

From Complementarity to Contestation: An Exploration into the Causes, Actors, and Effects of the *Karrayyu-Itu* Violent Conflicts of 2019-2020

Roba Peteros Yosef^{1*}, Jeylan Wolylie², Gutema Imana², and Aberra Degefa³

¹Dire Dawa University, College of Law

²Haramaya University, College of Social Sciences and Humanities

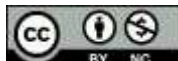
³Addis Ababa University, School of Law

Article History: Received: November 27, 2021; Accepted: July 25, 2022; Published: December 15, 2022

Abstract: This study explored the inter-communal interactions, and causes, actors, and effects of the 2019-2020 violent conflict of the *Karrayyu* pastoralists with the *Itu* farming and agropastoral community in *Fentalle* District of East Shoa Zone of Oromia. It was conducted based on qualitative data generated through interviews, focus group discussions and non-participatory observations. Both primary and secondary sources were used. Results of this study showed that despite the recent violent conflict, the two communities have far-reaching history of inter-communal solidarity, resource sharing, economic and marriage interactions, kins confederation and joint *Gadaa* parties. The shrinkage of pasture lands, disgracing and degradation of “lafa jiinfuu” (sacred natural sites), and a growing herder-farmer and agropastoral tension are explored as the major causes that have fostered conditions conducive to conflict generation and intensification since recent years. The analysis highlighted homicide and blockage of the road to *Karrayyu*’s “lafa jiinfuu” as the proximate causes of the conflict. To this end, the violent conflict had brought humanitarian, economic, social and security effects on both communities. Thus, we recommend that the Federal and Oromia regional state governments, nongovernmental organizations, and customary institutions, should intensify efforts to build inter-communal peace by ensuring the rule of law, and also through public enlightenment, education, and campaign for peaceful coexistence in the study area.

Keywords: Herders-farmers and agro-pastoralist; *Itu*; *Karrayyu*; The Upper Awash Valley

Licensed under a Creative Commons. Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.



*Corresponding author. E-mail: joyyechrist@gmail.com

ISSN: 2521-2192 (print), 2959-149X (electronic)

Haramaya University, 2022

1. Introduction

Conflict is a worldwide reality that knocks at the door of developed and developing nations (Jalali and Lipset, 1992). Among other conflicts, farmer-herder or agropastoral conflict is one of the susceptible lines of confrontation (Moorehead, 1989) to which pastoral regions of Africa are vulnerable too. Pastoralists' migration in and across borders fosters co-settlements with sedentary farmers, or other pastoralists, and the building of social ties over longtime interactions and breed violent confrontation with host farmers (Elhadary and Samat, 2011; Davidheiser and Luna, 2008). According to these scholars, such herders-farmers and agro-pastoralist contacts in both arid and semi-arid regions of Africa have characteristically been a mixture of cooperation and conflict. Regarding their symbiotic relationship, Shettima and Tar (2008) described pastoralists require the calories produced by crop farmers, much as the crop farmers also often require dairy products produced by the pastoralists. Despite their cooperation, constant mobility among pastoralists for opportunistic resource utilization routinely brings them into close contact with farmers, or agro-pastoralists with consequences of conflict over natural resources such as land, water, pasture, among others.

Different studies also stated that herder-farmer and agropastoral conflict is very common in the pastoral and agropastoral areas of Ethiopia. Scholars like Ahmed (2005), Fujimoto (2010), and Ahmadu and Ayub (2018) noted that such conflict occurs due to differences in livelihood patterns, cultural values and beliefs, and competitions over scarce natural resources. Since recent years, such conflict is becoming frequent and violent between the *Karrayyu* herders and the *Itu* farming and agropastoral community in the study area. However, the *Karrayyu-Itu* conflict case has some contextual differences from the above discussed cases since it was the *Karrayyu* pastoralists who gave hostage for the *Itu* farming and agropastoral community. The *Karrayyu* are inhabitants of the area, while as noted in Gebre (2001), the *Itu* were displaced to the area in 1960s from Chercher *Auraja* of the current West Hararghe Zone of Oromia due to inter-tribal conflicts with the expansionist Issa clan of the Somali people; the two major droughts in 1973/74 and 1984/85; and also partly encouraged by the Dergue regime's policy of free and equal access to agricultural land.

Besides, the two communities speak the same language, and are grouped genealogically among the *Bareentumaa* Oromo group (Jalata, 1993; Edjeta, 2001). However, they have different livelihood and religion. Despite many people from the Baasso *gosaa* (kins) of *Karrayyu* have rapidly been converted to Islam, majority of *Karrayyu* are still the followers of *Waaqeffannaa* (the Oromo traditional religion) while *Itu* are almost exclusively Muslims (Cullen, 2011). For those who consider as the sedentary farmers alone can give hostage to the pastoralists and conflict can be erupted only due to difference in ethnicity; thus, this study has the potential to show that there is a situation when pastoralists give hostage for farmers and as the herder-farmer conflict could also be inter- and intra-clan.

Literature on the study area is terribly thin. The works, *inter alia*, include pastoralism under pressure: land alienation and pastoral transformations among the *Karrayyu* (Gebre, 2001), socio-economic dimensions of development induced impoverishment in *Karrayyu* Oromo (Edjeta, 2001), and the transformation of conflicts among Ethiopian pastoralists: Ethnography of the Notion of Conflict among the *Karrayyu* in the Upper and Middle Awash Valley (Mulugeta, 2008). Though they have informative capacities, these studies have mainly focused on different factors like climate, land alienation, socio-economic factors, livestock and the ethnography of the conflict in the area. In his recent paper, Gebre (2009) noted the emergence of negative perception between the members of the two communities over difference in the usage of land in *Algee* village of the district. A decade after Gebre's work, the two communities engaged into violent attacks and counter attacks with group solidarity against each other. Hence, this study basically focused on an exploration of the underlying causes, actors, and effects of the 2019-2020 violent inter-communal conflict in the study area.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Description of the Study Area

The study was conducted from 7 October, 2020 to 6 February, 2021, in *Fentalle* district, East Shoa Zone of Oromia National Regional State. The district is located at a distance of 200 km. from Addis Ababa to the east. The district covers about 150,000 hectares of land (Beyene and Gudina, 2009), and falls within the Great Ethiopian Rift Valley system. *Fentalle* district has 18 rural sub-districts and 2 towns, (Matahara and Haroo Adii), the former being the administrative town of the district. The district shares borders with the west Hararghe Zone, Arsi and Boset districts within Oromia, and with the Afar and Amhara National Regional States. The Karrayyu are the indigenous inhabitants of the district (Wilding 1985, cited in Beyene and Gudina, 2009). According to Population Census Commission (PCC) 2007 report, the total population of the district was about 82,225 of which about 20,517 are urban dwellers, while 61,708 are rural dwellers (PCC, 2007). The Karrayyu have an estimated rural population of 43,833 across 18 rural districts (East Shoa Zone Finance and Economic Development Office, 2009, cited in Cullen, 2011). These figures are, however, unreliable. No exact records of *Karrayyu* population exist; the census report counts them together with other ethnic groups migrated to the district.

Fentalle district is characterized by hot and semiarid climate. Annual rainfall averages about 500 mm with great variability year to year (Abdulahi, 1998). The mean annual temperature of the district is 24.750 °C with June being the hottest (40°C) while the daily temperature ranges from 37-40 °C. Owing to varied topographical and hydrological features, the district exhibits a complex variety of habitat types (Jacobs and Schloeder 1993). Generally, riverine forest, wooded savanna thorn bush, and grassland dominate the area. The only major river, the Awash River, passes through the district while the *Bulgaa* River forms the northern boundary of the territory and is contentiously shared with other ethnic groups-the Argobba and Minjar Amhara communities. Currently, the *Karrayyu* have no access to the Awash River since the riverine forest along the bank of the river now encroached by the commercial farms, the park and irrigated cultivation (Beyene and Gudina, 2009), and also to the *Bulgaa* Rivers because of conflict with the Argobba and Minjar Amhara communities.

