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Social Capital and its Role in Traditional Conflict Resolution: The
Case of Inter-religious Conflict in Jimma Zone of the Oromia
Regional State in Ethiopia

Abiy Ahmed Ali

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Abstract

The general objective of this study was to investigate the nexus between social capital and conflict and examine the roles of social capital in conflict resolution in Jimma Zone of the Oromia National Regional State in Ethiopia. To this end, the study employed concurrent triangulation design of a mixed methods approach. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the study. A questionnaire composed of closed and open ended questions, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis were the main instruments used to collect data. The findings of the study indicated that religious conflicts in Jimma area in recent times have been the results of changes in the politico-religious landscape of the post 1991 Ethiopia and Islamic reform movements after the end of the Cold War in different corners of the world including the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. While the violence resulted in human casualties and damage to properties, communities witnessed one of the lasting consequences of the violence through the damages on the social capital makings of the communities in the area. The latter is mainly manifested through the erosion of cultural practices like "Jarssummaa" and "Debo". However, cultural practices like "Edir" and other interactions like friendship and gender relations have maintained their status. Moreover, personal safety, property security and neighborhood peace have stayed as they were before the conflict. It was also a droplet of inter-religious social capital that survived the violence that led to the birth of the most instrumental conflict resolution entity. The Religious Forum for Peace, as an outcome of longtime friendship among religious figures is an epitomization of the survival of the inter-religious social capital in the study area. As such, the forum was established in 2011 with the purpose of replenishing vital aspects of inter-religious social capital and promoting inter-religious interactions. The "Religious Forum for Peace" established by elders and religious leaders is making unreserved efforts in promoting cultural practices such as "Edir" and other social activities that promote positive interactions between followers of Islam and Christianity and thereby promoting peace in the study area. The study's recommendations include; the local government bodies, the religious leaders, and the elders in the community of the study area need to be proactive in preventing conflicts through the promotion of social capital. Moreover, it should be deemed invaluable that the government bodies at different echelons of the administrative structure as well as the religious leaders and the elders in the study area need to work hand-in-hand in promoting cultural practices through the strengthening of "The Religious Forum for Peace". Particularly, those actors should make use of and strengthen inter-religious cultural practices like "Edir", "Jarssummaa" and "Debo". The upsides of the Forum in capitalizing on inter-religious social capital have been duly noted. Particularly, its successes in drawing different actors together for its cause and in pooling resources from these actors are to be credited highly in building social capital. However, the lessons drawn from the forum to date need not be confined to the study area. The advantages that the forum promises as an alternative mechanism of conflict resolution can be utilized at a national level. Since conflicts between communities in Ethiopia occur at various levels, the use of a contextually tailored forum that capitalizes on local inter-religious social capital is an alternative not only to the formal but also to the existing traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution. Essentially, the method through which the forum ensures the sustainability of a particular conflict resolution exercise presents a curative opportunity to resolution practices in Ethiopia that inadvertently fail to see themselves past their early years of existence.

Key Words: social capital, religion, conflict and conflict resolution

Acknowledgements

In Loving Memory of

Zeiyneba Ahmed

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CAF	Conflict Analysis Framework
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHI	Family Health International
IFLO	Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromo
KI	Key Informant
SCAT	Social Capital Analysis Tool
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Chapter One

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, conceptual and theoretical framework of the study, objectives of the study, the research questions, significance of the study, limitation and delimitation of the study, and the structure of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

In recent years the traditional constituents of capitals namely, natural, physical, and human capitals have been conceptually broadened to include social capital (Colletta & Cullen, 2000). This is a result of the realization that any country's development trajectory depends on social capital although other forms of capital remain crucial ingredients of economic growth (Popova, 2009). Even though the concept of social capital varies depending on whether the focus is on the type of the relations an actor maintains with other actors and/or the structure of relations among actors within a collectivity, it refers to the networks (real-world links between groups or individuals) together with shared norms (society's unspoken and largely unquestioned rules), values (such as respect for people's safety and security) and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Keeley, 2007). In this definition, we can think of networks as real-world links between groups or individuals, where these networks and understandings engender trust and so enable people to work together (Keeley, 2007).

Countries with similar structures of natural, physical and human capitals can experience different levels of economic performance depending on the social capital they possess (Grootaert, 1998). Furthermore, different regions in a country can show different levels of economic development due to differences in social capital. Putnam's (1993) seminal work

draws attention to the fact that northern Italy is better developed compared to southern Italy because the former has better endowment of horizontal social capital as opposed to the hierarchical form of societal relations in the south.

The historical process underlying the creation of the modern Ethiopian state has been marked by power struggles and conflicting cleavages among diverse forces including the devastating religious violent conflicts in the past. Most of the religious conflicts in the past were results of the ideological commitments of leaders that considered religious unity instrumental in entrenching their legitimacy. The origin of organized violence rooted in religious differences is traceable to the coming of Christianity to Ethiopia in the 4th century when state-backed Orthodox Christianity pitted against traditional beliefs, and later on with the Jewish and Muslim communities (Tamrat, 1972). The Kushitic religious practices early Christianity had confronted with included worships in the sky-god and various spirits inhabiting springs, rivers, lakes, hills, trees and other objects (Tamrat, 1971). When the frontiers of Christianity spread to south of the Ethiopian highlands, local opposition against the Christian church which capitalized on the decline of the Aksumite power was intensified; and the strongest of the resistance came from traditional religious leaders who wielded considerable social and political powers before the coming of Christianity in the 4th century (Tamrat, 1971). Tamrat further contends that violent attacks against Christian figures were only militarily defeated and that the confrontations were highly destructive particularly because the Christian monks, protected by royal imperial court, insisted on building their churches on the sacred sanctions of their rivals. Ultimately, however, the confrontations never halted the expansion of Christianity nor did they put an end to animist beliefs which are widely practiced in Ethiopia to date.

A different era of religious conflicts with devastating social and political consequences has also been recorded between Ethiopian followers of Christianity and Judaism. The war waged

by Yodit (popularly known as Gudit), an adherent of Judaism, against the old Christian order in the 10th century AD is a case in point. In fact, this Christian-Judaism rivalry in Ethiopia went down to the 14th century when the Christian kings intensified their campaigns against followers of Judaism driving them en mass into the inaccessible mountains of Northern Ethiopia with the only significant result being the withdrawal of the center of Judaic resistance further north (Tamrat, 1972). Judaic revolts against Christian domination continued until the 15th century when it was suppressed militarily; and the incidences led Christian kings to try to bring Judaic territories into the feudal order of the Christian kingdom (Tamrat, 1972). As such, as Tamrat noted, a Christian king known as King Yishaq came up with a decree that: "He who is baptized in the Christian religion, may inherit the land of his father; otherwise let him be a Falashi." Since then followers of Judaism who used to be known as the House of Israel came to be called Falashoch (= exiles) (Tamrat, 1972).

Another notable inter-religious violent conflict in Ethiopian history is the 16th century 'Ahmad Gragn' war between the Christian kingdom and Muslim Sultanates. This historical phenomenon left deep scar on Christian-Muslim interactions, and that is manifested in the form of fear and mistrust among Christians (Elrich, 2010). The Church then emerged as protector of the state and the monarchy. This identity lasted as a crucial component of the Christian Amhara and Tigray ethnic groups (Karbo, 2013). This entails that religion and ethnicity often overlap in Ethiopia (Markakis, 1974). For example, the majority of highlanders in the north, notably the Amhara and the Tigray are Christian while the Oromo in the south, Afar and Somali in the east represent the largest proportion of the Muslim community.

There was also a notable history of Christian-Muslim violence in 19th century in the previous Wollo province of Ethiopia. Emperor Yohannes's drive to regenerate society and his nation building project led to claims for adherence to an exclusive and doctrinaire faith (Caulk,

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1972). Assimilation into a narrowly defined religious community of Tewahdo Christianity became an obligation, sanctioned by various disqualifications and ultimately by force (Caulk, 1972). When the Emperor declared Christianity as the only doctrine to which adherents of other sects were told to conform at the Boru Meda council of 1878, it showed his intention to follow stringent policy of religion unlike his political leadership (Bahru, 2001). The Muslims of Wollo in particular were ordered to be baptized with the consequences of not doing so resulting in at least the confiscation of property and land (Bahru, 2001). The Emperor also ordered those who refused to be converted to Christianity to "leave his country" and the books they possessed were to be taken and burnt (Caulk, 1972). Rebellion ensued as a result and went on for a couple of years until it was suppressed after a campaign characterized by devastation (Bahru, 2001).

Despite long and politically driven Christian-Muslim rivalries in Ethiopia, there are minority Muslim communities in the south and minority Christians in the east who dwell side-by-side in harmony with followers other religions. The culture and identity of Islam was gradually absorbed in the Ethiopian societal fabric as an active and integral part (Karbo, 2013). Despite the mentioned historical accounts, Ethiopia is referred as a country with traditions of tolerant religious interactions (Levine, 2007). This centuries old societal fabrics built between competing ethno-religious groups has recently been challenged. It is particularly so both to the indigenous Ethiopian Islam and Christianity. Both indigenous Islam and Christianity are increasingly vulnerable to external pressures, notably from the Middle East and the West, respectively. Elrich (2010) particularly sees the Islamic movement in Ethiopia as an extension of global Islamic trends. Karbo (2013) associated this recent movement with the surge of tension and violent conflict between various sects of Islam on the one hand, and between Islam and State on the other hand, and between Islam and Christianity on yet another

level. Karbo further conjectured that this movement in Ethiopia would continue and become the major source of instability in the future.

To put it in context, there are growing divergent narratives by different religious groups on their claim of what Ethiopia is or ought to be as it can be gleaned from the sacred narratives that they put forward. For Orthodox Christians Ethiopia is the "chosen nation" based on the claim that the divine Grace was transferred from Israel in the 10th century B.C. reinforced by a belief in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant in Ethiopia and many other divine relics. For Muslims, it is "the land of the first Hijra", a reference to the 7th century immigration of the followers of the Prophet Mohammed when they were persecuted by the Mecca establishment in the early days of Islam. There is also a growing localized tendency by Protestant Christians that Ethiopia is a land of "reformation" (Dereje, 2013).

Before the onset of the 2006 conflict, the relations between Muslims and Christians in Jimma have been amicable for long which were reflected in the joint social undertakings of the communities including *Iddir*, *Iqub*, funerals and wedding ceremonies (Zelalem, 2010). Members of both communities also have traditions of helping one another in various farming activities which extend from plowing to harvesting. This practice is locally known as "*debo*". A local conflict resolution practice known as "*jarsummaa*" used to be undertaken with joint membership of elderly Muslim and Christian personalities who mediate conflicts. Moreover, members of both communities used to have mutual celebrations of religious holidays. For instance, in the annual Christian holiday of "*buhe*" in August, teenagers and youths from both Christian and Muslim religions used to go around villages chanting songs of "*hoya hoye*" and collecting gifts in the form of home-made, special bread and money. Even the participation of Muslim youngsters was in some cases numerically superior to the Christian participants.

Furthermore, the solidarity between Muslims and Christians before the conflict was dependent on mutual trust and fraternity that wedding gifts decorated with Christian crossings presented to the Muslims were common and welcome. Likewise, Christians participated in Muslim holiday celebrations of Id al Fetir and Id al Adha. During the Ramadan fasting period Muslims who serve meals to others as part of a religious observance (i.e., *Sedoqa*) included Christians in the preparation of food. Neighboring Christians were also invited to the feasts by Muslims. All in all, these were the expressions of rich social capital in and around Jimma which have laid strong foundation for positive relationships among different religious groups. Such social ties were also used as mechanisms to resolve inter-religious conflicts when aroused across such groups. However, despite such rich social capital in and around the zone, inter-religious conflicts never stopped emerging periodically, with the one that appeared in 2006 being a major one. After its emergence, efforts have been exerted to establish a traditional conflict resolution institution, i.e. the Religious Forum for Peace which is believed to have addressed several incidences that otherwise might have led to wider conflicts in the areas.

Thus, this study tried to explore the vitality of such grass roots level initiatives in conflict resolution and assessed the extent to which such initiatives were useful to replenish the social capital being eroded. The study therefore tried to examine the nexus between social capital and its role in conflict resolution in Jimma zone where a notable religious conflict erupted in the recent history of Ethiopia. It further made efforts to clarify how the different layers of the community members' multiple identity played out during the conflict. In so doing, the study underlined the significance of understanding the local historical, cultural and political context within which the inter-religious violent conflict was situated.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Most conflict studies conducted in Ethiopia after 1991 centered their argument on resource-based conflict narratives. These kinds of conflicts were evidenced by the conflicts between the Karayu and Itu, and the Afar and the Arsi Oromos in eastern Ethiopia (Teklu, 2004); the Guji and Gedeo in Southern Ethiopia (Asebe, 2007); Amhara and Oromo ethnic groups in Wallaga (Tafesse, 2009); and the Gumuz and the settlers of the 1980s in Metekel Zone (Wolde-Selassie, 2004). On the other hand, other studies underline their argument on identity conflict after the change in the government structure in 1991, such as conflict between Shekacho and Sheko-Meczenger-Manja in Sheka Zone (Wolde-Selassie, 2004), Borena (Oromo) and Gerri Somali (Teshome, 2003), Anuak and Nuer in Gambella (Dereje, 2011) and Oromo and Somalia in Babile Woreda (Ahmed, 2003; Mesfin, 2006).

Much of these recent voluminous conflict studies in Ethiopia that concentrated on analyzing the immediate causes of the conflict suffer from oversimplification and echo the cause of conflict either to thesis of resource-based or power struggle between ethnic groups. However, historically marginalized groups, particularly Muslims and Protestant Christians, have made effective use of the post-1991 political space to enhance their visibility in the public sphere (Dereje, 2013). Also, political debates have been increasingly shaped by the steady growth of inter-faith conflicts lately. While some consider the inter-faith relation particularly between Muslims and Christians as both consensual and conflictual, the depiction has not always been as consensual (Hussein, 2006). Dereje (2013) gave a detailed account of the recent Muslim-Christian conflicts in different parts of Ethiopia including the one in Jimma zone.

However, there is a lack of adequate analysis on the social capital, post-conflict social capital building and traditional conflict resolving mechanisms, which this study has tried to address. Besides, this study briefly explains why it is after 1991 that the competition over resources

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began taking an identity dimension quickly (such as religious and ethnic). In addition, identifying the fundamental causes of such conflicts, the impacts on the social fabric and the nature of interplay between social capital and conflict are also the concerns of this study. The study gets at issues which require a deep exploration that goes beyond describing the immediate causes of conflicts. Moreover, in part motivated by the theoretical and analytical discussions on the roles of social capital in the socio-political and economic settings of different countries, this study endeavored to analyze the makings and contributions of social capital in Ethiopia as it relates to traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

A related research was conducted by Zelalem (2010) on the inter-religious conflict in Jimma that provides a comprehensive picture of the conflict. Specifically, Zelalem identified the teachings of a new extremist Islamic sect known as the khawarij as the precursor to the violence. The new teachings disrupted the largely peaceful relations between followers of Islam and Christianity in the area before gradually leading to the violence. However, from a macro-political perspective, Zelalem argues that the rapid political liberalization the country has undergone after 1991 harbors the fundamental explanation for the causes of the conflict. He is of the opinion that in the pre-1991 environment people hardly needed tolerance as a virtue for people had no interest in understanding the religious tenets of other people's faiths. But the situation began changing after 1991 for mass participation in religious affairs escalated even leading to controversies within the same religious denomination.

For Zelalem, the critical issue is that the religious freedom which unleashed mass participation was never accompanied by a change in the older notion of "tolerance" which he labels, borrowing Andreas's terminology, as indifference and skepticism to values. Zelalem's work is a magnificent explanation of the processes and causes leading up to the conflict supported by a wide range of primary data. Zelalem mentions that the conflict resolution

process in the two years after the conflict was protracted due to the unsettled enmity and prevailing insecurity at the time. Thus, this study assessed the progresses made after the establishment of the Religious Forum for Peace in a longer time frame.

The focus of this investigation was on local violent religious conflicts that occurred in September 2006 and in 2011 in villages outside the southwestern city of Jimma. The incident highlighted the possibility of rising religious tensions in the country. Despite the variance in accounts of the incident, supposedly the bonfire at the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian ceremony of 'Meskel' in one community sparked a conflict with neighboring Muslims worshiping in the mosque (Smith, 2007). The conflict resulted in the loss of human lives and destruction of property (burning houses and churches). Above all, the destruction would have lasting psychological trauma for it divided religious groups and destroyed the very basis of societal fabric of people who used to live side-by-side in harmony.

A prominent Muslim scholar, Hassen Taju (as cited in Dereje, 2013) documented that the extremist ideology (Takfir) was taking its root in Benishangul, Jimma and eastern Oromia even before the incident under study happened. Ostebo (2010) also asserted that the Christian-Muslim conflict in Jimma is tied to the process of Islamic radicalization. However, the foregoing studies dwelled on describing how new religious identity is constructed that leads to violent conflict. Though this explanation could be a part of the answer, it leaves some questions unattended. How did other factors, beside the radicalization of Islam, affect the social capital that existed between the Muslim and Christian communities? Was there a manipulation of social capital for group interest? And if yes, what were the forms of the manipulation? This study, therefore, attempted to fill those gaps left unaddressed by assessing post conflict aspect of the incident and underscoring the importance of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and their role in replenishing eroded social capital and exploring the nexus between social capital and conflict.

1.3. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The lack of conceptual and methodological clarity of social capital inspired the likes of Krishna and Shrader (1999) and Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2001) to assess a number of methodological approaches, empirical studies and develop analytical framework for analyzing social capital that comprises of multiple perspectives and manifestations.

In order to understand the nexus between social capital and violent conflict it is desirable to examine the relation between horizontal and vertical social capital aspects and the balance of bonding and bridging social capital in society. Colletta and Cullen (2000) indicated the need to understand the "relationship between social capital and the cohesiveness of a society". As pointed out by Berkman and Kawachi (2000) social capital forms a subset of social cohesion concept. They further describe two features of social cohesion of society: (1) the absence of hidden conflict in any form of polarization (e.g. religious) and income/wealth inequality, and disparities in political participation; (2) the presence of network of social bonds gauged by levels of trust and norms of reciprocity, the plethora of associations that bridge social cleavages, and the presence of institutions of conflict management.

Social cohesion is, therefore, an important variable that comes between social capital and violent conflict. The degree to which vertical (state responsiveness to its citizens) and horizontal (cross-cutting ties and networks among different groups) social capital intersect indicates the cohesiveness of a society. Stronger cohesive society has inclusive mechanisms to manage conflict before it turns violent. The weaker the social cohesion, the weaker the reinforcing channels of socialization and social controlling mechanisms become. Weak societal cohesion increases the risk of social disorganization, fragmentation and exclusion, potentially manifesting itself in violent conflict (Colletta & Cullen, 2000).

The figure below portrays the analytical framework that is used in this study to analyze the nexus among social capital, violent conflict and traditional conflict resolution mechanism. The gradual erosion and evolution of bridging ties will give rise to a loose tie between polarized groups (such as between Christian and Muslim communities). Loose bridging ties cultivate a fertile ground for a negative bonding social capital to emerge between groups. Such a strong bonding social capital built within groups can readily be perverted to undermine the cohesiveness of communities. It also fragments society for individual and group gains, and at large individual members of groups will start to have a perception on conflict, such as perceiving other groups as a threat rather than cooperators for resources, or social, or cultural, or religious values, and justifies their mechanisms of self-defense. Eventually, perception on conflict will result in exclusionary moves, which in turn loosen bridging ties among groups. It is when multiple structural conditions are concurrently happening that violent conflict can occur; like the presence of weak institutional capacity to manage conflicts (both formal and informal types), weak civil society, historical and political grievances, and manipulation of polarized identities (e.g. ethnic and religion).

In what follows, the scope of social capital at micro, meso and macro levels that will be used in the study and the way the different layers of social capital interact are presented. The micro level analysis will allow us to have an understanding on the status of social capital at individual or household level such as social ties, networks, values and norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness, which can have either positive or negative impacts on communities. More importantly, this micro level social capital will enable us explore bridging and bonding social capitals that exist across different groups (e.g. between Christians and Muslims). At the meso level analysis, social capital includes vertical component of social interactions and focuses on social structure. The most distinguishing feature of this analysis of social capital is that it considers relations among groups rather than individuals. It emphasizes instrumental

values that determine the social networks and nature of interactions within and among groups (Popova, 2009). The macro level analysis enables us see institutions that can mold the social and political environment under which local associations and norms, such as traditional conflict resolution mechanisms can ripen and flourish. Therefore, these macro institutions can either enable or hinder social engagement, civil and political participation (Franke, 2005). (See Fig.1 below)

Figure 1: Analytical framework for analyzing nexus among social capital, violent conflict and traditional conflict resolution
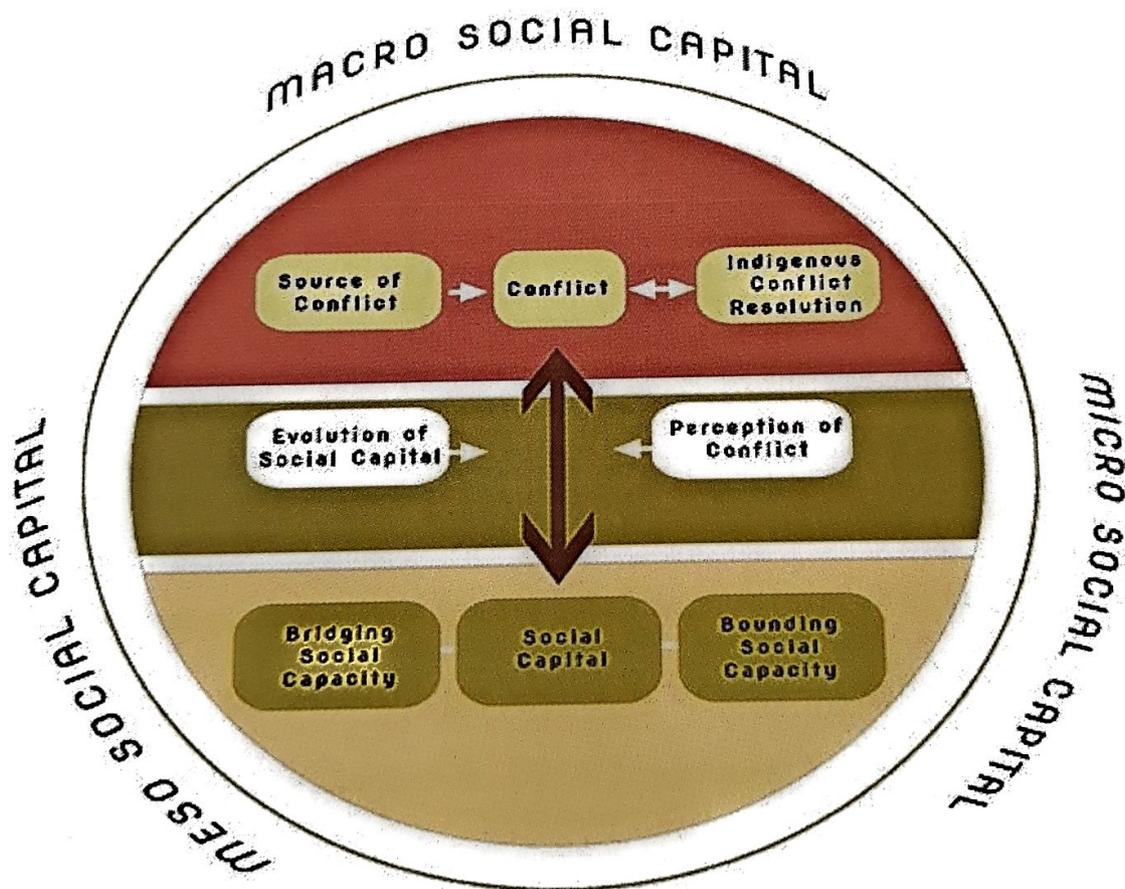
(Source: Developed by the Investigator).

1.4.   Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to investigate the nexus between social capital and conflict and examine the roles of social capital in conflict resolution in Jimma Zone, Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia.

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To describe examine the evolution of social capital overtime in the affected communities in Jimma Zone;
2. To identify the underlying sources of violent religious conflicts in the study area;
3. To assess the nature of interplay between social capital and conflict in the Christian and Muslim communities in Jimma zone;
4. To explore the perceptions of Jimma zone communities on the vitality of social capital and the Religious Forum for Peace

1.5.   Research Questions

The following are the main research questions that this study addressed:

1. How did the social capital that existed across the different ethnic and religious groups evolve over time in Jimma zone where violent conflicts occurred?
2. What are the historical, political and cultural (including religious) contexts that triggered the violent conflicts in Jimma zone?
3. What are the features of the interaction between social capital and conflict in the Christian and Muslim communities in Jimma zone?
4. How do inhabitants of Jimma zone perceive the role of social capital in maintaining harmony and the role of traditional institution-"Religious Forum for Peace"- in helping to avert and resolve conflicts?

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1.6. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to guide and create awareness among the administrative bodies at the different echelons of the government structure, community elders, religious leaders and the committee members of "the Religious Forum for Peace" in providing adequate knowledge on social capital and its role in traditional conflict resolution. Moreover, this study examined different concepts and theoretical approaches to social capital and its role in traditional conflict resolution. In this regard, it is expected to provide policy makers with important insights in their attempts to design mechanisms of preventing and resolving conflicts by tapping the potentials of social capital. Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of conflict studies by filling the void in the literature on social capital and its role in traditional conflict resolution. It could also provide more provocative thoughts and stimulate further interest among scholars for more research on peace and development of a country.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

It was the expectation of the investigator from the outset that throughout the study difficulties might emerge owing to the sensitivity of the issue and the recentness of the conflict. It was anticipated that getting subtle details on the conflict would be problematic as memories of the violence remain fresh in peoples' minds. The data gathering teams, therefore, made efforts to spend more time in each community to build relations, trust, and acceptance with residents. This helped data collecting teams to gain the confidence of respondents and engage them in broad discussions to encompass details of the respondents' conflict experiences.

1.8. Delimitations of the Study

The results of this study could have been more robust if it had included all zones and administrative towns in Oromia Regional State. However, due to time and financial

constraints, it was delimited to three areas in Jimma zone and one area which was previously in Jimma zone, but latter included in Ilu Ababora zone. The research focused on these four Woredas for they were the places where violence have been witnessed. Agaro town was also another focus area of the study as the Religious Forum for Peace was based in the town. Moreover, this study did not endeavor to evaluate the nexus between social capital and conflict resolution in general, but on the nexus between social capital and traditional conflict resolution.

1.9. Structure of the Study

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter consists of six parts: the background of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, limitations and delimitations of the study. The chapter addresses what is studied, how the topic was identified and why it is studied. Chapter two consists of the literature review which comprises the summary and analysis of literature on social capital, conflict and conflict resolution. The third chapter is composed of the research design and methodology which focuses on research design and method, sources of data, samples and sampling techniques, instruments of data collection, methods of data analysis, and ethical considerations.

The fourth chapter deals with data analysis, presentation and interpretation. It presents a detailed analysis on the nature, characteristics, causes and consequences of the inter-religious conflicts; the changes the conflict brought to social capital and examines how the changes in the area happened; the aspects of social capital that were broken due to the conflict, aspects that survived the conflict and forms of social capital that emerged after the conflict; and the roles social capital can play in resolving religious conflicts through the evaluation of the activities of the Religious Forum for Peace. Finally, chapter five ends in presenting the

summary of major findings, conclusion, recommendations, and implications based on the findings of the study.

Chapter Two

2. Review of Related Literature

This chapter presents the theoretical basis of the meaning, types, forms and measurements of social capital; the nature and causes of conflict; conflict in Ethiopia; and conflict resolution.

2.1. Social Capital: Meaning, Types, Forms and Measurements

2.1.1. The Concept of Social capital

Loaded with diverse meanings, the term social capital remains an elusive concept in the socio-political and economic literature, sometimes considered as an all-absorbing black hole with less defined limits. Different attempts to define and explain the term ended-up in reflecting complementary or even opposing ideas. Hence, outlining a conceptual as well as empirical review will help us to understand the notion of social capital and the vital role it plays in conflict affected societies. This chapter presents some of the theoretical literature and empirical research that are relevant to social capital and its role in traditional conflict resolution in Ethiopia.

Social capital is one of the trendiest phrases used ubiquitously in modern day. It provokes considerable amount of controversy. Since the medieval age, the term capital has been used to refer to all the moveable properties of a farm. But classical economists like Smith (1776) and Ricardo (1817) view capital as one of the factors of production alongside others. Marxian economists conceptualize capital as part of the surplus value captured by capitalists or the bourgeoisie, who control the means of production. Neoclassical economists added further factors of production and refined the connotation of capital. According to them, capital is further divided in to financial capital, fixed capital (machinery and equipment), and working capital (finished and semi-finished goods).

