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Conflicts among Pastoralists in the Borana Area of Southern Ethiopia: The case of Borana and Garri

SVF-3901

Tigist Kebede Feyissa

Master's Thesis in Peace and Conflict Transformation

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Abstract

This study deals with conflicts among pastoralists in the Borana area of Southern Ethiopia focusing on the case of the Borana and Garri peoples. The objective of the research is to assess the underlying factors related to the formation, development and transformation of conflicts between the Borana and Garri since 1990´s. To meet this objective, the study employs a qualitative approach and secondary sources. As a conceptual framework for the analysis, the study uses intergroup conflict. This study makes use of ethnicity; ethnic conflict and political ethnicity as a main analytical tool to study intergroup conflict and violence that emerge in a state, especially in this research context, where ethnicity constitutionally has become essential in creating a federal state and administrative units.

The study has reviewed and analyzed the macro historical and political trends in Ethiopia in relation to conflicts between different pastoralist communities. It also addresses the conflict since the 1990s between the two groups drawing lines of connection between the national discourse on ethnicity and local realities. Thus, it is argued that the violent conflicts in pastoral areas result from a myriad of historical, political and economic factors that reinforce one another. It is further argued that the pastoralist conflicts- if not all- particularly in the post 1991 period is also linked to questions of land ownership and self government, as the new state's constitution equated ethnic groups with administration units.

This thesis calls for the development and implementation ofintegrated policies and strengthening local governance institutions that are rooted in traditional practices for managing resources and inter-ethnic conflicts.

Table of contents

List of Maps and Table

List of Acronyms and Definition of local terms

Acronyms

EPLF - Eritrea Peoples' Liberation Front

EPRDF - Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

ESM - Ethiopian Student Movement

FDRE - Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

OALF-Oromo Abo Liberation Front

OLF -Oromo Liberation Front

ONLF- Ogaden National Liberation Front

SNNPR- Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples' Region

TGE- Transitional Government of Ethiopia

TPLF - Tigray People's Liberation Front

WSLF- Western Somali Liberation Front

Definition of local terms

Abba - Father, leader, head

Abba Gada - Head of Gada Assembly

Awraja-   Middle level territorial division, applied until 1987.

Ballabat- Appointed leader during the imperial rule (Traditional Chief).

Derg- Committee or Council

Kebele- The smallest territorial administrative unit

Tulla-Deep wells

*Wereda*The second smallest territorial administrative unit.

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background

Ethiopia is an ancient African state with a rich tradition of religious types, mores, and folkways whose roots are deeply embedded into a history of over two thousand years. The fact makes the country a mosaic of peoples and cultures at the heart of the Horn of Africa. Over eighty different ethnic entities of different size and spatial distribution with varied forms of cultural practices constitute the state. The cultural cohesion and population composition of the country is the result of a long historical process of inter-ethnic and socio-cultural interactions and integrations. This provides the state with a strong and communal structural foundation, regardless of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural phenomena. A complement to this complexity is the varied climatic conditions of the country that supports different types of economic activities. Sedentary farmers predominantly inhabit the northern and central highland areas. Whereas, the arid and semi arid regions of the country are home to pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, sedentary agriculturalists, private ranches, national parks and various investment and development projects (Mkutu, 2001; Jarso, 2005; Dida, 2008; Taye, 2002 cited in Temesgen,2010:2).

The Horn of Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular is an area where various forms of human interaction and complex forms of social relations have existed for centuries (Clapham, 2002: 49‑50). However, such interactions and integrations have not been peaceful all the time.

The history of Ethiopia is riddled by intra- and inter-state conflicts. In its modern history the country had to withstand foreign aggression and internally as well, it had intermittently experienced acute political and economic crises (Kefale, 2009:1).

Until the late 20th century, however, internal political upheavals arising from ethnic interest seem to have been well nigh unknown in the region. Although conflicts agitated by one or another

factor did happen many times, they were not connected to ethnic interests. As history tells, various conflicts in Ethiopia between different interest groups for economic or political gains usually led to massive damage. Moreover, they have had long-lasting repercussions on the social harmony and peaceful co-existence of the various religious or cultural groups of the country.

The long history of conflict for economic or political reasons took a different pattern and became more serious since the collapse of the monarchical system in 1974, making 'national integration' very difficult. Since the 1974 revolution there has been a proliferation of liberation movements calling for either regional autonomy or outright secession from Ethiopia. Southeastern and northern Ethiopia in particular became areas racked by conflicts. Ethnic insurgencies in Afar, Somali, and Eritrea made the viability of the Ethiopian state doubtful.

The feeling of victimhood was agonizing to some insurgences, as the government's new economic and political policies were not felt to be for the benefit of their people. Added to this feeling of economic and political marginalization, many ethnic groups still felt that they were victims of religious and ethnic discrimination. Such grievances harboured among some insurgencies were enough to mobilize their fellow ethnic affiliates and rise up in arms. A few of them aimed at securing "a fairer share of government services", while some others demanded to break away and become independent. The first group can be represented by the Afar, while the struggle for outright secession was pertinent to the Somalis and the Eritreans. The latter two sought to break away from Ethiopia and waged an armed struggle for many years even before the downfall of the monarchical rule. The new additional groups added were the Oromo, and later, Tigrean. In the 1970s, the Derg was increasingly being attacked by the Afar, Eritrean, and Somali separatists' – who became the chief opponents to the Derg regime, aided by the national army of Somalia.

The Ogadēn war, between Ethiopia and Somalia, by late 1977, led to huge outflows of Ethiopian Somalis into Somalia. The south eastern region, however, continued to be the most unstable part of the country throughout the 1980s, as those Ethiopian Somali who fled to Somalia carried on a guerrilla campaign against the Derg. In 1988, however, a peace agreement finally ended the hostility with Ethiopia, but civil war intensified in Somalia. Between the late 1980s and early

1990s, the civil war in Somalia led to a reverse refugee flow of Somalis, including those who had previously fled from Ethiopia, crossing into southeast Ethiopia to escape the fighting in Somalia.

Apart from international factors that destabilise the region the south eastern part of Ethiopia has to sustain the negative impact of conflicts between regional states, primarily Oromiya and the Somali National Regional States, two of the newly emerged administrative units after the fall of the Derg regime, and between fractions of concerned ethnic groups such as Borana of the Oromo and Garri of the Somali[1]. These inter-state and inter-ethnic conflicts seem to have been aggravated by implementation of new federal system, accompanying the major transition in the national politics of Ethiopia since the early 1990s.

After the military dictatorship of the Derg, which had ruled Ethiopia since 1974, was overthrown in May 1991[2], various ethnic groups of the country continued to push for 'institutional rehabilitation' and power sharing. The EPRDF (the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front)[3], hence, decided to enact the principle of equality of nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia. Hence, the 1995 constitution of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia formalized ethnicity as a fundamental principle of state organization, representation and political mobilization (Abbink, 1997). Accordingly, nine ethnically constituted regions: Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNPR), Gambella and Harrerri and two chartered city administrations (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa) were formed (Article 47). The right to ethnic self-determination up to secession has been constitutionally guaranteed for the regional states.[4] Several articles of the new federal constitution has stipulated laws encompassing individual and communal rights. In a nutshell, the new constitution aimed at securing the rights of the various ethnic and religious groups of the country, recognizing the diversity of the people and seeking to enhance equality within that diversity.

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[1] http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/AA0C62769222BE31802570B8005A6F3B?OpenDocument
[2] The Derg, the amharic geez word for a committee, refers to the provisional military Administrative council PMAC) that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991.
[3] The Ethiopians peoples revolutionary front EPRDF is a coalition of four ethnic based political parties: the dominant Tigray people' Libration front (TPLF), the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM); the Oromo People Democratic Movement (OPDO), and the Southern Ethiopian peoples' democratic Movemnet(SEPDM).
[4] The 1991 charter of the transitional government of Ethiopia (TGE) under the EPRDF has recognized Eritrea's secession.

With varying degrees of success and commitment, the government introduced and implemented many reforms intended to the pursuit of promoting equality, liberty, religious freedom, other democratic ideals, and unity in diversity. The reforms were part of a process of political democratization and economic liberalization that strongly affected the political consciousness and the economic status of the entire population. Wittingly or unwittingly, the new consciousness of the people, sooner or later, has generated new political complications. The ethnic federalism policy with the aim of matching ethno-linguistic identity with self-administrative structures has brought the question of ethnic identity into the politico-legal arena as well as the question of which group belongs to which ethnic identity (Kefale, 2010: 616). Also, the exact boundary line separating the regional states has remained disputed.

In Ethiopia today there are conflicts- sometimes peaceful at other times violent- over ethnic identity, territory and entitlements. In different parts of the country, several political activists are mobilizing their constituencies to secure state recognition of their separate identity and self-administrative status (Ibid).

The new developments in the political sphere have continued to reshape the social fabric of the people at regional level and the nature of identity and identification in the country. According to Abbink (1998), "The present climate in Ethiopia which politicizes everything, from personal identity and choice of friends to economic activity and political affiliation, will enhance this development" (1998:121). Therefore, the political transition in 1991, though it brought relief from the hardship of the Marxist Derg regime (1974-1991), it also signalled the emergence of a new threat to the viability of the state. The inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relations among the pastoral communities of southern and southeastern lowlands came to be compounded by animosities. This research addresses the conflicts among pastoralists of Borana area of southern Ethiopia taking the case of the Borana-Oromo and Garri-Somali. The Borana area is found on the southern tip of Ethiopia and hosts a number of ethnic groups whose livelihood is based on semi-pastoral and pastoral activities(Bassi and Boku Tache, 2007:60). In this study area, we find a number of pastoral and semi-pastoral societies, which mainly belong to the two predominant Cushitic speaking ethnic entities of southeast Ethiopia, the Oromo and the Somalie (Sileshi, 2005:1).

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1.2 Statement of the problem

Conflicts between pastoralists in southern Ethiopia are not a new phenomena, it has existed in different forms for centuries. However, these conflicts have intensified and changed over the last decade due to a range of factors. There is a long history of conflict among various pastoral groups, which raised sections of clans, tribes and ethnic groups against each other. Pastoral conflicts in the past were less devastating as they mostly relied ontraditional weaponry such as spears, bows, and arrows. However, the widespread availability of firearms has significantly increased the lethality of these conflicts. Indeed, the pattern and forms of the recent violent conflicts in pastoral areas indicate that they have involved large-scale livestock raiding, seizure of the neighboring ethnic group' s territories by military force and what has virtually become warfare (Getachew, 2003). The conflict between Borana-Oromo and Garri-Somali in recent years can be the best example of this reality. The Borana, and Garri pastoralists share common pastoral resources. They dwelt in one administrative province in the pre-federal Ethiopia. In their long lasting relationship, they developed a common approach to shared resources, culture and governance system.

Since the adoption of a new, more ethnically based federal structure; the two ethnic groups have been separated by administrative state boundaries. Violent and deadly conflicts have emerged in recent years in and around the city of Moyale, which is now divided between the Oromiya and Somali regional states.

In the past decade a number of large-scale clashes have occurred among Ethiopian pastoralists, resulting in major losses of life and displacement (Hagman and Mulugeta,2008:21). The Borana-Garri incident is among the many clashes between groups publicized. The relation between Borana Oromo and Somali clans has been characterized by competition and conflict[5]. Besides the violent resource conflicts existing between and within the Somali's and Oromo's pastoral groups, currently the issues of where the administrative boundaries between the two Regional States should be drawn in areas of mixed cultural, linguistic and ethnic affiliations have resulted in boundary disputes[6]. In February 2009 alone, some 16,000 people were driven from their

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[5]http://www.eth.mpg.de/cms/de/people/d/adugna/project.html
[6]http://epu.ac.at/fileadmin/downloads/research/rp_0306.pdf

homes by the conflict between the Somali region and the Oromiya region over a contested piece of land[7]. Displacement was triggered by conflict between different ethnic groups over access to political power or scarce resources such as water and pastoral or agricultural land. BBC has also reported that some 70,000 people have fled their homes to a remote part of southern Ethiopia, after a deadly conflict broke out between rival groups, Borana-Oromo and Somali clans, apparently triggered by the construction of a new borehole[8]. Recently, in July 2012, there was a clash in the southern part of Ethiopia involving the Garri and Borana communities, in which more than 30,000 people crossed into Kenya to escape the fighting and dozens have been killed[9].

Even though, conflict has always been a part of the lives of populations in arid and semi arid areas, the frequency, intensity and destructiveness of the conflicts have increased as never before (Mkutu 2008:3). Thus, it becomes essential to assess the underlying factors behind the formation, development and transformation of conflicts among the Oromo and the Somali in Borana area of Ethiopia, taking the case of the Borana and Garri communities.

A number of researches have been done on conflicts among pastoralists of the Horn of Africa, particularly in the Ethiopian lowlands. Based on a review of the available literature on conflicts among pastoralists of Southern Ethiopia, some research gaps are evident. Most of the studies only emphasizes on a general tendency of conflict in the region as a whole with little or no reference to the specific case of the Borana-Garri conflicts. And some has said little about the issue in a historical context. Therefore, it is the very focus of this paper to fill a lacuna apparent in some of the previous works. Also unlike other research cases, this research takes the case of the recent conflict that emerged in July 2012 between the Borana and Garri.

Notwithstanding the inherent lacunas outlined, many of the previous studies still have provided enormous contributions to our understanding of the pastoral communities of Ethiopia and the Horn.

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[7]http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/80C54D1ED57F9E76C1257626005638BD/$file/Ethiopia_Overview_Sep09.pdf
[8]http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7929104.stm
[9]http://somalilandpress.com/30000-ethiopians-fleeing-moyale-conflict-enter-kenya-32869

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the statements of the problem outlined above, the general objective of this study is to assess the underlying factors behind the formation, development and transformation of conflicts among pastoralists in the Southern Ethiopia since 1990's focusing on the case of the Borana and Garri peoples. Derived from this grand objective, the study has the following specific objectives:

- To identify the causes of conflicts by tracing their historical roots
- To discuss the role of social, economic, political and environmental dynamics in shaping social interaction in the area.
- To analyse the elements of change and continuity relying on the historical phenomena of conflict in the area.
- To find out challenges and opportunities towards peaceful co‑existence of these groups of the area.

1.4Research questions

In order to meet the objectives set out, the research questions of this study are:

- What are the underlying causes of the post 1990's conflicts among the Borana-Oromo and Garri-Somali pastoralist groups of Southern Ethiopia?
- What is the role of ethnicity in affecting social interaction in the area and particularly in fuelling or stabilizing conflicts? How was this relationship affected by the post‑1991 political system of the Ethiopian State?
- Did the intermittent conflicts of the area have elements of change and continuity that should be properly examined for viable political solutions?

## 1.5	Finding my thesis

Curiosity marked the beginning of this thesis project. The idea came to my attention after a discussion with my friend who spent time in a fieldwork in the Borana area. It was around the beginning of 2012, my friend and I were sitting at the university cafe, as we usually do, for coffee and a friendly chat. We were talking about Ethiopian politics. As the discussion goes, my friend told me about the horrible violent conflict he witnessed during his stay in the Borana area. It was a conflict between Borana-Oromo and Garri-Somali pastoral communities of southern Ethiopia. He mentioned that the conflict had claimed many lives and displaced many thousands of people from their homeland. As a student of Peace and Conflict Study, the story captured my attention. However, before making any decision to undertake a research on the subject, I had to find every pieces of information that other sources could offer me about the event. I made a lot of effort to refer from newspapers, magazines, and media broadcasts. The sources I checked upholds the same story I was told by my friend. This fact, thus, made me curious about why this kind of protracted violence exists and has persisted to this day in Ethiopia.

