



WOLKITE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**THE ROLE OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDERS IN RESOLVING MESKAN and
MAREKO ETHNIC CONFLICT IN CASE GURAGE ZONE OF SNNPRS
ETHIOPIA**

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December, 2023

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**Role of Multi-Stakeholders in Resolving Meskan and Mareko Ethnic
Conflict, The Case of Meskan and Mareko Woreda In South Nation
Nationalities and People Of Region, Ethiopia**

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**A thesis Submitted to the Department of Governance and Development
studies of Wolkite University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science**

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December, 2023
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Declaration

By my signature below, I declared and affirm that this thesis is my own work. I have followed all ethical principles of scholarship in the preparation, data collection, data analysis and completion of this thesis. All scholarly mater that is included in the thesis has been given recognition through citation. I affirm that I have cited and referenced all sources used in this document. Every serious effort has been made to avoid any plagiarism in the preparation of this thesis.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all I would like to thank the almighty God for his help in successfully completing the program for my master's degree. I therefore, praise him.

I am very grateful to my deepest gratitude for my advisors Yisak Bekele (PhD). And co-adviser Mr. Jemberu Molla for their careful guidance, constructive comments, and continual corrections they made to this thesis without their unlimited support, useful comments and advice they have given me from the very beginning to the end. Thank you very much. Your patience and encouragement helped me a lot to produce this thesis.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the district administrator, speaker of the head, security office head and police officer, justice office head, court president, of both Meskan and Mareko district.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to local conflict reconciler elders and religious elders of both Meskan and Mareko district.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my wife and my son for unreserved supports and also my friends for their motivation and encouragement throughout the research.

ACRONYMS

CSA = Central Statics' Agency

EPRDF = Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

FGD = Focus Group Discussion

IPI= International Peace and Institute

MWFEDD= Meskan Woreda Finance and Economic Development Department

NATO= North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO= Non-Governmental Organization

ONLF= Ogaden National Liberation Front

OLF= Oromo Liberation Front

OSCE= Organization for the Security, and Cooperation of Europe

SNNPR= South Nation Nationalities and Peoples Region

TPLF= Tigray People Liberation Front

UN = United Nation

UNDP= United Nation Development Program

GLOSSARY

Mala= is the process of oath taking between the two disputing parties in front of the elders before the process of local mediation system takes place

Raaga= is the second level of conflict resolution branch in the study area.

Maaga= is the first level of conflict resolution branch in the study area.

Sierra= customary law in the study area,

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of these multi-stakeholders in resolving Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict. Methodologically, the researcher used qualitative research approach with descriptive research design. Predominantly the study was conducted based on primary sources of data; however secondary sources of data were also used. The tools used to collect data were; interview, focus group discussion (FGD) and document analysis. Purposive sampling was also used to select the participants for the interview and FGD. The data collected using different data collection instruments were organized in to five themes and analyzed in accordance with the research questions and objectives of the study. Based on the finding of this study, many lives and properties were destroyed in the conflict between Mareko and Meskan communities. For this reasons, various parties participated in order to stop the conflict and bring the society to peace. Among the parties involved in resolving the conflict are the government bodies, custom conflict resolution systems and religious leaders. In sum, the study explored the role of these bodies (the local government, the customary conflict resolution system and religious institutions) as well as their mutual integration in solving the conflict and examines the challenges that embedded the conflict from being resolved. Although the conflict was resolved with the help of these bodies, especially the customary conflict resolution system, but ethnic group's (Mareko) side says government did not respond to the legal decision. Despite the concerns the main conclusion of this study is that the conflict between the two ethnic groups has been resolved, and community solidarity has enabled mutual relations to continue. Finally, this study indicates that to prevent similar ethnic conflict in the locality the ruling parties should be cautious and consider legal basis when demarcating the border between the two Woredas /communities. Furthermore when conflict occurs, it should be resolved through established legal basis and customary conflict resolution mechanisms by avoiding any politically affiliated intervention.

Key words: - ethnic, ethnic group conflict, conflict resolution, multi-stakeholders,

Chapter One

1 Introduction

This chapter consists of the theoretical framework of the research title and other related work surrounding the study area, the statement of the problem that deals the research gap, main and specific objective of the research, the scope of the study, limitation of the study and significant of the study were incorporated in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Ethnic conflict resolution is a process of peacemaking and a means of handling conflicts among different ethnic group to create peace when conflicts occur either in a family, ethnic group, or interpersonal relations. Ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms could either be traditional or modern. In these ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms different stakeholders may involve such as local governments, community elders and religious leaders. According to Pankhurst and Assefa (2008), conflict resolution mechanisms in Ethiopia can be broadly classified as indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms and formal conflict resolution mechanism (state justice system). The formal conflict resolution mechanism (which is provided by the state) in Ethiopia is mainly European origin (Ayalew, 2012:8). He also explore Formal conflict resolution mechanism was introduced in Ethiopia in the 1960s, and subsequent laws have been issued by succeeding governments. The professed intention was to create comprehensive set of laws modernization of the legal framework that would serve modern Ethiopia. This formal ethnic conflict resolution have big role in Ethiopia today through legal consideration such as legal court system and appointed judge. Formal legal system is based on individual interests and responsibilities. Participation is not mandatory and the goal is punishment rather than rebuilding of society relationship. Professional training and neutrality is also regarded as the sources of legitimacy and consequently power is the fundamental aspect of conflict resolution in modern systems (Tuso, 2011).

The other is customary ethnic conflict resolution that Ethiopia uses broadly. According to Pankhurst and Assefa, (2008) the practice of traditional ethnic conflict mechanism is common in different areas of Ethiopia, such as Gamo, Afar, Amhara, Beni-Shangul Gumuz, Gambella, Harar, Oromia, Somali, Sidama, Tigray, gurage and in the capital city Addis Ababa. The importance and necessity of indigenous ethnic conflict resolution lie in the fact that they strive to restore a balance, settle the conflict, and eliminate disputes.

The indigenous ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms have been the body of Ethiopian law for centuries. However, after the introduction of the new judicial system, the usual conflict resolution mechanisms were abandoned and ignored (Mekonnen, 2016). The constitutions that have been drafted at different points in the history of Ethiopia have no or only a little space for the role customary dispute resolution system. This has weakened these traditional systems significantly. This may indicate that the approach taken by Ethiopian legal modernizers may have been wrong, or at least should be reconsidered and revision (Pankhurst & Assefa, 2008).

Even though, indigenous ethnic conflict resolution institutions play an important role in resolving different types of ethnic conflicts in different parts of Ethiopia, their role in peace building is not yet scientifically understood (Mokonnen, 2016). Therefore, this study was initiated to investigate the ethnic conflict resolution of multi-stakeholders role in peace building among Meskan and Mareko ethnic groups. Those who use them are also more at ease in a familiar environment. The role of chiefs, elders, family heads, religious leaders and others is not only to resolve conflicts but also to anticipate and stop/or intercept conflicts. Group relationships and rights are as important as individual ones as emphasis is on restoring relationships and reconciling groups (Choudree, 1999).

When we come to the study area the mechanism employed to resolve conflicts is the same with other parts of Ethiopia. Meskan and Mareko districts have been following both formal and customary ethnic conflict resolution methods and in these mechanisms involvement of multi-stakeholders are realized to resolve the emergent ethnic conflict. For example in Meskan district both formal and customary conflict resolution mechanisms are available. *Feragezgn* customary

conflict resolution institution is one of cost and time effective Meskan's conflict resolution mechanisms when we compared with modern institutions (Lemu and Yasin, 2021). On the other hand, the Libido-Mareko ethnic group of Gurage Zone Southern Ethiopia have their own can be timed indigenous conflict resolution institution, *Maaga*, which has been used to resolve intra- and inter -group conflicts (Mekonnen, 2016).

Within those mechanisms there are different multi-stakeholders who participate in the process of resolving ethnic conflict. But the case is that the role of multi-stakeholders dose not well-known and the justification behind the initiative to investigate the role of multi-stakeholders in resolving ethnic conflict in the study area lays in this limitation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ethnic Conflict is an inevitable and all-pervasive element in our society and in the world. If there it is, conflict reconciliation must be mandatory for the betterment of good society. Many researchers have been undertaken on the resolving of Ethnic conflict throughout the world, even in Ethiopia, however, this research strives to show the role of multi-stakeholders in resolving ethnic conflict. Moreover, conflicts may end up in destruction and even death; conflicts may also result in increased effectiveness, enhanced relationships, and further goal attainment. Indeed, in human terms conflict is one of the powers that allow us to learn, progress, and grow. Understanding the relevance of reconciliation and Managing the conflict involves defusing any strong emotion involved in the conflict and enabling the disputing parties to understand their differences and similarities. Negotiation involves enabling the parties in the conflict to achieve an outcome with respect to their differences (Neil & Kevin, 1994)

Different kinds of conflicts will happen anywhere at any time. For instance, personal conflict, ethnic conflict, economic and political conflict etc. may happen. Therefore, it is necessary to find conflict resolution mechanisms for these conflicts. Among these conflict resolution mechanisms legal ethnic conflict resolution and traditional ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms are major methods. The study wants to show that different stakeholders may have different roles in these

conflict resolution methods. Some of these stakeholders include local government, community elders and religious leaders.

Our country, like any other African country, uses legal conflict resolution methods to resolve ethnic conflicts. This type of conflict resolution method has been supported and implemented in our country especially since the 1950s and 1960s based on various legislative references including legal codes and constitutional provisions. When we look at the role of these types of stakeholders, it focuses on arresting and fining the guilty party based on the civil and criminal code. The other and most important ethnic conflict resolution is the traditional conflict resolution mechanism. This conflict resolution method has a long history in Africa and Ethiopia it is accepted by most of the society as well. This is because the people who run the institution have their origins in the rise of the community and most of their focus is on things that strengthen the community's solidarity after the conflict. Generally, the customary dispute resolution mechanisms in Ethiopia involve mediation between the conflicting parties and their respective families. It also involves restitution, reconciliation, and aims at not only settling the conflict between the parties but also at restoring the previous peaceful relationship within the community as well as maintaining their future peaceful relationships by circumventing the culture of revenge. Further, the customary dispute resolution mechanisms use elders as mediators who are appointed by and known to the parties and/or communities (Lijalem, 2014).

Another stakeholder is religious leaders in ethnic conflict resolution. Their role is mainly to prevent conflict from happening in the society and after it happens, they have a great role in educating the society about the misery of conflict by teaching them according to the teachings of the Holy Bible and Qur'an. The religious leaders play the facilitating roles. Religious fathers can give more awareness about peace and how to be peace loving and mating with members of the specific religious institution. They further lowly shines biblical perspectives that would have power to solve conflicts (Benti, 2017).

I the same way, there are different mechanisms of conflict resolution in Meskane and Mareko ethnic groups. Such as from Meskan ethnic group, *fragezene* is a traditional conflict resolution mechanism and formal legal system. On the other hand, the formal legal system and *Raaga* and

Maaga are the traditional conflict resolution systems are the main ones to be mentioned in the study area.

Although the actions of the actors who resolve conflicts using the above-mentioned conflict resolution methods are preserved in Ethiopia and in the districts where this study is conducted, still less to understand the role of the actors. Additionally, there is limitation of formalizing customary conflict resolution mechanisms and integrating the process of solving the conflicts between the ethnic groups in the legal document in the constitution of the country and the local government like formal conflict resolution mechanism methods (top down approach). That is why the purpose of the study is to assess the role of the multi-stakeholders in the area where this study is conducted.

In the study area, different authors/researchers have done different researches, for example, Tewodros (2019) explore the nexus between ethnic federalism and ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia by taking the case of Meskan and Mareko in SNNPRS, this study shows that how ethnic federalism will be taken to ethnic conflict in the study area. Mokoonen (2016) was conducted on procedures used in *Raaga-Maaga* indigenous conflict resolution institution among the Libido-Mareko ethnic group in Gurage zone SNNPRS Ethiopia. This investigation was concerned on the procedure followed by *Raaga-Maaga* indigenous conflict resolution institution among Mareko ethnic group. And also Kebede L and Wondu Y (2021) examine the role of *Feregezagn* in handling/ settling conflicts in the Meskan ethnic group. The study focused on showing the role of the *feragezagn* conflict resolution mechanism in resolving the conflict that occurs in Meskan ethnic group.