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Historical conceptualization of capital by classical and neoclassical economists identified three other forms of capital (financial, physical and natural capital). More recently, other types of capital have been identified such as human capital, cultural capital and social capital. However, these forms proliferate meanings and conjure provoking contests whether they qualify as a real capital or not. Many authors questioned and even opposed especially the appropriateness of the term "capital" in "social capital".

Smith and Kulynych (2002) believed that the phrase "social capital" has a broad, pervasive and honorific meaning and that the term blurs many distinctions which adversely affect the scholarly inquiry, whatever its implicit or explicit normative concerns are. On the contrary, Inkeles (2000) suggested that the term capital is too limiting and suggested rather the use of the term social or communal resources because capital as an element of production of goods and services not only necessitates goods but also social support, physical and social security, freedom of expression, and opportunities to develop which is not covered by the term capital.

To resolve such types of arguments, different scholars identified various characteristics of capital. Schmid (2000) stated that capital is not immediately used up in production but rather its services extend over time. On the contrary, capital stock is subject to investment for future production, depreciation, and decay from both use and non-use. Piazza-Georgi (2002) argues that capital produces income and encompasses the non-consumable, but depreciating inputs into the production process. Castle (2002) adds other characteristics of capital regarding usefulness and durability.

Taking the criteria into consideration, it is clear from literature that social capital has both similarities and dissimilarities with neo-capital theories and is certainly quite dissimilar from classical theory of capital.

Social capital is similar to other forms of capital in that it can be invested with the

expectation of future returns (Adler & Kwon, 1999), is appropriable (Coleman, 1988), is convertible (Bourdieu, 1986), requires some investment of time and effort of money (Grootaert, 2001; Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002; Krishna & Uphoff, 2002) and needs to be maintained (Gant et al., 2002).

Social capital is different from other forms of capital in that it resides in social relationships whereas other forms of capital revolve around the individual (Robison et al., 2002). Furthermore, social capital cannot be traded by individuals on an open market like other forms of capital, but rather embedded within a group (Gant et al., 2002).

Hence, social capital is a unique form of capital yet not sufficiently dissimilar to warrant a different term. Certainly it is the use of the term capital that makes the concept attractive to such a wide range of people given the blending together of sociology and economics (Adam & Roncevic, 2003).

2.1.2. Dimensions and Units of Analysis of Social Capital

Analysis of the concept of social capital includes the level or unit of observation as well as its dimensions. Although the levels of analysis are not necessarily mutually exclusive, some categorizations in this regard divide social capital into micro and macro levels while others divide social capital into micro, meso and macro levels. The micro level is concerned with the close ties to family and friends, the meso level consists of communities and associational organizations and the macro level refers to analysis.

However, many scholarly works done on social capital focus on the meso level of analysis. Halpern (2005) suggested some functional equivalence exists between the different levels. That is to mean that declining social capital on one level can sometimes be compensated for increases on another level.

2.1.2.1. The Micro-approach: Putnam's Thesis

The micro-approach to social capital focuses on the value of collective action and on the subjective factors that can motivate individuals to cooperate formally (by joining associations) or informally in order to attain certain objectives (Franke, 2005). The most important elements considered within this discourse are the behavior of the actors involved and their perception of collective issues such as cultural beliefs and influences.

The micro level analysis of social capital usually emphasizes the horizontal association between people, consisting of social networks and associated norms. This narrow view of social capital is frequently associated with Putnam (1993) who defined social capital as the connections among individuals and social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (Putnam, 1993). In this definition, three main components are emphasized: trust, social norms and obligations as well as social networks and associations. Putnam's conceptualization grasps positive externalities of social capital in terms of improved efficiency of society such as generalized reciprocity, social trust, communication, and diminishing incentives for opportunism as a result of the facilitated coordinated actions. Putnam originally envisaged only these positive externalities of social capital but others have since recognized negative externalities of social capital.

2.1.2.2. The Meso Approach to Social Capital: Coleman's Addition

Coleman (1988) expanded the unit of observation of social capital by introducing a vertical component to the analysis of social capital which can be referred to as meso interpretation. He was more interested in the development and application of conceptual tools for micro-macro transition. To do this, he tried to synthesize sociological and economic perspectives in an attempt to conceptualize social capital and identified different forms of capital (physical. human and social) and the interplay among themselves. Coleman's aim is to import the

economists' principle of rational action for use in the analysis of social systems and to do so without discarding social organization in the process.

Coleman defined social capital by its function (enabling social action) as a variety of different entities which all consist of some aspect of social structure, and facilitate certain actions of actors whether personal or corporate. To avoid different interpretation of the concept Coleman distinguished between three main components of social relations: *obligations and expectations, information channels, and norms and sanctions.*

Furthermore, Coleman identified specific characteristics of social capital as a collective resource. He noted that social capital can take variety of forms, as long as it facilitates distinct action (cultural ties, organizational linkages and civic culture). He stated that social capital needs some level of closure of a social structure (e.g. in effectively imposing norms; generating trust) and also it often derives from original organizations set up for a specific purpose, which lasts beyond the original goal (e.g. neighborhood association; counter-example: Solidarnosc). Coleman further stated that social capital is neither about singular actors nor in physical goods and is part of the structure of relations between actors and among actors including organizations.

The distinguishing feature of Coleman's analysis of social capital is that first, he considered relations among groups, rather than individuals. Coleman endorses rational choice idea of social action, but rejects extreme individualistic views. Second, like Putnam, from the start, he recognizes the fact that social capital is productive even for marginalized groups, since vertical associations are characterized by hierarchical relationships and an unequal power distribution among members. Finally, Coleman sees the creation of social capital as an involuntary process.

Similarly, another prominent scholar, Bourdieu (1986), was also working on social capital.

Like Coleman, he also emphasized the vertical dimensions of social capital and linked social capital with the size of network and the volume of past resources accumulated and commanded by the agent. He defined social capital as the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu stated that the main reason that actors engage in and maintain links in a network, in actuality or imagined manner, is to earn profit as a result of the network. He also emphasized the fact that the actors' potential for accruing social profit and control of capital are differentially distributed. Therefore, positions of actors are both the cause and the effect of all forms of past accumulations of capital, particularly social capital. Bourdieu's approach is an important reminder that social capital can be exclusionary and might perpetuate social inequality by providing differential entitlements to credit (Bourdieu, 1986). Therefore, he concluded that social capital along with other forms of associated capitals, explain the structure and dynamics of differentiated societies (Bourdieu &Wacquant, 1992).

2.1.2.3. The Macro Approach to Social Capital

In addition to the largely informal, and often local, horizontal and hierarchical relationships the third paradigm, the macro level of analysis, embraces the social and political environment that shapes social structure and enables norms to develop (Grootaert & van Bastelaer, 2001). This understanding focuses on the institutional structures and, affairs such as the political regime, the rule of law, the court system, and civil and political liberties. While Putnam's and his colleagues' conceptualization of social capital focuses on understanding of social capital as an independent variable affecting outcome variables i.e., institutional performance, other scholars suggested a more dynamic view of social capital rather than static perspective that considers one way cause and effect relationship. The macro perspective considers institutions as one form of social capital rather than just an outcome. For example, different researches

(North, 1990; Oakerson, 1993; Evans, 1996; Ostrom, 1996) show that diverse forms of institutions enhance shared norms of trustworthiness, cooperation, trust and reciprocity.

2.1.2.4. The Micro-Macro Transition: Holistic Assessment of Social Capital

There is a strong degree of complementarities and substitution among the micro, meso and macro level institutions and a comprehensive view and holistic assessment of these dimensions maximizes a good understanding of the dynamism of social capital and its relation with social outcomes. In this regard, Woolcock's (1998) model of social capital facilitates analysis across the aforementioned levels by presenting a comprehensive framework that incorporates four dimensions of social capital and describing their interrelations.

According to his model, integration represents strong ties, or those primordial links within the family or a tightly knit community that are defensive. Linkages encompass intercommunity and intergroup ties. The concept of organizational integrity and synergy respectively stated as effectiveness and ability to function and the states links communities. An advantage of Woolcock's model is that it integrates vertical and horizontal forms of social capital and their relationships, thus facilitating analysis and the targeting of policy recommendations at the macro, meso, and micro levels.

2.1.3. Types and Forms of Social Capital: Bonding, Bridging and Linking Social Capital

A growing number of literatures discuss the various social, political and economic effects of social capital. Social capital is mostly argued to be a positive force that helps boost social trust, norms and values. Yet, it has also long been recognized that there are potential dark sides to social capital (e.g. Bourdieu, 1985; Coleman, 1988; Levi, 1996). To account for these within the context of micro level of analysis, Putnam identified two main components of the

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concept of social capital, bonding social capital and bridging social capital, the creation of which Putnam credits to Ross Gittell and Avis Vidal while linking social capital is treated as a recently added concept to the categorization (Szretzer & Woolcock, 2004). The bonding and bridging are similar in meaning to Granovetter's (1973) strong and weak thesis.

Bonding social capital is the initial system of strong in-group connections or homogeneous groups of people characterized by having dense, multi-functional ties, strong but localized trust and norm of reciprocity. Such ties have been found to stimulate a high level of solidarity within the group structure, which can effectively mobilize resources around a common purpose, facilitates creation of shared identities, provision of emotional closeness, social support and crisis aid (Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Putnam, 2001). Apart from its positive externalities bonding social capital when it is taken to the extreme is also associated with various downsides such as harm to individuals within the group and exclusion of outsiders (Portes & Landolt, 1996; Portes, 1998).

Bridging social capital on the other hand, refers to horizontal connections between socially heterogeneous groups but have broadly similar socio-economic status and power (Putnam, 2001; Woolcock, 2001; Grannoveter, 1986). Bridging ties are inclusive, cutting across ethnicity, caste, race, culture and other social cleavages (Grant, 2001; Wakefield & Blake, 2005; Narayan and Pritchett, 1999). Bridging social capital is characterized by more generalized trust and reciprocity (Putnam, 2001; Field, 2003). Unlike bonding, bridging social capital is more associated with positive outcomes and low potential for negative externalities because of the moderating influence of cross-cutting ties (Field, 2003; Putnam, 2001; Putnam, 2002).

Recently, linking social capital is added to the initially identified dimensions of social capital (i.e. bonding and bridging) to account for two distinct interpretations of bridging social

capital in the literature. The first interpretation focuses on socio-economic heterogeneity of membership within organizations (Stolle & Rochon, 1998; Putnam, 2000; Stolle, 2001) while the second focuses more on interconnectedness between organizations (Paxton, 2002 & 2007).

Szretzer and Woolcock (2004) stated that linking social capital is norms of respect and networks of trusting relationships between people who are interacting across explicit, formal, or institutionalized power or authority gradients in society. Unlike bonding and bridging social capital which basically stress horizontal relationships, linking social capital represents the vertical dimension such as civil society organizations, government agencies, representatives of the public and the private sector (Grant, 2001; Woolcock, 2001; Halpern, 2005).

In this context, linking social capital is considered a valuable asset for accessing key resources such as capacity building, financial and technical support from formal institutions (Narayan & Lant, 2000; Woolcock, 2001; Levitte, 2003; Grootaert et al., 2004)

The literature regarding linking social capital stresses the positive externalities but the adequacy of the concept to address issues of power and conflict is contested. World Bank and other proponents of the concept (e.g. Woolcock, 2001; Halpern, 2005), view linking social capital as essential asset for the well-being and long-term development of poor and marginalized groups.

Different combinations of the three types of community-level social capital are thought to produce a range of outcomes (Field, 2003; Woolcock, 2005) paralleling the argument made about the micro-and macro-forms of social capital in Woolcock's (1998) integrated model. Once again, more community-level social capital is not necessarily better; over-reliance on bonding or bridging, for instance, can be detrimental because benefits are confined to one

type of social capital at the expense of the other (Halpern, 2005). Similar to Woolcock's model, the conceptualization of community-level social capital is dynamic rather than static.

The optimal combination of bonding, bridging and linking social capital can vary over time as the needs and priorities of the community evolves or as the macro-environment itself changes (Halpern, 2005; Woolcock, 2005). However, in conflict analysis, this distinction is highly influential for the reason that it highlights how social capital may not always be beneficial for society as a whole even though it is always an asset for those individuals and groups involved. Horizontal networks of individual citizens and groups that enhance community productivity and cohesion are said to have positive social capital assets whereas self-serving exclusive gangs and hierarchical patronage systems that operate at cross purposes to societal interests can be thought of as negative social capital burdens on society (Varshney, 2001). These webs of relationships, especially when they link people from different backgrounds, are what hold a community together. The more bonding and bridging horizontal social capital link with vertical social capital, the more likely it will be that a society is cohesive and thus possesses the inclusive institutions necessary for managing conflicts. But when a society's social capital inheres mainly primary social groups disconnected from one another, the more powerful groups attempt to dominate the other creating situations of conflict.

The interesting point to note from the above review here is that social capital, as values and rules of social organization, is at the core of human creativity and collective action. Understanding how networks and institutions are organized, the outcomes they pursue and the consequences of such outcomes are fundamentally important in understanding social capital as used for collective action. Human beings typically undertake collective action to meet perceived needs and seize or create opportunities. This involves crafting and

implementing rules. Even the loosest networks of individuals are underpinned by rules. Understanding how such networks are put together enhances understanding of how conflict management is exercised, rules made and monitored, sanctions levied and implemented and outcomes realized and evaluated. On the whole, through appropriate model design and reliable social capital indicators, this study can produce findings which may have implications for policy direction and interventions needed to increase social capital.

2.2. The Nature and Causes of Conflict

Conflicts are as old as human societies and appear to be a basic constituent of human life in diverse activities. Historically, individuals, social groups and societies have disputed and competed against one another over scarce resources such as land, money, as well as political power and ideology. Such observation has inspired early scholars (e.g. Machiavelli, Hobbes) to shed some light on the general contours of conflict in society: how conflict starts, varies, and its effects on society. However, even today the term "conflict" means different things to different people.

2.2.1. The Concept of Conflict

Conflict could be classified and understood based on different criteria and this has created difficulty in formulating an operational and a working definition of the concept. The definition of conflict moves back and forth between conflict being perceived as a negative or as a positive process. Some present conflict as a natural phenomenon and/or a necessary condition for the development and growth of individuals and societies, while others view it as destructive and anomalous incident in social life (Colletta & Cullen, 2000). On top of that the wide variety of views on the subject from a wide range of disciplines (e.g. psychology, sociology, economics and political science) further complicates the conceptualization of the term into a single unifying idea. From individual level analysis in psychology, Freud's

psychoanalytic theory explains conflict through *death instinctî* as a product of unconscious drive for aggression. Sociologists (e.g. Emile Durkheim and Herbert Spencer) saw conflict as a function of social structure and an integral part of the way society evolves. Marxist and Gramscian perspectives regard conflict as a function of power relations, seeing class struggle as the root cause. Economists (e.g. William Stanley Jevons), on the other hand, regard conflict as the result of rational decision making process of an individual seeking to maximize his or her personal gain at the expense of other individuals or society and might even contest that conflict and competition are one and the same.

Arriving at an agreeable definition of conflict is further complicated by the diversity of causes, parties involved and consequences of conflict. This has also created a problem in distinguishing between different types of conflict.

Regarding the parties involved, the term conflict is used to refer to disagreements ranging from family level conflicts to those initiated by pressure groups and social movements (e.g. environmentalists, feminists etc.) right up to conflicts that occur between sections of the same community, between communities and higher levels of authority and between national governments.

The consequences of conflict can also range from simple disputes, with positive outcomes such as a football match (Powelson, 1972; Boulding, 1977) to spontaneous, poorly organized turmoil to highly organized and very violent wars. Conflicts can also be nonviolent, but well organized and focused on changing government policies (Rothgeb, 1996).

While such issues disable the efforts made in providing a single definition, Putnam and Poole (1987) observed that most definitions of conflict in literature involve three factors: (1) there are at least two independent groups involved in conflict, (2) the groups perceive some incompatibility between themselves, and (3) the groups interact with each other in some way.

In addition, Oberschall (1973) distinguishes between two forms of conflict definition in literature, the first definition is related to Weber and the notion of conflict as an action which is aligned to class struggle and physical violence and the second one, called social conflict, allows for a non-violent differing of opinions and values. Similarly, Wallace (1993) distinguishes between non-coercive peaceful conflicts as opposed to coercive or violent conflict.

Some scholars prefer to describe the structure of conflict rather than providing a single definition. Johan Galtung (2000) suggested it is possible to understand something of the nature and process of the conflict by understanding the relationship between the parts that make up the structure of conflict it is possible to understand something of the nature and process of the conflict. If one proceeds to dissect conflict, he states that, three principle constituents would be found: the attitudes of the participants, the behavior of those participants and the contradiction that influence the needs of the participants.

The attitudes of the participants include their perceptions and miss-conceptions of each other and these attitudes are influenced by other factors such as fear and prejudice. The behavior of the participants can include anything from co-operation and coercion through to threats, violence and hostility. Contradiction is the incompatible (perceived or real is of no importance) goals of conflict parties shaped by the structures that influence needs. There are institutions that make up the fabric of society: the legal and political structures, the economy and the market etc. In his logic, contradiction gives rise to attitudes and behaviors regardless of the nature (which patterns it follows) of the conflict.

2.2.2. The Nature and Process of Conflict

Identifying the different typology of conflict presents difficulty because of the various definition of the concept and the different level of focus one makes on causes, actors, issues,

strategy, dynamics, history, relationships and context of conflicts (Fink, 1968; Mack & Snyder, 1957).

Lederach (2005) identified different typology of conflict based on different classification and criteria. According to the assumed cause, they identified resources, conflict, ethnic, religious, political, cultural and boundary etc. Similarly, Daniel Katz (1965) created a typology that distinguishes three main sources of conflict: economic, value, and power. Economic conflict involves competing motives to attain scarce resources. Each party wants to get the most that it can, and the behavior and emotions of each party are directed toward maximizing its gain. Value conflict involves incompatibility in ways of life and ideologies. Power conflict occurs when each party wishes to maintain or maximize the amount of influence that it exerts in the relationship and the social setting.

In a slightly different manner, many scholars typically identified several types of conflicts based on the causes of conflicts; these include resource conflicts (Collier, 2000 & 2003), conflicts linked to superpower rivalry and its aftermath (Copson, 1991; Hampson 1996), conflicts associated more broadly with governance failure (Zartman, 1995) and identity conflicts driven by differences over issues of religion, ethnicity and space, among others (Gurr, 2000).

Based on the mode of pursuing conflict, armed, organized, or spontaneous are the various forms that are applicable; in accordance with the focus on the history, some conflicts are protracted, intractable or deep rooted; based on nature of relations of society in conflict and prescriptions of intervention: conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution and conflict transformation are identified (Lederach, 2005).

Wright (1951) identified three types of conflict based on the modalities of conflict: latent, overt and covert conflict. Latent conflict is a state where conflict is both possible and

expected because of unequal distribution of resources or conflictual action but neither of the two is actually experienced as conflict generating and no provoking action is taken. Overt conflict, on the other hand, occurs where two agents are in overt conflict if they both experience grounds for conflictual action against the other and as a result take such action. Covert conflict can either be an actual two-party conflict which is concealed from another interested party or a case where conflictual action is taken by one agent against another agent, who is unaware of the action, but who would, if the action were discovered, experience it as conflict generating and take counter measures.

Based on the level at which conflict is happening we can identify different types of conflict: Intrapersonal conflict; Interpersonal conflict, and intergroup conflict, Multi-Party Conflict and International conflict (Gray, 1989; Fisher, 1990; Cormick et al, 1996).

Conflict is a dynamic process because the objectives of the parties involved, their approaches, the intensity levels, the likely damage etc all change over time. In this sense much attention is given to the life cycle of a conflict or stages of conflict by different practitioners (e.g Lund, 1996; Lederach, 2005). Although the various efforts towards defining conflict cycles are not necessarily contradictory, they differ significantly in terms of their complexity. Thus, some writers put forward a very simple model with three stages (Mertus & Helsing, 2006) while others add on features and work with models with several more stages (Robinson, 1978). Many writers include in their models the escalation and de-escalation phases, thus being able to present them as graphs, mostly in curve (Lund, 1996) or, more correctly, wave form (Lederach, 2005).

The proposition that conflict cycles are recurring is strongly supported by empirical research and work of numerous scholars. Some claim that once a conflict has taken place, the probability of conflict reoccurring becomes significantly higher (Wohlfeld, 2010).

Mertus and Helsing (2006) identified three stages to a conflict: the conflict intensification stage, the armed conflict stage and the post-conflict/post crisis stage. The conflict intensification stage is inter alia marked by human rights violations as root causes of conflict, and failure to address human rights issues hinders conflict prevention efforts. During the armed conflict stage, competing factions take up arms and human rights abuses are both a common by-product of the violence and a component of wartime strategy, while human rights norms and concerns inform efforts for international intervention. During the post-conflict/post crisis stage, violent conflict ceases and efforts at rebuilding begin.

In the same manner the Conflict Prevention Network of the European Commission has identified four stages of the conflict cycle: stable peace, unstable peace, high tension and open conflict. In this approach, pre-conflict and post-conflict phases are opposed directions of the linear approach, in that in post conflict situation the conflict intensity diminishes from open conflict to high tension and so on, to stable peace.

Robinson, Clifford and Moorhead (1974) identified the now widely recognized conflict cycle containing 5 stages that most community conflicts go through. The five stages are tension development, role dilemma, injustice collecting, confrontation and adjustments. Each of the stages build on the previous until the matter is resolved.

All conflict begins as tension that develops among parties. As the disagreement or threat begins to develop, the various parties start taking sides. The conflict can appear immediately or over time (tension development). People or groups who are involved in the situation raise questions about what is happening, who is right, and what should be done. They try to decide whether they should take sides and, if so, which one (role dilemma). Usually, tension development and role dilemma happen at the same time. At the Injustice Collecting stage, each party begins to gather support. Each itemizes the problems, justifies their position, and

thinks of ways to win. At the Confrontation stage, the parties meet and clash. If both parties hold fast to their opinions, barriers may develop. Confrontation may be lessened or avoided by one or both parties making adjustments. If one party is weak and the other strong, the strong party can win by domination, but the conflict may reappear. If parties have equal power and neither party decides to change, they can wage a cold war, with each party trying to weaken the other. One party may choose to avoid the other. The two parties may choose to compromise, each gaining a little and losing a little. The two parties can work together in active participation to look for a solution to take care of both parties' needs.

One important difference in the various definitions of conflict cycle is whether scholars consider the absence of conflict as a stage of conflict cycle, or whether they start looking at the situation when tensions arise (Wohlfeld, 2010). This is difference in view indicates the conceptual variation among scholars in the field. Some (e.g. Lederach, 2003) see the study of peace as a distinct discipline from the study of conflict and war. For others it is also of key significance whether a peaceful and stable situation should be watched for any signs of tensions arising and, therefore, early warning can be given. Additionally, some argued that conflict cycle models that do not include the early warning stage do not focus on the root causes of conflict.

The division into stages or phases and the understanding of conflict as circular is the starting point for research on conflict prevention, management and resolution. In order to make the notion of conflict cycle more relevant in the study of reactions to conflict and to provide guidance to practitioner, parallel conceptions of the conflict cycle, which focus on the stages of involvement, have been developed. Lund and West (1998) identified conflict prevention (preventive diplomacy, preventive action, crisis prevention, preventive peace building), crisis management, conflict management (conflict mitigation), peace enforcement, conflict

termination, peacekeeping and conflict resolution (post-conflict peace building) as the stages of conflict management.

Some organizations and authors (e.g. Lund, 1996) especially those focused on conflict prevention, rightly add early warning, and argue that the most important step is from early warning to early action. Lund's models integrate the stages of conflict with stages of involvement, creating an analytical model that may be of use to both theoretical and practical approaches to conflict.

Lund's diagram of the Life cycle of a Conflict illustrates that in the typical life cycle of a conflict, there is a natural decline in tension after the violence has ended. In this regard peace building occupies the later stages of a conflict, both simultaneous and contiguous with peacekeeping efforts (Lund, 1996). This stage focuses on the failure of usual efforts to shift conflicts to a stable situation and reduce re-escalation probability.

2.2.3. The Causes of Conflict and Levels of Analysis

There is no single cause of conflict. Rather, conflict is context-specific, multi-causal and multidimensional and can result from a combination of different factors. Hence, most attempts to identify typologies of conflict shows weakness in the field of exhaustiveness, mutual exclusiveness of categories, semantic consistency and neutrality. Especially these weaknesses become significant for attempts to construct a typology according to causes of conflict. Due to the complexity and the dynamics of conflict, they are hardly ever mono causal. Despite such limitations, however, in the conflict literature we can identify three major theoretical approaches that try to illustrate the cause of conflict: the macro, meso and micro approaches.

2.2.3.1. The Micro Approach

In brief, the micro level approach and analysis employs the individual as its unit of analysis,

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both the conscious and the unconscious are examined in order to understand the cause of aggression and violence. Freud's idea of death instinct in his psychoanalytic theory and social Darwinism theorists such as Herbert Spencer and Sir Francis Galton believed that human beings have the innate predisposition towards aggression and violence. The biological predisposition argument which is connected to social learning and conflict identity theories maintains that aggression and violence are learned behaviors (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1961; Bandura, 1977).

2.2.3.2. The Meso Approach

In trying to explain the nature and cause of conflict, the meso approach emphasizes the interaction between the macro variables such as nations, institutions, ethnic, class, and micro variables such as individual's psychological motivation for aggression and violence. Thus, this approach borrows ideas from psychology, sociology, and politics in order to explain conflict. The Enemy System Theory (Volkan, 1988; Montville, 1990) and the Human Needs Theory (Burton 1990; Kelman, 1991) apply to this level of analysis. Both theories try to explain the complexity of group behavior especially antagonistic group relationships. The Enemy System Theory holds the hypothesis that humans have a deep rooted psychological need to dichotomize and to establish enemies and allies. This phenomenon happens at individual and group levels. This is an unconscious need which feeds conscious relationships, especially in our group lives (Cunningham, 1998). This view is very important as it provides explanation in the context of ethno-religious conflict where former neighbors harm and kill each other simply because they belong to different identity groups. Locating the source of hatred or antagonism usually points to some historical animosity.

At the meso level of analysis, the role of social structures or institutions can also have a very powerful role to play in the emergence of conflicts because they have the ability to mediate,

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control and filter social behavior and attitudes. Institutions range from formal bodies that have a set of written rules and objectives to socially recognized and supported procedures and rules (Scott, 1988).

2.2.3.3. The Macro Approach

The macro approach emphasizes the social, political, or material inequality of a social group at the conscious level and takes its units of analysis from the macro level such as nations, institutions, ethnicity, class, ethos to explain conflict. For instance decision-making and game theories are typical examples of macro approach, which are developed based on the irrational actor model whereby people make choices and decisions on a rational basis relying on informed choices and weighing of opportunities, negotiation, communication and information (Schelling, 1960). Some macro level analysts such as Dahrendorf (as cited in Angell, 1965) and Galtung (1965, 2000) focus on analyzing the historical evolution of conflict. Dahrendorf (1959) saw authority, not class, as the prime source of conflict. He maintained that those who have power and authority which manifests itself in economic, political, military, and cultural realms of life hope to maintain the status quo, while those who lack them hope to obtain some portion of them. Thus, emphasis is put on competition over scarce resources (such as territory, power, status, etc). Collins (1971), on the other hand, believed that power and status are fundamental relational dimensions at the macro level as well as micro level of social interaction and therefore every group wants to pursue certain goods such wealth, power, and prestige. He concluded that coercion and the ability to force others to behave a certain way are the primary basis of conflict.

2.2.4. Consequences of Conflict

Usually conflict is related with negative economic, social and political outcomes. Violent conflict and wars often result in social crisis such as mortality, disability, displacement and

social turmoil. In an attempt to describe the economic consequences of conflict, Collier et al (2003) rightly stated that prolonged civil war is development in reverse. Conflict results in the decline of economic growth, destruction of public infrastructure, increased military spending, and capital flight. Conflict can also lead to instability, autocratic governance, and human rights violation. Even though conflict is equated with negative consequences, some scholars have identified some positive externalities of conflict (Boulding, 1966; Powelson, 1972; Homer-Dixon & Levy, 1996; Warner & Jones, 1998). Powelson (1972) stated that conflict can increase economic efficiency by enabling goods to be produced more cheaply and political efficiency via promoting government to become more competent. Conflict can also improve social fabric via resolving small conflicts. As conflicts progress, minor compromises are reached, the conflict changes as a result and moves on until a state of equilibrium is reached (Boulding, 1966; Homer-Dixon & Levy, 1996). Thus, given the right context conflict is a fundamental societal need because it provides the arena within which debates are held and decisions are taken. Similarly, Powelson (1972) argues that if there were no conflicts at all over the immediate goals, the ultimate goals which arise from the immediate ones would not exist. In other words, society and its institutions are the product of repeated conflict, negotiation, disagreement and compromise (Powelson, 1972; Jabri, 1996).