The will to study this subject also has a personal reason, apart from the academic one. An issue related to identity always captures my attention. My previous research was on how individuals and collectives engage in self-redefinition of identity with a particular emphasis to a group referred to *Awura-Amba* (Feyissa, 2010*)*. In the same vein, when I learnt from my readings about the switching of the Garri's identity back and forth between Oromo and Somali, the subject came to attract my attention. Several questions once again began to crop up in my mind. I just became more curious about how and why people redefine themselves and how this affects social harmony, be it negatively or positively. For this special reason, and owing to a conviction on the academic significance of the subject, I was drawn to pick the case.

1.6 Significance of the study

I hope my case, which attempts to identify the main causes of the Borana-Garri conflicts informs political and social efforts to address the problem with the intention of promoting peaceful co-existence of the inhabitants.

Even today, at the time of the completion of this thesis, protracted violence among pastoral groups of the Borana area has continued and the situation still remains bothersome. Most importantly, therefore, as the conflict has continued to reverberate still today, I believe that this kind of study may be helpful in the development of the peace process.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

Conflicts could be complex, intricate and multidimensional and so does their causes. More time for fieldwork would have allowed me to combine a qualitative method withquantitative ones and enrich my data and analysis. Thus, the study should be understood to map out the issues in question, and create a foundation for more detailed research where this is considered necessary.

1.8Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters, the next chapter discusses and reflects on the methodological tools utilized in the study and presents a conceptual and theoretical framework. Chapter 3 sets the general context of the study. The geographic setting, economic livelihood, and social organization of the Borana and garri are discussed in this chapter. Chapter 4 and 5 focuses on the presentation and analysis of the empirical data. A summary and concluding remarks of the study have been offered in the final chapter, chapter 6.

Chapter II

Methodology, Conceptual and Theoretical framework

Introduction

This chapter aims to reflect on methodological, conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. The first section explains the methodological approach and methods employed. The second section sets the conceptual and theoretical framework for the empirical investigation. As a conceptual framework for the analysis, the study uses intergroup conflict. Moreover, this research use of ethnicity, ethnic conflict, and political ethnicity as the main analytical tool to study intergroup conflict and violence that emerge in a state, especially in my research context where ethnicity constitutionally has become essential in creating a federal state and administrative units. Thus, this section is divided into two sub-sections respectively, reviews and analysis of the concept of intergroup conflict, ethnicity, ethnic conflicts, and political ethnicity.

2.1 Methodology

2.1.1 Study Area

My fieldwork has covered only two months from mid August until mid October 2012. Aiming to investigate the conflict between the Borana of Oromo and Garri of Somalie, the lowland pastoral area of the Borana zone, which is made up of stretches of grassland with pockets of bush and forest, was chosen as the field site. In this zone there are both Somali speakers and ethnicities, like the Garri living together with the dominant Borana group of the Oromo people.

With in the Borana Zone,at first, a town called Moayle was chosen as a fieldwork site for two main reasons. One, it is a conflict zone among different clans of its inhabitants including the Borana and Garri and it is an urban city where I could have found hotel to stay in. However, due to the violent conflict broke out between Borana and Garri, on the 28th of July 2012, days before my departure from Tromsø, for safety reasons, I had to change my base to Yabelo, the current administrative center of the Borana Zone. Based in Yabelo, I have managed to meet informants who are residents of Moyale and I have also travelled to a remote place like Wachille to meet informants. Below I will describe these three places where my informants are from.

Moyale is a market town at the main border crossing between Ethiopia and Kenya. The larger part is in Ethiopia (Oromiya region) and the smaller part in Kenya. The town has a strategic significance as a gateway to Kenya from Southern Ethiopia. An asphalt road connects the town to Addis Ababa.

Moylae is a multi-ethnic town. Before the reorganization of local and regional governments in 1992, Moyale was under the Borana Administartive region and served as the capital of the Moyale *awraja*[10]. However, since 1992, both the Oromia and Somali regions claim the town and its surrounding areas and became a conflict area. The conflicting claim over Moyale town between the two regions stems from the three Afan Oromo speaking clans over their ethnic identity that is, the Borana, the Garri and the Gabrra[11] (Kefale, 2009:183).

Yabelo is located in southern Ethiopia, North West of Moyale, and is the present administrative center of Borana zone. Mountains surround the town and its alternative name is *Obda*, which is also the name of a nearby mountain. Yabelo is located on the main road from Addis Ababa to the border with Kenya, Moyale. There is bus connection from Addis Ababa and from the border town of Moyale. There are Oromo and Somali sub groups in the area over which the Borana assumed predominance. The town has a problem of perennial shortage of water and it has a history of ethnic conflict, which led to loss of human lives and displacement, the 2005 conflict between Gujji[12] Oromo and Gabbra is a case to remember[13].

Wachille is about 80km south east of Yabelo town. It has annual rainfall of less than 500mm. most of Wachille residents rely almost solely on pastoralism for their livelihoods.
Wachille is a highly contested border area between Oromiya (region 4) and Somali (region 5) regional states. Violence is common near the borders (McPeak, Little & Doss, 2012:19)

Choosing a study area is also choosing a perspective. Specific places like Moyalle and Wachille were chosen because these places are contested areas and have residents of both the Borana and

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[10]Middle level territorial division, applied until 1987.
[11] The Gabbra are oromo speaking clan, while most of them have chosen the oromo identity some has chosen to be somalie.
[12] Gujji are ethnic Oromo group living in the southern part of Ethiopia.
[13]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yabelo_(woreda)

Garri. The existence of basic facilities like hotels and safety has made Yabelo to be chosen as a base for my fieldwork site and it was also possible to meet the Borana informants.

Considering the complexity and the long time existence of the conflict among the Borana and Garri, and the small number of informants interviewed, it could be difficult to understand the whole of the conflict. However, what has been tried is to understand parts of the whole.

2.1.2 Choosing a data collection technique

Choosing a data collection method is choosing a perspective that one wishes to highlight or privilege in the study. Since my research interest has been in exploring and understanding the causes of the conflict of the Borana and Garri peoples of southern Ethiopia, the view points of ordinary people of each group was important. So as to reach the research interest, the qualitative approach, which focuses on the explanation of subjective perspectives, processes and contextual meaning (Bryman, 2003:59) was employed for my study. In order to trace the root causes of the conflict deep into the historical past, secondary sources has also been used.

This study basically relied on qualitative research. Different approaches have been used for the fieldwork as part of the data collection. Semi structured interviews- concentrating mainly on community elites; especially elders of the Borana and Garri, local government officials, and some informed informants from all walks of life-was mainly used. Besides, small group discussions, informal conversations, personal observation, and textual analysis were employed.

The interviews I conducted were chiefly open ended to explore the views of the local people. As Denscombe (2007:174-175) indicates when the researcher wants to gain insights about people's opinion, feelings, emotions and experiences, interviews become the appropriate methods of research. While group discussions were mainly used to scrutinize some 'controversial' or contested issues even within members of one particular group, informal conversations were chosen in order to uncover the unrevealed information of a group. In some cases my use of recorded media was very limited owing to the sense of insecurity of my informants.

Reliability and validity are essential components of a credible research (Silverman, 2005:6). In this essay, the data gathered from different sources is crosschecked to make sure the validity and reliability of sources. However, it should be clearly understood that validity and reliability cannot be achieved absolutely in any type of research. This is particularly true to qualitative researches where the degree of subjectivity is much higher than the quantitative researches.

2.1.3 Informants and field assistant

Informant selection and number of informants

Purposive-sampling technique in which respondents are selected on the basis of certain predefined purposes was used as a tool to select my informants. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005:64-65), informants "should be experienced and knowledgeable in the [research] area" and on the research issues. Informants were selected on the basis of their presumably rich knowledge about the issue under investigation as these concerned their position as local leaders, as leader of traditional social organizations, and local government officials. The remaining informants were selected based on suggestions by the already selected elders and community leaders themselves, residents and my fieldwork assistant, and I felt the data collected was satisfactory.

Elders and community leaders were used as informants in this research for a couple of reasons. One, on the virtue of their age, elders are considered to be useful to tell the history of the conflict under investigation and by the special position held in the community, and their capacity to figure out the views of other people and speak on their behalf. Community leaders could reflect their own as well as the views of the people at large whom they represent. Hence, deep and informal discussions were made with well-known and respected elders of the Borana and Garri. Attempts were also made to fairly represent individuals whose life has been directly affected by the conflict.

Informal discussions that I had with some of my informants, ordinary people whom I met on different occasions, and friends that I made during my stay at Yabelo was also very useful for the issue under investigation.

Since my research is qualitative research, I had a limited number of research participants. At the very beginning of my fieldwork project, I planned to have 15 informants however; I only managed to have 14. I had 6 Borana and 5 Garri informants and the remaining three were Regional and Borana zone officials. Among the informants it was only one woman interviewed.

Field Assistant

Having a field assistant was very crucial in my research context, because the southern part of Ethiopia, my field area, was new to me. In addition, I do not have a full understanding of the area language, Oromigna[14]. As a result, the main purpose of having a field assistant was guiding, helping me get to know the study area, suggest potential key informants and translate when my informants were not able to speak Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia. As Berreman(1962) described, the background and the social acceptance of field assistants among the study group enable a researcher to win the confidence of the groups, and to get the necessary information. To this end, field assistants were selected in accordance with their familiarity with the community, their knowledge about the geographical sites, and to some extent based on their knowledge about the field of study.

My main field assistant was an anthropologist who works at the Tourism office of Borana Zone. The fact that he is neither Garri nor Borana helped me to reach informants of both sides with out any informants' suspicion of his position towards the conflict. Through him, I managed to get two other assistants reaching each group of people under study.

2.1.4 Negotiating access

The time of my fieldwork coincided with political instability in the study areas. By the time of my arrival in Ethiopia, mid august 2012, my research site was under the control of the Ethiopian Federal police security due to a clash in the southern part of Ethiopia involving the Garri and

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[14] Oromigna, also called Afan Oromo and Oromo Language, is a widely spoken eastern cushitic language.

Borana communities, in which more than 30,000 people crossed into Kenya to escape the fighting, and dozens had been killed[15]. This conflict had left an atmosphere of suspicion in the minds of the informants and the government authorities. Thus, access negotiation was not easy. As Goodhand asserted, "Research [in conflict zones] occurs within an intensely political environment and is unlikely to be viewed by local actors as neutral or altruistic" (Goodhand, 2000:1). As a result, establishing a trusting relationship is important in gaining access to potential research participants in conflict situations, yet that trust is often difficult to secure (Norman,2009: 71).

Since I am an Ethiopian I didn't need a visa to enter the country to conduct my research. However, in order to have access to the field site, I decided to secure access from the regional offices, baring in mind the hope that may be their explicit support is of paramount importance for access to any interviewees, as well as lowering the foreseeable and the inherent risks to my safety at the fieldwork. Even though, I was recommended by the Oromiya regional office in Addis Ababa not to go to Moyale, for safety reason, as the area was unstable, I was not forbidden to do my research. Perhaps, I was in a big dilemma when it comes to getting an official letter in the local language from the federal or regional offices. A number of questions pop up in my mind:-"If I get such a letter, in what position would it put me? Would it be helpful to get the trust of regional and district officials in the conflict area? Would it help me to get the trust of the local people?, What if the local people considered me as a person who worked for the government? Even if they wouldn't, would it legitimize the government?". To lie about one's research or sneaking over borders may violate the ethical code of the individual researcher or his/her institution. And at the same time, cooperating with the government may raise other ethical questions that outweigh commitments to standard procedures. As it has been noted by Norman (2009:75)

> *Traditional 'ethical' emphasis of institutions and disciplines concentrate on methodological formalities, including securing legal approval from host nations and respective government institutions. However, complying with state regulations, even when methodologically possible to do so, can compromise the researcher by forcing him/her to legitimize the regime.*

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[15] http://somalilandpress.com/30000-ethiopians-fleeing-moyale-conflict-enter-kenya-32869

However, to be on the safe side, I finally decided to have the letter and may be not use it unless it was needed. But my effort to obtain an official letter in the local language was not successful, even if they gave me implicit support to access the field. In this aspect, some key officials in the region did not want to take responsibility for my research. Even those who were accessible were not willing to be interviewed for fear of political repercussions. However, through time some agreed to be interviewed with out a voice recorder.

Later I learnt that not having an official letter in the local language from officials was a plus to get trust from my informants. The first few days that I spent in the field without conducting interviews has helped me a lot to understand the existing conflict dynamics and security situation. It was during this time that I understood the fact that the general population was dissatisfied with the government's intervention in the conflict. Some had a close family member who had been put in jail by government officials due to different reasons related to the recent conflict. And it was easy to understand that they wouldn't be open to express their personal experiences and thoughts on the conflict to someone who has got permission from the government to pursue a research on the ongoing conflict. This time it became quite clear to me that, if I had any kind of letter from the government, be it from the federal or regional level, to pursue my research, this would take away my neutral position. Rather people would categorize me as a person who worked for the government, which would then make it very difficult to develop a relationship of trust.

Once a bargain has been formulated with official gatekeepers, re-negotiation of trust relationships, regular questions about my purpose of the study and personal identity continued in every level of my contact with different people. As Norman (2009:77) explains, 'the presence of the researcher not only typically raises the suspicions of authorities, but of local communities as well'.

Definitions and expression of trust can vary between cultures, disciplines, and individuals. In some cultures, people typically establish trust through contracts, signatures, and written documentations, while others instead rely on verbal agreements and communal relationships (Norman, 2009:71).

In general, in my fieldwork experience, although confidentiality and anonymity hasn't been explicitly mentioned, the letter that I brought from the peace and conflict transformations department in Tromsø, which states the educational purpose of the research and my objectives of the field, has helped me to establish a "cognitive trust"[16] with my informants, especially with those officials that I had limited time with. However, in the real fieldwork context, where I met ordinary people who were directly or indirectly involved and affected by the conflict, the "emotional trust"[17] that I have developed through time by participating in both formal and informal settings, like having coffee with them, being with them when they chew khat[18], was very helpful; particularly in making participants comfortable enough to share their personal experiences and opinions.

I have also found the 'snow ball' technique of accessing informants to be very helpful, especially negotiating access through leaders. Leaders are very influential in their communities and their respected people trust the researcher if the contact is through their leader.

2.1.5 Conducting the interviews and Group discussion

The interview was conducted mainly in *Yabelo*, *Wachille* and Addis Ababa during August, September and October 2012. All of them were tape recorded averagely around an hour except one interview, which was held without recorder. Seven of the interviews were conducted at Wachille, 6 at Yabelo and one at Addis Ababa. The interviews were made at informants' private houses, cafes, and offices. In order to avoid the noise and create a free environment, the back yard of the café was used in one of the interviews. The group discussion was made at a place where people gather and chew *khat*.