Mareko and Meskan ethnic groups were governed under one administrative structure before Ethiopia adopted the federal system since 1991 and after adopted federal system until the 2000. However, due to the delimitation of the border and other political problems, which were carried out based on the idea of self-administration flowing federalism system, the conflict between the two ethnic groups has occurred since 2011, resulting in the loss of human life and property. For this, various conflict resolution mechanisms have been used in the area to resolve the conflict. For example, local customary conflict resolution and formal conflict resolution mechanisms are

mainly mentioned. Even if, the conflict was recently solved through peace effort by various parties (multi-stakeholders) and the people of both communities were able to breathe the air of peace. As we have seen above, many types of the studies focus on the role of different conflict resolution mechanisms individually, but in most cases, ethnic conflict can be resolved through the joint efforts of different stakeholders. So no research has yet been conducted on the role of different actors in ethnic conflict resolution mechanism in the study area. Therefore, the main objective of this study is assessing the role of multi–stakeholders in solving Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict.

1.3 Objectives Of The Study Area

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to examine the role of multi – stakeholders in resolving Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- ❖ To explain the role of customary conflict resolution mechanism in Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict.
- ❖ To explain the role of local government and other parties in resolving ethnic conflict in the study area.
- ❖ To assess the integration between formal and informal conflict resolution mechanism in the study area.
- ❖ To identify the challenges that embed the process of conflict resolution between the two conflicting groups in the study area.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the roles of customary conflict resolution mechanism in Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict resolution?
2. What is the role of local government and other actors in conflict resolution process in the study area?

3. What is the integration between formal and informal conflict resolution mechanism in the study area.
4. What are the challenges that embed the process of conflict resolution between the two conflicting groups in the study area?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Ethiopia is a home for more than 80 ethnically varying society. All these have been their cultural and value background. In addition to this, Ethiopians in general and Meskan and Mareko ethnic group in particular, have different multi-stakeholders in resolving ethnic conflict. As conflict is apparent in such society, only legal law option couldn't guaranty and sustain peaceful coexistence of different ethnic group. So, the role of multi-stakeholders should be promoted since significant sect in resolving ethnic conflict. This study has the following benefits: It can serve the policy makers in enhancing learning by adding value laden recommendations based on the research findings. The study also can serve for advocacy, policy and legislation development, social mobilization, program design, starting point for future researchers and it can serve as ground for further training and possible feedback in the implementation of the research findings at all levels of interventions to researchers and development actors and contributes to investigate the role and potentials of multi-stakeholders in ethnic conflict resolution.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study have been conceptually, delimited to the role of multi – stakeholders in resolving Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict focusing on the role and integration of different actors in resolving the conflict. Geographically, the study covered Guragee zone SNNPRS Meskan and Mareko Woredas which are when the conflict is going on, to save our time and finance, because the ethnic conflict between Meskan and Mareko caused a lot of human, social and economic destruction at the time.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

Even though different efforts have been made, the researcher was facing some challenges to work this study. Among those challenges, there was lack of internet access, lack of sufficient written materials, the sensitivity of the issue and unwillingness of the respondents regards to the study. The respondents are afraid that their answer will be given a different political name in the area.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The research was presented in five chapters. Chapter one dealt with background, the statement of the problem, research objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two presented a review of the previous studies on different aspects the role of multi-stakeholders in ethnic conflict resolutions. It also revealed the theoretical and conceptual framework that was used to guide the study. Under chapter three the overview of the study area is presented and the details of the research methodology including the specific methods used for data collection and analysis are also incorporated. Chapter Four includes the overall analysis of the study. Finally chapter five covers the conclusion and recommendation part of the thesis.

Chapter Two

2 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of multi-stakeholders in resolving Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict in southern region of Ethiopia state. In this chapter, the study reviewed literatures related to the concept of ethnic conflict resolution and other relevant literatures by two major categories: Under the first category, definitions, conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the issue under study are portrayed. It includes definitions of ethnic, ethnicity, ethnic group, ethnic identity, conflict, ethnic conflict, conflict resolution and the concept of local government, and conflict resolution practice in contemporary africa. In the second category, theoretical framework of conflict resolving partnership in the world, the global preponderance of indigenous and endogenous approaches, african indigenous and endogenous approaches to peace and conflict resolution, theories of ethnicity and phases to resolve conflicts are explained.

2.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks: Concept and Definitions

2.2.1 Definition

2.2.2 Ethnic, Ethnicity, Ethnic Group and Ethnic identity

The term ethnic is derived from the Greek ethnos, which means stock, multitude, crowd and nation. Many claim that the Greek word in turn derives from the Sanskrit sabbah, community. Today it means primarily people (Bolaffi et al, 2003).

The terms ethnicity, ethnic group and ethnic identity lack conceptual clarity since its origin. They are often used interchangeably. In actuality, although these terms are closely related, there is a nuance dividing them. Ethnicity is the state of being ethnic or belonging to a certain ethnic group or it is an affiliation or identification with an ethnic group (Kellas, 1998). Ethnic group is a social group based on ancestry, culture, or national origin, ethnicity (Yang, 2000). Thus ethnic group can be defined as a group of people who believe sharing one language, particular attachments to

kinship, trace common ancestry, having collective memory and history, racial similarity, cultural symbols, common religion, outward physical characteristics.

Ethnic identity is defined as the set of meanings that individuals impute to their membership in an ethnic community, including those attributes that bind them to that collectively and distinguished it from others in their relevant environment (Taras & Ganguly, 2010).

2.2.3 Conflict and Ethnic Conflict

Conflict is a process of social interaction involving a struggle over claims to resources, power and status, beliefs, and other preferences and desires. The aims of the parties in conflict may extend from simply attempting to gain acceptance of a preference, or securing a resource advantage, to the extremes of injuring or eliminating opponents (Bisno, 1988, pp. 13– 14; see also Coser, 1968, p. 232).

Following this, ethnic conflict could be conceptualized as a conflict where ‘the goals of at least one conflict party are defined in... ethnic terms, and in which the primary fault line of confrontation is one of ethnic distinction’ (Wolff, 2006). Ethnicity has been the driving force behind many of the demands for a measure of self-rule in a well-defined territorial level of local government either with the status of a kilil (region), zone or wereda (district) within the Regional State or demands for incorporation into the adjoining State to which their ethnic group allegedly belongs. The marginalization of a minority ethnic group by a majority ethnic group within a certain territory is another cause of conflict. At least one of the conflict parties will explain its dissatisfaction in ethnic terms – that is – one party to the conflict will claim that its distinct ethnic identity is the reason why its members cannot realize their interest, why they do not have the same rights, or why their claims are not satisfied. Thus, ethnic conflicts are a form of group conflict in which at least one of the parties interprets the conflict, its causes and potential remedies along an actually existing or perceived discriminating ethnic divide (Ibid).

2.2.4 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution, is the most widely recognized and appropriate term for referring to the influential global movement to address conflict that developed in the second half of the twentieth

century. Such a broad movement is difficult to define, but it typically aims to deal with conflict informally, non-coercively, and by being responsive to people in conflict (Wanjala S. Nasong'o, 2016).

Conflict resolution is the process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures and by working with the parties involved in that conflict. The phrase "conflict management" is occasionally used interchangeably with conflict this one. It includes all efforts made to avoid disputes by being proactive. It also covers the full domain of handling conflict favorably at various states. Limiting conflict, containing them, and litigating are all included, the phrase "conflict resolution" may be an admission of venality, yet all disputes may be resolved, therefore, the most practitioners can do is manage and control it. Actions are taken in conflict resolution to lessen ongoing violent conflict, attempting to reduce the extent of the destruction and suffering to prevent potential spill over into other parties or adjacent nations (Deutsch, 2000).

Any procedure that ends or resolves conflict by means that may include violence or hostilities is referred to as conflict resolution. As an alternative, it can be seen as a non-violent procedure that manages conflict by compromise, or with the aid of a third party that either facilitates or imposes a settlement or resolution. Conflict resolution processes are numerous and varied and they can be seen on a continuum ranging from collaborative, participatory, informal, non-binding processes (such as mediation, conciliation, third party negotiation) to adversarial, fact-oriented, legally binding and imposed decisions that arise from institutions such as the courts and tribunals (Boulle, 1996).

Conflict resolution is an effort to deal with the underlying issues that lead to conflict and to resolve it by changing and reorganizing the institutions, forces, and systems that support such conflicts. In order to successfully settle a conflict, its underlying causes must be addressed. Conflict resolution is a wide term that indicates this. This suggests that there has been a shift in the conflict's structure, in the conflict's conduct, and in the attitudes toward it (Jeong, 2000).

2.3 Local Government

A “Local governance,” as defined by the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) is one that provides services to and controlled by citizens by defining their interests and is characterized by “a complex set of political relationships between many different actors, formal and informal, national and local, who related to each other in variety ways” (Olivier de Sardan, 2011). These actors are, for example, may be a mix of local governments, traditional chiefs, community-based organizations, and religious institutions (Joshi, A and Schultze-Kraft, 2014).

2.3.1 Managing Resources Effectively and Efficiently

Perhaps the most visible function of local governance is to provide basic services such as health care, education, water, sanitation, justice, and security. Managing these services at the local level helps keep peace in many ways. People can best describe their own needs and local government officials are closer to them than national authorities or international NGOs. This enables them, at least in theory, to respond to people’s needs, address local-level inequalities, and leverage existing capacities for service delivery (Derick, 2011). When provided by local governments in a fair, equitable, and reliable manner, service delivery can also increase the visibility, credibility, and legitimacy of the state (Berg and James, 2015). This is particularly true in the wake of conflict or instability, when the provision or restoration of basic services can be seen as “the materialization of the peace dividend,” showing people the benefits of peace and increasing their commitment to sustaining it (Klem and Frerks, 2008).

2.3.2 Giving People a Voice

International peace institute (IPI), (2018) state another important function of local governance structures is to give people a voice, both by representing their constituencies and giving them opportunities to participate at the local level and by relaying their interests and needs to higher-level actors. In particular, this can give a voice to historically disadvantaged groups or those that are underrepresented at higher levels of government.

2.3.3 Nurturing Political Will for Peace

International peace institute (IPI), (2018) also explained managing resources effectively and giving people a voice, local governance structures can also nurture political will for sustaining peace. Effective decentralization can allow local governments not only to deliver services but also to serve as for a people to engage in dialogue with each other and negotiate local-level issues. When there is intense local-level competition between groups, for example, local governments could provide opportunities for power sharing. Agreement provided for power sharing at the national level. Such efforts at local-level conciliation can help build political will for peace at the national level.

2.4 Conflict Resolution practice in Contemporary Africa

There are two dimensions to contemporary conflict resolution practice in Africa, the modern and traditional, albeit the two are not mutually exclusive.

2.4.1 State-centered Conflicts and Dominant Approaches to Conflict Management

It is observable that most of the major conflicts in contemporary Africa are state-centered, implying that these are conflicts that tend to challenge the sovereignty of the state (i.e. in both territorial and juridical terms) or the legal and moral authority of the government in power – i.e. crises of legitimacy. The state is a key protagonist in these conflicts and therefore cannot be trusted to play the role of a third-party umpire capable of bringing an effective resolution of the conflict (ibid).

2.4.2 Elite Co-optation

Elite co-optation is one method of conflict regulation and settlement that many neo-patrimonial states in Africa use effectively to weaken opposition and rebuild a form of consensus aimed at more or less preserving and perpetuating the status quo. By elite co-optation African political regimes aim to placate, disorganize, silence or weaken salient pressure groups by luring vocal and influential members of the groups into the ruling circle with offers of strategic appointments, government contracts and other tangible benefits designed to incorporate them into the state patronage network (ibid).

