

The Roles of Women in Instigating and Intensifying Ethnic Conflicts: The Case of Borana Women in Southern Oromia, Ethiopia

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Abstract: The study explored how Borana Oromo women instigated and intensified inter-clan/-ethnic conflicts. An ethnographic research design and a qualitative research approach were employed in the study. The primary data were collected through focus group discussions, non-participant observations, key informant interviews, and in-depth interviews while the secondary data were collected through a desk review. The collected data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. The findings of the study have revealed that the Borana Oromo women use folk songs to praise the heroes who defended Borana territories and successfully raided cattle, and disgrace the cowards in an attempt to promote masculinity and heroism and enhance men's spirit to fight to defend their territories and access valuable resources relentlessly. These songs play a key role in developing the culture of heroism and bravery among the Borana men. The songs vividly show that women play a significant role in ethnic conflicts though they are usually portrayed as peacemakers. The theoretical contribution is that women are not only conflict victims and peacemakers but also conflict instigators and heroines. The practical contribution of this finding is that the inclusive peacebuilding process demands policymakers and program developers to consider women as conflict instigators, peacemakers, and peacebuilders.

Keywords: Borana women; Coward; Ethnic conflict; Folk song; Heroism; Masculinity

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1. Introduction

A given society uses the oral tradition to transmit the social norms, morals, economic systems, interpersonal interactions, political customs, and wartime activities of the society (Grant, Möllemann, Morlandstö, Christine, and Nuxoll, 2010). In African societies, songs were/are used during wars or social conflicts (Hussein, 2005; Jirata, 2017). Folk songs also play a substantial role in social events such as births, deaths, marriages, weddings, funerals, healing rites, and rituals (Teffer, 2006). On these occasions, songs served as a channel for social change, the social construction of identity, and a tool for propaganda. Folk songs have paradoxical functions. On one hand, folk songs bring people together and promotes harmonious relationships by strengthening and promoting group cohesion. On the other hand, they provoke aggression and hatred toward the opponent parties (Grant *et al.*, 2010).

Songs are powerful weapons for starting or escalating conflicts. They have been sources of motivation for group action (Grant *et al.*, 2010). Songs not only create patriotic feelings (Mummendey, Klink, and Brown, 2001) but also serve as an emblem of national as well as ethnic identity. They have served as sources of inspiration for group or collective action (Grant *et al.*, 2010; Jorgensen, 2007; Hintjens and Ubaldo, 2019). In this way, songs are an effective instrument for igniting and escalating tensions, bloodshed, and wars.

There have been several instances where songs have been utilized to suppress and dehumanize others or provoke hatred and violence between individuals and groups (Grant *et al.*, 2010; Matiza and Mutasa, 2020). For example, evidence shows that forced singing was used during battles in Nazi Germany and Zimbabwe to degrade the adversaries (Stephenson, 2014). Serbian musicians created and promoted Croatian songs before the start of the war in that country in the 1990s (Pettan, 1998); Norfolk's Kosovo Albanian community supported a music video campaign that attempted to promote patriotism and military readiness. Hence, song or music served as a unifying focal point during the massive Nuremberg rallies in Nazi Germany in the 1930s (Stephenson, 2014). Numerous studies have shown that hearing violent lyrics frequently can influence one's aggressive nature i.e., violent songs elicit feelings of hostility (Kebede, 2020; Nasir and Fatimah, 2017; Ali and Peynircioğlu, 2006; Smith and Boyson, 2002; Adugna, 2001). Folk songs have the power to convey ideas, values, power relations, and status dynamics within society. Furthermore, songs can convey concepts, actions, and values, and are used to explore how values change over time (Kelbessa, 2013). In this case, the social context of power dynamics and status issues within the family and society is examined in connection to the message of various songs. Hence, songs are used to foster relationships, provoke conflict, and mobilize people for war (Smith and Boyson, 2002; Pieslak, 2009; Bergh and Sloboda, 2010; Kebede, 2020). Particularly, war songs have been used to keep fighters and soldiers inspired throughout the protracted battle.

War songs are essential in armed conflict, conflict instigation, and conflict provocation. War songs spark people's emotions, thoughts, and fighting inclinations. For instance, war songs catalyzed the struggle for freedom and independence in Zimbabwe by evoking people's emotions and thoughts (Matiza and Mutasa, 2020). War songs are essential for invoking the listener's sentiments of nationality, patriotism, and anger against the enemy (Naveed and Shaban Rafi, 2022). The songs evoke memories of their heroic past in the listeners, inspire a desire to fight the enemy, convince them to join in the struggle, and give them hope that they will triumph (Naveed and Shaban Rafi, 2022). Patriotic song enhances one's love of the motherland and fosters patriotism. Patriotic songs are one of the numerous genres of folk music that are sung to promote nationalism, patriotism, nation-building, love for the area, its culture, and all those things associated with it. Accordingly, national anthems are crucial for indoctrinating, inculcating, instilling, and promoting state ideology among citizens and the international community (Naveed and Shaban Rafi, 2022; Matiza and Mutasa, 2020). Patriotic songs also help to enhance consciousness, cultivate a shared identity, foster unity, and serve as a reminder of collective identity.