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[16] This cognitive trust can be achieved by a researcher through providing participants with a written statement of research objectives, securing informed consent, and ensuring anonymity and confidentiality (Lewis and Weigert, 1985: 970)

[17] Emotional trust refers to an 'affective' emotional bond among all those who participate in the relationship (Lewis and Weigert,1985: 971). It is a trust based on personal relations notso much based on reasons. Researcher may foster this type of trust by spending time in the community, talking with participants in both formal and informal settings(Ibid)

[18]*Khat is a flowering plant native to the horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula and chewing Khat has a stimulant and euphoricant effect and is a social custom in this part of Ethiopia.*

The semi structured and open-ended questions presented to the informants, encouraged them to elaborate issues and personal experiences related to the research topic. I encouraged the interviewees to bring issues related to the research topic and it allowed them to include issues that they considered relevant to the conversation and the research benefited from that.

Once a trusting relationship was secured, my informants showed very keen interest in the topic and became very open about the topic under study.

2.1.6 Challenges and Reflections

2.1.6.1 Researcher's identity and access negotiations

Identity is a difficult, unclear and fluid concept, yet it plays a significant role in theorizing social statuses such as ethnicity, gender, and nationality (Fearon,1999). Since an individual have different identities he/she belongs to several categories and groups of people at the same time. During the time when a certain category or label becomes a major form of group formation, then it serves as a group collective identity. People can identify with other people as being the same or different in wider or narrow senses. In other words, one can be an insider of a certain group in some aspects and an outsider in another aspects. However, besides self-identification to belong to a group or not, there is also external categorization.

Basing his argument after the model of Erving Goffman and Fredrik Barth, Jenkins (1996:20) considers identity as the internal-external identification processes. Unlike Barth (1969,1981), who focuses on the subjective view of individuals, which can be attained in the interaction, Jenkins (1994,2008) focuses on external categories mainly by authorities that control the collective institutions, which is more consequential than self-identification processes.

It is neither my intention nor the scope of this chapter to give a detailed discussion on the concept of identity. However, I found the brief discussion on identity important in this context so as to show how the internal (self)/external (others) categorization of oneself to be a member of a group or not affects access negotiation, with particular reference to my case, the conflict zone. In fact, there might be a situation where the impact of 'external categorization' (Jenkins (1994,

2008), how others categorizes "us", might be a big challenge towards developing trust relationship in negotiating access in conflict zones.

My research is on conflicts among pastoral groups of Ethiopia, the Borana and Garri, who particularly belong to the Oromo and Somali ethnic group respectively. Here a point to make is that, although the Garri are classified as Somalie, as the current administrative system of Ethiopia required ethnic specification, they could be placed at a point between the Oromo and Somali groups (Watson,2001:8). Though these two groups belong to different ethnic groups, due to long time co-existence and inhabitancy of that area, both speak the Oromo language, which belongs to the Oromo ethnic group.

I am an Ethiopian, and although I didn't grow up with the language and culture of the Oromo people, my parents belong to the Oromo ethnic group, and I have some understanding of the Oromo language. Others' categorization of me as Oromo by virtue of my last name, which is a typical Oromo name, has put me in a plus and minus position when it comes to obtaining trust from the people I interviewed.

Indeed, the simple facts of my Oromo identity, and coming from abroad, posed a barrier to my developing trust relationships with officials. This was attributed to the existence of members of the Oromo National Movements in exile in different parts of the world due to political reasons. This was even worse in a situation where officials feel insecure to share some key data about conflict issues. As Theophilus Gokah (2006) asserts, such cases are very common in sub Saharan African Countries where officials often refuse to share some key data because of fear of being labeled as anti-government and facing political repercussions. Some officials has totally refrained themselves from giving me any information and some who initially hesitated, has later agreed to give me some information after developing trust through time.

On the contrary, my Oromo identity was a plus in developing trust among some of the local people that I met in the field. Although I was using a translator, due to my limited understanding of the local people's language, when some of the elderly people from the Borana got to know my last name, they conveyed an impression of accepting me as a member of the Oromo, as their

"sister". I remember one of my informants smiling and saying; "she belongs to us" after recognizing my Oromo identity from my last name, mentioned in the letter that I brought from the Peace Centre in Tromsø and my student Identity card. They developed a trust relationship with me and began to be open in sharing their own experiences both in relation to my research and some other personal talks. However, some even from the Borana elders, whose mental horizon is mainly confined to the geographical and dialectical scope of the people, considered me as an outsider researcher. In this context for them my Oromo identity had "zero" value. As Linda Smith (1999:10) has described, insider researchers like outsider researchers, face rejection or suspicion from their own community that emanates from the researchers' religious, educational, and political backgrounds.

My Garri informants felt comfortable as they labeled me as a total outsider, based on the fact that I don't particularly belong to either of the conflicting group (Borana or Garri). Most of them viewed me as a University student-an impression equally important in my quest for winning their confidence.

My identity as a student from abroad gave my informants in the conflict area a sense of security to talk freely on the conflict in general and on their personal opinions on government interventions in particular. They felt that I was an outsider who had got nothing to do with the government. And they felt they were telling their side of the story to the external world through me. Through my identity as a student, I managed to earn their trust.

I was an outsider in many more aspects. Although my parents are from the Oromo ethnic group, I didn't grow up with the Oromo language and culture. I don't belong to the specific clan called Borana, which my informants belong to and where they have built strong bonds due to their indigenous institution called *Gada*[19], neither to the Somali ethnic group. I grew up in a capital city with a very different environment than my research area.

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[19] Gadaa (in older spelling: Gada) is the traditional social stratification system of Oromo males in Ethiopia and northern Kenya. As of 1990, gadaa had active adherents only among the Borana and Guji groups near the Ethiopian-Kenyan border. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gadaa

In general, as Radsch notes, access to informants is tied up with issues of identity, language and culture (2009:91). Someone might be familiar with a certain place: might be a citizen of that particular country, might speak the language or might share cultural codes, but some risks and suspicions which hinder getting trust from informants are unpredictable. Gokah (2006: 5) asserts that even if "familiarity" with the research site is advantageous, risks associated to a "familiar" researcher in the fieldwork are unpredictable because of risks associated with suspicion, the political climate and local culture.

Even what is considered an "insider" is complex in a country with diverse ethnic groups. In such a context, the notion of "insider" and "outsider" have a little significance as categorization on ethnic, religious, and political lines makes interaction among them difficult even compared with the real outsider, that is, a foreigner to the national state.

In both groups, impressions of suspicion and reluctance were overcome through time mainly through informal participation with informants, through assistants to whom the informants and government officials had a sense of belonging and trust, and by presenting my self as a neutral researcher rather than a politically affiliated person. Through all these processes I earned their trust, some even felt free to take a picture with me while interviewing.

2.1.6.2 The gender dimension

The gender dimension was one of the challenges that I faced while collecting data among the Borana and Garri. It should be noted that both the Borana and Garri are sociologically organized in patriarchal clan structures. They are male-dominant in many social affairs, which have left women with no or less independent voices. As a result, women are assumed to share a similar worldviews as their husbands and the men at large. That is why in this study the voice of women is not proportional to men, not because they had no views on topics related to the study, but the culture itself obstructs women from forwarding their opinions on issues outside of the household activities.

2.1.6.3 My position as a researcher

As the social constructivist approach (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 105) asserted, meanings are constructed in the interaction with others. The nature of relationship between the researcher and those who provide knowledge about the subject under study, and the method that the researcher go about are very crucial in studying social context/reality.Thus, I suppose my presence, as a researcher cannot be said to be value-free. Especially in times of collecting data in a situation where there is mutually exclusive interpretations of an event, fresh memory of violence and ongoing conflict, I believe the role of the researcher is very crucial.

Perhaps, the divergent views that people hold on the same event poses a serious challenge to a researcher working in a conflict context. In such a context, as Anthony Robben (1996) asserts, it is difficult to talk to victims of violence on one occasion and to perpetrators on the other, while keeping significant detachment (cited by Baumann, 2007: 7). I avoided too much association with every impression of the informants, as some of them were direct victims of the 2012 conflict. By so doing, I also attempted critically to interview my informants about their reasons or justification for events that could be construed as the cause of the event.

2.1.6.4 Secondary Sources

My study on the conflict of pastoralists of Borana Area of southern Ethiopia, with particular reference to the Borana and Garri, focuses on the period after 1991.So as to find the root causes of the conflict, the study is placed within the historical context. My research has consulted secondary sources to answer the research questions. In this study written material was collected from the National library of Addis Ababa University, the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and Regional and Local Peace and Security departments. The accuracy of the information from the interview data was checked through triangulation, by referring to different sources; like literatures on the issue under investigation.

2.1.6.5 Anonymity of respondents

Anonymity and confidentiality are important parts of the ethics of a research. This is even more important if one works on politically sensitive topics, which could result in harassment of informants for the information they have provided. Accordingly, the anonymity of my informants in this research is protected. For the purpose of reference, precision and providing a hint on the profile of my informants, anonymous name, age, sex, place of inhabitance of my informants, and interview date is indicated (See Table 1). However, the real names and identity of the informants is not revealed.

2.2 Conceptual and Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Inter-group conflict

The concept of conflict is applied in different contexts, ranging from intrapersonal conflict, a conflict people experience when deciding between doing what they want and what they should to violent confrontation, which can lead to an elimination of another person or groups of persons. The complex interactions among the society and the existence of human need could make up a conflict. It is a phenomenon, which is ever-present in the societies of people and it is almost inevitable. Each conflict is different and people will react in their own way to a situation. As part of societal life, conflict could provide numerous opportunities for growth through improved understanding and insight; at the same time it has also a tendency of negative outcome. As Miall (2007:3) argued, an emerging conflict might take two paths; one from an incipient conflict of interest towards an overt conflict, which may become polarized and led to violence and the other path towards negotiation and accommodation of the issues of conflict, leading to peaceful change. Depending on the context, which determines the conflict, a conflict can lead to an eruption of a war.

Intergroup conflict involves two or more groups with different and sometimes incompatible interests or goals, which may be expressed as material or in other ways; and they behave and react accordingly. In his "triangular" model of conflict and violence Galtung (1996) has asserted that if there are evident incompatible goals; like one group's goal is blocked by the other group's goal, contradictory attitudes; and violent behaviors; (physical and/or verbal) concurrently, there

exists an intergroup conflict. The more basic the blocked goals are- such as access to grazing land and other basic needs, the more likely the conflict will turn violent (Finlev, 2012:47).

Intergroup relations are embedded in complex social settings. Conflict and violent that emerge in such settings are shaped by different interacting forces. There by, the conflict and violence takes complex dimension. Conflicts emerge as a result of different backgrounds and sparking events. In his discussion about emergent conflict and conflict transformation Miall (2007:14) has pointed out that: "conflicts emerge as a result of a combination of background factors, proximate causes and trigger events. Each is unique and has a particular relationship with its historical setting". According to the statement, the usage of "historical setting" appears like a foundation for each particular cause as they seem to get their meaning from their particular historicity. According to Mayer (2000:11), the history of the people who participate in a conflict, the systems in which the conflict is occurring, and of the issues themselves has a powerful influence on the course of the conflict. So that it is vital to address the roots of conflicts in times of conflict resolution.

The structure, the external framework, in which an interaction takes place or an issue develops, shapes intergroup relations and sometimes could be a source of a conflict. The element of structure may include available resources, decision-making procedures, time constraints, communication procedures, and physical settings (Mayer, 2000:10). In his model of violence Galtung (1996) shows that, violence takes place in the context where there is a denial of access to resources for survival or well being; when there is political repression, detention, marginalization and expulsion; and interference in one's need to identify or socialization or equal citizenship (1996:197).

According to Hugh Miall (2007:33) social change or restructuring of social lives brings emergent conflict and violence if it is not handled carefully or transformed peacefully. Perhaps, the reaction of individuals on groups is not limited to the actions and policies of the state actors but also in relative moves and positions of other groups, and such responses are " shaped by their past history which thy carry with them"(2007:34).

Notwithstanding the nature of the group- be it ethnic, gender, class or race, I believe that the perspectives analyzed above have very significant importance to critically examine conflicts that involves state structure/authority and different interactive groups within the state.

2.2.2 Ethnicity, Ethnic conflicts and Political Ethnicity

Premordialist/ constructivist paradigm

Ethnicity and ethnic conflicts dominate contemporary discourses on the politics of multi-ethnic countries. Ethnicity as a key concept of discussion in social identity has got a prevailing recognition among scholars and entered the academic arena since the middle of twentieth century. A lot has been written and debated on its concept of definition, its manifestation in social or group interaction and the role it plays in groups' mobilization for 'common ends'. However, there is no scholarly agreement about the essence of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts. Here, I will briefly review the two approaches and debates on ethnicity and ethnic conflict.

One school of thought called the premordialist approach, also called naturalist and socio-biological, describe ethnicity as a group's self identification and/or ascription by others to belong to a certain ethnic group on the basis of common primordial ties such as kinship, language, culture, customs and sometimes religion. It presumes that ethnic identity is something given or natural (Berghe,1995;Geertz,1963). For example, Clifford Greetz, seen as a premordialist theoretician, states that:

> One is bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbor, one's fellow believer, ipso facto; as the result not merely personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie [primordial] itself... (1996: 42).

The other school of thought (the constructivist approach) attributes ethnicity to construction or as an instrument of groups' mobilization for political or economic purposes (Banks, 1996:39-40).

The premordialist approach was criticized as it implies that cultural communality of ethnic members are seen as stable and constant. The approach was criticized for the assumption that ethnic divisions are fixed, natural and static. In his theory of ethnic boundaries, Fredrik Barth (1969) gave an end to the already dominant view that community lived in isolation, more or less

a homogenous functional unity with rigid boundaries. It was also said that ethnic groups can be objectively defined and easy to trace. Little emphasis was given to subgroups in society, which are often identified as ethnic groups. Barth rather argued that ethnic groups are never in isolation and individuals or collectives pass across the border even if they maintained some stereotypes to keep their identity and to exclude outsiders. Constructivist theorist Aalen (2008) also viewed ethnicity as socially constructed, flexible and fluid and susceptible to change over time. Ethnicity can be made through fission in which some groups left the existing society to have their own group and fusion in which two members form new ethnicity via assimilation either vertically or horizontally. Intermarriage could be a good example here and even individuals or groups coming as strangers and be affiliated to a certain group, "guests becoming brothers, first metaphorically and then in a more and more binding sense"(Shlee and Shongolo, 1995:8). Myth and history are used to help to legitimize such construction. Instrumentalists, who also view ethnic identity as flexible and malleable argue that individuals or groups may use ethnicity to achieve political, economic and other goals (Brass, 1991;Glazer and Moynihan, 1975). Nevertheless, the instrumentalist approach is criticized for its apparent failure to recognize that ethnic identity cannot be 'decided . . . .by individuals at will but is embedded within and controlled by the larger society' (Lake and Rotchild,1998a:5).

Ethnic conflicts

Ethnic conflicts are conflicts in which the warring parties are defined by a combination of historical, linguistic and cultural features (Schlee and Shongolo,1995:8).

In the academic arena, another point of divergence about ethnicity besides its definition is weather ethnicity causes action or it's supplemental to other factors to justify action. For primordial theorists, the primordial attachments inherent in ethnicity, which are seen as stable and constant, cause communal action or conflict (Aalan, 2008:29). This approach contends ethnicity as a cause of inter-ethnic conflict. For instrumentalists, actions have material causes and ethnicity can be a by-product or a resource in achievement of other events but doesn't cause actions (Vaughan 2003:45). Instrumentalist theorists argue that the elites manipulate group differences (Hamesso, 2001:47) and states' involvement in instigating rivalries between groups for political advantages (Udogu 2001:21,35).