2.4.3 Third-Party Intervention in Large-Scale Armed Conflicts and Wars

Third-party intervention occurs when conflict goes beyond the resolution capacity of the direct disputants or warring parties to involve an external intervener (e.g. a mediator, facilitator, observer, arbitrator, peace enforcement team, etc.). Third parties bring additional resources, skills and perspectives to the conflict process and too often their presence rubs off on and changes the relational structure, physical dynamics and outcomes of conflicts (ibid).

2.4.4 Traditional African Approach to Conflict Resolution

Dating from pre-colonial antiquity, various African societies have had their own traditional and customary approaches and methods of conflict prevention, management and resolution. The traditional approach and correlated methods were (and still are) deeply embedded in the people's cosmology and culture, which in turn had a profound religious content – the philosophy about God, life, community and being. Prior to Western contact, African traditional religions and Islam largely shaped the culture, world-view and civilization of various parts of the continent, albeit pockets of orthodox Christian tradition that date back to the first century AD existed in Egypt and, to a larger extent, Ethiopia. Similarly, the early conquest and settlement of Dutch merchants in the coastal region of South Africa prior to late-nineteenth-century colonialism led to the establishment of the Dutch Reform Christian church in this part of Africa (David, 2008).

2.4.5 Customary Conflict Resolution Mechanism

Customary dispute resolution processes are a part of a well-organized, time-tested social system that aims to enhance, maintain, and reconcile social relationships. The methods, processes and regulations are deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of peoples of Africa. The importance and utility of the processes lie in the fact that they strive “to restore a balance, to settle conflict and eliminate disputes” (Choudree, 1999).

Traditional processes are relatively informal and thus, less intimidating. Those who use them are also more at ease in a familiar environment. The role of chiefs, elders, family heads, and others is not only to resolve conflicts but also to anticipate and stop/or intercept conflicts. Group

relationships and rights are as important as individual ones as emphasis is on restoring relationships and reconciling groups (Ibid).

Traditional institutions have two crucial roles: one is proactive in fostering social cohesion, peace, harmony, and coexistence; the other is reactive in resolving conflicts that have already arisen (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2008).

Endogenous mechanisms of justice that are founded in local community practices are preferred for handling local problems since they develop through time and are used consistently as opposed to being forced or imported into communities (Zartman 2000).

Traditional civil society organizations have contributed significantly to the prevention and resolution of violent interethnic conflict. However, numerous deadly ethnic clashes have broken out all over the nation since the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), came to power in May 1991. Although reliable figures are difficult to come by, several reports and testimonies indicate that violent confrontations frequently occur in all of the regional states and have resulted in the deaths of thousands of people as well as the damage of public property (Sisay, 2007).

According to Getachew (2001), an Ethiopian legal professor, the adoption of a federal system might allow for legal pluralism: One part of the problem of the formal legal system's legitimacy crisis is the existence of the customary mechanisms for conducting legal affairs in the diverse Ethiopian communities. Mechanisms for harmonizing ancient and modern legal norms must be created in order to solve this issue. With the adoption of the federal form of government in Ethiopia, the system of allowing the play of traditional norms in various parts of the country (the states) practice based in the interest of both conflicting parties.

Formal pluralism, according to Andre Hoekema, "is a legal concept referring to the inclusion within the legal order of a principle of recognizing „other “law." Article 34; sub-article 5 of the federal constitution states that "This constitution shall not preclude the adjudication of disputes relating to personal and family laws in accordance with religious and customary law, with the consent of the parties to the dispute. Particulars shall be determined by law if the disputing

parties agreed to let religious and customary institutions have jurisdiction over their personal and family concerns, these institutions were given a constitutional right to do so. According to Article 78, sub-article 5, "Religious and customary courts that had state recognition and operated prior to the adoption of the constitution shall be organized on the basis of the recognition accorded to them by this constitution," the House of People's Representatives and State Councils "can establish or give official recognition to Religious and customary courts."

The formal legal pluralism under Ethiopia's new constitutional system is limited to personal status and family law, as is evident from the aforementioned constitutional clauses. However, the public law fields of criminal law, constitutional law, labor/employment law, and similar areas continued to be monopolized by the state legal system. Only personal law has received special attention. However, this does not disprove the existence and function of customary criminal courts, which, according to certain studies, are by far the most significant institutions of dispute resolution. There is a dual family law system that acknowledges official and non-official platforms for discussing family issues.

Courts that are arranged in a hierarchy make up the official forums. The Regional/Federal First Instance Courts, the High Court, and the Supreme Court are the three highest courts, from highest to lowest. For example, the Shemagelle (community elders) and Family council in Tigray and Amhara, the Luba Basa in Oromia, the Xeer in Somalia, the Earge in Bench, the Shari'a courts, and the church tribunals are a few examples of CCRMs in Ethiopia. Additionally, it is fully up to the parties to decide whether to file a lawsuit in a regular state court or one of those CCRMs.

2.5 Theoretical Framework of Conflict Resolving Partnership in the World

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are a relatively new political phenomenon and have only recently become instruments for policy-making. Their emergence is linked to the rising stakes of the private sector and of civil society. NGOs, trade unions, mass media, and other groups representing different interests claim stakes in policy-making, made even more complex by the

spread of ethnic and religious, national and trans-national movements on the one hand, and the increasing involvement of global actors in contemporary conflict resolution, on the other. These developments entail a growing need for the representation of divergent interests in conflict resolution. Although new actors are usually classified according to their affiliation with nation-states (state or non-state actors), in order to examine their role in the resolution, management, and transformation of contemporary conflicts I suggest classifying them according to the scale of their activities and authority compared to that of the nation-state (Jovvan and Valentin, 2006).

This implies two scales of multi-stakeholder participation in conflict resolution processes. The first is the participation of large international actors or stakeholders, primarily global or regional inter-governmental treaty organizations like the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or the Organization for the Security and Cooperation of Europe (OSCE) – players larger than the state. The second is the scale of local actors and stakeholders, such as private business, civil society organizations, or national, ethnic, and religious groups. The second level of participation usually takes place with the backing of a third party, either international NGOs dealing with conflict resolution and related issues or under the auspices of inter-governmental organizations. The two levels of participation are different in many ways, because of their different objectives, stakes, and strategies. The involvement of the second level of stakeholders usually aims at resolving a particular small-scale problem and, accordingly, has only an indirect impact on a conflict as a whole. Alternatively, their involvement can be a process-oriented mission aiming to establish a better environment in general, facilitating a dialogue between conflicting parties. This practice is known within the conflict resolution community as “dialogue projects” or “trust building projects.” The involvement of global players in conflict resolution typically has a more direct and bigger influence (positive or negative) on a conflict and its dynamics. These players can afford to engage in conflict resolution at any stage – starting from peacemaking (the cessation of hostilities), through peacekeeping operations (the implementation of cease-fires), to involvement in conflict settlement, as principal participants (negotiators, observers, arbiters, or mediators) (ibid).

Hence they also discussed, the main participants involved in the resolution, management, and transformation of contemporary conflicts may include a variety of global actors, actors from the private sector and the media, paramilitary, religious or other traditional leaders.

2.5.1 Global actors: global and regional inter-governmental organizations. As mentioned, in the contemporary international system, borders between so-called zones of peace and zones of war are fuzzy and difficult to define. Any local conflict has the potential to generate cross-border unrest. Due to far-reaching consequences, such as refugees or economic costs, contemporary conflicts have not only regional, but global affect, raising the stake of global players who may represent the interests of the international community as a whole (ibid).

2.5.2 Arowobusoye, International Alert and Haufler (as cited in Jovvan and Valentin, 2006) The private sector is one of the most important and most powerful stakeholders in contemporary conflicts, as it has access to and control over economic power – an extremely powerful lever in the global system. Business and conflict intertwine in two ways. The first is the way in which conflict affects businesses, usually reduced to factoring in financial risks in relation to investment decisions. The second, the reverse influence of the political, social, and economic impacts of businesses and their effect on conflict dynamics, is less studied, but is a crucial aspect of that interconnection (Arowobusoye, 2005; International Alert, 2004a, 2004b; Haufler, 2002). The media is a potent stakeholder in the management of contemporary social relations, due to its power to reach, influence, and manipulate large audiences. It is also a powerful means of politicizing issues and of generating division between sides of a present or future conflict. The power of the media, however, can be used not only for generation or escalation of conflict, but also for its resolution (Howard, Rolt, van de Veen, and Verhoeven, 2003; Melone, Terzis, and Beleli, 2002).

2.5.3 Para-Military Groups: In addition to the above Jovvan and Valentin (2006) explained the role of Para-military groups, traditional and religious leaders in contemporary conflict. **Para-military groups** the form of the participation of Para-military groups in the processes of conflict resolution can be controversial. Along with the transformation of the means and forms of

contemporary conflicts, the need arises to identify new military, political, economic, and social methods of influencing these groups and their role in conflict resolution.

2.5.4 Traditional and Religious Leaders: As contemporary conflicts are mainly intra-state conflicts fought around issues of identity, be they national, religious, or ethnic, traditional leaders and religious leaders have an important role to play. In situations of chaos and turmoil, they represent the forces that have the potential to unite and consolidate people. Often the authority of these leaders is recognized across the conflict line. This power can effect either escalation or resolution of conflicts. Accordingly, this power and influence of traditional and religious leaders must be recognized and utilized by decision-makers and used to facilitate reconciliation and trust building between and within communities (Jovvan, K and Valentin, K 2006).

2.6 The global preponderance of Indigenous and Endogenous

Approaches

Virtually all societies around the world have both indigenous and endogenous values, resources and institutions. Peacemaking and peace-building in Africa are, however, still predominantly being taught and practiced through models developed from Eurocentric traditions. The mainstream and dominant literature in peace studies works on the premise that the values, resources and institutions that have been developed by Eurocentric Western tradition, broadly defined as the Judaeo-Christian heritage, have a universality and can easily be transposed on to other societies. The Judaeo-Christian Western traditions have developed their own notions of peacemaking and reconciliation (ibid).

According to David J. Francis (2008) exploration the strengths of indigenous processes are:-

- First, they are familiar to the communities where they are being utilized and appeal to the local cultural norms and leadership structures. Therefore, the outcomes they produce are more likely to be internalized by the parties.
- Second, indigenous processes are inclusive, promote public participation and seek consensus in addressing the root causes of conflict.

- Third, there is a value-added element in terms of sustaining peace when these processes draw upon local cultural assumptions, norms and values as well as traditional and grassroots notions of justice and community-based political dialogue.
- Fourth, indigenous processes are cost effective in the sense that they rely on a community's own internal resources rather than the infusion of funds from external actors.
- Fifth, indigenous approaches emphasize and place a higher value on the nexus between mediation and reconciliation rather than viewing them as separate and distinct processes.
- Finally, indigenous approaches emphasize the importance of a sustained and continuous peace effort.

2.7 African Indigenous and Endogenous Approaches to Peace and Conflict Resolution

Externally driven international efforts to resolve conflict in Africa are often faced with the limitation that the local parties are sometimes unwilling, or unable, to relate to such initiatives. Official high-level diplomacy tends to focus on promoting dialogue between the leaders of warring parties based on the assumption that these are the legitimate representatives of the people. This may be an erroneous assumption. Ultimately peace processes must also include local populations in order to be effectively grounded in their realities and so able to address their grievances. Indigenous and endogenous approaches to peace and conflict resolution in Africa provide us with insights into how more inclusive and community-based processes can be utilized. Indigenous and endogenous peace processes are endowed with valuable insights that can inform the rebuilding of social trust and restoration of the conditions for communal coexistence (David, 2008).