The Borana people are pastoral groups that inhabit southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya. They are a subset of the Oromo ethnic group (Ta'a, 2016; Legesse, 2006; Tache and Oba, 2009; Bassi, 2010). The

Borana are the guardians of the egalitarian culture represented by the distinctively democratic, sociopolitical, and economic institution known as Gadaa (Legesse 1973; 2006; Bassi 2005). In the Gadaa system, women exert their influence and authority indirectly. They engage in the decision-making process by communicating with their husbands (Bassi, 2005; Legesse, 1973, 2006; Ta'a, 2016). Women discuss important matters with their husbands, and the husbands seek their input and opinions. Consequently, Borana women are able to indirectly contribute to the decision-making process.

Borana women indirectly reacted men's assemblies using folk songs. They utilize the songs to express their concerns about the various historical, social, cultural, and political situations as well as their identity and territorial issues (Guyo, 2017). As Legesse (1973) stated, Borana women employ folk songs to express their direct criticism of the bad decisions they hear males are making at men's assemblies. In this manner, women's use of songs has a pertinent role in reverting decisions (Legesse, 1973; Guyo, 2017). They also use songs in pre- and while-conflict situations to arouse men's thoughts, feelings, and fighting moods.

However, the roles of women in inter-clan and -ethnic conflicts have not been well addressed by scholarly works. Hence, the objective of this article is to explore roles of Borana Oromo women in instigating and intensifying inter-clan/inter-ethnic conflicts. To explore this objective, guiding research questions were employed. How do Borana women participate in ethnic conflicts? What tools do Borana Oromo use to convey their message to promote masculinity and heroism? How do Borana Oromo instigate and intensify intra-/inter-clan and ethnic conflicts? In what way do Borana Oromo women instigate and promote a culture of bravery and heroism?

2. Research Methods

2.1. Study Area

The study that resulted in this article was conducted in the Borana zone. The Borana zone is one of the 22 zones in the Oromiyaa Regional State, Ethiopia. The zone is bordered on the south by Kenya, on the west by the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Regional State, on the north by West Guji, and the east by the Somali Regional State. The Borana people constitute one of the Oromo ethnic groups that inhabit Oromiyaa (Ethiopia) and northern Kenya. The data for this article were collected from the Borana people on the Ethiopian side during the months of March, July, and August 2022. The three months were chosen for the high occurrence of ritual activities which bring many people together.

2.2. Research Design and Approach

This research employed an ethnographic research design and a qualitative research approach. Ethnographic research design provides a comprehensive understanding of the worldviews, behaviors, and local culture and lifestyles of the people being researched (Angrosino, 2007). The qualitative research approach was used to examine and comprehend the meaning that individuals and communities give to their lived experiences (Creswell, 2014). In this manner, the researchers used a qualitative research approach to collect, organize, and interpret data in an attempt to establish the relationship between Borana women's folk songs and intra-/inter-clan/ethnic conflicts.

2.3. Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling and chain sampling techniques were employed in identifying informants. The purposive sampling technique was employed to nominate key informants such as Gadaa leaders, Qalluu councils, women who work in the Borana women's affairs office, women and men working in the Borana Culture and Tourism office, *elelee*, Oral historians, Gadaa councils, and their wives. Snowball sampling was used to select informants for FGD and in-depth interviews. The sampling began with one or more participants who had in-depth knowledge of the roles of Borana Oromo women in evoking manhood by using folksongs. This technique enabled the researchers to track *arga-dhagetti* (oral historians) as well as Borana men and women who had ample knowledge in the area.

2.4. Data Collection Methods

The research involved both primary and secondary data collection methods. The primary data was collected through key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and non-participant observations while the secondary data were collected through a desk review method to critically evaluate relevant recorded and written sources. The data collection process was structured using guiding research questions, with a specific focus on investigating the roles, practices, and expressions of Borana women in ethnic conflict.

The primary data were collected through key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and no-participant observation. Key informant interviewees were selected purposively based on their extensive knowledge, expertise and participation in Borana culture, Gadaa system, argaa-dhageetii (oral tradition), ethnic peace committee, community leaders, Borana Women affairs, ritual, naming ceremony, ethnic conflict, *Qaalluu* institution, Borana Culture and Tourism, and Borana general assembly, *Gumii Gayyoo*. A total of 20 key informants were interviewed using guide questions prepared for the purpose. In-depth interviews, on the other hand, were nominated using chain sampling techniques. This method enabled the researchers to obtain detailed information up to the point where the data were saturated. Four focus group discussions were used to construct collective meaning and identify interactions between participants for common themes. Direct observations were made of Borana women's folk song performances during the construction of ritual halls for *Raba-Dori* at Arero district ritual place and *Karrayyu Qaallua* institutions at the Yaabelloo district, specifically called Bakke were made. This method gave chances for researchers to gain firsthand understanding of cultural expressions. The actual performances of Borana women's folk songs while they were constructing ritual halls have been observed.