2.2. Research Design and Paradigms

This study employed a qualitative case study. A case study is a holistic inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its natural setting. It is also the most preferred research method to study conflicts in general and causes and dynamics of inter-group conflicts in particular. Miles and Huberman (1994) and Yin (2009) noted that this approach provides an in-depth appreciation of research issue in its real-life context. Yin (2009) promotes use of case study to address the ‘how’ or ‘why’ question, when the investigator has little control over events, and, when one is interested to offer an analytic and nuanced description of a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. Thus, this approach serves a sound purpose to create understanding interactive social phenomena such as inter-communal conflicts as they occur in specific socio-political, socio-historical, socio-environmental and geo-territorial contexts.

The study draws on interpretivist paradigm, which offers an appropriate analytical framework for inquiring into dynamics of social phenomena such as peace and conflict as it facilitates methodological conditions and analytical lenses for examining individuals’ diverse and competing understandings of their world and their place in it. Two stage sampling technique was employed to draw the sample for the study. The first stage involved a purposive selection of ten rural sub-districts and key informants where the 2019-2020 *Karrayyu-Itu* conflict was prevalent among 18 rural sub-districts of *Fentalle* district as described in Figure 1 below. In-depth interviews were also conducted with individuals from both communities. The second stage involved snow-ball selection of knowledgeable individuals about the *Karrayyu-Itu* interaction and the recent conflicts.

The primary data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions and non-participatory observations. Secondary data were also used for this study. The primary data were collected from the

Gadaa leaders, community elders, clan leaders, and members of both communities. Interviews were also conducted with the officers of local NGOs found in the district and from different government authorities of the district, zonal, regional and federal levels. About 40 key interviews, 90 in-depth interviews and 12 focus group discussions having six to eight people for each focal group were conducted during the field work. However, since this study is a part of a larger PhD project aiming to assess conflict dynamics in the study area, only related data to the *Karrayyu-Itu* conflict were taken into account. In this study, the research participants were encouraged to use their own conceptual and analytical resources to provide historically and contextually grounded analysis of their knowledge, experiences and perspectives on the subject matter of the study. Attempts were made to generate empirically substantiated and contextually grounded facts about the dynamics of inter-communal interactions, conflict and collective solution.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. *Karrayyu-Itu* Symbiotic Interaction/ Cooperation

This study revealed that *Karrayyu* pastoralists have centuries old interaction with *Itu* of Chercher area and also with the *Itu* group displaced to *Fentalle* district in the post-1960s period. Until the recent violent conflict, *Karrayyu* lived peacefully and cooperatively with *Itu* farmers and agropastoral groups living in district almost for half a century in the area. This is what Axelrod (1984) suggested in his theory of cooperation that “like produces like”. This theory used to show the relations that exists between the two or more communities. In writings published between 1949 and 1980, Deustch (cited in Tjosvold, 1984) theorized that in cooperation, persons perceive their goals attainments as positively related; however, in competition persons perceive their goals attainments as negatively linked. In light of this theory, this study explored that *Karrayyu* have far reaching symbiotic interaction with *Itu*, including inter-communal support, resource sharing, marriage, and economic interactions, *ciibsaa gosaa* (clan confederation) and joint *tuutaa* (*Gadaa* parties). Such interactions used to foster *Karrayyu-Itu* peaceful relations in the study area; however, such relations have been under threat since recent years. Thus, this study examines the dynamics of their cooperation as follows.

3.1.1. Inter-communal supports and solidarity

In his informative work, Abdulahi (1998) noted that *Karrayyu* pastoralists had relative peace with *Itu* than with the neighboring communities. In support of this, our study also revealed that *Karrayyu* have mutual support and solidarity systems which goes back to early 20th century with *Itu* of Chercher area when the two communities forged partnership to minimize their vulnerability to the repressive measures of the then imperial regime of the country (FGD 9: Nov 2, 2020). The discussants added that the *Karrayyu* maintained such systems with the *Itu* group that displaced to the *Karrayyu* land in 1960s onwards. Regarding this, informants from both communities have mentioned two famous historical cases as follow.

In the late 1920s, the Afar warriors fought with *Karrayyu* at the place called *Xiloosii Sooddee*. The battle was known as *Lola Mogolbuusaa* (battle of Mogolbusa). In the battle, the *Karrayyu* warriors killed several Afar’s men and ravaged one of the Afar villages. After the war, Emperor Haile Selassie ordered *Karrayyu* to pay many cattle to compensate Afar for loss of life. The *Karrayyu* didn’t able to pay the requested amount; but the *Itu* had redeemed them by paying about 150 cattle for Afar on behalf of *Karrayyu* (Discussant: Arboyee Ninni, Nov 8, 2020).

In the late 1930s, the Afar warriors invaded the *Karrayyu* land and occupied the land up to Lake *Basaqaa* and the *Karrayyu* were therefore, unable to withstand them. Fortunately, large numbers of *Itu* warriors came from Chercher to defend the *Karrayyu* fought against Afar at the place called *Bantii*. The battle was called *Lola Bantii* (the Battle of Bantii). After the war, Emperor Haile Selassie has ordered *awuraja* administrator and killed 26 *Itu* warriors by hanging them on a tree at Awash 7 Kilo town for supporting *Karrayyu* in the battle (Hawas Fentalle Fichale: Oct 16, 2020).

The oral accounts revealed that there has been a longstanding cooperation between *Karrayyu* and *Itu*. In supports of this, one of the *Karrayyu* elders said, “the *Itu* redeemed our soul by their own souls

in those days” (Boru Rukessa: Oct 15, 2020). The *Itu* discussants also mentioned that *Karrayyu* warriors had fought with the imperial forces at the battle of “*waddeessaa*” during the regime of Emperor Haile Selassie in defending the *Itu* of Chercher area (FGD 9: Nov 2, 2020). This implies that the two communities have history of solidarity to defend one another from their enemies.

3.1.2. Inter-communal resource sharing

The *Karrayyu* categorized the *Itu* inhabitants living in *Fentalle* district into two groups based on their livelihood patterns. These are: the “*Qonnaan Bultootaa*” (the farming group), locally called “*gamaa galii*” (who were displaced beyond the Awash River) and *Shanaano* (the pastoral group who are the recent migrants to the area). According to the authors’ observations, about ten (10) rural sub-districts are inhabited by the farming group while *Shanaano* group mostly dominated two (2) rural sub-districts namely, *Galchaa* and *Bantii-Moggisaa* villages of the *Fentalle* district. The key resources that the *Karrayyu* share with *Itu* living in *Fentalle* district are land, pasture and water points.

According to Gebre (2009), it was the farming *Itu* group who introduced the farming activities to the area by clearing forest lands and hoeing the ground until they later started ox-drawn cultivation since 1985. In support of this, the *Itu* discussants noted that the *Karrayyu* hosted their community by giving them farmland since 1960s and also sharing pasture everywhere in the *Karrayyu* land (FGD 11: Dec 8, 2020). As to our field observations, the *Shanaano* group also engaged in crop production alongside to their pastoral livelihood taking advantage of proximity to the Awash River. For decades, the two communities have developed traditional communication system in the distribution of resources at a particular point in time, which then informs decisions on livestock movement patterns. However, currently due to the shrinkage of grazing lands and the expansion of farming practices by the *Itu* inhabitants such inter-communal resource sharing culture is found under threat.