Identifying the effects of conflict and stating whether its externalities are negative or positive depends on the issue of conflict and how fundamental that disagreement is to the social status quo. Conflict as disagreement over goal has been identified to occur over the ultimate or immediate goals (Aubert, 1963; Boulding, 1966; Powelson, 1972). This has been called over consensus or within consensus, diconsensual (over consensus) and consensual (within consensus), benign and malign conflicts.

Conflicts within consensus or consensual are those that dispute the immediate goals. In other words, the parties agree about the value of what they seek but not the means of achieving it,

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or don't get as much as they would have hoped to get from it. That is, the fundamental basis of the community is not threatened, but a minor point of order is at issue. That this difference is important is emphasized by Coser's argument that the impact of conflict depends upon the degree of consensual framework within which they are contested and the degree of conflict over basic consensus (Coser, 1957).

2.3. Conflict in Ethiopia

2.3.1. Background

Ethiopia is an ancient country with a long, proud and complex history. It is commonly considered to be the origin of mankind (Ansari, 2009). Tracing its roots to the 2nd millennium BC, Ethiopia was a monarchy for most of its history. During the first century AD, the Kingdom of Aksum maintained a unified civilization in the region (Henze, 2005). Ethiopia derived prestige with a uniquely successful military resistance during the late 19th century's "Scramble for Africa", becoming the only African country to defeat a European colonial power and retain its sovereignty. Ethiopia is the only country that has its own calendar and ancient scripts, one of the oldest alphabets still in use in the world (Willie, 2001).

Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage includes both tangible and non-tangible assets such as the ancient handcraft production, various ceremonies and festivals as well as nine cultural heritage sites registered by UNESCO. With a population of more than 90 million (projected population, CSA, 2015), Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa next to Nigeria. The country's cultural heritage and diversity is enhanced by being home to multitude of ethnicities, religions and cultures. Ethiopia has about 80 ethnic groups. The ethnic groups which account for about 1% and above of the total population are the following fifteen: Oromo (34.5%), Amhara (26.9%), Somali (6.2%), Tigray (6.1%), Sidama (4.0%), Gurage

(2.5%), Wolaita (2.3%), Silte (2.0%), Afar (1.7%), Hadiya (1.7%), Gamo (1.5%), Gedeo (1.2%), Kaffacho (1.13%), Agew (1.05%), and Kambatta (0.94%); the first two ethnic groups account for 61.4%, the first six accounts for 80.2% and all the fifteen account for about 93.72% of all the population (CSA, 2015). The majority of the ethnic groups live in Southern Ethiopia. In terms of religious affiliation, the Ethiopian people are Coptic Orthodox Christians (43.5%), Muslims (33.9%) and Protestant Christians (18.6%); Catholics and other religions account for the remaining 4% (CSA, 2015).

Due to the complex characteristics of the people and the historical process underlying the creation of the modern Ethiopian state, there was high incident of power struggles and prolonged conflict cleavages among diverse forces in the country. In fact, it will not be an exaggeration if one says that the history of Ethiopia is the history of war and conflicts (Alemayehu, 2004). Ethnicity, religion and control of resources and choice of socio-political paradigm have been the center of conflict in Ethiopia (Alemayehu, 2004). Therefore, in this chapter, an attempt was made to review the nature and history of conflicts, their duration, intensity and the modalities for their cessation as well as the impact of conflicts and post-conflict conditions in Ethiopia. Moreover, understanding the social, cultural, political and the historical context of the country will help us to understand the unique characteristics and dynamics of conflicts.

2.3.2. Conflict in Ethiopia: Causes, Types and Consequences

The historical process underlying the creation of modern Ethiopia has been marked by power struggles and conflict cleavages among diverse forces (Mesfin, 2006). The nature and the root causes of such conflicts are both multidimensional and complex. However, different authors tried to identify the basic causes of conflict in Ethiopia.

Muhabie (2015) classified the causes of conflict in the horn of Africa including Ethiopia in to

four broad categories. These are: Economic Causes (Competition over and mismanagement of economic resources), Social and Cultural Causes (e.g. Extreme religious politics, ethnic polarity), Historical Legacies (Colonization, having dictatorial and oppressive regimes, The Cold War) and Political Causes (Power struggle, poor governance and transparency).

Some scholars (e.g. Alemayuehu & Befekadu, 2004; Mesfin, 2006) attempted to categorize the causes of conflict based on parties involved in conflict. Mesfin (2006) has identified two major contending forces that usually lead to conflict. The first one is conflict over consolidating political sovereignty under a centralized authority while the second comprise centrifugal challenges, local supremacy and resistance to consolidation by centralized authority. Mesfin has acknowledged however that somewhere between the two, there were small and medium scale intra and inter-local frictions that developed into a situation of conflict in Ethiopia. In a similar manner, Alemayuehu and Befekadu (2004) analyzed the cause and nature of conflict in Ethiopia by introducing three power players in the country (supremacy of central authority, centrifugal challenge and conflict among ordinary people over resources) as well as analyzing the subject of their conflict, and the specific form of conflict among parties. They identified three forms of conflict:

- **Type I conflict:** this is caused by competition for position of power and the agents of conflict are either the 'educated elite' (after the 1974 revolution) or regional aristocrats (before 1974). The subject of conflict is power in its generic form (ie. both political and economic) as can be exercised through capturing the state machinery.

- **Type II conflict**: is caused by popular revolt against those in power. The agents in conflict are the elite in power and the masses (usually the under-class). The subject of conflict is usually a violation of basic economic and political rights.

- **Type III** conflict: occurs among ordinary people over resources. In this type of

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conflict, the agents are peasants usually organized across regions or ethnicity.

UNDP (2007) identified the basic cause of frequently observed conflict in Ethiopia as (1) resource conflict such as competition for resources such as land, pasture, and water, clashes due to livelihoods competition between sedentary farmers and pastoralists; (2) identity conflict which is caused by heightened awareness of ethnic identity; (3) political issues such as language rights and perceptions of disenfranchisement, and (4) arguments on border delineation between regions and ethnicities.

Furthermore, conflict has been classified by combining the territory where the conflict takes place and actors involved. In this regard, Small and Singer (1972) identified four types of conflicts: "Intrastate"- internal conflicts fought between a government and a non-state group, "Internationalized intrastate"- conflicts in which either the government, non-state armed group, or both, received external military support from a foreign government, "Interstate"- conflicts fought between two or more states and "Extra-state"- conflicts between a state and a non-state armed group outside that state's territory.

2.3.2.1. Interstate Conflict in Ethiopia

Interstate conflict is a conflict between two or more states in which both members of the international system, that use their respective national forces in the conflict. Compared to the rampant intra-state conflicts, inter-state conflicts are very rare but when they take place, they engender devastating effects to human life, property and environment (Wallensteen & Sollenberg, 1999, 2000, 2001).

Ethiopia has fought several wars against many states in its history and this external intervention has had an important role in the initiation and continuation of conflict in the country. The cause of these conflicts can be classified as: historic (religious and colonial); cold-war related; and conflict with neighboring countries. In the modern history of the

country, for instance between 1868–1896 alone, Ethiopia was engaged in a number of historic conflicts; three times with the Egyptians, four times involving the Dervishes, five times with Italy and once with the British. In recent years Ethiopia has fought a war with the neighbors Somalia in 1964 and 1977-8 and Eretria in 1998-2000. These conflicts protracted and shaped the Ethiopian state, making it more militaristic.

Many inter-state and intra-state conflicts in Africa become more complex by being extended into 'proxy wars'. Secondary or substitution parties were involved in fighting battles in alliance with larger states, pursuing their own agenda relevant in a local arena.

2.3.2.2. Intrastate Conflict

In Ethiopia, intra state conflict is more prevalent than conflict with another state. The sources of intra state conflict are diverse and the most frequently cited are resource conflict, regional border conflicts, ethnic conflict, and religious conflict (UNDP, 2010).

Natural resources are an important component in understanding the nature of conflict in Ethiopia. Natural resources are embedded in an environment, geographic, geopolitical and interdependent space where actions by one individual or group may generate effects far beyond specific localities or even national jurisdictions. The link between natural resource management and conflict is strong. Shortages of natural resources lead to competition which may result in conflict. In addition, fighting and insecurity may prevent appropriate management of natural resources and reduce their production, thereby worsening shortages and intensifying competition and conflict (Wood, 1993).

Land and related resources such as water and biodiversity are the main source of resource conflict in Ethiopia. Land resources continue to have major historical, cultural and spiritual significance.

Resource conflict can happen among inter-group, intra-group, between the state and its people. Intra-government conflicts could happen between different groups and organizations within government, and inter-regional and international conflicts occur between other regions within and outside nations, global conflicts revolve around conflicts pertaining to shared benefits, especially in terms of biodiversity, and temporal conflicts are about the interests of present and future generations (Wood, 1993).

With regard to Ethiopia and regional border conflict in recent years, the Federal form of government the country has adopted has heightened and transformed historical, territorial conflicts into contemporary inter-regional boundary conflicts. This particular case reflects the transformation of resource conflicts between pastoral communities in the lowland regions of the country into inter-regional boundary conflicts and border disputes between communities. Although Ethiopia is one administrative unit, inter and intra-regional border demarcation has had economic implications pertaining to resource appropriation, mobilization and distribution. All state border disputes ought to be settled by agreement of the concerned states. Nevertheless, in times when the concerned states fail to reach agreement, the House of the Federation has a power to superintend over such disputes on the basis of settlement patterns and the wishes of the peoples concerned (Constitution of FDRE, 1995). Most resource conflicts in Ethiopia occur among pastoralist communities (UNDP, 2010). Pastoralists are coming under increasing pressure from natural disasters such as drought and flooding which are compounded by climate change. Population growth, increasing numbers of livestock produced for export, deforestation, environmental degradation, bush encroachment, and invasive species will further increase pressure and competition over shared and shrinking resources. These communities also have diverse settlement patterns inhabiting different ecological zones and, accordingly, practicing different production systems as well as having diverse livelihood basis. As a result, there is conflict between

farmer and herder, farmer/herder versus forest users and rural versus urban dwellers. These conflicts are mostly informed by lack of properly implemented land use system and degradation of natural resources.

2.3.2.3. Ethnic Conflicts

The Ethiopian people are ethnically heterogeneous, with more than 80 ethnic groups speaking different languages. The Oromo, Amhara, Somali and Tigreans make up more than three-quarters of the population. The prevalence and nature of conflict in Ethiopia can be viewed in two distinct but inter-related categories: conflicts before 1991 and ethnic-conflict in Post-Federal Ethiopia.

Before 1991, Ethiopia's major ethnic conflict were related to mainly the control over resources, such as grazing land, water points, cultivable land as well as resistance war of expansion by the central government to the periphery to build a unitary state out of multi ethnic nations. Ethiopia has got its present shape and ethno-cultural diversity during the emperor Menelik II with continuous interaction and expansion of his kingdom to the south and east, expanding into Kaffa, Sidama, Wolayta and other kingdoms (Bahru, 2001). Some argue that this expansion has brought about political, economic, and cultural hegemony for the benefit of one "non-native" ethnic group, namely, the Amhara and resulted in major ethnic dissatisfactions and resistance against the monarchy. For example the recent civil wars between the central government, and various insurgency groups bearing the names of ethnic groups such as the Oromo, Tigre, Afar, Ogaden and others in the form of liberation fronts were based on ethnicity.

The post-1991 politics of Ethiopia witnessed a major departure from the past in terms of political and structural dimensions. Federalism was allegedly chosen to respond to the challenge of ethno-national conflicts that beleaguered the old Ethiopian state from the time it

has been built into a multi-ethnic empire often seeking to build one nation out of many. However, still there are a number of accounts for ethnic conflict in the country. Ironically, significant and growing evidence exists that there were conflicts even after 1991. Some of the major inter-ethnic conflicts recently observed in Ethiopia are: the Silte- Gurage conflict, the Wagagoda language conflict, the Sheko-Megengir conflict, the Anuak-Nuer conflict, the Berta-Gumuz conflict, the Gedeo-Guji conflict, the Oromo-Amhara conflict, the Borana-Gerri conflict, and the Oromo-Somali conflict.

The causes of ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia are multiple. They include historical and political - over centralization of power and economic resources by the dominant and elite groups, (Markakis, 1998), economic competition over grazing land and/or water resources, especially in times of drought and boundaries that led to the apportionment of the land between different states, were delimited and impeded the freedom of movement of the pastoralists (Ahmed, 2002) as well as social and cultural causes:- **defense mechanisms** of ethnic groups to protect their property and to protect themselves from other ethnic groups and specific cultures such as **payment of dowry (gift)** for marriage and **prestige and retaliation can easily trigger conflict.**

2.3.2.4. Consequences of Violent Conflicts in Ethiopia

The consequence of violent conflicts in Ethiopia can be observed via different dimensions such as economic, social, psychological, and political. With respect to the economic effects of violent conflicts, Alemayehu (2005) argued that the main reason for Ethiopia's backwardness and poverty is war and social conflicts that occupy the majority of Ethiopian history. As a result of prolonged conflicts, resources were used for destructive rather than productive activities. Interstate conflict and identity conflicts have also reduced economic growth of the country and/or negatively affected its quality and composition. Alemayehu

further justified his claim that Economic revival intensifies conflict and mentioned the case of sustained economic growth under the current government.

The social impacts of conflict in Ethiopia can also be viewed in terms of effect on education, health, hunger and displacement of people. For example we can look at the Eritrean-Ethiopian war (1998- 2000) from interstate conflict and the civil war (1974-1991) as cases in point. During the Eritrean-Ethiopian war, it is estimated that both countries spent hundreds of millions of dollars on the war, more than 70,000 people died from both sides and by the end of 1998, estimates suggest approximately 250,000 Eritreans had been internally displaced and another 45,000 people of Eritrean origin were deported from Ethiopia (Global IDP Project, 2004). Compared with interstate conflict, it is highly difficult to measure the impact of intra state conflict in Ethiopia. Henze (1984), for instance, stated that of the two wars fought in Ethiopia since the 1974 revolution, the protracted civil war (1974-1991) in the north has been significantly more costly and destructive than the Ethio-Somalia war of 1977. According to Sivard (1991), 609,000 Ethiopians died in those wars and more than 500,000 of them were civilians. While the causes and consequences of famines that occurred in Ethiopia since the early 1970s was attributed largely to drought, there is a growing consensus that human factors, particularly conflict is the culprit (Kaplan, 1988; Africa Watch, 1991).

Less is known about the psychological impact of the conflict in Ethiopia. Personal accounts show that individuals and communities traumatized by conflict and displacement faced lasting mental and psychosocial disarrays and difficulty to integrate back to normal state once violence ends. The mental and psychosocial wounds induced by violence and traumatic experiences do not disappear with the return to normalcy, and if not addressed may well become an important constraint to efforts that aim to support reconciliation and the reweaving of a post-conflict society's social fabric. A further example of the psychological

impact of conflict could be observed when one examines the civil war during the Dereg regime: aerial bombings, violence against the civilian population, and the destruction of socioeconomic systems were particularly serious in the war zones of Tigray and Eritrea (Cliffe, 1989; Hammond & Druze, 1989; Hendrie, 1991). The political effect of conflict was enormous. In addition to the economic, social and psychological impacts, the prolonged conflict has led to a long lasting political instability and insecurity, autocratic governance and human right violations.

The current government of Ethiopia follows a democratic path and an all-inclusive state based on ethnic federation. Progress has been made in all social development progress indicators. It would be wrong, however to conclude that conflicts related to federalism are averted in full in many parts of the country at local/regional levels. Yet, there is still the need to better understand the effect of violent conflict on the social capital in Ethiopia. We need to know more about how violent conflict can be viewed as both an independent and a dependent variable (a cause and an effect) in its relationship to social capital. That is, social capital can be constructive supporting societal cohesion and the mitigation of conflict, but it can also be perverted to hasten social fragmentation and the onslaught of violent conflict.

To further deepen the analysis of conflict and social capital interrelations, interactions at the macro level should also be considered. This broadening of the definition of social capital permits the inclusion of government, market, and development actors, which have a direct impact on the social capital environment facing actors at the local level, and also helps identify measures for policy and operational recommendations.

If social capital matters for the well-being of all societies, it becomes necessary to ask who or what is the vehicle for creating or engendering it. Given the vital role the state plays in shaping the context and climate within which society is organized, it can, in some cases, also

actively help to create social cohesion. Again, it is worth noting that empirical research on social capital is still at an early stage, though promising links have already been made between social capital and development and democracy.

Most scholars agree that Ethiopia is a unique country in terms of inter-religious relations. Relations, especially between Arabs and Abyssinians in trade, culture and religion reach back to ancient times. With the introduction of Judaism into Ethiopia, monotheism started to influence both regions. The introduction of Christianity into Ethiopia further advanced this process. Yet, another religion that stood in line with other monotheistic religions came with Islam. All these religions came to Ethiopia and co-existed in mutual relationship with one another. This has made Ethiopia a unique place for all types of encounters, including peaceful relations, respect and tolerance, in exchange of ideas and practices.

Clearly, horizontal social capital such as bonds of kinship in Ethiopia still remains strong. Add to that, Ethiopians have strong social capital i.e. there is strong self-support system among the communities, there are strong social values that help people to respect one another and to build trust among one another. Promoting such self-supporting systems indigenous civil societies help communities to handle their social problems by themselves through their own traditional mechanisms that have been practiced by them for years. However, integrating vertical social capital to shape a cohesive society remains a challenge.

2.4. Conflict Resolution

2.4.1. The Concept

As much as what conflict entails is contested, conflict resolution occupies a central stage as a point of disagreement in the field. Many terms are frequently, and almost interchangeably, used to describe the activities and processes that bring conflict to an end. However, some of these terminological approaches have distinct implications for the outcome of a conflict

situation. Among them, candidate terms are conflict regulation, conflict engagement, conflict management, as well as peace building and conflict transformation.

For example, Miller (2003) suggested that conflict resolution is "a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems, distinct from management or transformation of conflict". For Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2011), by conflict resolution, it is expected that the deep rooted sources of conflict are addressed and resolved, and behavior is no longer violent, nor are attitude hostile any longer, while structure of the conflict has been changed.

From the above definitions, one can understand the connotation conflict resolution implies as a bad phenomenon hence it is something that should not be encouraged. It also assumes that conflict is a short term phenomenon that can be "resolved" permanently through mediation or other intervention processes. In principle, however, conflict cannot be once and for all solved. Some conflicts may be "non-resolvable and can at best be transformed, regulated or managed" (Best, 2005).

Conflict management, on the other hand, is seen in the right perspective, and assumes that conflicts are long term processes that often cannot be quickly resolved. Best (2005), sees conflict management as the process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity through a number of measures and by working with and through the parties involved in that conflict. He equally proposes that the term is sometimes used synonymously with the term conflict regulation. By extension, the term covers other areas of handling "conflicts positively at different levels, including those efforts made to prevent conflict by being proactive" (Best, 2005). The concept equally includes such other terms like conflict limitation, containment and litigation.

Burton (1990) uses this phrase 'conflict prevention' to connote "containment of conflict

through steps introduced to promote conditions in which collaborative and valued relationships control the behavior of conflict parties". Conflict transformation on the other hand refers to the longer-term and deeper structural dimensions of conflict resolution. Some analysts contend that 'resolution' carries the connotation of bringing conflict to permanent conclusion, negating the possible social value of positively channeled conflict. Lederach (2003) compares conflict resolution with conflict transformation and downgrades the term conflict resolution on the grounds that it is content- centered rather than relationship-centered, and aims at immediate agreement rather than long- term process, and is committed only to de-escalation rather than also including escalation to pursue constructive change.

Furthermore, conflict resolution was differentiated from other established fields, such as international relations in that:

- **It is multilevel:** analysis and resolution had to embrace all levels of conflict: intra-personal (interpersonal, intergroup , international, regional, global, and the complex interplays between them;

- **It is multidisciplinary:** in order to learn how to address complex conflict systems adequately, the conflict resolution had to draw on many disciplines, including politics, international relations, strategic studies, development studies, individual and social psychology etc.;

- **It is multicultural**: since human conflict is a worldwide phenomenon within an increasingly intricate and interconnected local/global cultural web, this had to be a truly cooperative international enterprise, in terms of both the geographical locations where conflict is encountered and the conflict resolution initiatives deployed to address them.

- **It is both analytic and normative:** the foundation of the study of conflict was to be systematic analysis and interpretation of the 'statistics of deadly quarrels' (polymology), but this was to be combined from the outset with the normative aim of learning how better thereby to transform actually or potentially violent conflict into non-violent processes of social, political and other forms of change;

- **It is both theoretical and practical:** the conflict resolution field was to be constituted by a constant mutual interplay between theory and practice: only when theoretical understanding and practical experience of what works and what does not work are connected can properly informed experience develop.

In this study, conflict resolution is used because it is the earliest term employed in the field and also is a comprehensive term which encompasses various approaches and methods used to handle conflict non-violently at all levels in society.

To invoke conflict resolution in this way is not, however, to indicate what conflict resolution is nor to indicate that conflict resolution might be considered good. Much clarification is needed before drawing any conclusions about the meaning of conflict resolution and its contribution to collective well-being.

2.4.2. Forms and Methods of Conflict Resolution

As a universal feature of human society that takes its origins in economic differentiation, social change, cultural formation, psychological development and political organization, the identity of the conflicting parties, the levels at which the conflict is contested, and the issues fought over (scarce resources, unequal relations, competing values) may vary over time and may themselves be disputed. Conflicts are dynamic as they escalate and de-escalate, and are constituted by a complex interplay of attitudes and behaviors that can assume a reality of their own. In this context, regardless of the level, origin and the dynamics of conflict, there

are differing approaches of conflict resolution that deal with incompatibilities.

This approach sees conflict resolution from different perspectives such as the goals or stages at which conflict resolution takes place, the effect or outcome of the process and the dimensions of conflict in the way the conflict is processed.

The goals of conflict resolution, may be classified as preventive or corrective. Preventive goal deals with convincing individuals and groups "to choose to negotiate rather than resort to rancor in all matters of disagreement; thereby increasing the level of peaceful existence…" Corrective goal, however, focuses on measures to resolve existing conflicts "with less violence and more understanding of human nature," (Okrah, 2003). Galtung (1971, 1976) identifies 3 key forms or stages of conflict resolution: peacemaking, peace keeping and peace building. The distinction between the three is slight yet useful. Peace-making implies the first tentative steps. Peace-keeping or the dissociative approach is by which requires the two sides to the conflict to withdraw from the arena. Peace building or the associative approach is where symbiosis is developed (conflict resolution).

Blake, Shepard and Mouton (1964) identified three general strategies that parties may take toward dealing with their conflict; win-lose, lose-lose, and win-win. The win-lose approach is a strategy used to force the other side to capitulate. Sometimes, this is done through socially acceptable mechanisms such as majority vote, the authority of the leader, or the determination of a judge. Sometimes, it involves secret strategies, threat, innuendo – whatever works is acceptable, i.e., the ends justify the means. The lose-lose strategy is exemplified by smoothing over conflict or by reaching the simplest of compromises. In neither case is the creative potential of productive conflict resolution realized or explored. On the other hand the win-win approach is a conscious and systematic attempt to maximize the goals of both parties through collaborative problem solving. The conflict is seen as a problem

to be solved rather than a war to be won. There is an emphasis on the quality of the long term relationships between the parties, rather than short term accommodations. Communication is open and direct rather than secretive and calculating.

The other approach to conflict resolution looks the dimensions of resolution that parallels with the dimensions of conflict in the way the conflict is processed. In this context, Bernard (2000) identified the three dimensions of conflict resolution as cognitive resolution, emotional resolution and behavioral resolution. He further elaborates cognitive resolution as the way disputants understand and view the conflict, with beliefs and perspectives and understandings and attitudes. Emotional resolution is the way disputants feel about a conflict, the emotional energy. Behavioral resolution is how one thinks the disputants act, looking at their behavior.

Macfarlane (2007) outlines that there are two forms of conflict management and resolution mechanisms as formal and informal conflict management and resolution that the best result often are achieved by combining the two methods.

2.4.3. Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: Definitions and Merits

As long as people live in society or group, there are conflicts arising from differences of interests, prejudice, needs and ambitions. Therefore, the approach adopted to prevent or resolve such difference of interests determines its resolution. In other words, when a conflict happens, the crucial point should be the effective adoption of the necessary principle of the resolution.

Indigenous mechanisms are grass roots approaches to solving conflicts. The most important elements involved in this mechanism include the tradition of forgiveness, respect for elders

because of their symbolic authority to enforce decisions and transfer of resource as compensation (Zartman, 2000).

Dahal and Bhatta (2008) also confirmed that indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are used to organize a discussion to mediate several types of conflicts within the societies by recognizing the identity and interests of the conflicting parties. Here the main aim is to come up with a solution and justify it by the duty of the mechanism based on recognized customs and morality of the society itself. Indigenous conflict resolution typically incorporates consensus-building based on open discussions to exchange information and clarify issues. Conflicting parties are more likely to accept guidance from these mediators than from other sources because an elder's decision does not entail any loss of face and is backed by social pressure.

Indigenous conflict management and resolution mechanisms use local actors and traditional community-based judicial and legal decision-making mechanisms to manage and resolve conflicts within or between communities. Local mechanisms aim to resolve conflicts without resorting to state-run judicial systems, police, or other external structures. Local negotiations can lead to ad hoc practical agreements which keep broader inter-communal relations positive, creating environments where nomads can graze together, townspeople can live together, and merchants can trade together even if military men remain un-reconciled (Lowry, 1995).

Indigenous societies have varied institutions and personnel that function as agents of conflict resolution in their respective locality (Degene, 2007). In spite of this, Ember, as cited in Degene (2007), argued that these agents lack coercive force to support their decisions.

Indigenous societies in all parts of the world have featured variations of third-party arbitration and mediation. Western societies saw these practices subsumed by the rise of

modern judiciaries. The increased complexity of these processes, however, saw reduced satisfaction with legal outcomes among disputants (United Nations, 2007).

In fact, the indigenous forms of conflict resolution, which refer to refers to the set of mechanisms a society utilizes to resolve conflicts outside litigation or the formal court, have been practiced by peoples and communities for centuries. The older forms of dispute resolution, particularly those practiced by the Indigenous or Aboriginal peoples around the world, challenge the originality of present-day court system (Osi, 2008).

Indigenous conflict resolution processes will allow community members to pursue remedies and resolve conflicts outside of the courtroom and still within their own cultural confines. Practiced in indigenous communities since time immemorial, they are culturally more appropriate than litigation because they are based on the customs and traditions of the group concerned. They may also pursue remedies through state-formalized ADR. Litigating in court is normally prohibitive; with long case queues, intermittent delay in the resolution of motions or claims is quite common. More importantly, litigation with its basic rudiments of confrontation, fault-finding and judge made resolutions, coupled with its adversarial nature is not a viable alternative for indigenous communities (Osi, 2008).

Assefa (2005) summarized some of the advantages of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms: they quickly respond to crisis; they contribute to the reduction of regular court caseloads; they contribute to saving of the public money; they also stand aside of the problem in shortage of judges who work in the regular courts and budget constraints; they are complementary to modern government structures and are not substitutes or competitors as some government officials think and worry about; they give access to many people who do not find modern system of conflict resolution comfortable; affordable or suitable to their needs disputants are satisfied with their operation and view their outcomes as fair.

Specifically, Boege (2006) identifies the following potential advantages of the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms as follows:

- *fit situations of state fragility and failure;*
- *are not state-centric and hence credited with legitimacy;*
- *take the time factor into due account and are process-oriented;*
- *provide for comprehensive inclusion and participation;*
- *Focus on the psycho-social and spiritual dimension of conflict transformation.*

Scholars have long argued that there exists a connection between the quality of governance and important economic, political, and social outcomes. Rule of law is a core aspect of good governance and one of particular importance to poor people who may struggle to find formal and informal institutions responsive to their needs. The resolution of conflict in wealthy societies typically relies on legal action in a court of law or formal modes of mediation. Yet, citizens of poor, informal societies in the developing world often have only limited access to such avenues of redress and arbitration. The existence of culturally legitimate, locally accepted norms of dispute resolution has the potential to significantly reduce the incidence of violent conflict in poor societies by offering access to justice, which is associated with a host of positive externalities.

Beyond these definitional quibbles, a more interesting association could be made between indigenous conflict resolution and social capital. Especially when one adopts the insight from Uphoff (2000) who breaks social capital down into structural and cognitive components, "an accumulation of various types of social, psychological, cognitive, institutional, and related assets that increase the amount or probability of mutually beneficial cooperative behavior that is productive for others, not just oneself".