The secondary data were collected from various sources such as libraries, archives, cultural centers, and web pages to comprehensively review existing literature and materials related to Borana culture, folk songs, and gender dynamics in ethnic conflict. Overall, the diverse data collection techniques utilized in this study provided a strong and comprehensive basis for the research, facilitating a profound comprehension of the intricate relationship between the roles of Borana women and the dynamics of ethnic conflict.

2.5. Methods of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique. The field notes were made into comprehensive notes during data processing and cleaning. The recorded interviews, folk songs, and focus group FGDs were transcribed, translated, and categorized into themes to construct meaning. Then, the themes were discussed with existing literature and research findings. The legitimacy and authenticity of the primary and secondary data were cross-checked by counter-checking the primary data with secondary data.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

Research ethical considerations were taken into account during the data collection and analysis processes. Research participants were informed of the purpose and goal of the research before the data collection started. They were also informed of their rights to take part and to revoke or withdraw at any time. Furthermore, participants were given the chance to choose the interview sites, inquire about the research and its procedures, and give consent to audio recordings of the interviews. During data presentation and interpretation, utmost care was taken to maintain confidentiality.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Places, Occasions, and Importance of Folk Songs

According to key informants, the Borana women perform folk songs mainly at weddings, rituals, and naming ceremonies. They also sing songs while collecting firewood, fetching water, and constructing houses. The songs serve as a means for them to express a wide range of emotions including love, sorrow,

rejection, objection, and acceptance of decisions made within the community. Moreover, the Borana women utilize songs as a persuasive tool to encourage males to take action and protect their land, pastures, water sources, and livestock from trespassers and raiders. Moreover, the songs play a crucial role in defending their territory, preserving their culture, and upholding the significance of ritual sites (informants (infs): Mrs. Ayisha Golicha, Mr. Golicha Dhengicha and Mrs. Almaz Liban).

Borana women actively engage in generating the necessary aggressive masculinities as catalysts and significant contributors to perpetuating a conflict. They incite males through carefully selected words that have degrading consequences and are infused with gender-specific symbolism and significance (infs: Galgalo Tadhole, Ayisha Golicha). The Borana women skillfully utilize songs to deliberately provoke males by carefully choosing words that carry derogatory connotations and are imbued with gender-specific symbolism and importance. This finding is consistent with Grant *et al.* (2010) who stated folk songs are utilized to elicit strong feelings and foster animosity toward the opposite group. According to the overall view of the FGD discussants, the Borana women used folk songs to evoke men's emotions using songs. As one of the key informants of this study stated:

The Gerri men engaged in combat with the Borana ranchers and captured a herd of Borana livestock. When the Borana women heard about the situation, they arrived and began singing the *hoo-raree* song. The song sparked the Borana men's masculinity. Then the Borana men organized to fight the Gerri community. They engaged in combat, killed the Gerri men, and then took the cattle back (Inf: Kanu Jilo).

The conflict between the Borana-Garri communities is complex, intricate, and multifaceted. They can be attributed to historical and political factors, changes in administrative boundaries, and inter-state wars between Somalia and Ethiopia. The combination of these different elements has led to the escalation and intricacy of the conflicts between the Borana and (Feyissa, 2015; Beyene, 2017).

It appears that both males and females have dedicated considerable effort to engage in inter-clan/ethnic conflicts and fighting. Serving as mobilizers and substantial contributors to perpetuating the dispute, Borana women actively participate in fostering the required aggressive masculinities. According to female in-depth interviewees, women provoke men by using terminologies and expressions infused with gendered symbols and connotations that humiliate and degrade men.

3.2. Women's Folk Songs in Promoting Manhood

Although Borana men held formal authority and accountability in the political sphere, women had an impact on decisions through supporting roles in the background (Guyo, 2017). The Borana women use folk songs, jokes, and other verbal expressions to express their concerns, rejections, complaints, and support (Lorber, 1996). The use of folk songs challenges the male-centered social structure and existing power dynamics in Borana society (Guyo, 2017). In other words, the Borana women express their disapproval of men's decisions through *kaarile* folk songs. At several public events, including weddings, naming ceremonies, Gadaa power transfer ceremonies, ceremonial areas, ritual places, and house construction, they sang resistance songs (Legesse, 1973). They utilized the songs as a way to highlight the accomplishments of men and point out their flaws. Most of the women's key informants stated that the women use folk songs *kaarile* to resist the ill-decisions of men at men's assemblies. In this way, the songs serve a dual role in their community. They celebrate men's achievements and virtues, such as bravery and leadership, reinforcing traditional notions of manhood. Simultaneously, these songs critique men's decisions and actions, particularly in men's assemblies, urging them to meet societal expectations. By highlighting both strengths and shortcomings, these songs influence public perception and challenge gender-blind decision-making, resisting patriarchal norms while upholding the values associated with manhood.

