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**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ISSA-AFAR VIOLENCE IN ETHIOPIA AND  
THE IMPERATIVE FOR CONSTRUCTIVE TRANSFORMATION**

By

**MUAUZ GIDEY ALEMU**

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**Supervisor:** Prof. Siphamandla Si Zondi

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**Declaration**

**I, Muauz Gidey Alemu,** declare that this dissertation is my own work both in conception and execution, which I hereby submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other university.

**Muauz Gidey Alemu**

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## **Dedications**

To all the victims of Issa-Afar violence



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## Abstract and Keywords

*This thesis critically analyzes the phenomena of Issa-Afar violence in Ethiopian in the post-1991 period. It interrogated the explanation for the self-perpetuating nature of the violence militating against successive peace-making efforts and the way forward towards its constructive transformation. Previous studies on the topic have either focused on the nature of the Issa-Afar conflict, in general, or conceived the violence as war violence per se. However, given the long history, multiple and overlapping contexts and types of violence involved, the reason for the continuity of the violence and how to transform the violent relations constructively have not been analyzed. Because the nature, utility and dynamic of the violence, on the one hand, the explanation behind its self-perpetuating nature, on the other was not analyzed. Therefore, this study examined the entirety of the violence including the memory and narratives of Issa-Afar violence from a phenomenological point of view. The study was informed by hybrid theories of violence and peace-making, mainly Galtung's and Lederach's theoretical and conceptual lenses were used as analytical frameworks for explaining the continuity of violence and the imperative for constructive transformation. Accordingly, the study came up with the following major findings. First, Issa-Afar violence became self-perpetuating because of the interplay direct violence, structural violence, cultural violence over time. Second, the unique feature of Issa-Afar violence is that the memory of past violence has great effects in justifying the continuity of violence in the above mentioned three forms. Besides, the continued territorial eviction gave it a characteristic of foundational violence. Third, the various changes, which occurred during the post-1991 period at local national and regional levels have augmented the cycle of violence. Fourth, the cumulative effect of the above situations contributed to the failure of successive peace-making, which in turn added to the collective loss of hope in the possibility of peace, that reinforced the commitment to pursue the way of violence. Thus, the constructive transformation of Issa-Afar violence requires a comprehensive, ingenious, authentic and indigenous turn informed by the lived experience of the people than a top-down and state-security informed approach.*

**Key words:** *Issa-Afar, Afar-Horn, Violence, Peace-Making, Indigenous Turn, Phenomenology, Conflict Transformation, Ethiopia.*



## List of Acronyms

ABAO	Afar Boundary Affairs Office
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data
ADC	Addis Ababa Djibouti Corridor
ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
AIJSCP	Afar and Issa Joint Special Committee for Peace
AIKW	Adal-Issa-Kerrayu Wereda
AIWG	Adal-Issa Wereda Governor
AIWGO	Adal-Issa Wereda Governor Office
AIWJPC	The Afar-Issa Wereda Joint Peace Committee
AIZJPC	Afar-Issa Zone Joint Peace Committee
AJSAB	Administration, Justice and Security Affairs Bureau of Afar
ALF	Afar Liberation Front
AND	Afar Diaspora Network
ANRS	Afar National Regional State
APDA	Afar People Development Association
APDP	Afar People Democratic Party
APP	Afar People Party
ARDUF	Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front
ASJPC	Afar-Somali Joint Peace Conference
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAGrWGO	Chercher-Adal-Gurgura Wereda Governorate Office
CEAINC	Committee for the Eradication of Afar and Issa Nationalities conflict
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
DDR	Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DMA	'Dichotomy-Manicheism-Armageddon'
DW	Deutsche Welle
EBC	Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
ECA	Ethiopian Custom's Authority
EEBC	Eritrea and Ethiopian Border Commission
EEBW	Eritrea-Ethiopia Border War
ENM	Ethiopia National Museum
EPLF	Eritrean People Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESDM	Ethiopian Somali Democratic Movement
ETV	Ethiopian Television
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FEW	Famine Early Warning
FPD	Federal Police Detachments



FRUD	Front pour La Restauration de l'Unité Democratique (Front for the Restoration for Unity and Democracy)
HGG	Hararge governorate General
HGGO	Hararge governorate General Office
HOF	House of Federation
HPO	Hararge Provincial Office
IDF	Israeli Defense Force
IDMC	International Displaced Persons Monitory Center
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IGE	Imperial Government of Ethiopia
IGLF	Issa and Gurgura Liberation Front
JPCs	Joint Peace Committees
JPPC	Joint Public Peace Conferences
JTACCT	The Joint Transitional Administration Council of Contested Territories
MIO	Ministry of Interior
MoFedA	Ministry of Federal Affairs
NDR	New Democratic Revolution
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
PDRE	People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
PMGE	Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia
PSSO	Public Security and Safety Office
RAH-OP	Regional Affairs Head at Office of the Prime Minster
RNDF	Representative of National Defence Forces
RPJS	Regional Presidents Joint Session
RRR	Ridge-Ridge-Ridge
SALWs	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SNNP	Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples
SNRS	Somali National Regional State
TPLF	Tigray People Liberation Front
UNDP	United Nations Development program
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UN	United Nations
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development
USF	United Somali Front
VOA	Voice of America



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## Chapter One

### Introduction

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#### 1.1 On the Research Theme

Pastoralists constitute a sizeable share of the population and unrewarded production in Africa, in general, and Ethiopia, in particular. Two-thirds of Ethiopia's total area size is within arid and semi-arid pastoral areas, prone to military-security concerns. As elsewhere, most pastoralists occupy geographic, economic, social and political fringes of African states and societies that characterize the multi-dimensional marginalisation, repression and predation of the pastoral social and production system. This contributed to the perpetuation of cultural, structural and physical violence. The frequency of protracted violent conflict in pastoral areas embedded in the mutual causation between the nature of the Ethiopian state to which pastoralists were marginally integrated and the harsh life conditions of pastoralists, gave birth to the erroneous conception of pastoral society as ungovernable people of hostile territories.

In effect, in both human and state security parlance, most pastoral areas are zones of negative sovereignty that are subject to troublesome internal and regional dynamics, not least destabilizing multidimensional global changes. Tragically, pastoralists are often blamed for ungovernability and incessant violence. Though victims of violence they are not totally passive objects of multidimensional insecurity and protracted violence that they have a part in. The prevalence of violence in the pastoralist world is the result of the interplay of multiple factors and overlapping contexts not exclusively limited to the world of pastoralists. The unique nature of pastoralist economic, political and social systems as well as strategic military and security considerations embedded in local, national, regional and global contexts, affect pastoral conflict dynamics and perpetuation of violence. The escalation of violent pastoralist conflicts in the post-Cold War era with the growing localization of international conflicts attests their interconnectedness with the interface of complex factors and overlapping contexts at various levels (Lederach, 1999: 11-12). This is evident from the simultaneous process of localization of



international conflicts and regionalization of local conflicts (Kaldor, 2005:155-158). Kaldor has also indicated the potential of the perpetuation of violence as one characteristic feature of the new wars (2013: 2). According to Lederach (1999:18), intra-national conflicts have become more akin to communal and inter-communal conflicts than inter-state ones. Most of the conflicts in the Horn of Africa and including in Ethiopia, which have become intractable and protracted, have long historical roots of violence and animosity (Prendergart, 1999: 157-169). One of such conflicts is the Issa-Afar conflict in Ethiopia.

The Issa and Afar people are pastoralists belonging to the Southern Cushitic linguistic category in the Horn of Africa. They live in the arid desert and semi-arid territories of the Afar and Somali Horn (mainly the Eastern part of Ethiopia, South Eastern part of Eritrea, Djibouti and Somali land). The Issa people are one of the nine Somali clan confederacies living in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somali Land. The Afar people are a distinct ethnic category in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti. The Issa and the Afar, besides their pastoral mode of production, share multiple commonalities. They share a clan-based egalitarian social organization, patrilineal lineage and endogamous marriage system, religion (Sunni Muslims), customary legal, political and conflict transformation systems, linguistic and socio-cultural values. Moreover, they share the myth of descent from a remote ancestor, a history of solidarity and victory against, defeat and incorporation into the Highlander-Christian-Abyssinian Empire state of Ethiopia by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The Adal Sultanate, which rivaled and during the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century devastated the Highlander-Christian-Abyssinian Empire state of Ethiopia under the leadership of Imam Ahmed Ibrahim Algazi, was mainly composed of the Afar and Somali. Despite these similarities the Issa and the Afar of Ethiopia have a long history of conflict that dates back to the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Yasin, 2010: 72-73; Gamaldin, 1993).

Since the incorporation and marginal integration of the Somali and the Afar into the Ethiopian state after World War II under Emperor Haile Silassie I, the nature of Issa-Afar conflict became double-edged in that there was pastoral and territorial conflict over access and control of resources, on the one hand, and political conflict with the state, on the other hand. During the



reign of the last absolute monarch of Ethiopia (1931-1974), Issa-Afar violent conflict continued unabated owing to the predatory nature of the state that kept pastoralists marginalized and alienated. The Afar and the Issa were the worst affected among Ethiopian pastoralists. During early 1970s, the violent confrontation between them had been exacerbated by internal and regional political dynamics. The Eritrean secessionist armed struggle and the Ethio-Somalia war were major factors that set the regional context of Issa-Afar violence. The military government that came to power after the 1974 revolution in Ethiopia, despite its commitment to address the Issa-Afar conflict under the ambit of the nationalities question, continued relying on repressive measures. For both governments, the central concern was ensuring the security of the road and railway line traversing the Afar and the Issa territory to the sea through the port of Assab and Djibouti. The imperative to address the root causes of Issa-Afar violent conflict was relegated to the state's interest in securing access to the sea and general state security concerns. In effect, the violence continued unabated after the post-1991 regime change that brought to power a coalition of armed groups promising political transformation and democratic resolution of historically embedded conflicts (Muauz, 2015b: 240, 245-246).

As part of the post-1991 change and transformation, the Afar and Issa became one of the autonomous constituent units of the ethno-national federal arrangement; they achieved the status of a self-governing regional state of Afar and an autonomous Issa zone within the self-governing Somali National Regional State. The new regime that came to power in the post-1991 period viewed the continuity of the violent conflict to have been rooted in mainly the undemocratic nature of the past regimes which manipulated the Afar and the Issa to counterbalance each other. Also, problems associated with poverty, harmful traditional practices and lack of good governance implacably affected the democratic resolution of the conflict. The governing Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)-led government has also articulated its commitment to end Issa-Afar violent conflict and has embarked on successive peace and reconciliation programs that continue to this date. However, the plethora of peace and conflict resolution conferences could not reduce the tempo of the violence; instead, Issa-Afar



violence escalated repeatedly causing immense damage to the life, psyche, property and human relations among the people of Issa and the Afar. The conflict became intractable (irresolvable) and the violence vicious and mimetic, feeding on preceding violent episodes (Muauz, 2010).

Lederach (1999:18) correctly characterized the nature of contemporary communal conflicts as “rooted in long-standing animosities that are reinforced by high level of violence and direct experiences of atrocities. As the result, psychological and even cultural features often drive and sustain more than substantive issues”. The Issa-Afar conflict fits exactly in this description. In the post-1991 period, the generations of violent conflict episodes have engendered the calcification of socio-psychological perceptions, emotions and subjective experiences of fear, animosity, loss, trauma and victimization. The conflicting groups compare their destiny to the Israeli-Palestinian entrapment which suggests a divine predisposition to a situation in which humans have no means to change. Their experience and memory of violence and its perpetuation in the present have become detached from the substantive and originating issues of territory, dominance and the immediate basic needs of water and pasture for their cattle (Muauz, 2015a:147-148).

The Issa-Afar violent conflict is a classic case of “reciprocal causation” where the actions and reaction involved in the cycle of violence and counter-violence nourish and perpetuate the violent conflict (Lederach, 1999:15). The violent conflict is rooted in, using Galtung’s articulation, the three dimensions of a full-fledged violent conflict, namely: cultural, structural and direct violence. Such types of conflicts require the harnessing of the negative energy of violent conflicts for the constructive transformation of cultural, structural, personal and relational challenges (Galtung, 1996: 89-91, 93-95, 107-133). For Lederach (2003), this constructive transformation of relations destroyed by violence requires addressing the immediate issue of reducing violent incidents; resolution of issues of conflict as a medium range goal; and positive transformation of the quality of relations in the long range. The synchronized implementation of the tasks in the three-time frames brings to focus the imperative of addressing the impact of past and current violence on people.



Viewed this way, the interventions by the Ethiopian government have been one of responding to Issa-Afar violent incidents for the sake of ensuring the security needs of the state apparatus. On the matter of the resolution of the issue of conflict in the medium time frame, it has concluded that resource scarcity (of water and grazing), the territorial question and lack of good governance are the major challenges sustaining the violence but whether it has acted decisively to eliminate this factor is subject for debate. In the long range the transformation of pastoral livelihood into sedentary agricultural society has been envisioned. Despite the inadequacy of the measures in responding to the mutated nature of the contemporary Issa-Afar violent conflict, the state persisted in relying on state security-driven approaches designed for conflicts of the Cold War era (Muauz, 2010). Consequently, the violence has continued to be more intransigent to interventions to reduce violence and resolve conflict than ever. The attempt to explain the perpetuation of Issa-Afar violence based only on resource and cultural factors have not provided a proper understanding of the challenge. Interventions informed by such explanations have consistently failed, indicating the need for a greater understanding of the problem on a wider scale than past approaches. Thus, it is within this wider context that this study on the phenomenology of Issa-Afar violence in post-1991 Ethiopia and the imperative for transformation is based.

## **1.2 Study Objectives**

This study is an attempt to analyze the explanations for Issa-Afar violent conflict perpetuation, and the way forward towards transcending the impasse from the experience of the phenomena of violence within the everyday social contexts of the Issa and the Afar people in the post-1991 period. The primary objective of this study is to explore the phenomenon of the perpetuation of Issa-Afar violence and the way forward for its constructive transformation from the perspective of the people involved. This is to be carried out on the basis of the dialectical interaction of the peoples' experience and theories of intractable violent conflicts, as well as theories of transcendence and constructive transformation (Gantung, 1996; Galtung, 2001; Lederach, 2003;



Lederach, 2006; Aijimer and Abbink (eds), 2000). Following the main objective, three sub-objectives are to guide the study.

First, with a view to understand the phenomenon of perpetual violence from the hitherto neglected viewpoint of the pastoralists, the study aims at an in-depth description of the historical prognosis, change and transformation of Issa-Afar violent conflict in the post-1991 period. In effect, it enables an understanding of the ways in which ordinary members of society understand and attend to perpetual violence and the social and psychological effects of living in a violent situation. From this, the nature of the meaning, the history, memory and experience of violence constituted and instituted in their real-life experience can be grasped without the addition of elaborate ideological and political constructs. Furthermore, it allows the researcher access to the subjective experience of the people of Issa and Afar, and hence enters a potentially insightful inter-subjective horizon.

Secondly, based on the personal experience of the violence in the two groups and the inter-subjective meaning shared with the researcher from the first sub-objective, the study probes the research subjects' explanation for the perpetuation of the violent conflict and its intransigency in the post-1991 period. This endeavour brings to light the hitherto unheard views of the people about the causes of perpetual violence in the Issa-Afar world. Thus, the study enables an alternative viewpoint to the dominant state and academic narrative.

Thirdly, the study focuses on how to change the perpetual violence from mimetic (reciprocal) violence into mimetic (cooperative) peace, which underscores the constructive transformation of the violent relationship between the Afar and the Issa people. Their view of the violent conflict as dilemma and paradox, and of the future is to be discussed. Moreover, their prescription and proscriptions are thematically interpreted against orientations of the state towards the matter and preexisting theoretical constructs of constructive conflict transformation.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

The literature on pastoralist violence in general and its intractable nature in the Horn of Africa in particular, has been the focus of attention of many academics. The perpetuation of violence



among pastoralists is explained on two grounds; one is related to livelihood vulnerability, and the other is custom. Both explanations, in turn, are based on the analyses of the violence involved in reciprocal cattle raiding and rustling. From a livelihood vulnerability perspective, the violence associated with cattle raiding and rustling is an adaptive response to the deteriorating condition of pastoral livelihood. The aim of restocking after a massive loss of cattle following a period of disaster or being raided results in vehement reciprocal raiding that underscores the perpetuation of pastoral violence. Reciprocal cattle raiding and cattle rustling are also the customary practices among pastoralists for the purpose of social values and economic rationality of restocking cattle lost either by cattle raiding or massive cattle death caused by natural calamities. In effect, cattle raiding and cattle rustling serve as a factor in the perpetuation of violence. Thus, the violence related with cattle raiding and rustling is explained as a reaction to resource scarcity and as part of the custom of pastoral social systems (Schilling, Opiyo and Scheffran, 2012; Ayalew, 2004; Ryan, 2014).

On another scale, pastoral violence in the Horn is examined from a political marginalization perspective namely, marginalization induced vulnerability (Pavanello, 2009) and the pastoral defiance of the state (Onyango, 2010). The prevalence of arms and criminal trafficking networks in the Horn as in the Karimojong (Leff, 2009) and Somali clusters are fertile conditions for the prevalence of violence. A case focusing on Karrayu-Oromo pastoralists in the Lower Awash Valley of Ethiopia, the home of many Ethiopian pastoralists, explains the violence in light of shrinking pastoral space, environmental degradation and economic predation that rendered pastoral violence less manageable (Alemmaya and Hagmann, 2008).

There are also explanations based on the colonial legacy, namely that the post-colonial state has inherited the violence of the colonial system and is at the worst expressed among pastoralists occupying the fringe of the post-colonial state and society (Farred, Kavwahirehi and Praeg(eds), 2014). Given the unique nature of the Ethiopian state in the history of colonialism, as the exception for being not colonized, this line of argument does not provide an explanation of the nature of incessant violence among the Afar and Issa of Ethiopia. The Issa-Afar perpetual violent conflict has drawn divergent academic and official explanations. The above general explanations on pastoral violence are also reflected in the multiple explanations of Issa-Afar violence



discussed below. To set the discussion in perspective, the explanations are summarized under four categories.

### **1.3.1 Cultural Violence Explanations**

The cultural violence explanation is based on the view that the intractability of Issa-Afar violence is due to the presence of cultural practices, norms and institutions that foster the resolution of conflict using force. The economic, social and political system of pastoralists the culture of pastoral violence is rooted in provides the structures of continuity of violence. This explanation is promoted by the government and some academics. Often the value of firearms, the practice of revenge killing and the institutions of traditional cattle raiding and counter-raiding prevalent among the Issa and Afar, are invoked as explanations for the culture of violence (Bekele, 2010). This view is one aspect of continuity of state orientation across the three regimes (Bekele, 2006; IGE, 1943-1974; PDRE., 1985-1991; PMGE, 1978-1985; MoFedA, 2003). The explanation applies to the aspects of violence involving the above aspects of the violence. However, the violence has structural and direct violence dimensions that the cultural violence explanation does not explain. Besides, this explanation is ideologically and politically biased toward the (Ethiopian) highlander, Christian, and settled agricultural way of life.

### **1.3.2 Political Ecology Explanations**

Political Ecology brings together a political-economic perspective and an ecological perspective to understand the interconnections between society and the environment. Political Ecology involves understanding the quality of the relationship between people and nature, and how ecologies are affected by political, economic and social processes. It also offers new understandings of power relations in human-environment relationships (Robins, 2004). From a political ecology point of view, Issa-Afar violence is explained by a chain of closely knitted factors. The violence is understood in view of the pastoral ecological vulnerability induced scarcity and the decline of pastoral livelihood engendered by the political marginalization, development-induced displacement, and pastoral land alienation. Thus, scarcity of pastoral resources is at the center of this discussion. Environmental scarcity is widely believed to be the main contributor to different forms of violence (Homer-Dixon, 2001). Similarly, Bardhan (2005) argues that the powerful role of identity competition over scarce resources results in violence.



In the case of the discovery of new resources and abundance of precious stones, oil and metals as in the case of diamonds in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (De Boeck, 2001; Olsson, 2006), and the Opal of Ethiopia (Muauz, 2014), as opposed to the resources scarcity explanation, the resource surfeit argument could be apt to explain the perpetuation of violence. Similarly, the creation of new valuable resources like government funding, markets and political office (Markakis J. , *Anatomy of a Conflict: Afar and Issa Ethiopia*, 2003) could also be the source of conflict. These resource-centered orthodoxies are being challenged for neglecting the motivations and subjective perceptions of local actors (Hagmann T. , 2005). Recent studies conducted within the context of East African pastoral areas also relativize—if not utterly dismiss—the link between resource scarcity (or abundance) and violent conflicts by focusing on newly introduced opportunities (for example access to illicit trade and the demand for better state benefits) and the historical process of modern state-building to explain conflicts (Hagmann and Alemmaya, 2008; Yasin, 2008; Markakis, 2003).