3.1.3. Economic interactions

The *Karrayyu-Itu* economic relation depends on the exchange of different crops, livestock and livestock products. There are two local market centers in *Fentalle* district, namely, *Matahara* and *Haroo Adii* towns on a weekly basis. The *Karrayyu* pastoralists sell their livestock and livestock products in these local markets and buy most of their daily consumption like tobacco, coffee, khat, *hashara* (straws of coffee bean), *quxxii* (leaves of coffee used to make a sort of tea) and grain from the *Itu*. On the other hand, the *Itu* used that money to buy industrial products such as clothes, shoes, sugar, sandal wood, veterinary medicines, and others from these markets. One of the *Karrayyu* informants noted that the two communities have economic interdependence in these two markets (Jilo Dido: Nov 1, 2020). During the field work we observed that economic interaction was there between the two communities even during such violent time despite the number of market participants were decreased.

3.1.4. Intergroup marriage

Marriage practices in the Oromo people is not extensively differing from place to place despite some differences in its arraignments (Adem, 2014). Regarding marriage arraignments, there are some restrictions imposed on men and women by the laws of marriage (seera rakoo) in the marriage system of *Karrayyu* Oromo. The *Karrayyu* marriage arrangement is based on the clan laws (seera gosaa) and Gadaa law (seera Gadaa). One of the elders noted that marriage from the same *gosaa* and the same *tuutaa* (Gadaa class) is strictly forbidden by these *heera gosaa* (Roba Boru: Oct 16, 2020). Traditionally and legally a marriage arrangement is allowed only among the *Dullacha-Baasso gosaa* and sub-*gosaa* among the *Karrayyu* community (FGD 1, Oct 22, 2020). According to these discussants, marriage arrangement between men and women of the same *tuutaa* (Gadaa party) is strictly forbidden by *heera Gadaa*.

Besides, marriage arrangement of *Karrayyu* with some of the neighboring communities is forbidden due to politico-religious and social factors. One of the senior *Karrayyu* elders stated that marriage

interaction of *Karrayyu* with the neighboring Christian communities is forbidden because they have largely resisted Orthodox Christianity due to its associations with Amhara rule and culture, and also with Arsi Oromo and Afar for historical enmity (Boru Rukessa, Oct 15, 2020); however, such restriction was lifted from Arsi and Afar after they made peace agreements with *Karrayyu* in 1992 and 2012 respectively. Despite such peace agreements, still marriage interaction of *Karrayyu* with these communities is very rare. Contrary to this, both the clan and *Gadaa* laws allow *Karrayyu-Itu* marriage interaction. During the field work, the authors also observed that the two communities are highly intermixed through marriage. For instance, in expressing such marriage interaction one of the *Karrayyu* informants noted as follow:

I was born from the *Karrayyu* father and *Itu* mother. The family of my mother came to Fentalle district in the late 1960s from Chercher area of the current western Hararghe Zone of Oromia. You can see such intermixes in most of the *Karrayyu* and *Itu* households. Moreover, such interaction has the potential to create fraternity between the two communities despite the current conflicts (Hawas Fentalle Aroolle, Jan13, 2021).

This means, such *Baasso-Dullachaa* and also *Karrayyu-Itu* marriage arrangement had determined individuals from different *gosaa* (clan) get hitched to each other despite the current violent conflict.

3.1.5. *Ciibsaa gosaa* (kins confederations) and joint *tuutaa* (*Gadaa* parties)

The traditional socio-political organization of *Karrayyu* has been dominated by *gosaas*- lineage-family structure and by the *Gadaa* System. *Karrayyu* have two *gosaa* structures, named *Dullacha* and *Baasso* from which other sub-*gosaas* trace their lineages (Edjeta, 2001). This study revealed that different sub-*gosaas* of both *Dullacha* and *Baasso gosaa* established *ciibsa gosaa* (kins confederation) with the sub-*gosaas* of *Itu* living in the study area. As noted by one *Itu* informants, the *Mulaataa* sub-*gosaa* from *Dullacha* and the *Dooranii* and *Kooyyee* sub-*gosaas* from *Baasso* of the *Karrayyu* confederated with the *Waayyee*, *Addayyoo*, *Momajii* and *Algaa* sub-*gosaa* of *Itu* and named the confederation *Saddeet Daadhii* (the eight Daadhi) (Hussein Abdo, Jan13, 2021). He added that the *Abbayyii Daga*, *Beerree* and *Kuttaayee* sub-*gosaa* of *Baasso* of *Karrayyu* also confederated with *Gaamoo*, *Baabboo*, *Qaalluu*, *Wacaalee*, *Elelee*, and *Liban* sub-*gosaa* of *Itu* and named the confederation *Saglan Galaan* (the nine Galaan). In support of this, one of the *Karrayyu* informants stated that such confederations enable small *gosaa* of both communities to prevent conflict or pay *gumaa* (blood money) together (Nuredin Fentalle, Dec 16, 2020). Such confederation helps the two communities to administer inter-communal resource sharing, and support one another.

Besides, the *Karrayyu* organized every member of *Itu* living in the study area under one of the five *tuuta* of the *Gadaa* System to broaden political platform. This inter-communal confederation is rooted to the *Gadaa* System. In the post-1960 period, displaced *Itu* allowed to join one among the five *tuutaa* *Gadaa* which is similar to their previous *tuutaa* when they were governed under the Oda Bultum's *Gadaa* System of west Hararghe Zone (FGD 1, Oct 22, 2020). This implies that such joint arrangement of *tuutaa* serves them as an assertive conflict prevention and peacemaking process at the grassroots level communities. However, since recent years the conflict have affected the decision-making processes by creating negative polarization even between inter-mixed *Gadaa* leaders (Roba Boru, Oct 16, 2020), and also changing the existed complementarity to hostility.

3.2. Conflict Corridors, Underlying and Proximate Causes of the 2019-2020 Conflict

3.2.1. Conflict corridors

The *Karrayyu-Itu* conflict of 2019-2020 was violent throughout the *Fentalle* district though it was more destructive in ten of the sub-districts that are shaded in a red color (See Figure 1 below).