2.7.1 Contextualizing the Indigenous and the Endogenous

David (2008) state the types of intra-state conflicts that we are witnessing today in Africa divide the population of a state by undermining interpersonal and social trust, and consequently they destroy the social norms, values and institutions that have regulated and coordinated cooperation and collective action for the well-being of the community. This makes it very

difficult for both the social groups and the state itself to recover their cohesion after hostilities cease in the post-conflict situation. It is therefore useful to examine whether there are indigenous and endogenous approaches to peace and conflict resolution that emphasize the rebuilding of social trust through reconciliation. It is particularly of interest to look at these issues through the prism of the rebuilding of social trust, because if our emphasis during the peacemaking process is on the renewal and reconstruction of society then the mechanisms and institutions that are put in place to oversee this process need to place an emphasis on the healing of social divisions, the redressing of the exclusion and inequality that may exist in a given community. This in turn means focusing on the restoration of broken relationships, through the involvement and participation of the family, community and even the nation as a whole. It means highlighting their strengths in supporting local governance, constructing consensus and initiating processes of reconciliation. It also means pointing out that a reliance on indigenous approaches can limit the flexibility of a process owing to the adherence of cultural norms, some of which may not be gender sensitive. The term indigenous refers to that which is inherent to a given society but also that which is innate and instinctive. The term endogenous refers to that which emerges from a society. Both definitions are instructive because when we allude to indigenous and endogenous approaches to peace and conflict resolution, we are simultaneously referring to processes that are inherent in a given society following years of tradition, but also to those that are generated and systematically reproduced by such a society.

2.7.2 The Limitations of Indigenous and Endogenous Peace Processes

Paradoxically, the duration of indigenous peacemaking can be viewed as a weakness, because, depending on the willingness of parties to achieve consensus, such processes can become indefinite. Gender exclusion and the paternalism inherent in human societies while indigenous processes contain a range of progressive values, some of their practices are patriarchal and therefore not gender sensitive. This interestingly enough is not a phenomenon that is restricted to the African experience. Western and Eurocentric traditions and cultural practices have historically excluded women from the political decision-making and problem-solving roles.

This has had the effect of undermining the role of women in peace and peacemaking processes (David, 2008).

2.7.3 Complementing Official State and International Peace Processes

The discussion of indigenous and endogenous processes points to a number of strengths and limitations in terms of their effectiveness. Indigenous and endogenous peace and conflict resolution approaches are generally not recognized by the governments as viable alternatives to promoting peace at a grassroots level (David, 2008).

2.8 Theories of Ethnicity

There is no scholarly agreement about the essence of ethnicity and causes ethnic conflicts. However, the various approaches on ethnicity and ethnic conflicts could be seen under the three theories *primordialist*, *instrumentalist* and *constructivist*.

2.8.1 Primordial Approach

The primordial approach is the oldest in sociological and anthropological literature. The *primordialist* or naturalist approach and sociobiological, supposes that ethnic identity is something given or natural (Berghe, 1995; Geertz, 1963). It is something given, ascribed at birth, deriving from the kin-and-clan-structure of human society, and hence something more or less fixed and permanent. Many proponents of this approach view ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in terms of natural and fixed characteristics of individuals and communities. In the case of Ethiopian, *primordialism* greatly influenced both popular perceptions of ethnic identity and political discourses. In this respect, in popular conceptions of ethnic identity, primordial elements, political discourse of national self-determination have used primordial elements. The popularity of the Stalinist doctrine of self-determination in Ethiopia since the beginning of the 1970s appeared to reinforce primordial elements of identity. Indeed, the ‘self’ in political discourses of ethnic self-determination found definition based on Stalinist principles of common descent, language, territory and common psychology (Hizkias, 1996). Primordialism is mostly criticized for making the premise that racial and ethnic divides are permanent, innate, and static. According to several scholars, ethnic identity is flexible and changeable and is open to revision,

modification, and renegotiation (Brass, 1991; Eller and Coughlan 1996; Hutchison and Smith 1996). In general, one's biological heredity (an independent variable) and attachment, which are fixed at birth and always remain the most important determinants of one's identity throughout the life time and cannot be subject to any alteration, play a large role in the primordial approach to ethnicity.

2.8.2 Instrumentalist Approach

According to instrumentalists who take this stance on ethnicity (Brass, 1991; Glazer and Moynihan, 1975), people or groups can utilize their ethnicity to further their political, economic, and other objectives. However, the instrumentalist approach is attacked for its flimsy failure to acknowledge that ethnic identity cannot be "decided...by individuals at will but is embedded within and controlled by the larger society" (Lake and Rothchild, 1998). The instrumentalist perspective could be able to explain why ethnicity is becoming more important in Ethiopian academic and political discourses. The primary components of their ethnic constituencies were almost always *instrumentalized* by ethno-nationalist movements like the TPLF, ONLF, and OLF in order to mobilize the political base. For instance, in today's political parties, the majority will conduct the upcoming election using primitive elements like shared ancestry, language, geography, and psychology. Similar to the previous example, the institutionalization of ethnic federalism since the early 1990s has prompted the *instrumentalization* of primal identity for political mobilization.

2.8.3 Constructivist Approach

In order to overcome the shortcomings of instrumentalism and *primordialism*, the constructivist approach was developed, which holds that "ethnicity is neither immutable nor completely open" (Lake and Rothchild, 1998). Furthermore, it argues that ethnic conflicts are socially produced and not caused by certain individuals (Ibid). Constructivism may be able to explain how various situations create various ethnic groupings. For instance, despite the diversity of the personal ethnicity of the individuals in question, many peripheral ethnic groups (like pastoralists in the south-eastern lowlands of Ethiopia) collectively classify people who work in government

administration, the military, and other institutions as either "Amhara," "Christian," or "highlanders" (Clapham, 1975; Markakis, 1994).

2.9 Phases to Resolve Conflict

Different parties follow different processes to resolve conflict in different areas. Below are important starting points (Phase) to put peace together.

2.9.1 Phase 1: Setting the Stage

Most analyses refer to this stage as "getting to the [negotiating] table," but this is an overly simplistic idea. The difficult part is finding the right opportunity to sit down at the table. It may be necessary for third parties to tip the balance of military force against any party to the war that feels that continuing the conflict will benefit it, as this party will operate as a "spoiler" and obstruct efforts to reach a peaceful resolution. If there are multiple outside parties supporting different sides of a conflict, a peaceful solution either requires that some accept the military triumph of their adversaries or that local party and their sponsors both acknowledge that a peaceful solution would be preferable to a protracted conflict (Stuart J. Kaufman).

2.9.2 Phase 2: Negotiation and Political: De-escalation

Political de-escalation is the topic that is typically ignored at this point. For instance, the mediators and the parties to the dispute should condition the continuation of negotiations on the parties taking concrete steps toward formalizing their reconciliation. This entails, at the very least, that when addressing their own people, leaders and the media they control are not allowed to use hate speech. Negotiations are a waste of time as long as leaders on both sides continue to fall into the symbolic politics trap by inciting animosity toward the other side. Threats by mediators to end their mediation are reasonable and cost-effective because current rabble-rousers are impeding their capacity to reach an agreement or have it approved, thus postponing negotiations until they quit makes sense (Stuart J. Kaufman).

2.9.3 Phase 3: Deal-Making and Political: Mobilization

This is the stage in which negotiators find a specific formula for settling the tangible issues at stake, and leaders mobilize their groups to ratify it. Formal acceptance of a formula should be

preceded by problem solving workshops that allow middle-range and grass-roots leaders to experience the same trade-off problems faced by their superiors. The more fully committed middle-range leaders are to an eventual deal, the easier it is for their chiefs to implement the deal. (Stuart J. Kaufman, 2006)

Chapter Three

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Description of the study area

3.1.1. Demographic Features of Gurage Zone

Guraghe zone is one of the zonal administration of SNNPRS established in 1993, is located in the western part of central Ethiopia; and at the same time it is the northern tip of the region. It is bounded with Hadiya zone and Yem special woreda in the south and south west, southeast by Silt'e zone on the northern, western and eastern portions are sharing boarder with Oromia state. The zone has an area of 5932 sq.km. The zone has been divided in to thirteen woredas (districts), two provisional city administration and a population of 1,279,646 (CSA, 2007) projected population of 1,577,077 in the year 2013. Wolkite, which is 158 kms from Addis Ababa on Addis Ababa–Jima road, is the capital of the zone. The major ethnic groups of the zone are Guraghe (bête gurgghes), Kebena and Mareko. About 94% of the population lives in rural areas. The people are mostly engaged in mixed farming. They mostly grow enset, wheat, barley, maize, sorghum and teff as food crops. Coffee and chat are grown as cash crops. Guraghe zone has natural as well as historical tourist attraction areas (Guraghe Zone Communication affairs).

The Guraghe people occupy the southern most areas of the central plateau, mainly the beautiful semi- mountainous part of the country (i.e. Today's Guraghe Zone). The Guraghe houses are circular, with beautiful thatched steep roofs generally with a pot at the apex. Each stands in its own immaculately clean compound; a dirty one is described as being like that of a dead man because the people believe that idleness is a sin and work is the key to success. The Guraghes live in small densely settled villages, and like many other peoples of the southern Region they, take enset as their main cultural subsistence crop (Ibid).

According to the data from the communication affair, the climate in the zone is of three divisions these are dega, weinadega and kolla. The dega section is connected with the distribution of the

Gurage chine mountain. The Gibe valley mainly represent kolla climate. Most of the zone lines in the weinadega division.

3.1.2. An Overview of the Libdo-Mareko Woreda

Libido-Mareko, who lives in the central plateau of Ethiopia, is one of the ethnic groups in Ethiopia. They are found between the longitudes of 38: 26' and 38: 33'E and latitudes of 7:55' and 8: 04'N (CSA, 2007). According to the data from Communication Office of Mareko Woreda, from 66 clan of Libido-Mareko around 49 clans are found in Mareko Woreda. The remaining clans of Libido-Mareko ethnic group live in Meskan and Silite Woredas.

Administratively, the Mareko woreda is one of the thirteen Woredas that make up today's Gurage zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State. The Woreda is located in the eastern corner of the zone where they share boundary with Oromiya regional state, Silite Administrative Zone and Meskan Woreda in east, south, and north respectively. The Woreda consists of 26 rural kebeles and the administrative centre is Koshe, which is 160 k.m far from Addis Ababa and 82 k.m from Wolkite, the capital of Gurage Administrative Zone. Mareko woreda is one of the largest districts in the Gurage zone administration of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State. According to the data from Central Statistics Agency (2007), the Woreda has a population of 81,892 in which 50.2% of them are male and 49.7% are female. The Woreda is inhabited by Libido – Mareko, Gurage, Silite, Oromo, Amhara, Hadiya and other ethnic group. The Libido- Mareko ethnic group is the Cushitic language speaking society which is surrounded by the neighboring Semitic language speaking societies (Sodo, Mesqan and Silite). The language they speak is known as Marekegna (Mekonnen, 2016a).

3.1.3. An Overview of Meskan Woreda

Meskan is one of the thirteen woredas in Gurage Zone, SNNPRS. According to Meskan Woreda Finance and Economic Development Department (MWFEDD, 2016), the woreda are near Butajira at 8°8' N 38 24 E located in the Western highlands. It shares boarder with Sodo woreda on the North and North-East, Kokir_Gedebano woreda on the North-West, Muhurna_

Aklil wereda on the West, Mareko wereda & Silte zone on the South and Mareko Wereda on the South-East. Butajira town, the administrative capital of the woreda, is located at 130 kilometers south of Addis Ababa.

The population is 155,782 (CSA, 2007) referring to the projected 2007 Population and Housing Census report of Ethiopia, MWFEDD (2016:12) has indicated that the woreda has about 202,236 total populations with 0.9:1 ratio of men to women. The same report has indicated that the woreda population has 2.9% annual growth rate with an average 4.9 persons per household—which was reported as one of the woredas with the highest fertility rate recorded in Gorage zone (MWFEDD 2016). About 185, 135 (92%) of the woreda population lives in rural areas whose lives directly tend to depend on land and agricultural crops such as Maize, Wheat, Barley, Sorghum, Avocado, Mango, Banana, Teff, Khat, Berbere and others. The remaining people were engaged in trade, service sectors and employments in the public or private sectors while the rest depend on temporary (seasonal) income or remained jobless (Ibid).