The cogency of the resource scarcity or surfeit argument to explain conflict and violence notwithstanding, many academic works on Ethiopian pastoralists attempt to relate pastoral violence to the depletion of pastoralist resources rooted in the historical marginalization and land alienation of pastoralists. They argue that pastoral conflicts are the consequence of land alienation, development-induced displacement and marginalization (Buli, 2006; Ayele, 2016). The problem of pastoral land tenure systems and the land alienation of pastoralists as in Karrayu country (Ayalew, 2004) and the Afar of Lower Awash Valley (Gamaldin, 1993) reinforces this line of argument. However, environmental changes, growing pressure on, and the depletion of pastoral resources, are sources of violence among pastoralists of the Dassanech (Gebre, 2012) and the Borana (Boku, 2008).

The political ecology-based explanation of Issa-Afar violent conflict is premised on the effect of historical marginalization and exploitation of pastoralists that in turn contributed to the ecological crisis which provided the context for a perpetuation of violence (Getachew, 2001). This is underpinned (Kameri-Mbote, 2005) by the major theme that underscores this class of intellectual discourse on the topic at hand - the historical marginalization and exploitation of pastoralist Issa and Afar are behind the conflict (Getachew, 2001). This explanation focuses on the conflict in terms of dwindling pastoralist livelihood as a result of the commercialization of



pastoralist land. The historical reference is made to the advent of the commercialization of vast pastoralist fertile land on the banks of the Middle and Lower Awash Valley by foreign and domestic concessionary companies, state commercial farms, and plantations (Gamaldin, 1993; Bekele, 2006).

Moreover, the establishment of national parks and game reserves, along with ill-planned and executed economic activities that have not taken note of impacts on the pastoralist systems have created vulnerability and threats to livelihood by narrowing the pastoralist resource base (Hagmann, 2005; Getachew, 2001). Political ecology has informed explanations as to why Issa-Afar conflict continues to be an intractable situation and relates it to the repressive nature of the Ethiopian state. Others relate the conflict dynamics to scarcity and demographic pressure factors (Buli, 2006). Getachew's account goes further than the political ecology linkage by adding culture and social dynamics accompanying the perpetuation of conflict among the Afar and the Issa. Other works on the Karrayu (Ayele, 2016; Ayalew, 2004; Buli, 2006), the closest neighbor to, and sharing similar circumstances with the Afar, are vital in showing how the political marginalization and land alienation; the marginal integration of pastoralist into the capitalist market economy, and the subsequent commercialization of pastoral resources, cause and aggravate the crisis of pastoral livelihood and ecology. Therefore, consequent scarcity sustains pastoral violence. The political ecology explanation of Issa-Afar violence does not explain its structural continuity of politically, demographically and climatically induced shrinking of the pastoral resource base and how it continues to contribute to the exacerbation and escalation of violence.

However, the post-1991 pastoral conflict is not only about pastoral resources but also the interplay of new and old tangible and intangible resources. These include but is not limited to, political power, access to trade and markets, and the psychological and symbolic significance of space and territory (Hagmann and Alemmaya, 2008; Markakis, 2003; Muauz, 2007; Membere, 2013). Another important unique feature of Issa-Afar violence is that it has been neglected in analysis on both periods of scarcity and abundance that, without contravening the validity of political ecology explanations for the continued historical marginalization. This requires further explanation beyond resource-orthodoxy.

### **1.3.3 Geopolitical Explanations**



The geopolitical explanation of Issa-Afar violent conflict in the post-1991 era examine the conflict in view of the changes and continuities of the nature of states, boundaries and relations in the Afar and Issa Horn of Africa. The major regional political dynamics in this regard are associated with the secession of Eritrea along with the Afar Red Sea coast from Ethiopia, which had impacted on both the Ethiopian state and the Afar people. The secession of Eritrea transformed Ethiopia into the largest landlocked state in the Horn of Africa dependent on Eritrea and Djibouti for access to the sea. After the Eritrea-Ethiopia Border War (EEBW), Ethiopia became totally dependent on the port of Issa-dominated Djibouti. The two developments could be considered a problem for the Afar people on two counts: first, the secession of the Red Sea Afar along with Eritrea saw the people of Afar divided into three states-Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti-adding to their vulnerability to Issa invasion. Second, Ethiopia's dependence on Issa-dominated Djibouti is a disadvantage to the Afar besides the historical skepticism of Afar-Horn states to Afar political movements as shown in the all Afar rebellion of 1998 in Djibouti, was crushed by the collaboration of Eritrean, Ethiopian and Djibouti troops, thus providing a political victory to the Issa in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, in this period the Issa and the Afar are better empowered in Ethiopian than before. Regionally, the Afar (unlike their counterpart the Issa who are empowered both in Ethiopia and ruling in Djibouti) found themselves more divided among the three states than ever (Tadese and Yohas, 2002; Yasin, 2008 and Muauz, (2015b). In effect, the agenda of Afar unity became a threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the three states. The post-1991 dynamics shows how changes in the geopolitical calculus of inter-state relations affect the nature of inter-communal relations.

According to Yasin (2008), the manipulation and division of the Afar (in three political entities), and the strategic position of the Afar homeland in the Horn of Africa, are viewed as the structural sources of vulnerability for the Afar in the region. Yasin creates consistent narratives about how various governments in the Horn of Africa have been marginalizing the Afar for their political and security advantages. Thus, Issa-Afar violent conflict in Ethiopia is presented as a reflection of a regional interplay of factors; a deliberate political construction by states of the Afar-Horn to pin down potential 'threats' of a United Afar (Yasin, 2008). Hence, the conflict is predicated on state-community conflict of interest. However, this explanation is only relevant to one aspect of the conflict and does not represent the totality of the dynamics of the violence. The Issa-Afar conflict, like any other social conflict, creates a situation where the state-community clash of



interests is an aspect of the relational and structural dimensions of the conflict (Lederach, 2003). Nonetheless, it is possible to present the conflict as a sub-category of the regional meta-system of conflict in which case the sub-system is in part explained by its regional interconnectedness or the fragility of the region and vice versa. Recent works have also examined the Issa-Afar violent conflict from the vantage point of the undemocratic nature of the Afar-Horn states, regional instability, mutual insurgency, rampant corruption and emergent ethnicity (Yasin, 2010; Muauz, 2015b).

Tadese and Yonas (2002) have taken note of the post-Cold War dynamics and attempted to place the local-regional nexus within a geopolitical framework. This research shows how the internal dynamics of the Issa-Afar conflict are linked with the political dynamics in Ethiopia and Djibouti. Their work, however, also suffers from an excess of the resource-based and ethnic dimension of explanations and it is limited in its temporal and analytical scope. Muauz's recent exposé of the geopolitics and human security of the Afar, despite an in-depth historical exploration of the conflict dynamics and the multi-level interplay of actors and systems, discussing for the first time the regional human security of the Afar (2015b), has limited focus on the Issa-Afar conflict.

The human security aspect is also limited in scope to the post-Cold War period. There are academic works which show the regionally embedded nature of the Issa-Afar conflict, but they are not directly focused on Issa-Afar violence (Dereje and Hoenn, 2008; Medhane, 2008; Gebru, 2009). The Issa and the Afar are affected by historical dynamics as they are not exceptions to post-Cold War geopolitical transformation. Protracted violent conflicts, such as the Issa-Afar struggle, are affected by changes and continuities in the geopolitical landscape. However, in terms of explaining the perpetuation of violence in the post-1991 Ethiopia, the literature lacks depth and focus.

#### **1.3.4 Eclectic Explanations**

The works categorized under this subsection attempt to investigate the interplay of complex factors, without an exclusive focus on certain aspects of causal explanations. According to Haggmann and Mulugeta (2008), unlike the past where resource scarcity was the dominant explanatory factor, the current violent conflict dynamics involve modern state politics, ethnicity,



and competition over new resources and problems of the capitalist mode of production. In essence, the conflicts go beyond the bounds of the pastoralists' domain and the resource-based explanation (Bekele, 2010). Important additions to the preexisting literature are the ethnicization/politicization of pastoral ethnic/clan identities which are used as instruments for the mobilization of the antagonistic ethnic/clan groups by a few political elites. Two studies on the Afar-Karrayu (Muauz, 2007) and the Afar-Issa conflict (Membere, 2013) argue that resources alone cannot be a sufficient explanation for the new ethnicized and securitized nature of current pastoral conflicts. Moreover, the deterioration and commercialization of customary conflict transformation systems are among other factors. This line of argument is also reflected in other works about conflicts among the pastoralists of Southern Ethiopia: the conflict between Boran and Digodi (Mohammud, 2005) and the conflict between the Borana and Geri pastoralists (Tigist, 2014). This trend is rooted in the struggle to secure a meaningful place in the ethnic federalist system of Ethiopia (Løber and Worm, 2015). Hence, the contemporary pastoral conflict has become mired with ethnicity, politics and security considerations.

Getachew's contribution foregrounds the interface of environmental, social, and political-economic, as well as state structures, as factors underlying the violence, and maintaining the intractability of the Issa-Afar conflict (Getachew, 2004). However, this explanation does not address its continuity in the post-1991 period, in light of the complex national and regional context in which the conflict finds itself embedded. Markakis (2003) provides a detailed historical analysis pointing to local, national and regional dimensions. At a regional level, he relates the conflict with the greater Afar and Issa-Somali in the Horn of Africa along a historical time line, starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to date, by analyzing how developments in neighboring Djibouti and Somalia affected Issa-Afar relations in Ethiopia. He also explains the responses of Ethiopian governments' in relation to state security and political concerns in countering the Greater-Afar threats by Issa, that in turn affected relation with Djibouti.

He further went on explaining the local dynamics of Issa-Afar violence in terms of competition over, what he termed as, 'the new resources' which refers to the competition for access and control of administrative and political power and positions which determine who gets what in Ethiopian political reality. As in any part of Ethiopia, controlling territory and ensuring autonomous administrative units means getting access to government funding, basic services and



amenities, besides returns from illicit trade and contraband trafficking (Markakis J. , Anatomy of a Conflict: Afar and Issa Ethiopia, 2003). ‘The new resources’ argument gave a cogent explanation for the struggle of Issa and Afar pastoralists in areas where pastoralist resources are not available. However, this line of argument relied too much on an elitist interpretation of the perpetuation of violence among the ordinary pastoralists.

Linked to Markakis’ ‘new resource’ argument, is the work of Alemmaya and Hagman (2008) that relates the continuity of Issa-Afar conflict to the politicization of identity as an enshrined constitutional right to self-determination (minimum one<sup>1</sup>, internal self-rule), which is territorial and unrealizable without territorial control. Consequently, they concluded, ethnicization of politics and territory for control over new political resources was behind the conflict. This is well observed for the period, but exclusively focused on an ethnicity-politics nexus, thus excluding historical causes and effects. By and large, the merit each study brings to bear on an understanding of Issa-Afar conflict notwithstanding, all bear limitations. First, for example the works of Markakis (2003), and Alemmaya and Hagman (2008) have methodological and epistemological reductionists’ orientation, and limitations in framework and level of analyses. The second is the limitation of the scope of causes and impacts, with exclusive emphasis either on the structural causes (epicenter), or the episodic manifestation of the conflict. Third, the view that violence is limited to direct violent actions excludes the invisible cultural and structural aspects rooted in the psychic and social mores of the Issa and the Afar society. Still another shortcoming in the above works is that the multiple factors are presented from an instrumentalist point of view that does not look into the non-instrumentalist and symbolic aspects of violence often seen as mere irrationality.

The four explanations have their own merits and demerits discussed in each respective subsection above. In general, all share common shortcomings on three counts which provided the rationale for this study. Firstly, even though there are ample research works addressing Issa-Afar conflict in general (which includes the violence dimension), no study has addressed the violence

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<sup>1</sup>This refers to the right of ethno-national groups to autonomy while the maximum program, as is provided in article 39 of the FDRE constitution, extends up to and including secession.



dimension only as a separate focus of study. Secondly, none has provided comprehensive explanations of the intractable nature of Issa-Afar violence in the post-1991 period, and its escalation in a period when it should have subsided. Besides, none has indicated a way forward to transform the energy of violence constructively into the energy of peace.

Thirdly, methodologically those works have not approached the issue from the point of view of the people directly experiencing violence, from a phenomenological vantage point. This research attempts to bridge the gaps mentioned above based on data to be collected from opinion leaders among the pastoral commons by administering deep interview, focus group discussion and presenting the lived experience of violence.

#### **1.4 The Research Problem**

Issa-Afar violent conflict, as detailed in the preceding sections, is one of the most protracted violent conflict resisting efforts of resolution and containment in Ethiopia. The post-1991 period is a period of paradox in the history of Issa-Afar violent conflict; this is the period in which unprecedented efforts of peacekeeping and peacemaking have been carried out, and at the same time a period of constant escalation and mutation of the nature of the violence. Administrative, political, economic and customary interventions for peace were attempted to no avail. The violence continued gathering momentum even where substantive and originating issues like resources, territory and interests are not primary. However, after every violent episode the people in conflict are becoming more committed to continuing their violent struggle than ever. It has become a typical phenomenon of self-perpetuating violence seemingly guided by reciprocal causation. However, up to date, neither the state nor the academic scholarship has come up with the explanation for its self-perpetuating nature and the way forward to transcend the never-ending cycle of violence. This problem is indicative of the imperative for phenomenological research engagement. Therefore, to explore the phenomenological intractability and protracted nature of Issa-Afar violence militating against interventions, and envisioning a design of constructive transformation, is at the center of this study.

This study aims to answer the following central questions:

- What is the experience of violence among the Issa and the Afar in Ethiopian in the post-1991 period?



Answering this question requires an analysis of the nature and changing features of the violence from the experience, perspectives and dilemmas of the people affected by the violence. The study is cognizant of the dominant role of the clan and customary leaders, politicians and influential people among the pastoral community in framing issues and setting agendas and constructing consensual narratives of experience and memory of violence. Hence, the data from such sources is believed to be representative of the experience of the people. This adds a new element to the prevailing understanding of the violence.

- Why has Issa-Afar violence in the post-1991 period become intractable and immutable to interventions?

The paradox of the post-1991 period as a period of escalated violence and persistent attempts of the constructive transformation of Issa-Afar violence raises the issue of explaining its intractability and immutability to interventions. Given the lack of comprehensive explanation, answering this question provides a new way of understanding and explaining Issa-Afar violence useful for innovative engagement for peace.

- How can the Issa-Afar relations be constructively transformed into lasting peace?

Once a new way of understanding the conflict is achieved, and then the imperative for designing an innovative change process of constructive transformation which is comprehensive and inclusive of the viewpoint of the people arises. This question enables the study to provide some solutions.

In response to these questions, the following assumptions are formulated to guide the study:

- Issa-Afar Violence in the post-1991 period has transformed into a social-psychological force, independent of the substantive and originating causes of conflict.
- While the violence has long been detached from substantive causes and has become embedded in deep-rooted mutual hatred which perpetuates and exacerbates the security dilemma of both groups, interventions by the state have been anachronistic to the current nature of the violence and the psychological and security needs of the people.



- The constructive transformation of the violent conflict requires interventions to be informed by the views and perceptions of Issa and Afar pastoralists as represented by opinion leaders

The study is limited in time scope to the post-1991 period up to the end of 2015, although some retroactive look at the pre-1991 period is provided for purposes of providing a historical context. Regarding dimensions, the topic covers the multiple dimensions of Issa-Afar violence and is not limited to the direct experience of war only. The study excludes the non-violent aspects of the conflict but addresses violence in all its manifestations, namely manifest (direct) and invisible (cultural and structural). The dimension of cultural violence involves a set of value systems and practices encouraging violence, hate and vengeance, rather than peaceful resolution of conflicts; the structural dimension involves structures and relationships of oppression, exploitation, marginalization, inequality and injustice (Galtung, 1996)

## **1.5 Research Methodology**

### **1.5.1 Philosophical Approach**

Following the tradition of interpretive phenomenology, the study is to generate as much subjective and inter-subjective (shared) meaning of the experience of violence from the point of view of the individual “bracketing” taken-for-granted assumptions and the usual way of understanding (Wertz, 2005; Aspers, 2009; Lester, 1999). In an effort to understand the intra-communal and inter-communal experiences, insights, motivations, actions and interpretations of the perpetual nature of Issa-Afar violence, some personal and subjective perspectives are essential (Lester, 1999). In contrast to the dispassionate objectivity of positivist researchers, the phenomenologist cannot be detached from personal presuppositions and should not pretend otherwise (Groenewald, 2004:7). Hence, the appropriate position to such type of study is critical subjectivity (Frauenberger, Good and Bright, 2010 ). The imperative to grasp how people experience, perceive, describe, make sense and explain a phenomenon, requires a phenomenological research engagement (Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004; Titchen and Hobson, 2005:121).



In exploring the phenomenon of Issa-Afar violence, as the people experienced and perceived it, therefore, the study has adopted phenomenological inquiry with critical subjectivity.

The above does not claim to entail a survey type of engagement; instead, since the violent dynamics have formed and crystalized in-group and out-group views, a qualitative embedded multiple case study design using key informant interviews, focus group discussion (FGD discussed at length below) and document analysis are to be used. Among the Issa and the Afar religious, clan, political and age-set (known in Afar language as *Fiqqima*) leaders have powerful representative roles in society. Accordingly, systematic purposive sampling is used to identify and select a few key informants. Phenomenological research with embedded multiple case study design involves the process of gathering ‘deep’ information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and document analyses, and representing it from the perspective of the research participants. The study is not based on the gathering and analyses of large samples but a few relevant and reliable informants (Frauenberger, Good and Keay-Bright, 2010). Therefore, it has the subjective epistemological claim of constructivism that reality and meanings are socially constructed, based on the subjective perception of people (Groenewald, 2004).

The assumption is that Issa-Afar violence is experienced, interpreted and responded to differently by different actors in the conflict situated in different geographic, political and power spaces. This claim is appropriate for this study because it is meant to bring to light the subjective views and perceptions of the different actors in the conflict. Besides, this claim is apt to the study on the ground that the Issa and the Afar have polarized views of the same violence affecting their lives, which in turn is different from the official explanation. Apart from descriptive phenomenology, this study is based on, interpretive phenomenology which looks into the generating of meaning from the peoples’ understanding, description and perception of the violence as well as from the forms and contents of communications. The interpretive dimension of the phenomenology of Issa-Afar violence enables the generating of understanding that challenged pre-established official and academic conceptions.



This understanding can be used as the basis for informing, supporting or challenging the prevailing policy and action of and peacemaking and the designing of a practical theory of the constructive transformation of the violent conflict (Lester, 1999).

A study such as this addressing the “what”, “why” and “how” questions involves a process of description and explanation of the nature of the phenomenon of violence, its intractable nature and the aptness of the interventions, and lastly a critical evaluation of the way forward for its future constructive transformation.

Because of the subjective nature of the constructive knowledge claim and the uniqueness of interpretive phenomenology, the study does not objectively uphold and deductively use one ground theory or model of analyses. As inductive qualitative research, it is to be informed by the theory of transcendence of Galtung and the constructive transformation model of Lederach. These underscore that violence does not end with the end of physical destruction and war, the direct violence, but it continues in an invisible (structural and cultural) form as trauma, victimization, hatred and the mutual obsession for revenge that serve as a basis for the recurrence of, and entrapment in perpetual violence. The way to overcome this is to bring about multidimensional (personal, relational, cultural and structural) transformation of the energy of violence into capabilities for peace, which is for Galtung the transcendence approach (Galtung, 1996) and for Lederach the constructive transformation model (Lederach, 2003; Lederach, 1999).

Multi-dimensional constructive transformation, which includes the transformation of actor, issue, rule and structures can bring resolution to intractable conflicts of values and interests. (Vayrynen, 1991). This is noted to be a visionary commitment to empathetic engagement and spiritual change within the heart and mind of people to see the light at the end of the tunnel (Chupp, 1993; Jones and Georgakopoulos, Summer 2009). In line with Galtung and Lederach’s assertion Louise Diamond (November 1994) argues that transformation is a heroic journey that takes people in intrapment of intractable conflicts beyond a win-win situation.