3.3. Borana Women Songs for Cattle-raiders

Cattle raiding has long been a prominent aspect of many pastoralist societies in East Africa Wild, Jok, and Patel, 2018). The practice of stealing cattle among pastoralists in arid and semi-arid regions can be traced back to precolonial times. Prior to the colonial era, this activity was linked to the territorial

expansion of specialized pastoralist groups like the Nuer, Turkana, Maasai, and Poko (Wild *et al.*, 2018). Despite the colonial government's attempts to establish ethnic boundaries and limit their territorial expansion (Osamba, 2009), cattle raiding persisted. Following independence, both persisted and gained greater significance due to the widespread availability of modern firearms from the mid-1970s onwards. The primary factors contributing to this phenomenon include access to illegal arms, and light weapons, cultural tradition of moranism, drought, and limited grazing resources and the fencing of grazing areas (Martin, 2012). Moreover, politics and cultural traditions play a significant role, with politicians being key actors deeply involved in inciting and supporting these conflicts related to cattle raiding (Greiner, 2013).

Cattle rustling is a coordinated effort in which a group of people plan, organize, and steal livestock from rival ethnic groups (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014). According to Odary, Komba and Nyamato (2020), this practice is deeply rooted in pastoralist communities in the horn of Africa, where it reflects a mix of gender dynamics, social structures, and economic conditions that contribute and fuel conflicts. Besides, the scarcity of pasture lands and water points in pastoralist environments and the consequent struggle for access to these resources create violent conflicts among pastoral communities. Furthermore, the drought-induced decrease in livestock numbers served as a justification for rustling (Birchall, 2019) which leads to severe conflicts. The raided or rustled cattle are given different names among Borana people depending on the condition of the rustler who rustled them. According to one of the key informants, the raided cattle would be given different names as indicated below:

These names are *dheebuu*, *haaloo*, *harrii*, *xiyyoo* and *hookuu*. *Dheebuu* is the name given to the cattle raided by a raider who is starved and thirsty before raiding the cattle. *Haaloo* is the name given to the cattle raided as revenge or retaliation against the enemy. *Harrii* is the name given to the cattle which an old man raided. The cattle that have been raided using weapons like spears, bullets, and other armaments are referred to as *Xiyyoo*. *Hookuu* is the name of the cattle which a person raided after fighting and winning the enemy (Source: Inf: Galgalo Tadhole).

The Borana women appraise and honour the raiders with folk songs. The in-depth interview participants unanimously stated that the Borana women believed that only brave and heroic people could raid cattle. As a result, they honor and have a unique place for the raided cattle as well as the raiders.

In addition, Borana women have grave roles in all aspects of cattle rustling processes, from initiation to execution. They pray for their sons' and husbands' safety during these dangerous missions (Inf: Boru Dire). Confirming this, one of the key informants stated that "in Borana culture, the mother blesses and sends her son to raiding. When the son comes back after raiding cattle, she welcomes him" (Inf: Galgalo Tadhole). This indicates that women have key roles in ethnic resource conflicts. This further attest that pastoral women in general and Borana women, in particular, contribute to conditions that lead to intra-/inter-ethnic conflicts. In addition to this, the Borana women consider that the milk of the rustled or raided cows is sweet and the bowls for milking the cows are kept in special places. The milk could not be given to the cowardly men. This discrimination in itself provokes men to rustle cattle from other ethnic groups. Most of the time the men who raid cattle would engage in a serious battle with the owners of the cattle which could result in killings from both sides. Hence, cattle raiding creates high animosity and mistrust between inter-clans such as Borana-Guji, and Borana-Gabra, on one side, and other ethnic groups, on the other to the extent that a simple act of raiding could result in bloodshed which in turn aggrandizes clan as well as ethnic conflicts. The FGD discussants vividly indicated that there were accusations and counter-accusations between Borana and Gerri ethnic groups around the borderlands for cattle raiding.

Women have a significant role in cattle rustling. However, the various social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of women's involvement in cattle rustling have often been overlooked. Previous literature has predominantly portrayed women as vulnerable and dependent on male protection (Guyo, 2017). However, it is crucial to delve deeper into this subject to gain a more comprehensive understanding. According to key informants, women praise men who raided cattle with folk songs. They call the names of those who brought the highest number of cattle and praise in their folk songs

(Infs: Dadhi Boruu, Wario Dima, Nuunoo, Kanu). These create a sense of brevity for the achievers and humility for the losers. In this way, women encourage warriors to engage in violent cattle rustling to gain social acceptance. In so doing, women do take part in conflicts indirectly through invoking, inspiring, and perpetuating cattle rustling in almost equal measure as the men. In-depth and key informant interview results revealed that women were found to start or exacerbate cattle raiding. This further implies that through actions such as singing popular songs to celebrate successful rustlers or praising the raiders while mocking or ridiculing those who have not participated in the raids, women significantly contribute to conflicts.