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Taking the premordialists definition of ethnicity, if we see the nation-states in the world almost all of them are multiethnic. However, not all states has experienced conflicts that involve ethnic identities. According to the studies made on political identities and group conflicts in modern societies, conflicts between different groups invariably involve perception of scarcity and struggle to retain or attain hegemony or equality (Eriksen, 2001: 46; Wimmer, 1997: 651). Political conflicts usually shape into ethnic forms during unequal distribution of resources along ethnic lines. Perhaps ethnic homogeneity by itself is not a means to achieve peace. Somalia can be a good example here. Prior to the civil war that occurred in Somalia in 1991, the country was one of the most homogeneous countries in Africa, the majority speaking the same language and practicing the same religion. However, a multitude of ethnic and cultural divisions exists within the country due to the variation in the practice of Islam, influenced by the Arab culture[20]. Had it been for the homogeneity of the society, there would have been no civil war in the country which has affected not only the peace in the country but also the horn of Africa for at least twenty years.

As it is discussed in chapter five, I argue that ethnic factors are not necessarily the cause of inter-ethnic conflicts, as that notion assumes the existence of hatred among different ethnic groups; neither do I argue for the instrumental expression of identity, which to some extent overlooks groups' self awareness and labels ethnic groups as mainly driven by elites for material gains. I argue that conflicts should be mainly understood contextually.Depending on the political, economic, and social realities in which the actors operate, ethnic conflicts may contextually combine both primordial feelings and instrumental strategies.

In my study context, although the ethnic arena came to Ethiopian politics after 1960- with the movement of students- and as a main state policy since 1990, the conflict between the Borana and Garri has been there before. However, the conflict has got an ethnic dimension mainly after 1991. Since then, primordial paradigm of ethnicity, where decent plays a major role, has influenced both popular perceptions of ethnic identity and political discourse.

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[20]http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~jmroth/index.htm

Political Ethnicity

Political ethnicity can be seen as political *ideology*, organization and action that openly represent the interests of designed groups based on 'essential' characteristics such as ethnic origin or religion, and whose legitimacy lies in the support of important segments of such groups (Eriksen,2001:43). The ideology of a modern nation state, nationalism, has politicized identity/ ethnicity. The process of nationalism incorporated local identities within a larger state identity, thereby integrating different groups economically, culturally and politically, even at times when the state administrative, security, fiscal and political imperatives were alian to the interest of the new incorporated people. And the fixed boundary created by the nation building process also partitioned societies, who share common culture, economy, livelihood, etc in to different states. The ideal of nation state, which tends to advance two parallel goals: economic growth and ethno-national identity (Yiftachel,1998) inherently entails "ethnic-conflicts" as individual and group identities are reshaped and reformed in the process of state creation. That is, the rise of nation-state as an ideal is itself one of the causes of identity-based conflict.

It is discussed in chapter four and five that the ideologies of nationalism and ethnicity have a particular importance in Ethiopia historical and current contexts, especially in the current context where ethnic ideology operates formally in the country.

In the African context, the colonial system of divide and rule policy played a great role in politicizing ethnicity by emphasizing group differences through unequal and differential treatment of ethnic groups, such as: differential education, unfair political participation, uneven social services and so forth. In Ethiopia, politicized ethnicity emerged in 1960s with the emergence of Marxism-Leninism (ML)[21] as the dominant ideology of opposition among the Ethiopian students (Balsvik,1985,2005 and Gudina, 2003). This brought the question of ethnic inequality in terms of 'national question' in to Ethiopian politics. The imperial rule, which avoided any reference to ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity and rather devoted towards discouraging the culture, language and religion of the non-Amhara[22] ethnic groups, had initiated

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[21] marxist –Leninist thought that "you can mobilize a community more effectivley and get it engaged in its own political development if you can mobilize it from inside; that is, with its own members, in its own language, using its own cultural traditions and knowledge system"(Vaughan,2003:170).
[22] The Amhara people are Ethiopia's second largest group.

Ethno-nationalist movements. Since then, the already existing elements of ethnic characteristics-common language, psychological make up, and history-experience of suppression, customs and sometimes myths of origin- were activated as strong engines of mobilization by different elites. What makes the political change in 1991 rather unique is that the government officially institutionalized ethnicity as a fundamental instrument of addressing the question of nationalities.

Thus, in Ethiopia, the state ideology, which has emphasized on ethnicity, has an important role in reconciling the interaction between groups; either consolidating the existing statuses or deconstructing it.

Chapter III

Setting the Context of the Study

Introduction

The task of this chapter is to discuss the context of the study. Starting with the general discussion on pastoral communities in Ethiopia, this chapter specifically discusses the geographical setting, socio-political organization and economic life of the Borana and Garri.

## 3.1 Pastoral Communities in Ethiopia

Pastoralism is a cultural and economic system in communities founded on livestock rearing as the primary economic activity. It incorporates and defines social structure, resource management, productivity, trade and social welfare mechanisms. The majority of the world's pastoral community lives in the horn of Africa. The pastoralist livelihoods require both extensive use of land and freedom of movement. For pastoralists mobility is a necessary response to climate and vegetation variations. The need to provide for the varied foraging needs of different livestock and to afford a margin of safety against the vagaries of rainfall, demanded ecologically specialized and seasonally varied grazing lands over a considerable space and watering points. So the best protection against unreliable rainfall is control over extensive territory, preferably containing a regular supply of water (Abdulahi, 2005:7).

As it is the case of pastoralists in the other parts of the Horn of Africa, pastoralists in Ethiopia supply a huge number of livestock and livestock products to the country's national wealth by making dry land productive. Pastoralism is a way of life to millions of people in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has Africa's largest livestock population, which is largely concentrated in pastoral areas of the country, with an estimated 41 million cattle, 26 million goats and 2 million camels[23]. Apart from livestock production, this part of the country has multiple economic and social

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[23]http://www.acdivoca.org/site/ID/ethiopiaPLI

purposes such as minerals, tourism and important bio-diversity. Despite their economic contributions, however, pastoral areas are the most underdeveloped, and are prone to drought, famine and conflict. In addition, government development efforts have focused on sedentarization of pastoralists in favor of cultivation instead of transhumance nomadism and ease of provision of social services. Such perception has made Ethiopian pastoralists subject to economic and political marginalization (Elias, 2008:1; Abdulahi, 2005: 8).

In Ethiopia, pastoralists are minorities made up of 29 different ethnic groups belonging to Cushitic and Nilo-Saharan language families and are estimated to represent 12 percent of the population occupying 61 percent of the total territory (Abdulahi, 2005: 8). The majority of pastoralists in Ethiopia belong to the Somali, Borana and Afar groups; and lives in the peripheries of the country, bordering neighboring countries. The Karayu, Ittu, and Jille Oromo pastoralists live near and along the Awash National Park in the center of the country. There are also some other small groups of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in western Ethiopia.
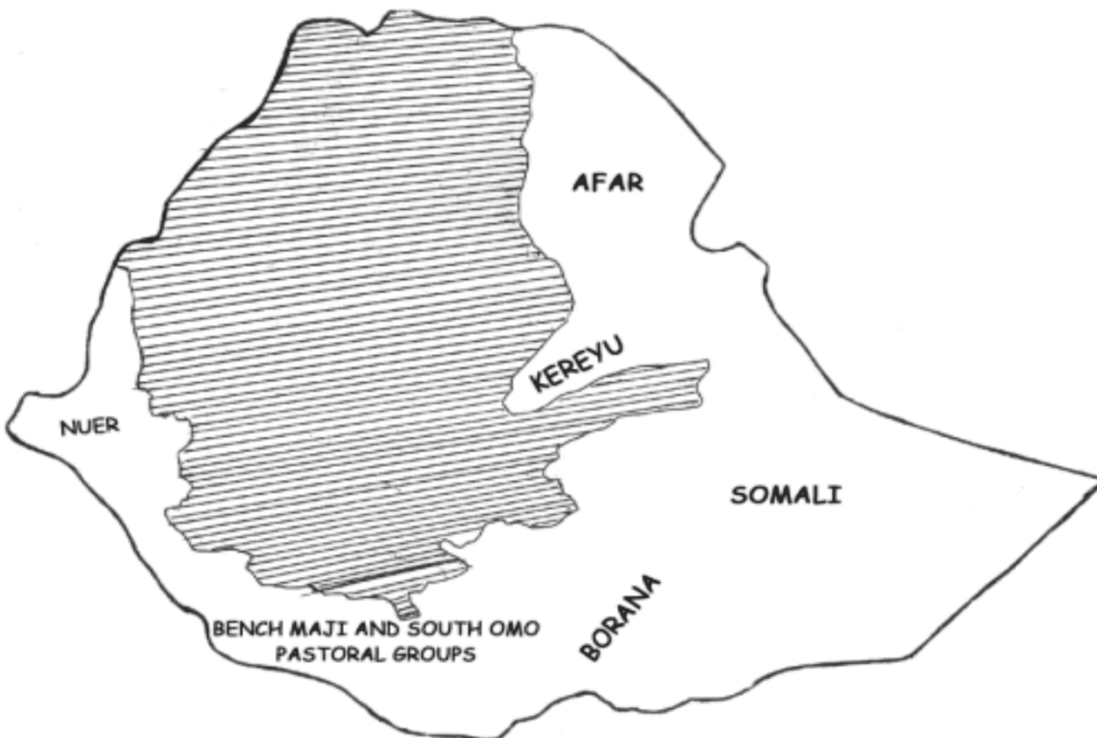
Map. 1 Location of some of the Pastoralist groups in Ethiopia.

Source: PFE, IIRR and DF. 2010. Pastoralism and Land: Land tenure, administration and use in pastoral areas of Ethiopia.

3.2 The Borana Area

The Borana area, which is the study area, is found in the southern tip of Ethiopia, along the border with Kenya. The relative highland area of the Borana zone is characterized mainly by forest and agriculture, where as the lowland area, the particular focus of this research, is made up of stretches of grassland with pockets of bush and forest. This particular area has no perennial rivers and rainfall varies highly both spatially and temporally. The people are highly dependent on open water sources that vary throughout the year: wells; rain-fed ponds and reservoirs; essential surface water and rivers; and boreholes that have been built by the government and NGOs. There are nine most important deep wells, which contain water throughout the year. They are as old as the Borana's residence in this region (approximately 400years) and sacred to them. These nine wells are known as the *tulaani saglaani* (Helland, 1997, cited in Watson,2001:7) (see map 5), they are also called *tulla* in short. The Borana and Garri peoples have conflict over use of these water wells and it is discussed in the fifth chapter.

The area hosts a number of ethnic groups whose livelihood is based on semi-pastoral and pastoral activities (Bassi and Boku Tache, 2007:60). The relationships between these different ethnic groups are complex and varying and influence natural resource management in various ways. These pastoral and semi-pastoral societies belong mainly to the two predominant Cushitic speaking peoples of South East Ethiopia, the Oromo and the Somali (Sileshi, 2005:1). The identities of the multiple groups, and the relations between them are dominated by these two larger encompassing ethnic identities. These identities have even been more important since the reorganization of the Ethiopian state along ethnic lines, which took place after1991.

This process led to the shrinkage of the Borana customary territory as Somali speaking inhabitants of that customary Borana territory were placed into the new Somali regional state (Region 5) (See map 3 and 4). Whereas, the larger western portion of the area, which is mainly inhabited by the Oromo groups became the Borana zone of the Oromiya Regional state(

Region4) (Watson, 2001: 7). Despite this, there are Oromo and Somali speakers and ethnicities resident in the Borana zone. In terms of the numbers resident in Borana Zone, the Somali groups are minority but they are significant and have a key influence on the natural resource management.

According to Bassi and Boku Tache (2007:14) there are at least five Oromo and Somali sub groups over whom the Boran assumed predominance. These include Gebra (speaking Oromo), Marehan (speaking Somali) Gujji (speaking Oromo) Garri(speaking Oromo and Somali) and the Degodia (speaking Somali).

Most of the pastoral groups of the Borana area use different animals including donkeys, goats and sheep, but each group is unique in terms of life style and identity by their emphasis either on cattle or camels as their main source of livelihood.

3.3 The Borana and Garri

The Borana and the Garri are neighbouring communities inhabiting the southern part of Ethiopia. Both are predominantly engaged in pastoralism and have developed a complex relationship in the lowland area of Borana region. They relate to each other in terms of language and culture. Sociologically, both are organized in patriarchal clan structures. However, there are differences in ethnic identification. The Borana belongs to the Oromo ethnic group, while the ethnic identity of the Garri remains controversial. Getachew Kassa, for instance characterizes the Garri as 'partly Somali and partly Oromo (2003:1). Similarly E.R Turton discusses the fluidity of the identity of the Garri between Oromo and Somali, as many of them were bilingual and culturally mixed (1975:536, cited in Kefale,2009: 184). However, since the current ethnic regionalization required the Garri peoples to identify themselves with either the Oromiya or Somali region, they have opted for Somali identity (Kefale, 2010:621).

Because of their centuries old interactions, the Borana and the Garri have several commonly shared socio-cultural values. For instance some Borana and Garri groups have been either Somalized or Oromized. In this respect the ethnic identities of the Garri that today compete with the Borana for control of the major town Moyale were influenced by years of Oromo-Somali interaction in southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya (Kefale, 2009:181).

While the Garri and other Somali groups of the Borana area rely mainly on camels, the Borana economy and way of life is organized around cattle rearing. Although formerly there was a taboo towards camel rearing, camel has become increasingly important among the Borana pastoralists in recent periods. In this area, the use of distinctive animals play a role in the group sense of identity, social interaction, and use of the animal in ritual exchange, for example for marriage payments (Watson, 2001:8). Furthermore, it has practical implications; due to camels' biological and physiological adaptations, which help them cope with harsh environmental conditions, they drink less water as compared to cattle. Cattles must be watered every two or three days, where as camels can be watered after seven to fourteen days (Gufu, 1998a). The Borana control over water sources in the area made cattle rearing possible. The Borana control over grazing land and water in the area was legitimized by their claim to be decedents of the people who dug the wells (Watson, 2001:8).

The Borana

The Borana is one of the major pastoralist groups who belong to the large ethnic group of Oromo society. The majority of the Borana are residents in Oromiya Region of Ethiopia and others live in northern Kenya. They are speakers of *Afan Oromo*[24], an Eastern cushitic language. Sociologically, they are organized in patriarchal clan structures. Of the Oromo groups in Borana, the Borana are by far the dominant group. The Borana pastoralists now dwell in the Guji and Borena zones of the Oromia regional state with a relatively large population in the Borena zone.

The core of Borana history and cultural tradition is the *Gada*, a very comprehensive social and political organization based on generation grading system (Leggese,1973; and Borana informants). The Borana pastoral community has maintained the traditional Oromo institutions almost intact. The leader of *gada* is known as *Aba gada*, who is elected every eight years. And the Borana Oromo people are loyal to the traditional leader, *aba gada*. Issues central to the Borana is discussed among multiple people in the highest Borana assembly of the *gada* organ called *Gumo Gayo*. Here people get the chance to debate and participate in a consensus based decision-making process. The use of existing grazing lands and water resources, and mobility of

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[24] The term Afan Oromo litrally means the language of Oromo people. It is also refered as Oromigna/ Oromo Langauge.

people and livestock is governed by the *gada* System. The system also plays a pivotal role in addressing political affairs and conflict issues within and outside Borana.