A situation wherein new relations can be built on the ashes of a society destroyed by intractable violent conflict, which underscores the transcendence perspective of Galtung (1996) and constructive transformation view of Lederach (2003).



### **1.5.2 Design of the Study**

The choice of design of the study is also informed by the subjective philosophy the research has adopted; this requires the generation of rich and in-depth knowledge of Issa-Afar violence from different sources, using different instruments and tools of data gathering. Therefore, to generate an in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon of the violence from multiple sources, the study design used is an embedded multiple case study type. According to Yin (2009: xi) multiple case study design is appropriate when a research topic is broadly defined, the study is not carried out by looking at isolated factors but covers contextual or complex conditions, and it has to rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence”. Moreover, Yin (2003) emphasizes that the data collection and analyses is done within each situation and across different contexts. When the multiple cases are examined against various nested contexts, it takes the form of embedded multiple case study design. The justification for this design emanates from the contextual nature of the specific case-phenomena of Issa-Afar violence and peace making examined in this study based on their respective contexts across time; the differently situated natures of the cases, and the need for multiple sources and methods of data collection to capture the subjective experiences, perceptions and meanings thereof.

### **1.5.3 The Sources of Data**

The primary sources for the study are clan, religious, age-set and political leaders of the Afar and the Issa, highlanders residing among the Afar and the Issa and selected members of the federal security and law enforcement selected by purposive sampling. The criterion for selection is their knowledge of the case under investigation. The polarized opinion of the Issa and the Afar notwithstanding, an important point to note regarding the representativeness of key informants is that the in-group opinion about, and interpretation of any phenomena among the Afar and Issa, is apparently uniform in certain respects. Owing to their quick information communication system and their egalitarian social arrangement, members of society irrespective of differences in age, sex, occupation tend to share similar opinions. They have a consensual way of framing and interpreting their experiences and paradoxes.

Thus, selecting the individuals considered representative of the people remains valid as long as the objective is to show the experience of the people. The Afar and the Issa have clan based



social organization. Clan, religious, customary and age-set groups are highly regarded as the most dependable repository and archival of communal memories and experiences of their people. Taking these categories of informants than the ordinary folk adds informant and validity and dependability. The experience of violence is subjective across the Issa and the Afar, and contextual among non-pastoralist actors in the conflict. Since the interest is to get in-depth knowledge about the phenomenon from sources differently situated, informal interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) will be carried out with individuals selected as key informants.

Informal interviews are important to capture the richness of life experience, understanding and imaginings of research participants (Edwards and Holland, 2013:89-91; Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Phenomenological interviews are a dialogical tool of creating meaning between the researcher and the researched (Gordon and Grass, 2000:1487). According to Bevan, a phenomenological interview requires a three staged process of acquiring knowledge: contextualizing, apprehending the phenomena, and clarifying the phenomena (Bevan, 2014:138). Therefore, this is the type of interview method used in this study.

FGDs are meant to garner the feeling, priorities and anxieties of people and to generate new ideas from carefully selected individuals. FGDs are needed to gather data complimentary to the interview data by bringing similar groups together and recording their dialogue and interaction (Aspers, 2009 ). Thus, FGDs enable the exploration of a specific set of issues such as peoples experience and view of Issa-Afar Violence.

Accordingly, four FGDs composed of purposively selected six key discussants each will be carried out to obtain the experience of violence, and their view of its intractability. Most important to this tool is to obtain their envisioning of the way forward for constructive transformation of the conflict. The researcher used archival audio and video sources, interviews and conference reports dating back to 2009 available in his custody as he was researching on the topic as expert in the region.

Archival sources of the Issa-Afar conflict situation and incident reports and the records of the various peacemaking efforts are also to be examined. Documents from Afar and Somali National Regional States, the Federal government (Ministry of Federal Affairs) and National Archives and Museum records in Addis Ababa are included. Secondary sources such books, journal articles,



conference proceedings and workshop reports are to be used to support the finding from primary sources. The ethical clearance for the collection of the data is granted.

#### **1.5.4 Research Approaches**

The study follows descriptive and analytical approaches. This includes the identification of changes in informant thought and division into thought segments; the specification of significant phrases in each thought segment; and distillation of each significant phrase to express the central meaning. After this, segments of ideas are to be grouped based on the similarity of their central ideas and meaning, and further refined for preliminary syntheses of the nature of Issa-Afar violence. Subjective and divergent views are analyzed similarly for content validity and against theoretical concepts and other empirical findings. Final syntheses of the essence of Issa-Afar violence, the explanation for its intractability and the way forward for its constructive transformation, will be provided.

#### **1.6 Structure of The Thesis**

The study consists of eight chapters. Chapter one provides background information about what necessitated the study; how the study was carried out, and other relevant issues of method, design and theoretical orientation revolving around the major problem statement and objectives of the study. Chapter two entitled, “Ending Perpetual Violence for Constructive Transformation”, deals with the major theoretical assumptions and conceptual frameworks on violence. It also sets the context of the general discourse on pastoral violence. Chapter three entitled, “Narratives of Old Issa-Afar Wars: the organization and nature of Violence in the pre-1991 Period” presents the prognosis and diagnosis of Issa-Afar violence since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An aspect of historical developments associated with Ethiopian state building and modern political dynamics are covered in mutual causation with Issa Afar conflict dynamics. Chapter four entitled, “The Overlapping Contexts of the Issa-Afar Violence in the post-1991 Period”. The various overlapping contexts from local to regional level are analyzed providing the background for the discussion in chapter five the emergent new face of the violence.

Chapter five entitled, “The Changing Face of Issa-Afar Violence: Organization, Meaning and Utility in the post-1991 Period”, presents the changing face of Issa-Afar violence after 1991. The form, organization and meanings that the new Issa-Afar violence assumed, and the (tangible and



intangible) purposes it was used for during this period are included. This chapter embeds contemporary violent conflict dynamics in the political and economic system put in place after the fall of the military government in Ethiopia. The discussion enables the study to indicate the changes and continuities of the nature of violence considering the place of Issa-Afar pastoralists in contemporary Ethiopian state and society.

Chapter six entitled, “Issa-Afar Peace-Making and the Recurrence of Violence”, examines the reason for the constant failure of the various high, medium and low-level state and non-state peacekeeping and peacemaking interventions from the point of view of the Issa and the Afar. This chapter assesses the reasons for their failure in light of the theoretical and empirical frameworks of transcending deep-rooted violent conflicts. The views and perceptions of the ordinary pastoralist can be garnered using the data collected from their clan, religious and political leaders. Chapter seven entitled, “Changing the Structure of Violence and the Future of Issa-Afar Peace”, is a detailed reflection on the future of Issa-Afar peace and presents the way forward for the constructive transformation of Issa-Afar relations. This chapter also provides inputs for policy makers and practitioners in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Chapter eight entitled, “Reflection on the Recurrence of Violence and Peace-Making”, tests and discusses the assumptions of the study and provides theoretical reflections on the case at hand and perpetuation of pastoral violence in general.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

Therefore, this study, by approaching the Issa-Afar violence from a phenomenological approach, separately focusing only on the nature of the violence caused by factors and actors located at various levels, and the various peace-making efforts, brings to light the explanations for the self-perpetuating nature of Issa-Afar violence. First, from the point of inherited violence as memory and narrative of violence. Second, as caused by the emergence changes involved in the overlapping contexts of violence, which in turn came to define the instrument, utility and nature of Issa-Afar violence in the post 1991 era. Moreover, it examines the perpetuating nature of Issa-Afar violence from the vantage point of the nature of the various peace-making processes, which unfortunately failed except for the 2014 peace deal the future of which is still hanging on balance. At last, a way forward for the constructive transformation of violent relation and lasting Issa-Afar peace is made along with theoretical contributions of the study.



## Chapter Two

# The Conceptual Framework of the Constructive Transformation of Violence

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the conceptual construct, nature and dynamics of violence as a phenomenon and discourse in shaping the quality of relationship among groups in a pastoral context. Albeit the contentions around the understanding of the meaning, nature and dynamics of violence shows that there is a dire need to address the continuity of violence in each context against the background of efforts to end and transform its energy into constructive use. Central to this effort is to provide a tentative theoretical construct and formulation helpful for understanding the phenomenal self-perpetuating nature of violence and the way to its constructive transformation.

Accordingly, the first section looks at the obscurity of violence as a philosophical problem. Taking violence as a construct to understand human past and posterity, continues to pose philosophical ambivalence contributing to the lack of consensus on defining the concept. Cognizant of this dilemma, the second section examines the contentions around defining violence. To understand the self-perpetuating nature, a workable definition is developed through the discussion. This is followed by an examination of the explanation on the self-perpetuating nature of violence from different theoretical orientations.

### 2.2 The Obscurity of Violence

The problem of the obscurity of violence relates to the multiple distinctions requiring clarification and justification to formulate a standard definition, if possible, at all. The obscurity lies in the paradoxical nature of violence, namely that it is a concern of everyone always, but has no common understanding around it. Understanding violence and human experience through the examination of violence have been a major challenge involving a complex overlap of multiple



distinctions. The multiplicity of the types and manifestations of violence, and their causes and consequences make the issue of violence a problematic terrain to explore.

The problem of the obscurity of violence can, in short, be framed as the problem of considering violence as applicable in a wide range of issues and scope (expecting too much out of violence) on one hand and very narrowly defining it as applicable only in exceptional circumstances (expecting too little). Defining violence in either of the conceptual constructs construes the obscurity of violence. At least to understand violence through its closest phenomena and concept of war as defined by Clausewitz as planned and organised human action as an instrument for a premeditated goal is not enough because violence is not limited to war, nor is war as capacious as violence. This is what Dodd (2004:1-2) calls “becoming the dupes of violence”. The understanding of violence is entangled by either expecting too much or too little from the violence that gives violence the meaning it does not have. On the one hand, violence is meant to represent activities ranging from the use of force in law enforcement up to international war. This makes violence an overstretched concept, which underscores expecting too much from violence. On the other hand, the expectation that violence is a temporary phenomenon that withers away with the improvement of the human conditions represents expecting too little.

This has important implications for defining violence. The two-fold problem of defining violence is stretching the scope of the concept too wide to include everything and constricting it too narrowly to refer to only physical harm. While Keane criticises Johan Galtung for the former he himself gets caught up in the latter (Keane, 2004). However, his warnings against delving into democratising and decontextualizing the concept are as important as Galtung’s wider frameworks of analyses which, he argues, have to be “broad enough to include the most significant varieties, yet specific enough to serve as a basis for concrete action (Galtung, 1969:168).

The focus of the modern classics on violence starting from the period of Clausewitz, Sorel, Benjamin, Arendt, Fanon, Sartre and Waltz, has focused mainly on war and the ethics involved. The latter especially has been the main occupation of all except Arendt who attempted to differentiate the nature, purpose and utility of power and violence. Except for Arendt, all argued



and justified the instrumental utility of violence for some end. Beginning from the just war and unjust war theories through the legitimacy of violence for proletarian revolution of Sorel, the pure means of Benjamin and the cleansing power of violence argued by Sartre and the legitimacy of violence against colonialism promoted by Fanon, dealt with the ethical and pragmatic dimension of violence (Hanssen, 2007; Dodd, 2009; Keane, 2004). The growing preoccupation with the ethics and limits of violence and its instrumentality has affected thinking on the meaning, type and nature of violence. The focus has been on political and legal theories rather than on what constitutes violence and how to deal with it.

Benjamin's critique of violence is a critique of both the just end and transhistorical good of natural law and the just means conception of the positive law traditions but based on the positivist hypotheses of the pure means. By delving into his anti-liberal thinking, he introduced the duality of violence, namely the mythical and the divine. The mythical is the law making and the law preserving violence of the state, mere power over life. Devine violence is conceived as the sovereign and unalloyed, pure revolutionary violence pertaining to justice. It is the ultimate form of violence antithetical to the former and a form of non-violence. He identifies the difference as follows:

“If mythical violence is law making, divine violence is law-destroying; if the former sets boundaries, the latter boundlessly destroys them; if mythical violence brings at once guilt and retribution, divine power only expiates; if the former threatens, the latter strikes; if the former is bloody, the latter is lethal without spilling blood.” (Benjamin, 1986:297).

It is a law destroyer but liberating violence (Benjamin, 1986:298-300). He hailed divine violence as a power transcendental to the law making and law-preserving type of violence (Benjamin, 1986). Because the commitment to non-violence is compatible with the justification of violence in exceptional cases (Bernstein, 2013). While Benjamin's critique of violence is based on identification of the types of violence, his concept of divine violence is too vague for understanding contemporary types of violence. Bernstein's critical reading of Benjamin's critique of violence alludes to the same (Bernstein, 2013). Although his conception of divine violence as the ultimate force to end mythical violence seems to be relevant to the interest of this study on the question of the recurrence of violence, it does not provide insight into why violence



recurs. Hence, it is limited to explaining the exceptional power of divine violence in order to absolve it. Hanssen's reading of Benjamin's critique of violence shows divine violence as pure means, an end in itself (Hanssen, 2007). Fanon's often misunderstood justification of anti-colonial violence for liberation, and Sartre's advocacy of revolutionary violence, reflect concrete historical conditions and the utility of violence for the transformation of society. However, their conceptual categories do not include the occurrence of violence other than in revolutionary and anti-colonial contexts. In terms of the depth of addressing the issue of violence and its typologies, the focus of Fanon and Arendt are on a higher level. Fanon has shown the multidimensionality of colonial violence embedded in the political, economic, social, physical and psychological being of the colonised. The later to restore its humanity and dignity uses anti-colonial violence as justified tool of liberation. However, he cautions against using it excessively, because it leads into the decadent violence of the coloniser. The continuity of violence in the hand of the colonized after replacing the colonizer (Fanon, 1963) remains to be an important contribution to contemporary theories of recurrent violence. In so doing though, he gives the insight about the typologies of political, economic, social, physical and psychological violence .

Arendt's critical stance on the instrumental nature of violence is based on the separation between power and violence. She argues that violence is antithetical to, and devours power that is to be used as an instrument of revolutionary politics. Because for Arendt (1969:140) "the end of revolution is the foundation of freedom". Violence could be necessary and justified in the rebellion against oppression, but it does not render public freedom, instead, it falls outside of the realm of revolutionary politics. She criticizes both Fanon and Sartre for hailing revolutionary violence as capable of cleansing and healing the wound of the violated (Fanon, 1963: 83-84). However, she recognises the importance of violence in exceptionally, what she called, "privileged moments" in history where violence is justified in the context of armed liberation struggle as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the realisation of freedom. Hence, the instrumentality of the violent armed struggle justified for the liberation-instead of empowering the people to liberation, it becomes the tool of destruction (Bernstein, 2013).

A close reading of Fanon's *the Wretched of the Earth* and Arendt's *On Violence* shows that the Arendt's critique of Fanon is erroneous. Fanon legitimises the use of revolutionary violence



with the clear articulation of the need to restore human dignity affected by colonial violence and results in multiple healing and reconciliation which he termed liberation (Fanon, 1963). Incidentally, this eventuality is also the end of revolutions in the Arendt's conception of violence namely the realisation of public freedom where violence has no place. Yet, she accepted the importance of violence during the phase of armed struggle for liberation to bring about the "privileged moment" in the history-the revolution which is the realisation of public freedom" (Arendt, 1969:140). The revolution of Arendt is where public freedom begins and violence ends; while Fanon's liberation is a violent struggle for the restoration of humanity. For both Arendt and Fanon, liberation is the end of violence and beginning of restoration of human dignity. Here, furthermore, two points of convergence and divergence are worth noting. Firstly, both share the necessity of violence for liberation, although the term "liberation" is viewed differently by both. Secondly, both warn against the use of surplus violence. Arendt (1969: 36) totally rejected the use of violence after the realization of public freedom or using it for the purpose of ensuring power is surplus violence. Because in both cases violence is corrosive and annihilating of its goal, Fanon (1963) critically warns against the use of reactionary surplus violence which degenerates the struggle for liberation into oppression. In other words, surplus violence reduces the struggle for liberation to the level of vicious cycle of violence of the oppressed becoming the oppressor and the vice versa.

Arendt's critique, therefore, follows on Sartre's preface to *the Wretched of the Earth* where Sartre argued the indispensable and irreplaceable utility of the violence of the oppressed in recreating its humanity. He argued that only violence can erase the mark of colonial violence. Besides, the oppressed in the face of colonialism has two chances either to be terrifying or to be terrified. He legitimizes anti-colonial violence as a means of re-valuation of morality and restoring of the humanity of the oppressed: "When the peasants lay hands on a gun, the old myths fade, and one by one the taboos are overturned: a fighter's weapon is his humanity" (Sartre, 1963:XiV). He blatantly justified the act of killing as, "for in the first phase of the revolt killing is a necessity: killing a European is killing two birds with one stone, eliminating in one go oppressor and oppressed: leaving one man dead and the other man free; for the first time the survivor feels a *national* soil under his feet." (Sartre, 1963:XiV). Arendt critiqued Sartre for misinterpreting Marx 'in his "amalgamation of existentialism and Marxism"' in order to glorify violence. Even



Fanon recognised the uncontrollable nature of surplus violence and cautions against it (Bernstein, 2011:5).

From this discussion, the following themes relevant for this study can be identified. First, considering the depth and scope of the concept of violence in peace and violence studies, the dominant definition of violence common to all is the physical harm and loss of life. An act of harm and destruction involving use of naked force observable during its perpetration and by its consequences.

Second, almost all of them are informed by the experience of extreme or surplus violence such as the Holocaust during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and European colonialism. In effect, their thinking carries the mark of their experience that makes theorising violence based on war and extreme violence a risky enterprise. This is currently especially important as violence carries significant dimensions in a visible and invisible form beyond war violence and physical harm.

Third, the high degree of preoccupation with providing the threshold of acceptable violence and the ethical justification (based on the means and end relationships) is done at the expense of understanding the nature of violence beyond its visible, agentive and objective manifestations.

Fourth, wherever the thinkers have addressed the relationship between violence and nonviolence, the latter is considered as the negation or antithesis of violence. So, the issue of peace as a positive phenomenon, which is the negation of any form of violence in contemporary theoretical caveats of peace and violence studies, is relegated from being the central focus of the negation of violence. Rather the focus is on nonviolence viewed as the absence of war which does not mean peace.

Fifth, the typologies of violence such as structural, institutional and symbolic violence provided by Benjamin are left unexplained and hardly apt to be used as a definitional category. The multidimensional and complex nature of contemporary violence, therefore, demands to transcend the classical limitations and making sense of recurrent violence. However, the above discussed conceptual constructs of violence and peace, by being truncated to fit contemporary phenomena of violence and peace, speak to the need for capacious conceptual framework.



Consequently, there is a need for examining the obscurity of violence, making sense of the seemingly senseless problem of violence. One way of doing so is embarking phenomenological inquiry, which promises to give sense to the obscurity of violence—they called it *problematicity of violence*—how it reveals itself and finds its place among society. It is useful to better understand why violence swings between extremes poles of viewing violence too wide and too narrow, expecting too much and too little; straddling between that of sense and non-sense, clarity and obscurity, continuity and discontinuity. The phenomenological way is thus not the simple inquiry of cause and effect, of where violence comes from and goes to but how violence manifests itself within a human situation (Dodd, 2009:15).

There is another problem that undermines human understanding and cognition of violence: the anarchy it creates. As though violence has the power to write its own script over people, it can reduce into muted and numbness “incapable of articulating meaning, as if we always come up short, revealing the depth of the absence of sense at the heart of the experience of violence itself” (Dodd, 2009:17). The confusion the lived experience of violence causes is further exacerbated by “in part how varied our responses can be to our experiences: violence can be as an almost ephemerality or a deeply shaking and disturbing catastrophe or the clearest and simple answer to an otherwise impossible opaque situation” (Ibid). People experience violence in an ever-shifting set of ambiguities which makes it problematic to handle. The phenomenological task, therefore, is to make sense of violence and war as it places itself in lived experience in its unstable and protean form (Dodd, 2009:17).

However, according to Dodd (2009:17), violence is “marked by a peculiar refusal of phenomenality itself”: the deep relation between sense and phenomenality defining the core of phenomenology. In plain words, the spell of violence negates the (phenomenal) quality and affectivity of lived experience of violence. Hence, caution should be taken against too much dependence on phenomenological description more than what it can make sense. Because “the problem of violence is not something that can be clearly articulated simply in terms of phenomenon alone” (Dodd, 2009:17). Yet, it gives ample opportunity to reflect on how violence is experienced, lived and affects people and its dynamics in society.