3.4. Sirboota Loon Duulaa (Cattle raiding/rustling songs)

In Borana, cattle raiding songs (*sirba loon duulaa*) are sung by women. The women chant the song praising the brave raiders or warriors (Infs: Borbor Bule and Jatani Dida). These songs are dedicated to the heroes who have battled and defeated the enemies and raided cattle. In addition to this, the women called the names of the brave, the hero, names of the livestock raided, where the raiders traveled to, and the way the hero and the coward are represented in the conflict (Infs: Ayisha Golicha, Almaz Liban, Galgalo Tadhole, and Kaballe Halake). In this case, the song has the power to influence people. It has an emotive hook. It cultivates an awareness of the audience's emotional state stirring up their feelings to persuade them to avenge or revenge the enemy. This goes with the assertion of some scholars that folk songs can elicit, influence, and leverage men's emotions and actions (Williams, 1892; Saarikallio, 2011). Through folk songs, the Borana women have been expressing their ideas, emotions, demands and aspirations. Therefore, it is safe to argue that the Borana women have been utilizing folk songs as weapons not only to protect their cattle from thieves and raiders, and land from invaders but also to encourage men to take offensive actions against enemies for economic and social gains.

3.5. Hoo-raree¹ (Borana women's cattle-raiding folk song)

Hoo-raree is a Borana women's folk song sung to honour men or women who portrayed bravery or heroism in protecting the Borana people, land, pasture and their territory against intruders and invaders. Supporting these statements, the FGD discussants unanimously stated that *hoo-raree* is a traditional folk song the Borana women use to praise heroes. "*Hoo-raree*" is a combination of two words "hoo-" and "raree". The word "hoo" is a short form of the Oromo word "hoodhi" or "hoodhu," which means "take, please" (Infs: Galgalo, Kaballe, Almaz and Wariyoo) while the word "raree" refers to a dry cowhide which serves as drum- is placed beneath the feet of women while they are singing songs (Infs: Golicha Dhengicha and Nuunno Borbor). Together, "*hoo-raree*" means "please accept a song we dedicate to you for being our heroes" or "heroines". Basically, it means the song for the heroes. Of course, some might have a slightly different interpretation or a more thorough justification of what the term "*hoo-raree*" means. In essence, *hoo-raree* is a folk song that is performed to honour the heroes. This meaning elucidates the significance of the song.

This song plays a major role in war as illustrated in the following way:

Hoo-raree duulaa jabaan haaloo duulaa,...hoo-raree the song of war, the mighty fights to take revenge
against enemies

Raree baasee jabaan haaloo baaseedisplaying raree, the mighty has retaliated against the enemy

Raree fuudhee jartii rafte kaasee..... taking raree, he awakened the sleeping old woman

Lafti lafee keenya, handhuura abbaa keenya.....our land is our bone, our father's umbilical cord

Aaboon lafee isaatin ijaare.....our father built it with his bone

Daangaan keenya dhiiga.....our borders are defended at the cost of our blood

Daangaa dhiirati eega..... borders are defended by men

The song celebrates brave individuals who courageously protect Borana territory from external threats.

Bravery in Borana culture involves taking proactive action to defend against theft of livestock or harm

¹ Girma, E. (2020, Feb 21). Horare - New Oromo Music 2020 (Official Video). YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5abO_u0U1Es.

to relatives by enemies, reflecting a societal expectation of seeking revenge for honor. War songs are used to inspire men to actively participate in defense efforts, with failure to do so potentially leading to loss of personal dignity in Borana society. Heroes are highly respected for their ability to retaliate against adversaries, highlighting the duty of the strong and courageous to safeguard Borana lands. Women's songs also play a role in motivating men to defend Borana territory, emphasizing the belief that the homeland is preserved through the sacrifices of its heroes. This cultural perspective suggests that those who do not protect their land are seen as lacking courage and not contributing to its growth and security in the face of neighboring threats.

The song underscores the integral relationship between land ownership and the survival of the Borana community. As emphasized by participants in focus group discussions, Borana land is held communally, representing not just territory but the collective identity and political autonomy of the community. The phrase 'our land is our bone', referenced by Borana women in the song, draws a poignant analogy. Bones, as described by Grabowski (2015), are essential for bodily functions like protection, support, and mobility. They form the structural framework that allows movement and safeguard vital organs. Similarly, Borana land supports the community's cohesion and sustenance, essential for their cultural practices and economic activities. The analogy extends further, reflecting Gerbi's (2019) exploration of the interconnectedness between bone health and overall bodily function. In this context, any encroachment on Borana land jeopardizes the entire community's well-being, akin to how a disruption in one bone affects the entire skeletal system. This symmetrical relationship underscores the existential importance of land to the Borana people. Therefore, the struggle over land transcends mere property disputes; it becomes a matter of life and death, intimately tied to the preservation of Borana identity and their way of life.