Interestingly, this was also true of the traditional informal institutions in Ethiopia. Informal

governance structures in rural Ethiopia such as Iddir, Mahber, Eqqub, Elder's Group, Gadaa/Cheffe Kore, Debo/Wobera/Wonfel/Oxen sharing (labor sharing) serve different economic and social purposes. The major benefits include risk coping, provision of credit, common property regulation, manpower and traction force sharing, conflict resolution and information sharing.

The fact that local people in different parts of the country adopted different survival strategies underscore the existence of a variety of patterns that can be brought together in a coordinated system of governance in which local patterns can be utilized within local contexts. Horizontal and vertical institutional linkages should be developed across patterns so that several centers of authority can be developed instead of a single source of power (Ostrom, 1999). Using the best available traditional institution and practice surely provides possibilities opening up prospects toward establishing a system of democratic self-governance.

Chapter Three

3. Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this study was to assess the nexus between social capital and its role in conflict resolution in Jimma Zone of the Oromia Regional State in Ethiopia. Based on this aim, the current chapter presents the research design and method, sources of data, samples and sampling techniques, instruments and procedure of data collection, methods of data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1. The Research Design

The research design used was a mixed approach. A research design can be quantitative, qualitative or a mixed type (Creswell, 2009; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). As using a single approach (quantitative or qualitative alone) may not be successful in explaining social events and relationships in their full complexity, a mixed approach is advocated (Schulze, 2003). Moreover, using this approach allows a researcher to obtain a variety of information on the same issue by employing both the qualitative and quantitative approaches, and use the strength of each approach to overcome the deficiencies of the other, and achieve a higher degree of validity and reliability (Sarantakos, 1998).

More specifically, of the six strategies of the mixed approach, concurrent triangulation design (QUAN-QUAL) strategy was employed in this study. As to this strategy, both the qualitative and quantitative data are collected in one phase concurrently, and then the two databases are compared to determine if there is convergence, difference or some combination. It helps to compare the results from the qualitative and quantitative analyses to determine if the two data bases yield similar or dissimilar results. Thus, this approach helps to confirm, cross validate or corroborate findings within a single study. Moreover, the qualitative approach is used to explain how violent group conflicts shape social capitals in general and traditional conflict

resolution mechanisms in particular, and the quantitative approach was utilized to analyze the structured questionnaires of the cross-sectional data collected from the representative samples.

3.2. The Research Method

The research method employed was descriptive survey based on the nature of the data. This method enables to assess the present situation, that is, the on-going process and helps to identify the challenges in the area and thereby coming up with relevant recommendations. Supporting this, Sing (1985) stated that, the descriptive survey method is a way of investigation that attempts to describe and interpret what exists at present in the form of conditions, practices, process, trends, attitudes, and beliefs from a broad size study areas. Therefore, in describing the existing situation of the nexus between social capital and conflict and examine the roles of social capital in conflict resolution in Jimma Zone, the descriptive survey method was found to be relevant and appropriate.

3.3. Data Sources

Basically, a research is designed with the aim of generating appropriate and sufficient data that would allow the researcher to answer the basic questions or test the hypotheses. In this regard, to raise the trustworthiness of the findings of this study, both primary and secondary data sources were used. Therefore, the religious leaders, politicians, individuals working in formal justice systems, conflict victim families and community leaders, elders, women and youth were included in the study as primary data sources. In addition to these, the conditions in markets, holiday celebrations, weddings, and mourning processes, as well as mosque and church attendances were also taken as primary sources of the research data to grasp how people interact and act in social practices. Moreover, published books and journal articles, reports and official documents from different government administrative echelons were also used as secondary sources of data for this study.

3.4. Study Samples and Sampling Techniques

Administratively, Jimma zone has 17 Woredas. Three areas namely Caggoo, Bashasha and Asendabo had a violent conflict experience in different occasions since 2006. Also, the adjacent Calloo area of Iluabbabora zone was where the violence started in 2006 for which reason it has been part of the survey for this study.

For the quantitative method, a survey was conducted at household level to gather quantitative data by selecting representative samples from the total household population in the study area using simple random sampling. The simple random sampling was used for its ability to provide equal probability of selection from their respective groups (Gay et al., 2009). The survey was conducted at household level. Five areas (Agaro, Asendabo, Beshasha, Challoo, and Chaggoo), where the religious violence were witnessed, were selected purposively. In the process of determining sample size, the researcher used Watson (2001) formula and also considered four conditions; 95% degree of confidence interval, +/- 5 margin of error, 50% variance in the population and 50% response rate. Total household population of the five Kebeles was 9132. From this population, the researcher selected 850 households using Watson sample size determination formula as shown below.

$$n = \frac{\left(\dfrac{P[1-P]}{\dfrac{A^2}{Z^2} + \dfrac{P[1-P]}{N}} \right)}{R}$$

Where

n= sample size required

N= Number of household in 9132

P= Estimate variance in population (50 -50)

A= Precision Desired (0.05)

Z= Confidence Level 1.96

R= Estimated Response rate (0.5)

In addition, to enhance the quality of data and get high response rate, the data collection process was held through personal interview. Consequently, the data collection team distributed questionnaires to 850 respondents to collect required data and 800 of them responded positively. Ultimately, 185 from Agaro, 145 from Asendabo, 170 from Bashasha, 154 from Calloo and 146 participants from Caggoo participants responded positively to the survey questionnaires. Accordingly, the response rate of the study was found to be 94%.

Respondents from Agaro town have also been included in the study for two main reasons. First, Agaro is the closest big town to Caggoo kebele where the violent religious conflict erupted for the first time. As such, the response to the conflict was felt nowhere sooner than Agaro. Second, the town is composed of people with various religious and ethnic identities. Agaro is one of the areas where the impact of the conflict in terms of disrupting long established social capital is apparent. Moreover, the town is one of the focal areas where attempts to restore broken social ties as a means of resolving the conflict are undertaken aggressively.

On the other hand, the religious leaders, politicians, individuals working in formal justice systems, conflict victim families and community leaders, elders, women and youth as the respondents of the qualitative data were selected using purposive sampling technique. This technique was chosen because it was expected to help the researcher in selecting participants who had direct relation with the issue under study and who could provide their insights and share their experiences (Gay *et al.*, 2009; Trochin, 2001).

3.5. Instruments of Data Collection, Standardization and Operationalization of Variables

3.5.1. Instruments of Data Collection

Since the study employed a mixed approach, the data gathering tools comprised both qualitative and quantitative types. The quantitative data was collected using closed and open ended structured questionnaire particularly, the Social Capital Assessment Tool (SCAT). The SCAT is a multifaceted instrument designed by the World Bank Group to collect social capital data at the household, community and organizational levels. An important feature of this tool is the detailed information about structural and cognitive social capital that is collected at the level of the household. The tool aims to generate quantitative data on various dimensions of social capital as part of a larger household survey.

As regards the qualitative data, a semi-structured in-depth interview guide was prepared by the researcher to get additional information on the nexus between social capital and its role in the study area. The semi-structured interview offers a rich source of data which provide access to the respondents to explain their opinion freely and allow for more in-depth inquiry or probing where necessary (Koech, 1995). The advantage of probing questions is that they may help to make the argument clearer (Ingham & Zessen, 1997 in Getnet, 2009). The interview was conducted with a total of 47 interviewees purposely selected from elders, religious leaders, politicians, individuals working in the formal justice systems, conflict victim families and community leaders. The contact with each interviewee took about 20 to 30 minutes.

Other than this, focus group discussion (FGD) tool was used to gain an in-depth understanding on how micro, meso and macro level social capitals interact. The FGD seeks to illuminate group opinion, and is effective for assessing broad range of views on a specific topic (FHI, 2005). The tool is utilized to describe and examine evolution in bridging and

bonding social capitals; how conflict is caused, averted and healing process started; and how traditional conflict resolution mechanisms help avert incidence of violent conflict. A total of 12 focus group discussions were conducted in Agaro, Bashasha, Asendabo and Challoo. There were 9 to 12 discussants in each group representing different sections of the communities. The discussion with each focus group took from 1:30 to 2 hours. In each of the areas discussions were organized for women/girls, boys, elders and religious leaders.

The process of carefully selecting key informant respondents and members of the focus group discussion was intended to help minimize investigator bias, which otherwise could be a threat to validity. As to the reflexivity validity threats that might have affected the interviewers while engaging with respondents, care was taken to avoid leading questions that might bias the respondents. The investigator being born and grown in the study area was able to have a privilege to mobilize key informants such as high ranking political authorities, local elders and the likes.

Moreover, observation was also used as an instrument to collect the qualitative data. The investigator systematically observed communal practices in areas affected by inter-group conflicts to understand how social relations work in a post-conflict situation. The targets of such observation were activities that engage numerous members of communities at the same time such as markets, weddings, mourning, mosque and church attendances, holidays and the likes. Besides, because analyzing some relevant documents enables to get additional information to further enrich the research findings, document analysis was made focusing on government reports and decisions at different administrative levels. The selection of these documents was based on the researcher's judgement as to their utility in achieving the purpose of this study.

3.5.2. Operationalization of Variables

This study intended to assess the dynamism of social capital with regard to conflict and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. The traditional conflict resolution mechanisms will be treated as the dependent variable. Social capital, that affects the outcome, will be treated as the independent variable. However, both the dependent and independent variables in this case are variables whose natures will be highly determined by the dynamics of inter-group conflicts based on religious differentiation. As such, inter-group conflict was treated as an interdependent variable for its ability to cut across both the dependent and independent variables. The measurements of those variables are explained below along with the appropriate types of sources of data.

i. Social Capital

Social capital has been measured using the short and adapted version of the Social Capital Assessment Tool (SCAT)-which is developed by the World Bank to measure social capital in low-income settings. The SCAT instrument was validated in Vietnam and Peru, which supports its use in low-income settings. The instrument clearly differentiates structural social capital and cognitive social capital. Structural social capital comprises interpersonal relationships formed through participation in formal or informal organizations or networks, whereas cognitive social capital comprises values, norms, attitudes, and beliefs among neighbors, friends, and relatives at the community level.

ii. Inter-group Conflict

Conflict analysis is still a fledgling field, and currently, there is no consensus on what good conflict analysis entails. This study adopted the Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF) developed by World Bank and focused on social and ethnic relations, governance, political institutions and external factors as major indicating variables for analysis. These indicators

were considered vital in identifying causes of inter-group conflicts, the social consequences of the conflicts and levels of casualties and damages associated with the violence. This multidimensional analysis of the conflicts shows the dynamism of the conflicts in relation with social capital and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area. The two-way impacts of inter-group conflicts were explained qualitatively. Data from focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and network analysis were used to explain the interaction between conflict and social capital.

iii. Traditional Conflict Resolving Mechanism- Religious Forum for Peace

The main focus of investigating traditional conflict resolution mechanism is to check the effectiveness of the traditional conflict resolving institute-Religious Forum for Peace-in resolving inter-religious conflicts established in the aftermath of the conflict.

The forum was first initiated in Agaro area with few individuals who are religious leaders from the Orthodox-Christianity and Islam religions. Most of these initiators of the forum have longtime friendship since their childhood, and wanted to exploit their longtime friendship as part of their social capital to establish a forum for religious tolerance to restore and maintain the peaceful co-existence in their communities. After a while, the forum gained support and acceptance from the local government and the community. Later on in 2011, the forum embraced members from other religious doctrines and was established a "Religious Forum for Peace". Anecdotal evidences suggest that the forum has brought successful changes in resolving conflict issue that might lead to violence and building peace in the area; as a result of which its structure expanded to the level of kebeles in all Woredas of Jimma zone.

The effectiveness of this traditional conflict-resolving institute was assessed accordingly. The effectiveness was examined based on existing social relations and its relevance in resolving inter-religious conflicts. The success and/or failure stories of the traditional conflict resolving

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institute in restoring broken social relations in post-conflict scenarios will be assessed and its effectiveness will also be examined.

The analysis of this variable was made both through quantitative and qualitative methods. For the quantitative analysis, structured questionnaires were used to determine the effectiveness of traditional conflict resolving institute both in fostering existing social relations and in restoring broken social relations in post-conflict scenarios.

Nonetheless, the essences of traditional conflict resolving mechanisms cannot be wholly captured on a quantitative measure alone. Therefore, a qualitative data analysis was employed in order to explain both the inherent values entrenched in the mechanisms and the reasons for which the community members prefer the traditional mechanisms to formal/state mechanisms of conflict litigation.

3.6. Procedures of Data Collection

Since the study employed a concurrent triangulation strategy of the mixed approach, both the qualitative and quantitative data were collected in one phase concurrently. Thus, data through questionnaires, interviews and FGDs were collected simultaneously. Moreover, observations and document analysis were also employed to get supportive ideas to the information gathered through semi-structured interviews and FGDs, as well as through questionnaires. Four teams of local enumerators conducted field activities in the selected communities together with the investigator to gather data from informants in the study area.

3.7. Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of one's data (Merriam, 1985 in Koech, 1995). The methods of data analysis depend on the nature of the basic questions and the type of data collected. Regarding the qualitative approach, the information obtained from relevant documents; the opinions gathered through semi-structured interviews and FGDs as well as through observation were first transcribed before analysis. On the other hand, the quantitative information obtained from the responses of the close-ended questionnaires was edited, classified and organized, coded and tabulated. Statistical tools like percentages and chi-square test were used in the process of data analysis. More specifically, test of independence was used to identify and analyze factors that hinder and enable traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. It was also useful in describing how the inter-religious conflict affected aspects of social capital in the study area. Finally, the two types of data were analyzed by triangulating the results of their findings.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

In social science research, ethical considerations are needed to minimize potential harms on the participants while maximizing the quality of the research. The ethical considerations include issues of informed consent, voluntary participation, respect for privacy, safeguarding anonymity and confidentiality, and accuracy of the reports and results (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). To this effect, the researcher provided adequate information about the details and purposes of the study for all participants taking part in the processes of data gathering before they started responding to the interviews and participating in the FGDs as well as before filling out the questionnaires.

The investigator took the utmost care to work in line with the cultural, sociological, moral and religious aspects of the study area during the conduct of the investigation. Particularly,

the identity of respondents was handled with careful considerations for confidentiality and the data they provided were used based on their explicit consent. Moreover, efforts were also made not to include sensitive questions that could cause participants discomfort. The researcher assumed the responsibility of elaborating the academic purpose of the study in view of both acquiring relevant data and the need to establish confidence among the respondents. The privacy of individual respondents was also respected duly in the attempt to attain the highest possible level of ethical and academic conduct.

Moreover, the researcher showed the participants the information/data he collected from them for accuracy and privacy check immediately after the interview and the FGD sessions. Finally, after collecting the necessary data along with the assistant data collectors, the researcher assumed the responsibility when reporting data and results that he perceived as the most accurate and also reported problems and weaknesses experienced in the study as well as the positive aspects of the study.

Chapter Four

4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents data collected from research participants on religious conflicts in Jimma zone, the post-conflict evolution of social capital in the study area, the link between social capital and religious conflicts in Jimma zone, and the role of the Religious Forum for Peace. However, before delving into the details of data presentation, analysis and interpretation, some overview of the characteristics of the respondents is provided below.

4.1. Characteristics of the Respondents

Overall, a total of eight hundred (800) residents responded to the questionnaires. The respondents are from four areas that have seen violent religious conflicts after 2006 namely Asendabo, Beshasha, Calloo and Caggoo. Respondents from Agaro town were also included for Agaro is the largest town closest to the area where the violence started. Also, Agaro is a town where the impact of the conflict on social capital was uniquely noted due to the multi-ethnic and multi-religious characteristics of its population.

The respondents were from various lifestyles in terms of their ethnic, religious and professional identities. The questionnaires were made available to various age groups while the gender aspect has also been addressed in a balanced way. The benefit of addressing respondents of various characteristics, above all, lies in its expediency to shed light on the nature of social capital as comprehensively as possible. Below is the presentation of the characteristics of the respondents explained in detail.

Of the total 800 respondents, 185 of them were from Agaro town as shown in Table 1 below. The rest of the respondents were from Asendabo (145), Beshasha (170), Chaggoo (146) and Challoo (154). In terms of ethnicity, the largest of the respondents were Oromos who

constituted close to 65% of the respondents. The Yem constituted the second largest ethnic group of respondents at 9.3% followed by the Amhara at 8% and the Tigre at 4.8%. Respondents from other ethnic groups constituted about 13%. In terms of religion, about 53% of the respondents were Muslims while Orthodox and Protestant Christians constituted 27% and 20% of the respondents respectively.

Table 1: Summary of the Areas, Ethnicities and Religious Characteristics of the Respondents

Kebele of the Respondents		Respondents' Religion			Total
		Muslim	Orthodox Christian	Protestant	
Agaro	Oromo	62	10	22	94
	Tigre	1	8	1	10
	Amhara	5	13	2	20
	Yem	1	4	1	6
	Others	11	20	24	55
	Total	80	55	50	185
Asendabo	Oromo	57	16	18	91
	Tigre	1	2	1	4
	Amhara	3	8	2	13
	Yem	6	13	3	22
	Others	8	4	3	15
	Total	75	43	27	145
Beshasha	Oromo	86	23	15	124
	Tigre	3	3	2	8
	Amhara	2	5	2	9
	Yem	4	5	3	12
	Others	1	9	7	17
	Total	96	45	29	170
Chago	Oromo	56	15	9	80
	Tigre	1	3	4	8
	Amhara	4	10	3	17
	Yem	2	14	7	23
	Others	2	10	6	18
	Total	65	52	29	146
Challo	Oromo	105	9	16	130
	Tigre	1	6	1	8
	Amhara	1	3	1	5
	Yem	3	2	6	11
	Total	110	20	24	154
	Oromo	366	73	80	519

Total					
	Tigre	7	22	9	38
	Amhara	15	39	10	64
	Yem	16	38	20	74
	Others	22	43	40	105
	Total	426	215	159	800

Figure 2 below describes the religious characteristics of the respondents based on their ethnicity. Of the total Oromo respondents, 71% of them were adherents of Islam while 14% and 15% of them were followers of Orthodox and Protestant Christianity. Also, 51% of the respondents from the Yem ethnic group were Orthodox Christians while 27% and 22% of them were followers of Protestant Christianity and Islam respectively. While 61% of the Amhara respondents were Orthodox Christians, Muslim and Protestant Christian respondents stood at 23% and 16% respectively. 58% of the respondents from the Tigre ethnic group were Orthodox Christians while Protestant Christians and Muslims of the Tigre respondent group constituted 24% and 18% of the respondents.

Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents' Religions by Ethnicity
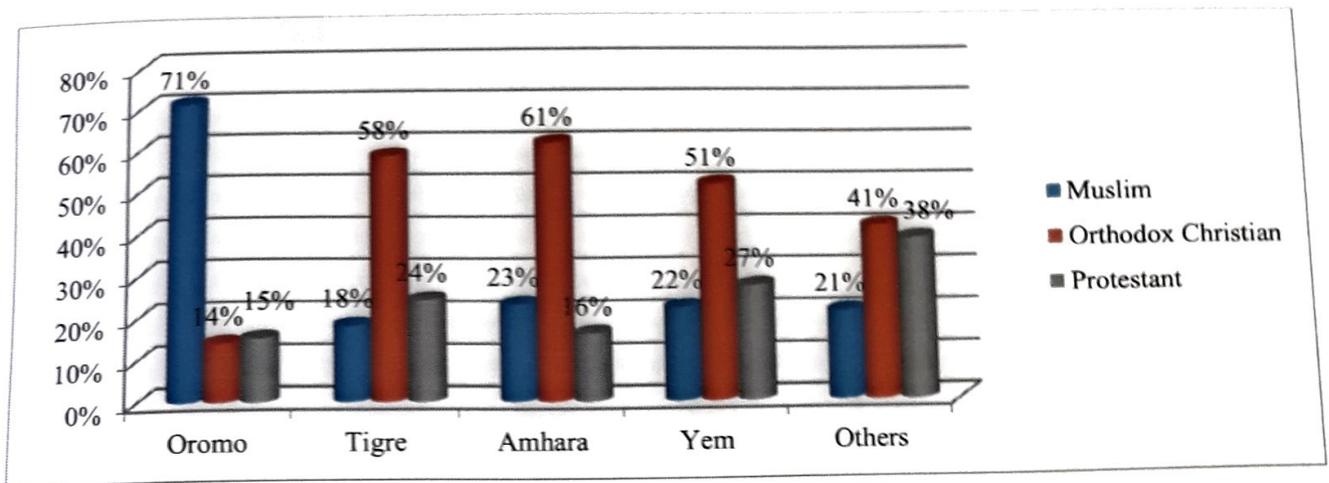
The educational profile of the respondents was also assessed based on a category of five aggregations: Category One- Illiterates; Category Two- Read Only; Category Three- Grades 1 to 4; Category Four- Grades 5 to 9; Category Five- Grades 10 and above. The largest group of Muslim respondents fell within the fourth category while the least size of those respondents were in the second category. The patterns observed for Protestant and Orthodox Christian respondents were similar wherein the highest respondents were in the fifth group and the lowest size of respondents fell within the second category.

Figure 3: Educational Status of the Respondents by Religion
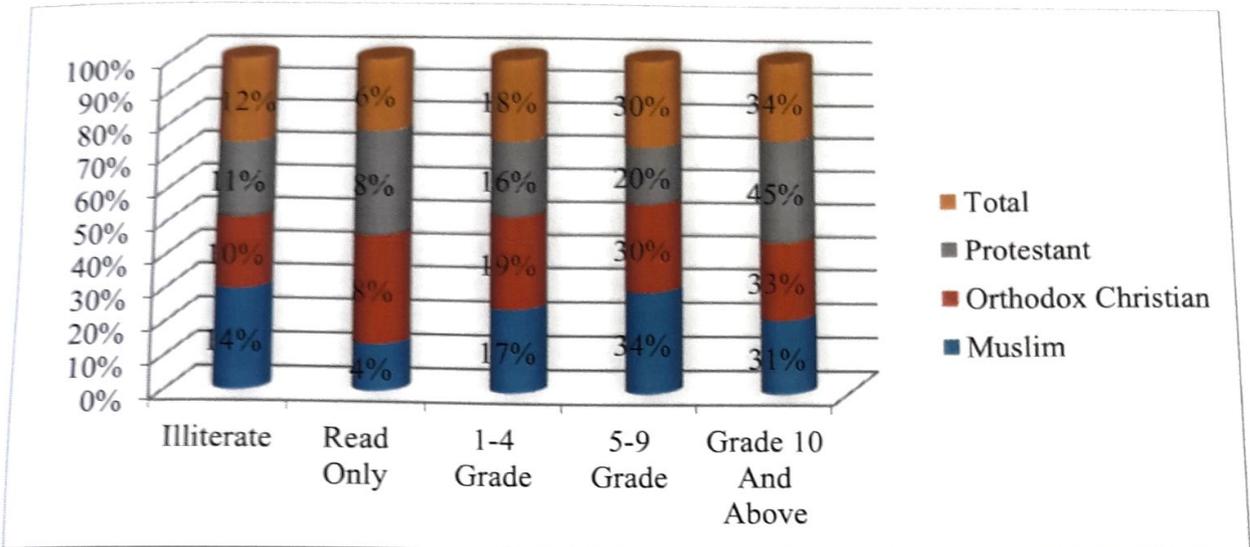
In terms of ethnic groups, the largest size of Oromo respondents (35%) were within the fifth category of grade 10 and above while the lowest size of Oromo respondents were in the second category of Read Only (3%). Similar pattern was observed for the Amhara respondents as the largest of them (38%) were in the fifth category and the second category composed the least of the respondents at 8%. The third category composed the largest of the Tigre respondent group at 29% while the first and second category were both sharing the least of the respondents at 11%. As for Yem respondents, 38% of them were in fourth category which composed the largest of the respondents and the least were in the second category at 7%.

Figure 4: Educational Status of the Respondents by Ethnicity

4.2. An Overview of Religious Conflicts in Jimma

4.2.1. Changes in the Politico-Religious Landscape of the Study Area in the Pre-Conflict Period

One of the causes of conflict in the study area that informants repetitively pointed out was the political changes of the nation in the post-1991 period. Once the Derg regime was overthrown, all religious groups were allowed the space to air their views and promote their doctrines. The change was unprecedented for it presented the state as an authority that considered the promotion of all religions as its responsibility. This was a major breakthrough for the state's authority that only promoted Orthodox Christianity in the preceding eras. Though the Derg officially pursued a secular ideology, the dominance of Orthodox Christianity never receded in practice.

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After the restructuring of the Ethiopian state along the line of ethno-linguistic federalism, the advancement of equality of nations and religious freedom were accompanied by the political commitment of the elites who stamped their policy in the 1995 constitution of the Federal

Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The period opened a new era where all the major religions had to compete for the publicity of their doctrines on a politically equal ground. Islam and Protestant Christianity were the religions that took advantage of the new political ground while Orthodox Christianity had to assume a defensive posture (Prunier & Ficquet, 2015).

Nonetheless, the changes that brought all religions to equal standing still had a downside. The sudden overhaul of relationships amongst the religions came before the rules of the new relations were established (KI-1, 2015). The space became an amorphous one where the distinctions between promoting one's own religion and attacking the doctrines of others were blurred (KI-3, 2015). In the end, the religious implications of the nation-wide change in the political structure in the study area begot mixed blessing at least in the beginning of the process. The delight of sudden hope for equality was bloated enough to disrupt the course of peaceful change (KI-13, 2015). While historic uneasiness emanated from the dominance of Orthodox Christianity, the desire to put an end to it served the purpose of a newly structured uneasiness (KI-13, 2015).

The discomfiture of the change was also compounded by political revelations unique to the study area and its surroundings. The roles purported to have been played by the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromo (IFLO), one of the numerous movements, as has been the characteristic of the day, foraged the fears and suspicions of Christians (KI-12, 2015). The IFLO claimed to have campaigned for the exaltation of Islam in the area in the 1990s to an extent that it threatened to ban other religions (KI-12, 2015). Notwithstanding the dubious credibility of the roles played by IFLO, the public perception of the movement as well as the reading or misreading of its nomenclature could only have helped perpetuate the image of an insecure future. The irony of this conundrum is that the danger this time around was posed not just against Orthodox Christians, but also Protestant Christians, who were in the gaining ground after the political changes of 1991, were not spared from the uncomfortable disclosure

(KI-18, 2015). This coincided with the revival of Islam in Ethiopia after 1991 despite the "securitization of Islam by the members of the dominant Christian population and the EPRDF in the context of regional and global geo-politics" (Dereje, 2013).

As time went by, the ramifications of the changes in the political grounds that redefined the relations between religions began spreading into the relations between Muslims and Christians. The historic inter-religious relations between Muslims and Christians on personal levels characterized by harmonious existence despite asymmetric political standings of the two religions were now to be put to test (KI-24, 2015). The perils posed to the relations of the followers of both religions had a different characteristic. While the process of revamping the religious landscape in favor of Islam against the dominance of Christianity was based on a nation-wide ideational and political frame, the danger posed against the interaction between followers of both religions threatened personal and social make-ups of the communities. Moreover, the driving force of change that targeted the social and inter-religious interactions of members of the communities is peculiar in its origin. The origin of the developments that later disrupted the inter-religious interaction was largely intra-religious (KI-1, 2015). As shown below, the developments in this regard were results of changes in some aspects of the practices within Islam (Østebø, 2014). This change, in fact, was not limited to the study area nor did it emerge there. It was largely a result of new developments within Islam in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. As witnessed in the violence after 2006, the ramifications of the intra-religious development were radically different from the consequences of the post-1991 political changes in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, this assertion should not be taken to mean that there were no areas where the macro-political change in Ethiopia after 1991 and the intra-religious changes within Islam met. This account is addressed in detail in the following section.

4.2.2. Islamic Reform Movements and their Impact on Inter-Religious Interaction in the Study Area

Emergent trends within the religion of Islam began to surface in the study area after the change of regime in Ethiopia in 1991. According to informants, those new practices were brought into the area by returning soldiers who served under the Derg regime until 1991 (FGD 1-1, 2015; KI-1, 2015). Those soldiers who particularly served in the national army closer to the Ethio-Sudanese and Ethio-Somali borders were the ones that the informants identified as the agents of changes in the Islamic practices (KI-1, 2015). The practices they brought to the study area were believed to be new to the belief system of Ethiopian Muslims at large (KI-18, 2015).

Nonetheless, the impacts of those practices brought by returning soldiers were never felt immediately. Yet, this perspective is informative of the emergence of new religious trend in the Horn of Africa. The full scale impact of the trend, however, was only to be comprehended later on. Two major and related developments were the prime movers of this change.