### 2.3 Defining Violence and Peace

The obscurity of violence discussed above is prominently reflected when beginning to construct a working definition of violence than in any other instances. This pertains to the myriads of orientations different disciplines follow in categorising violence. The minimalist conception defines violence as force while the comprehensive conception of violence defines it as a violation. Others define and classify violence based on divergent etiologies and consequences, their scope and nature of actors (Krause, 2009:337-340). The divergent conceptions constitute more of confusion than a frame of understanding violence. Therefore, the definition of violence depends on the purpose and disciplinary orientation of researchers. Because doing so adds efficacy and expediency to understanding the types of violence they are studying. Moreover, dealing the experience of violence is not to be conceived as existing objectively independent of its subjective conditions.

This notwithstanding, the contention as to whether to use the restrictive or the comprehensive/inclusive theoretical caveat of violence is to be addressed first. According to Haan, it is pragmatic and advisable to use the comprehensive conception of violence to be able to include all possible typologies (Haan, 2008). For Galtung, a good typology of violence is one that shows the shared essence among different types of violence and, which is theoretically enabling to not only identify the differences among typologies but also the relationship among them (Galtung, 1990). In line with Haan's view, Galtung in his earliest work on violence and peace research recommended the need to adopt a comprehensive definitional frame of violence.

More important is to indicate theoretically significant dimensions of violence that can lead thinking, research and, potentially, action, towards the most important problems. If

peace action is to be regarded highly because it is action against violence, then the concept of violence must be broad enough to include the most significant varieties, yet specific enough to serve as a basis for concrete action (Galtung, 1996:168).

In defining violence, the reference point for Galtung, as it is for this study, is peace. Violence is conceptualised as the negation of peace. In light of this, violence is an influence on human beings causing the somatic and mental realisation to be below the potential. Therefore, violence is the source of difference between what people realise and what they could have achieved as per



their potentialities in the absence of an influence. The potential level of realisation is that which is possible within existing insights and resources. Provided access to insights/resources are limited or restricted either by war violence causing somatic/physical or mental harm as in fear, then violence is constituted in two forms. One is the direct impact visible on the physical and life of the person/group which is the indirect/personal violence. Direct violence “puts his 'actual somatic realisation' below his 'potential somatic realisation’”. Second is the invisible harm on the psychological and mental condition that along with the first constitute a limitation on the realisation of human potentialities. And hence, it constitutes a violation of the comprehensive meaning of the term (Galtung, 1996:169).

In the indirect category are included both structural and cultural violence. Structural violence is the inhibition on basic human needs which causes human actual realization below the potential by an invisible system of oppression and marginalization (Galtung, 1969). Cultural violence refers to the cultural systems used for the legitimation of structural and direct violence. While the structural violence violates human potential and dignity invisibly, cultural violence provides the moral justification. In a fulfilled and protracted violent conflict, it is common to see the direct, structural and cultural violence are available. Therefore, the above definition based on an influence on the realisation of somatic and psychological potentialities of human beings includes aspects of influences emanating from value systems, norms and ideas legitimising personal and structural violence in a society and international level (Galtung, 1990:294). In elaborating the definition further, Galtung added the avoidable criterion to qualify the presence of violence. Unavoidable difference in the actual and potential realization is not violence. There is violence where there is an avoidable higher potential realisation than actual realisation. Anything that facilitates this condition constitutes violence (Galtung, 1996:169).

If peace is defined as the absence of violence and if violence is thought narrowly to mean the absence of physical harm, killing and destruction as in war violence, then peace means the absence of war. Oppressive and exploitative systems of injustice, discrimination, segregation and marginalisation where the opportunities for the realisation of human potentialities are unequally available, are not to be considered a state of peace. Cognizant of this, Galtung made six distinctions in defining the concept of violence and peace.



First, based on the nature of the influence, violence can be physical and psychological, with visible and invisible consequences of deliberately making the actual realisation of basic human needs to be lower than the potential. The influences on physical and mental safety and security as well vital dimensions of the violations people suffer. The second distinction is between the negative and positive approach to influence. This refers to both negative influences like punishments imposed by the influencer for omission and commission of an act prescribed by the influencer, and positive rewards offered for respecting omissions and commissions prescribed by the influencer. When the net result of the positive influence, though might increase the somatic capabilities of the influenced, makes the potential realisation to be higher than the actual realisation, then it constitutes an act of violence as much as negative influences with similar consequences. The third, thinking the presence of violence in the absence of physical and biological being directly affected by an act. The show of force, the display of arms, self-aggrandizing songs and the destruction of objects considered valuable by another person constitute violence. Because it carries the psychological threat of use of force and by so doing it constrains human action that in turn is the sign of constrained actual realisation. Freedom from fear and freedom from wants are vital human needs. Any avoidable limitation on the actual realization of freedom from fear and freedom from wants constitutes a violation (Galtung, 1969:170).

According to recent studies on symbolic violence, the destruction of objects considered valuable by another person, like the destruction of holy shrines and places of worship by religious fundamentalists, is wanton violence on a higher scale besides the symbolic significance. It is a violence against a people's way of being in the world.

Fourth, violence against the somatic and psychological wellbeing can be perpetrated with and without an actor performing it. People could be exposed to avoidable starvation, epidemics and pernicious crime and illiteracy by a system of inequality, marginalisation and predation that makes them at risk. These are typical categories of structural violence. Such type of structural violence may not have an identifiable actor but are equally violations of basic human needs (Galtung, 1969:170).

The fifth distinction to be made is between violence that is intended or unintended. Intentionality is the bases of the determination of guilt of crime and violation both in the Judeo-Christian



tradition and Roman jurisprudence. The intentionality criteria, therefore, is used among proponents of the positivist conception of violence. The definition of violence by Galtung is based on the consequences side of violence than the intention of the violence. The ethical predisposition on identifying justifiable and unjustifiable (just and unjust war) fails to understand the unintended impacts of structural violence and cultural violence. Systems of inequality and their ideological justifications may not be designed for the consequences that resulted. However, this does not make the consequences less violent than intended acts of direct violence (Galtung, 1991:171).

Sixth, there is the traditional distinction between two levels of violence, the manifest and the latent. However, the latter is the focus of this subsection because the former is discussed above. There is latent violence when the situation is so unstable that the actual realisation level 'easily' decreases. For personal violence, latent violence means a very fragile and easily flammable situation which can lead to immense racial and ethnic killing. In such case, it is the situation of unstable equilibrium, preceding the coming into existence of manifest personal violence where the level of actual realisation is not sufficiently protected against deterioration by upholding mechanisms (Galtung, 1991: 171).

Therefore, the definition used in this study accepts the idea of Galtung that violence is any visible/invisible, manifest/latent, intended/unintended act by a known/unknown actor against known/unknown object which makes the realisation of human potentialities to be less than the actual. The exact negation of these forms of violence constitutes the definition of peace. The absence of the three forms of violence is conceptualised as negative peace. While the prevalence and substitution of the negative attributes of personal/direct, structural and cultural violence by positive attributes constitute personal, structural and cultural positive peace (Galtung, 1996).

Furthermore, Galtung for analytical purpose viewed the omnipresence of violence in six spaces which define the types of sub-typologies of conflict. Violence is embedded in and emerges from “nature (all life forms), person (basic human needs), social (categories of gender, race, class nation and country), world (territorial and non-territorial systems), culture (as system of civilizational divide or at micro levels) and time (in the present/intra-time and cross-generational/inter-time).” These typologies have also their own intra and inter violence which



makes the possible sub-categories twelve. However, for analytical purpose, these can be simplified to distinguish the types of violence and peace involved in nature, actor, structure, culture and time (Galtung, 1996:30).

Accordingly, nature violence is the kind of violence originating from the natural systems including an unintentional act from the human body/subject which results in intra and inter-species struggle. While nature peace is species cooperation replacing struggle. Actor or direct violence is an intentional act of individuals acting individually or in a group constituted in the person, social and world spaces. Structural/indirect violence is unintentionally built into the person, social and world spaces. Cultural violence can be intentional or unintentional legitimization of direct and structural violence or omission of resisting structural violence. Time violence is the dimension of the cross-generational type of violence affecting life, in the extreme case impeding the continuity of reproduction (Galtung, 1996:31).

Lederach in his view of conflict transformation, recognises the six spaces in four condensed categories, namely the personal (actor), structural, cultural and relational (nature and time involved) spaces. Complement Galtung's time dimension, the violence emerging from and affecting the four spaces is manifested in direct violent episodes (for Galtung intra-time or *Kairos*) and epicentres (for Galtung inter-time or *Khronos*) (Lederach, 2003). The relational dimension is the quality of relationship or interdependence among Galtung's three meta-typologies of violence: Direct, structural and cultural. Lederach's categorization, though not exclusively about violence, provides a workable model rather than Galtung's overlapping meta-typologies and typology on two considerations. First, time violence can be assumed in the three types of violence as direct violent episodes, and indirect structural and cultural epicentres; while direct, structural and cultural violence can constitute episodic or trans-generational harm. Second, nature, for this study the environmental system, can be considered in structures of vulnerability and marginalisation. Therefore, for purposes of this study, the conceptualization of violence and peace is based on the three meta-typologies in Galtung's violence triangle namely direct, structural and cultural. Therefore, based on the way the three categories of violence and peace operate, the following section examines the triangles of violence and peace.



## 2.4 Types of Violence and Peace

This section deals with the conceptual constructs of violence and peace used in this study. Accordingly, three categories of violence and peace, namely direct violence and direct peace, structural violence and structural peace, and cultural violence and cultural peace are discussed as follows

### 2.4.1 Direct/Personal Violence and Direct/Personal Peace

Direct/personal violence is verbal and physical violence harming the body, mind and spirit performed by an identifiable actor perusing a tangible or intangible objective. Direct violence could be intended or unintended with an identifiable object or without a direct object on the scene impacting on the somatic (physical) and mental integrity of people (Galtung, 1969: 172-173). The combination of the harm to the body, mind and spirit by direct violence leave behind the trauma of violation that carries violence over time. The impact of direct violence is often associated with physical harm and material destruction as in war violence. However, even traditional categorization noted the distinction between violence (which is perpetrated) and the threat of violence. This pertains to the immense power of direct violence causing a sense of fear and insecurity as well as the sense of unpredictability of the future (Galtung, 1996: 36).

Because of its visibility and the sensitive nature of the consequence of direct physical violence, the focus of peace workers in a violent conflict situation rests on the reduction of war violence.

This explains the fact that direct violence constitutes immediate survival and security needs. According to Lederach, in violent episodes, the primary focus of peace workers engaging in conflict transformation is a reduction of violence and addressing basic human needs (Lederach, 2003). Direct violence could be caused by rational calculations of using violence as an instrument for a defined end and goals. The goals may include both tangible and intangible values of ensuring basic human needs, or intangible ones associated with honour, the decimation of an enemy or scoring revenge (Galtung, 1996:31). In this case, direct violence inhibits the realisation of human potentialities (Dilts, 2012:194). In line with Galtung's latter conceptualization, violence as an obstacle to basic human needs, and the scope of harm caused



by direct violence goes beyond human victims. According to Galtung the visible and invisible effects of direct violence can be summarised as depicted in the table below.

Table 1: The Visible and Invisible Effects of Violence

Spaces	Material, Visible effects	Non-material, Invisible effects
<b>Environment</b>	Depletion, pollution, damage to diversity of life form and balance of ecosystem and symbiosis	Anthropocentric view, less respect to other life form and non- human nature.
<b>Human</b>	<b>Somatic effects:</b>  Numbers killed; numbers wounded; numbers raped, and numbers displace.	<b>Spiritual effects:</b>  Bereavement, traumas, hatred, Revenge addiction, victory addiction.
<b>Society</b>	Damage to material assets, building and infrastructures, loss of a way of life.	Damage to social structures, synergetic relationships, culture and system of communication, economic, political and legal Institutions vital for peaceful relationship
<b>World</b>	Material and infrastructural damages	Damage to World structures and social structures
<b>Time</b>	Time becomes capsule of violence.  Delayed violence- land mines;  Transmitted violence: descendants	Transfer of structures and cultures of violence; norms of aggression; transfer of memory of trauma and glory
<b>Culture</b>	Irreversible damage to cultural heritages and institutions	Violence culture; narrative, trauma and glory; deterioration of conflict resolving capabilities

Source: The Transcendence model (Galtung, 2000:22)

However, the above conceptual caveat of Galtung also has its limitation. Direct violence is objective in the sense that its agent can be identified, and its level of damage can be measured to the extent that the visible dimension is the only focus. The affected basic human needs are predictable in other words. Considering the invisible effects, this does not hold always true and the basic needs become subjective.

The transition of direct violence from the state of latency to manifestation, is determined by the societal context and level of realisation of human potentialities. The state of promotion or deterioration of basic human needs determines the transition. In a context where the level of actual realisation easily falls below the potential realisation or human basic needs are easily withheld, minor challenges can ignite latent violence into manifest violence unleashing massive



death and suffering. Direct violence exists before the moment of explosion of manifested harm and injury (Galtung, 1969:171; Lederach, 2003:36). Therefore, episodic manifestations of direct violence are rooted in issues and systems causing grievance and frustration requiring a mechanism for addressing human needs.

As compared to structural violence, the manifestation of direct violence depends on the level of dynamics of society. In a static society, personal violence is more visible than in a dynamic society. Frustrated needs easily trigger latent violence into direct manifest violence, while in a dynamic society structural violence looms out as major impediment to progress and realisation of human potentialities than personal violence (Galtung, 1969: 174).

The above conception of direct violence is viewed by the positivist conception of violence, which limits the meaning of violence to an objectively visible and personalised type of violence (Keane, 2004). By so doing, it limits our understanding of the invisible types of violence. Recognizing the latent and manifest forms of direct violence bolsters a thorough examination of the various forms and levels of direct violence in society (Dilts, 2012:194). In effect, it provides a wider framework to understand direct peace as the negation of direct violence discussed below.

According to Galtung, the three types of violence are rooted in three types of sources of conflicts: direct violence in conflictual behaviour, structural violence in contradictions, and cultural violence in attitudes. The presence of direct violence indicates the presence of unresolved conflict rooted in conflictual behaviour. Conflictual behaviour to manifest in direct violence requires the presence of a conflictual attitude rooted in the culture of violence and contradiction over goals rooted in structures of violence. As conflictual behaviour can be explained by conflictual attitude and contradiction, so does direct violence by the presence of structures of violence and culture of violence legitimising acts of violation (Galtung, 1990:293). Similarly, direct peace can be understood and explained in relation to structural peace and cultural peace.

The absence of direct violence entails an aspect of negative peace observable after the end of war, confrontation and tension. This is the case with post-war societies defined by the absence of manifest direct hostility and direct violation. Direct peace instead is not limited to the absence of war violence, fear and tension. It means the flourishing of harmony, friendship, cooperation and



understanding among identifiable actors. At the societal level, it entails a relationship of dialogue, understanding and healthy communication among ingroups and outgroups than conflictual relations (Galtung, 1996:31-33).

As a positive phenomenon, “direct positive peace would consist of verbal and physical kindness, good to the body, mind and spirit of self and other; addressed to all basic needs, survival, well-being, freedom and identity. Love is the epitome of this: a union of bodies, minds and spirits” (Galtung, 1996:32). Direct peace flourishes beyond the absence of the visible and invisible harms in the six spaces discussed above, but also the replacement of negative experiences and contexts by cooperative and harmonious relations. In the context of societies bogged in a cycle of historical violence, this seems unattainable bliss without the transformation of other systems and dimensions of violence. However, this should be considered as an ideal of direct peace to be realized with ingenuity and creativity.

This conception is best articulated and grounded in pragmatic considerations by Lederach (1999) as just peace. A just peace is addressing both peace and justice. In relation to direct violence, direct peace (as peace and justice) entails a reduction of violence and increasing justice. This view is based on the pragmatic consideration of controlling violent episodes and at the same time promotion of cooperative relations (Lederach, 2003:23). Similarly, for Galtung ensuring economic, social and political justice are prerequisites for addressing direct and structural violence. This, in turn, is about reducing direct violence and increasing justice by addressing the issue of structural and cultural violence and transforming them into peace structures and cultures.

#### **2.4.2 Structural Violence and Structural Peace**

Structural violence is defined by Galtung as a depersonalised, non-agentive, indirect and invisible harm constituted in the structure of society expressed as inequality of power, resources, and life opportunities. It is a form of hindrance to the advancement of human capabilities, dispositions and potentialities (Galtung, 1969:170). This includes not only specific forms of targeted discrimination but also more diffuse forms of inequality (Galtung and Hoivik, 1971).

Structural violence is a subtle type of violence without identifiable actors but causing great harm on the somatic and psychological potential realisation of human beings. Hence, it feeds the



continuity of direct violence. Structural violence is caused by the presence of hierarchical structures of inequality and marginalisation; it could be divided into political, repressive and economic, exploitative structures of violence. It entails a system of violence embedded in the personal, social and world spaces as the structure of repression and exploitation, inequality and marginalisation. Galtung (1996) argues that the failure to prevent avoidable injury, pain and suffering is as relevant to social and political analysis as is their perpetration.

The state of vulnerability to avoidable famine, diseases, ignorance, environmental disaster and social degeneration, results in victims without a perpetrator. Behind such damages to basic human needs are invisible structures doing immense harm by way of omission rather than commission. Consequently, the actual human realisation is far below the potential.

This is supported and sustained by two types of structures: vertical and horizontal. Vertical structural violence is inclusive of repression, exploitation and alienation. The three violations sublate the political, economic and cultural power of society. The basic human needs insulted by vertical structural repression are freedom, wellbeing and identity needs. The causal chain of the types of vertical structural violence, of power and basic human needs each type of violence can be framed as a repression-political power-freedom, exploitation-economic-power-wellbeing and alienation-cultural power-identity triad (Galtung, 2000:105).

Horizontal structural violence involves imposed and undesired togetherness and separation. In words, forcefully keeping people desiring to live together apart and keeping people desiring to live apart together. The force, however, is rendered invisible by using structures of penetration and segmentation, fragmentation and marginalisation. It shifts focus from oppressors, exploiters and agents of alienation into anonymous structures of oppression, exploitation and alienation. In effect, it hides the violator (perpetrator) behind structures as much as it creates a sense of helplessness of the victim what to do with its reality (Galtung, 2000:150).

The oppressed suffers from penetration-the implanting of the oppressor inside the oppressed; segmentation engenders the oppressed to have a partial view of reality, and marginalisation by keeping the oppressed outside and fragmentation keeping the oppressed away from each other precludes solidarity (Galtung, 1990:294). The horizontal structural violence is imparted on the oppressed by way of either being too tightly confined or loosely dispersed or even being



unrelated in a certain geographic, social or economic space (Galtung, 1996). The presence of the other, in this case, the structures of the oppressor, amidst the oppressed becomes a mechanism of penetration, divide and rule. In other words, the social and environmental space carried marks of invisible violence. The Israeli settlement policy, a wall of separation, network of securitized roads and checkpoints within the occupied territories is a case in point (Chomsky, 1999; Eid, Septemebr 2008).

Lederach (1999:12) similarly emphasises the quality of relationships in society, how close and far people wish to be together, as an important point towards reducing violence and increasing justice. The presence of structures obstructing normal relationship in society adds vulnerability to be a victim of direct violence. According to Galtung, “violent structures leave their mark not only on the human body but also on the mind and spirit of human beings”. Such structures are effective tools of crippling anti-exploitation struggle of the oppressed and impeding consciousness formation and mobilisation (Galtung, 1990:294).

As structural violence stands for a subjective and depersonalised type of violence. Its invisibility and depersonalised nature add to the perpetuation of violence across generations. The perpetuation could be reflected as direct or structural and cultural violence. Direct violence could provoke counter direct violence owing to its immediacy of risk to basic needs and its visibility. Both counter direct violence and its invisible roots, structural and cultural violence, can sustain the repetition of violence. However, it is not the case with structural and cultural violence (Galtung, 1969:179). On this point, the battle between Galtungian view and its critique is an interesting point to reflect.

