farmer could not afford to pay on the spot. On the other hand, there is no payment in advance before the dispute is settled between the plaintiff and the defendant in their locality. After rapprochement is reached the elderly men decide the amount of compensation to be made by the guilty party. The expense for inviting the elders for settling the dispute will be shared among the plaintiff and the opponent.

Homicide is the highest conflict case among the Derba Oromo. Though homicide cases are reported to the formal institution (the police station) it is usually handled by the *Waadaa* elders because people prefer to settle it ritually through indigenous mechanisms. The resolution of homicide case is a lengthy process involving the coordinated action of numerous ritual specialists and other conflict resolution agents. Until peace has been made, people concerned with homicide case, from both parties must avoid each other. The killer leaves his homestead with his family to avoid revenge and show respect to the victim's relatives.

Despite the availability of various modes by which disputes are handled and the performance of extremely elaborated rituals to mark conflict resolution, scholars have revealed that disputes are not often resolved. Schellenberg (1966:22) argues that neither peaceful nor violent mechanisms of conflict resolution can always perfectly resolve issues. Similarly, there were cases in the study area where people take blood-for-blood. They refuse to reconcile through *Guma* ritual and wait for the right time and place for revenge.

I have pointed out in my ethnographic data that the Oromo people of North Shewa have social and economic interaction with the Amhara people around that area. As anthropological findings have proved, there are extensive cultural exchanges between two different peoples living in and around the same residence area. According to the assumption of my informants, the Oromo nearer to the border of the Amhara region have adopted the tradition of "blood-for-blood" from the Amhara people with whom they have good attachment and intermarriage. This is possible because the Amharas in Merhabite see settling homicide cases with *Guma* reconciliation as a sign of defeat and cowardness (informant Atnafu Yirdaw). They say that, a man settles for compensation of blood if he is old and without kin and if he is determined to leave the area forever. Anyway this exceptional case, which is not practiced among other Oromo people, needs further research why it turned out to be that way even among few.

Contrary to few exceptional cases the Derba Oromo are willing to build sustainable relationships. Sustainable relationships can be achieved only when disputing parties have reconciled putting the past behind, recognizing their present differences, and agreed upon on a future vision for staying in relationships. Because of this most of the time, once the *Guma* negotiation is completed, complaints are not surfaced.

In all societies there are different methods of conflict resolution mechanisms. Among the Derba Oromo the most favored is the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms though there is pressure from the government to suppress this kind of traditional system and to bring them to modern institutions. Even though the *Waadaa* agreement has set rules to be carried on by the conflict-resolving elders, it is true that people could violate them in rare cases. So the traditional people's verdicts are carried on based on the willingness and tradition of the society. If the matter cannot be resolved using the indigenous mechanisms, or if the dispute is serious, and the disputants are not willing to resolve it, the case will be taken to government institutions. This means they are free to bring opponents into court. That is why the *Waadaa* agreement has included in each of its articles, words like "after being fined by government institutions ..." or "after settling the problem on the government side ..." the *Waadaa* has decided "the following *seera* for this and that conflict." So the elders try to be on the safest side by avoiding the state pressure. Anyway it is the reconciliation that ends the enmity among the Derba Oromo.

To conclude, I have attempted to show the relationships between the social networks and conflict of the Derba Oromo and the traditional mechanisms employed to settle the disputes. But I admit that this research is not the final on the issue of networks, conflict and the resolutions. Thus I hope other researchers would come up with further study of the network and conflict resolution among the Derba