Firstly, the rivalry among Middle Eastern Islamic states particularly after the end of the Cold War was to lead them to the path of embracing Islam as a new force of influence in the region and beyond. The states embarked on sponsoring a brand of Islam which they thought would serve their interests best. In this regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a major actor in the game, began promoting the doctrines of Islam known as Wahhabism and Salafism (Østebø, 2014). One of the instruments in introducing the doctrine was providing scholarships to individuals who wanted to study Islamic theology. The Islamic University of Medina began hosting such students from different countries. After completion of their study, those students were expected to return to their home states and contribute to the expansion of the teachings they acquired. The impact of this trend in Ethiopia is explained shortly below. But few words abound on the other major development first.

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The second factor that could be taken both as an outcome of the changing role of Islam after the Cold War in part and as an agent of change in the role of Islam in the Horn of Africa is associated with regime change in Sudan in 1989. The coalition led by Omar al-Bashir and Hassan al-Turabi assumed power in Sudan after a staged coup d'état that ousted the coalition government of Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi. This was a period when the Cold War receded and socialist governments withered away one after another. The change in Sudan occurred only two years before the crumbling of the socialist dictatorship of Mengistu Hailemaram's Derg regime in Ethiopia. The implications of these changes were underlined by one fact: the Marxist concept of class was no longer the source of legitimacy for political movements. This represented the time during which political movements searched for an alternative ideological foundation of power. For the movement that dominated power in Sudan- the National Islamic Front, the alternative lied in Islam. As such, the regime in Sudan became a brand of expeditious Islamic teachings in the Horn of Africa. While the hostility between the Ethiopian and the National Islamic Front reached its climax in the mid-1990s (Elrich, 2010), the deadly political evidence of this new development came after the 1995 assassination attempt on President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt in Addis Ababa when the Sudanese government was rumored to have provided shelter for the assailants (Ibrahim, 1995).

Furthermore, as aforementioned earlier, scholarship opportunities to students to pursue higher education in Islamic theology was another instrument of marking influence in the region as has been the case with Saudi Arabia. Ethiopian Muslims from different areas were also beneficiaries of these scholarship schemes. The fact that the scholarships covered tuition and living expenses attracted a large number of students. Students from Jimma area were also participants in the scholarships. While soldiers who served under the Derg regime were assumed to be the first agents of the new teachings in the study area, returning clerics who studied Islamic theology abroad were later to have more influence in the change (KI-2, 2015).

The developments within Islam and the Islamic teachings whose results were transferred to the community members later contributed to rough Muslim-Christian relations in Ethiopia (KI-1, 2015). The impacts of the new teachings were different from the practices that traditionally prevailed in Ethiopia (KI-1, 2015). Its danger was magnified because the practices the new teachings promoted struck a chord of inter-religious interaction in the study area.

Nonetheless, the disruptions brought by the new practices were first witnessed within Islam itself. After the students that studied Islamic theology abroad returned to the area, they began promoting their doctrine aggressively (KI-18, 2015). The new doctrines they brought, known as Wahhabism and Salafism, put them at loggerheads with practitioners of Sufism which had been the characteristic doctrine of Ethiopian Islam traditionally (KI-3, 2015). The preachers of Wahhabism and Salafism began replacing Sufi Sheikhs in different mosques (KI-5, 2015). The financial support they gained from outside sources enabled them to edge their Sufi rivals who were used to employ the traditional practice of preaching in already built mosques (KI-5, 2015). Against the disinterest of Sufi leaders in soliciting funds, the proponents of Wahhabism and Salafism not only were able to build new mosques but also attracted an increasing size of followers (KI-3, 2015). Some of the new advocates left their positions as government employees since the financial benefits of the new doctrine were more attractive (KI-3, 2015). Gradually, the cumulative effects of the process enabled the advocates of the new doctrines to establish their pre-eminence over the leaders of the traditional sect.

Once the dominance of the new teachings prevailed, the confrontation expanded to the inter-religious Muslim-Christian sphere (KI-1, 2015). The ramifications of the Muslim-Christian confrontation were much more disastrous than the intra-religious rivalry between Islamic sects as evidenced by the violence after 2006. This was due largely to the exclusivist set of socio-cultural practices which the new teachings embraced. The characteristics of the

practices, in contrast to previous trends of inter-religious social capital, brought sharp disparities in the Muslim-Christian interaction. It was this observation that led Østebø (2010) to conclude that it was the divisive strategy of the proponents of the new teachings that played a central role in the 2006 conflict.

At the dawn of the violence in the study area, specific teachings that widened the gap between Muslims and Christians thereby disrupting the foundations of inter-religious social capital were broadly publicized (FGD 1-1, 2015). The movement that was believed to have been at the center of this disruption was the Takfir wal Hijra- a movement with exclusivist approach even to Salafism- propounded teachings that were disposed to fuel intra- and inter-religious tensions (Østebø, 2010). The major practices prohibited by the new teachings included, among others, greeting Christians and sharing/exchanging milk and honey with Christians. Moreover, observing Mawlid (the celebration of the birth of Prophet Mohammed) as a religious holiday, Hajji (pilgrim to the holy city of Mecca) and paying tax to the government were banned as *Kufr* (sin). Those who did so in violation of the teachings were dubbed *Kafir* (sinners) (KI-1, 2015; KI-3, 2015; FGD 1-1, 2015).

All in all, the teachings propounded this way were simply helping in the synthesis of an exclusivist set of social capital for followers of Islam in the study area. This development fits the claim of Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) that a set of shared interpretive schemes and systems of meaning such as codes, symbols, narratives and languages used by people in a network are employed to make sense of their behaviors and of the environment. This aspect of social capital influences individual perceptions of meaning and reality in relationships (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). In the context of the study area, one of the results of this development was the deterioration of inter-personal relations between Muslims and Christians.

In retrospect, one could have easily imagined the disruptions such practices would bring to a society whose numerous values were built on inter-religious elements. It would be difficult to now believe that the proponents of the new practices could have foreseen the possible costs of the changes they brought. In fact, as Østebø (2014) notes, those who acquired the teachings of the practices and brought them back home were largely from rural areas with little or no exposure to the multi-religious demographic nature of the country particularly in urban areas.

4.2.3. The Violence and its Aftermath

The immediate period preceding the violence was marked by souring relations between Muslims and Christians. Deep suspicions and sporadic acts of violence at individual levels were spreading in Gomma Woreda and adjacent areas (FGD 2-1, 2015). Living peacefully with Christians had already been depicted as undesirable in various ways. The most prominent of the propagations included a widely heard *Menzuma* collection, a religious hymn of Muslims, which explicitly preached Muslims to rise against Christians (KI-3, 2015). Hate speeches targeting Christians were rampant at the time (KI-3, 2015). Some religious leaders of the Muslim community were even accused of instigating their followers to "get rid of unbelievers", viz. Christians (FGD 2-1, 2015).

The attacks perpetuated against members of the Christian community were increasing by the day: children at schools were beaten; their cattle were attacked and properties damaged; and attending markets became increasingly difficult (KI-3, 2015). In fact, members of the Christian community recall bringing their concerns to the attention of government officials to no avail (KI-20, 2015).

In the end, the incidence that triggered large-scale violence and destruction came on the 26th of September 2006. On the eve of *Meskel* celebration, a holiday in which Christians

commemorate the finding of the true cross, disagreements arose between Muslims and Christians in Challoo kebele of Didhessa Woreda. The disagreement was said to have emerged when Muslims asked the Christians to change the site of *demera* bonfire, a core part of *Meskel* celebration, as it was too close to a mosque (KI-12, 2015). Yet the demands of the Muslims were not met by the Christians for the latter insisted on holding the celebration in the same site as it had been the case before (KI-6, 2015). To make things worse, a police station that separated the mosque and the bonfire site had been removed months earlier upon the request of members of the Muslim community (KI-3, 2015).

In an attempt to resolve the brewing dispute through a traditional way, elders of the area began deliberating on the possible ways out of the conundrum (FGD 4-1, 2015). Incidentally, a stone thrown in the direction of the sitting elders hit one of the elders in the head. One of the sons of the person who has been hit by the stone, after returning home from fieldwork, looked at his father's wound (KI-1, 2015). He picked his gun and went to the mosque before beginning to fire indiscriminately at Muslims coming out of the mosque after completing their Ramadan prayers killing four and wounding five others (KI-1, 2015).

The ensuing disorder went on for days without any entity being able to restore order. The news that Muslims were massacred by Christians was quickly disseminated to wide areas through telephone communications (KI-2, 2015). One of the areas where the news arrived fast was Beshasha kebele of the adjacent Gomma Woreda (KI-2, 2015). Things were more complicated in Beshasha because the son of the person who has been hit, had crossed to Beshasha town where he surrendered to police after he killed the four persons and wounded the other five persons (KI-4, 2015). Once the news of his detention in the hands of the police was heard, Muslims of the area began to demand his public execution (KI-4, 2015). Yet the refusal of the security forces to comply with their demands angered the Muslims who then attempted to burn the *Abune Gebremenfes Kidus* church located in Beshasha (KI-2, 2015).

In the meantime, Christians from different kebeles of Gomma Woreda fled to Agaro town for they could see no lessening of the tension (FGD 1-2, 2015; FGD 2-1, 2015). They brought the covenant of the church with them and stayed in tents for days (KI-2, 2015). Some days later they asked the Woreda administration whether order has been restored which the administration answered positively and provided them with five thousand birr for their return (KI-26, 2015). Their return was set for the 14th of October 2006 based on their desire to return the covenant of the *Abune Gebremenfes Kidus* church and hold the annual celebration at the site of the church the next day (KI-26, 2015). In their journey, they were joined some residents of Agaro town who wanted to partake in the holiday (KI-7, 2015). Nonetheless, they were attacked in the church on the evening of 14 October 2006 resulting in the death of five and injury of forty six people (KI-2, 2015). The attack during the night only ended when the tires of the burning truck that brought the covenant from Agaro produced huge explosion forcing the attackers to assume that security forces had arrived (KI-26, 2015).

However, security forces arrived late in the night and they remained on duty in different areas for the coming several days (KI-26, 2015). In the end, as data gathered from the Religious Forum for Peace office which was established after the conflict showed, the violence had produced large destructions including the demolishing of twelve houses and the burning of three hundred sixty-eight houses, three Protestant and one Orthodox Christian churches, and one grinding mill besides the human casualties.

The vibe of violence started to resurface in the area in 2011. This time around the areas where violence was observed included three weredas: Omonada, Turafeta and Kersa (KI-47, 2015). Unlike the violence in 2006, the primary victims of this round of violence were Protestant Christians (FGD 3-1, 2015).

The propagations against Protestant Christians in the areas were fundamentally related to the increase in the size of Protestant Christianity followers. In the years that preceded the violence, members of Protestant Christianity were able to assert their presence through the construction of churches in large number (KI-3, 2015). The number of converts was also increasing by the day (KI-3, 2015). Nonetheless, the increasing influence of Protestant Christianity was never an acceptable reality particularly for some leaders of the Muslim religious community (KI-47, 2015). The expression of the grievances was in a way a reverberation of the pre-2006 narrative. As such, the period immediately before the violence saw the echoing of the instigation that an area meant only for the prevalence of Islam was now being invaded by an illegitimate religion (KI-9, 2015).

The violence started after the eruption of the allegation that pieces of the Holy Kuran were found in a Protestant Christianity church premise (KI-3, 2015). Things went out of order from then on. Data obtained from the Religious Forum for Peace office showed that in the destruction that followed, sixty-five churches and ninety-eight houses were burnt. Ninety-seven houses were also reported to have been looted. Beside seven hundred families that sought refuge in Jimma town, six thousand individuals from Turafeta and one hundred ten families from Kersa areas were temporarily displaced. Overall, the property damage the violence brought was estimated at fifty million birr in financial terms. The astounding aspect of the violence was that all it took for the damages to take place was just a week. It was a storm that transpired from the second of March to the tenth of March 2011 (KI-3, 2015).

4.3. The Post-Conflict Evolution of Social Capital in the Study Area

4.3.1. Religion and Social Capital

Firstly, in an attempt to understand the tenets of social capital in the study area, the researcher tried to identify individuals' preferences of group membership patterns. Membership to social groups was addressed in the study in a way that could enable it be descriptive of the patterns

of social relations in the study area. The responses were ultimately informative of the nature of the dominant social groupings in the study area. The data also provided insight into the dynamics of the social groups for they reveal the compositions of the groups and the sense of belonging members have about their particular groups.

For the purpose of this study, social groups were taken to be formal and informal associations where people from different walks of life come together to pursue common social purposes such as funerals, religious worships, credit provisions/*ekub* etc. The nature of the groups differ depending on the purposes for which they are established and the characteristics of the members (KI-44, 2015). For instance, some groups are exclusivists in terms of religion as in Christian congregations/*tsewa* where only followers of Christianity attend or in terms of profession as in farmers' associations whose members are farmers (KI-44, 2015). Yet other groups draw their memberships from people of different religious and ethnic identity. *Edir* is a peculiar example where people of various religious and ethnic identities come together for the purpose of honoring the deceased and managing the funeral processes in the study area (FGD 2-3, 2015; FGD 3-1, 2015).

The benefits of encompassing various forms of groups, despite differences in structures, compositions and objectives, are manifold. Firstly, such an approach would help explain the determining impacts that religious affairs have on the building and maintenance of social capital in the study area. Moreover, the treatment of as much social groups as available would in the end help determine the order of groups in importance. In turn, this will reveal the basis through which the local population conceptualizes social capital. Unearthing the rationales for putting one group before another would also be informative of the implications for social capital.

In order to understand how adherence to a particular religion affects membership to social groups, chi-square independent test was run. For the conflict in the study area was framed mainly along religious lines, the test enables us comprehend how that same factor, i.e., religion, affects membership to social groups as a form of social capital. As indicated in Table 2 below, Pearson Chi-Square shows that there is a significant relationship between the type of religion the people in the study area adhere to and the number of social groups that they enlist to as members χ^2(df =2, N=800) =11.70, p =.003. That is, Christians were more likely to enlist to six-to-seven social groups than were Muslims (9.9% to 4%). Table 2 shows that Christians who have memberships to the sizes of social groups under discussion actually count more than the expected while Muslims with memberships to six-to-seven groups actually count lesser than the expected. On the other hand, Muslims were more likely to enlist to social groups of one-to-two than were Christians (51.6% to 45.7%). Also, the size of Muslims who belong to groups of one-to-two actually count more than the expected while Christians that enlist to one-to-two social groups actually count lesser than the expected.

Table 2: Test of Independence for Membership Sizes to Social Groups in the Study Area, 2015

No. of Social Groups Respondents Belong to		Muslims	Christians	Total
One-to-Two	Count	220	171	391
	Expected Count	208.2	182.8	391.0
	% within Religion of respondents	51.6%	45.7%	48.9%
	Std. Residual	.8	-.9	
Three-to-Five	Count	189	166	355
	Expected Count	189.0	166.0	355.0
	% within Religion of respondents	44.4%	44.4%	44.4%
	Std. Residual	.0	.0	
Six-to-Seven	Count	17	37	54
	Expected Count	28.8	25.2	54.0

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		% within Religion of respondents	4.0%	9.9%	6.8%
Total		Std. Residual	-2.2	2.3	
		Count	426	374	800
		Expected Count	426.0	374.0	800.0
		% within Religion of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.708[a]	2	.003
Likelihood Ratio	11.852	2	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.341	1	.007
N of Valid Cases	800		

Further statistical description of the data points to some specific factors that abet the number of social groups to which people belong to be dependent on religion. Figure 5 below shows a general overview of membership to social groups from a religious perspective without making reference to the type or nature of the social groups. As such, half of the Muslim respondents (50%) have memberships in one-to-two social groups. This proportion is only next to Protestant Christian respondents as 47% of the respondents have memberships to one-to-two social groups. The largest proportion (45.1%) of Orthodox Christians has memberships to three-to-five social groups. The latter group of respondents also has the highest size of memberships that belong to six-to-seven groups (17.7) as compared to Muslim and Protestant Christian respondents that have 5% and 13% memberships to similar number of groups respectively. It is discernible that Orthodox Christians have memberships to more groups than adherents of Islam and Protestant Christianity. This is explained by the fact that Orthodox Christians, who harbor a sense of insecurity lingering from the 2006 religious conflict in the study area, have the tendency of asserting their religious identity, which they believe they have paid price for (KI-7, 2015; KI-37, 2015). Being drawn into various social

groups in a bigger scale than other religious groups is their way of ensuring intra-group solidarity.

Figure 5: Membership to Social Groups by Religion in the Study Area, 2015
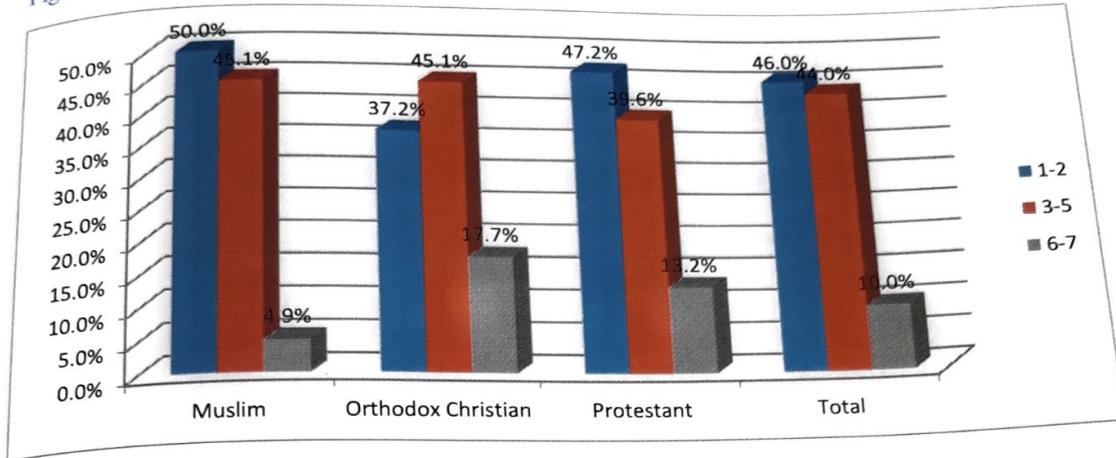
The result for Protestant Christians also shows similar trend. As shown in Table 3, the largest of the respondents from Asendabo area have memberships to groups of three-to-five and six-to-seven as compared to Protestant Christian respondents from Agaro where the largest size of the respondents has memberships to one-to-two groups. This is because adherents of Protestant Christianity have been victims of violence more in Asendabo and its surrounding area than anywhere else after 2010 putting them in a position to demand and realize the necessity of intra-group solidarity for security (FGD 3-3, 2015; KI-32, 2015). For they had been targets of violence owing to their religious identity, Protestant Christianity is a primacy for the followers to draw themselves together in as much groups as possible.

Table 3: Membership to Social Groups for Protestant Christians in the Study Area, 2015

Area	One-to-Two	Three-to-Five	Six-to-Seven	Total
Agaro	39	7	4	50
	78.0%	14.0%	8.0%	100.0%
Asendabo	1	18	8	27
	3.7%	66.7%	29.6%	100.0%
Beshasha	20	8	1	29
	69.0%	27.6%	3.4%	100.0%
Chago	4	23	2	29
	13.8%	79.3%	6.9%	100.0%
Challo	11	7	6	24
	45.8%	29.2%	25.0%	100.0%
Total	75	63	21	159
	47.2%	39.6%	13.2%	100.0%

4.3.2. Post-Conflict Changes to Social Interaction

One of the lasting impacts of the conflict in Jimma was understood to be the erosion of social capital that had been built over years. Particularly, social interactions across religious spectrums have been at the forefront of the damage since the conflict was primarily framed along religious lines (FGD 1-2, 2015). Yet there is a need to empirically assess the extent of damage the conflict has inflicted. One of the mechanisms to weigh the damage is assessing the extent of changes in the number of social groups to which people belonged in pre-conflict and post-conflict scenarios.

A chi-square test of independence result for changes (decrease or increase) in the sizes of social group memberships after the conflict corroborates the previous findings about the relation between religion and number of social groups. There is a significant relationship between the types of religion that people follow and the perceptions of changes in membership to social groups after the conflict, $\chi^2(df=2, N=800) =7.74, p=.021$.

The results of the test regarding changes to the sizes of memberships to social groups after the conflict were aggregated on three counts: whether they have increased, stayed the same or decreased. Unlike the results of mere memberships to social groups where Christians were found to be more inclined to belong to higher number of social groups than were Muslims, the results for changes in the sizes of memberships to social groups were not straightforward. As shown in Table 4, the chi-square test of independence reveals that Muslims were more likely to engage in higher social groups than were the Christians after the conflict (55.4% to 47.1%). Muslims whose memberships to social groups increased after the conflict actually count more than the expected while Christians whose memberships to social groups increased actually count lesser than the expected. On the other hand, Christians were more likely to engage in fewer social groups after the conflict than were Muslims (15.8% to 10.3%). The actual count of Christians whose engagement in social groups decreased was higher than the expected (48.2) while the actual count of Muslims in this regard was lesser than the expected.

Table 4: Test of Independence for Changes in Memberships to Social Groups in the Study Area, 2015

		Muslims	Christians	Total
More	Count	236	176	412
	Expected Count	219.4	192.6	412.0
	% within Religion of respondents	55.4%	47.1%	51.5%
	Std. Residual	1.1	-1.2	
Same number	Count	146	139	285
	Expected Count	151.8	133.2	285.0
	% within Religion of respondents	34.3%	37.2%	35.6%
	Std. Residual	-.5	.5	
Fewer	Count	44	59	103
	Expected Count	54.8	48.2	103.0
	% within Religion of respondents	10.3%	15.8%	12.9%
	Std. Residual	-1.5	1.6	
Total	Count	426	374	800

| Expected Count | | 426.0 | 374.0 | 800.0 |
| % within Religion of respondents | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.747[a]	2	.021
Likelihood Ratio	7.751	2	.021
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.645	1	.006
N of Valid Cases	800		

The qualitative data obtained from focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews evidenced that variations regarding changes in the trends of memberships to social groups are largely consequences of the particular understanding of the conflict and associated resolution efforts in the wake of the violence. The increase in memberships to social groups for Muslims, in particular after the conflict, is related to the focus of the resolution efforts in the immediate post-violence period. A conventional thought that prevailed at the time linked the cause of the violence with late changes in the practices of Islam (KI-15, 2015).

The understanding that the conflict was an inter-religious one coupled with the fact that the first recorded large scale violence targeted Orthodox Christians who came together for an annual religious celebration in Beshasha town easily led to the widespread assumption that it was an attack by Muslims on Christians (FGD 1-1, 2015). Yet the violence in Beshasha was in fact preceded by an attack on Muslims in Chaggo area of Illubabor which claimed the lives of four Muslims (KI-41, 2015). The attack in Chaggo was considered as an attack by Christians on Muslims thereby serving as a public justification for the preceding violence (KI-27, 2015). The ensuing rounds of violence were not only felt enormously in large parts of Western Oromia for they involved large scale casualty but were also understood as an attack by Muslims on Christians (FGD 2-1, 2015). Once the violence subsided, the search for the underlying causes of the conflict continued to assume a religious perspective albeit the search

this time tried to discover a historical background to the conflict. In an attempt to dig into the origins of the inter-religious discord, a local elder explains:

> The changes in the teachings of some Islamic leaders started in the early 1990s. The teachings targeted not only the social ties that held together Muslims and Christians for long but also traditional Islamic practices as well. The conflict in 2006 was the culmination of that change which had been building momentum till then. It was a violence instigated by few adherents of the new teachings against traditional social practices which accommodated people of various religions (KI-44, 2015).

Also, as a Muslim leader from the area believed, the suddenly widening gaps in inter-religious interactions were brought to the forefront after the 1991 regime change in Ethiopia. Explaining his perspective, the informant claimed that:

> The changes associated with the overthrowing of the Dergue regime in 1991 and the openings of the fields for all religious actors were sudden. Though not unexpected, it marked a time where people tried to assert their religious position for all the historical and political reasons. The downside, however, was that it was an experiment where the rules of the game were not understood by all. That was the gap which ultimately opened the space for some actors with radically new agendas. Those were the factors that threatened the historical social ties that were characterized by inter-religious admixtures (KI-39, 2015).

When the inter-religious conflict erupted in 2006, those were the accounts that grabbed the headline of the attempts to explain the causes of the conflict immediately after the violence in Bashasha. In fact, the assumption that the violence was perpetuated against Christians was in part sustained, particularly in the minds of the victims; by the mechanisms the local officials handled the brawling that preceded the violence. An informant from Agaro observed that:

The local administration at the time did less than desirable. In fact, the deaths at Bashasha could have been averted had it not been for the insistence of the local officials that those who evacuated from the rural vicinities of Gomma woreda be returned to their homes. Those were followers of Orthodox Christianity who came to Agaro town in fear of large scale violence after an earlier conflict in Iluabbabora claimed the lives of four Muslims (KI-20, 2015).

A factor that reinforced the conviction of those who shared the above account was the sacking of some local officials in what people considered was in connection with the flawed handling of the conflict (FGD 2-3, 2015). An informant, who was a local official at the time of the interview, also conceded that there was some negligence on the parts of some of the then administrators which later led to the escalation of the conflict (KI-27, 2015).

Moreover, the way security forces from the federal level of administration tried to contain the conflict retrospectively buttressed the assumption that the violence was perpetrated by Muslims against Christians. It was also a showcase that this understanding also extended to the upper levels of government structure. Informants recall how followers of Islam in the wake of the violence were brought out to open field in mass and treated violently in what looked like gross punishment for the crime (KI-8, 2015; FGD 2-1, 2015). In the end, all those developments before, during and after the conflict were instrumental in entrenching the thought that the violence was, in simple terms, an attack by Muslims against Christians. Unfortunately, this linear understanding of the violence, which only helped put Muslims in whole on the spot, was later to define the essences of the early conflict resolution initiatives.

Once the violence was halted, efforts to restore peace were initiated in the areas where further breakout of violence was feared. The peculiarity of those efforts was that they were informed by the assumption explained earlier: that it was violence perpetrated by Muslims. These early

efforts, ... and the local administration were involved, were thus focused on bringing traditional Islamic practices back to the fore whose erosions were taken to be the underlying causes of the conflict. The primary way of achieving this was to ensure that followers of Islam and Christianity alike participated in various social and cultural activities. A religious leader who was part of the process at the time noted that this was done to attain two related aims. First, the participation in social and cultural activities would help narrow the gap between followers of the traditional Islamic practices and of the new teachings (KI-36, 2015).

This was actually done on top of a vigorous attempt to convince the people to abandon the practices sponsored by the new dogma proponents and discredit the whole foundation as something alien (KI-44, 2015). The second purpose of the attempt was to regain the confidence of the whole community that the old lines of social relations, trust and communication between followers of the two religions could be restored (KI-36, 2015). Asked about the success rate of the efforts, informants were of different opinion. A particular religious leader who was part of the early efforts to restore peace was rather upbeat about the success of the first than the second as he claimed that they lately realized the attainment of the latter objective rather needed time and much resources (KI-29, 2015). Focus group discussants also reported that the efforts would have borne better results had the process been sustained over time (FGD 1-1, 2015). Sharing some of the concerns over the level of success brought about by the early efforts, a local official asserted that the gap was later addressed by the Religious Forum for Peace which became active after 2011 (KI-15, 2015).

Normatively, the intentions of the early efforts were not to be questioned. However, the foundation of the process which was predicated on implicit and at times explicit lines of identifying perpetrators and victims had uncomforting elements for Muslims (KI-45, 2015).

Yet that never seemed to hold back many from going along the order of the day (FGD 1-2, 2015). Once it was stated publicly that the conflict was a consequence of the new Islamic teachings that disrupted the old social fabrics, moving away from those teachings was recommended as a straightforward solution (KI-31, 2015). Whether the recommendation was bought in earnest or not, joining various social groups was an undemanding task.

The cumulative effect of this process was, ultimately, the increase in memberships to social groups for the Muslims. Joining old and new groups for Muslims became a way of proving their desire to move on from what were considered the causes of the conflict. On the other hand, the process depicted above could not be said to have the same impact for all religious groups. While joining social groups for Muslims was a show of commitment in the eyes of watching local officials and religious leaders at the minimum, followers of Orthodox Christianity in particular were preoccupied by the thoughts of victimhood and lack of justice. For the Christians, the strengths of the efforts were not enough to match their expectations. Dissatisfaction over the whole process of conflict management only added to their lack of stern belief in the activities of social order restoration. Demands of reparation for the properties they have lost (KI-26, 2015), bringing perpetrators before court of law (KI-28, 2015) and sincere and public apology (KI-33, 2015) were the issues that gained priority for the Christians.