For the Borana people, land holds significant importance as it represents their political, social, economic, and cultural identities. Essentially, land plays a crucial role in economic development, food security, and poverty reduction for the community (Deininger and Nagarajan, 2009). Moreover, land holds various meanings such as ancestral, religious, political, sociological, anthropological, economic, cultural, ecological, and psychological significance for the Oromo people, especially the Borana Oromo (Gerbi, 2019). Therefore, in the song, Borana women encourage and urge Borana men to protect, defend, claim, and preserve the Borana land.

3.6. Sharree

Sharree is a part of *hoo-raree* song, which is performed in honor of those who returned home after taking cattle from raiders or returning the cattle raiders had taken (Inf: Galgalo). They sing the song to honor the raiders and their mothers (Infs: Kanu, Almaz, Kaballe, Jilo, Momina, Ayisha, and Wario). The mothers are praised as they are the mothers of the heroes or brave warriors. The following song explains the brevity of fighters.

Duulli goomaan bulee Fighters provoked the war throughout the night

Goomaan aadaan bulee... Brave fighters were provoked throughout the night to fight the enemy
per the existing tradition

Duula goomessan Provoked the fighters for war

Gooma yayaamanii..... recalling the brave time and again

Hin galluu galgalaa we do not go back home at the evening

Hin dhamnuu dambala We do not miss *dambala* (Children of the same *Gadaa* period)

Loon malkaa dakkaraa Cattle of Dakkaraa water point

Loon fuudhaan dambala.....raiding/rustling cattle is best by *dambala*

Loon fuudhaan galgala..... raiding cattle is in the evening.

Loon malkaa jabduu.....the cattle of jabduu water point

Marxoo qalloo si'aa.....Body wrapping thin cloth for quick action

Malkaa jabduu bu'ee Going down to Jabduu water point

jabaan loonii bu'ee The mighty sacrificed himself for cattle.

Simanaa dhaabatee..... Stood to fight the enemy
 si'aa jilbiiffate..... knelt quickly
 Dhowwee fuloo cufee..... he blocked the way of the enemy
 Irree arbooraan cokee.....he decorated his arm with elephant teeth

Source: Galagalo Tadhole

In this song, the women narrate how the strong, brave, and mighty fought and raided cattle. In the song, women narrate how, when, and where the raiders fought, and raided cattle. Even the song indicates evening is the best for raiders. The mighty men show their strength by killing their enemies and raiding cattle. The fighter wears special (military) warrior's clothes and decorates his arm with elephant teeth (Inf: Guyo Konnichia).

There are two groups of children in the Borana tradition. Galgalo, one of the key informants, explained the difference between *Dambala* and *Wakoora* groups in the following way:

While one group is known as *Dambala*, the other one is known as *Wakoora*. The children born in the same Gadaa period are either *dambala* or *wakoora*. Children born in one Gadaa period are *Dambala* and children born after eight years in the next Gadaa period are called *Wakoora*. When the women praise *Dambala* in their songs, the *Wakoora* are irritated. Similarly, when the *Wakoora* are praised by women, the *Dambala* are irritated. The method is used to encourage competition between the two groups to be brave enough to defend their land and properties and engage effectively in raids.

Hence, it can be argued that the Borana women use folk songs to evoke the *Dambala* and *Wakoora* to fight heroically, contributing to the protracted violent ethnic conflicts between the Borana and the neighbouring ethnic groups. In the above song, the women evoke men who listen to their songs. Both *Dambala* and *Wakoora* are provoked in one way or another. When one group is praised, the other group would be provoked to do the same thing.

The following songs express how loved the raided cows' milk is. It also expresses how this milk is stored and loved by both the women and children.

Sharree sharamadhee----- milking a raided cow
 Naqeee ambuuradhee----pouring it into a milk pot and taking a sip of it
 Amburroo omichaa-----Sipping the foam of milk
 Ijoolleen jaalatee----- children liked it
 Aanan qulloo muchaa----- the milk of clean udder
 Elemtuun jaalate----- The milker loved the milk of the raided cow

Source:Wariyo Dima

The song is traditionally sung following a battle or cattle raid, celebrating the bravery and heroism of the participants. In this context, the milk from the cows that were raided is highly valued for its rich and creamy taste, which is particularly enjoyed by women and children in the community. This milk is stored in a special container to preserve its flavor and symbolizes the rewards of bravery and heroism. It is considered exclusive and reserved only for those who demonstrated bravery during the raid, enhancing its value and significance within the community. This ritual underscores the cultural importance of bravery and heroism, linking them directly to tangible rewards like the prized milk from the raided cows. It serves not only as a celebration of victory but also as a reinforcement of the social values and hierarchy within the community.