Religious wise, the Borana are predominantly affiliated to the traditional Oromo belief in the existence of a supernatural power, which they call, *Waaqa*. Islam has also gained a foothold in the last few decades.

With regard to resource management the Borana pastoralists consider land and pasture as the communal property of all of the members of their group. Pasture is considered as a gift from *Waaqa* and it does not belong to specific individuals. Within the Borana pastoral groups, access to rivers and rainwater are free to all, including neighbors. This is typical of pastoral communities throughout southeastern Ethiopia, where rights to access natural water reserves depend primarily on their availability. In the case of borehole water, however individual right of access is not free and entitled only to the group who dug it (Abdulahi, 2005: 9). Among the Borana, every *tula* belongs to a specific clan, and clan identity is important for gaining access to water. Within Borana there are different organizational units, each gets access to water with in its unit. The Boranas institutions for regulating access and use of resources are dominant in the Borana area and Schlee(1989) refers to their powerful position in the area as a hegemony or over lordship(Cited in Watson, 2001:8).

The Garri

The Garri belong to the East Cushitic linguistic group of horn of Africa. They are residents in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. They live in the Moyale and Hudet districts of the Somali regional state and in Wachille, Borana zone, where they have tribal reserve land and pasture.

The Garri are a Somali group but they have many cultural links to the Borana (Schlee, 1989;Bassi, 1997). The Garri who live in close proximity to other Somali groups speak Somali languages, and those who live close to the Borana speak Oromo language as well. Many of the Garri are bilingual and their allegiance to Somali or Borana groups can vary over time.

The Garri practice Islam almost exclusively, many being followers of the *sufi* sect. They share

many values including spiritual values with their neighbors like the Gebra and Sakuye. In addition, neighborhood ties have also resulted in adoption of some Borana Customs (Getachew,1996:114).

Camels and goats are very important animals among the Garri, but sheep and cattle are also reared. In addition to herding, trade in animal products is also common among the Garri.

Like the Borana pastoralists, the Garri pastoralists consider land and pasture as the communal property of all of the members of their group. Pasture is considered as a gift from *Allah* and it does not belong to specific individuals. As the prevailing nature of livelihood of the pastoral communities is based on mobile pastoral production, among the Garri, like other pastoral groups of southern Ethiopia, access to rivers and rainwater are free to all, including neighbors. In the case of borehole water, however individual right of access is not free.

While having common socio cultural practices as an instrument of integration, pastoralism, which depends on the mobility of livestock, brings the Borana and the Garri into frequent resource conflicts. This will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

Chapter IV

Historical Factors of the Borana-Garri Conflicts

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review and analyze macro historical and political trends in Ethiopia in relation to conflicts between different pastoralist communities. Pastoral conflicts should be understood within the context of the historic and ongoing expansion of the Ethiopian state from its central highland to the remoter parts of peripheral lowlands and the continued 'nation-building' process by successive governments. Thus, in this chapter, I introduce a generalized review and analysis of how the process of state creation and its subsequent state policies have shaped the interaction between different individuals and groups of people, particularly pastoralists. By doing so, this chapter shows the interrelationship between statehood and pastoral conflicts, particularly the Borana and Garri that have been experiencing violent conflicts.

Accordingly, the chapter is divided into two sections that pay attention to significant aspects of the understanding of conflicts and violence among pastoralists of southern Ethiopia: the formation of the modern Ethiopian state and imperial rule and the reconstruction of the imperial order by a socialist military regime since 1974. I shall note here that the attention I pay to review the past is to implicate the role played by the Ethiopian state in the contemporary pastoral conflicts and elements of change and continuity of the conflict that affects different individuals and collectives. In addition, I shall also note that the multiple causes of conflicts among pastoralists such as climatic and economic factors that are not directly related to the state building, are not neglected in fact, it is discussed in the coming chapter as is also the case of the current situation, nor am I suggesting that the state policy or government officials have deliberately orchestrated violent conflicts among pastoralists.

4.1 The Ethiopian state creation and imperial rule

By the time of the colonial partition of Africa in the 1880s, the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia, often referred to as Abyssinia, was busy in an empire-building project in the horn of Africa. The Christian kingdom from the north undertook a series of military conquests, expanding the

frontiers of the conquest to the southern, western and eastern regions (Zewde, 1991:60) and this led to the formation of the modern Ethiopian state in the late 19thcentury. The process of empire building, which was initiated by Tewodros II (1855-1869), was continued by King Menilik of Shewa, the later emperor Minilik II of Ethiopia (1889-1913). He started the conquest from his Shewan Province with the motives of empire building and resource exploitation. The resources he had from conquered peoples enabled him to buy more firearms from Europeans and stand as the major actor after taking power from emperor Yahannes IV (1872-1889), to further incorporate the country's landmass into the empire state (Adhana, 1994: 24). His conquest gave the country its present geographical shape and cultural, linguistic and ethnic compositions by the beginning of the 20th century.

During the expansion, the emperor with firearms faced varied resistance from the people with traditional weapons. Those who resisted strongly faced disruption and burning of their state, merciless killings or enslavement and looting of animals (Marcus (1969) cited in Tronvoll, 2000: 13). And some like the Borana people, who didn't have access to firearms quickly surrendered to Menilik's forces (Helland,2002: 52).

Most of the nobility, who helped the emperor to conquer the people and their lands, administered the newly incorporated areas. Lands were granted to these nobilities in reward for their services, to ensure their loyalty and to secure them a source of income (Helland, 1999:3). In the north, in the Christian kingdom, nobilities possessed only the rights to collect tribute from peasants; however, in the south they were given the land and the peoples they conquered (Adhana, 1994; Pausewang, 1994, 1997). These feudal aristocrats administered the land on behalf of the imperial state of Ethiopia.

The end of the conquest was followed by institutionalization of the northern feudal system of exploitation, massive population settlement from the north on the lands of the subjugated peoples, and imposition of *Amhara* language, Orthodox Christian religion and other forms of culture at the expense of the indigenous cultures (Tibebu, 1995:44-45, McClellan, 1998). And these cultural values were accepted or rejected in various degrees. In general, ethnic inequality and economic exploitation characterized the multi- ethnic Ethiopian empire that emerged after

the expansion (Alem, 2004: 100). This mainly manifested in the form of the dominance of the Amhara elite, and the imposition of Orthodox Christianity and the Amharic language as embodiments of the Ethiopian state (Gudina, 2003: 62).

It was this experience, as some refer to as "colonial experience/black colonialism" (Tibebu,1995:xv,40; Debelo,2007), which in later times (since 1960s) enabled the subjected peoples to revitalize their ethnic identity, historical background and traditional values and inspired them to emphasize their distinctive ethnic identification against the Amhara/Ethiopian ethnic identity, culture and history (Hameso,2001, Bassi,1996).

4.1.1 Ethiopia state formation and pastoralists

During the scramble for Africa, Emperor Minilik II of Ethiopia expanded his territory to the south and conquered pastoralist areas to re-counter the British advance from the south (Helland,2002: 52). Hence, the Borana area came under Ethiopian state administration in 1897 and became the fief (*ristegult*) of Fitawrari HabteGiorgis (until1924) and later was given to Ras Desta Damtew until the end of the Italian occupation in 1941(Getachew, 2002: 69).

The presence of colonial powers in the Horn of Africa and the simultaneous expansion of Minilik II to conquer unoccupied land of pastoralists to re-counter the European colonial advance had fatal consequences for pastoralists in the region. The European colonial powers defined state boundaries in the Horn of Africa and partitioned the land of pastoralists between different colonial states. That is why today we have the Borana pastoralists both in Kenya and Ethiopia across the Ethio-Kenyan border and the Garri pastoralists partitioned into three separate states: Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. The existence of fixed boundaries created by colonial powers limited the mobility of pastoralists. The pastoralists' way of life, which was based on mobility, was seriously affected by the boundaries set by the colonial states and border dispute became the cause of many conflicts in the region (Abdulahi, 2005:11).

The administrative, security, economic and political imperatives of modern states during the colonial period and thereafter were alien to pastoral communities who were continuously moving (Ibid). The pastoralist society who had never recognized borders and administrative boundaries

challenged the newly established states in the horn of Africa. However, they were threatened with heavy fines and confiscation of their livestock if they did not stay within the area allotted to their group (Markakis,1987:30) . As a result, the opposition to administrative boundaries and the limitations imposed on border crossings became a frequent cause of conflicts (Abdulahi, 2005:11).

Even though, until the end of WWII, the main concern of the Ethiopian state in the Borana area was the establishment and maintenance of the border with Kenya (Helland,2002: 52), the pastoralists were asked to pay their feudal fees to the nobilities. Pastoralists in the Borana area paid their feudal in the form of livestock, forest products (honey, incense, myrrh) and obligatory labor services (to build houses and give transport and guidance services to the officials and soldiers)for a fixed number of days. At the same time, some Borana pastoralists migrated into northern Kenya to avoid the Ethiopian rule (Getachew,2002: 69).

Historically, the Ethiopian state has always rested on an agricultural foundation. Hence, in the early days of the conquest, they brought new settlers and soldiers in the most fertile parts of the dry-season grazing lands of the Borana area. However, the scope of land alienation and land allocation for settler farmers was too limited in scale to have an impact on the pastoral Borana system (Helland,1999:13). Apart from the above-mentioned challenges, the feudal administration was not as harsh on pastoralists as it was on the conquered agricultural people in the south-where the people were subjected to economic exploitation, socio-cultural and political domination by the Ethiopian leaders. The less favorable ecological conditions in the pastoral areas, perhaps in combination with an agricultural bias in the economic outlook of the solider-settlers, seem to have protected the pastoralists from the kind of harsh economic exploitation experienced by sharecroppers in the agricultural areas of southern Ethiopia (Ibid).

The five-year fascist Italian occupation (1936-1941) stopped the imperial rule in Ethiopia and disrupted the deeds of landlords and their associates. Although some peasants in the south who felt freed from the feudal administrative system, which confiscated their land, welcomed this, for pastoralists, it created violent conflicts. During this occupation time, Italy had already controlled large part of Somalia and this enabled the fascists to recruit and arm Ethiopian Somalis

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(including the Garri) to fight against the central government. Through this collaboration, the Garri and other Somali groups benefited from the Italian administrative policy and military support, and used their superior weaponry to violently attack and expand their grazing land across the Borana areas (Bassi,1997; Getachew,1996; Helland, 1997; 1998; Hogg, 1997). Besides the Somalis, the Gujji and the Arsi Oromo recruits to the Italian army had also occupied the eastern and northeastern parts of Borana grazing lands in the Liben zone (Getachew, 2002:71).

In 1941, the short Italian administration came to an end, leaving a challenge to pastoral communities in the area. The expulsion of the Italians was followed by intensive instability caused by inter-ethnic conflicts and new administrative reforms, which included the delineation of tribal boundaries (Ibid).

After the expulsion of the Italians from the region, the state claimed all pastoral grazing land, also referred to as 'no mans land'/ *'zalan meret'* or 'wanderer land' as state property. As it was enacted in a 1954 proclamation, the 1955 constitution, and the Ethiopian civil code of 1960, all unsettled or permanently uncultivated land in Ethiopia was conceived by the authorities as no man's land, and claimed as state property. There was neither private nor state investment in this unsettled area (Abdulahi, 2005). The treaty of 1948 allocated to each tribe in the Borana province defined areas of grazing land and water points, which was called *Ye-gossa-gitosh kilil* (Getachew, 2002: 71). And the monarchy recognized or appointed leaders (*balabbats*) of Borana, Gujji, Garri and other Somali groups to work closely with the government officials.

The 1948 treaty allowed inter-ethnic group conflicts to be handled using the traditional dispute settlement procedures, customary laws and other local conflict management practices and managed in lessening the frequency of the inter-tribal territorial or resource (land and water) related armed conflicts among pastoralists (Ibid). Nevertheless, the demarcation was made arbitrarily without giving due consideration to the relations between groups, mobility patterns, rights of use to the land and so on (Ibid). Hence, territorial conflicts continued among pastoral groups. In 1950´s, 1960's and 1970's, the local government in Borana land was not effective in

hindering territorial conflicts between the Borana and their neighbors, like the Garri (Getachew,2002:73).

As part of its agricultural development efforts, the Ethiopian government expanded crop cultivation in parts of what it referred to as 'no man's land', which in fact was a grazing land for pastoralist communities of the region. As a result, pastoralists were forced to evacuate their grazing lands and watering points. The effect of such forced evacuation has been devastating on humans and animals (PFE, IIRR and DF,2010: 28).

In the late 1950s, with the rise of Somali nationalism across the border, the local conflict in Borana area between the pastoralist groups became more complicated. After Somalian independence in 1960, pan-somalism, the desire to unite all somalis across the horn of Africa into one nation-state, gained popularity and prompted armed insurgency along the border with Ethiopia and Kenya in 1963 and 1964. Then, the Ethiopian government became more suspicious of Somali pastoralists and it began arming and supporting the Borana and Guji pastoralists in their conflicts with the Garri, Digodi and other Somali pastoralists (Markakis,1987:195). The intervention by the monarchy aggravated the hostility between pastoral groups. The provincial administration support to Borana and other pastoralists against the Somali pastoralists, the 1960's relocation of the Garri and other Somali pastoralists to Filtu area (See map 3) and beyond, and the expulsion of the Somali *balabats* from the administration system, led the Somali pastoralists to join the growing rebellions against the monarchy in the area (Abdulahi, 2005,). Consequently, the regime responded very harshly and intensified the pressure on them through the extermination of herds, restriction of movement and imposition of heavy fines (Ibid). This repression forced the Garri and other Somali pastoralists to seek support from the new state of Somalia, which was ambitious to create a greater Somalia.

Thus, the local conflict between pastoralists was linked with and intensified by the border dispute between Ethiopia and Somalia. This situation has continued during the Derg regime and it is a point to discuss in the next section.

4.2 The socialist Regime and pastoralists

At the culmination of a popular uprising spearheaded by Ethiopian university students, in 1974, middle-rank members of the army deposed Emperor Haile Selassie I (r. 1930-1974), and established a provisional government called the Derg (i.e "Committee"/ "Council").

The Derg declared a socialist state under the motto "*Etyopia Tikdem"* or "Ethiopian First" and introduced an aggressive form of state nationalism, which failed to resolve the issue of national political integration.

The Derg regime abolished the imperial land tenure system and introduced a new land tenure reforms (1975-1993)(proclamation number, 31 of 1975). This land reform nationalized all the rural lands and vested ownership rights in the state. Land was a core issue of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. With the rallying cry of " Land to the tiller", the revolution toppled the old regime. Hence, the land reform of 1975 played a key role to the Derg in order to get legitimacy to their control of the state apparatus and mobilize people.

The 1975 land reform proclamation annulled the previous land related obligation of pastoralists to the *ballabats* (Traditional chiefs) and proclaimed pastoralists to pay all dues to the state. According to the proclamation, pastoralists have possessory rights over the lands customarily used for grazing or other purposes related to agriculture (PFE, IIRR and DF, 2010:30).