4.3.3. Post-Conflict Changes in the Level of Trust

Restoration of broken social ties to a desired level is to be informed by, among others, the level of trust in the post-conflict environment. The different results of the early resolution efforts in improving social interaction for the different religious groups were found to be consistent with the perception of the different religious groups regarding the change in the level of trust after the violence. The assessment revealed not only that the perception about

the change in the level of trust after the violence was informed by one's religion but also that the results varied for the different religious groups.

As shown in Table 5 below, there is a significant relationship between the types of religion that people followed and the perceived changes in the level of trust after the conflict, χ^2(df =2, N=800) =10.65p=.005. The results of the test regarding changes in the level of trust after the conflict were aggregated on three counts: whether they have gotten better, stayed the same or gotten worse. The chi-square test of independence reveals that Muslims were more convinced that the level of trust has improved after the conflict than were the Christians (51.4% to 40.1%). The actual count of Muslims who believed in the improvement was higher than the expected while the Christians who believed that there was an improvement in the level of trust after the conflict actually counted lesser than the expected.

The counts also varied based on religion when it came to the perception that the level of trust has deteriorated. Christians were more likely to believe that the level of trust has gotten worse than were Muslims (49.2% to 38.7%). The number of Christians who believed the level has worsened was higher than the expected while the actual count of Muslims who believed so was lesser than the expected.

Table 5: Test of Independence for Changes in the Level of Trust after the Conflict in the Study Area, 2015

		Muslim	Christian	Total
Gotten better	Count	219	150	369
	Expected Count	196.5	172.5	369.0
	% within Religion of respondents	51.4%	40.1%	46.1%
	Std. Residual	1.6	-1.7	
Gotten worse	Count	165	184	349
	Expected Count	185.8	163.2	349.0
	% within Religion of respondents	38.7%	49.2%	43.6%

Though Muslims' perception regarding the post-conflict change in the level of trust was stronger than the perceptions of Christians (Table 5), interview results depicted that the latter had their reasons to believe that the level of trust had improved as well. The words of an informant who lived in Agaro for about forty years shed light on this account:

It was tragic enough that we had to endure the disruptions the conflict caused to our social fabric. But once we put an end to the violence, we had to give ways to practices that defined our lives for long as neighbors. We needed to do the things we had been doing before: drink coffee and celebrate holidays together, borrow money and care for each other at times of illness. Looking back, it looks like the drift at the time was a silver lining for it was to rest our trust on a more solid foundation later (KI-36, 2015).

A statistical description of the results, which also helps the categorization of Protestant and Orthodox Christians, revealed consistent outcome with the chi-square test of independence. The perception of Muslim respondents looks different from the perceptions of the other religious group respondents. As shown in Figure 6, one can understand that about half

(51.4%) of the Muslims and 40% of the Orthodox Christian respondents were of the opinion that the level of the trust has changed for better after the conflict. On the other hand, 38.7% of the Muslim respondents believed the level of trust has deteriorated after the conflict while about 9.9% of them did not notice any change. On the contrary, a little above half of the Protestant Christian respondents (53.5%) reported the case has gotten worse while 40.3% of them saw the level of trust as improving. Overall, the size of respondents who believed that the situation stayed about the same amounted to 10.3% of the total research participants.

Figure 6: Changes in the Level of Trust after the Conflict by Religion in the Study Area
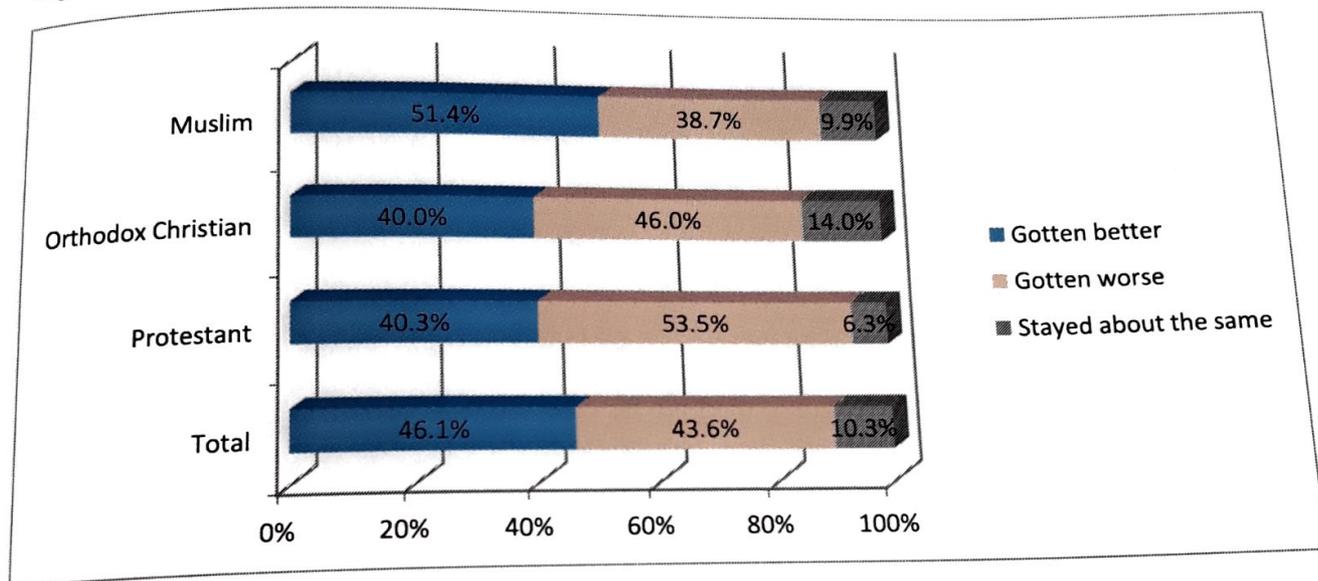
As indicated by the chi-square test of independence and the statistical description, Muslim respondents seemed far more convinced of the improvement than other religious groups. The response rates that underlined improvement in the level of trust after the conflict are in part attributable to conflict resolution efforts. While conceding that building trust right after the violence was a difficult issue, maintained an official, the issue had been markedly improving over time (KI-31, 2015). Focus group discussants, on the other hand, asserted that the prominent challenges in improving the level of trust were in addressing people of different religions simultaneously as it was more effortless to get Muslims on board than others (FGD

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2-1, 2015). This assertion points to the fact that the trends with which the level of trust continues to improve varies across religions.

The factors that led to the variation were ultimately found to be issues that stretched beyond local contexts. For instance, an informant stated that he was not happy with the characterization of the violence as "a contravention carried out by few who trade in the name of Islam" (KI-30, 2015). While the statement is a makeup of the intention to show the downsides of the understanding of the violence by the local officials, it is also informative of how the issues have macro-political dimension. Another informant was more elaborative when he claimed that his identity-based perception is just the source of the problems that he feels he was facing. In his own words:

> The problem is not just about few individuals. It is not even just about Islamic extremism. It is a wider public problem that transcends the Jimma area. It is presented as a transient problem propounded by handful of people but it is in fact a problem of looking at Christians as people who do not belong here (KI-23, 2015).

For others, the issue is compounded when one finds himself as a non-Oromo embracing Christianity. This is the picture an informant from Agaro town captures when she stated that:

> The issues that have been discomforting us even before the conflict are not only that we are not Muslims. It is also because we are not Oromos. If you are a non-Oromo Muslim, that might ease the burden for you. Otherwise, the pressure has been enormous to become a Muslim especially in the immediate post-violence period (KI-20, 2015).

While the description of the conflict as an inter-religious one has affected the resolution process, the ethnic basis that accompanied the description of the conflict had its own contribution. Yet the way religious identity had affected the conflict in the area had

unwillingly been defined decades ago in relation to the reconfiguration of the nation's political landscape. While federalism was largely a response to the ethno-national discord that pervaded the national political scene, it conceded to new conflicts underlined by competition for new power, resources and autonomy at local levels (Tsegaye, 2010). Misunderstandings that emanate from flawed comprehension of the federalist principles by local officials not only prompt the advocacy of parochial views and localized interests but also limit the roles of regional and local governments in dealing with conflicts (Alemayehu, 2009). Moreover, the undermining of efforts by the government to establish and maintain closer contact with the local population due to lack of capacity has particularly resulted in dissatisfaction of communities towards the government structures (Keller, 2007). These were factors that contributed both to the pre-conflict inter-religious incongruences and to the inability of winning the confidence of all religious groups in the study area in the post-conflict period.

The misunderstandings of the national political formula at local levels, which unfolded during the conflict in the study area, forced sections of the local populace to shed doubt on the sincerity and capability of local officials' attempts to resolve the conflict. An informant mentioned that two of his brothers became Muslims to maintain their private properties after they considered the losses of non-Muslims as a proof of lack of administrative protection (KI-22, 2015). In a similar vein, another informant, who believed that he had been unfairly treated due to his religion, recounted his personal experience in explaining why he maintained a low level of trust after the conflict:

I went to the kebele office to apply for a kebele house once I lost my own during the course of the violence. I was hopeful of getting one for I knew that there was at least one house that the officials could provide. Yet I was repetitively told to come back until they could consider my request. On one fateful day, while I was waiting outside

for the right time to speak to the officials inside their office, I heard one of them claiming that "our resources are for those who are like us". That was when I learnt that the vacant house has been allotted to someone else and I never went back to the office after that (KI-26, 2015).

These are the factors that explain the marked differences over the changes in the level of trust when one moves across religions. While the conflict resolution efforts were conducted locally, the concerns of the non-Muslims in the study area stretch to the national political scene. Owing to lingering misreading of the national political formula, most members of those groups of people are locally perceived as non-natives. This is a strong factor that put those people in a position where they could not hold genuine beliefs both in their community members and local administration. Though one could not gainsay that the situation had been prevalent before the conflict, it was magnified as a consequence of the violence. On the other hand, the conflict resolution efforts, with all their shortcomings, only contributed to harnessing local level challenges thereby contributing to improvements in the level of trust as perceived by Muslims while the concerns of non-Muslims whose apprehension originated from the macro-political scenes remained largely unaddressed.

4.3.4. Friendship across Religions as a Measure of Social Capital

The foregoing discussion illustrated how the violence affected the evolution of social capital in the study area. It also explicated the post-violence developments that impacted the pattern of social capital particularly in the form of social groupings. Moreover, the data revealed that not only the conflict but also the resolution efforts immediately after the violence had enduring effects on the evolution of post-conflict social capital. A widespread understanding of the conflict as a result mainly, if not wholly, of religious differences was one of the factors that influenced the efficacy of locally initiated resolution efforts.

In the meantime, it is worthwhile to notice that social capital was treated generically in explaining the changes it endured due to the conflict. This was because social capital was extrapolated through the use of the pattern of changes in social groupings as the main indicator. Yet a consideration of the interaction between the conflict and social capital through an individualistic perspective of assessing the latter variable would have its own merits. Examining the approach that members of the community were (re)building their social capital on a personal terms, in contrast to the terms of social groups, would enable one observe whether there was a difference between individual-to-individual, and individual-to-community interaction. This could be achieved through the analysis of the approaches members of the community in the study area employ to make friends for it depends on personal preferences as opposed to group membership which is rather a reflection of social and cultural norms.

The aggregate data showed that, on average, a single Muslim respondent had close to eight friends while Orthodox and Protestant Christian respondents had a little more than seven and six close friends, respectively, as shown in figure 7. While Muslims in Jimma zone account for more than 85% of the population and represent more than 53% of the respondents, this numerical superiority did not reflect in the size of close friends the Muslim respondents made. This is because while Orthodox and Protestant Christians represent only 11% and 3% of the total population and 30% and 20% of the total respondents in the same order, the average number of close friends they had was numerically closer to the average number of close friends for Muslims.

Figure 7: Close Friends by Religion in the Study Area, 2015
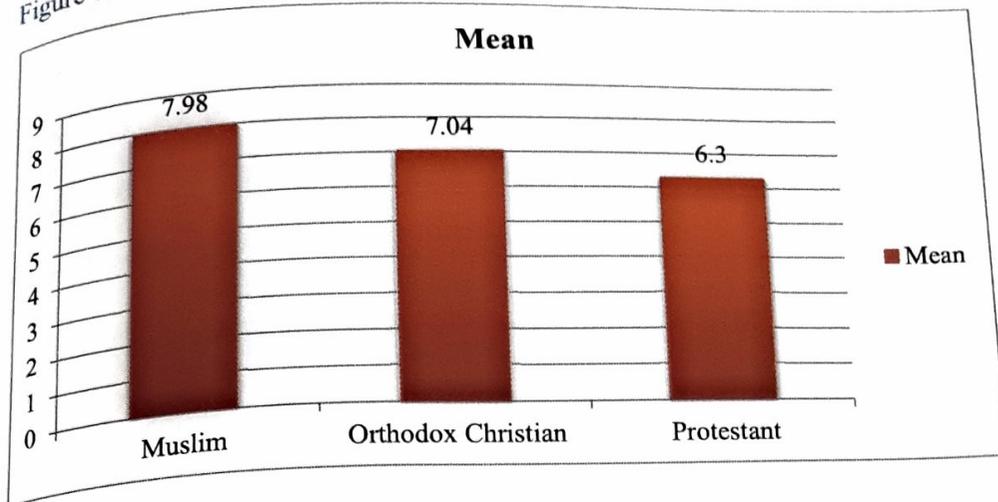
While religious similarity cannot be ruled out as an important factor to have close friends, one cannot definitively tell whether it is the only or most important factor. This is, for instance, the point that an elderly woman addressed in explaining the factors that mattered in making friends:

> I opt my friends to be people with whom I can carry out most of my social activities. My preference depends not only on the issues of who I need to confide to at times of difficulty. They are people I can go with to church, market places, social commitments like weddings and mourning (KI-9, 2015).

Similarly, a young informant disclosed that the types of friends he makes are outcomes of his life style as a student:

> I make my friends at school and most of them are my classmates. I do not really care about religion as long as we can get along. The friends I have are my friends because most of the things we do and the issues we talk about are results of our school life (KI-11, 2015).

Gender preference was also identified as another factor that determined the types of friends that people preferred to have. A participant in a focus group discussion stated that "women

often find it convenient to make friends with women as men are more disposed to make friends with men" (FGD 4-2, 2015). But religion was also identified as another factor for the moral evaluations of issues that people shared with friends were largely defined by their religious outlooks (FGD 4-2, 2015.). This claim was reinforced by the account of a Muslim informant who considered religion as just one factor albeit a stronger one:

> I do have a lot of acquaintances from different walks of life. I do also have very close ties with my neighbors. But when it comes to sharing details of personal matters, I prefer Muslims to others. That is because as most of my stories have religious touches I would believe that my Muslim friends would understand me easily (KI-43, 2015).

The factors that the informants raised, despite the fact that they are of various contents, were not exclusive defining characteristics of any one religion. Yet the data for close friendships imply the higher tendency of people from the Christian religious group than followers of Islam to encircle themselves with as much people as possible. In fact, for an individual to have seven close friends that he or she can feel at ease with, can talk about private matters with or call on help cannot be underestimated for any of the religious groups. Also, the importance of religion in making friends cannot be underemphasized at least because, as focus group discussants succinctly put it, "while religious difference might not necessarily keep individuals apart, religious similarity can make individuals intimate" (FGD 3-2, 2015). But the centripetal effect of religion in making much friends happens to be stronger for Christians. For these group of people consider themselves as past targets of conflict framed along religious lines, they find it easier to get closer to people within their religious category. This essence was captured by an informant who claimed that "as much as I would love to go on from the fears of the past, I eventually have to come to terms with my heart and find the best of comfort with people of similar religion" (KI-30, 2015).

4.4. Linking Social Capital and Religious Conflicts in Jimma

4.4.1. The Destructive Aspects of the Conflict on Social Capital

There is no better way of starting the identification of the destructive impacts of the religious conflict on social capital in the study area than analyzing the degree of trust between dwellers of the study area. For trust is one of the most important foundations of social capital, its assessment helps understand not only the elements of social capital that the conflict changed but also the particular nature of the changes. In this regard, the perception of the individual members of the community towards trust was assessed based on their thoughts about whether people could be trusted or whether they should be careful in dealing with others.

As indicated in Table 6, the chi-square test of independence for the item revealed that there is a significant relationship between religion of respondents (Muslim or Christian) and trust towards others (people can be trusted or cannot be trusted) ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 10.03$, $p = .002$). We would accept these odds as statistically significant and conclude that there was a relationship between the religion of respondents and the trust they had towards others showing that a greater proportion of Muslim respondents (52.1%) were of the opinion that most people could be trusted while a greater proportion of Christians (59.1%) were of the opinion that most people were not trust worthy.

Table 6: Test of Independence for Trustworthiness of People in the Study Area, 2015

			Muslim	Christian	Total
Do you think that most people can be trusted?	People can be trusted	Count	222	153	375
		Expected Count	199.7	175.3	375.0
		% within Religion of respondents	52.1%	40.9%	46.9%
		Std. Residual	1.6	-1.7	
	You should be too careful	Count	204	221	425
		Expected Count	226.3	198.7	425.0
		% within Religion of respondents	47.9%	59.1%	53.1%
		Std. Residual	-1.5	1.6	
	Total	Count	426	374	800
		Expected Count	426.0	374.0	800.0
		% within Religion of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.038[a]	1	.002		
Continuity Correction[b]	9.594	1	.002		
Likelihood Ratio	10.066	1	.002		
Fisher's Exact Test				.002	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.026	1	.002		
N of Valid Cases	800				

The possible explanations for this difference can be sought in the different implications the conflict had for the different religious groups. The Muslims seemed to trust other people better than the Christians did which is still another reflection of the conflict that left the Christians in a stronger state of fear than Muslims. In fact, the severity of the conflict was reflected in its potency to break the relations of close family members with different religions. A protestant informant from Asendabo area, for instance, claimed that:

I was the only one from my family with different religion when the violence in Asendabo area broke out. As a Protestant Christian, I had no problem living with my Muslim family members before the conflict. However, our relations started souring

once some members of the Muslim community began propagating against Protestant Christians. The accusations portrayed Protestantism as the enemy of Islam that was taking over the religion of our fathers and forefathers, i.e., Islam. As a consequence, my siblings and parents were the first to turn against me when the violence finally erupted. I got bitten severely (KI-47, 2015).

Also, one of the results of the post-conflict public deliberations about the causes was the emphasis on the need to identify people's background before putting one's trust in somebody. This is mainly related to the fact that it was people with obscure identity that were eventually identified as the ones responsible for the pre-conflict degradation of the Muslim-Christian relations (KI-6, 2015). These were as well the kind of people pointed out as culprits that instigated the Muslims to attack the Christians through inflammatory speeches. Focus group discussants recall that there were Muslim religious leaders that instigated the conflict but whose particular origin was not known (FGD 2-1, 2015). They preached and urged their followers to attack Christians by deeming such acts as acceptable religious deeds (KI-12, 2015). Looking retrospectively at the growing gap between Muslims and Christians before the violence, an informant claimed that he was appalled at how those religious leaders persuaded Muslims not to greet their Christian acquaintances (KI-26, 2015).

Despite the fact that withholding trust before someone's background becomes clear in the eyes of the local community members works both for Muslims and Christians, the same factor backfires against the Christian community. This emanated from the fact that strangers were the first subjects whose background history needs to be known before they could earn the community's trust. Nonetheless, the public's need to be critical of strangers was a factor that easily translated into suspecting Christians for they were considered as strangers themselves at least from a religious point of view.

Focus group discussants claimed that the attack against the Christians during the violence was justified on, among others, the thought that Christianity is a non-native religion (FGD 4-1, 2015) - a conundrum that some suspect to linger around to date (KI-26, 2015). Thus, the instigators incessantly publicized the depiction of Christians as followers of non-native religion, by implication characterizing them as non-natives, who should be Islamized to the minimum (KI-26, 2015).

In the end, the issue of trust as a reminiscent of the conflict happens to be a two-way instrument that counts against Christians forcing them to be more careful in dealing with others than Muslims. While Muslims who would go for being careful in dealing with others due to the post-conflict realization that people of especially distant origin were not to be easily trusted, the Christians endured the additional burden of being considered strangers themselves. Yet the roles played by non-native religious leaders during the conflict still disgruntled members of the Muslim community (KI-39, 2015). It is for this reason that a considerable size of Muslims as shown in the data opted for being careful in dealing with people despite the fact that a significant majority of them, compared to members of the Christian community, would trust others rather easily.

Generally, the result of the chi-square test of independence discussed above conclusively showed that one's religion mattered in conferring trust to others. A nominal comparison of the respondents also shows that the level of trust in the area is overall less than satisfactory for those who would like to be careful in dealing with others were slightly higher than those who would go easy on others. The latter of the points is supported by the data acquired from the assessment of the community members' perception of the degree to which differences characterized their area.

A statistical description of the result in which the respondents were requested to describe their responses on a "Likert type scale" of one to five where one meant a 'very great extent' and five meant a 'very small extent' is presented below in Figure 8. Overall, the distribution of the respondent choices across the five scales were roughly even where the highest of the respondents (26%) opted for 'great extent' and the lowest size of the respondents (16%) chose 'very small extent' to describe the extent of difference. The differences that the respondents mentioned included differences in terms of wealth, income, social status, ethnic or linguistic background, religious and political beliefs.

In terms of specific religious respondents, there were apparent variations in the extent to which those differences characterized their communities. The highest number of Muslim respondents, who were about 26%, chose 'small extent' to describe the existing differences in the study area while equal percentage of the same respondents could not decide to describe the scale of differences. On the other hand, the highest number of respondents from both Protestant and Orthodox Christians, who accounted for 44% and 34% of the respondents within each group respectively, thought differences characterized their area to a 'great extent' in the aftermath of the conflict.

Figure 8: Existence of Difference after the Conflict in the Study Area, 2015[1]
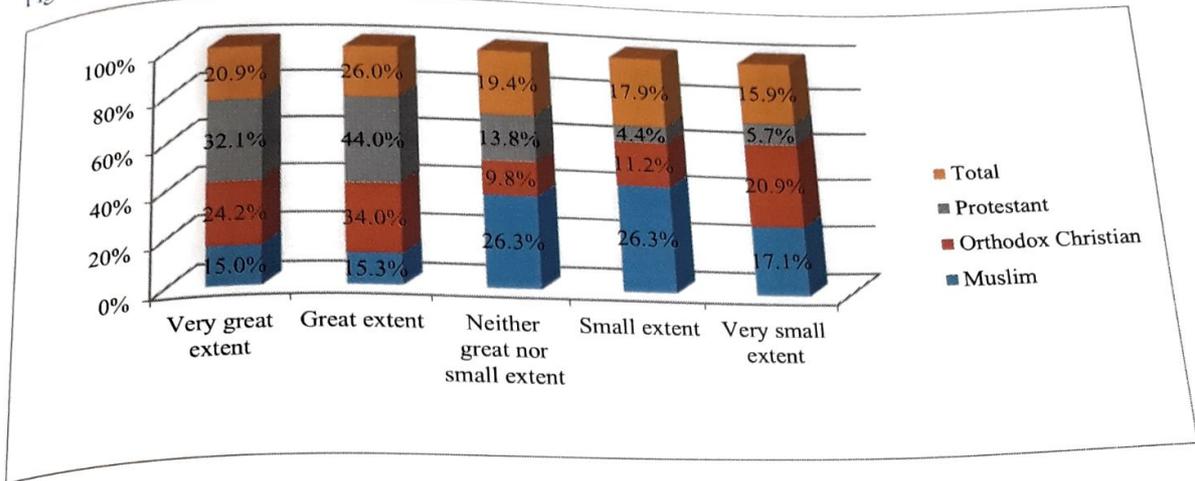
Nevertheless, assessment of the respondents' perceptions regarding the extent to which those differences ensue problems resulted in similar responses as the overwhelming majority of the respondents were convinced that the differences did not translate to major problems as shown under figure 9.

Figure 9: Differences that ensue Problems in the Study Area, 2015
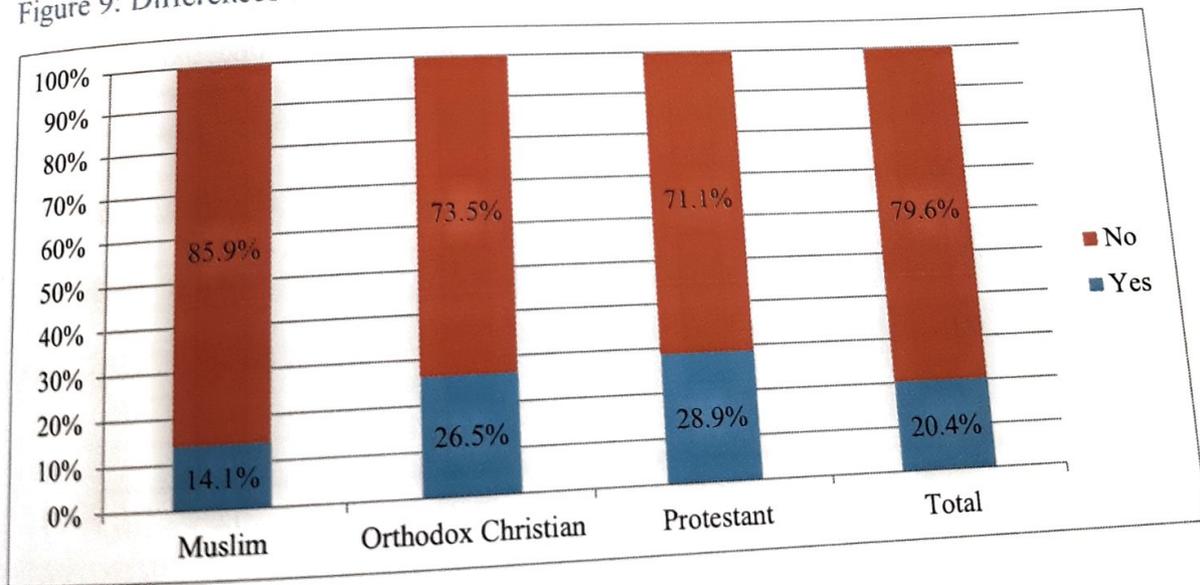
Regardless of religion, the above figures portrayed that the majority of the respondents from the study area (79.6%) believed the differences did not ensue problems. Nonetheless, a higher

proportion of Orthodox (26.5%) and Protestant Christians (28.9%) expressed that the differences ensued problems as compared to Muslims. A summary of the respondents' thoughts (figure 10) regarding the specific causes of the problems revealed some interesting results. While the respondents were asked to mention factors they thought were causes of the problems after the violence, their frame of reference however largely remained the religious conflict. As such, the large majority of the respondents were convinced that the problems were the results of 'differences in religious beliefs' and 'differences in ethnic or linguistic background'.

Of the total 20.4% of the respondents who believed the differences ensued problems, close to 63.8% pointed to differences in religious beliefs as causes of problems in the study area while the respondents who stood next with their choice of differences in ethnic or linguistic background as causes of problems constituted for 27.9% of those respondents. The rest of the factors that the respondents picked as causes of problems had two characteristics. Firstly, differences in terms of education, wealth/material possessions, social status and duration of residence were considered as marginal causes of problems for most of the respondents. Secondly, those factors were considered as causes of problems for individuals rather than communal groups in cases where they led to problems. The factor that was considered to bring about frequent problems from this category of factors was landholding disputes whose sphere only extended to two families at best that shared adjacent plots of land (KI-27, 2015).

Figure 10: Differences that Most Often Cause Problems in the Study Area, 2015
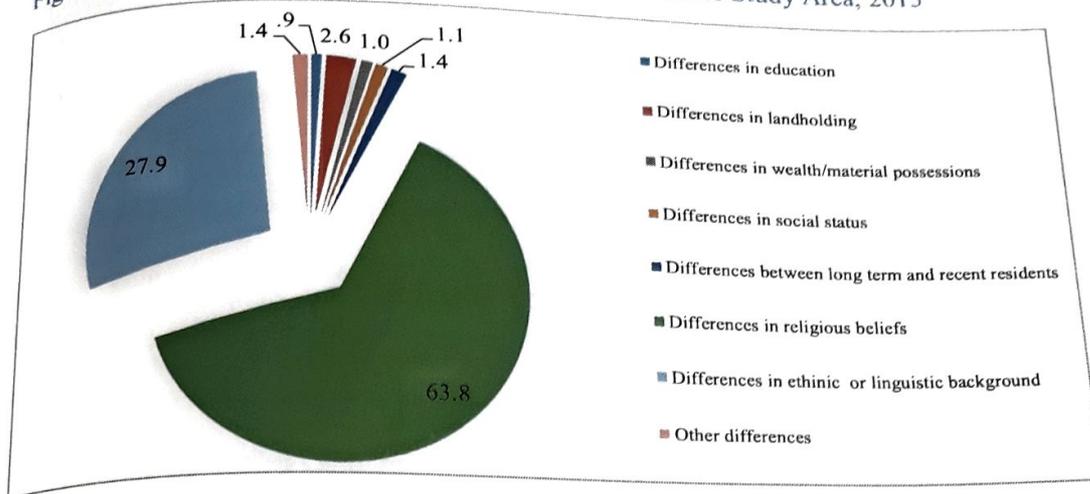
The perception of the community members in the study area that singled out religious difference as the most susceptible difference to ensue problems was largely derived from the reading of the post-conflict impact of religion on daily social and cultural routines. It was predicated on the belief that religion began marking a clearer boundary to the domains of the activities that people of different religion carry out together after the conflict rather than before. As a showcase of this point, focus group discussants mentioned two activities that used to be inter-religious affairs: *jarsummaa* and *debo*. The first refers to a traditional conflict resolution mechanism that is used to resolve disagreements that arise between at least two parties or individuals (KI-1, 2015). Those who listen to the cases of the parties in conflict, locally known as *Jarsolii*- translated as the elderly, are highly respected people within the community for their wisdom, achievements and ages (KI-1, 2015).