3.1.4 Geographic location of the study area



Figure 1: study areas that are found in Meskan wereda.

Source: Meskan wereda communication office, 2018

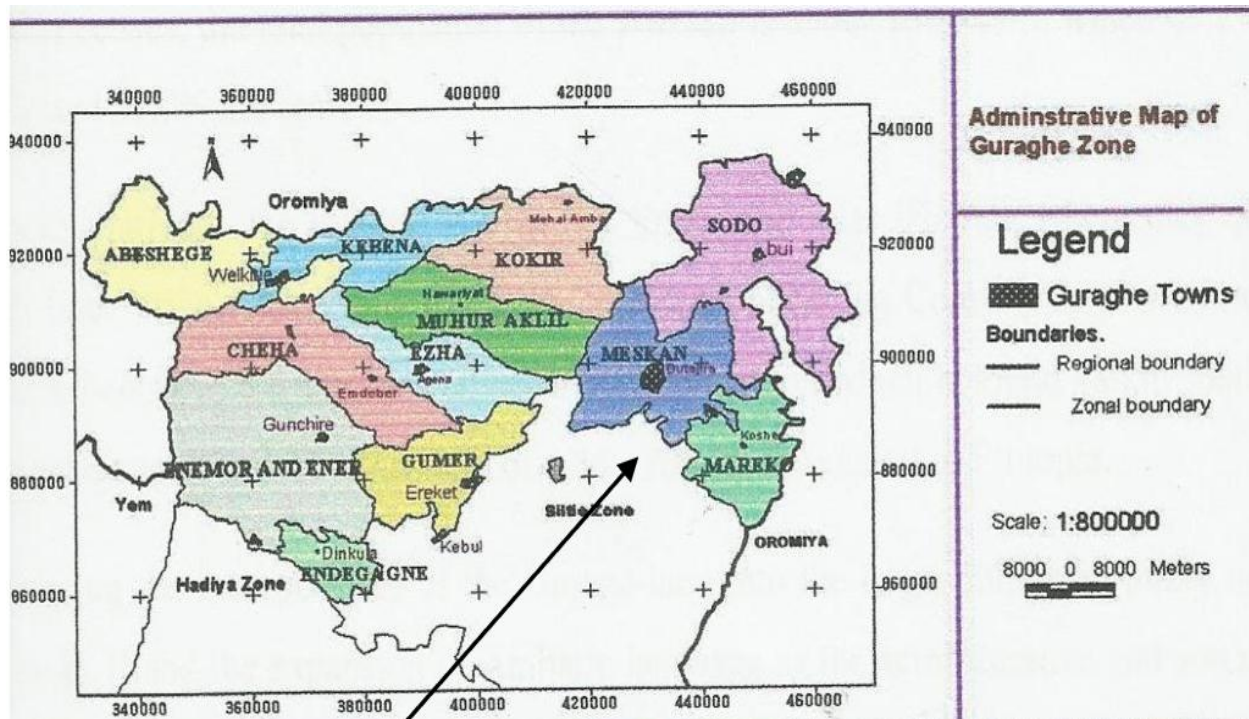


Figure 2 study areas that are found in Mareko woreda.

Source: Wubeyed (2010)

3.2 Research Design

The research used descriptive research design and qualitative research approach. Descriptive study is attempts to describe systematically a situation, problem, phenomenon, service or program, provides information about say, the living conditions of a community, or describes attitudes towards an issue (Ranjit, 2011). So the research has showed systematically their perspective, experience by collecting data from participants of research through interview, FGD and document analysis about the role of multi-stakeholders in Meskan and Mareko woreda conflict resolving practices. Such qualitative data is so possible to analyze in descriptive research design. Qualitative research approach attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants (Catherine, 2002). In this research approach the researcher attempt to explore the role, and experiences of Mulit-stakeholder in conflict resolution, through such methods as interviews, focus group dissection and published and unpublished documents has been used. This approach differs from other approaches with the resource use to get the objectives of the study and the angle of how we get it. For this research, the researcher directly ask the conflict resolved participant by deep-interviewing the parties who were involved in conflict resolution and elders who are available for the same task to resolve the conflict through FGD. It makes the qualitative research approach preferable than collecting information from parties who do not know by questioners. Therefore, qualitative research approach enabled the researcher to explore the role, perspectives and experiences of multi- stockholders on ethnic conflict resolution in the study area.

3.3 Target Population

Meskan and Mareko woerdas are one of the Southern Nation Nationality and peoples of Ethiopia Regional State in Gurage Zone where recently the ethnic conflict was happened. The target populations of the study are officials and personnel from local government, the council, court, justice office, security office, and traditional (customary) conflict resolving actors such as elders and religious leaders in Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict resolution. These parties were chosen for this study mainly because they are direct participants in the reconciliation process of this conflict and they are regular participants when conflicts arise in the area and society.

3.4 Sampling Design, Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sample is a sub-group of population. It has also described as a representative of a group. The research used non-probability sampling design and purposive sampling technique to explore the role of multi – stakeholders in resolving ethnic conflict. Non-probability sampling designs are used when the number of elements in a population is either unknown or cannot be individually identified (Ranjit, 2011). Moreover, the reason why purposive sampling technique is preferred for the study is that it is suitable to select people with knowledge, experience and responsibility, and who are able to respond to the research questions. So this technique enabled the research to get the reliable information from informants with in specific time period. Purposive sampling method is your judgment as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of your study. Purposive sampling technique is extremely useful when you want to construct a historical reality, describe a phenomenon or develop something about which only a little is known (Ranjit, 2011). According to Catherine, (2002) the sample size also depend on what you want to do with your results. A total of 28Key informants were purposefully selected among those: from one FGD four people from each of the customary conflict resolution bodies in both ethnic groups, an interview also made with the leaders of three religious institutions (Muslim, Orthodox and Protestant) from each districts and a total of 6 religious leaders from both district, and an interview of one from each and a total of two local government administration, three from each and a total of six district security officers, one from each and a total of two district council, one from each and a total of two district court office and one from each and a total of two district Justice office, because these participants are directly involved in this reconciliation process and they represent their institutions.

3.5 Data Sources

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources were first hand sources through data are collected by Interview and focus group discussion (FGD). Secondary data also used, to build conceptual and theoretical perspectives and other parts of the study, the researcher critically reviewed different books, journals-articles, and internet websites related

with ethnic conflict resolution, and the role of multi-stakeholders in conflict resolution. The researcher also analyzed local government reports which have relationship with the research.

3.6 Data Collection Method

3.6.1 Interview: The data are collected through Semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview is good to collect data from different informant by asking similar question and the researcher still free to ask important information from the interviewees. Semi-structured interview with selected key informants to get primary data regarding the role, perspective, and experience multi-stakeholders in ethnic conflict resolution, a purposeful sampling technique was used to select individuals who are well versed with the conflict resolution. The participants were knowledgeable elders and responsible leaders in the local government, who frequently participate in the conflict resolution process. Formal court judge, prosecutor, polices, government officials and religious leaders in both Mareko and Meskan Wereda were interviewed to get information about this conflict resolution. In these a total of 20 informants were interviewed for this study.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD): The researcher also used focus group discussion method of data collection. One group from Meskan district *feragezgn* traditional conflict resolution mechanism and the other from Mareko district *Raaga-Maaga* conflict resolution mechanism, the number of elides from each FGD are 4 (four) and a total of 8 in the focus group discussion were able to use in the study. The member of one customary conflict resolution is eight up to ten in the study area. The participant was selected from there member based on their experience and knowledge in conflict resolution process.

3.6.3 Secondary Data: The study also conducted secondary data such as documents, unpublished report, articles and books which are written on traditional conflict resolution, those data are all that utilized by different stakeholders in resolving Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration becomes important in social science. This is because social sciences deal with human behavior; it is therefore not possible to manipulate human behavior (Sanjay and Dhaneşwar, 2015). So, there are ethical issues encountered in this study such as; respondent are not aware about the research project, giving incorrect information about the research proposal, the respondent may be forced to cheat or lie, may expose the respondent to mental & physical stress, privacy of an individual and keep the information a secret. Moreover, the researcher will try to overcome the above discussed problems in different mechanisms such as informing the respondents about the project and giving correct information keep privacy and secret information.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The study was conducted using qualitative data analysis method because the researcher used interview, focus group discussion and document analysis. After collecting the data, the next step was analyzing through different qualitative data analysis methods. The data analysis began after transcribing the data into Amharic language and translating of the data in to English language and attempts have been made to keep the originality of the research. I analyzed and interpreted the data gathering through focus group discussions and interviews thematically based the specific objective of the study. I triangulated the primary data obtained through focus group discussions and key informant interviews with the secondary data to maximize the reliability and validity of the findings.

Chapter Four

4 Result and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter mainly emphasizes the analyses of the role of local government, customary conflict resolution mechanism and religious leaders in resolving Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict. It also portrays the detailed analysis made on the integration of these different stakeholders, the good work they achieved and the challenges they faced during the reconciliation process. Undertaking this study, primary sources are the main inputs but when appropriate secondary sources are also employed as part of the analysis.

Moreover, under this chapter, the basic research questions are answered, and the objectives of the study are also addressed. The results of the analysis are presented under topics and sub-topics that are organized in line with the objectives and basic research questions of the study. The information about the research participants' general background is attached in the appendix part (see appendix-2).

4.2 The Cause of the Conflate

SNNPRS is organized into 14 Zones, 4 Special Woredas, 131 Woredas, 22 Cities and 3999 Kebeles (SNNPRS Council of Nationalities, 2009 & 2014). Guraghe Zones is found in this region, and it has 13 woredas among this woredas Mareko and Meskan is found in this Zone. Until 2002 this two woredas were a single woreda named 'Meskan Mareko'.

After the establishing of federal administration system in Ethiopia under SNNPRS with in gurage zone Maskan and Marerko ethic group were administrated under one woreda from 1991 G.C until 2002 G.C this ethic group lived together under this woreda there was total numbers 68 kebeles. A question about autonomy and self-administration arose in 2002 G.C. between these two ethnic groups and it was brought to the local, state, and federal governments. Following review of their query zone, the local, state and federal governments acknowledged their inquiry

and granted permission to develop there Owen weredas, and the Mareko ethnic group consisted of 26 kebele, and the Meskan ethnic group consisted of 42 kebeles. However, there was disagreement between the two ethnic groups on 9 kebeles. The Mareko ethnic group raised this issue because they believe they have the majority of people on these kebeles, but the ruling regional state at that time implied that it would be fixed in the future.

After the implementation of Ethiopia's ethnic federalism in 1991 and the creation of the Mareko woreda based on ethnic lines in 2002, these events became sources of conflict in the study region. Because the nine kebeles of Meskan woreda have the name of Libido-Mareko ethnic clans that claimed by Mareko: Yemerwacho, Bamo, Bati Lejano, Ochageneme, Dida, Bati Fato, Inseno town, Beche Bulchano, and Inseno usemen is the main causes of Meskan and Mareko conflict (Tewderose, 2019).

From the information gathered through (FGD), when Mareko district separated from Meskan district and became an independent district with 26 kebals, there were nine kebals left, and the concerned party was not give a response. As a result, arguments could arise between the two ethnic groups, by saying that we deserve it and they don't deserve it. In the meantime, they started to show a sense of competition between the youths, and the conflict was immediately triggered by an argument between two youths who said that they should not open Marekegn music in Meskan wereda Enseno town (MAFGD-2, Apr/17/2023). The cause of this conflict was made by demarcation of ethnic line boulder among these two ethnic groups, which means the faults of the political elites.

Political elites at the woreda, zonal, and regional levels are found to be one of the major actors of the conflict. Depending on the groups they represent and their own interests, their main concerns differed. Many of the informants concurred that the political elites involved in the Meskan and Mareko ethnic dispute are primarily concerned with maintaining their positions of power at the woreda, zonal, and regional levels and feigning loyalty to the populace (tewderose).