3.7. Folk Songs for Humiliating Coward

Women sing songs that humiliate the cowards. They use powerful words which disgrace them in the following way:

Daafanaan ce'ee dheete gale-----The coward escaped and went back home running.
 Kophee kootichatti lakkisee.....Left his shoes on the land covered with loam and black soil
 Kootii saphansatti lakkisee..... Left his coat hanged on a tree called saphansaa
 Shirrixii mataan keessa ba'e ----- He escaped with a head wrap skirt
 Surree dakkaratti fannisee----- He hung his trousers at the ford
 Daafanaan ce'ee fiigee gale -----The coward ran away and came back home.

Source: Galgalo Tadhole

Women sing this song to criticize or assault the coward. Traditionally, a man should prove his masculinity to the girl before asking her for marriage. He should kill the enemy and show his bravery and heroism. Girls insult the cowards' using songs. The Oromo have diverse definitions of what it means to be a warrior. The ability of a man to engage in warfare is intimately related to the identity that is linked to being a male. Oromo culture celebrates the virtues of bravery, notably those of martial courage and strong masculinity. Boys are taught to be fearless warriors in Borana society. Men who kill dangerous animals or human adversaries are highly privileged and honoured.

The Borana women traditionally seek to get married to courageous young men. They always strive to marry heroes. In other words, women do not want to marry men who do not kill the enemy. They can identify the brave ones in the community by their twisted hairstyles known as *cibraa*. Concerning this, one of the key informants stated as follows:

Borana girls choose brave, courageous, and heroic men for marriage. The brave and heroic are men who killed enemies and are known by their twisted hairstyles (*cibraa*). Historically, the men who killed enemies would make their hair *cibraa*. If the man's hair is not patterned in such a way, he is not brave and has not killed the enemy. If such a man asks a woman for marriage, she undermines his manhood. She tells him not only that he is not a man but that there is no difference between him and her since he did not reach manhood. She would inform him to first prove his manhood before thinking about marriage. In this way, the woman provokes a man to be aggressive, heroic, and brave. The man should then go to kill a man from another ethnic group. He will either come killing an enemy or will be killed. This reason used to be one of the key contributing factors for protracted inter-ethnic violence in the area (Inf: Kanu Jilo).

One might infer from these statements of the informant that the Borana girls desire to engage in marriage with a man who is courageous, aggressive, combative, intrusive, and heroic. The Borana girls culturally prefer men who are revered in the community as a hero, warriors and veterans. The men with twisted hairstyles are heroes, strong, fearless and combatant. Using twisted hairstyles symbolizes heroism and a sign of brevity which shows manhood. A man without braided/twisted hairstyles is portrayed negatively; he is considered a coward by women.

The Borana women use folksongs to illustrate the social norms that govern the Borana community. If one breaks the social norms and values, he/she will be impacted and will be led to social sanctions and marginalization. *Guutuu*, a braided tuft of hair on top of the head-worn by males from warriorhood till *Gadamoji* "retired elderhood," represents the Borana concept of manhood (Legesse, 1973; Oba, 1996). In Borana culture, *guutuu* is a symbol of masculinity, and social and economic status as a cattle owner (Oba, 1996). Thus, using folk songs the Borana women provoke a man to become a Borana *guutuu*. Borana *guutuu* implies ritual superiority and is believed to defend Borana's identity, territory, ritual places, and customs, and believed to have high social and economic status (Oba, 1996). Through the songs, the women evoke manhood to defend the Borana territories and identities to keep the peace of Borana. Since every member of the Borana has a share in keeping the peace of Borana (Oba, 1996), the Borana women play their part through folk songs and ritual materials (milk, slaughtered coffee, cooked foods, etc.) provision.

Through the women's songs, the Borana men are encouraged to defend their land, pasture, territory, and community. This result is consistent with Matiza and Mutasa's (2020) which assert that war songs encouraged people to fight for their country's freedom by triggering their feelings and moods.

3.8. Women's Folksongs and Implication for Peace of Borana

Pastoralists use cattle for a variety of reasons, including safeguarding themselves from hazards, providing them as a means of subsistence, and supporting them for social, cultural, ritual, and religious purposes (Kaimba, Njehia, and Guliye, 2020). For the Borana community, livestock is seen as a valuable resource since it is a means of food security and livelihood. Anyone who owns it is considered wealthy and has higher social capital and status (Oba, 1996). Cattle have been the Borana community's primary economy and source of wealth. This is why the women of the Borana community praise and honor the men who raid cattle and defend their own. The Borana women, thus, have high moral

standards and respect for livestock raiders and the cattle they have taken. This is a result of the fact that women make considerable contributions to the raising of livestock, which serves as the primary source of income and reputation. Hence, the Borana women have been using folk songs to entice males to protect their cattle and plunder more cattle from neighbours. This idea is consistent with studies by Kaimba *et al.* (2011), who claim that males give up their lives to protect their livestock and engage in raiding to have more for social and economic progress. In this instance, women's songs make a significant economic contribution to families and local communities. On the other hand, as already mentioned, the Borana women use songs to encourage males to protect their lands, territories, and pastures and raid the cattle of neighbours to maintain and promote the Borana peace. In general, the Borana Oromo women's folk songs are of utmost importance in preserving communal peace, territorial peace, and land governance harmony since cattle have historically been seen as a source of income and a mark of status, which in turn contributes to sustainable Borana peace.