Informants stated that the religious identity of the elderly that preside over cases never mattered (FGD 2-1, 2015). However, according to informants, the conflict affected this traditional mechanism of conflict resolution in one particular way: after the conflict the number of disputants with different religions that brought their cases to this institution

declined (KI-1, 2015). This was because after the violence people feared that disputes of even the most personal cases, as long as the disputants were from the two different religions, could be interpreted as religious ones (FGD 2-1, 2015). As such, disputes of this nature were avoided in some cases; in other cases where the stakes were too costly to be left unresolved, the disputants went to courts (KI-18, 2015). Nonetheless, it remains the firm belief of many that this conundrum had long been buried not least because the mechanism was vital for all groups in terms of cost, accessibility and credibility (FGD 2-1, 2015). Also, *debo-* a social institution where farmers in close vicinities help each other out particularly at times of plowing and harvesting- was believed to have lost its inter-religious character immediately after the conflict (KI-18, 2015). Yet the inter-religious character of this institution was also restored not long after the end of the violence (KI-18, 2015).

The two traditional practices mentioned above are uniquely inter-religious practices the characters of which were restored relatively shortly after the end of the violence. According to informants, the lasting impact of the conflict was rather on activities that have religious dimensions (FGD 3-1, 2015). The informants stated that there had been a long tradition between Muslims and Christians of conducting religious activities and celebrating holidays together (FGD 3-1, 2015). For instance, there was a tradition, among some Christians, of observing the fasting period of *Ramadan*- which is only the religious duty of Muslims (KI-39, 2015). Also, young boys of both religions used to sing *hoyahoye* songs from door to door- which is actually a Christian religious holiday (KI-39, 2015).

Holiday invitations between Muslims and Christians, particularly among neighbors, on the occasion of religious holidays used to be a very common practice (KI-18, 2015). These were all characteristics of traditional practices in the study area whose levels had been eroded after the violence (FGD 4-1, 2015). Unlike the previous activities that have been restored to

normalcy after the conflict, these activities have not been restored to their pre-conflict level (KI-29, 2015). The members of the community have only been lucky to see some improvement whose degree is not comparable to the activities described above (KI-29, 2015). It is in part this observation of the long lasting damages to inter-religious practices that drove people to identify religion as the most susceptible issue to ensue problems.

Generally, the destructive impacts of the conflict on social capital in the study area had been witnessed in the different schemes of the communities' daily lives. Various social and traditional aspects of the communities had been on the receiving end of the calamities. In fact, the disparaging consequences of the conflict disrupted close familial ties. It is also discernable that the level of success in restoring damaged social capital features differs when one moves across different aspects of those activities. A critical inspection of the aspects of social capital damaged due to the conflict cum the different rates of success in restoring them point to the fact that much of the damage was sustained by inter-religious practices. Aspects of social capital whose conduct provided platforms for the joint efforts of Muslims and Christians have rather proved difficult to restore.

4.4.2. Aspects of Social Capital that Survived the Conflict

The foregoing discussions revealed a range of social capital aspects that endured changes to their nature due to the conflict. The assessment of the impacts of the conflict on social capital also brought to light some aspects of social capital that were able to escape the clutches of the conflict. Particularly, the assessment showed issues like personal safety, property security and neighborhood peace were found to be aspects that were free of the lingering impacts of the conflict.

One of the issues whose nature was found to be uninfluenced after the conflict was personal safety. As indicated in Table 7, chi-square test for personal safety showed that it was not

dependent on religion. There is no significant relation between the type of religion one followed and personal safety ($\chi^2_{(4)} = 2.74$, $p = .602$). Besides, the cross tabulation results show that the respondents' size increased going from bottom (representing the 'very unsafe' choice) to top (representing the 'very safe' choice).

Table 7: Test of Independence for Extent of Feeling Safe When Walking Alone in Dark in the Study Area, 2015

		Muslim	Christian	Total
Very safe	Count	218	192	410
	Expected Count	218.3	191.7	410.0
	% within Religion of respondents	51.2%	51.3%	51.3%
	Std. Residual	.0	.0	
Moderately safe	Count	72	62	134
	Expected Count	71.4	62.6	134.0
	% within Religion of respondents	16.9%	16.6%	16.8%
	Std. Residual	.1	−.1	
Neither safe nor unsafe	Count	79	58	137
	Expected Count	73.0	64.0	137.0
	% within Religion of respondents	18.5%	15.5%	17.1%
	Std. Residual	.7	−.8	
Moderately unsafe	Count	35	41	76
	Expected Count	40.5	35.5	76.0
	% within Religion of respondents	8.2%	11.0%	9.5%
	Std. Residual	−.9	.9	
Very unsafe	Count	22	21	43
	Expected Count	22.9	20.1	43.0
	% within Religion of respondents	5.2%	5.6%	5.4%
	Std. Residual	−.2	.2	
Total	Count	426	374	800
	Expected Count	426.0	374.0	800.0
	% within Religion of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.743ᵃ	4	.60
Likelihood Ratio	2.744	4	.6
Linear-by-Linear Association	.171	1	.6
N of Valid Cases	800		

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dependent on religion. There is no significant relation between the type of religion one followed and personal safety ($\chi^2_{(4)} = 2.74$, $p = .602$). Besides, the cross tabulation results show that the respondents' size increased going from bottom (representing the 'very unsafe' choice) to top (representing the 'very safe' choice).

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		Muslim	Christian	Total
Very safe	Count	218	192	410
	Expected Count	218.3	191.7	410.0
	% within Religion of respondents	51.2%	51.3%	51.3%
	Std. Residual	.0	.0	
Moderately safe	Count	72	62	134
	Expected Count	71.4	62.6	134.0
	% within Religion of respondents	16.9%	16.6%	16.8%
	Std. Residual	.1	-.1	
Neither safe nor unsafe	Count	79	58	137
	Expected Count	73.0	64.0	137.0
	% within Religion of respondents	18.5%	15.5%	17.1%
	Std. Residual	.7	-.8	
Moderately unsafe	Count	35	41	76
	Expected Count	40.5	35.5	76.0
	% within Religion of respondents	8.2%	11.0%	9.5%
	Std. Residual	-.9	.9	
Very unsafe	Count	22	21	43
	Expected Count	22.9	20.1	43.0
	% within Religion of respondents	5.2%	5.6%	5.4%
	Std. Residual	-.2	.2	
Total	Count	426	374	800
	Expected Count	426.0	374.0	800.0
	% within Religion of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.743ᵃ	4	.602
Likelihood Ratio	2.744	4	.60
Linear-by-Linear Association	.171	1	.67
N of Valid Cases	800		

The fact that personal safety is one of the factors that escaped the influence of the conflict was also corroborated by an assessment of a related factor. As the result of the chi-square test of independence below shows, there was no significant relationship between religion and safety at home ($\chi^2_{(4)}$ =4.97, p=.290). (See Table 8 below)

Table 8: Test of Independence for Extent of Feeling Safe from Crime and Violence When Alone at Home in the Study Area, 2015

			Muslim	Christian	Total
How safe do you feel when walking down your street alone after dark?	Very safe	Count	257	202	459
		Expected Count	244.4	214.6	459.0
		% within Religion of respondents	60.3%	54.0%	57.4%
		Std. Residual	.8	-.9	
	Moderately safe	Count	78	70	148
		Expected Count	78.8	69.2	148.0
		% within Religion of respondents	18.3%	18.7%	18.5%
		Std. Residual	-.1	.1	
	Neither safe nor unsafe	Count	20	27	47
		Expected Count	25.0	22.0	47.0
		% within Religion of respondents	4.7%	7.2%	5.9%
		Std. Residual	-1.0	1.1	
	Moderately unsafe	Count	47	55	102
		Expected Count	54.3	47.7	102.0
		% within Religion of respondents	11.0%	14.7%	12.8%
		Std. Residual	-1.0	1.1	
	Very unsafe	Count	24	20	44
		Expected Count	23.4	20.6	44.0
		% within Religion of respondents	5.6%	5.3%	5.5%
		Std. Residual	.1	-.1	
Total		Count	426	374	800
		Expected Count	426.0	374.0	800.0
		% within Religion of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.972[a]	4	.290
Likelihood Ratio	4.968	4	.291
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.354	1	.125
N of Valid Cases	800		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 20.57.

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Nonetheless, the absence of significant relationship between religion and one's safety when going down the street alone at night time on the one hand and, on the other hand, religion and one's safety when alone at home does not categorically rule out the absence of threat to one's security in the study area. This is supported by the qualitative data from the study area. For instance, focus group discussants asserted that the level of safety one feels particularly when being alone was a gender-sensitive issue as female participants hinted at more fear of vulnerability than their male counterparts (FGD 1-2, 2015). This perception is predicated on the assumption that males are better disposed to protect themselves (FGD 1-2, 2015). Their levels of fear seem to ascend particularly when they had to take care of cattle after dark which could largely involve checking on them every now and then to protect their livelihood from robbery (KI-40, 2015). Also, walking down the street alone after it gets dark was identified as very risky owing to possible sexual assaults (KI-30, 2015).

While the gender dimension of fear was a common denominator to all religious groups, the urban way of life was also cited as a source of fear. This is because, according to the informants, urban dwellers were assumed to expose themselves to attempts of thefts on the streets particularly during night time (KI-26, 2015; KI-44, 2015). In the end, those factors cited as sources of threat to personal safety, and their occurrences as well, were taken to be characteristically common to the community members as the exposures to the factors did not target any religious group. This is supported by the results of the assessment of actual experiences of violent crimes and burglary/vandalism the occurrences of which were not dependent on religion.

As shown in Table 9, there is no significant relationship between religion and experiences of violent crimes ($\chi^2_{(1)}$ =2.19, p =.138) on the one hand and religion and house burglary/vandalism ($\chi^2_{(1)}$ =.43, p =.509).

Table 9: Test of Independence for Violent Crime Victimhood in the Study Area, 2015

			Muslim	Christian	Total
In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household been the victim of a violent crime?	Yes	Count	3	7	10
		Expected Count	5.3	4.7	10.0
		% within Religion of respondents	.7%	1.9%	1.3%
		Std. Residual	-1.0	1.1	
	No	Count	423	367	790
		Expected Count	420.7	369.3	790.0
		% within Religion of respondents	99.3%	98.1%	98.8%
		Std. Residual	.1	-.1	
	Total	Count	426	374	800
		Expected Count	426.0	374.0	800.0
		% within Religion of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.199[a]	1	.138		
Continuity Correction[b]	1.355	1	.244		
Likelihood Ratio	2.236	1	.135		
Fisher's Exact Test				.202	.122
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.196	1	.138		
N of Valid Cases	800				

Table 10: Test of Independence for Vulnerability to Burglary/Vandalism in the Study Area, 2015

			Muslim	Christian	Total
In the past 12 months, have your house been burglarized/vandalized	Yes	Count	4	2	6
		Expected Count	3.2	2.8	6.0
		% within Religion of respondents	1%	1%	1%
		Std. Residual	.5	-.5	
	No	Count	422	372	794
		Expected Count	422.8	371.2	794.0
		% within Religion of respondents	99%	99%	99%
		Std. Residual	.0	.0	
	Total	Count	426	374	800

Expected Count		426	374	800
% within Religion of respondents		100%	100%	100%

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.437^a	1	.509		
Continuity Correction^b	.063	1	.802		
Likelihood Ratio	.448	1	.503		
Fisher's Exact Test				.690	.406
Linear-by-Linear Association	.437	1	.509		
N of Valid Cases	800				

The nature of the relation between religion on the one hand and experiences of violent crimes and burglary or vandalism on the other hand was one of the areas where markedly contrasting changes were observed during and after the conflict. The times of the violence and the periods immediately preceding the violence were characterized by violent attacks based on religion. Once the amicable relations between Muslims and Christians were brought down, attacks on Christians and their properties were intensified (FGD 4-1, 2015). Christians were victims of verbal abuses during those difficult times (KI-34, 2015). They were also victims of stone throwing (KI-31, 2015). The private holdings of the Christians were targets of violent destructions as well. The most vivid manifestation of those was the burning down of Christian houses and property thefts during the conflict (KI-31, 2015). Even the periods preceding the large-scale violence were marked by destruction of field crops and stabbing of cattle that belonged to the Christians (KI-31, 2015).

Nevertheless, the post-conflict level of exposure to violent crimes and burglary or vandalism represented a completely different reality. The cross tabulation and chi-square tests (Tables 9 and 10) showed not only that such exposures were minimal but also, and more importantly, that there sporadic occurrences were not religion related. Overall, the absence of significance

relation between religion, and personal safety and property security was a confirmation that the impacts of the conflict on the issues had been a onetime affair that subsided with the waning of the violence. This is affirmed by an assessment of the community members' perception of their villages as peaceful or violent. As shown in Table 11 below, there was no significant relation between religion and the characterization of villages as peaceful or violent ($\chi^2_{(4)}$ =6.78, p=.148). Moreover, an overwhelming majority of the respondents from both groups of religion seemed to have no doubt about the pacific nature of their vicinities.

Table 11: Test of Independence for Village Characterization as in the Study Area, 2015

			Muslim	Christian	Total
Is this village peaceful or violent?	very peaceful	Count	163	122	285
		Expected Count	151.8	133.2	285.0
		% within Religion of respondents	38.3%	32.6%	35.6%
		Std. Residual	.9	-1.0	
	moderately peaceful	Count	186	178	364
		Expected Count	193.8	170.2	364.0
		% within Religion of respondents	43.7%	47.6%	45.5%
		Std. Residual	-.6	.6	
	neither peaceful nor violent	Count	39	49	88
		Expected Count	46.9	41.1	88.0
		% within Religion of respondents	9.2%	13.1%	11.0%
		Std. Residual	-1.1	1.2	
	moderately violent	Count	30	21	51
		Expected Count	27.2	23.8	51.0
		% within Religion of respondents	7.0%	5.6%	6.4%
		Std. Residual	.5	-.6	
	very violent	Count	8	4	12
		Expected Count	6.4	5.6	12.0
		% within Religion of respondents	1.9%	1.1%	1.5%
		Std. Residual	.6	-.7	
Total		Count	426	374	800
		Expected Count	426.0	374.0	800.0
		% within Religion of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.781ª	4	.148
Likelihood Ratio	6.807	4	.146
Linear-by-Linear Association	.434	1	.510
N of Valid Cases	800		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.61.

The foregoing discussions have made it clear that the impact of the conflict on aspects of social capital have been enormous. Particularly, the impacts on activities that bring together members of both religions have been severe. Nonetheless, there remained a social institution whose importance never waned over time, i.e., *edir* despite the crunching impacts of the conflict on social capital and social groups. Pitted against all forms of groupings available in the study area, *edir* stood out as the most valuable social institution to the local people. As shown under figure 11, 65% of the respondents proclaimed *edir* as their most important institution.

According to informants, the vitality of the institution lies in the purposes it serves. On the passing away of an individual, the family members are relieved of the complexes of arranging the funeral processes and providing accommodations to those who attend the grieving from near and far (FGD 2-2, 2015; FGD 3-2, 2015). Those tasks would be assumed by members of *edir* who are usually people from close vicinities (KI-35, 2015). Its importance was also magnified due to the understanding that remaining outside this institution is socially and financially unbearable (KI-35, 2015). Nevertheless, the importance of *edir* goes well beyond the times of funerals and grieving.

For the institution brings people in proximate areas together, it is highly inclusive of members with different characteristics (KI-27, 2015). Membership to any *edir* is almost unconditional making the institution a platform where people of different ethnicity and religion and divergent economic and social status blend in (KI-27, 2015). As such, the vitality of *edir* as a social institution lies not only in the socially unavoidable purposes it serves. It is a symbolic institution that reflects the religious, ethnic and socio-cultural diversity of the people in the study area cum a culture of tolerance (FGD 3-1, 2015). Those are the imperatives that made *edir* the only institution whose vitality never waned over the duration of the conflict.

Despite the grudges and suspicions that prevailed among the members during the conflict, the institution survived in an ocean of turmoil where other forms of informal associations crumbled (KI-36, 2015). The institution was able to assert its vitality over time while other social groups with diverse memberships struggled to reinstate their buoyance (KI-36, 2015).

Figure 11: Groups in Order of Importance in the Study Area, 2015
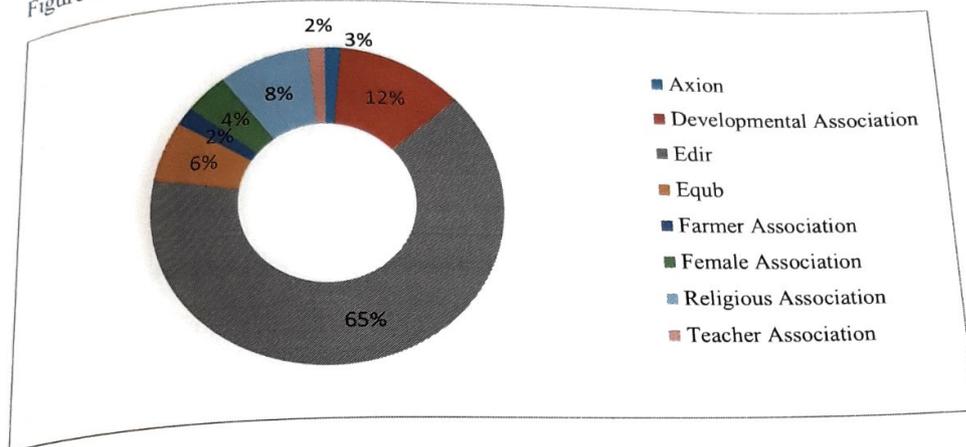
4.4.3. Emergent Forms of Post-Conflict Social Capital

Theoretical and empirical accounts about the impact of conflict on social capital indicate the birth of new forms of social capital in post-conflict societies. Newly born forms of social capital, which build on the old ruins, either assume the roles that destructed forms of social capital used to play or bring in new roles for themselves along the way. Likewise, the development of some new aspects of social capital in the study area has been accounted for. These aspects of social capital, instead of assuming new roles, served the purpose of facilitating the execution of pre-existing roles with renewed vigor.

Analysis of the post-conflict development of social capital in the area showed that social interaction was largely an outcome of the efforts of local administrative officials. The local administration, which took it upon itself the prevention of further violence, realized the need

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to closely work with the community members. At first, the realization was framed under the conflict resolution efforts and the promotion of social interaction assumed different pattern later on (KI-24, 2015). The officials began drawing members of both religious communities within the frame of development through communal participation. This resulted in a situation where individuals had to organize themselves into groups of handful members (KI-24, 2015). One of the most prominent roles of those groups became participation in local developmental activities of various kinds. The groups also became platforms where the members could discuss issues of local concern including security (KI-27, 2015).

An assessment of the level of the community members' participation in such platforms was conducted using willingness to contribute time and money to communal projects. The contributions of the community members to such projects were found to be considerably high for both religious groups. The chi-square result in Table 12 and Table 13 respectively showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between religion and willingness to contribute time ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 2.07$, $p = .150$) and money ($\chi^2_{(1)} = .452$, $p = .501$) to community projects. That is, both Muslim and Christian religions equally showed willingness to contribute time and money to the community project.

Table 12: Test of Independence for Willingness to Contribute Time to Community Projects in the Study Area, 2015

			Muslim	Christian	Total
Will you contribute time to community projects?	Will not contribute time	Count	35	21	56
		Expected Count	29.8	26.2	56.0
		% within Religion of respondents	8.2%	5.6%	7.0%
		Std. Residual	.9	-1.0	
	Will contribute time	Count	391	353	744
		Expected Count	396.2	347.8	744.0
		% within Religion of respondents	91.8%	94.4%	93.0%
		Std. Residual	-.3	.3	
	Total	Count	426	374	800
		Expected Count	426.0	374.0	800.0
		% within Religion of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.070[a]	1	.150
Continuity Correction[b]	1.689	1	.194
Likelihood Ratio	2.097	1	.148
Fisher's Exact Test			
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.067	1	.151
N of Valid Cases	800		

Table 13: Test of Independence for Willingness to Contribute Money to Community Projects in the Study Area, 2015

	Will	Count	Muslim	Christian	Total
Will you contribute money to community projects?	contribute money		391	348	739
		Expected Count	393.5	345.5	739.0
		% within Religion of respondents	91.8%	93.0%	92.4%
		Std. Residual	-.1	.1	
	Will not contribute money	Count	35	26	61
		Expected Count	32.5	28.5	61.0
		% within Religion of respondents	8.2%	7.0%	7.6%
		Std. Residual	.4	-.5	
	Total	Count	426	374	800
		Expected Count	426.0	374.0	800.0
		% within Religion of respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.452[a]	1	.501
Continuity Correction[b]	.290	1	.590
Likelihood Ratio	.454	1	.501
Fisher's Exact Test			
Linear-by-Linear Association	.451	1	.502
N of Valid Cases	800		

Furthermore, the efforts of the local administration to promote social interaction through communal participation in developmental activities were also accompanied by an opportunity provided by political development at the national level. The beginning of those efforts coincided with the adoption of the developmental state model as the guiding ideology of the Ethiopian government. The coincidence provided the local administration with the political prerogative of engaging the community members in various developmental activities. The nationwide publicity of the slogan 'poverty is our enemy' was an asset for the officials who needed to legitimize their claim that 'the conflict has been the work of few actors' and that the local populace should refocus on the enemy of all, i.e., poverty (KI-24, 2015).

However, the local populace seemed to go beyond the accounts held by officials in explaining the essence of the organization of members in such associations. An informant, for instance, claimed that the roles of the associations in promoting communal engagement could not be denied. Yet he felt that each of the associations kept records of the routines of their members. Thus, he claimed, these associations were no less instruments of control for officials (KI-45, 2015). Another informant also indicated that participation in these associations was not really a matter of choice. Community members considered participation as a guarantee for them not to fall under the watching eyes of the administrative officials (KI-43, 2015).

In fact, officials stressed the point that local administration reached out to as much families as possible this was more apparent during the conflict (KI-12, 2015; KI-31, 2015). In what seems a softening up of the public opinion, an official maintained keeping closer contact with the local population was a reflection of good governance practice and a means of detecting 'forces of instability' at local level (KI-12, 2015).

The issue of detecting 'forces of instability' is now officially considered as an area where the local administration at the time of the conflict failed to achieve (KI-27, 2015). For those who were responsible for the conflict were unrepresentative of the wider public, according to the viewpoint of the administration, close cooperation between the local administration and the communities would have helped identify the instigators thereby possibly averting large-scale violence (KI-27, 2015). As such, the local administration is now devoted to this mechanism of identifying destabilizers; the achievement of which depends both on community to community and community to local administration engagement (KI-27, 2015). The line of communication was also assumed to curb the gaps between Muslims and Christians created during the conflict by bringing the members closer (KI-19, 2015).

In short, the post-conflict attempts of the local administration to bring and maintain smooth line of communication between the Muslim and Christian communities contributed to a unique path of post-conflict social capital development. The peculiarity of the evolution lies in the fact that the development has been a government-sponsored one. While the administrative effort was in part necessitated by the outcomes of the conflict, it also reflects the administration's broader involvement in communal affairs. As it stands, the involvement is leading to the emergence of a new form of social capital accentuated by a Muslim-Christian social interaction where the local administration plays a central role.

4.5.   The Religious Forum for Peace

4.5.1. The Beginning

After the violence that erupted in Gomma and Didhessa weredas in 2006, various attempts had been made to contain the violence and enable people get back to normal life. The first of the attempts was the deployment of security forces to halt the violence particularly in Beshasha town. Once the security forces were deployed, the individuals who were considered culprits in the instigation of the violence were apprehended along with those individuals who were suspects of killings and property destruction (KI-15, 2015).

The urgency of trying to restore things was so strong that security forces and administrative officials were taking risky measures. *Kesis* Tagay, who was later to become a prominent figure in the foundation of the Religious Forum for Peace, recalled the turmoil such a process would have brought just few days after the death of the members of the Christian community in *Abune Gebremenfes Kidus* church of Beshasha. He remembered that on the day the bodies of the victims returned from Jimma hospital after autopsy tests, many in Agaro town went out to the streets to receive corpses. Standing in the crowd himself, he noticed that emotions were uncontrollably high and that the sense of rage among Christians was flaming. He witnessed that the Christian mob, not unexpectedly, began categorically blaming Muslims

for the atrocities. Nevertheless, he stated, Muslims were there in large number in the crowd. Suddenly, he observed that some of them started removing their hijabs and hats once they began feeling the animosity. It was at this stage that he decided to do something about it. In his own words,

God forbid, nothing would stop a bloodshed on the spot that day, in case the slightest of triggers gets in the way. I cannot let that happen as a religious leader of the Christian community. I quickly began moving to the outskirt of the Agaro town before the vehicle carrying the corpses entered the inner parts of the town. When they arrived, I had to wave my hands and stop them. I begged them to change their route to avoid the waiting crowd. I slid into the tire of the vehicle and lie on the ground to make them change their mind. Luckily, they gave in to my pleading and changed their way. Thank God, nothing happened on that day.

Moreover, the animosity between Christians and Muslims that prevailed in the area was a glaring fact that made the need to devise a sustainable resolution quite an apparent one. The need for someone to step in and assume the responsibility of spearheading the way forward was dire. It was at this time that *Kesis* Tagay and *Sheikh* Abdulhamid decided to use their longtime friendship to help bring harmony in the area. According to their account, they agreed on the need to promote the interaction between members of the Muslim and Christian communities. They were convinced that inter-religious interaction was the key to break the animosity and overcome the deep hatred the community members reflected on each other. The first thing they did could simply be considered as a routine and normal but proved to be a critical gesture of the possibility of peaceful Muslim-Christian interaction. According to *Kesis* Tagay,

We decided to ride on the back of *Sheikh* Abdulhamid's motorbike together. We went around the quarters of Agaro town every day making sure that as much people as possible watched us. At first, the reaction we observed from the public was perplexity and astonishment. People were asking how we could do this after all the members of the communities went through.

Both informants underline that it was difficult for them to convince a lot of people in the beginning. They recalled that there were people who accused them of hurting the purity of their religion by aligning with their ultimate enemies. In fact, *Sheikh* Abdulhamid exclaimed that some went to the extent of threatening him with his life.

The result of that symbolic activity was in the end encouraging for the starters of "the Religious Forum for Peace" despite the challenges they endured. Then after, the realization of the exercise in promoting the Muslim-Christian interaction has to be taken to the next level. At this stage, *Sheikh* Abdulhamid and *Kesis* Tagay did not intend to go forth on their own. They convinced and brought in other religious leaders and elders in their attempt to organize a reconciliation event where people of all religion gather and forgive each other.

One of the underlining features of the reconciliation event was that it took place according to traditional practices that had historically been typical of Jimma area. With religious leaders, elders and political figures at the front, the residents of Gomma Woreda turned out in huge numbers to an open field (KI-33, 2015). All of the attendants stood barefoot at the event as a gesture of sincere willingness to leave behind what happened in the past and move on to the future (KI-33, 2015). At the same time, religious leaders and elders communicated the need to restore harmony and trust as attributes which had long been the characteristics of communities in the study area (KI-29, 2015).

The other peculiar feature of the reconciliation event was the importance attached to coffee drinking ceremony. In fact, Jimma is one of the areas renowned for its coffee production in Ethiopia. Coffee is an important aspect of the economic, social and religious lives of people in the area. People use coffee ceremony as a gesture of respect, solidarity and affection (KI-36, 2015). It is a traditional practice that people use to share their feelings in times of sadness and happiness (KI-36, 2015). It is these values that the society attaches to it that made coffee ceremony not just an indispensable symbol of the reconciliation event but a central aspect of the process (KI-27, 2015). Muslims and Christians gathered at the event sat and drank coffee together (KI-27, 2015). The message was that it was possible, and desirable, to restore intimate relationships between Muslims and Christians that had been the historic hallmarks of religious tolerance in the area.