The new administrative system urged pastoralists to establish associations to improve grazing areas, dig wells and settle. The pastoral associations introduced pastoralists to cooperate in the use of grazing and water rights, though they were not mandated to carry out distribution and redistribution of lands (ibid). This regulation on the one hand respected the communal right by not distributing and redistributing land, but on the other hand replaced the local traditional resource management system and the pastoralists' traditional leaders with pastoral associations. The latter caused the erosion of traditional institutions and contributed greatly to the distortion of the pastoral way of life (Ibid). The new leadership substituted the functions of traditional leaders related to management of basic resources, such as water wells, dry season grazing, the migration of house holds across territorial boundaries (Getachew, 2002:74).

The land reform, which came up with the introduction of the pastoralist associations, implied an unprecedented measure of state control, for instance, "there was a time when the Borana pastoralists even had to obtain official permission to move across association boundaries"(Helland,1998:67), and contributed to the undermining of the customary pastoral land tenure and resource management.

In 1987, the derg established the democratic republic of Ethiopia and introduced new administrative reforms. Accordingly, the Borana became a separate administrative region (See map 4. Although there was no explicit policy of favoring Borana in maintaining the new structures, the regional administration was dominated by Borana from top to bottom (Helland, 1998:68). One of myBorana informants also reflected the same; "During the Derg regime we administered the Borana land"(Gelana, Interview Sep.2012). This power and influence of the Borana in the provincial administration further exacerbate the Borana-Garri conflict and the Garri and other Somali pastoralists felt that the government was biased against them (Abdulahi,2005:12).

This was clearly reflected in my interview with informants; the Borana informants recounted that they were satisfied with the Derg administration and its immediate action to solve the problem. On the other hand, the Garri informants reflected their dissatisfaction towards the regime. During At the end of the Ethio-Somalia war of the 1970s, the Derg managed to reduce violent conflicts in the area due to strong military presence. However, this didn't bring a lasting solution to pastoral conflicts (Abdulahi,2005:12).

In general, the provincial administration during the socialist regime continued to aggravate the Borana -Garrri and other Somali pastoralist conflicts.

4.2.1 The 1977-78 Ethio- Somalian war and its impact on pastoralists

As it was the case during the imperial rule, the local conflict between pastoralists again got intensified and shaped by the Ethio-Somalian war in 1977-78. The idea of Pan-Somalism, creating a Greater Somalia, which had started after Somalian independence continued to affect the peace in the Horn of Africa during the late 1970s. In July 1977 Somalia invaded Ethiopia and

the Somalis captured most of the Ogadēn by late 1977, but the Derg with the help of Cuba and the USSR reasserted control over the region in early 1978, as Somalia's army suffered heavy losses (Henze, 2000:302). The war led to huge outflows of Ethiopian Somalis into Somalia. Around 800,000 Ethiopian Somalis, including the Garri, fled into the neighboring Somalia and lived for the next decade and a half in refugee camps (Hagmann, 2006:27). The region, however, continued to be the unstable part of the country throughout the 1980s, as those Ethiopian Somali who fled to Somalia carried on a guerrilla campaign against the Derg. Subsequent fighting in the Ogaden precipitated a flood of refugees into Somalia. The efforts made to reconcile the two sides at Mogadishu and Khartoum by the end of April 1981 proved ineffective.

The relations between Ethiopia and Somalia became even tenser after 1982. On the one hand, an Ethiopian supported coalition of rebel groups (Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia) continued insurgency against government forces of Somalia. On the other, the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), a separist rebel group fighting in Ethiopia, which was supported by troops from neighboring Somalia, pursued a relentless guerrilla campaign against the Ethiopian army stationed in Ogaden. In 1988, however, a peace agreement finally ended the hostility with Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the civil war which was intensified in Somalia as a result of the emergence of a variety of Islamist movements seeking to establish an Islamic state in Somalia continued to affect the peace among pastoralist groups in the study region.

Between the late 1980s and early 1990s, the state collapse, famine, and the civil war in Somalia led to a reverse refugee flow of Somalis, including the Garri. By mid 1992, there were 594,000 refugees and 117,000 returnees (ibid). Some fled to refugee camps, others simply crossed the borders with or without their cattle, and tried to continue their lives in this new area. This process brought a new wave of Somali people to the region, and pushed the existing further west into Borana territory (Helland, 1998 cited in Watson,2001:10). Many of the returned pastoralists were heavily armed (Watson,2001:10). As a result, the Garri and other Somali groups gained new control over territory and wells, and this control has since been consolidated, partly by the redrawing of the boundaries of the new administrative regions (Getachew,1996; Bassi,1997). Resources that were shared between different pastoralist groups like Borana, Gebara, and Garri are now only used by one or two of these groups. As a result the Borana, the Garri and other Somali clans have been fighting over these resources. Most of these fights has been concentrated

in the areas where today's region 4(The Oromiya Region) and region 5(The Somalie Region) meet (Watson,2001:10). This regional division came with the new ethnic federalism policy of Ethiopia and the impact it has on the relation between Borana and Garri is discussed in the next chapter.

4.2.2 Bloody civil war, Nationalist movements and Pastoralist conflicts

In the1960s the Ethiopian students movement (ESM) for the first time rose up the ethic/nationality questions against the century age hegemony (Balsvik,1985, 2005 and Gudina, 2003). Such forces contributed greatly to the demise of the imperial state system (Balsvik, 2007). Although, the 1974 revolution brought the collapse of the monarchical system, the military dictatorship which took power under Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, did not bring a significant difference as far as fundamentals of centralism and ethnic domination are concerned (Hamesso,2001:77). Since the 1974 revolution there has been a proliferation of liberation movements calling for either regional autonomy or outright secession from Ethiopia. Internal political debate continued in the country, even after the fall of Haile Selassie, and later degenerated into violence. Colonel Mengistu, who won the internal fight for the leading office in the council as chairman of the Derg, started war against different opposition groups. In 1977, the "red terror" campaign was launched to suppress all political opponents by violent massacre and torture (Tronvoll, 2000: 14). Consequently, thousands died and several thousands fled the country.

The feeling of victimhood was agonizing to some insurgences as the government's new economic and political policies were not for the benefit of their people. Added to this feeling of economic and political marginalization, many ethnic groups still felt that they were victims of religious and ethnic discrimination. Such grievances harbored among some insurgencies were enough to mobilize their fellow ethnic affiliates and rise up in arms. A few of them aimed at securing a fairer share of government services, while others demanded to break away and become independent. The first group can be represented by the Afar, while the struggle for outright secession was pertinent to the Eritreans and Somali. The latter sought to break away from Ethiopia and waged an armed struggle for many years even before the downfall of the

monarchical rule. The new additional insurgent groups now added were the Oromo, and later, Tigrean. In the 1970s, the Derg was increasingly being attacked by the Afar, Eritrean, and Somali separatists' – who became the chief opponents to the Derg regime, aided by the national army of Somalia.

The Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) was one of the strongest armed resistance groups that emerged as a dominant force in Eritrea, and eventually realized the formation of a *de facto* independent state of Eritrea. The other two significant nationalist movements the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) were able to mobilize their respective peoples along ethnic lines. These ethno-nationally defined movements accused the Derg for its policy of Ethiopian nationalism; Both TPLF and OLF entertained political agendas ranging from withdrawal from the Ethiopian state to participation in a democratic Ethiopian state. The leaders of these movements were initially Marxist inspired students who openly raised the issues of ethnic or national identities in response to the dominant model of Ethiopian nationalism.

In 1989 the various opposition groups eventually united and formed the Ethiopian people's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and it began its historic military campaign towards Addis Ababa.

During the late 1980s, confronted by the above-mentioned ethnic and regional based fronts and other political factors the Derg was weakened and its administration was eroded in the Borana area. This situation gradually ended with the creation of power vacuum in the area when the regime finally collapsed in 1991. In the absence of no one to watch, dormant conflict erupted among pastoral groups, such as the Borana and Garri, and the situation turned into local anarchy (Abdulahi, 2005: 13). This situation was fueled by the return of Somali pastoralists, like Garri, who fled to Somalia and Kenya in the 1970's due to Ethio-Somalian war. One of my Garri informant recalled the issue; "our people, who were displaced, came back to their homeland and they reclaimed the areas, which they had occupied before. But the Borana didn't allow them, and it was a chaos"(Mohammed, Interview Oct.2012). The Borana informants claim historical ownership over the areas occupied by the Garri and other Somali returnees. For example Bayo

noted; "The Somalis came back with heavy weapons and settled on our territory"(Interview Sep. 2012) and some argue the returnees number was higher than the one they had left (Gelana, Olana, Bayo and Regasa, Interview, Sept. 2012).

In the absence of any resolution to the conflict the transitional government of Ethiopia was established in 1991 and the tension and hostility between the Borana and Garri continued.

To sum up, the conflict among pastoralists, particularly the Borana-Garri conflicts have been intensified and shaped by historical political factors, such as changes in administration boundaries and wars between Ethiopia and Somalia.

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Chapter V

Political and Economic factors of the Borana- Garri Conflicts

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Introduction

Under chapter four of this thesis, I have reviewed and analyzed the macro historical and political trends in Ethiopia in relation to conflicts between different pastoralist communities. By doing so, I have discussed the historical factors; how political factors; changes in administrative boundaries and inter-state wars between Somalia and Ethiopia, has shaped and intensified pastoralist conflict, particularly the Borana-Garri conflicts. This chapter presents the political and economic factors of the conflict.

5.1 The Borana-Garri conflicts since 1991: questions of claims over land ownership and self- government

The EPRDF came to power in May 1991 after its military victory over the Derg. This marked the beginning of process towards a federal state in Ethiopia. As it is mentioned in the first chapter, the conflict between the Borana and Garri has become more frequent since the adoption of ethnic federalism policy in Ethiopia. This section presents and analyses the political factors of the conflicts.

5.1.1 Inter-Regional boundary making as a triggering factor for the Borana-Garri conflicts

With the adoption of ethnic based regional administration in Ethiopia, as it is mentioned earlier the constitution has divided the country into nine ethno-regional states and two multi-ethnic city-states. Accordingly, the Oromiya and Somali Nation Regions, Region 4 and 5 respectively were formed. Until the last years of the Derg Regime, both the Borana and Garri were under the same administrative province- the then Borana *Awraja*(See map 4*)*. However, the new ethnic based territorial restructuring put in place by the EPRDF regime split this province between two ethno-regional states- Oromiya and Somali, in 1992 (see map 3).

Ethnic regionalization required people with fluid identities like the Garri, who share both Oromo and Somali ethno-linguistic features, to identify themselves with either the Oromiya or Somali Regional States. The process of inter-regional boundary making was thus linked with renegotiation of identity (Kefale,2010:621). The Garri opted for Somali identity and thus, the Borana and Garri found themselves on the opposite sides of the administration boundary. This led to the shrinkage of the Borana customary territory as the Garri and other Somali speaking inhabitants of the area were placed into the new Somali regional state.

Most of the Borana informants argued that the choice of the Garri to be Somali in 1992 was a calculative move to own resources. Their major argument was that at the beginning of the 1990's the Garri were emphasizing their Oromo identity and even they formed a political alliance under the Oromo Abo Libration Front (OALF). For instance, Bayo noted: *at the beginning of 1990s, the Garri settled in Borana land. They claimed that they are Oromo and they inhabited in the Oromo land as Oromo, and all of the sudden, few years later, they claimed that they are Somali. So, they took a piece of our land with them to their newly chosen identity, Somali* (Interview, Sep.2012).

It appears that the Garri were emphasizing their Oromo identity during the TGE (Transitional Government of Ethiopia) when the OLF was considered the second most important political force in the country behind the TPLF/EPRDF (kefale, 2010:621). Soon after, when the politics of the post 1991 Ethiopia began to change; when OLF was no more part of EPRDF, the Garri ended their affiliation with the Oromo and decided to join the Somali.

The Borana informants agree that they were deeply dissatisfied with the new territorial arrangement. For instance, Debela stated: *Our problem is this new territorial arrangement based on ethnicity, we were okay with the old administration* (Interview Sep. 2012). While many Garri informants reflect otherwise. Unlike the case during the Derg regime, the Garri seems to enjoy the self-ethno-regional administrationprovisions of the constitution; this is partly because they didn't like the Borana dominated administration of the Derg regime. Mohammed noted: *The Derg and the Imperial Regime was biased to the Borana, our people had suffered because of the Ethio-Somalian war. Our people were displaced and they had lived in refugee camps in Kenya*

and Somalia for years. We were happy when we were told that we could have our own administration, which is not Borana dominated anymore (Mohammed, Interview Oct. 2012).

Besides the challenge the new ethno-regional administration brought to ethnic-negotiation among some local people, the new state structure has not addressed the issue of who should now administer the areasthat were previously shared by the two groups.This situation created violent conflicts among the Borana and Garri. Both Borana and Garri informants agree on the fact that most of their conflicts since the 1992 were mainly border issues across the Oromoiya and Somali regional states. Between 1992 and 2004, 8 major conflicts happened between the Borana and Garri in the border area (Odhiambo, 2012: 11). Thus, the nature of the Borana-Garri conflicts from one caused primarily by resource competition, to onein which boundary issues play an increasingly important role.

Drawing the regional boundary was not only the problem of the inhabitants, also the two regional states were in protracted conflicts and claims and counter claims over territory along the border (Adugna, 2010:47). According to some informants of both Borana and Garri, some conflicts had erupted between the Borana and Garri initiated by the disagreement of the two regional officials. Neither the 1992 proclamation nor the 1995 EPRDF constitution not any other law said anything about how the administrative boundaries should be demarcated (Abdulahi, 2005:14). This situation made the conflict and negotiation between the two regional states lingers for a while. Following years of negotiation brokered by the national state institutions such as the House of Federation and the Ministry of Federal Affairs, the two regional states reached an agreement to undertake a referendum- by the majority vote (50% + 1 formula[25])- in the 430 *Kebele*[26]along their borders (Adugna, 2010:47).

According to both Borana and Garri informants, most pastoralists rejected the idea of the referendum. The major argument was that the referendum, wouldn't take into consideration their socioeconomic situation. While pastoralist livelihood depends on seasonal mobility and the

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[25]The 50%+1 formula is a crude minimum numerical majority that is larger only by one than the maximumPossible minority, 50%-1(Debelo, 2007:75).

[26]*Kebeles* are territorial units of the lower level of administration.

extensive use of environment beyond administrative territorial border, the state imposed a referendum aimed at creating solid borders. Moreover, some Borana pastoralists also argued that the idea of the referendum did not recognize the customary right of the groups' over the land they traditionally inhabited. For example, Olana pointed out:

> *if there was ever a need to demarcate the border ethnically, or to decide which land belongs to who, the government could consult history, It was not difficult to see the owner of the land, there are documentations about it by different international organizations, which proves which land was being administered by whom. But government failed to rely on those evidences and rather decided to undertake referendum* (Interview, Sep.2012).

In any case, after a decade of territorial contestations and partly violent conflicts, the referendum was carried out in Novemeber 2004. The inhabitants were forced to caste ballots to decide their fate, also with regard to resource use and ethnic identification (Adugna, 2010). The process was taken "successfully" in 422 *kebele*, but it failed to materialize in eight kebele, among these four of them are in Moyale town and the surrounding area. Subsequently, these areas were left to the dual administration of the two regions with competing and at times conflicting jurisdictions. This left a contest area for the Borana and Garri and other Oromo and Somali peoples living in the area.