In his recent work on transcendence, Galtung (2000:102) added, the routinized nature of structural violence causes people to follow and enact certain rules without any questioning. It sustains unequal and oppressive types of relationships and roles among people and institutions. The damage is being done under the camouflage of being routinized and followed by all. The violence done by structural violence is rendered invisible by being a fetish and routine, an everyday aspect of life. Structural violence could assume the frozen form of direct violence of past repression and exploitation. It enters time in the bygone but perpetuates direct violence.



The Galtungian conceptualization of structural violence by widening the category of violence to include poverty, hunger, subordination, social exclusion and alienation, opened a new theoretical caveat of violence helpful to analysing complex social relations. This goes beyond the ostensible phenomena of direct violence. This, according to Winter, enables theorising differential access to power and resources as a form of violence (Winter, 2012:195). However, this caveat is a point of criticism for three scholars including Winter.

Winter (2012) by focusing on the relationship between the visibility of violence and memory argues, that the invisibility of structural violence is owing to the ceaseless repetition of direct violence than the former being hidden. Winter (2012) argues against the Galtungian assumption that the invisibility of structural violence allows for repetition. Instead, it is through ceaseless repetition and normalcy of direct violence that the structural becomes invisible. In short, normalised, routinized and naturalised direct violence renders structural violence invisible and inheritable to the next generation. Winter (2012:197) further argues that “the fetishization of the visible hinders analyses that seek to connect visible modes of injury to concealed ones, while the priority of the act hampers investigations into social and historical conditions for contemporary formations of violence”.

Winter’s contention makes sense in the context of societies entangled in the cycle of direct violence which obscures the visibility of structural violence. This study adopts the idea that the ceaseless repetition of direct violence may contribute to the invisibility of structural violence which in turn contributes to the perpetuation of direct violence. However, this is not always the case with dynamic societies where structural violence is the most dominant violence rather than direct violence. In such a context, the continuity of structural violence across generations cannot be characterised by the normalcy of direct violence rather than the inherent invisibility of structural violence. The inherent invisibility of structural violence, in turn, is not explained by the ceaseless repetition of direct violence. Instead, it is explained by the fact that it is not personalised, agentive and intentional to be visible.

Vázquez-Arroyo (2012:214) argues that even though structural violence is depersonalised it does not mean that it does not have invisible agents bent on sustaining it. But its functioning is invisible. The most brutal forces of violence are lurking beneath the normalised and stable flow but obliqueness of violence. The reason is that structural violence is “silent, silenced and



silencing” (Vázquez-Arroyo, 2012:214). He correctly puts that, behind this is the dialectics of order and eruption of, what he calls, ultra-subjective violence (eruption of direct violence) and ultra-objective (structural violence). He explains the continuity of violence in terms of the mutual mediation of direct and structural violence, as constitutive of contemporary forms of violence (Vázquez-Arroyo, 2012:215).

Vázquez-Arroyo’s (2012) departure from Galtung is an important addition to the understanding of the relationship between direct and structural violence namely the idea of catastrophe as a permanent (structure) and ongoing (direct) system of violence. He argues that the perception of catastrophic events as episodes of direct violence limits the understanding that catastrophes have an ongoing nature beyond a historical eruption of violence. Vázquez-Arroyo agrees with Galtung on the political and economic effects of capitalism and colonialism as structural violence which can be considered as catastrophes. Furthermore, he contends to think of two types of catastrophes, the one like direct violence is an ongoing and the other like structural violence is the permanent one (Vázquez-Arroyo, 2012:219). Therefore, this conception of violence is appropriate to examine a certain type of violence which happened at a certain historical period but continues affecting the current dynamics of violence as structure. This enables to see this catastrophic violence as concrete and existential violence. The Palestinian catastrophe associated with the birth of the state of Israel, in Arabic *Al-Nakba*-a definite event in history which introduced a system of ongoing direct violence in the hand of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and the permanent structural violence symbolized by the Israeli occupation (Nakhleh, 2008; Nofal, Autumn 1998). Galtung recognized the level of Palestinian tragedy cannot even be captured within the conceptual constructs of direct and structural violence (Galtung, Autumn 1972).

Cocks (2012) recognises the importance of Galtung’s violence triad in general and his structural violence in exposing the invisible aspects of violence in an ongoing order of things. However, he contends that the focus on structural violence eclipses the analyses of the “secret and transparent violence that occurs when a new order of things comes into being, namely foundational violence.” Central to his argument is that Galtung’s conception of violence omits foundational violence because the underlying assumption for the three types of violence is the presence of an agreed upon value against which potential and actual realisation of values can be compared. In



the case of foundational violence, it decimates old values against which potential and actual realisation of values can be compared and creates new ones, in other words, involves a revaluation of values including the foundational violence of seemingly “peaceful” processes such as treaties or contracts to create new states, territories or relationships. A case in point is the foundational violence of the settlers in North America against the natives which was based on seemingly “peaceful” processes of making treaties. In another case, foundational violence of carving a nation-state by war (Cocks, 2012:222-223).

Cocks (2012:224) argues that foundational violence because of the positive (he termed as “the upside of down”) opportunities it creates and negative consequences of birth of new system cannot be accommodated within the theoretical limits of structural violence per se. A unique approach to analysing foundational violence is plausible. However, the argument to consider foundational violence as a separate category of violence does not carry logical soundness. This is because it is possible to comprehend the visible and invisible aspects of foundational violence which are reflected across the Galtungian triad of direct, structural and cultural violence. In other words, the fact that it is not possible to put the whole corpus of foundational violence in one of the categories does not necessarily imply the logical soundness of creating a new category.

In using the Galtung theory of violence, this study is aware of the following limitations. First, the Galtungian theory of violence places too much emphasis on the act of the powerful and violator. It in effect elides the violence of the violated and oppressed. The violent entanglement and entrapment between oppressed groups, though asymmetrical in the role, which perpetuates the cycle of violence is not boldly dealt by his categories. The oppressed commits violence as a reaction to or liberation from oppression. Also, violence functions in the relationship between the oppressed. Second, the Galtungian theoretical caveat of structural violence is mainly informed by the asymmetrical relationship between the oppressor and an oppressed. In the case of the historically rooted cycle of violence between the oppressed, like the case of the Issa-Afar violence, the caveat loses its capaciousness. Furthermore, the involvement of the state or any other oppressor in the violence between the oppressed, the Galtungian caveat elides aspects of structural violence emanating from such type of cases. The state factor in the violence, as well as the cycle of hegemonic moments between the two groups, makes the dominant-dominated factor indirectly useful in this study.



Third, the nature of the basic human need to be insulted depends on the phenomenal quality and affectivity of the violence. How the people experienced the violence and how the violence, in turn, affect their sense of experiencing and responding to the violence, remains to be subject to the specific experiences of violence on the one hand. Furthermore, the specific system of valuation of needs of the society, on the other hand. The discussion on structural peace below accordingly takes note of the above-discussed limitations and criticisms. Given the capacious nature of the Galtungian framework of violence, Vázquez-Arroyo's conception of the catastrophe and memory violence, and Cocks' conception of foundational violence are a vital addition to the conceptual construct of violence. Moreover, Cocks' foundational violence can be taken a bit further considering the contexts of multiple episodes of foundational violence which results in a repeated redefinition of political and territorial identities and boundaries of states and societies. This is a clear reference to the Israeli-Palestinian and the Issa-Afar relations.

While Cocks seems to have conceived of foundational violence as a singular event in history. In the case of the State of Israel, its foundational violence did not end with the 1948 catastrophe. It continued defining its limits and values with the subsequent wars. The Suez Canal in 1956, the six-day war of 1967, the Yom Kippur war of 1973, the Lebanese invasion, the intifada, the occupation of Gaza and the West bank as subsequent peace settlements have redefined the identity and values of the state of Israel and Palestinians (Chomsky, 1999). A repeated foundational violence quite different from Vázquez-Arroyo's the ongoing catastrophe. Even in the eye of Israeli politicians like *Shlomo Ben-Ami*, a former foreign minister of Israel such events are recognized as original sins which should be limited (Ben-Ami, 2015). Likewise, the continued Issa eviction and penetration of the Afar since circa the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has been redefining the territorial limits of Issa homeland (Yasin, 2010). Therefore, this is instructive of conceiving foundational violence as a dynamic phenomenon recurring, eventuating new birth and in effect causing revaluation.

Structural positive peace entails the negation of structural violence in all its forms and its substitution by positive developments. This means to substitute freedom for repression and equity for exploitation, and then reinforce this with dialogue instead of penetration, integration instead of segmentation, solidarity instead of fragmentation, and participation instead of marginalisation. The realisation of structural peace entails the destruction of vertical and



horizontal structures and their replacement with desirable vertical structures of peace. Galtung (1996: 32) advises for small horizontal structures which avoid too much structuration. This also holds for the realisation of inner peace (the task is to bring about the harmony of body, mind, and spirit) and outer and inner dialogue with oneself.

Structural peace, apart from the Galtungian caveat, requires substituting the mutual mediation of direct violence and structural violence by direct peace and structural peace to break the cycle of violence and replace it with mutual substantiating peace. This imperative is confirmed by Lederach's idea of synchronising the immediate act of reducing violence and increasing justice discussed in the preceding sections. This is also relevant in addressing the relationship between visible and invisible aspects of peace as opposed to visible and invisible violence, to ensure the sustainable peace. In doing so, focusing on creating permanent and ongoing peace structures is vital. As opposed to foundational violence, attempting to initiate and sustain foundational peace within the Galtungian peace triad, enables the realisation of structural peace. Furthermore, turning structures of animosity and hatred, stereotype and racism reflected in the oppressed and the oppressor into structures of equality, cooperation and mutual understanding enables to see the peace capabilities among groups in the violent interface. Nevertheless, structural peace requires strong systems of legitimation to sustain, and hence the need to address issues of cultural violence and cultural peace.

### **2.4.3 Cultural Violence and Cultural Peace**

Cultural violence is the more recent development in Galtung's theorization of violence. Cultural violence underscores those aspects of culture and symbolic dimensions of human existence used for the legitimation of the use of direct and structural violence in a society and on international level. This includes religion, law, ideology, art, formal and informal sciences and their various symbolic and performative expressions. Speeches, insignias, emblems and moral constructs guiding and reinforcing the propensity and act of performing direct and structural violence constitute cultural violence. By providing a system of values and normative constructs justifying violence, cultural violence makes and creates the sense and feeling that direct and structural violence are right or at least not abominable (Galtung, 1990:291).



The inner functioning of cultural violence is twofold. One way involves “changing the moral colour” of direct and structural violence as acceptable and at least not abominable acts. The justification for murdering others in the name of one’s country, identity, homeland and religion as patriotism or religious devotion changes the moral valuation of murder from abominable act of crime into socially acceptable behavior. This includes values systems of scapegoating, stereotyping and prejudice dehumanising the other as a non-moral and non-human entity. This, in inter-group conflicts involving race, ethnicity and religion, in turn, gives way to massacres, as morally commendable acts or at least as admissible acts without any moral consequence. The second is making reality oblique and obscure by rendering the consciousness to identify and resist oppression impossible. This has twofold strategies. The first strategy is creating false consciousness which makes people accept structural and direct violence as facts of life. In short, it makes attacks on survival needs (negation: death and mortality), wellbeing needs (negation: misery and morbidity) identity, meaning needs (negation: alienation and estrangement) and freedom needs (negation: repression) acceptable (Galtung,1990: 292). The second strategy follows the logic of allowing people to see partial reality. Obstructing consciousness to identify reality fully by rendering the brute facts of direct violence and structural violence as normalcy and justified. Here again comes the issue of rendering violence invisible to sustain its dynamics discussed in the preceding sections. Cultural violence provides justification for the various typologies of direct and cultural violence provided in the table taken from the theory of Galtung below: *Table 2: Typologies of Violence*

	Survival Needs	Wellbeing Needs	Identity needs	Freedom needs
<b>Direct violence</b>	Killing	Maiming, siege sanctions, misery	De-socialization Re-socialization Secondary citizenship	Repression Detention Expulsion
<b>Structural Violence</b>	Exploitation A	Exploitation B	Penetration Segmentation	Marginalisation Fragmentation

Source: Galtung’s Theory of Cultural violence (Galtung, 1990: 292)



Some of the typologies of violence justified by cultural violence require explanation. The negation of wellbeing needs by direct violence involves slow death by exposure to confinement and incapacitation of wellbeing potential. De-socialization and re-socialization involve the process of eliminating the identity of the oppressed and replacement by a new form of identity and meaning. It engenders social death using an invisible form of violence. The negation of freedom needs is self-explanatory. Exploitation A as negation of survival needs involves the use of structural violence imposing asymmetrical relationships, unequal exchange and disadvantage positions which cause slow decimation of a group of people. Exploitation B as the negation of wellbeing involves being permanently situated in a state of misery and dilapidation threatening wellbeing. This includes the unchanging condition of malnutrition, illness and ignorance (Galtung, 1990:293). The functioning of cultural violence in the two types of exploitation is the legitimation and sustenance of an ongoing and permanent violence. Similarly, cultural violence means values advocating acts of repression, detention and expulsion negating freedom needs this includes freedom from any form of direct violence and indirect violence (from fear and structural repression) as well as freedom of ensuring self rule (Galtung, 1990: 294).

Cultural violence uses metaphors of sustainable development, national security and territorial unity, industrialisation and democratisation to justify direct and structural violence of displacement, resettlement, social re-engineering and dissolution of groups. As political

repression is carried out in the name of combating extremism and terrorism, economic exploitation is justified in the name of economic integration of peripheral people and livelihood transformation of production systems like pastoralism to the centre and dominant mode of production. One of the victims of direct and structural violence is the natural system and the environment, the vital source and context of ensuring other basic human needs. In the name of 'sustainable economic growth' the natural system and the environment is being destroyed. In effect, 'sustainable economic growth' serves as the catchphrase justifying violence against nature (Galtung, 1990: 294).

Cultural violence also functions in reorienting and reframing the memory and representation of past violence. This also entails dealing with geographic space as a mark of violent memory. The



geographic spaces, in the form of mass graves, extermination sites and erased villages, carry the memory of violence. It witnesses the presence of the physically absent victim of extreme violence. Phelan shows the invisible presence of repository of violence as exhibited in the history of the bogs in Northern Ireland (Phelan, 2009: 286-290). Considering the favouring of a certain form of memory, cultural violence justifies the reconfiguration of geographic space by the change of names and separation, penetration and fusion of groups. Hence, cultural violence writes its own script on the geographic space as a legitimate type of memory worth remembering. This is exactly the case with the displacement of the renaming and reorganisation of administrative boundaries involved between the Afar and Issa pastoralists in Ethiopia.

Art and popular culture as tool of recasting cultural memories of violence construct the way direct violence is carried out and sustained in time. Rokem (2009: 265) argues that performance narratives about violence and experience of the direct violence are constructed on cultural memories and associations. These are mainly sustained by invisible values justifying violence than the visible repetition of direct violence. The dialectic of the experience and the narrative of violence are inevitably bound together, constantly feeding on each other. The mutual interdependence between the narratives of violence and the experiential violence is that, at the end, it creates a mindset of entrapment and hopelessness in the possibility of a resolution to end the cycle of violence. It cements the attitude that peace is impossible which in turn adds up to perpetuation of violence. Rokem appropriately named it the coalition of despair between rival groups.

Whitehead (2004:3) from an anthropological perspective reflects on the rarely studied case of the use of cultural conceptions of violence for the amplification of direct violent acts. He argues in line with the Galtungian thinking that such types of discursive utilities of cultural conceptions of violence can create a shared meaning of violent acts such as killing and violent death. Hence, it provides the justification for ceaseless repetition of direct violence and permanence of structural violence.

Girard's systematic examination of religion, culture and violence in literary texts shows that violence underpins practically all the sacred texts of humanity. The major religious, cultural and literary constructions justifying the sacredness of the sacrifice are justifications for violence. For Girard, the sacred is violence (Girard, 1977:178). Behind the endless war violence and



animosities in the name of religion and country stands the cultural justification of violence, namely cultural violence.

Cultural positive peace would substitute legitimation of peace for the legitimation of violence; it means building a positive peace culture in religion, law, and ideology; in language; in art and science; in schools, universities, and the media. At individual level, this means to be accommodative of diversity of experiences, values, inclinations and capabilities, rather than repressing them (Galtung, 1996:32). It stands for those aspects of culture which justifies direct and structural peace. This includes the internalisation and promotion of the sanctity and dignity of human life, importance of democratic resolution of conflicts, dialogue and veneration of multiculturalism. The presence of many aspects of cultural peace constitutes the culture of peace (Galtung, 2002:5-7; Galtung, 1996:196).

Culture of peace is not about the mere peaceful or non-violent representation of reality rather than being peaceful and acting accordingly. It entails affecting the behaviour of people in conflict. The acid test for cultural peace is how far it affects people to resort to peaceful ways of responding to a challenging reality (Galtung, 1996, p. 77). In effect, cultural peace is the prevalence of legal, political, ideological and religious value systems, symbols, insignias, artworks and norms encouraging direct peace and structural peace. An important distinction point is that only internalised values for peaceful resolution of conflicts are to be considered cultural peace, which leads to inner and outer dialogue with the self and the other with the view of improving conflictual situations (Galtung, 1996). To summarise, cultural violence and cultural peace are the aspects of human relationship upon which the sustenance and continuity of the direct and structural peace and violence are rooted. It can be considered as the most enduring aspect of violence and peace. However, the preceding discussion on the type and nature of three dimensions of violence does not show their functioning in causing the recurrence and ceaseless repetition of violence. Therefore, the dynamics of violence are briefly discussed in the next section.

## **2.5 The Dynamics of Violence**

This section deals with the relationship among the various types of violence, namely the relationship between famine, illness, destitution, inequality and marginalisation with war



violence, armed conflict and bloodshed. The role of values and symbols in justifying the visible and invisible forms of violence is also part of dynamics of violence. In Galtungian terms, this means the dialectics of direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence. How one form of violence sustains or abolishes another form of violence is important to understand the self-perpetuating nature of violence and how to transcend it.

Direct violence causes further direct violence. Causing harm to human basic needs of the oppressed requires the oppressor the perpetual use of force to sustain its domination. The oppressed resists harm using direct violence and hence direct violence breeds direct violence. In direct violence involving the oppressed, mutual lateral direct violence perpetuates violence. The dehumanisation of groups in violent interface serves as a condition for the perpetuation of direct violence (Ardizzone, 2007:4). The oppressed imitates the oppressor by adopting violent reaction as resistance against oppression. Girard termed this imitation an act of mimicking the violence of the enemy. The mutual mimicking in violence and the unsatiable desire for revenge creates ceaseless cycle of mimetic violence (Girard, 1977:33; Girard, 1987). Similarly, the fact that structural violence often breeds structural violence, and personal violence often breeds personal violence is undisputed (Galtung, 1969:178). The relationship between the two types of violence is vital.

All types of violence presuppose a kind of prehistory of the same or opposite violence. The prehistory of structural violence can be traced back to a form of direct violence. Direct violence used for the maintenance of a hierarchical system of relations obviously sustains both direct and structural violence. On the other hand, the use of direct violence for the sustenance of an egalitarian system of relations tentatively would bring about the eruption of new violent conflicts that are kept latent under an oppressive structure. The presence of one type of violence may not presuppose the synchronic or diachronic emergence of the other (Galtung, 1969: 178-179). Nevertheless, the presence of manifest structural violence presupposes latent direct violence and vice versa. Structures of equality maintained by means of direct violence can be accompanied by the rise of structural violence when the direct violence which maintains the structures of equality is threatened to decimation (Galtung, 1969:180). Structural means of repression emerges as guardian of the structures of equality.



Inversely speaking, studies on violent crimes show that direct violence is pervasive among sections of society suffering from marginalisation, destitution and exploitation (Ardizzone, 2007:5-6). In this case, structural violence breeds manifest direct violence. The direct violence could also be directed at the other and at oneself. Aggression against the other and self-degradation becomes a way of venting the visible and invisible violence accumulated in communal memory.

Structural violence engraved in the psychic of people (Galtung, 1990:294) is animated into direct violent action which in turn reinforces hatred, animosity and structures of discrimination and oppression (Galtung, 1969). Even the struggle for liberation could be trapped in this cycle of violence.

The relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed involves the dehumanisation of both. In effect, lateral direct violence also breeds itself among the oppressed as much as the desire of the oppressor to maintain its dominant status using direct violence (Ardizzone, 2007: 4). Sadly, as Arendt succinctly puts it, the instrumentality of violence to sustain domination or to undo social injustice negates the nature of the power of the oppressor and the oppressed. It increases the obsession and total dependence on continued violence (Arendt, 1969: 36). In the same vein, Fanon (1963) warns against the use of surplus violence during the war for liberation for it has the power of degenerating the cause of the re-humanization to dehumanisation. It results in a role reversal of the oppressed and oppressor. Similarly, the post-revolutionary recurrence of direct violence, for Galtung, attests the potency of this line of argument. The use of direct violence against structural violence may mean neither long-term absence of violence nor justice (Galtung, 1969:179-184).

The opportunity cost of the tentative abolition of one form of violence using another form of violence entail keeping the abolished form of violence standby to recur on other time. The sum of total violence remains constant. The difference is that one remains latent, while the other manifests. The cost of ensuring the tentative absence of one form of violence is the threat of recurrence of the other (Galtung, 1969:181).

The inhibition of human basic needs caused by structural violence or direct violence engenders dehumanisation and resentment, as well as triggers the security dilemma of the oppressor.



Resentment over an insult, in Girardian notion, transforms into lethal and mimetic violence (Girard, 1977:30-31). It causes a ceaseless recurrence of violence.

Mimetic violence swinging between structural and direct violence is carried out through time through the mediation of cultural construction of justifications of violent acts and violent discourses (Whitehead, 2004; Wydra, 2008:188). It is carried in the cultural, legal, ideological and religious values and prescriptions for the continuation of visible and invisible violence. This includes the inculcation of the memory of victimhood, humiliation and catastrophe which should be avenged. Consequently, direct violence and structural violence are transmitted to posterity (Nordstrom, 2004). The violence of yesterday and today resonates in the mind of people precluding non-violence and the way of peace (Lederach and Lederach, 2010).

In terms of the relationship of the decimation of one type of violence by another, the relationship is less predictable. Galtung has examined whether there is a sufficient and necessary relationship between the abolition of structural violence by direct violence and vice versa. The complete use of structural violence is not a sufficient condition for the abolition of direct violence. Neither does the scope of contemporary empirical research show that it involves the causal necessity between them. Yet, instead, it may tentatively compartmentalise its occurrence in time. In effect, it results in protracted direct violence; periodic absence and emergence of violent eruptions (Galtung, 1969:176-177).

Inversely speaking, the sufficiency and necessity of using direct violence to abolish structural violence reaffirm the continuation of direct and structural violence. Direct violence may decimate the oppressors but their violent structures. Because the decimation of the oppressor may not always simultaneously abolish the violent structures built by the oppressor. As is the case with post-colonial and post-revolutionary states, long after the removal of colonial rulers and old regimes their violent structures could be perpetuated without interruption by their inheritors. Differently put, the structural violence may temporarily submerge into oblivion but deeply engraved in the mind of the power holders and latently persist until the opportunity to manifest itself comes (Galtung, 1969:178). Thus, violence ceaselessly recurs.

The causal flow of violence from the cultural via the structural to direct is comprehensible. Cultural violence internalizes the way of understanding and seeing of exploitation/and repression



as normal. The trauma of violence submerges into collective subconsciousness and becomes the raw material for major historical processes and events which activate structural violence and direct violence respectively. Cultural violence provides their legitimation. There is a temporal dimension of the interaction and dynamics of the violence triad. Direct violence is an event or episode, structural violence a process-epicenter and cultural violence is a subterranean dormant and relatively permanent structure. In terms of timing, Galtung (1990:294) analogized direct violence with earthquake, structural violence with tectonic plate, and cultural violence with fault line. Cultural violence is an invariant element animating the unleashing of direct violence and operation of structural violence. It is the subterranean nutrient for both.

Exploring the structural and cultural contexts that activate the desire for domination and aggression in people and attempt to remove or modify them is the role of the peace researcher (Galtung, 1990:296). To do so, understanding the social context of violence is vital to grasp the specific ways in which violence is inherited and repeated (Dilts, 2012:193). The next section deals with the mechanisms for transforming violent relationships, however subject to the social context of the pastoral space.

## **2.6 Transforming/Transcending Violent Relations**

The idea of transformation is based on the transformative and constitutive nature of violence. The experience of violence involves transformative process affecting mind, body, emotions and memory. It transforms the nature of the individual and society in many ways which weaken the capacity for peace as much as it increases the need for peace. The mimetic reciprocity of social interaction sustaining violence can also be used to create mimetic peace (Girard, 1977: 33; Wydra, 2008: 191). The transformation idea is that the energy of violence can be used for the constructive change process. Human beings, as creators of the violence dynamics, are also capable of transcending their condition of entrapment in a cycle of violence. Hence, for transformation, the problem is not conflict (which is not always violent) but violence. Therefore, the transformation is a process of transition from the cycle of direct violence and the invisible violence of structures and culture towards positive peace (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 2003).

In terms of terminology, Galtung and Lederach use different terms to represent similar sets of ideas about creative engagement regarding the violent condition and the ability to envision as



well as create a better reality out of the experience of violence. This process is transcendence for Galtung and transformation for Lederach. However, both conceive the idea of creatively imagining and envisioning beyond the immediacy of the danger of episodes of violence for a better future. It is about addressing both the immediate basic human needs and strategically thinking about long terms changes. It underscores both changing the quality of the relationship, structures and values systems supporting violence and thinking beyond the immediate conditions of violence, dehumanisation and antipathy (Miall, 2004).

In the context of deep-rooted animosity and history of the incessant cycle of violence, transformation, in general, is about a non-violent social change. The conversion of the destructive energies of violence into constructive conflicts is an opportunity for creating a new reality. This is a way of going beyond ending violence. This emanates from the realisation that addressing/reducing direct violent episodes or resolution of the contentious issue of conflict do not end the recurrence of violence. Because the hidden structures, relationships, mind setups, values and traumas engraved by violence are often left unaddressed. Besides, it emanates from the fact that violence creates the sense of mutual entrapment and the desire to exit, but not knowing how to. The obsession with victory and vengeance are also destructive energies of violence which should be tamed and transformed into capabilities for peace (Lederach and Maiese, 2009; Galtung, 2000; Lederach, 1999; Galtung, 1996).

Transformation involves a continues process of addressing the circular relationship of attitude, behaviour and contradiction, and their corresponding dimensions of violence namely, direct, structural and cultural violence using strategies of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding respectively. The three overlapping Galtungian triangles of conflict, violence and peace are to be considered here. The task of transformation follows three steps. First, making the conflicts non-violent (end violence of all form). Second use the energies of the violent contradiction constructively in a non-violent fashion to embark on social change process involving changes at the individual/societal level, structural, cultural and relational levels affected by violence. Third, build positive peace at all the six spaces of Galtung (Lederach and Maiese, 2009; Galtung, 2000; Lederach, 1999; Galtung, 1996).



According to Lederach, a creative change process can address the basic human needs in real time, resolve root causes of the cycle of violence, and bring about a radical change in the quality of relationships. At the heart of the whole process is, besides the abolition of all form of violence, the replacement of negation of violence (negative peace) by the positive elements of peace at all levels (Lederach, 1999: 12-16).

In a society where violence is a concrete and existential reality, creating change process acceptable by all sections of society is very difficult. Lack of trust in all forms of efforts of peace and reconciliation preclude the success of interventions. Transformation, to succeed, has to deal with a series of questions. According to Lederach, these are three interrelated vital questions. One is how to transcend destructive violent patterns of relations while still living in the context that produced them? The second is how to build broad processes of social change while creating genuine spaces of accessible public engagement in dialogue? The third is how to promote structural change that can be translated into visible action? (Lederach, 2005:61).

Regarding the first question, the challenge is understanding and changing the types of relationships that propel people into the spiral of vengeance and retaliation (Wydra, 2008: 193). Both Galtung and Lederach similarly recognise the importance of establishing a working relationship to initiate transformation. At this stage, peace becomes a pragmatic context for a constructive way of handling conflict. This involves promoting elements of culture which practically affects the behaviour of people in conflict towards non-violence, empathy and creativity. It is the process of developing the courage of people to constructively engage with those most feared (Galtung, 1996: 77; Lederach, 2005: 63).

Galtung starts off with a simple formula of transformation indicating the need to begin from the ABC triangle of conflict, the three vertexes representing “A” for attitude, “B” for behavior and “C” for contradiction. Continuity of violence is a sign of the presence of unresolved contradiction. Yet, a full-fledged conflict involves the cyclical causation among contradictions (root causes), attitudes (values and perceptions) and behaviour (actions). The corresponding dimensions of violence are structural, cultural and direct violence respectively. From this, Galtung recommends a simple formula of transcending the cycle of violence empathy/attitude + non-violence/behavior + creativity/contradiction (Galtung, 1996:79). Miall reflects on the need



to add the context of the contradiction, memory of violence to behaviour and relationship to the attitude in analysing transformation of violence (Miall, 2004:7).

The integrated model of Lederach is more than the sum of Galtung's triangle and Miall's addition. The integrated model examines violence as at three levels: presenting condition, the horizon of the future and change process. Violence is examined at presenting condition as manifested episode of violence (*behavior and context*). The episode of violence embedded in a web of patterns of relationships (of apathy and antipathy as *attitude*) which are in turn rooted in the history of incompatibility and struggle (as communal *memory and contradiction*). Looking at episodes of violence this way enables understanding violence beyond its immediate context. This enables examining violence considering the nature of relations involved and the way it manifested in history. Furthermore, how both add up to cause the recurrence of violence. Thus, it poses violence as damaging behaviour manifesting itself in contexts of overwhelming attitudes of antipathy which should be dampened, the dysfunctional channel of communication (culture of violence), and relations of domination and asymmetry rooted in history and memory of violence, which has to be transcended (Lederach, 2003: 21). This is vital for the generation of empathy, one of the trinity of Galtungian transformation. Because without the analysis of the violent situation, the relationship involved and its history, one cannot be able to understand violent actions or conditions beyond their violent episode. Hence, empathy, a vital requirement in transformation, cannot be realized (Galtung, 1996).

The process of overcoming violence starts with identifying oneself with the enemy, empathy and solidarity, compassion and tolerance with victims of violence. Turning negative communications into positive reciprocity between enemies can break the cycle of violence. Gandhi's idea of non-violence and moral obligation towards fellow human beings, expressed in his idea of truth-force (*Satyagraha*) are vital inputs to begin the transformation of relations to end the perpetuation of violence (Wydra, 2008: 191-192). Galtung takes empathy to mean more than imagining what it means to be in the other party's shoes. Rather it means sharing their view of their experience of violence and how it corresponds to their way of being and becoming what they are (Galtung, 1996:79). This is what Lederach termed as the need to go out of the comfort zone and being able to face the other's view of the shared experience of violence (Lederach and Lederach, 2010; Lederach, 2005).



In a context of an overwhelming sense of polarised and binary moral divide, the believe in one's moral superiority and the need for the final battle for the victory of good over evil or the 'Dichotomy-Manicheism-Armageddon' (DMA) syndrome, empathy is not easily to be realised. Therefore, the task of transformation is the absolute negation of this syndrome-a culture of violence into a culture of peace. In a word, "no black and white division but fusion, no party is only evil or only good, they are all *yin/yang*; there is no final battle" (Galtung, a1996: 8, 16-18; Galtung, b1996:82-84; Galtung, 2000:120-129).

Galtung recognises the challenge of realising and sustaining empathy and advice to transcend beyond empathy, to think *Karma*, believe in a shared and intertwined destiny, not predetermined, capable of improving at any time. Karma is the realisation of the shared role of all parties in the creation, sustenance and transformation of evil irrespective of who began the first act of violence. The cognition of Karma that underscores even in violence life is interactive, co-dependent and symbiotic is vital for transformation (Galtung, a1996:85; Galtung, b1996: 82-84; Galtung, 2000:163; Galtung, 2002:57; Galtung, 2005:226). The concept of Karma, shared responsibility for violence is vital to grasp the state of relations in societies like Afar and Issa with a history of violence since time immemorial and contention on the first evil or guilt is an input in the history of violence.

The commitment to non-violence is entailed above in dealing with contradictions and to break the 'violence breeds violence' cycles (Galtung, a1996:79). Non-violence may not mean love and positive cooperation but a cooperative conflict. It is a commitment to solve the issue in a non-violent manner. The presence of empathy helps in opening the horizon of commitment for non-violence. But in the absence of empathy and in a society where the history of violence has made violent means acceptable and non-violence not dependable, the commitment for non-violence faces a great challenge (Lederach, 2005). Galtung argues that if non-violence is not in the culture, then recourse to violence comes too easily, 'to settle the matter once and for all' (Galtung, a1996: 80; Galtung, b1996:82-84).

This is where the need for creativity to frame paradoxes as opportunities and generating new ways of approaching the problem becomes indispensable. Yet it should be emphasized that the



result of being insightful of the enemy other (empathy) and brilliance in creativity without commitment to non-violence is refinement and mastery of the art of war than promoting peace. The absence of commitment to non-violence in the state of Israel has wasted the important asset of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) for peace namely their knowledge of the Hamas and Fatah and their creativity (in Hebrew conceptualized as *Chutzpha*). Because this, Galtung warns that without real commitment to non-violence, empathy and creativity leads to being either IDF or Sun Tzu (Galtung, a1996:82).

Therefore, the result is the art of war and not the art of peace. Non-violence is neither a euphemism for a Gandhian ideal nor a commitment to brute realism. Instead, it is a pragmatic commitment to make non-violence becomes the means of political struggle. With the view to realize peace by peaceful means the commitment to non-violence is central to achieve peace rather than to attempt to achieve peace and justice by means of violence (Wydra, 2008:193). However, sustaining non-violence in the face of a powerful oppressive machinery is very difficult. Recognising the challenge of sustaining non-violence, Galtung (b1996; 2001) recommends the need to go beyond nonviolence into reversibility; that all nonviolent action of addressing the injustice, trauma, damage and loss of the past need to be limited to what is reversible. This safeguards the process of transformation from sliding into violence by indulging in the futile violent act of reverting what cannot be reverted.

Creativity is a vital aspect of transformation to deal with the transcendence of contradictions currently seen as absolute incompatibilities. Creativity enables seeing beyond the current predicament of being trapped in a cycle of violence and reciprocal animosity. In a context where empathy, non-violence and creativity are internalized, then follows: first, establish a mediated dialogue separately and engage with the root cause of the violence. Second, create mutually accepted a process for the realisation of contradictory goals. Third, introduce a creative way of addressing goals considered incompatible because of the blinding power of the culture of violence. Fourth, embark face to face mediation of well-prepared parties. Finally, Galtung (2005:232) advices to keep peace dialogues going although their immediate result could be regressing backwards. He further recommends conceptual transcendence; the need to go beyond the empathy-non-violence-creativity triad. This is attaining karma for empathy, reversibility for non-violence, flexibility for creativity.



However, realizing this is often not the case with violent conflicts embedded in the long history of violence. This is the right point to reflect on how should change be designed for a whole society to move from cycles of violence to respectful engagement in a way that the change is experienced as genuine (Lederach, 2005:53).

The horizon of the future, according to Lederach, is where thinking beyond the limiting condition of the present and envision a future without violence takes place. This is the point of reflection and creativity of the reality people wish to create. It is the image of the desired future. This space is directed both towards the present conditions of violence and the kinds of changes needed to realise the desired future. It is both a linear movement towards non-violence and justice, and at the same time a circular movement of tirelessly engaging in keeping the change process, despite discouraging results. It is a journey to the future with hindsight to the past. This refers to the concept of linearity and circularity of transformation. The change process may progress ahead, halt in a stalemate or regress backwards in escalation of violence. So, the journey of transformation is both a linear movement from violence to positive peace as much as it could be a circular journey (Lederach, 2003:36; Paffenholz, 2009:4). This is in line with the Galtungian argument that let countless peace dialogues flourish even in the face of failing deals (Galtung, 2005:232). It is a process structure. A process because it is adaptive to condition and with defined purpose but a structure because it maintains its shape over time (Lederach and Maiese, 2009:9).

From a transformational view, change processes deal with addressing the problem of basic human needs caused by direct violence. This includes addressing the deeper and longer-term relational and systemic patterns that produce violence. It is a platform for short-term responsiveness to basic human needs and long-term strategic action to move from violence to positive peace. The key to such a platform is the capacity to generate and re-generate change processes responsive to both immediate episodes and the relational context (Lederach and Maiese, 2009:10).

A transformational platform is essentially the building of an on-going and adaptive base at the epicentre of conflict from which it is possible to generate processes that create solutions to short-term needs and provide a capacity to work on strategic long-term constructive change in



systemic and relational context (Lederach and Maiese, 2009:9-10). The change process is to address both the visible and invisible, current and past violence imbedded in and is sustained by the personal, cultural, structural and relational dimensions of violence (Lederach, 2003, p. 39). It prescribes appropriate solutions for the after effects of violence (trauma, guilt, and victimization, obsession for victory and revenge as well as deep-rooted antipathy) using resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation namely a mixture of peacemaking and a structural peacebuilding approach. For the immediate eruption of violence, it works on the reduction and mitigation of violence, namely a peacekeeping approach. Addressing the future of violence is dealt with changing the culture of violence sustaining it over time, namely cultural peacebuilding (Galtung, 2001:71-75; Lederach, 1999; Dudouet, 2006).

In the bid to respond to basic human needs and developing the capacity for sustainable peace, the need for giving voice to the voiceless victims of violence, ushering new space of communication and dialogue is vital for individual and social healing. Both at individual and societal level initiating dialogue to engage and exchange their views of reality is vital. Creating a viable public space where reconciliation can be carried out is indispensable (Lederach and Lederach, 2010:4-6). This space is where the four pillars of reconciliation truth, mercy, justice and peace meet (Lederach, 2005).

However, in a context of deep-rooted history of gruesome violence realizing mercy and truth, justice and peace is challenging owing to the paradoxical nature of the pairs. Therefore, resolving the paradoxical nature of the pairs requires ingenuity and creativity, and hence turning challenges into opportunity. It is also guided by pragmatic consideration of realizing what is possible and reversible. In other words, it is a flexible approach to respond to realities than a hard and fast obsession with principles. The goal is to create a new wave of togetherness from troubled past after a proper revelation of truth of what happened and requesting mercy, the rendering of justice in a way it ensures peace (Lederach, 1999:23-29; Galtung, 2005:234). However, for people bearing the legacy of lived experience of violence, designing a constructive change process practically considered authentic and acceptable by society remains to be the biggest challenge. This is a point where the issue of creativity and imagination comes to the front of transformation (Lederach, 2005).



Consistent engagement with complex historical relationships of violence than avoiding them is key to constructive change process. In this, Lederach (2005) suggests the need to recognise, what he calls, “the gift of pessimism”. One is to be imbedded in the reality of what has existed while seeking new ways to move beyond the grips of those patterns. Second, the authenticity of constructive change should be rooted in the quality of relationships and nature of the public sphere, where it affects their life most and affects them directly. It got to be proximate to their life and things which matter most to them. This should also enable them to have their voice in the social space of direct conversation and communication. Because for a society divided by violence, the proximity of accessible social conversation comes to measure the success of moving away from violence to peace. Ensuring proximity and accessible conversation creates practical engagement for authentic change process, which “avoids apathy and manipulated change process”. The litmus test of the authenticity of the constructive change process is, however, the attitudinal and behavioural change of people demonstrable in action in a long-time frame (Lederach, 2005:53-57).

The success of constructive processes hinges on the ability to engage with three paradoxes. First is to prevail over the dilemma of transcendence by being rooted in history and focus on the present. Second, the ability to win the confidence of the local community while the change process covers far wider social space. Third, structural change should be attested by and reflected in personal and individual actions as proof of the authenticity of change. This requires a daring initiative and two types of social courage. The first is to be able to see the perspective and views of the strange enemy other, and hence empathy. Second, to be able to withstand the challenge that comes from within one’s group resisting communication with the enemy, and hence transcending violent ethos and communications. The principles of karma, reversibility and flexibility should be noted along with the dire need for creative imagination (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 2005).

The overall success and outcome of constructive transformation, however, is to be determined by the subjective conditions of cases rather than an overall principle. The potency of the lived experience of the ordinary people and the commitment for the critical analysis of power structures and realities instead of normative assumptions is becoming the future path of growth of theory of transformation (Paffenholz, 2009:5).