The participants of the FGD explained that a society that has lived and bred oppression, but it is the profit-seekers and the authorities that have caused the conflict. The farmers and the other

community did not fight, and for this reason, the elder of the community was working to reconcile since the conflict occurred (MFGD -1, May/10/2023).

It is clear that conflicts never erupt by themselves whatever causes and motives might be in certain state of affairs. Causes of the conflict need agents or actors for their actual episodes. Accordingly, in the study areas, conflict has held own actors involve in the course of conflict for various reasons. To this effect, the major actors of conflict in the study area are: political elites, organized youth movements “*Arjadez*” and “*Lodesa*”, business owners, and illicit arm dealers and brokers (Tewderose, 2019).

In sum, the cause for the conflict between Meskan and Mareko ethnic groups was the claim of kebeles on the part of the Meskan ethnic group, but what made the conflict worse was the mutual quarrel of the politicians on both sides. It is the source of problem that the south nation nationalities and peoples of state had during the delimitation of the two districts.

4.3 The Role of Customary Conflict Resolution Mechanism

In different parts of our country, we have a variety of traditional mechanisms for resolving conflicts. For instance there are customary conflict resolutions mechanisms called *shmagele* in Amhara and *jaarsumaa* in Oromo communities. In the area where this study was conducted i.e. in Mareko and Meskan district predominantly three customary conflict resolution mechanisms are known. Their list is “*Maaga, Raaga and Seera.*” The community in their area is extremely familiar with these conflict resolution mechanisms, and they have for centuries been able to solve communal and bipartite conflicts better than the formal process of resolving disputes. Therefore, customary conflict resolution played a significant role in resolving the ethnic conflict between Meskan and Mareko in the course of the research.

When it comes to the customary dispute resolution institution, the beliefs, values, and practices that are used during conflict resolution are responsible for the system's success in upholding social harmony and peace (Kebede Lemu and Wondu Yasin, 2021).

4.3.1 Selection of Mediators for Reconciliation

As it is known in any part of the country, mediators are chosen from the representative of both conflict areas and from a third party. The candidates should have experience in the customary conflict resolution system in their respective areas and should be familiar with the culture.

According to (Fiseha et al. 2011:27), elders are chosen on a case-by-case basis by the disputing parties themselves or their families based on their "reputation for high sense of justice, impartiality, deep knowledge of community norms, wisdom, and rich experience." This is in contrast to judges in the formal legal systems who are appointed by a state on the basis of their knowledge of state laws.

4.3.2 The Process Selecting Elders and Reconciliation

When we look at what happened in the first round of conflict resolution, there was the intervention of politicians and the elected mediators were focused on their personal interests instead of reconciling the two ethnic groups. As a result, the reconciliation system has been tried 28 times by these bodies, but it has not been effective (MAFGD-2, Apr/17/2023 and MFGD-2, May/10/2023).

Second round of reconciliation system on the other hand, from the beginning, free from the interference of politicians, mediator elders from the two conflicted ethnic groups, 15 from Mareko, 15 from Meskan and other third party mediators from neighboring regions, zones and districts, two elders from each of who are accepted by the local community in the mediation system according to the local culture and tradition, elders to perform the reconciliation those who have experience can be selected by the suggestion of the local community. Accordingly, according to the local culture and tradition, the reconciliation was started by sprinkling the mixture of honey and water prepared by the elders selected from the two conflicting sides. Subsequently, the reconciliation process is based on the local reconciliation system, as reconciliation should be done at the place where the conflict broke out, so all the selected elders were able to stay at the place where the conflict started until the reconciliation started and ended in order to avoid other interlopers. The reconciliation process started immediately in September

2018, when the conflict broke out, and the 28-round reconciliation process, which had no results, lasted until 2021. Finally, the reconciliation that was effective and able to reunite the two ethnic groups lasted from November 25/2021 to January 15/2022, efforts of day and night *Ashemagai* elders selected following the local culture and tradition (MAFGD, Apr/17/2023 and MFGD, May/10/2023).

FGD participated that, the elders who were recruited in the second round agreed that they should be cleansed from localism and profit seeking, and they were able to enter into the reconciliation process. Earlier, it was shown that reconciliation was started according to the traditional system (local conspiracy), after the honey was sprinkled with water, the elders of both ethnic groups sat on the same platform with other elders and they were able to start the reconciliation process. Thus, the position of the elder who was chosen for reconciliation was that they must stop this destruction, without dividing it by saying that the destruction of human life and property is a Mareko loss or a Meskan loss. Finally, forty months of conflict between the two ethnic groups led to a reconciliation process in twenty-three (23) days (MFGD-1, May/10/2023).

Similarly FGD explained that, in the second round reconciliation the elders were chosen by the local reconciliation process. After that the chosen elders asked the regional government what is our response after reconciliation about the cause of the conflict, then the regional government responded to the elder that our job is only reconciling the community; we can give the response that cause of the conflict immediately after reconciliation. Then elder were able to reconciliation with confidence that the question asked by the side will be answered after the reconciliation. Based on this, according to the traditional mala system of the Mareko ethnic group, we held a mala with soil, which means that according to the conspiracy, everything that is held in the sky will inevitably fall to the ground. According to our culture, the main basis for reconciliation is release. It should be emphasized that it means releasing the issues that were the cause of the conflict. Finally, even though the political party has not kept its word yet, the truce has prevented people from killing each other, destruction of property and restored people's solidarity (MAFGD-1, Apr 17/2023).

In general both FGD informed, the reconciliation system took a long time because of the mediation system was not conducted according to the eldership system and was initiated by the local administration and the regional government. This is due to the fact that the elder of both district and other neighboring elders were chosen by the government bodies and thus the mediation system was led by the intervention of politicians, and the threat of the youths of both ethnic groups in the mediation process and the killing of influential individuals in the area prolonged the reconciliation period. According to this, the parties who delayed the reconciliation are politicians who are profiting from the conflict, local youth, investors, social media, and the selfishness of the elders who were elected in the first round (MAFGD-1, Apr 17/2023, and MFGD, May/10/2023).

4.3.4 Compensation for the Victim's

During the formal and informal conflict resolution system, the mediator or arbitrator must determine the compensation for the destroyed property and the lost human life in the conflict according to the system's guidelines and regulations. Accordingly, to the participants of the FGDs there were 86 peoples, 43 from Mareko ethnic and 43 from Meskan ethnic groups were died in this ethnic conflict. For this, the traditional mediation body decided to 30,000 Birr compensation to the families for each lost human life. The money to be paid according to the local traditional reconciliation system and collected Mareko from Mareko woreda community paid for Meskan ethnic and Meskan from Meskan woreda community and paid for each Mareko ethnic human life lost (MFGD-2, May/10/2023). This compensation system made the reconciliation should holistic all over the conflicted community.

Unlike the formal criminal legal system which is guided by the principle of the personal nature of crime, in which only the criminal is liable for his/her crime, customary dispute resolution mechanisms may entail collective responsibility for the payment of compensation. The offender's family or his/her clan members may be required to contribute to the compensation determined by the elders (Fiseha et al. 2011:30).

Lastly, the *Raagas* on both sides were told to call the *Raaga* that stopped *Maaga* from suffering, and the matter was told and the reconciliation system was approved (MFGD-2, May/10/2023). *Ragaa* observes issues which are referred by the first institutions which is called *Maaga*. It has the power to give decisions and it ordered *Maaga* to implement the decisions (Kebede and Wond, 2021). This means that they have the level of local reconciliation system that is the matters mediated by the *Maaga* level can be finally approved by *Raaga* the 2th level of mediation.

After this reconciliation, if the aggressor voluntarily surrenders to the elder of the area, according to the local mediation system, the elder are making him pay 300,000 Birr if he killed for revenge, 100,000 Birr for sudden or accidentally kill and so far they are working to make reconciliation (MFGD-2, May/10/2023).

4.3.5 The Success of Reconciliation

During the second round of the reconciliation processes, the elders worked hard to make the mediation system free from the interference of politicians and to leave the legal response to the politician as the main cause of the conflict. And elders focused their attention on the solidarity of the two communities, understanding that these two ethnic groups are bound together and living together, and believing that conflict is destructive, these able to reach an agreement that the conflict should stop (MAFGD-2, Apr/17/2023).

The great reconciliation effort of these elders brought peace to the area and brought back the community for the time being. But to ensure the sustainability of peace, they are waiting for government political and legal response.

4.3.6 The Concerns of Reconciliation

Concerns about the implementation of the issues that the government promised as starting point for the truce-such as the claim of the Mareko ethnic groups 9 kebele, which is said to have received a legal response, and the idea that the administration of East Meskan district and Enseno city, which was established during the conflict, should be organized inclusive of the two ethnic groups-have been rised as threats to the truce, particularly by the elders of the Mareko ethnic

group. The government's pledge to implement the cease fire raises doubts about its sustainability.

In sum, it shows that the customary conflict resolution mechanisms has played a role in the reconciliation of the two ethnic groups and is still playing it. On the other hand, it clearly shows that in order for the customary conflict resolution system to be effective, it must be independent from the politicians and private interests and work only on a traditional basis. On the other hand, when the reconciliation was carried out by the local elders, the main causes of the conflict will be legally addressed; it is conditions set by the federal and regional leaders; to the elders in reconciliation,

4.4. The Role of Local Government (Administration) and Other Parties in Conflict Resolution

4.4.1 Introduction

Local government is door step government to the local people and is responsible towards the local people. The main roles of local government are executive, legislative and judicial. It is administrative body for a small geographic area, such as a city, town, county or state. Local government can elect officials, enact taxes, and do many other things that a national government would do, just on a smaller scale, it is a system of electing representatives to be responsible for the administrations of public services and functions in a particular area (Ishwor, 2020). In addition to that, local government should work to strengthen the solidarity of the community with other local government in different social, economic and political ways. On the other hand, when these values are eroded for various reasons and conflicts occur within the community, there is a legal obligation to stop and resolve conflicts by coordinating and using conflict resolution methods available in the area. Therefore, the local governments have been made different activities to resolve the ethnic conflict between Mareko and Meskan ethnic.

4.4.2 Administration Office

According to the information gathered from the informants, one of the activities that the local government ordered to stop the conflict was try to prevent the conflict with the security forces in the area, apart from the security forces, it was working to resolve the conflict through customary conflict resolution methods by coordinating the elders of both ethnic group in areas of the conflict and even other mediating elders from the neighboring districts and regions to resolve the conflict through traditional conflict resolution methods (MAKI-1, May/2023 and MKI-). On this idea, other researchers strengthen the function as follows.

The importance of stepping outside the bounds of local government bodies and legal frameworks is highlighted by local governance. It aims to take into account the variety of formal and unofficial connections among various development actors (Olsen, 2007) it tries to ensure the safety of the community by combing the traditions of the local culture and formal system of the country.

4.4.3 Security Office

As the informant said, due to the nature of conflict, many human lives and property were destroyed, the actions of the district security to come to peace the conflict were to enforce the law, escorting the elders who were working for reconciliation to protect them from danger, teach the community about peace and working together with the special force of the region to stabilize the community and protect the safety of the displaced people who have returned to their place, prepared shelters, and coordinated the community for this activity. And also organize community elders in the district to help them solve local problems (MAKI-2, Apr/2023, and MAKI-7, Apr/2023).

Police are realizing that initiatives that prevent crime, lessen public fear of crime, and enhance neighborhood standards of living are necessary to supplement traditional crime-control measures. An important issue nowadays is the public's growing fear of crime. Since fear has

been found to be "more closely correlated with disorder than with crime," a visible police presence inside the community aids in lowering that dread (Kelling and Mark, 1988).

Additionally, key informant explained that, security forces of both districts were working to arrest the recalcitrant, while on the other hand, most of the work was done with elders (from Mareko, Silti, Oromo, Meskan and Sodo), both districts have been sharing police information between them and are still working in the same way and from local investors for peace. For example, they were giving support even to the idea and even though the result remained, after 29 mediation efforts, it was possible to come to the reconciliation (MKI-2, May/2023).