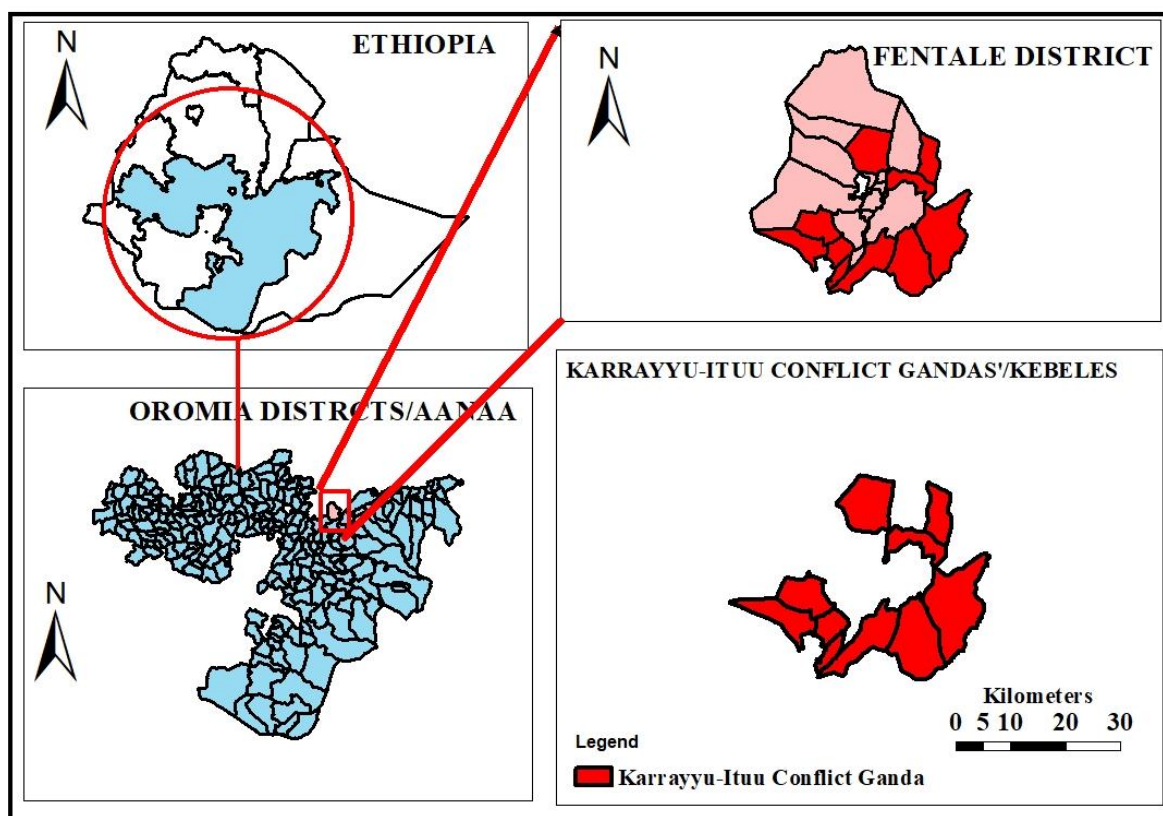


Figure 1: *Karrayyu-Itu* violent conflict corridors in 2019-2020 in *Fentalle* district. Source: data collected during fieldwork.

As can be seen from Figure 1 above, out of the 18 sub-districts, conflict was proliferated and violent in 10 sub-districts. As to the authors' field observations, the conflict was very violent and destructive in *Gaaraa Diimaa*, *Gidaaraa*, *Dirree-Sadeen*, *Saara-Weebaa*, *Bantii Moggisaa*, *Galchaa*, *Ilaalaa Qararii*, *Dhagaa-Hedduu*, *Qobboo* and *Xuxxuuxii* sub-districts of *Fentalle* district. One of the security experts of the *Fentalle* district noted that the hostility was heightened due to the accumulated grievances over the difference in the usage of natural resources (Aliyyi Qumbi, Dec 24, 2020). This implies that the conflict became violent in these sub-districts due to the deepened herder-farmers and agro-pastoralist mistrusts over difference in livelihood and natural resource usages. Only two sub-district was safe for the displaced community within the district. The conflict has its own underlaying and proximate causes as discussed below.

3.2.2. Underlying causes of the conflict

To assess the causes behind the recent *Karrayyu-Itu* hostility, this study used the basic needs theory of conflict (Burton, 1990, cited in Jeong, 2000). According this theory, unfulfilled needs are the root causes of a conflict hence; if human needs are denied or obstructed then conflict is inevitable. Based on this theory, this study identified three broad causes directly or indirectly contributed to the *Karrayyu-Itu* violent conflict of 2019-2020. These were: a) shrinkage of pasture lands, b) disgracing and degrading sacred natural sites, and c) growing tensions between *Karrayyu* herding and *Itu* farming and agro-pastoral communities. Each underlying causes has direct and indirect linkages to one another in breeding conflict in the study area.

3.2.2.1. Shrinkage of the pasture lands

As noted by Kiloos (1982), the *Karrayyu* population occupied the Savannas between the *Kessem* (Bulгаа) in the northwest and *Awash* Rivers in southeast when Harris (1844) visited the area in the

mid-19th century. Gebre (2001), in his critical study also mentioned that this geographical delimitation has estimated about 150,113 hectares. Within this geographical delimitation as the *Karrayyu* used three major ecological zones for grazing, namely; dry season (ona bonaa), winter season (ona birraa) and wet season (ona gannaa). According to Gebre, the post-1960s state-led land alienation had put the *Karrayyu* pastoralists in a precarious situation. However, his work didn't note clearly how the shrinkage of pasture lands drove the *Karrayyu* herders to be in conflict with the neighboring communities.

Migration of different communities in the post-1960s period has also changed the dynamics of natural resources usages in the *Karrayyu* land. The *Karrayyu* discussants noted that the loss of their dry season grazing site found alongside the Awash River by the *Martii* State Farm (sugarcane farm), Awash National Park (ANP), the ever-expanding Matahara town (built in 1897 with the construction of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway) and the *Haroo Adii* town, which came into existence with the construction of the Matahara Sugar Factory in 1967 are among the main factors that resulted the shrinkage of their pasture lands (FGD 1, Oct 22, 2020). These discussants added that nowadays their herders are pushed by the State-led development projects and migrant communities to the dusty areas around the *Fentalle* Mountain. Anna (2013) also noted in her recent travel account that the *Karrayyu* herders had already lost 70% of their grazing lands because of the above-mentioned actors. Regarding the loss of their pasture lands, one of the *Karrayyu* senior elders said, 'successive Ethiopian governments have more love and respect for the antelopes of the Awash Park than for the *Karrayyu* and their livestock' (Hawas Fentalle Fichale, Oct 16, 2020).

Nowadays, the *Karrayyu* complained that their herders are facing serious challenges from the expansion of farmlands by the *Itu* and Arsi farmers and the territorial encroachments made by the Argobba and Minjaar Amhara agro-pastoralists. Despite these challenges, the *Karrayyu* complied as their grazing zones are extended from Awash River to *Bulгаа* River and also to the Boset district. It is very common to hear nowadays when the Gadaa leaders made declaration on every ritual ceremony or meetings by saying *Hora samaayii gadiin, dagaagaa hawaasii oliin biyyii tiyyumaan jedha* meaning, 'from *Hora Samaayii* (area found in the Boset district) up to the Awash River, I said the country is mine'. This implies that the *Karrayyu* claim to fulfil their needs by using these ecological zones however, their need is obstructed by the immigrant farmers and agro-pastoralists. One of the *Gadaa* leaders of *Karrayyu* said, 'conflict with the *Itu* is inevitable since our herders have faced shortage of pasture land' (Sambali Asebba, Dec 22, 2020). Thus, such shrinkage of natural resources is one of the factors changed the *Karrayyu-Itu* historical complementarity to hostility.

3.2.2.2. Disgracing and degrading *lafa jiinfuu* (sacred natural sites)

Sacred natural sites are the physical entities and natural landscapes such as trees, forest areas, mountains caves, rivers that are set apart as holy by virtue of societal beliefs and values (Verschuuren, 2010). There are different types of sacred natural sites among the Oromo people living across the Oromia regional state. From *Karrayyu* community vantage point, sacred natural sites which locally named *lafa jiinfuu* are categorized under three themes: *jiinfuu Gadaa* (settlement places of the Gadaa leaders and sites used to perform the Gadaa ceremonies), *malkaa-tulluu*- locally known scared riverside/lakeside and hillside areas, and *Galma Waaqeeffannaa* (worship places of the followers of traditional Oromo religion).

In the Oromo worldview in general, the sacred natural sites have great respect. As a result of this, the Oromia regional government has enacted proclamation No. 211/2019 to conserve and protect the sacred natural sites found in different localities of the region. However, as noted by one of the experts in the Culture and Tourism Bureau of Oromia, the said proclamation was not implemented to the grassroot community levels (Ol'ana Teshome, Jan 25, 2021). However, the *Karrayyu* governed their *lafa jiinfuu* by the *Gadaa* laws, *safuu* (moral values) and *hooda* (divination). Any act that disgraces or degrade *lafa jiinfuu* is strictly prohibited among the community. One of the *Gadaa* leaders said, 'we the *Karrayyu* love, respect, and protect our *lafa jiinfuu* than our children' (Jilo Dido, Nov 1, 2020).