## 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter examined the various theoretical and conceptual constructs of violence and peace from different fields of studies in order to situate Issa-Afar violence in the wider discourse on violence and peace, on the one hand, and to borrow analytical conceptual framework. Accordingly, the problem of understanding violence, the nature and utility of violence is discussed in a way it shines light on our understanding of the self-perpetuating nature of violence. The theoretical contestations and justification for the use of violence and conceptual limitations are interrogated. A recurring leitmotiv in the literature until the coming of the capacious conceptual framework of Galtung and Lederach is the truncated understanding of violence as an act associated with war, physical harm and destruction, and peace the absence of war. The more inclusive conceptual framework of Galtung and Lederach, which provides the three forms of violence and peace are detailed as useful tools to understand Issa-Afar violence in its entirety.

However, even this capacious framework has its own limitation as indicated by authors like Winter and Cock that the latter's additions are also integrated into the conceptual framework of violence and peace, ending recurrence of violence, peace-making and transformation of violent relations. Moreover, critical reflection is made on every theoretical stipulation in a way it speaks to our understanding of the recurrence of Issa-Afar violence, ending it and transformation of violent relations through peace-making. Therefore, the critical analysis of Issa-Afar violence is to be guided by the above conceptual framework and constructs. Accordingly, the next chapter examines the historical formation and dynamics of Issa-Afar violence in a way to show how it contributes to the continuity of contemporary Issa-Afar violence.



## Chapter Three

# Narratives of Old Issa-Afar Wars: the Organization and Nature of Violence in the pre-1991 Period

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### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents Issa-Afar violence in the pre-1991 period, covering circa the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century up to the fall of the Derg regime in 1991. The main objective of this chapter is to explore the early formation and transformation of the origin, nature, utility and organisation of Issa-Afar violence. Moreover, it examines what is constituted in the Issa-Afar narratives of violence in the form of communal memory and representation of past violence. Conversely, it examines how narratives of old Issa-Afar wars play out in the dynamics of contemporary Issa-Afar violence. Therefore, the central contention of this chapter is that the memories of old Issa-Afar wars and the various forms of experience of violence during the pre-1991 period are inherited as aspects of structural violence and cultural violence in the dynamics of the post-1991 Issa-Afar violence.

Violence as social behaviour is defined by the social, economic, cultural and political organisation of society. Without the proper understanding of this aspect of society, it is not possible to grasp the nature of violence. Accordingly, the next section deals with the social, cultural, economic and political complexion of the Issa and the Afar.

### 3.2 Introducing the Issa and the Afar Societies

The Issa/Somali and the Afar have multiple commonalities as they are different in other ways. To begin with, both the Issa/Somali and the Afar belong to the southern Cushitic linguistic category, which is among the earliest settlers of the Horn of Africa. They have a clan-based social organisation that goes from family to sub-clan, to clan, to clan confederacy and finally to the Afar and Somali ethnic groups. The Issa belongs to the Dir Somali clans while the Afar is the nationality composed of a collectivity of different sub-groups. Except for few Afar in the Lower Awash Valley, nomadic pastoralism based on animal production and transhumant pastoral practice across seasons is the main economic organisation. Their environment is characterised by



extremely arid and semi-arid desert, and seasonal migration across multiple ecosystems is the major adaptive mechanism to sustain in the harsh environment. Their customary legal and political system have many similarities; while the Afar had the Sultan, Amoyta or Dardar at the top of the political hierarchy, the Issa used to be ruled under one *Ougas*. Clan leaders and religious fathers are highly regarded and have ample power on matters of peace and conflict. There are many aspects of linguistic, somatic and cultural similarities. One would find it difficult to identify an Afar from an Issa from their costumes, hairdressing and the various implements and weapons they use. The high regard offered to heroism, warrior ethos and arms are common to both. Adventure and revenge killing are basic values at the centre of the clan solidarity. Guilt and right are collective in the sense that war on one is a war on all, and the individual clan member is the right bearer for protection by its clan as the bearer of duty to stand for the security and safety of a clan man. This logic of reciprocity applies at all level of the social organisation, starting from the family to the nationality. Central to the fundamental role of the clan as basic political and social institution is the role of kinship, which connects people from the family up to the tribe based on lineage (Lewis, 1961).

The place of youth, women and children is also another point of convergence between the two groups. There is an age set group among the Afar and the Issa, which is organised for the purpose of social, political and security reasons. As patrilineal and patriarchic societies, women among the Afar and the Issa have marginal roles in public life. They are not included in political and judicial assemblies where even boys may take part. However, the protection and security of woman and children are regarded as a high priority or concern in society. An attack on children and women is considered an attack on the future of the society. The male member of the family is considered to be a source of security and is expected to play so in the case of conflict. The dominant livelihood is nomadic pastoralism, which is complimented by contraband trade, salt extraction and farming. Sharing the arid and desert environment, the Issa and the Afar have the same patterns of settlement and mobility across the desert during the dominantly dry seasons and the very few and short rain seasons. In terms of the myth of origin and lineage, the Issa and the Afar have so intimate origins that in some of the oral traditions the Issa are referred as the classical prodigal son of a common ancient ancestor. Although historical sources evidently show



that the history of the Afar and the Somali predates the rise of Islam, however, descent from the Arab Quraysh clan of Prophet Mohammed is another leitmotiv among the Issa and the Afar. There is a strong link between some Issa and Afar clans believed to have been created with the coming of Arab Quranic teachers from Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula. Some Issa clans are by far closer in lineage to the Afar than the rest of the Somali clans. At times, there has been Issa-Afar alliances and security arrangements against other Afar clans like the case of the Debne' ke weqima-Issa alliance against the Sultanate of Awusa (Isenberg and Krapf, 1968; Clapham, 2008).

Another important aspect is the nature of social organisation. Both groups have an egalitarian pastoralist social organisation wherein access to and control over basic and strategic pastoral resources is a communal matter. Grazing land, rivers and water points are flashpoints of conflicts. The use and management of such scarce resources are administered by the clan. It determines which clans to allow and share with and which to prohibit because this pertains to the aspect of reciprocity and security arrangements. Therefore, cross-ethnic arrangement of sharing resources and accommodating the other during dry seasons is a common practice. This applies to all Issa and among other Somali and Afar people. They also share material culture namely the housing construction, which is easily movable and the utensils they use at households are similar. The tools of war and violence are also similar with minor differences (Lewis, 1955).

In terms of regional politics and security, both occupy a contiguous territory both in Ethiopia and Djibouti. While the Afar homeland territorial contiguity extends to Eritrea, the Issa homeland extends to Somaliland. Owing to this, they are connected to their kin across the borders of states which gave the regional connectedness of their conflict. They have a similar experience of colonialism, their responses differ, though. The Afar in Eritrea and Djibouti encountered Italian and French colonialism respectively. Similarly, the Somali people were colonized by Italians (Italian Somaliland), French (Djibouti) and British (in British Somaliland). While the Afar response was continuing anti-colonial struggle, the Somali has a mixed reaction of resistance and collaboration. Their relations with the Ethiopian state had been mainly that of marginalisation, exploitation and alienation at least not favourable until the end of the Derg regime. In effect, they occupy geographic, economic, social and political peripheries of the Ethiopian state. Famine and



drought are frequent phenomena in the Afar and Somali horn. Consequently, they are often vulnerable to the dangers of environmental and climatic calamities.

Historically, their relationship with the Ethiopian state has been that of antipathy and suspicion. This dates to the period of the Islamist conquest of Christian Abyssinia during the 16<sup>th</sup> century under the leadership of Imam Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi commonly known as the Gragn Ahmed (the left handed). The Afar and the Somali had been part of the most powerful flank of Gragn Army (Wagner, 2014:71), that in Highlander Christian Ethiopia communal memory of Islam and the peripheries, mainly Afar and Somali, invokes the sense of trauma and existential treat often associated with the immense havoc and destruction Gragn brought to the empire (Henze, 2000:90). The enmity of the Issa and other Somali groups, who were allies of the Afar during the Gragn conquest of Abyssinia, began after the defeat of the Gragn Army. This was manifested in mutual raids against each other, which weakened the Adal Sultanate of Harar, besides the Oromo raids. The inheritor of the Adal Sultanate of Harar believed to be the member of Gragn's family transferred the Adal Sultanate from Harar to the fertile valley of Awusa, a sultanate and the centre of Afar political life (Abir, 1968). During the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Somali along with the Afar nomadic raids affected the Awusa sultanate (Trimingham, 1952). Despite multidimensional commonalities, the history of the Issa and the Afar at least since circa 16<sup>th</sup> century has been characterised by violent clashes and animosity than amity. This pertains partly owing to the various ways the differences characterising each group had been played off.

### **3.2.1 The Issa/Somali**

The livelihood of the Issa/Somali is not exclusively pastoralist like the Afar. They have alternative means of livelihoods. Trade and commerce are in the tradition the Issa owing to historical and geographic reasons. Historically the ancient trade routes of central Ethiopia to the Indian Ocean traversed through Issa occupied territories that they have been engaged as security escorts, service providers and guides of caravan trade. The proximity to and territorial consanguinity of their Issa with Somali land and Djibouti made their exposure to trade and commerce via the coast (Muauz , 2009). This explains the avid commercial mentality of the Issa/Somali. According to the observation of travels during 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Issa



have been fighting with each other over the control of the caravan routes because they showed a very strong tendency to exploit any financial gains and resources of other peoples. Lewis (1994) also confirms that the power of money is so highly regarded among the Issa that they often engage in violence to secure trade routes.

According to Dereje and Markus (2008), the Issa demonstrate superb creativity and efficiency of resourcing borders and borderland for illicit commercial purposes. This tradition continued through centuries up to date. The huge contraband business transaction involving the international companies from the Gulf States locally known as *Shirkades* is operated and controlled by the Issa in the Ethiopia (Muauz , 2015b). Besides as a way of life, the Issa creativity and commercial mentality have its own contribution to the quality of relationship they have with their neighbours which must be explored by further study.

However, the main livelihood of the Issa society is pastoralism with a more challenging environmental context than the Afar. The Issa/Somali pastoralists inhabit most inhospitable, arid and semi-arid areas of extending from Aysha Dewele in the East up to the escarpment of Awash River in the North adjacent to the Afar region. Owing to the harsh environmental condition grazing land and water points are a matter of life and death. Clan ownership of water points and grazing land goes along with the right of access to all Issa clans to the resources irrespective of lineage and clan membership. There is a general belief system that such resources are a gift of Allah to all humanity that any Somali should have access to (Lewis, 1961). This “egalitarian” system of access to pastoral resources is so strong that they adhere to their belief that anywhere they step in is considered a free reign for grazing and watering (Lewis, 1994). Though grazing land and water point are owned by clans among the Afar, the universal access to all Somali is the Issa’s conception of access to pastoral resources. This has its own contribution to the incidence of violent clashes.

In describing the seasonal mobility of the Issa/Somali tribes, Lewis (1994) indicated that “the centers of population are the home wells to which in *Haga* (dry season July-August) and *Dhair* (November-December) tribes retire from the far grazing, and from which in *Jilal* (January-February), they move out to the new pasture after the *Gu* (April-May) rains. In the dry season,



tribes are concentrated around the home wells, which are often shared among friendly tribes” (Lewis, 1994:90). But owing to the lack of grazing land water points they are often forced to migrate to neighbouring communities which bring them into violent clashes.

The segmentary nature of clan-based social organisation without central authority makes the mitigation of violence and resolution of conflict a challenging task. This is remarkably visible when inter-clan conflicts involving control over caravan trade route and contraband channels happens (Lewis, 1994). This seems to fit Evans Pritchard’s description of the Nuer as an anarchic society without any sense of central authority and order (Evans-Pritchard, 1940).

However, the Issa view of their society is contrary to this and closer to Wal Duany’s conception of the Nuer as an order within anarchy (Duany, 2012). They consider the role of elders and the customary legal system is a source of stability. Duany’s conception of the Nuer fits the fact that the Afar and the Issa have a legal system which punishes without apprehension yet the Afar and the Issa differ because they had palaces, political centres of power. Contemporary political dynamics have brought modern state institutions of political power that parallel customary institutions are aligned to support the former. Even though authors like Lewis keep on narrating the influential role of customary elders (Lewis, 1961), contemporaneous reality shows that with the penetration of the society by state institutions it is no longer applicable. Political party leaders and the new ruling elite have come to replace the traditional role of elders. This, however, does not mean that the role of customary leaders has vanished but remarkably diminished.

### **3.2.2 The Afar**

The Afar are dominantly transhumance pastoralists whose livelihood is dependent upon seasonal movement across multiple ecosystems based on the availability of grazing area and water points. This seasonal movement follows patterns of migration from homesteads to near and far way satellite camps and temporary settlement. With the availability of grazing and water, they return to their homesteads following the customary pattern of movement (Getachew, 2001). The Afar pastoralists have good communication traditions, which they call *Dagu* that enable men patrolling as scouts (*Gibba*) for mapping out places of seasonal movements to access resources



as well as to take timely interaction between temporarily separated families. The seasonal mobility of the Afar is limited in distance based on seasonal variations and rainfall. Most members of the family stay near the river during the dry September-May season and move only once a year to more distant areas. They are, therefore, heavily dependent on grazing close to the river. The seasonal mobility follows the major five seasons: the *Hagay* (May/June the driest season of the year), *Karma* (Mid July-mid September, the main rain season when 60% of annual rainfall comes), *Dadaa* (late October-early November, the season of slight rain), *Kayrat* (September to November, the best grazing season), *Gilal* (November to March, less severely dry season but cool temperature), and *Sagum* (March-April, a minor rainy season accounting to 20% of annual rainfall) (Yasin, 2010).

The Afar people have historically had an independent customary political system, which possessed clearly defined geographic boundaries. The customary authorities in the Afar triangle, current day Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti Afar territories used to be the highest political authorities representing individual clans and clan confederacies. These customary political authorities administered their society through their customary law. As Gemaluddin (1998:35) claimed, “be it in the five sultanates or in the numerous tribal chieftaincies, the Afar are administered by customary laws known as *Madaqa* which are processed through litigation or lawsuit known as *Mablo*.” The law court is called Hera, the jury is called *Makkaban*. Although different regions of the Afar triangle have *Madaqas* of their own; they differ only in minor aspects. The well-known *Madaqa* are *Burili Madaqa* (*Burili’s* code of laws), *Buddihto-badih Madaqa* (*Buddito’s* son’s code of law) and the *Debnek- Weqima Madaqa* (*Debnek–Weqima’s* code of law). The customary legal systems in spite of differences in origin and naming share basic principles, which serve as a mechanism for the conflict transformation. The customary legal and political institutions provide legitimacy to the powerful role of elders and customary leaders in the whole of Afar triangle. All the Afar in spite of falling under the different political constellation of the modern state are united by these customary institutions (Muauz, 2013).

### **3.3 Historical Prognosis of Issa-Afar Violence**

The history of Issa-Afar violence cannot be traced to a definite historical period. Partly owing to the fact that the earliest forms of Issa-Afar violent relations are either commonplace to pastoralist



relations or had not had a discernable pattern of continuity. However, in light of the ever-widening concept of violence to be inclusive of so many dimensions, one can still identify different forms of violence. Yet, treating earliest forms of relations other than warfare as violence seems to fall into historical anachronism. This notwithstanding, the narratives of warfare and the historically rooted animosity still stands relevant to our understanding of contemporary Issa-Afar violence. The historical prognosis mainly examines the development of pre-1991 Issa-Afar violence since early 1900 up to the fall of the Derg regime in 1991. However, the early formation of Issa-Afar violence dating back to medieval Ethiopia, the Afar Horn and Somali Horn is relevant to show how certain forms of inherited violence play out at different historical periods. With the rise and fall of different international, regional and national forces, the Issa-Afar violence inherited from the medieval and colonial period had differently played out contributing to the cycle of violence.

### **3.3.1 The Inheritance of Medieval Violence**

The focus on the medieval violence in this section is due to the fact that the period is one of the most tumultuous periods in Ethiopian history. The major wars and population movements which came to shape the current form and content of Ethiopian state and society were carried out during this period. The struggle for political dominance among the various political entities and the empire state of Abyssinia had been one of the major phenomena, which brought about historical interaction among various groups (Abir, 1980; Trimingham, 1952). The Afar and Somali groups belonging to the Islamic and Cushitic periphery of the Christian Abyssinian Empire had been on the constant move northwards. Part of the northward movement, which was a political brought about the great war of the 16<sup>th</sup> century known as Gagn invasion of Abyssinia. In this, the Afar and the Somali groups constituted the tip of the arrow (Abir, 1968; Trimingham, 1952). The recorded history of violence between the Somali and Afar, in general, can be traced back to the post-Gagn period. The Afar and the Somali, which constituted the invincible flanks of the defeated Gagn army are believed to have gone into rivalry among themselves during this period (Trimingham, 1952). Since this period to date, the Issa one of the Somali clans has been in a violent struggle.

However, the more significant aspect of violent interaction the trace of which continues to date is the constant northward population drifting of the Issa and the eviction of the Afar. This in part



belongs to the great north and southward population movement which included the Oromo and other Somali clans. Yet, the Issa is group that had always had fights with the Afar (Thesiger, Jan 1935; Harbeson, 1978). The northward push is believed to have brought the Afar as far away as the coastal kingdom of Zula towards the harsh desert of *Denkalia* adjacent to the Red Sea coast, the Amhara and Tigray escarpment. The southern limit is now below the Harari plate and east of the Erer River. According to Yasin Mohammed Yasin (2010), the Issa had also been evicting other Somali clans and engulfing or assimilating clans of the expanding Oromo confederacy along their expansion.

In political terms, the struggle over the Adal Sultanate of Harar and the aftermath of the continuous invasion of the Sultanate of Awusa in lower Awash Valley by the Issa are well recorded historical relations. For hundreds of years, constant wars of eviction have raged between the two groups adding to the construction of mythical animosity. Memories of medieval wars and evictions from old Afar homelands are narrated to generations so much so that un-lived value constructions are inherited across generations (FGD-Mile, 2016). The same can be said without exaggeration about the Issa, they are dominantly on the victorious side of the story though. According to early accounts, Issa-Afar relations, the tendency to kill each other on sight and at times committing acts of overkilling was common practice among the Issa and the Afar (Nesbitt, 1934; Lewis, 1955).

According to these early sources, the nature of violence was caused by partly resources driven and partly cultural. Trophy killing, and adventure were common among both groups. The killer were given high regard. The social values behind getting respect and honour in society were the driving force. In some instances, abusing the victim and emasculating (cutting of the genitals) were a common practice of showing one's manhood and rite of passage (Lewis, 1955). Resource scarcity drove violence, as in raids and counter raids constitute an aspect of violent reciprocity. A revenge killing, cattle raiding and rustling to restock lost cattle by either drought and famine, or raids connected the resource driven aspect of violence with cultural elements (Yasin, 2010). Avenging the dead is given such high regard that in both groups, reminders of the imperative for revenge killing were visible in the social space. Among the Issa, this was symbolised in provocative songs and denying respect for those who failed to avenge their dead. Among the Afar, they erect a stand by the grave for the dead whose blood is not avenged. Such types of



graves are known as *Waydal* erected as a constant reminder for members of the clan to avenge the dead and for other clans to see then respective clan has failed the responsibility of the dead (Yayo A. , 2016; Nesbitt, 1934; Thesiger, Jan, 1935).

According to informants, the dead would not be laid to rest in the ground until his blood is avenged. Instead the dead would be buried standing in the *Waydal* structure standing above the ground. So, avenging accounts to giving rest to the dead (Yayo A. , 2016). However, Lewis (1955) contradicts this saying that the *Waydal* is erected for the man killed in battle. The height of the *Waydal* erected for the dead depends on his heroism and surely the number of people he killed. Custom has it that, any traveler outside of the clan used to have the right to slaughter the camel of the clan with *Waydal* in its neighborhood. This makes the opportunity cost of not avenging very high. Because camel is the best asset among the Afar which has economic, social and religious values (Endris, 2016). The important theme to be taken from both versions is that the high regard offered to revenge killing and how the dead occupies public space as constant reminder of preparing society to violence.

Among the Issa similar value are dominant. This is evident from the collection of Afar and Somali poetry, war songs and performances which mainly in honor of the killer (Saleh, 2012; Morin, 1996). According to informants, the memory of the hero slain bravely in battle is narrated to children as evening stories, girls sing the heroes name and elders remember him by honouring his siblings (Aydahiso, 2015).