Although the recruitment process of local police officers is based on the fact that they born in the area where they are trained and work there, when conflicts occur, they are responsible for their families, which violated police ethics. For this reason, it was understood from the study that most of the activities described above were carried out with the help of the special forces of the region.

4.4.4 The Study Area Council

According to the information gathered from the informants, the council made the members of the council to play an important role in the issue of peace according to the direction set by the regional government, for example it showed that reconciliation is important, the direction set by the region should be implemented, to make the members of the council from kebele to district participate in this direction of peace. Through this dialogue, the two ethnic groups were able to enter into reconciliation (MAKI-3, May/2023).

Thus, the directions that were held in the region were: - Returning displaced persons, reconciliation must be done; upholding the rule of law and the council was able to agree with others that the composition of the administrative structure in the area and the naming of the East Meskan should be adjusted (unpublished document, 2014 E,C).

4.4.5 The Justice

An interviewer said that, the case was handled by the federal bodies, in this group the justice institutions of the districts participated as one member. Therefore, when a conflict occurs it is

inevitable that human rights will be violated in some way, because people will be arrested on suspicion until it is investigated, it means that human rights will be violated in the meantime. Thus, the district prosecutor asked the question why the illegal arrest was necessary, and they release the arrested individuals on bail based on the law. And also the justice office supported this work by bringing together the elders of the two ethnic groups, including the elders of the surrounding districts in the alliance, and enabling them to arrest the criminals who commit crimes here and hand them over to the law (MKI-4, May/2023).

As the other interviewee explained, on the subject at the beginning of the conflict, it happened because of the question that they had been asking for. Looking at it as a law, it is believed that such a question should be raised in accordance with the law. The function of the institution was to enforce the law when there was a violation of human rights, because the institution is work with the law set by the country from above, so we were applying it equally to everyone. This had the job of checking what kind of evidence and information the arrested prisoners lacked, and releasing those who did not have information. And also, the justice office teach the society through the legal research experts in its institution that the evacuees should be returned to the place because reconciliation and the return of the evacuees does not prevent the question from being answered from the point of view of the law (MAKI-4, May/2023).

This interviewee also told that, justice institution was the position that the rule of law should be respected, the question should not be reconciled, and thus the reconciliation should not be carried out. There were many visible results recorded those who are arrested in this way are all arrested because of the conflict, because it is impossible for the justice institution to look at the evidence and information, identify those who were arrested based on individual needs and release them, have been work to make those who have well information but be punished according to the law.

4.4.6 The Court

During the conflict, the court used plays a lot of role to solve various cases like thus people were wrongly arrested, under the shadow of the laws. The court used to receive complaints that the

arrested person not appear before the court of law within 48 hours, but the woreda (first instance court) send the accused person to the high court how have jurisdictions. (MAKI-5, Apr/2023)

4.5. The Role of Religious Institution

According to the information gathered from the informants, during the conflict we took a representative of all religious leaders went to the regional administration office to stop the conflict. We also used to plead to the community in every mosque the believers of the religion, for example, we used to teach saying, "Please, Allah, who will see us on the last Day of Judgment with our brothers, who will open our foreheads and raise a whip and ask for us." We used to give advice that harmed the body that Allah Himself had forbidden (created). Another part of our Qur'an says, *Almomine, Almomine*, means that one *momin* is related to one *momin*, and there is nothing different about Adam's race. In our Qur'an, a person who is at peace is a person whose tongue is untouchable and whose hand is untouchable (MAKI-8, May/2023).

Solomon (2019,), included in the analysis the idea of religious elder about the role of religious institutions in resolving conflict, "Holy Book of Islam or Koran teaches love, respect for others and this is a mandatory principle to be realized". Even, the principle works to guide the relationship with animals and plants as well. Briefly expressed that he teaches his church members love for all people even the enemies because the Holy Scriptures commanded to do so.

Other interviewee explained, the Orthodox Church contributed to the reconciliation of the conflict between the two ethnic groups in two ways. First, the church participated in the reconciliation of the conflict. The Church was teaching us topics related to the severity of conflict, which we usually give to the believers in the church so that it can be resolved through a table discussion. In this way, since there are two groups of people living in this city, we talk about the conflict unnecessarily and hatefully. Therefore, in our opinion, we believe that these believers teach our ideas outside the church (MAKI-9, May/2023).

What the Church taught, for example, love your brother as yourself according to the law of our church, the law is done in two ways. One is by loving God, and the other is by loving your

friend. How can you love your neighbor without loving God? When we read from the first chapter of the Holy Epistle of John to the end of the chapter, the first one is about light and the second one is about love. He should not be offended, but he who hates his brother is in darkness, he walks in darkness, he does not know where he is going, the darkness has blinded his eyes. In this way, the church were teaching Bible parables saying that love is God, love is friendship with those who are near you, light is God, and light is a person who does good work.

Religious institution teaches their member to solve conflict; showing unconditional love to both parties is another mechanism that works. Love can change lots of things. People can be attracted towards love and person who shows love to them can dissolve hate and the idea of conflict in their mind and heart and bring both parties to reconciliation (Solomon, 2017). Solomon also, explained in order to create a culture of discussion within the mind of members; religious leaders make presentations on growing and developing habits for talking about various issues with other people. It's a way of getting the members to learn tolerance by being aware of others' thoughts, values, beliefs and different ways of thinking. He teaches one of the basic values of love for humanity, particularly unconditional love, regardless of their background, including their religion.

4.6. The Integration Between Formal and Informal Conflict Resolution in the Study Area

“The study shows that,” various participants who took part in the research interview as well as different research have seen the existence of integration between formal and informal conflict resolution mechanism during conflict resolution processes in Ethiopia. The study explained that this phenomenon was there when the ethnic conflict of Meskan and Mareko was resolved.

According to the information gathered from the informants, the police doesn't interfered in the activities of the reconciliation of elders except to protect them when they moved for mediation and the police was worked to prevent other unrelated parties from interfering, such as parties those want that doesn't perform reconciliation (MAKI-7, Apr/2023).

The police officer's account shows the direct cooperation between his office and the traditional leaders, who – in combining government pressure and the ritual power of the *ogade* – are able to enforce the handover of a slayer as well as the start of the reconciliation process. Their common interest here is the re-establishment of social peace between the two families/clans, as well as the prevention of revenge attacks that would result in further killing and destruction of property (Epple and Assefa, 2020).

Other interviewee (the law expert) explained that, after the truce started, the security forces of both districts exchanged a lot of information. There are things that we still do with the local elders. The elders regularly discuss everything that happens, so we send an investigation team from the police and the prosecutor to them. By doing so, we will ensure that the record reaches the relevant party. But there is a situation where the elders say that we will see all the issues, but there is a part that they have to work for the victim to get justice and there is also a part that the law has to be made (MAKI-4, May/2023).

In addition to that similar information gathered through (FGD), one group informant told the researcher, when we face a problem whether our integration is peaceful or otherwise, it is the local administration's problem to solve and we inform them; otherwise we would be fired by the elder. In the first reconciliation, the old man forgets to gather and disperse. Even after the truce, the elders of the two ethnic groups meet every 15 days. At present, it is a thief who is causing trouble in this area, and the elder can identify this and identify it as my ethnic group, so that the concerned ethnic group can stop it. Also, if there is someone trying to fight between these two ethnic groups, so that he can clearly stop it, moreover, peace has been achieved through the cooperation of the government and the local elders (MFGD-4, May/10/2023).

The numerous interviews I conducted with local elders and state agents show that, whenever homicide cases are reported, both customary and state institutions intervene in order to settle them. Representing government institutions, the police and local militia arrest the slayer and keep him at the police station until the court comes to a final verdict. Representing customary institutions, local leaders and elders get involved and engage in reconciliation efforts with the aim of healing the relationship between the families of slayer and deceased. One policeman

expressed how working with local agents enables the police to be more effective (Epple and Assefa, 2020).

In general, the information provided by the various participants in this study indicate that the two institutions are working together for the peace of the area, both in the activities to resolve the conflict and in the efforts to maintain sustainable community relations.

4.7 The Challenge of Their Integration

What various writers have explained and all scholars of the country agree, but if there is a question that the government of the country have not given a written response to, is that formal and informal conflict resolution have no legal relationship. This could not be resolved mainly because, according to the writers, the country laws were not copied from the country's culture and tradition, but from the Europeans. This is way the law of the country does not give legal place to customary conflict resolution system, even though the government uses it in different parts of the country when conflicts arise.

The transplantation process was, thus, a drastic measure taken against customary dispute resolution mechanisms which made them lose formal legal recognition and standing. De facto, however, customary dispute resolution mechanisms remained functional on the ground, as the transplanted laws were unable to penetrate into the local communities and get legitimacy (Lijalem, 2019).

The interviewee (the law expert) explained, the formal and informal conflict resolution mechanism do not have a legal relationship, and because of this, sometimes when local elders come to reconcile us, the court does not accept it, and the elders feel that we have been neglected, but the court does it because the law has to be followed. This happened because most of the laws of our country were copied from other countries. Our criminal laws have not opened the door to the traditional reconciliation system. Our justice system has not grown from the traditional justice system. If that were the case, the traditional justice system would have been isolated (MKI-5, May/2023). This is why customary conflict resolution systems are losing their usefulness in some parts of the country.

In short, Ethiopia exhibits plural legal systems, both multi-layered state laws and customary laws; though no formal recognition is given to the use of customary dispute resolution mechanisms in criminal matters under Ethiopian laws (Lijalem, 2019).

There were complaints by the elders who felt that dissatisfied parties could sometimes refuse to comply with their decisions. They also realized that at the end of the day it was the court, and not them, who make final and binding decisions (Epple and Assefa, 2020). This idea was discussed;

As the interviewee explained that, there were conflicts between the two systems, for example, the traditional elders ask for a solution after settling a crime and case because their culture allows it, but the law where the criminal has been proven guilty by evidence and witnesses and decided by a regular court cannot be released, so it cannot agree with the traditional mediation system. In this way, if the mediation system is not effective, it means that there is damage and thus the victim will not be happy even though the decision of the regular court can be taken as a relief (MKI-4, May/2023).

Another interviewee also explained, in our area, there is something to be seen that the society has a high role of mediation system. But now, in some areas, there are situations where the cost of the mediation system is higher than that of the normal court system. On the other hand, elders say that we should be involved in all cases, but through the judicial institution, crimes are presented to the law in two ways, for example, there are cases where a private petition is presented and the prosecutor or the law is the plaintiff. The justice institution invites an elder to handle those who file private petitions, for example, those who file private petitions only violate the rights of individuals and do not affect the interests of the majority, while others are filed by the prosecutor through petitions and affect the rights of the public. Reconciliation is allowed for all of them, but even if reconciliation is allowed, there are situations where the court's decision cannot be avoided, according to the normal law (MAKI-4, May/2023).

In this study the customary conflict resolution system was also face difficulties such as:-

From the information gathered through (FGD), when we first started the reconciliation process, the local elders agreed that the government should resolve issues such as population census by law and the main job of the local elder was to make peace and stop the killing and destruction of property. But we have to leave other issues that can be solved through the legal system to the legal bodies. There is a problem between the government (courts and local elders) that has not been resolved yet. People who did not contribute are still being detained without court recognition on both sides. As promised, the *Shimmagle* team submitted a report to the government body that promised to complete the reconciliation process. The regional administration gave an order to resolve the matter, but it was said that the matter was a federal matter and case of those arrested remains unresolved. The relevant government body is always giving different reasons when asked, and the two groups of elders are still raising it as a complaint (MFGD-1, May/10/2023).

4.8. The Challenge that Embed the Process of Conflict Resolution

It can be understood from different scholars and the social media that were released at that time various reasons for the delay (embed) in reconciliation were discussed in the community by Mareko ethnic groups.

The key informant explained, there were broad questions in the community that reconciliation should not be done without responding the questions (the cause of conflict) that have been raised. There is also created a wide-ranging hatred for those who were carrying out the direction of the government. On the other hand questions of the people were *Raaga Maaga* should not be performed until the cause of conflict is resolved, had an impact on the government institution (MAKI-3, May/2023).