Hence, everyone from the *Abbaa Bokkuu* to the lowest herdsman have the duty to respect and protect *lafa jiinfuu*.

However, *Karrayyu* are seeing *Itu* farming and agropastoral groups as a potential threat to their *lafa jiinfuu*. Since recent years, *lafa jiinfuu* are becoming one of the factors that put the two communities in violent conflict against one another in the study area. The *Karrayyu* discussants noted that the *Itu* farmers and agro-pastoralists have expanded their farmlands and blocked the road to *Tarree Luugoo* (the sacred seat for the Dullacha Gadaa council) which is found in *Gaara Diimaa* village and cut sacred trees and burnt charcoal on *Tarree Leedii/Harooreetti* (the sacred seat for the Baasso Gadaa council) which is found on the eastern border of the district (FGD 1 and FGD 4: Oct 22 and 24, 2020). The discussants blamed *Itu* for disgracing and degrading their sacred natural sites. Contrary to this, the *Itu* discussants argued that the *Karrayyu* invoke the claim of *lafa jiinfuu* only to evict *Itu* from their farm lands (FGD 7: Dec 5, 2020). This implies for the *Karrayyu* need to get great attention for their sacred natural sites while the *Itu* on the other hand need to secure their farm lands. Thus, such difference in the usage of natural resources is one of the factors that put *Karrayyu* to be in violent conflict with *Itu* in the study area.

3.2.2.3. Growing herder-harder and agropastoral tensions

For the *Karrayyu* tilling the land and farming activity is a taboo (hoodaa) act. In supports of this, one of the *Qaalluu* (leaders of traditional religion) noted that ‘we dig the land only to bury our dead’ (Bula Fentalle: Nov, 2, 2020). He added that even stabbing the land with stick is strictly forbidden and it may bring a curse to the community. Land is considered as a communal property and used only for communal purpose, while the *Itu* living in the area enclosed the land for farming activity since dominantly they are farmers. The *Karrayyu* discussants noted that in the *Karrayyu*’s worldview, the land, cattle, *Gadaa* system and *Karrayyoomaa* (*Karrayyu*-ness) are interrelated (FGD 4, Oct 24, 2020). Where there is no grazing land, there are no cattle, where there are no cattle there is no *Gadaa* system, and where there is no *Gadaa* system; there is no *Karrayyoomaa*. This means, one can’t be understood without reference to other. In his informative work, Gebre (2009) noted that there would be disagreement in the future between *Karrayyu* herders and *Itu* farmers since they are practicing different land- use systems, in the same area. Rightly, after 10 years of Gebre’s prediction, conflict has erupted between the two communities on herder-farmer and agropastoral contrasts.

The *Karrayyu* herders blame the *Itu* farming and agropastoral groups for introducing farming practice and also expanding such activity to their traditional grazing zones and “*lafa jiinfuu*” throughout the district (FGD 1: Oct 22, 2020). The *Itu* discussants on the other hand argued that the tension was created by some *Karrayyu* individuals who have enclosed land for farming and to lease it for the highland farmers since 2008 (FGD 7: Dec 5, 2020). This supports what is mentioned in the 2010 report of Gudina Tumsa Foundation (cited in Cullen, 2011), that about 588.5 hectares of land, about 0.75 hectares per family has been distributed for both *Itu* and *Karrayyu* in *Gidaaraa* and *Dirree-Sadeen* villages for crop productions. The plan was to move *Karrayyu* herders more to agriculture along with the *Itu* living in the area. In this regard, one of the *Karrayyu* informants said “only few *Karrayyu* individuals have accepted the plan for irrigational scheme and enclosed land since they were forced by government security forces’ (Kucha Weday, Jan 3, 2021). Kucha added that the plan was implemented without creating awareness and convincing the pastoralists about its significance.

Since recent years, such tension has created mistrust among the *Karrayyu* themselves and also hostility with the *Itu* living in the area on herder-farmer and agropastoral contrast. According to Woldemichael (1995), these types of contrast are becoming one of the prominent factors for the germination of violent conflict in the pastoral and agropastoral areas of the Horn of Africa. Thus, the *Karrayyu* informants and discussants noted that they fought with *Itu* farmers and agro-pastoralists only to defend their pasture lands and “*lafa jiinfuu*” from the expanding farming activities. Whereas, the *Itu* also complained that the *Karrayyu* invoked such claims only to evict them from their farm land

(FGD 8, Jan. 7, 2022). As to the authors' observations, such contestation is very prevalent throughout the district though it has escalated in the conflict corridors (See Figure 1 above). Thus, this study revealed that such contrast is one of the factors the 2019-2020 violent inter-communal conflict in the study area.

3.2.3. Proximate or immediate causes of the conflict

This study identified two major proximate causes of the *Karrayyu-Itu* conflict. These are the irresponsible acts of blockage of the road to *Karrayyu's* sacred natural sites and the homicide on the *Karrayyu* man by the youth mob albeit each group points fingers at the other regarding the identity of those irresponsible youth. However, almost all discussants and informants from both communities agree on the political abuse in relation to conflict escalation in the study area. Firstly, as to the *Karrayyu* discussants, the conflict was erupted in October 2019 because the road was blocked around *Bantii-Mogisaa* village by some irresponsible *Itu* youth while the *Karrayyu Gadaa* leaders were on the way to perform ritual ceremony at a scared natural site called *Tarree Leedii* (FGD 7: Dec 5, 2020). The discussants also agree that those youths were manipulated by local politicians. The act done by the mob had provoked the *Karrayyu* and sparked the flare of the conflict between the two communities.

Secondly, as stated by one of the *Itu* informants, the conflict between the two communities re-erupted in September, 2020 and escalated in December 2020, because the *Karrayyu* man named Arju Fentalle was murdered by the youth mob in *Gaara Diimaa*, the village dominantly occupied by *Itu* while he was in the Mosque with his *Itu* family in law (Abdella Tule, Nov.18, 2020). The informant further noted that the victim was killed in inhuman and cruel manner while he was trying to escape from the angry mob through the window of the Mosque. Furthermore, after the news of such incident heard among the *Karrayyu*, violent conflict re-erupted between the two communities throughout the district.

3.3. Actors of the Conflicts and their Interests

3.3.1. Local political elites

In this case study, local political elites refer to local actors that embrace the government authorities working at the grassroots and district levels though these groups of actors have long hand even beyond the district. One of the *Itu* informants noted that the friction began at district level between the chief administrator (who was from *Karrayyu*) and his deputy (who was from *Itu*) over their personal interests in the political power (Elemo Dube, Dec 18, 2020). He added that the two officials cascaded their disagreement to the grassroots level through educated youth of their respective community. As to the views of the discussants from both communities, *Karrayyu's* local political elites have labeled the *Itu* as the supporters of ODP (Oromo Democratic Party which is in power and recently changed its nomenclature to Prosperity Party), while the *Itu* side have also labeled the *Karrayyu* as supporters of OLF (Oromo Liberation Front which is an armed group that opposed the ruling party) (FGD 10 and FGD 4, Nov 22 and 24, 2020). Thus, proliferation of such polarization based on different political ideologies has fueled hostility between the two communities.