4. Conclusions

The Borana women use folk songs in social, cultural, and political situations to discharge their roles and responsibilities. Through the folk songs, the women acclaim heroes, ridicule the coward, and challenge masculinity through criticism. They use the songs as a powerful weapon to intensify masculinity which in turn aggravates inter-clan and -ethnic conflicts and violence. So, the folk songs performed by Borana women serve to perpetuate a cultural ethos that places value on bravery and aggression by glorifying warriors and their heroic deeds, potentially contributing to the escalation of conflicts within the community. The finding further revealed that Borana women are called brave and heroine as they are the mothers of warriors. The finding sparkles discussion among feminist scholars and activists, advancing more complex thinking that takes into account women's experiences as conflict instigators and perpetrators making it clear that pastoral women should be involved at the negotiating table.

In a nutshell, the Borana women's songs have tripartite roles. For one thing, it intensifies manhood heartening bravery, and a culture of heroism. For another, using songs, the women encourage raids and counter-raids which in turn aggravates, bolsters, and reinforces inter-clan and inter-ethnic conflicts. Furthermore, it increases the number of livestock which boosts the economy and income of the household as well as the community's well-being. Hence, the conclusion is consistent with the theoretical framework of feminist conflict and conflict resolution, which argues that women actively participate in conflicts and peace negotiations. The study implies that all stakeholders who work on peace issues need to be aware of the fact that women actively engage in both conflict and peace processes and any attempt to transform conflicts and maintain peace cannot be viable without the participation of women. In addition, the finding of the research hints at the fact that culture strongly influences human behaviour, and any endeavor of peacemaking needs to take into account the cultural, social, and economic environments of conflicts.

5. Acknowledgments

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Lists of informants

No.	Name of informants	Date of interview	Place of interview
1.	Kuluula Areeroo	July 13, 2022	Dhas
2.	Dr. Borbor Bule	March 16 and 17, 2022	Dubluk
3.	Nonno Borbor	March 10, 2022 and August 16, 2022	Yaabello
4.	Halakee Godaanaa	March 07, 2022	Yaabello
5.	Almaz Liban	July 10, 2022	Arero
6.	Kaballe Liban	March 18, 2022	Yabello
7.	Wariyo Jaldessa	March 18, 2022	Yabello
8.	Wamu Boru	August 12, 2022	Arero
9.	Jiloo Alaa	July 25, 2022	Areeroo
10.	Kilichas Areeroo	August 10, 2022	Surupha
11.	Jarso Liban	March 13, 2022	Moyale
12.	Alake Godana	August 23, 2022	Dubluk
13.	Guyo Boru	March 26, 2022	Dubluk
14.	Haca Hasano	March 15, 2022	Surupha
15.	Lasi Jaldesa	March 16, 2022	Surupha
16.	Dinkinesh Bahiru	March 16, 2022	Surupha
17.	Golicha Dhenge	March 20, 2022	Surupha
18.	Boru Liban	March 19, 2022	Surupha
19.	Mr. Kanu Jilo	August 27, 2022	Arero
20.	Mrs. Kuluula Areeroo	July 5, 2022	Dhas
21.	Mr. Wariyo Dima	March 7, 2022	Yabello
22.	Mrs. Kaballe Halake	March 5, 2022	Yabello
23.	Mr. Wariyo Dima Booruu	March 8, 2022	Yabello
24.	Mr. Bonaya Dida	March 5, 2022	Addis Ababa
25.	Mrs. Ayisha Golicha	March 21, 2022	Moyale
26.	Jarso Liban	July 23, 2022	Teltelle
27.	Mr. Jatanii Diidaa	March 17, 2022	Yabello
28.	Mrs. Daadhi Booruu,	July 26, 2022	Arero
29.	Mr. Hussien Galacha	July 11, 2022	Arero
30.	Mr. Golicha Dhengicha	March 10, 2022	Dhas
31.	Ms. Halake Godana	August 20, 2022	Arero
32.	Mrs. Mr. Momina Jarso	August, 28 2022	Guchi
33.	Mr, Galgalo Tadhole	March 4, 2022	Mega
34.	Mr. Mengistu Eticha	March 10, 2022	Yabello
35.	Mr. Golicha Dhenge,	July 10, 2022	Surupha
36.	Mrs. Almaz Golicha	March 3, 2022	Teltele
37.	Mrs. Bekelech Bahiru	March 12, 2022	Surupha
38.	Mrs. Dimbilal Abera	March 12, 2022	Yabello