According to the information gathered from the informants, there were forces that prevented the reconciliation from succeeding, such as keeping the elders from coming to the place of reconciliation, wanting to prolong the conflict was a major problem for those who benefited from the conflict. Later, there was the killing of influential people (MAKI-7, Apr/2023).

As it can be seen in various situations, in the parts of the country where there is conflict, instead of solving the conflict, politicians violate human rights of innocent people in order to advance their own ideas, and on the other hand, the guilty remain unpunished. At this time, it can be seen that the legal bodies are unable to implement the law according to it and they fall into the hands of executive bodies.

The interviewee (law expert) explained that, the challenge was the position of the justice institution that the rule of law must be respected, and in other ways, human rights violations were occurring by claiming that we would resolve the conflict. It was an arresting situation to believe that just because someone has a different political stance is the reason for the conflict, but our institution defended that this was not right. On the other hand, there were clearly visible informal elements and those who said that the question would only be resolved through conflict (MAKI-4, May/2023),

Another problem was the lack of trust that the government would listen and respond to the community's questions.

According to the information gathered from the informants, if the conflict was resolved through customary conflict resolution methods, the Mareko people claims of nine kebeles will remain unanswered, and the conflict would be prevented from being resolved as if the people's demand that all those imprisoned due to this conflict should be released unconditionally (MAKI-1, 2023).

The incompatibility of the traditional reconciliation system and the local legal system has delayed reconciliation. As the FGD participant explained to the researcher, in Mareko customary conflict resolution if a person kills someone, he will be made to surrender within three days. Accordingly, on the third day, it will be handed over to the committee chairman or judge. If he surrenders to a judge, the judge (collector) inform to the dead family and everyone else. He asks whether he should be handed over to the law or to me. After that, there is something called a coffee conspiracy for the elderly and it is given to the family of the deceased and after the midnight conspiracy is done, mediation begins and the government knows and protects us. If he

does not surrender, it is said that the government and the country should all look for him. But there are people in this conflict who have been arrested suspected of murder and have not yet been released. However, when we started to reconcile with the government bodies, we used to communicate with the mediation system according to the order that they would be released after reconciliation because the reconciliation is based on forgiveness and it is not known who was killed in the conflict and so there is misunderstanding between custom and formal government conflict resolution systems (MAFGD-1, Apr 17/2023).

In general, as shown in this study, in the effort to resolve the conflict between the two ethnic groups, the main challenges that embed the conflict from being resolved, are the question of the nine kebeles who say that the origin of the conflict is the root cause of the conflict, should get a priority response from the government, the killing of influential individuals on both sides to make the conflict worse due to the information spread profit seeker from that conflict, the question being asked for a long time and the government not responding quickly here too that the formation the groups who say that the question can only be resolved by conflict, and the government politicians from the reign to the district on both sides saying to put their hands in the customary conflict resolution system.

Chapter five

5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

For study of the role of multi-stakeholders in resolving Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict resolution, the researcher used descriptive research methods, and applied qualitative Methodology regarding data collection used primary data's tools such as interview, focus group discussion, and secondary data's which includes published and unpublished documents for data analysis.

Though out the conducting of this research I found that if customary conflict resolution guide by culture with the supervision of community elders without any political intervention and interest it can solve any kind of conflict because it consider the interest of the community to maintains the solidarity of the society in a sustainable manner, the reason that after all society respect their culture and traditions with is the cornerstone of their harmonies existences.

In conducting of this study I found that the local government contributes both positive and negative impact on the conflict resolution between Meskan and Mareko ethnic conflict. On negative the local government made a lot of intervention on the resolution conducted by and selecting and leading elders also by influence the political view, this made the conflict to take a long time to be resolved. On other hand the positive part local government plays avail role on facilitating, giving protection and security for informal counsels (elder) for reconciliation process.

The study found that there is integration between informal and formal conflict resolution system, the integration is in two ways one positive the other negative. The first is that they had positive integration to solve the conflict, this mean that the formal legal system is protect the traditional system (informal) from various parties who try to intervene there proceeding and thus how want profit from the conflict also advise them not to violate the formal legal system. The second

integration is that have negative, after the informal conflict resolution solve the majority problem thus parties how suspected on committed crime and detained on formal institution specially court not relies thus parties because of strict procedural regulation followed by formal institution made the informal displeasure to the traditional conflict resolution bodies.

The other finding that this study gets the integrations of formal legal system and customary conflict are not formal, these made it the decision of the two institution are incompatible and discomforted among them. And that made among conflicting parties lack of trust in decision made by customary conflict resolution mechanism.

The main challenges that embedded the conflict between Meskan and Mareko ethnic groups from being resolved are, the main reason for the conflict from the Mareko ethnic side was the formation of those who said that the conflict should not stop if the issue of nine kebeles is not resolved, the information spread by people who benefits from the conflict between the two ethnic groups, killing of influential people from both ethnic groups and involvement of officials and politicians from the region to the district in the customary conflict resolution system in the study area.

5.2 Recommendation

- ❖ Though the study the basic reason of the conflict between this two ethnic group was not making immediate response by the government organ about political question specially self-administration that lead to conflict ,the recommendation I forward is that the federal or regional government should reposed this kind of question with carful and rapidly because it lead to unstoppable conflict.
- ❖ After this study it clear that the need to develop a clear legal and policy framework for the application of customary conflict resolution, because it help to have clear formation, time schedule selection of elder and other procedural stapes in order to help the local custom conflict resolution method to work effectively and efficacy.
- ❖ The next recommendation is that after established legally framed customary conflict resolution we need make sure that customary conflict resolution free from any political interference, it should only governed by local traditional, custom and culture, Because political intervention make the process more complex and difficult to solve.
- ❖ To sum up the recommendation main issue of this ethic conflict between difference group is based on border demarcation between this ethnic groups, the task of demarcation of borders given to government therefore the government should put clear demarcation between thus ethic groups, based on laws if it necessary by making referendum which can be reduce conflict faced by ethics on federal system.

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Appendix- 1

Interview Guideline

Thank you for your consent to respond to the interview. This interview Guideline is designed to generate data on the research topic, ‘The Role of Multi-Stakeholders in Resolving Meskan and Mareko Ethnic Conflict’.

Part One: Personal Back Ground Information

1. How old are you? _____
2. Sex? F____M _____
3. Can you tell me about your Educational background? _____
4. Are you Married_____?
6. What is your position in your institution? _____

Part Two: - Interview Guideline Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

1. Interview Guideline Focus Group Discussion for Customary Conflict Resolution Institutions (elders)

1. What is the cause of the conflict?
2. As an elder of the local area, what did you do to find a solution when the conflict happened? in what way? With who?
3. What processes did you use to resolve the conflict? What was the result?
4. Are there any challenges you faced while working for peace?
5. What are those challenges?
6. When you working for peace, how was your integration with the local government?
7. What are the challenges that you face in your integration in solving the conflict?
8. What opportunities did you get in your integration?

Part three: - General Interview Guideline

2. Interview Guide for Government Bodies

Section One: - An Interview Guideline for District Administration

1. What is the cause of the conflict?
2. What did the local government do to solve the conflict? With who? In what ways?
3. What are the challenges that local government face to solve the conflict?
4. How did the local government try to overcome the challenge?
5. What was the integration between the local government and the customary conflict resolution mechanism to solve the conflict?
6. What procedures were followed to work with traditional peace options?
7. What were the challenge they faced during their integration to resolve the conflict?
8. What was the way that local government flowed to solve the challenge they faced?
9. What opportunities did the local government get from other conflict resolution mechanism in solving the conflict?

Section Two: - An Interview Guideline for District Security Office

1. What is the cause of the conflict?
2. How was the district security body moving to resolve the conflict?
3. What were they doing to prevent the conflict from getting worse? in what way?
4. How was your integration with other traditional conflict resolution methods?
5. What challenge did they face in their efforts to resolve the conflict?
6. How did they overcome the challenges?

Section Three: - An Interview Guideline for District Justice Office

1. What is the cause of the conflict?
2. How was the district justice office looking at the cases related to the conflict?
3. How did you deal with issues related to the conflict?
4. What kind of challenges did you face while looking at cases related to the conflict?

5. What was the integrating with other conflict resolution mechanisms to solve the conflict?
6. What were the challenges they face?
7. How are they resolved?

Section Four: - An Interview Guideline for District court

1. What is the cause of the conflict?
2. How did the court solve the cases that come to it in relation to the conflict?
3. What was the integration with other local conflict resolution mechanism?
4. In what way was the decision of the local conflict resolution bodies accepted?
5. What were the challenges encountered in the process? How did you solve them?

Section Five: - An Interview Guideline for District Council

1. What is the cause of the conflict?
2. How was your council leading the work of peace in that conflict?
3. What kind of decisions did the council make? I what way?
4. How were you working with other conflict resolution bodies?
5. What challenges did you face when you moved to resolve the conflict? How did you get rid of it?

3. Interview Guideline for District Religious Leaders

1. What would your institution do to bring peace to the community during the conflict?
2. What kind of messages of peace were you conveying?
3. How was your relationship with the community during the conflict?
4. What kind of the challenges were you facing at the time?

Appendix- 2

LIST OF TABLE

Table: - 1

No	Interviewe e cod No	Sex	Professional or Job	Ethnic group	Educational level	Date of interview	Remark
MAKI	MAKI-1	Male	Administrative office head	Mareko	Degree	May/2023	
	MAKI-2	Male	Peace and Security office head	Mareko	Degree	Apr/2023	
	MAKI-3	Male	Spokes person	Mareko	Degree	May/2023	
	MAKI-4	Male	Justice office head	Mareko	LLB Degree	May/2023	
	MAKI-5	Male	Court President	Mareko	LLB Degree	Apr/2023	
	MAKI-6	Male	Police	Mareko	Diploma	Apr/2023	
	MAKI-7	Male	Police	Mareko	Diploma	Apr/2023	
	MAKI-8	Male	Muslims Musk elder	Mareko	Other	May/2023	
	MAKI-9	Male	Orthodox Church elder	Mareko	MA Degree	May/2023	
	MAKI-10	Male	Protestants Church elder	Mareko	Other	Jun/2023	
MKI	MKI-1	Male	Administrative office head	Gurage	Degree	Jun/2023	
	MKI-2	Male	Peace and Security office head	Gurage	Degree	May/2023	
	MKI-3	Male	Spokes person	Gurage	Degree	Jun/2023	
	MKI-4	Male	Justice office head	Gurage	LLB Degree	May/2023	
	MKI-5	Male	Court President	Gurage	LLB Degree	May/2023	
	MKI-6	Female	Police	Gurage	Diploma	May/2023	
	MKI-7	Male	Police	Gurage	Diploma	May/2023	
	MKI-8	Male	Muslims Musk elder	Gurage	Other	Jun/2023	
	MKI-9	Male	Orthodox Church elder	Gurage	Degree	Jun/2023	
	MKI-10	Male	Protestants Church elder	Gurage	Degree	Jun/2023	

Key: - MAKI= (Mareko key informant)

MKI= (Meskan key informant)

Table: - 2

No	Participants cod	Sex	Age	Education level	Date of FGD	Remark
MAFGD	MAFGD -1	Male	75	Other	5/1/2023	
	MAFGD -2	Male	50	Other	>> >> >>	
	MAFGD -3	Male	55	Other	>> >> >>	
	MAFGD -4	Male	60	Other	>> >> >>	
MFGD	MFGD -1	Male	74	Other	5/10/2023	
	MFGD -2	Male	60	Other	>> >> >>	
	MFGD -3	Male	56	Other	>> >> >>	
	MFGD -4	Male	64	Other	>> >> >>	

Key: - MAFGD= (Mareko Focus group discussion)

MFGD= (Meskan focus group discussion)

Appendix-3



Figure 3:- (FGD), Elders participating in the reconciliation of Meskan district



Figure 4 :- (FGD), Elders participating in the reconciliation of Meskan district



Figure 5:- Muslim religious leader in Mareko district