The possibility of the eruption of the conflict was repeatedly warned early by elders from both communities. However, the government officials of all levels didn't give attention to prevent its occurrence (Public Meeting in Gidaaraa, Oct 18, 2020). In supports of this, one of the *Itu* informants also stated that the eruption of such conflict was early warned several times by the renowned elders of both communities but local political elites deafened their ears for the warning since they were in conflict of interest over political power in the district (Ahmed Mahamud, Oct 19, 2020). Besides, the contention among the political authorities of both communities has weakened the law enforcement agencies of the district. Moreover, had the law enforcers followed the warnings of the elders vigorously, such violent conflicts might have been prevented.

3.3.2. Urban based educated youth (*warra barate*)

Youth can easily be mobilized by others into conflict because of lack of economic opportunities, political voice and sense of belongingness to their communities (Mercy Corps, 2016). In a similar vein, data obtained from the office of Employee and Social Affairs of *Fentalle* district revealed that there were more than 1827 youths- 1376 men and 451 girls who were registered as unemployed persons in 2020 alone. The head of this office noted that these unemployed youths played a pivotal role in the conflict by disseminating false information to their respective community (Melese Gizaw, Dec 9, 2020). He further noted there was disagreement between the educated and unemployed youth of the two communities over the usage of political economy programs in the area. One of the *Karrayyu* informants also agreed that their youth have not been benefiting from the political economy programs in the study area, particularly the youth organized to extract sand for sale from the Awash River basin (Hawas Fentalle, Jan 13, 2021). This has created resentment among the *Karrayyu* educated youth.

On the other hand, the *Itu* youth complained that *Karrayyu* have a plan to evict their community from the district in the name of pasture land and sacred natural sites (FGD 7: Dec 5, 2020). This implies that the *Itu* youth have used communal security as a tool to mobilize their respective community to be in conflict with *Karrayyu* in the study area. The *Karrayyu* discussants also argued that it was the *Itu* educated youth who first provoked the *Karrayyu* by wearing a T-Shirt with a message that said *Ituu ona Fantaallee* meaning, '*Itu* of the *Fentalle* district' for the 2019 *Irreechaa* festival and also by erecting a billboard in *Galachaa* area with a writing which described as the district belongs to *Itu* (FGD 8: Jan 7, 2022). This implies that the urban based youth of both communities have cascaded their disagreement from the urban area to grassroots level to their respective community.

3.3.3. The general communities

In the context of this study, the general communities as actors in the conflict refer to local residents including civilians like the rural youth, adults (both men and women) and other social groups of both communities living in the study area. In the conflict of the last two years, adults and rural youth of both communities were the active participants. However, women were not direct combatants in such conflicts. As noted by the wife of *Abbaa Bokkuu* (*Gadaa* leader), the *Karrayyu* women took part in the conflict indirectly by fetching water and serving food to their warriors and providing care to the injured (Halko Fentale, Oct 23, 2020). However, as to the *Karrayyu* and *Itu* discussants, men from both communities participated in the conflict (FGD 3 and FGD 11, Oct 23 and Dec 8, 2020 respectively). The polarized politics resulted the involvement of the members of both communities into the violent conflict albeit each group points fingers at the other regarding who first ignited the conflict.

3.4. Effects of the 2019-2020 *Karrayyu-Itu* Violent Conflicts

The *Karrayyu-Itu* violent conflicts had resulted in humanitarian, economic, social, and security crisis on both communities.

3.4.1. Humanitarian effects: damage to human life and displacement

In his critical study conducted on Malo and Me'en and Konta, Me'en and Dime, the Suri and Dizi in southwest region of Ethiopia, Fujimoto (2010) noted that herder-farmer and agropastoral conflicts had enormous impacts on human security. In a similar vein, according to the report made on Dec 26, 2020 by the Prosperity Office and data obtained from Administration and Security Office of the district, the *Karrayyu-Itu* violent conflict resulted in loss of lives, injuries on people, and displacement of both communities within the district (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Humanitarian effects of the *Karrayyu-Itu* violent conflicts of 2019-2020

| Year | Damage to human life from both communities | | Persons displaced | |
|----------------|--|----------|-------------------|----------|
| | Deaths | Injuries | Family | Children |
| August 2019 | 20 | - | 5,372 | 10,628 |
| December, 2020 | 13 men and 2 women | 2 | 12890 | - |
| Total | 35 | 2 | 28,890 | |

Data: Obtained from the field work in December 2020.

As can be seen from Table 1 above, over 20 people were reported killed both in attack and reprisal attacks of the 2019 violent conflict. Besides, due to the government's failure to prevent the conflict and acts of reprisal, the conflict re-erupted in December 2020 and proliferated throughout the district. According to the reports, about 15 people (13 men and 2 women) were killed and 2 people were injured from both sides in the re-erupted conflict. The report didn't identify clearly the exact number of the people killed from each community. Some informants from the security forces argued that the number of the killed were more than what was reported. One police sergeant from the crime investigation department of the Police Office of the district noted more than 20 people lost their lives in addition to the number reported by authorities (Dale Beriso, Jan. 20, 2021). He added that members from both communities and the family of the victim were not willing to bring their case to the justice, rather they preferred to settle their disagreement by the clan law. This implies that the communities have no confidence on the formal justice organs.

Many people were also forced to leave their villages from both groups during such conflict. It was mentioned in the report that over 5,372 households were displaced from their homes along with 10,628 children from both communities in the 2019 conflict. It was also reported that about 12,890 households from both groups were displaced from their homes within *Fentalie* district due to the re-erupted conflict of October, 2020. Some sub-districts particularly, *Gidaaraa* and *Dirree-Sadeen* villages in which *Itu* farmers and *Karrayyu's* land leasers lived together were totally abandoned by both groups for fear of being attacked and possibly killed. Fleeing the conflict areas, members of both groups were forced to internally move to secure areas dominated by their respective community.

Apart from such killings and displacement, some women became widows and children became orphans as consequences of the conflicts. This is supported by what said by Pike, Straight, Oesterle, Hilton, and Lanyasunya (2010) that in any types of conflict women and children are the primary victim groups of the community. The data obtained on Dec 3, 2020 from local NGO known as Future Generation's Organization (FGO) revealed that the conflict forced children, pregnant women, and mothers with infant children to leave their homes though the deadly virus-COVID-19 was very intense.

3.4.2. Economic effects: damage to properties, crops and livestock raids

Though there was no data recorded about the economic effects of the 2019 conflict, the report obtained from the Prosperity Office of the district revealed that the 2020 conflict has resulted the destruction of public properties, houses, crops on the farmlands and where they were piled together, and also livestock raids (See Table 2 below).

Table 2. Economic effects of *Karrayyu-Itu* conflict of December 2020

| No | Damage to properties | Type of property and quantity | Raided livestock |
|----|------------------------------|--|------------------|
| 1 | Destructed public properties | 7 Schools | 65 goats |
| | | 3 Health stations | 60 donkeys |
| 2 | Burned private properties | 84 houses | 12 Camels |
| | | 10.5 hectares of <i>Xaafii</i> dried in the farm | 39 Cattle |
| | | 10.5 Piles of <i>Xaafii</i> yield (<i>tuullaa</i>) | 6 Sheep |
| | | 2 hectares of ripen Maize in the farm | |
| | | 15 Piles of Maize yield (<i>tuullaa</i>) | Total 182 |
| | | 4.5 hectares of ripen Onion in the farm | |

Data Source: obtained from the Prosperity Office of the District

As it was mentioned in Malifu (2006), there were shortages of schools and health services in the *Fentalle* district. It was also mentioned in the Dec 3, 2020 report of Future Generation Organization that the schools and other social services were also disrupted and destroyed during the 2019-2020 *Karrayyu-Itu* violent conflict. The report has also revealed that currently both communities are suffering from lack of clean water supply and health services throughout the district. Because, as it can be seen from Table 2 above, seven (7) public schools and three (3) health stations were destroyed during the conflict of December 2020 alone by the warriors of both communities. This implies that the already fragile delivery of social services like schools and health stations turned to be non-existent particularly in the areas severely affected by such violent conflict.