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### Internet

Some Notes on Violence and Conflict

<http://WWW.d.umn.edu/~bmork/2306/Theories/BAMconflict 2.htm>

**Appendix- Information with full Name and Address**

No	Full Name	sex	Age	Nationality	Religion	Occupation	Date of interview	Place of interview	Remake
1	Tesema korecha	M	87	Oromo	Orthodox	Retired tailor	29/11/03	Debra	Waadaa chairman
2	Debeso Borishe	M	87	Oromo	Orthodox	Retired	6/12/03	Debra	Waadaa member
3	Kebede Urgesa	M	56	Oromo	Orthodox	Fired shengo	3/12/03	Debra	Still working
4	Dahaba Tolcha	M	54	Oromo	Orthodox	Trader	14/12/03	Debra	
5	Bedada Debiso	M	43	Oromo	Orthodox	Factory worker	20/12/03	Cement factory	Cement factory
6	Godeti Tuffa	F	65	Oromo	Orthodox	Farmer	21/12/03	Ada'a Koticha	
7	Mamee Hitsanu	F	45	Oromo	Orthodox	Trader	28/12/03	Debra	Accountant for WSCA
8	Worknesh Tolla	F	52	Oromo	Orthodox	House wife	28/12/03	Debra	Chair person for WSCA
9	Nigussie Mergia	M	69	Oromo	Orthodox	Farmer	3/1/04	Gulele	Waadaa member
10	Bulcha Dendecha	M	45	Oromo	Orthodox	Factory worker	4/1/04	Cement factory	One of the actors in the social networks
11	Ararso Dekeba	M	47	Oromo	Orthodox	Trader	10/1/04	Debra	The other major actor
12	Belete Beyene	M	36	Oromo	Orthodox	Farmer	10/1/04	Beresa	
13	Nega Bayisa	M	50	Oromo	Orthodox	Water and sewerage	11/1/04	Chancho	Born in Derba
14	Sergent Diriba Dekeba	M	42	Oromo	Orthodox	Police officer	17/1/04	Chancho	Commander of the <i>Woreda</i> police force
15	Seboka Negawo	M	73	Oromo	Orthodox	Farmer	18/1/04	Gulele	Member of <i>Waada</i>
16	Hailu Chala	M	38	Oromo	Orthodox	Police man	24/1/04	Chancho	
17	Almaz Tolcha	F	34	Oromo	Protestant	Secretary	24/1/04	Chancho	Born in Derba
18	Mekonnen Gemechu	M	27	Oromo	Traditional + Orthodox	Ayyantuu	4&5/2/04	Jimole	One of the famous <i>Qallus</i>
19	Beredu Nigussie	F	23	Oromo	Orthodox	Housewife	15/02/04	Mulo	Daughter of the late Nigussie kassa
20	Tolcha Nigussie	M	29	Oromo	Orthodox	Farmer	15/02/04	Mulo	Son of the late Nigussie kassa
21	Agaree Tullu	M	59	Oromo	Traditional	Ayyantuu	21/02/04	Kore Reba	The other famous Qallu
22	Demelash Dadi	M	30	Oromo	Orthodox	Police man	6/3/04	Cancho	
23	Tesfaye Begna	M	48	Oromo	Orthodox	Prosecutor	3/4/04	Chancho	
24	Aster Degu	F	30	Amhara	Protestant	Police officer	3/4/04	Debra	
25	Abebe Getu	M	46	Tigre	Orthodox	Priest	4/4/04	Debra	
26	Beyeti Waqkene	F	38	Oromo	Orthodox	Teacher	10/4/04	Debra	Auditor of the women's saving and credit association
27	Mulugeta Mekonnen	M	30	Amhara	Orthodox	Organizer of credit ass	17/04/04	Debra	
28	Jalene Beyene	F	35	Amhara, Oromo	Protestant	Dresser in chancho clinic	1/5/04	Debra	Private clinic

**\*WSCA=Women's Savings and credit association**













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**Picture 1: Selected *Jaarssa Waadaa* waiting to start conflict resolution**



**Picture 2: *Chole Gebrela* -the young *Qallu***



**Picture 3: Women at the gate of *Chole Gebrela* ready to enter the *Galma***



**Picture 4: *Ayyaantu Agaree Tullu***

# DECLARATION

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

Name: Demissie Gudisa

Signature: Dezu

Date: March, 2005