Both Borana and Garri informants reflected that they were unhappy with the results of the referendum; while most of the Borana completely condemned the principle itself, the Garri were disappointed with their loss of some *kebeles* across the border and those particularly in Moyale town and its surrounding area.

Many Borana informants reflect their deep discontent of their land being taken by the Garri, whom they welcomed as 'guests' some years back. For example one Borana elder stated:

> *We didn´t agree on the demarcation. The Somali took our historical land. We are never happy about it. We are still fighting for that land. We lost our grazing areas and 2 tula, (*deep wells*)Goff and Lae* (see map 5), *that was dug by the Borana 500yrs ago. We cannot access it now, we allowed the Garri people to stay on our territory when they came as a guest, now they took it. Our territory stretches 200km into the current Somali Region (Gelana, Interview Sep.2012).*

The Garri informants have also reflected their unhappiness with the result of the referendum and they still claim some areas and they reject the Borana claim; Husen noted *The Borana want all the land, it is never enough for them. We are claiming our historical territory too. Our people had left some of the areas during the Ethio-Somalian war and we are reclaiming that* (Interview,Oct.2012).

Inter-Regional boundary making and the subsequent split of the Borana *Awraja* administration and resource loss led to conflicts and internal displacement. Both Borana and Garri informants argued that after the demarcation they had to move to their respective regional areas because of the violent conflicts. Most informants from both sides claim that the main reason for most of the fights that they have had since 1992 were border issues, claims and counterclaims over territory along the border. As an example, Here, I present two quotes; one from Borana and one from Garri Informants reflecting this idea:

> *Since the beginning of ethno-regional administration, the conflict is not only about resource, like grazing land. It is all about occupyinga land and expanding a region. That is the aim of the Garri and other Somali. Although grazing land and water for animals is also the issue, the main issue here is they are expanding their regional territory*(Regasa, Interview, Sep2012*).*

> *The conflict has been there since long time ago. . . before, it was mainly about land and water recourse. But now it is all about territorial ownership and self-administration (Mohammed, Interview Oct.2012).*

According to the administrative officials interviewed, the regional border serves as administrative purposes, but for the inhabitants it is a question of either losing or gaining self-administration and resources mainly related to territory endowed with water wells, grazing land, and ritual places in towns. The referendum did not resolve the existingconflicts, rather intensified them in some areas. For example, the Borana and Garri fought three deadly conflicts over their borders in June 2008, February 2009, and July 2012. In February 2009 alone, some 16,000 people were driven from their homes by the conflict[27]. During the July 2012 conflict30,000

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[27] http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/80C54D1ED57F9E76C1257626005638BD/$file/Ethiopia_Overview_Sep09.pdf

people were displaced into Kenya to escape the fighting and dozens have been killed[28]. Proximity of this conflict area to the porous border between Ethiopia and Somalia has significantly contributed to the steady inflows of firearms and made the conflict devastating.

Both Borana and Garri informants argued that the federal army usually intervened after many casualties had already happened and the interventions of the army sometimes had the effect of escalating the conflicts by making one group or the other feel that the army had taken sides. For example, the Borana informants noted that they had felt that the government was on the side of the Garri during most of the fights since 1992. There was suspicion by the government that the Borana inhabited territories were a 'breeding space' for the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). The Borana, who were in the past alliance of the Ethiopian Imperial and Derg government, as discussed in the fourth chapter, were suspected by the EPRDF that they had given support to the OLF party. This made a shift in the center-periphery relation, which seems to have served the local balance of power in favor of the Garri (Kefale, 2010:621). However, this situation was only very focused some years immediately after the OLF withdrew from the government and started guerilla warfare. By then, OLF was strong and had a strong ambition in waging armed resistance. However, later OLF got weaker as the party itself was divided into factions. Moreover, as it is discussed in the next section, the infiltration of other armed groups; like the ONLF (Ogaden Nation Libration Front), which the government suspect could ally with the Somalie, including the Garri, balanced the government intervention concerning the Borana and Garri conflicts.

To sum up, during the years following the ethno-regional administration, it became political strife consisted of gaining more territory or loosing it, and using any possible means to win the game and defending one's own rights of territorial integrity from encroachment. The conflict is political, it is not just about recourses anymore, and it is about having control over land and has administrative power.

The discontent and dissatisfaction between the Borana and Garri is still there. Disagreement and violent conflict continued along the borders after demarcation, even worse in the Moyale area, with conflictual dual administration. Violent conflicts often result from minor incidents, because

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[28] http://somalilandpress.com/30000-ethiopians-fleeing-moyale-conflict-enter-kenya-32869

solid action was not taken to resolve the issue across the administrative borders. The case of Moyale is a question that hasn't been addressed for the last 20 years. Below I will discuss the 2012 conflict of the Borana and Garri in the Moyale area.

5.1.2 The Borana-Garri conflict, July 2012

The fundamental cause of the Borana-Garri conflicts since the new regional administration was neither resolved nor relinquished, but was rather postponed to erupt whenever a situation would be evolved. Nevertheless, the nature and dimension of the issue have continued to be challenged by different factors since then. A single incident was enough to explode a volatile tension. That was what happened in July 2012.

As informants recalled the main cause of the conflict was settlement of the Garri on the disputed "Borana land". The settlement was in the area called *Chamuk/ Shewaber* and some other places in the Moyale area. The Borana continued to reflect their discontent towards this settlement and later minor incidents between individuals erupted into a violent conflict. The Garri informantsclaim that it was the Borana who started the violence and the Borana informants claim otherwise. Anyway, a simple incident erupted into a big violence on the 28th of July 2012 and the conflict escalated into other areas at the border between the Oromiya and Somali regional states; like, *Arero Woreda, Wachille Kebele* (see map 3).

A deadly violent conflict erupted for a few days that claimed the lives of dozens of people, several were wounded, and there was significant destruction of properties and displacement of people. It was not easy to find a genuine report of causalities after such conflicts owing to its political implications. While the information from the Borana and Garri informants claim a higher number, in hundreds, the politicians reported twelve. International media has reported that in this clash more than 30,000 people were displaced and crossed into Kenya to escape the fighting and dozens have been killed[29]. Mohammed recalled the situation; *Houses were burnt, our animals were stolen, we were displaced to Kenya. We were robbed while we were there. We had nothing when we came back. Our people were killed and several died (Interview, October,2012).*And Ayantu (Moyale resident that I met in Yabelo) recalled; *We heard a shot in*

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[29]http://somalilandpress.com/30000-ethiopians-fleeing-moyale-conflict-enter-kenya-32869 accessed Sep 2013

the morning. It was a sudden attack, there is no enemy who tells you when he will attack you. . . I ran away and came here to Yabelo, but my house is burnt, I have lost everything in it. There are people who were attacked while they were asleep, some of them died. A woman who gave birth recently was killed with her child, while she was in the house.

According to Borana informants, for Borana pastoralists any settlement by the Garri or any other Somali on their land is considered as a threat to their "territorial ownership". The main reason behind is they are afraid that they would lose administrative power over the land incase they are dominated by ethnic Somali in the area. This came with ethnic-based regionalization arrangement of the state. For example, Gelana explained;

> *We are not going to make any mistake as we did before. Previously, we took the Garri into our territory as guests . . . and later with the ethnic regional administration, our land has been included into the Somali region when the Garri opted for Somali identity. And we don't want this to happen again* (Informal discussion, Sep 2012).

The 2004 referendum, which the Borana argued against its implementation, but anyways was imposed by the government, didn't consider the population resettlement history while demarcating the border. Thus, for the Borana any move by the Garri is considered as territorial expansion and ambition to own land as before. In fact, the referendum, which has failed to materialize in four kebele in Moyale and its surrounding area has left a contested area for both the Borana and Garri.

The Garri informants argue that, the new settlement areas were areas that they claim ownership as Borana does, and they further argue that the refusal of the Borana to their settlement was inappropriate. For example, Mohammed reflected his view: *Our people settled in our territory, and it was an empty land, unoccupied (Interview, Oct.2012)*. Both the Borana and Garri still have claim to own the same territories.

The 2012 Borana-Garri conflict had brought suspicion on the part of the government about involvement of external forces into the conflict. According to the two Borana officials interviewed the Garri who settled on the "Borana land" were around 90 young men. And there was a suspicion by the government that these men could be people supported by the guerrilla

fighter ONLF (Ogaden National Libration Front) or Al-Shabaab[30] from Somalia. Both informants of the Borana and Garri complain about the fact that government intervention was not timely whenever there was a violent conflict.

Proximity of the Moyale region to the porous border with Ethiopia and Somalia has significantly contributed to steady inflow of firearms and infiltration of various armed groups. Today pastoralists own very sophisticated firearms and they have become good markets for arm smugglers. In a group discussion I asked my informants who are Moyale residents how people get access to firearms; everybody smiled and one of the guy said, "this is the question to businessmen . . .but you should know that the weapons are very modern" (group discussion, Oct. 2012). And the flow of displaced people has also contributed to the destruction of the already fragile environment. Ali explained how this situation is affecting their lives; *This area is close to the Somalia border and people migrate to this place whenever the situation is not good in their country. And this is creating a problem for us since we have scarce resources* (Ali, Interview Sep 2012).

Both Borana and Garri informants, agree on the fact that the government has undermined the role of traditional authorities, thus they are not usually involved in the border and conflict issue.
Both are not satisfied with their regional officials, who they think failed them to resolve their peoples' question. Owing to this reason, the Borana informants agree on the fact that they are now claiming "the Borana administration". The Borana- who not only speak Oromo language- but also have a central symbolic place in the Oromo clan structure are now claiming self-administration, they don't want to be administered under the Oromo Regional State. As Debela reflected the Borana view:

> *Now, we, Borana, and our leader Aba gada have discussed and decided that we need our own administration as Borana. During the Derg regime, we were okay, now with this regional division based on ethnicity, our rights are not protected, we are loosing our land.We are not benefiting from Oromiya administration at all, we are rather loosing our land and our resource. Oromia region is not helping us to protect our rights, . . wewant*

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[30]Ethiopia enterd hostility with Al-Shabaab because in 2006 US backed Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia to prop up the TFG (Transitional federal Governemnt) in Somalia against ICU (Islamic Court Union). Al-Shabaab militant group is formed by some members of ICU.

our own administration not as Oromo but as Borana. We have raised this question to the next president of Oromiya Regional state (Interview, Sep. 2012).

It should be from the convergence of the interest of the Borana in ownership rights and defence of "their land" and the similar ownership claim of the Garri on the same area, that the 2012 strife of conflict would be understood. Despite the Garri's interest of having a referendum on the contested areas, the Borana strongly argue against for two main reasons. One, they totally condemn the idea of the referendum, as it doesn't consider the history of population demography and resettlement. Two, due to the 'free' flow of migrants from Somalia across the border, they are afraid that, the Garri would bring more settlers from Somalia and win the vote.

In general, it can be argued that the Borana- Garri conflict was a question of land ownership and self-administration. Here it is important to note that according to the constitution, the state owns the land, including pastoral areas. However, in pastoral areas land holding arrangements are not clear and there is no clear rules giving security to the peoples who have used and cared for the land over generation (PFE, IIRR and DF,2010: 28).

The major implication of the conflict is the activation of the dividing boundary of 'us' and 'them'. The conflict demonstrated the potent force of ethnicity in that as many of the informants pointed out, many of the Garri and a few other members of the Somali (including some Gebra who have opted for Somali Identity) and Borana and Gabra (those who have opted for Oromo identity) branches participated in the conflict. One of my informant, regional officer, reflected similar view, *The conflict started between few people and it escalated and included different groups (Interview, Aug2012).*

The political environment around the Borana and Garri has ethnified the already existed identity. As Mohammed noted: *we don't like the Oromo and they don't like the Somali(Interview, Octo.2012).* Their relation after the ethnic regionalization has been altered. For instance, Gelana explained the current situation: *Before ethno-regional division and referendum, we had common social life; intermarriage, we ate together, we shared the resources. It is true we had conflicts, but we had peaceful time as well. The Garri even used to come from far to our place. . . butafter,*

we don't go there and they don't come here, except for the market/business purposes, we don't take our cattle there. We have no marriage relationship as before.

In such existing conflicts where lasting resolution failed to be given, the prospect of future relation seems worrisome.

5.1.3 The Borana-Garri conflicts in the context of heightened ethnic politics

Since 1990s the Borana-Garri conflicts have got a different dimension, a question of land ownership and self-administration emphasizing ethnic dichotomies. For example, a discussion with my Garri informants helps to bridge between the different contexts before and after 1991. When asked why the issue of land ownership and self government was not raised during the Derg Regime, they stated that "the state policy of that time did not give rights to any ethnic group to administer its own territory, but EPRDF provides that and we want to be administered as Somali. We want to have referendum in contested areas and get self-administration" (Ibrahim, Seid, Hasen, and Ali).

Against the premordialists' notion that sees inherent ethnic dichotomies as a cause of communal action, the Borana-Garri conflict was not fundamentally attributed to primordial ethnic differences. The conflict must also be understood by the role played by the state. The shift in center-periphery relation with respect to Borana and Garri; first in favor of the Borana during the Imperial and Derg regime (as discussed in the 4th chapter) and later,in favor of the Garriduring the EPRDF has profound impact on their relation. Likewise, it should not be constructed as if the new state policy created an ethnic boundary between the two, which might be presumed as creating a source of conflict. The new system put in place rather politicized the existing difference and added a dimension of "us" from "them", which surpassed the elements of similarities and magnified the differences. However, the conflict demonstrated the potent force of ethnicity in creating hostilities and conflicts between dichotomized groups, once activated for political or economic motives.

The conflict was complex, sophisticated and multidimensional in nature. It can be seen as a question of gaining and maintaining self-government and territorial integrity among the

Garri. When seen from the perspective of the Borana, it was a reaction to keep the status quo of larger geographical occupation and administration, which was the case during the imperial and Derg regime.

5.2 Competition over scarce resource as a triggering factor for the Borana-Garri Conflicts

Competition over scarce grazing fields and water, and clan based raiding of livestock has been ongoing causes ofpastoralist conflicts. Borana and Garri pastoralists move to different areas searching for pasture and water for their animals and for human use. Their movement varies according to the distribution of pasture and water. Some areas are suitable for use during the dry season and some during the wet season. During the dry season, the Garri pastoralists move to the dry season reserve areas along the lower banks of Genale and Dawa rivers and the areas outside the riverbanks. The Borana pastoralists also move during the dry season to the banks of the upper Dawa river. However, these areas are not suitable during the wet season, some areas become infested with biting flies, ticks, and tsetse fly. Thus, both groups migrate to the Ellele Plain grassland, east of Diid Liben. This migration brings them into contact with each other and triggers conflict between them.

Shrinkage of rangelands due to different factors intensifies competition over pastor and water in the area between the Borana and Garri, resulting in frequent violent conflicts. The rangelands that are suitable for irrigated farming (typically the dry season reserves) have been taken away from pastoralists for farming schemes. The grazing land has also been fragmented by settlements, by national parks, and critically by war and conflict, all of which have reduced access.