Besides, the 2020 conflict led to serious economic crises as several homes/houses and crops of both communities were burnt down to ashes in those conflict prone villages (See Picture 1 below).



Picture: Burnt house and crops in *Dirree-Sadeen* and *Gidaaraa* sub-district

(Picture: By author on 12 and 13 Dec, 2020)

As one can observe from picture 1 above, homes and crops of both communities were burnt down to ashes. For instance, in the violent conflict of December 2020 alone, about 84 houses (shelters), 10.5 hectares of *Xaafii* 2 hectares of Maize and 4.5 hectares of Onion in the fields, 10.5 piles (*tuullaa*) of *Xaafii* and 15 piles (*tuullaa*) of Maize were reported burnt down to ashes. In the public meetings held in *Gaara Diimaa* and *Gidaaraa* sub-districts, the members of both communities complained that their crops were burned where they were piled together. It was also reported that about 182 livestock were raided from both groups during that violent conflict.

As one can understand from the above report the recent *Karrayyu-Itu* conflict has had immense effects on the livelihood of both communities because it escalated during harvest seasons in both years. On the top of such conflict, as mentioned in Tefera (2013), *Fentalle* district is prone to drought even in peace times which leads to food deficit. So, it is evident that the surge of attacks and counter-attacks had resulted in economic crises potentially posing serious security repercussions. Above all, the reluctance of local government authorities to manage the inter-communal disagreement contributed to the intensification of economic effects of such conflict. Besides, as to the authors' observations to the conflict corridors in the study area, the role of the local, zonal and regional government in rehabilitating the displaced members of the communities was insignificant. Only one local NGO known as Future Generation (FGO) stood by the side of these communities. One of the experts, the FGO gave a support of 600 quintals of maize for about 1200 households and also 910,000 ETB, for about 700 women, particularly for mothers having infants and pregnant women who fled their homes due to the conflicts (Muleta Gemmechu, Nov 18, 2020).

3.4.3.Social effects: proliferation of the politics of “Us” and “Them”

The prevalence of the *Karrayyu-Itu* violent conflict of 2019-2020 resulted the proliferation of the attitude and politics of “us” and “them” between both communities in the study area. This supports what is mentioned by Cunningham (1998), that people may develop the attitude of “us” and “them” in a conflict environment. Such attitude is manifested between the *Karrayyu* and *Itu* communities because mistrusts and hate speeches have been propagated and fueled by the above-mentioned conflict actors. Regarding this, one of the *Itu* elders noted that “a cold war was taking place in Matahara and *Haroo Adii* towns among the local politicians, while a hot war took place in the villages” (Ahmed Mahamud, Oct 19, 2020). He added that the political elites and educated groups had propagated such divisive attitudes only to get supports from their respective community and to sustain their positions in political offices. In supports of this, one of the *Karrayyu* informants also noted that the local political elites and educated youth of both communities used the difference over the livelihood and usage of natural resources of the two communities as a weapon to proliferate the politics of “us” and “them” between the two communities (Sambali Asebba, Dec 22, 2020). Therefore, such attitude has affected the age old cooperation and economic exchanges of the two communities adversely.

3.4.4.Security effect: prevalence of insecurity

As noted in Getachew (2001), the lowland areas of Ethiopia are marked by conflict and budding insecurity resulting from possessions of firearms by the entire pastoral, agropastoral, and farming communities. Okoli and Atelhe (2014) also asserted that herder-farmer conflicts create tense and volatile inter-group relations amongst the communities. In a similar vein, the *Karrayyu-Itu* violent conflicts had also threatened peace and tranquility in the study area. One of the security experts of the *Fentalle* district reported the insecurity was intensified since both communities are armed their men and youth with AK 47 and other automatic fire arms (Aliyyi Qumbi, Nov 6, 2020). During the field work we also observed that both communities were brought their animals to the local markets to buy the fire arms for fear of insecurity. Furthermore, the recent violent conflict has intensified insecurity throughout the district.

3.5. The Failed Marti Peace Accord of June 2019

Many attempts were made by the clan leaders and elders of both communities to resolve the conflicts of 2019-2020. For instance, the *Gadaa* leaders from across all over Oromia were invited by the local government authorities to mediate between the two communities in June 2019. The local leaders of both communities had made serious efforts to conclude Peace Agreement and reached consensus on June 21, 2019 at *Martii* after successive peace talks. However, informants from both communities complied that the peacemaking effort failed due to the intervention of local politicians into such inter-

communal peace process. The following extracts were taken from the interviews made to one of the *Karrayyu* clan leaders and also from the *Itu* discussants provide some evidence to this assertion:

The peace talks were not performed according to *heera guma* Oromo (the law of blood money). After the peace talks, on June 21, 2019, those *Gadaa* leaders made a declaration of peace and decided 8 cattle and 10,000 ETB as compensation without determining who did the crime and who the victims were. So, for us, such peace process was incomplete since it didn't embrace *araaraa* (reconciliation). The invited *Gadaa* leaders who brokered such peace talk didn't invite the offenders and victims to eat, drink, and enter houses together to perform *araaraa* ritual according to our customary laws (Haji Bulga Bosha, Oct. 24, 2020).

The peace agreement declared on June 21, 2019 was incomplete since it did not identify and examined the causes, actors, effects, offenders and victims of the conflicts. The peace talks were not incorporated the traditional values transformative justice of the Oromo people, rather it was a politicized by the local political authorities (FGD 11, Dec 8, 2020).

The above extracts have revealed that both the peace talks and the said agreement were doomed to failure due to procedural and strategical errors. The root causes of the inter-communal conflict and tools of resolution as well as transformation were not identified. Moreover, the intervention mechanisms didn't allow the local leaderships of both communities to have ownership over the peacemaking processes. The peace process was brokered by the local political authorities of both communities. As to the above informant and discussants, the local political authorities gave more attention to hide such conflict and its effects from the public media, rather than healing the broken relationship of the two communities. Thus, the peace talks failed due to the above-mentioned reasons, and as a result the latent conflict re-erupted in October 2020 and cost both communities for humanitarian, economic, social and security effects in *Fentalle* district.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study examined the *Karrayyu-Itu* peaceful interaction and the 2019-2020 violent conflict of the two communities in *Fentalle* district. It revealed the two communities had peaceful interactions even before the first *Itu* group displaced to the *Karrayyu* land in 1960s. Since then, their relationships have been multi-dimensional and like most social relationships involve both cooperation and conflict. However, their historic peaceful relations have become conflictual since 2018 onwards. Particularly, the 2019-2020 violent conflict resulted humanitarian, economic, social and security effects on both communities in the study area. The successive efforts made by the government to resolve the conflict not borne fruit.

Furthermore, the future effects of the conflict can be minimized through extension intervention. Hence, this study suggested that the mechanism tagged "Local Development Plans" (LDPs), be applied by extension agencies to minimize conflict. These kinds of plans are expected to include among others, clear agreements on access to natural resources involving all stakeholders. The stakeholders in this study are the *Karrayyu* and *Itu* communities. Therefore, it is expected from both the Federal and Oromia Regional State governments, and also from NGOs to create the enabling environment for the *Karrayyu* herders and also for the *Itu* farming and agropastoral communities to thrive in the study area. In this regard, fairness and equity between herders and farmers and agropastoralist should be the watchword of the agencies responsible. Intensifying efforts to build inter-communal peace by ensuring the rule of law and good governance is needed to reduce re-eruption of the conflict. Besides, building sustainable peace through public enlightenment, education, and campaign are recommended by this study because they are *sine qua non* to peace and sustainable development. Furthermore, the following policy-level implications were highlighted by this study. It is expected from the Federal and Oromia National Regional State governments to:

Ensure that development schemes do not have a negative impact on the *Karrayyu* pastoralist and their transhumant grazing patterns.