Overall, the processes described above that aimed at resolving the conflict and restore order and harmony were largely initiated at individual levels. A process began by individuals was finally able to mobilize the population to a large extent for two reasons. Firstly, the fact that the conflict was a religious one in itself provided the individuals, who were religious leaders themselves, with the prerogative to accentuate and justify their initiatives religiously. Their established image as religious leaders of the communities helped them legitimize their activities in the eyes of the public. Their positions helped them progressively smoothen up whatever resistance they faced. Secondly, their luck in assuming the leading role in the resolution attempts was coupled with their ability to draw in prominent figures in the process. In short, the founders of "the Religious Forum for Peace" used their relationship to establish it which provided the institutional assets of rules, procedures and precedents for action. This is actually the use of what scholars such as Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) and Coleman (1990) refer to as "the structural dimension of social capital". Coleman (1990) underlines that the merit of this dimension is its ability to empower individuals to identify and use potential

social resources from others; and this is a quintessential description of the nature of the forum as an outcome of social capital.

The religious services they provide to their followers naturally disposed them to the knowledge of people from all walks of life. In fact, it was the long-time friendship between *Sheikh* Abdulhamid and *Kesis* Tagay which they established due to the similarity of the roles they assumed in their respective communities that ultimately enabled them to come up with their plan of resolving the conflict. The wider base of the social network they established and the prominence they attained in their communities enabled them to bring the public together and galvanize the support of the local administration toward the resolution effort (FGD 1-1, 2015). In fact, a purposeful use of certain behavioral characteristics of communities such as respect, trust, obligations, expectation, identification and friendship is believed to enhance the sociability, acceptance and prestige of actors in the network (Granovetter, 1992). Such were the factors that created the smooth background for the formation of the Religious Forum for Peace in 2011. The establishment of the forum was grounded in the realization that ensuring the sustainability of the conflict resolution efforts on a wider frame would help achieve more and that the forum would be instrumental in this regard (KI-27, 2015; KI-18, 2015).

4.5.2. The Activities and Achievements of the Forum

Once the founders saw the initial successes of the forum, their hope to see it grow into a more organized entity was immense. There was also the realization that the forum could be an entity worth investing in as long as it maintains and creates strong relationships with different actors (KI-1, 2015). The founders claim that one such factor that could have determined the fate of the forum was the nature of relations it would maintain with the local and regional administration (KI-1, 2015; KI-3, 2015). Not only that the blessings of the administration were needed for the continuation of the operations of the forum but also that the purposes it intended to achieve should be politically acknowledged. In other words, there should have

been a recognition that the solutions for the fundamental causes of the conflict had to be both political and religious. Fortunately, claimed an informant, the successes the forum attained in its short period of existence was a source of optimism for the administration as it had been for its founders (KI-2, 2015).

As a show of the belief of the administration in the forum, informants pointed to the decision of the Oromia regional administration office to announce the celebration of 'coffee day' at a regional level (FGD 1-1, 2015; FGD 1-2, 2015). Once the social and religious value of coffee making/drinking celebration was acclaimed on the occasion of the public reconciliation, the Gomma woreda administration had decided to observe the day annually in the area (KI-2, 2015). The decision also maintained that the one-day celebration would be held at the time of the year when coffee is harvested (KI-2, 2015). The practice was then adopted by neighboring Woreda administrations (KI-12, 2015). Finally, the regional administration of Oromia took the initiative to make it a region-wide occasion on the ground that it would serve not only as a conflict resolution mechanism but also as a socio-cultural tool of promoting communication among members of the communities (KI-12, 2015).

Nowadays, the forum is engaging itself with the local justice institutions. It has developed a framework that enables it to work with justice offices, courts and police institutions in the area (KI-15, 2015). This is actually one of the cases that showed the ever-broadening scope of the functions the Forum performs. Data obtained from the Forum's office in Agaro showed that the Forum was actively resolving individual cases of conflicts, both civil and criminal in the legal sense of the terms in collaboration with the legal establishments. As experiences reveal, cases that had already been brought to the knowledge of the legal institutions could be referred back to the Forum for resolution as long as both parties in the conflict express their consent to the process. Nevertheless, much of the cases that the Forum dealt with were brought to it by the parties in disagreement even before they were dealt with by the formal

legal institutions. Asked why individuals prefer to bring their cases to the Forum rather than to the formal legal institutions, Pastor Tamrat- a co-founding member of the Forum claimed that the tradition has long been part of the evolution of socio-cultural norms of the society in the study area. As to him, there is a strong norm of respect for religious leaders that have proved their impartiality to any members of the community while presiding over cases. The religious leaders working under the umbrella of the forum had been able to provide agreeable terms of solutions for both sides of disputants in over six hundred cases out of the total seven hundred cases brought to them. According to Pastor Tamrat, the cases to which solutions were carved out range from petty thefts to disagreements over farmland demarcations, to inheritance and marriage disputes.

Lately, the forum has identified areas that it deemed vital to work on to address some lingering issues pertaining to religious violence. In fact, the importance of addressing the underlining aspects of the violence was reiterated not only by the members of the Forum but also by the local administrative officials. It is this conviction that was enabling the Forum to capitalize on both the political willingness of the administrative officials and resources from various sources (KI-19, 2015).

The single most important area of focus in this regard had been the work on the attitude of the community members in the study area. Members of the forum particularly seemed convinced that working on the attitudes of the youth would be beneficial (KI-18, 2015; KI-24, 2015). The rationale for working on the attitude of the youth emanate from the lessons drawn from the violence. The youth were identified as the foremost actors during the violence (KI-24, 2015). In fact, one of the widely held views was that when the tradition of religious tolerance began to crumble decades ago the youth were the first sections of the society that easily entertained the doctrines which ultimately laid the ground for the violence (FGD 2-1, 2015).

As the result, the forum is now using different platforms to work mainly on the attitude of the youth. One of the platforms is the provision of training schemes whose themes revolve around inter-religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence. The training sessions are largely interactive where the participants exchanged opinion, and elders and religious leaders shared their religious and cultural wisdom with the youth in various sessions of the trainings (KI-1, 2015). Moreover, the participants used different written materials that could enable them understand the values and principles of religious tolerance. While most of the materials that were used for the purpose had been provided by the Inter-religious Congress of Ethiopia, the forum also prepared pieces for the trainings with the help of experts (KI-1, 2015).

The forum also worked with the schools in the study area as a way of getting access to the youth. Such cooperation with school systems has enabled it to organize the students in clubs. With the close follow up of school-teachers and members of the forum, students carried out different activities that promoted inter-religious tolerance (KI-8, 2015). The students tried to promote such values through plays, essays and poems with contents that address issues in the communities (KI-8, 2015). At times, the clubs got their messages across the communities outside schools on different occasions such as local community meetings (KI-2, 2015).

Apart from clubs, the forum also promoted separate girls' clubs in the communities. The decision of the forum to organize and promote girls' clubs in part emanated from the conventional wisdom that women are better pacifists than men (KI-1, 2015). The irony, however, is that women were identified as the main actors of the conflict who worked in the background by motivating their husbands and brothers "to get out of their homes and fight like men" (KI-1, 2015). As such, the forum now considers the roles of the girls' clubs vital in inculcating the essences of peace in the minds of women and the society in general (KI-1, 2015).

The forum carried out its activities in different kebeles of Gomma and Omonada weredas. However, there is no doubt that the forum was much more active in Gomma wereda than other areas. Of the eighteen kebeles of Gomma Woreda, the forum is active in sixteen which were identified as sensitive areas after they became home to much of the violence during the inter-religious conflict (KI-2, 2015). Nonetheless, the activities of the forum in other areas were much weaker. An informant claimed that since the forum was established in Agaro town, the biggest town in Gomma Woreda, its reach to other areas only came gradually (KI-12, 2015). For instance, the conflict in Omonada in 2011 came at a time when the members of the forum were immersed in their initial investments in Gomma area thereby forcing the forum to intervene only after the violence receded (KI-12, 2015). Lack of sufficient resources which necessitated the selection of specific scopes had been mentioned as a factor (KI-12, 2015).

Despite the imbalance of focus and activities across areas, the members of the forum taunt the transformation it brought about. *Sheikh* Abdulhamid, *Kesis* Tagay and Pastor Tamrat are of the conviction that it was due to the works done by the forum in collaboration with the local and regional administrations that further violence had been averted. According to an official from the study area, the awareness that the forum created about the violence enabled followers of each religion to critically look at new developments within their religious doctrines. As an evidence, he pointed to the fact that there was no incidence of any type of demonstration at the time when Muslims in different parts of the country were campaigning for the "dimtsachin yisema" movement- a movement where Muslims asked continuously for the reservation of government from interfering in what they deemed as religious affairs- for the official assumed that the Muslims and Christians in Jimma area have drawn lessons of such sudden changes prior to other communities in other parts of Ethiopia (KI-12, 2015).

In line with the statements of the official above, members of the forum emphasized that inter-religious deliberations had proved effective in addressing the needs and demands of any religious group. One of the peculiar showcases in this regard is the way the forum helped address the demands of members of the communities to acquire places for religious activities. Requests to build churches and mosques, which had usually been spheres of contention at the earlier times, were now being decided by joint deliberations of followers of all religions through the facilitations provided by the forum (KI-5, 2015). In fact, this turned out to be an area in which the forum had been able to promote social capital. Once the decision to build a new mosque or church was made, its construction would not be a task to be left to the members of the particular religion. The forum rather encourages followers of all religions to participate in the building of a religious shrine (KI-5, 2015). According to an elderly informant, there had been an ancient tradition in which Muslims contributed to the establishments of churches and Christians likewise did so in the construction of Mosques (KI-18, 2015).

Undoubtedly, the significance of promoting close cooperation between followers of both religions is enormous. The particular practice of bringing members of mosques and churches epitomizes the attempt in the revival of an age-old inter-religious social capital. However, the results of such activities that serve the purpose of promoting the interests of both religions play into the danger of resuscitating the voices dominating the pre-conflict scenario. As has been pointed out in the chapter dealing with the causes of the conflict, the violence was framed in the grievances of members of the Muslim communities who complained of the increasing dominance of Christians at the expense of the traditionally unchallenged Muslim pre-eminence. It was against this background that the forum was working to accentuate the roles and freedom of the Christian community. A member of the forum, for instance, mentioned that Christians are now exercising their worship rights more freely than ever (KI-

1, 2015). This is attributed to the fact that in the post-conflict period the forum has been successful in facilitating the ground for Orthodox Christians to acquire religious sites for their annual epiphany/baptism celebrations in a different area; and Protestant Christians have also been able to get access to land for graveyards. These were privileges hard to come by for both groups in the past.

The perils of those changes were not limited to the unpleasant consequences disrupting the status quo. In the eyes of those who had been aware of the uncomfortable truth of the promotion of Christianity in an area thought to be of Islamic site, the activities of the forum projected an image that the entities behind the change were turning deaf ears. In effect, the works on the attitude of the youth could be expected to bear fruits especially in the long-run. The point, however, is that the essences of conflict resolution necessitated the prudence of addressing the causes of both parties. This is the point that should have been highlighted by the forum for it required to maintain balance between attempts of reviving age-old social capital and the legitimate demands of both parties. As much as the urge to revive age-old social capital is strong, one should also bear the responsibility of comprehending both the need to contextualize the changing reality and the necessity of accepting everything of the past, or even much of it, might not be desirable. Such a ground will not only enable the forum to build an image of all-encompassing entity but also to lay the foundation for spearheading a political cum religious solution.

4.5.3. The Peculiar Features of the Religious Forum for Peace

The Religious Forum for Peace as an exercise in conflict resolution reflects various characteristics. These characteristics cut across normative and institutional dimensions which were assumed to be instrumental in its operation. As an entity working to build inter-religious social capital in a post-conflict society, it is a mirror image of the world it aspires to build.

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The forum provides an arena where actors with different interests pool their resources for one goal: building a peaceful society through religious harmony and tolerance.

The edge of the forum primarily originates from its foundational complexion that makes use of local indigenous knowledge. The techniques that the forum uses to resolve conflicts depend on intact practices which have been shaped and informed by religious and traditional sources of wisdom (KI-36, 2015). This is made possible through the use of religious leaders and elders as the actors that preside over cases of conflict. While originally established to fill the gap created in conflict resolution after the religious violence in the study area, it has taken up the mandate of resolving non-religious disputes among individuals enabling the local indigenous knowledge package re-assume its original purpose as well (KI-33, 2015).

No less interesting feature of the forum is the wide network it established which ultimately helped it acquire the resources it needed for its operation and build its legitimacy in the eyes of various actors. As explained elsewhere, the forum secured the acceptance and support of the local political administration once the founders capitalized on their long-time friendship and acquaintance despite their different religious outlooks.

Yet the acceptance that the forum gained from the local political administration empowered it to carry out meaningful activities aimed at conflict resolution. In turn, according to *Sheikh* Abdulhamid, *Kesis* Tagay and Pastor Tamrat, the initial successes led to the recognition of the importance of the forum at higher political levels. It is for this reason that the Human Rights Commission of Ethiopia decided to provide annual budgetary support which helps the forum cover its operational costs. The forum has also been able to augment its standing by soliciting resources from non-governmental organizations. The most notable of such institutions is the USAID. USAID has been covering the expenses of the clubs organized by the forum in addition to providing financial support and technical expertise. Moreover, the

forum also gets support from prominent individuals including religious leaders and elders who devote their efforts to the forum. In fact, individuals were behind the inception of the forum as shown by the case of an affluent Agaro town resident who covered the rental expense of the forum's office from the onset.

Generally, the forum evidences its benefits to members of the communities in two ways. Firstly, it tries to address the concerns of each community from the religious conflict point of view. This requires the commitment to reach out to members of each community for the issue that brings them to the fore is an inherently sensitive one, viz. religious contention. To that end, the vitality of working on both short-term (as shown by the reconciliation efforts immediately after the violence) and long-term goals (as shown by the works on the attitude of the youth) has already been acknowledged. Secondly, the forum is an actualization of a collective dream, i.e., the dream of creating a peaceful society with the engagement of all actors. The involvement of individuals, governmental and non-governmental entities as shown above attests to the recognition the forum has earned in the society. Above all, it is in its ability to address the concern of the communities and resilience to employ its resources that it substantiates its vitality.

Chapter Five

5. Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations and Implications

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the nexus between social capital and conflict and examine the roles of social capital in conflict resolution in Jimma Zone of Oromia National Regional State in Ethiopia. Based on the research questions stated at the onset, data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, providing the major findings, conclusions and recommendations. Therefore, this chapter presents the summary of the major findings and critical reflections of the researcher in light of the research objectives. The conclusion draws readers' attention to the key findings of the research. Then, a discussion of the theoretical, practical and policy implications of the study is presented in the form of recommendations. Finally, the chapter winds up by highlighting the implications and possibilities for future research.

5.1. Summary and Conclusion

Being geographically close to the Middle East, the origin of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Ethiopia has been one of the earliest homes to the three major religions. The entry of Abrahamic religions to Ethiopia took place at different times and the history of inter-religious interaction in the country has witnessed discord. The arrival of a new religion at a time when an earlier religious doctrine already held grips could be expected to cause confrontation between the protagonists of the status quo and forces of change. While sporadic inter-religious conflicts have spurred violence between Animists and Judaists, early organized violence was traceable to the coming of Christianity to Ethiopia in the 4th century which ensured entanglement between the two forces (Tamrat, 1972). Also, the Christianity-Islam relational dynamics have been shaped by struggle for dominance and recognition. The most

vivid depictions of the dynamics were provided by religious violence in the 16th and 19th centuries (Caulk, 1972)

One of the most significant aspects of inter-religious discords in Ethiopia has been the role that the state played in the conflicts. For centuries the royal class has embraced Christianity as the official denomination and rulers from northern and central Ethiopia have set the political ground for inter-religious rivalry and confrontation. The early days of Christianity were marked by inter-religious destructions. Monks who insisted on building churches on the sacred sanctions of Animists, under the protection of royal imperial courts, induced violence (Tamrat, 1971). The alignment of the state with a single religion went on for years until the separation of state and religion was heralded following the 1974 revolution. Nonetheless, the constitutional guarantee of people's freedom to follow the religion of their choice would still wait for years.

It was under the 1995 constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia that religious freedom of citizens was stipulated. This normative transformation in Ethiopia led to the development of new dynamics of inter-religious interaction. The once Orthodox Christianity dominated religious sphere increasingly had to face competition particularly from the other major religions of Islam and Protestant Christianity. As Dereje (2013) notes, improved access to education, communication technology and transportation helped Muslims reverberate their calls for recognition.

A parallel development in the form of revitalized Islamic movements after the end of the Cold War in different corners of the world accompanied the newly synthesizing Islam-Christianity relations in Ethiopia. These developments, coupled with the post-1991 political change in Ethiopia, necessitated a different role for the state. While the state had historically been a major actor in religious conflicts, the post-1991 changes placed the state as the referee

of the unfolding game whose rules were set by the state itself. Nonetheless, the rules of the game at societal level were in part to be learnt the hard way. The inter-religious violence in Jimma area since 2006 has born ultimate witness to that fact.

The violence in the areas surrounding Jimma town in Ethiopia was framed in religious terms and had various consequences. The physical consequences of the conflict were mainly described in terms of human casualties and damage to properties. On the other hand, communities witnessed one of the lasting consequences of the violence through the damages on the social capital makings of the communities in the area. Particularly, tenets of social capital built across inter-religious lines were the ones that were affected most by the violence. Apparently, the foundations of the inter-religious social capital have been slowly waning in the years preceding the violence. When the first large-scale violence erupted in 2006, the result was a tumultuous breakdown of social capital that had been built over centuries.

The particular effects of the conflict on social capital were lasting and more detrimental than the physical damages, as the dynamics of the conflict stretched to the most basic of inter-personal relations. The extent of the damage on social capital was heightened as the religious nature of the conflict permitted it to eclipse other forms of ties such as ethnic solidarity. In fact, the power of religious sentiment was so strong that it even broke down familial ties.

Once the power of the violence that evidenced the urge of vengeance even against family members was attested, the crumbling of the age-old inter-religious social capital might not have come as a surprise. Traditional practices that defined inter-religious co-existence between Muslim and Christian community members such as joint celebrations of religious holidays became only memories after the violence. Other forms of activities such as *jarsummaa, debo,* attendance of weddings and mourning were also weakened.

At this juncture, it is worth underlining the fact that the breakdown in inter-religious forms of social capital was not just an overnight consequence of the violence. As explained in the previous sections, the decline in inter-religious ties had been set forth long before the violence erupted in 2006. As the data generated by this study shows, the drift in Muslim-Christian interaction begun to unravel itself long before the onset of the violence. The politico-religious changes in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, as witnessed by the end of the Cold War and the ascendance of political Islam in state politics and rivalry for regional dominance, were no less resilient factors in defining the course of religious interface in Ethiopia. Also, the study area represents a case for the new path of the development of Islamic movements in Ethiopia after 1991. The essences that later turned around harmonious Muslim-Christian relations in the study area were first observed within Islam itself. The new practices in Islam which were at the center of the disruption of the traditional Muslim-Christian relations were outcomes of an intra-Islam competition between sects for dominance. The success of the emergent pool of Islamic doctrines in asserting its gradual prominence in the Islamic sphere naturally led to the spillover of the teachings to the whole communal sphere.

However, the reluctance in acknowledging the immense roles that new practices in Islam played in inter-religious communal discords by the academic intelligentsia is not helping the demand for broader comprehension of the unravelling politico-religious landscape of Ethiopia. For instance, T. Østebø (2012) argues that the agents of Salafis in Ethiopia who returned from studies in Saudi Arabia were proponents of apolitical Islam inspired by an isolationist and conservative strand. The core of Østebø's argument is that the new practices were meant for gaining religious purity rather than attaining some sort of political purpose. Nonetheless, in the pre-occupation of falsifying the assertion that the proponents of the new doctrines work toward a political end, Østebø fails to grasp the implications of the practices

he acknowledges. In fact, the ramifications of the idea of religious purity get complicated in a multi-religious country like Ethiopia. As this study clearly showed, the conflict in Jimma province proved that the call for religious purity as indicated by the demands of the proponents of the new practices that were in clear contradiction with the local context of inter-religious makeup was no simpler problem than Islamic political ideology itself. And one need not seek an evidence for this conundrum beyond the breakdown of inter-religious social capital in the study area.

While the damage the conflict caused to inter-religious social capital was immense, there was a droplet of inter-religious social capital that survived the violence and led to the birth of the most instrumental conflict resolution entity. The Religious Forum for Peace, as an outcome of longtime friendship among religious figures is an epitomization of the survival of the inter-religious social capital in the study area. Needless to say, the forum is an outcome of the form of social capital that was hit hardest by the violence, i.e., inter-religious social capital. Being a reflection of inter-religious social capital that dominated the pre-conflict scenario, it stands in direct contradiction to one of the outcomes of the conflict, i.e., intra-group solidarity. As discussed in the preceding parts of the study, *intra-religious* social capital stepped into the vacuum created by broken *inter-religious* social capital after the conflict. Due to the low level of trust that prevailed in the study area after the conflict, people were drawing to their religious kinsmen. One of the manifestations of this trend was the decline in the sizes and utilities of social groups with multi-religious membership characteristics. As such, the forum was established in 2011 with the purpose of reversing such trends and promoting inter-religious interactions.

One important dimension of the forum is the fact that it relies on the use of indigenous knowledge in its endeavor to restore a harmonious inter-religious interaction. For instance, *jarsummaa* has always been the hallmark of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms for

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members of the Jimma communities. The forum now uses this mechanism widely to resolve disputes between parties. The significance of this approach can be acknowledged for two reasons. Firstly, the extensive use of *jarsummaa* is in itself a representation of the restoration of its utility for the practice was declining in the wake of the religious conflict as an inter-religious institution. Secondly, the forum is accentuating the effectiveness of *jarsummaa* by providing it an institutional flow and contributing to its credibility through extensive use of the mechanism. Moreover, the forum's contribution in the restoration of broken social capital is reflected through its successful attempt to revive the role of religious wisdom in conflict resolution. The advantage of the use of religious wisdom emanates from the fact that the communities in the study area can easily agree with the judgements of religious leaders for much of their social values are defined religiously.

Generally, the place of social capital in conflict cases can be mapped in two ways. For one, social capital can be used as an instrument of conflict in situations where an exclusive set of social capital is used by a group against another entity. As the conflict in Jimma area after 2006 showed, the consequences of such use of social capital can have a detrimental effect to the ways of lives of communities. On the other hand, the use of social capital, particularly of inter-religious social capital, can have a positive contribution to the livelihoods of communities. The use of such form of social capital in the study area, as shown in this study, can help restore broken inter-communal ties through the engagement of various actors. The benefits of building a network of religious leaders, local and regional administration, formal justice institutions, non-governmental organizations and prominent individuals attests to the roles social capital can play in resolving conflicts.

5.2. Recommendations

As has been discussed in the preceding chapters various scholars, mostly from the West, have studied amicable community relationships as possible platforms for conflict resolution. This study has attempted to build on the existing body of knowledge by providing the perspectives of collectivistic and diverse communities in Ethiopia. The study has investigated the potentials of home-grown, traditional social relationships and grassroots structures for solving clashes between communities. The researcher hopes the outcomes of this study may contribute for the further theorization of intergroup bonds as social capital. Given its focus on interrogating inter-religious conflicts in the context of traditionally connected communities, the study is believed to put its mark on the theorization of social capital which is understudied in the milieu of collectivistic societies.

Specifically, this study has tried to investigate the nexus between social capital and conflict, and examined the roles of social capital in conflict resolution in Jimma locality. The religious conflict that was observed in the area after 2006 was put into perspective to examine the changes in social capital over time. Also, the roles of the Religious Forum for Peace were assessed to provide an understanding of how social capital can be used to resolve conflicts. In light of those discussions, the following recommendations are forwarded.

The upsides of the forum in capitalizing on inter-religious social capital have been duly noted. Particularly, its successes in drawing different actors together for its cause and in pooling resources from these actors are to be credited highly in building social capital. However, these successes can be exalted more by the use of additional forms of social institutions whose vitality has been proven through time. One such a social institution in the study area is *edir*. The merits this institution entails emanates from the fact that it is an institution that was able to survive the damages the inter-religious conflict brought to social

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institutions. Despite the institution's multi-religious membership, it remained largely unaffected by the conflict.

As such, the consideration of *edir* as an outlet for the activities of the forum can enable it to harvest prolific results. For the single most important aim of the forum is the promotion of inter-religious interaction, *edir* could be regarded as the mirror image of the world it aspires to build. A closer engagement with *edir* can also help the forum gain even more credibility as a communal asset.

The activities that the forum carries out to the fulfilment of its objectives have been shown to have reached at grassroots level. The way the forum reaches out to school-boys and girls, the youth and women are the showcases here. However, the forum could do better by making its presence noticeable in different regions of the study area. As has been pointed out elsewhere in the study, the forum is rather much active in Gomma and Omonada areas. While resource limitation seems to have restrained the activities of the forum, it should diversify the sources of support in order to be able to widen the scope of its activities.

As a conflict resolution mechanism, the potential implications of the specific activities the forum conducts need to be evaluated carefully. Particularly, leaders of the forum should pay recognition to the fact that everything of the past need not be restored. For instance, the unbalanced religious space of the past times had fundamentally contributed to the conflict. As such, any activity that appears to serve religious favoritism could only be expected to reinforce the discord. For this reason, leaders of the forum need to assert their position as figures capable of embracing the post-conflict changes to inter-religious social capital in the eyes of the public. In fact, it should be taken as the responsibility of the forum to ensure that religious leaders who act in the name of the forum are themselves examples of the changes they strive to attain.

Lastly, the lessons drawn from the forum to date need not be confined to the study area. The advantages that the forum promises as an alternative mechanism of conflict resolution can be utilized at a national level. Since conflicts between communities in Ethiopia occur at various levels, the use of a contextually tailored forum that capitalizes on local inter-religious social capital is an alternative not only to the formal but also to the existing traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution. Essentially, the resolve through which the forum ensures the sustainability of a particular conflict resolution exercise presents a curative opportunity to resolution practices in Ethiopia that inadvertently fail to see themselves past their early years of existence.

Implications for policy

Most countries in the world have populations characterized by multiplicity. The merits of diversity aside, historically misunderstandings have been witnessed between communities in racially, ethnically and culturally diverse nations like these. Misunderstandings emanating from differences in backgrounds do have the potential to lead to conflicts which range from simple clashes in pocket areas to nation-wide turmoil. Conflicts wrapped around racial rhetoric in the United States and France are among a few recent examples. Once they kick off, such conflicts are not always easy to put under control. Where law enforcement and other infrastructures have not fully developed, traditional social fabric and informal grassroots institutions have a paramount role to play in calming down conflicts. Thus the Federal Government of Ethiopia together with regional states should heighten the efforts they have been making in nurturing grassroots community structures. Policy frameworks that urge government bodies like the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Pastoral Area Development to take the initiatives to further support community-based networks and traditional structures.

The government's support should be limited to carefully selected areas of strategic importance. There is nothing wrong in addressing some felt-needs reported by the community units themselves. For example, shortcomings of financial resources is reported to have hindered the inter-religious forum operating in Jimma locality from fully realizing its potentials. This is apparently one specific way the government can help. It is, however, important to be mindful of the fact that these community structures should maintain their independence and original values. Any attempt to institutionalize community-based organizations needs to balance empowering them with making sure they remain alternative means of maintaining peace and stability in the society. Initiatives of building the capacity of traditional community structures ought to base themselves on understanding unique features of such bodies in each community. It is important to stay away from a one-size-fits-all approach in any move directed towards enriching the potentials of community-based networks and organizations such as the *edir*.

Potentials for Further Research

This study explored the conflicts in Jimma area and the peace-making efforts in the aftermath of the conflicts. Focusing on a specific case was found beneficial in staying focused and in unearthing the underlying causes of the conflict. In as much as possible the study has tried to observe all sides of the problem and the subsequent peace initiatives. The findings suggest the endeavors of community organs in Jimma province to restore peace could be replicated to other regions and communities. Nevertheless, the researcher does not claim the findings could be generalized to all communities as each community and the corresponding context is unique. Based on the quantitative part of the study, one can at least contend the results could be generalizable to the study population. Even then, the study mostly aimed at providing "thick descriptions" and critical analysis of each case. Admittedly, drawing conclusions based on an investigation of a case may be considered a shortcoming of the current study. It would

be important to see how far similar inter-group conflicts benefit from some variants of social capital present in different communities.

The researcher hopes this study would trigger other researchers to conduct studies around the latent abilities of social capital that can be tapped to resolve conflicts arising from intercultural differences and also from competitions over limited resources such as grassing land. Other researchers could either pursue similar lines of study or carve out their own angles of exploration.