In many pastoral areas drought occurs on a regular basis due to climate change and environmental degradation. In the Liben Zone (see map 3) of the Somali regional state, there is hardly any perennial source of water between Genale and Dawa, the two main rivers in the state. Therefore, villagers like the Garri must rely on water tanks and boreholes, once the nearby local

pond dries out. These situations apply equally to most pastoral lands in Borana, which experience low annual precipitation, average between 400 and 700mm.Hence, pastoral land use depends on scarce water supply from the rivers and ground water. According to the Borana and Garri informants, the search for pastoral land and water has become more difficult as extreme weather has reduced their availability, and moving into new areas in search of these resources often provokes conflict. One interviewee noted: *the temperature is getting higher and higher . . .the long rains had been reduced and desertification is so high, we don't even have trees, no grass. . . . look at the cattle, they are in a poor condition, nobody would buy them from us*.

The increase in the number of human and animal population is the internal factor for the shrinkage of grazing lands.

There has been raiding and counter-raiding between the two groups since the earliest period of their relations. For example, in 1963, there was a series of raids and counter-raids by the Garri and Borana that made the government intervene (Getachew, 1996:115). As informants noted, with varying scale, this is also a current case, which causes violent conflict.

This competition over resources is shaped by economic changes. As it is discussed in the third chapter, the Borana who were exclusively cattle herders have become camel herders around 18years ago. This was caused by the increased aridity of the area and the Borana began investing in camels as an alternative or addition to the cattle. This economic change increased the competition between the Borana and Garri.

In general, due to the deterioration in their livelihood triggered by a number of factors discussed above has increased conflict over scarce pastoral resources. Moreover, the erosion of pastoralist institutional arrangements around natural resources management has also affected the situation. This is in part attributed to the state policies and actions that have not recognized the right of the pastoralists to own or manage their rangelands, and have therefore ignored their institutional system.

Chapter VI

Summary and Concluding Remarks

Introduction

This chapter tries to provide a summary of what this essay has attempted to address and how the research questions are answered.

6.1 What has been tried?

In the start this paper had one grand objective: to assess the underlying factors behind the formation, development and transformation of conflicts among pastoralists in the southern Ethiopia since 1990's focusing on the case of the Borana and Garri peoples. So as to do that, first, I went back in history and I revised and analyzed the macro historical trends in Ethiopia in relation to conflicts between different pastoralist communities. By doing so, I have discussed how historical political factors; changes in administrative boundaries and inter-state wars between Somalia and Ethiopia, has shaped and intensified pastoralist conflict, particularly the Borana-Garri conflicts. This paper also addressed the conflicts since 1990s between the two groups drawing lines of connection between the national discourse on ethnicity and local realities. It is argued that the violent conflicts in pastoral areas result from a myriad of historical, political and economic factors that reinforce one another. It is further argued that the pastoralist conflicts- if not all- particularly in post 1991 period are also linked with questions of land ownership and self government as the new state's constitution equated ethnic groups with administration units.

6.2 Answering the Research Questions

On the basis of the objectives setout, the research questions that were identified in chapter one were-

- What are the underlying causes of the post 1990's conflicts among the Borana-Oromo and Garri- Somali pastoralist group of Southern Ethiopia?

- What is the role of ethnicity in affecting social interaction in the area and particularly in fuelling or stabilizing conflicts? How was this relationship affected by the post‑1991 political system of the Ethiopian State?
- Did the intermittent conflicts of the area have elements of change and continuity that should be properly examined for viable political solutions?

The first research question, i.e finding the underlying causes of the conflicts among the Borana-Oromo and Garri- Somali pastoralist group of Southern Ethiopia since 1990's is jointly answered in Chapter IV and V. Chapter IV showed how the historical political factors; changes in administrative boundaries and inter-state wars between Somalia and Ethiopia, has shaped and intensified pastoralist conflict, particularly the Borana-Garri conflicts. By doing so, it showed the existing tensions between the groups from the past. The fifth chapter has identified political and economic, factors that reinforce one another and caused violent conflicts between Borana and Garri. Competition for scarce natural resources triggered by droughts and demographic factors, and exacerbated by weak local institutions, cattle raiding, and question of land ownership and self government are the main causes of the conflict identified. Biased provincial administrative support, the geo-political situation; presence of guerilla fighters across the border, refugee flow from Somalia, and firearms inflows was also considered central to the violent conflicts in the area.

Chapter V has also answered the second question i.e the role of ethnicity in affecting social interaction in the area and particularly in fuelling or stabilizing conflicts and how this relationship was affected by the post‑1991 political system of the Ethiopian State. Against the premordialists' notion that sees inherent ethnic dichotomies as a cause of communal action, the Borana-Garri conflict was not fundamentally attributed to primordial ethnic differences. It has been argued that the conflict must also be understood by the role played by the state. The shift in center-periphery relation with respect to Borana and Garri; first in favor of the Borana during the Imperial and Derg regime and later,in favor of the Garriduring the EPRDF has profound impact on their relation. However, the conflict demonstrated the potent force of ethnicity in creating hostilities and conflicts between dichotomized groups, once activated for political or economic motives.

Since 1990s the Borana-Garri conflicts have got a different dimension, a question of land ownership and self administration emphasizing ethnic dichotomies. However, it is argued that the conflict should not be constructed as if the new state policy, since 1991, created an ethnic boundary between the two, which might be presumed as creating a source of conflict. The new system put in place rather politicized the existing difference and added a dimension of "us" from "them", which surpassed the elements of similarities and magnified the differences. In a nutshell, it has been argued that the manifestation of many forms of ethnicity is highly situational and ethnic identity takes different forms based on changing conditions.

The last but not least question of the research was if the intermittent conflicts of the area have elements of change and continuity that should be properly examined for viable political solutions and this is answered again in chapter V. Competition for scarce natural resources triggered by droughts and demographic factors, and exacerbated by weak local institutions, cattle raiding, and other above mentioned causes of the conflicts between Borana and Garri has been there with varying scale. However, years following the ethno-regional administration, it became a political strife that consisted of gaining more territory or loosing it, and using any possible means to win the game and defend one's own rights of territorial integrity from encroachment. The conflict has become more frequent and political; it is not just about recourses anymore. It is about having control over land and administrative power.

Currently, both the Borana and Garri claim territorial ownership and self government on the same areas across the border between Oromiya and Somali Regional States, including Moyale and its surroundings. In such existing conflicts where lasting resolution failed to be given, the prospect of future relation seems worrisome. However, commitment on the part of the local elders, and local government authorities from both sides could no doubt help to handle the situation.

6.3 A way Forward

The Borana-Garri conflicts are complex, intricate and multidimensional in nature. There are several factors contributing to the conflicts and this makes it more challenging. However, I believe that there are opportunities towards peaceful co-existence. According to Hugh Miall (2007:33) social change or restructuring of social lives brings emergent conflict and violence if it is not handled carefully or transformed peacefully. This is what happened in the case of Borana-Garri conflicts. Perhaps, the reaction of one group on the other one was not limited to the actions and policies of the state actors, but also in relative moves and positions of other groups, and such responses are " shaped by their past history which they carry with them"(2007:34). Any government imposed polices should consider the historical and existing situation of the different groups.

The border issue between Oromiya and Somali regional states should be solved in a way that guarantees the freedom of movement of pastoral groups and doesn't aggravate resource competition between them. Moreover, the government should integrate and strengthen local governance institutions that are rooted in traditional practice for managing resources and inter-group conflicts, a paradigm from below. In general, commitment on the part of the local elders, and local government authorities from both sides could no doubt help to handle the situation.

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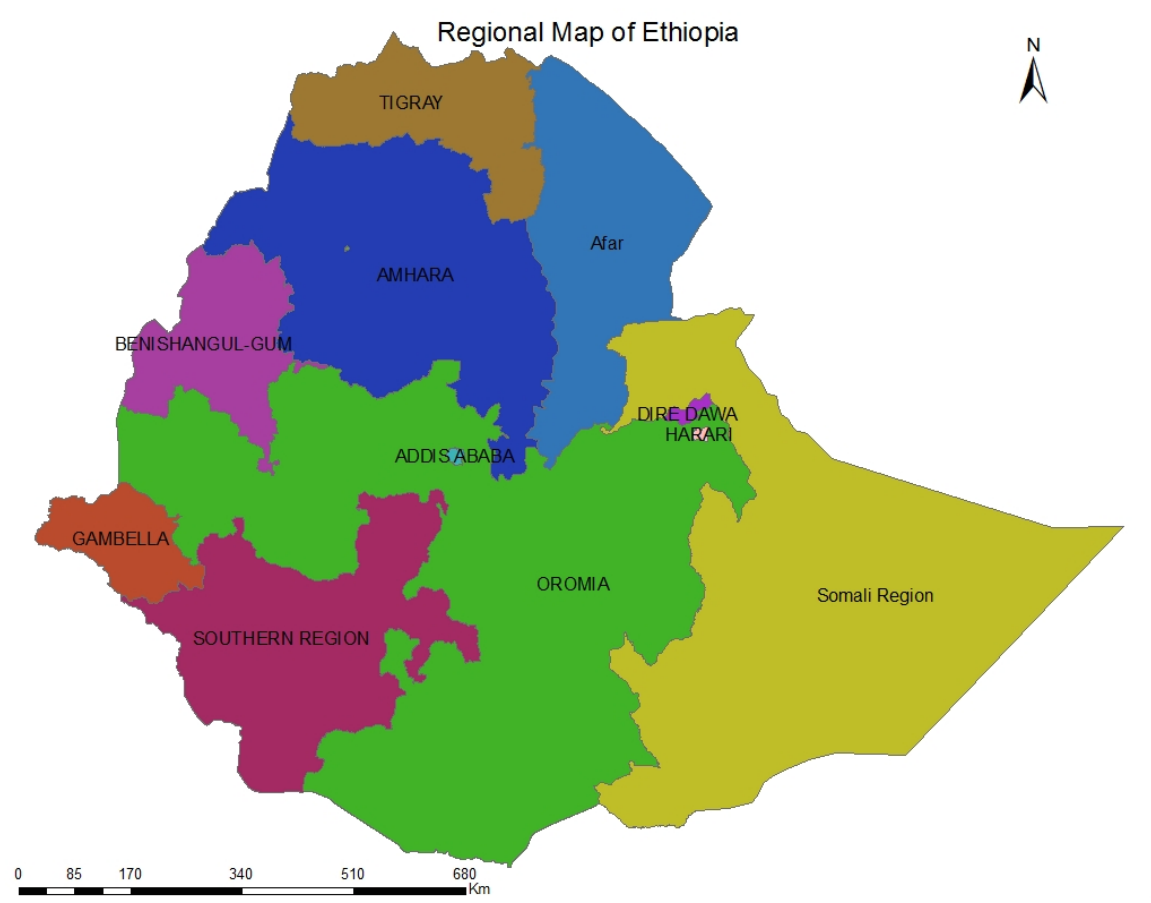
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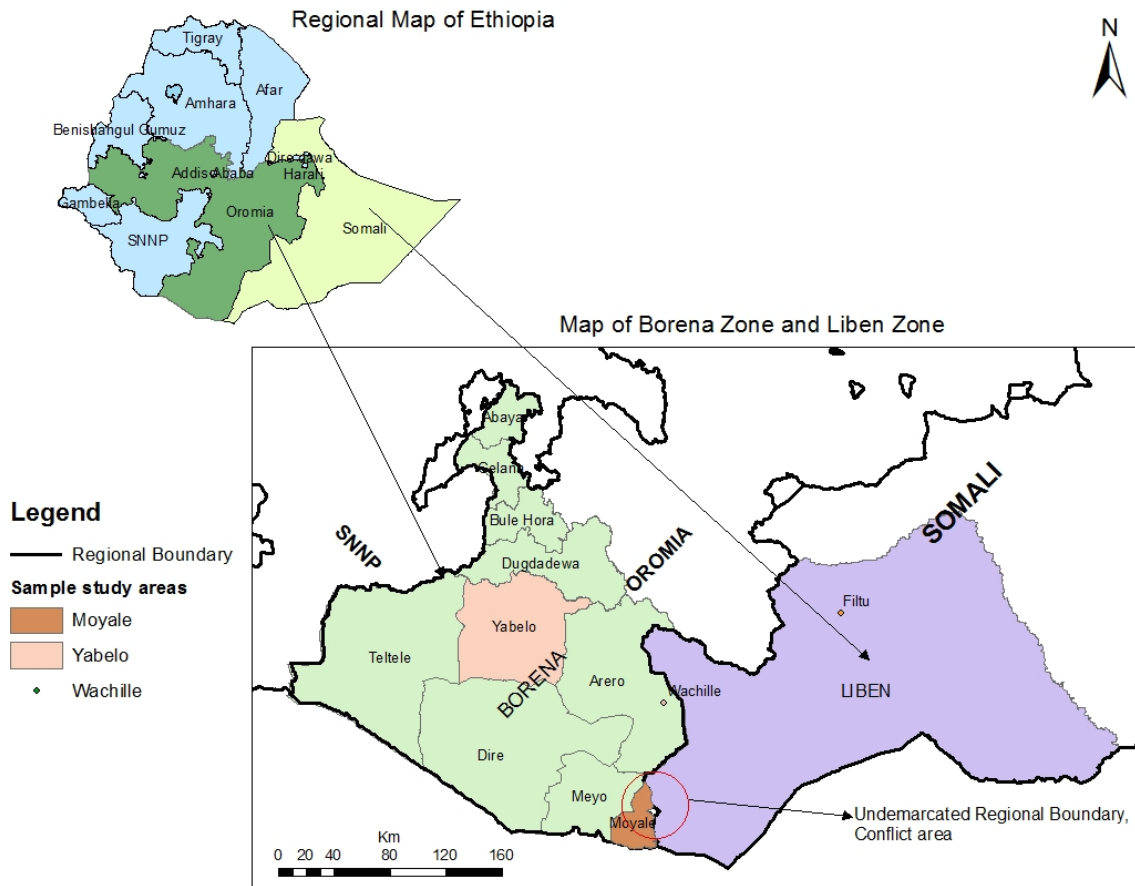
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Appendices

Map 2. Regional Map of Ethiopia

Regional Map of Ethiopia

Map 3. Map of the Research Area

N:B The Liben Zone which was part of the Borana Awraja before, now is in the Somali regional state.

Map 4. Borana Awraja/ Province

The Borana province map until 1992

Source: Ethio demography and health.
http://www.ethiodemographyandhealth.org/OromAdmMap.jpg

Map 5. *Tulla* Wells

Source: PFE, IIRR and DF. 2010. Pastoralism and Land: Land tenure, administration and use in pastoral areas of Ethiopia

Table 1. Interviewees' details and Interview Date

Anonymous Name	Age	Sex		Borana	Garri	Living area	Interview Date
		Male	Female				
Gelana	64	X		X		Yabelo	18/09/12
Ali	44	X			X	Moyale	24/09/12
Ayantu	51		X	X		Moyale	18/09/12
Debela	52	X		X		Yabelo	24/09/12
Olana	32	X		X		Wachille	30/09/12
Mohammed	72	X			X	Wachile	5/10/12
Seid	46	X			X	Moyale	3/10/12
Ibrahim	54	X			X	Moyale	3/10/12
Husen	36	X			X	Wachille	5/10/12
Bayo	46	X		X		Moyale	30/09/12
Regasa	58	X		X		Yabelo	18/09/12
Regional Official		X					20/08/12
Zonal Official		X					18/09/12
Zonal Official		X					5/10/12

NB: The names given are anonymous names and other detail of the regional and zonal officials is not given for informants' safety.

Field notes have also been taken in time of interview without recordings.

Source: Fieldwork 2012.