Develop transhumance-related infrastructure: The need to develop and expand herders-related infrastructure - such as water points, pastureland, livestock resting areas, and pastoral routes-should be assessed. The *Karrayyu* herders, and *Itu* farming and agropastoral community should be

incentivized to work together on the sustainable management of scarce natural resources, especially land and water.

Reinforce the capacity of the justice system to respond impartially: The government and local leaders should be supported in order to ensure that both the *Karrayyu* herders and *Itu* farming and agropastoral groups receive fair treatment and proper redress under the law, be it under the formal or traditional justice systems.

Provide training to *Karrayyu* herders and the *Itu* farming and agropastoral groups in joint conflict management and resolution techniques.

5. Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the Administration Office of the *Fentalle* District and the officers of the Federal Police Division stationed in the Upper Awash Valley, for their supports in the processes of data collection from the conflict zones. We would like to express our respect and appreciation to the participants of this study. We also gratefully acknowledge the Ministry of Education and the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in partnership with the African Research Universities' Alliance (ARUA).

Funding

The corresponding author received capacity building mini grant for PhD students from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in partnership with the African Research Universities' Alliance (ARUA).

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this study.

6. References

- Abdulah, Muderis. 1998. Resource deprivation and socio-economic changes among pastoral households: The case of Karayu and Itu pastoralists in the Middle Awash Valley of Ethiopia. M.Sc. Thesis, Agricultural University of Norway, Aas, Norway.
- Adem, Jemila. 2014. Women and indigenous conflict resolution institutions in Oromia: Experience from Siinqee of the Wayyu Shanan Arsi Oromo in Adami Tullu Jiddu Kombolcha district of the Oromia National Regional State. MA Thesis in Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.
- Ahmed, A. Gedi. 2005. Herder-farmer conflicts in the Dawa-Ganale river basin areas: the case of intra-clan conflict among the Degodia Somali of Dollo Ado district in the Somali Regional state of Ethiopia. MA Thesis in regional and local development studies, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Unpublished.
- Anna, W. 2013. Karrayyu people: East Africa's Cushitic guardians of Ancient Oromo culture and traditions. Accessed on October 16, 2019).
- Axelrod, Robert. 1984. *The evolution of cooperation*. New York: Basic Books.
- Beyene, Shimelis and Gudina, Dafa. 2009. Reviving a traditional pasture management system in Fentale, East Central Ethiopia. *Journal of Ecological Anthropology*, 13 (1): 57-72.
- Cullen, B. Selina. 2011. By the community, for the community: An investigation of participatory video with Karrayyu Oromo pastoralists, Ethiopia. Durham theses, Durham University.
- Cunningham, W. 1998. Theoretical framework for conflict resolution. In CAIN Webb Service. (<http://Cain.vist.au.uk/conflict/cunningham.Htm>). (Accessed on April 19, 2021).
- Davidheiser, M. and Luna, A. M. 2008. From complementarity to conflict: A historical analysis of armer-Fulbe relations in West Africa. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 8 (1): 77-103.

- Edjeta, Buli. 2001. The socio-economic dimensions of development-induced impoverishment: The case of the Karrayu Oromo of the Upper Awash Valley. MA thesis, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Elhadary, Y. A. and Samat, N. 2011. Pastoral land rights and protracted conflict in eastern Sudan. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 4 (8): 74–90.
- Fujimoto, T. 2010. Herder-farmer conflict in Africa: An analysis of cases in southwest Ethiopia. *Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology*, 7 (3): 348-370.
- Gebre, Ayalew. 2001. Pastoralism under pressure: Land alienation and pastoral transformation among the Karrayyu of Eastern Ethiopia, 1941. PhD Dissertation, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, the Netherlands.
- _____. 2009. When pastoral commons are privatized: Resource deprivation and changes in land tenure systems among the Karrayu in the upper Awash valley region of Ethiopia. In: Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. Trondheim.
- Getachew, Kassa. N. 2001. *Among the Pastoral Afar in Ethiopia: Tradition, Continuity and Socioeconomic Change*. Utrecht: International Books in association with OSSREA.
- Hamman, J. Ahmadu and Haruna Ayuba. 2018. The role of group solidarity in conflict between farmers and Fulani pastoralists: A case study of Northern Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 12 (3): 33-34.
- Jacobs, M. J. and C. A. Schloeder. 1993. The Awash national park management plan. Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organization.
- Jalali, Rita and Lipset, S. 1992. Racial and ethnic conflicts: A global perspective. *Political Science Quarterly*, 107 (4): 558-606.
- Jalata, Asafa. 1993. *Oromia and Ethiopia, state formation and Ethno-national conflict, 1868-1992*. Boulder-and London: Lynnee Reinner Publisher.
- Jeong, H. 2000. *Peace and conflict studies: An introduction*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
- Kiloos, H. 1982. Development, drought and famine in the Awash valley of Ethiopia. *African Studies Review*, 25 (4): 21-48.
- Malifu, Emanuel. 2006. The environmental consequences of dependent development in the Upper Awash valley and the predicaments of the *Kereyu*. MA Thesis in Environmental Science, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.
- Mercy Corps. 2016. *Youth and conflict toolkit*. (<http://www.mercycorps.org>). (Accessed on April 7, 2021).
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, M. 1994. *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moorehead, R. 1989. *Changes taking place in common-property resource management in the inland Niger Delta of Mali*, In: F. Berkes (ed.), *Common property resources*. London: Belhaven Press. PP. 256-272.
- Mulugeta, Almmaya. 2008. The transformation of conflicts among Ethiopian pastoralists: Ethnography of the notion of conflict among the *Karrayyu* in the upper and middle Awash valley. PhD Dissertation, University of Basel.
- Okoli, A. C. and Atelhe, A. G. 2014. Nomads against natives: A political ecology of herder/farmer conflicts in Nasarawa state, Nigeria. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4 (2): 76-88.
- PCC (Population Census Commission). 2007. Summary and statistical report of the 2007 population and housing census of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Result for Oromia region, population size by age and sex.
- Pike, IL., Straight, B., Oesterle, M., Hilton, C. and Lanyasunya, A. 2010. Documenting the health consequences of endemic warfare in three pastoralist communities of northern Kenya: A conceptual framework. *Social Science and Medicine*, 70 (1): 45–52.

- Shettima, A. G. and Tar, U. 2008. Farmer-pastoralist conflict in West Africa: Exploring the causes and consequences. *Journal of Information, Society and Justice*, 1 (2): 163-184.
- Tefera, Samuel. 2013. Enclosing the commons: Coping strategy to socio-ecological challenges by Ethiopian pastoralists. The fourteenth biennial conference of International Association for the Study of the Commons, Mt. Fuji, Japan.
- Tjosvold, D. 1984. Cooperation theory and organizations. *Human Relations*, 37 (9): 743-767.
- Verschuuren, B. 2010. Sacred natural sites: Conserving nature and culture. (https://www.academia.edu/5990541/Sacred_Natural_Sites_Conerving_Nature_and_Culture). (Accessed on February 21, 2021).
- Woldemichael, B. 1995. Education for pastoral communities of Eritrea: A research study. Asmara: Ministry of Education of the State of Eritrea/Radda Barnen, Swedish Save the Children, October.
- Yin, R. K. 2009. *Case study research*, 4th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.