The struggle between the Issa and Afar, which began during the 13<sup>th</sup> century continued through 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries had its legacy on the nature of Issa-Afar relations. The medieval violence rooted in custom, economic and political objectives was inherited to the advent of colonialism in the Horn of Africa. The six-hundred-year long struggle cemented enemy imagery and bitter animosity that contributed to the unleashing of a new form of war violence during the era of colonial struggle.

Even though the cumulated effect of hundreds of years' violent engagement had its lasting marks on Issa-Afar relations, the violence it is considered by Issa and Afar informants as a commonplace one. The nature of episodes of violence was a short period of confrontation, communal, using rudimentary tools and organisation of violence. The major weapons were



swords, javelins, spears and daggers. On the Issa side, the sling had been a devastating weapon used to attack the enemy at distance. Shotguns were a rarity (Lewis, 1955). This was to change with the emergence of the European state system at the shores of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, on the one hand, and the Ethiopian empire state from mainland Africa.

With the arrival of colonialists at Afar and Somali Horn in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Afar and Somali people found themselves in between the European colonialism and the Ethiopian empire, which they had not yet formed a part of. The regional political dynamics of this period has continued to affect the overall political dynamics of the region as much as the nature of Issa-Afar relations.

The Ethiopian state found itself threatened by European encirclement. The historical encirclement mentalist born of fear of Islam and the Cushitic stock from the south-east of its coastal territories now was doubled by the appearance of a far advanced European colonial power. Ethiopia's emergence right out of the turbulent era of princes was thriving to build and consolidate the empire. The appearance of the European colonial power in the territories of the less confided Somali and Afar societies added the anxiety about and scepticism among those groups. European colonial powers cognizant of the rough relations with the empire state tried to play out the circumstances to their advantage. Many of the colonial and Ethiopian state policies and orientations towards the Afar and the Issa were shaped by this prevailing confrontation. The peripheral status of the two peoples formed vivid shape. The nature of Issa-Afar relations in general and nature of the violence, in particular, was affected by this interplay (Yasin, 2010; Gemaluddin, 1998).

The British, French and Italian control of what becomes British Somaliland, the territories of the Issa and the Afar (current day Djibouti) and Italian Somaliland (latter joined with British Somaliland to and formed the republic of Somalia during independence) introduced multidimensional struggle, namely the struggle among a world system (colonialism), an imperial state system and a pastoral communal system. The complex interplay can be reduced by four positions and situations. First, Ethiopia used the pastoral Afar and Somali territories as a buffer zone against the advancing colonial force. Djibouti and the coastal territories of Ethiopia were willfully handed to French and British rule. On the other hand, the Ethiopian state attempted to win the allegiance of both groups as much as it considered them as common subject shared with



colonial forces. Second, the colonial forces tried to manipulate the conflict between the Afar and Issa to further their objectives, succeeding in gaining the support of the Issa in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somaliland and the Afar of Djibouti, but not in Ethiopia. Third, Issa and Afar attempted to use the gun power and support of the colonial powers and the Ethiopia state to out manoeuvre the influence of the other. Fourth, the Afar collaborated with the Ethiopian state and the Issa fully allied with the colonial forces. The result of power relations between the two groups was a foregone conclusion that the Issa collaborating with the strong power took the upper hand in arms and territorial control (Ibid).

In effect, this transformed the nature of the Issa-Afar violence inherited from medieval period to the new form of violence of the European state system and empire-state of Ethiopia. Politics step into the realm of communal violence. The traditional modalities of handling communal violence had not had the means of dealing with the violence blended with the politics of colonial and Ethiopian empire state building. In Djibouti and the coast of Zula, the traditional homeland of Afar, Issa gradually took dominance over the Afar. In Ethiopia, the expansion and eviction continued widening the sphere of Issa influence. The Afar attempted to resist and outmanoeuvre the Issa exploiting their close relations with Ethiopia but for no avail (Muauz , 2009).

The politics of alliance and counter alliance to outmanoeuvre the other is considered the beginning of better memory of betrayal between the Issa and the Afar. Although mass violence and eviction had been there before this period, it was considered as an acceptable struggle between closely linked communities. Whereas, using either of the forces against each other was considered as defying the norm and using alien force against one's own kin (Ibid).

Therefore, the violence of this period recast the memory of violence of the medieval time, as though it was a premeditated and strategic animosity to decimate. According to Issa and Afar informants, the attempt to take advantage of the vulnerability of the other was the sources of frustration and hatred. Besides warfare and warrior ethos among both groups is a highly considered role of the brave. This was based on how one plays his role on the battlefield in the open. Conspiracy and clandestine designs to decimate the enemy the like of Sun Tzu's art of war is considered cheap and treacherous acts. The politics of the period, however, required not only the war on the battlefield but also political struggles utilizing the interplay of various political



forces (Habib, 2015; Abduljibriel, 2015). Consequently, this contributed to the buildup of the sense of deep-rooted hatred justifying violence which can be considered part of the cultural violence sustained to this date.

Another vital element of political dynamics, which came to constitute a major aspect of the structural violence in the Horn of Africa, namely the segmentation of the Somali and the Afar Horn into different political constellations. The division of the Somali into Italian, British and French colonial rule and the Ethiopian state, the Afar into Ethiopian, the French colony of Djibouti and the Italian occupation of the Red Sea Afar coast set apart a people that desired to live together and combined peoples that wished to live separately. The Issa found themselves in the Ethiopian state, British Somaliland and French Djibouti. The Issa and the Afar are examples of this phenomenon of segmentation and amalgamation. To sustain these structures of segmentation, the corresponding states of Afar and Somali Horn states used Issa-Afar violence as an input. It in effect became a source of weakness and vulnerability as much as the repository of the memory of violence. Resistance against and the attempt to manipulate the imposed structures caused double faceted violence. One, it intensified the violence between the Issa and the Afar; second, it strengthened the state marginalisation of both groups, which continued through the twentieth Century and is inherited to the present (Markakis, 2003; Puddu, 2016).

### **3.3.3 The Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century to Second World War**

This period can be considered as the formative years of Ethiopian modernization and consolidation of the state building. The Ethiopian state survived the Horn of Africa version of the scramble for Africa as a sovereign state with recognised borders. However, the unfinished business of the search for access to the sea because of the Italian presence in the province of Eritrea and the consolidation of internal unity was an ongoing challenge (Clapham, 2008). One of the developments relating to Issa-Afar relations is the development of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway. With the coming of the railway line, the Issa were employed as daily labourers, which enabled them to establish settlements along the rail line (Markakis J. , Anatomy of a conflict: Afar and Ise Ethiopia, 2003).

The Issa presence in British Somaliland and Djibouti gave them the opportunity to gradually move along the Aysha Dewele triangle into the Hararge plateau. For Afar, this was the period of



political struggle in the Awusa sultanate. In the bid for succession among the Aydahiso the ruling family of the Awusa, the political struggle had weakened the Afar. In the Baadu area, the fertile flood plains of Awash Valley, strong clan leaders were mobilising raids against the Issa, which were pushing the Afar off the Harerge plateau and Erer eastwards below the water shade of Erer River. There had been skirmishes and Issa raids along the southern borders of Awusa Sultanate. This was the period the Afar presence around the ancient city of Harrer began declining. In Dire Dawa, the Afar presence was replaced by Issa presence (Muauz , 2009). According to travellers' accounts of the period, one form of violence was intermittent ambushes on and robbery of caravans to and from the coast. Both Afar and Issa used to be employed as guides and escorts that there was competition over the control of caravan trade routes. The animosity was so vivid that European travelers recorded the presence of "natural" enmity between the two groups (Nesbitt, 1934; Thesiger, Jan 1935). Beginning with the death of Emperor Menelik II through the tumultuous era of Leji Iyassu, the grandson of emperor Menelik II until the coronation of Emperor Halesilasie I in 1932, this part of Ethiopia was the most ungovernable. The political instability, on the one hand, and the treacherous and provocative role of Italian colonialists by Arming the Somali, on the other, had been igniting Issa-Afar violence as a mechanism of provoking Ethiopia into all-out war (Muauz , 2015b).

A period considered by many as missed opportunity had been the period of Lij Iyassu who was pursuing pro-Muslim and pro-pastoralist (mainly Afar and Somali) policy at home and pro-Germane policy in the region. Iyassu wished to set off balance the British, Italian and French encirclement by forging an alliance with Germany and supporting the Somali nationalists the Mehadi. He established marriage relations with Afar and Somali women. On the side of both Issa And Afar elders, this period had Lij Iyassu not been dethroned because of his policy, would have been the time to establish a closer bond between Issa and Afar (Aden, 2009; Tahiro, 2009).

Government records of conflict incident reports of the period showed repeated eruptions of mass mobilisation and raids and counter raids between the two groups. The movement in search of pasture both from Italian Somaliland and British Somaliland has been the cause of nuance between the colonial powers and Ethiopian authorities. The Afar were all the time on the defensive side of the battle and at times trying to propel the government to take measures against by informing on the Issa collaboration with the enemy. However, both emperor Hailesilasie I and



the state he inherited was not ready to provoke the colonial force into war by touching its pretexts. As colonial Italy succeeded latter to get a pretext incident known in history as the Walwal incident to ignite a war of aggression in 1935, the Issa was being used for this purpose and came to compose a substantial colonial army of Italia during the Invasion (Abbink, 1995). So, to summarise, this period witnessed the emergence of a new form and wave of Issa-Afar violence using new weapons, formations and military and political backing. Because of the alliance of the Issa with colonial forces in Djibouti, British and Italian Somaliland, Issa violence was not limited to Afar but also with other Somali clans. Resource driven competition and violence for cultural trophies and values when not abated but became dominated by the interstate politics and regional dynamics.

The worst was to come with the colonial invasion and occupation of Ethiopia. The Afar fought against the invading force both for their country and to rescue their homeland but were crushed by the combined force of the Issa and the invading army. The Issa took the opportunity to erase villages to ashes, evict the people village after village across hundred kilometres of Afar homeland. According to the memory of Afar informants, this period witnessed the wholesale massacre and wanton destruction of heroes of Afar in the hand of the Italians and the Issa. The Issa used the army and ammunition superiority to evict the Oromo, Hawiya and other Somali clans along the way besides the Afar (Yasi, 2010). According to the memory of Issa informants, it was a payback time for the Afar for what they were doing against the Issa by using the Ethiopian government forces. While others recognise the melancholic nature of what happened during the period but accentuate Issa role saying that it was the logic of the day (Aden, 2009). The observation of Oromo informants is that the Issa brought a new machine of violence both in thinking and instruments of violence. It was the Issa that introduced calibre high machine guns and hand grenades to the pastoral conflict. In effect, this changed the way violence was carried out (Asebot, 2010).

Government archival records of the period, similarly, show that the Issa introduced anarchy to that part of the region that even continued to worsen after the expulsion of colonial Italy from Ethiopia and the restoration of the monarchy in 1943. In the post-restoration period, the Issa continued with their arms superiority (HGGO, 1938a; HGGO, 1938b). Therefore, Issa-Afar violence appeared to be territorial control, access to grazing land and water points, disarmament



of the Issa and the usual raid and counter cattle raiding and cattle rustling. However, above all was the Afar obsession for revenge and the Issa obsession to sustain their superiority by gaining additional victories over the Afar. This was in turn to introduce a wave of violence during the post-restoration period.

### **3.3.4 From the Post-Restoration to the Ethio-Somalia Border Dispute**

After the restoration, the Monarchy of Emperor Haile Selassie I was engaged in two major political efforts, which set the context of Issa-Afar violence. One domestic and the other international. At the domestic level, the monarch was adamantly committed to the consolidation of power at the centre which involved the taking away of residual power from local lords and nobilities. This was made even more vital because of four interlinked reasons. Firstly, the rise of popular local lords who got wide popularity during the five years' patriotic war, as opposed to the emperor's stay in Europe in exile which was considered as cowardice, overshadowed the emperor's suzerainty. Gaining control over them became a priority agenda of the emperor.

Secondly, subduing bandit groups in various parts of the country was another law and order issue. Thirdly, control over the historical peripheries of the empire which were accomplices of the Italian occupying force or were contemptuous of the power of the monarch because of its defeat. Such territories like the Afar and Somali were almost ungovernable (PSSO, 1947). Therefore, the consolidation of power to the centre as it came to be an absolute monarch necessitated the use of various forms of violence.

At the international level, restoring Ethiopia's sovereignty first from the British control and second, the restoration of the lost territories of Ogden, Eritrea and the western borders with Sudan required demonstrating both creative diplomacy and effective control over and administration these territories. The dominant *modus operadi* was coercion and military control (AIKW, 1946). As it came to dominate modern Ethiopian political discourse the Somali, Afar and Eritrea question was basic agenda of the period (Clapham, 2008). The above overlapping contexts and factors defined the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence during the period between restoration to the rise of Somali irredentism.



The Somali in general and the Issa in particular were fearful of the reprisal of the restored monarchy for their collaboration with the invading force of colonial Italy. So, they clung to their arms organised at each land and sub-clan levels. Ugas Hassen Hirsi, the leader of the Issa and other representatives of the twelve Issa sub-clans tried to appease the monarch by pleading mercy. The monarchy did not go into reprisal and passed them with a stern warning not to cause any further trouble on the Afar and the region in general. This was a far-sighted and cautious measure of not pushing the Somali too far towards the embrace of the emerging Somali nationalism, which later came to threaten Ethiopian sovereignty (Muauz , 2009). At this juncture, it should be noted that not all Somali or Issa were collaborators of the colonial force. Somali patriots like Omar Samatre from the Ogaden region were remarkable in the patriotic struggle (Yasin, 2010). The Afar on the other hand, repeatedly waged raids to avail themselves of the favours they got in the eye of the monarchy for their patriotic resistance. However, owing to the asymmetric firepower provided by the colonial forces to the Issa and their common versatility in war, the Afar were defeated repeatedly. The goal of the Afar was to restore the areas taken by the Issa during the Italian occupation in the Hararge and Erer areas (MOI, 1946). According to an Afar informant, the monarchy betrayed them for fear of the reprisal of the Somali and Issa got a free hand to evict us continuously (Yayo, 2016). Issa informants, on the other hand, accuse the Afar of using the police force and the army ignoring spreading false information about the conspiracy for Somalia invasion (Fure M. , 2016).

According to war incident reports of the period, hundreds of raids and counter raids took place in a matter of a year, resulting in massive death on both sides and eviction of the Afar towards the eastern lowlands of Awash River banks (Muauz , 2009). While the Afar kept on the narrative of fear of imminent Somalia invasion of Ethiopia, the Issa continued to pool their support from kindred in Djibouti and Somalia, thus continuing their penetration further into traditional Afar homelands. The monarch found itself in a precarious situation of not being able to use force full heartily, on the one hand, and the threats it posed to the national security, on the other hand. The need for military measures against the Issa was repeatedly reported by the local administration of the Adal and Issa wereda (AIWG, 1953; AIWGO, 1954). With the bid to consolidate power at the centre and ensure the safety of the railway line to the coast of Aden via Djibouti, which traversed the Afar and Issa areas of contention, the monarchy repeatedly attempted to strike peaceful settlements. None came to materialise. With the growing tempo of violence from both



sides government organs and urban dwellers of the Hararge province were greatly affected by the menace. Consequently, the province in general and the areas of Issa and Afar were administered under martial law. Even so, the wars did not decrease forcing the government to envisage structural measures which further escalated the dynamics of violence.

The administrative restructuring was part of the grand reorganisation of administrative localities to reconfigure the alliance of forces at the national level. The monarchy followed a policy of merging together diversified groups and dividing monolithic administrative localities into localities with different ethnocultural compositions. This was meant to erase the social base and bastion of the regional lords and nobilities and realise absolute consolidation of state power to the centre. This policy has ushered a new era of state violence against various regions in Ethiopia which had legitimate concerns for rebellion. The nature of state violence was transformed to unprecedented scale and intensity. One explanation for the transformation of violence was the fact that the monarch inherited the mechanism of repression from the Italian colonial force (Abbink, 1995). At the structural level, the new state policy brought together peoples, which wished to live apart and separated those that wished to live together. The Afar and the Issa were brought into one administrative structure in three localities namely Adal and Issa Wereda at Asebe-Teferi, Adal, Issa and Gurgura Awuraja at Dire Dawa and Adal, Issa and Karrayu Wereda at Afdem. Given the inherited violence and the recent memory of bloodletting along with the unresolved issue at hand further escalated the violence more than ever (AIWG, 1946; AIWG, 1947; CAGrWGO., 1946).

The independence of Somalia in 1960 added fuel to the fire. Right after declaring independence Somali, as part of the greater Somali project, began laying claim over the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. The security alert level was escalated to preparation for war. The Issa both through the Djibouti-Addis Ababa train and the porous border began smuggling in arms and insurgents. The Afar, in return, bent on exposing the Issa for government army measures. During the border dispute between 1960 up to 1964 dozens of military actions were taken against the Issa for obvious national security reasons. The Issa. However, continued the military mobilisation for independence from Ethiopia fashioning their Kinmen in Italian Somali land and British Somali land. They launched attacks on police and military personnel (Yasin M. Y., 2010). The confrontation between the Issa and the Afar during this time was totally political than the



customary conflict among pastoralists that negotiated settlements were totally released by coercion. At one time, the Issa were heavily penalised and made to pay compensations by the order of the imperial government (Muauz , 2009).

However, the measures did not hinder the escalation of Issa-Afar violence nor preclude the augmenting of the fertile condition created by the violence for the invasion of Ethiopia by Somali in 1977 after the Ethiopian revolution. The role of the Issa during the Somali invasion was a front line that the Afar suffered heavy losses in human life, cattle and territories. The Issa advanced in great leaps totally removing the Afar from the Hararge plateaus and its environs. On this point, both Issa and Afar informants have no difference on the scale and nature of devastation over the Afar. The elders and warriors of Afar who survived the Italian massacre were annihilated during this period. The case in point is the Kebri Adash. According to Afar elders' recollections, this was the time they began painting Somalia flags on landmarks and change the Afar names into the Somali language to erase Afar trace from the geography (Ousman A. , 2010; Muauz , 2015a).

According to Lewis (1955), demarcating clan territories by engraving clan signs on trees and rocks used to be a customary practice among the Issa, in general among the Somali society. After the expulsion of the invading Somali force, the Issa was also to suffer heavy losses in the combined attack by Ethiopian regular army and the Afar warriors. Many were forced to flee to Djibouti, an independent state under Issa government, to be integrated as national, which in turn tipped the balance to the Issa's favour (Yasin, 2008; Tadesse and Yonas, 2002; Muauz, 2015b). This war of states, nonetheless, is by far viewed by the local community as Issa-Afar war than the inter-state war that added to the violence dynamics under the military regime.

### **3.3.5 The Ethiopian Revolution and the Derg Era**

The Ethiopian revolution spontaneously erupted ending the 1400 years long history of the monarchy in Ethiopia in 1974. The committee of officers, which overthrew the monarchy, later on, known in Amharic as the Derg became the provisional military government of Ethiopia. This era is unique in Ethiopian history for introducing unprecedented form and scale of violence. According to Jon Abbink, the revolution unleashed uncontrolled revolutionary and counter-revolutionary violence, which consumed the lives of hundreds of thousands of youth generation



in few months. The military regime installed a system of violence without bounds (Abbink, 2006). During the early years of the revolution, Issa-Violence briefly deescalated because the short-lived peace deal involving the Sultan of Afar and the Ugas of the Issa. However, owing to the superficial nature of the deal and the system of violence unshed by the revolution, Issa-Afar violence came back with higher scale and scope (HPO, 1974).

This resulted in the rise of militant armed resisting the military government. Among those groups are the Afar insurgencies and Somali insurgencies where Issa formed a part. The first military campaign to Awusa the seat of the Afar Sultanate faced fierce resistance in a bloody war which ended in the exile of Sultan Alimirah in Somalia, where he formed Afar Liberation Front (ALF). Similar military measures brought the rise of virulent Somali armed groups. Ugas Hassen Hirsi of the Issa also followed suit of his Afar counterpart and fled into exile. Before his departure, the Ugas had declared war on the government, the Christian Amhara population which he considered as historical enemy and rulers, and the Afar. Intelligence reports of the time confirmed the mobilisation people and financial resources, purchase and smuggling in of arms through the support of Djibouti and Somalia (HGG, 1967; Ogaden-Awuraja, 1972; HGG, 1972). In sum, the Afar and Issa violence was highly securitized. Consequently, the government was intolerant of any menace on the road and railway line as well as on its military garrisons and government establishments. It was so intolerant that both the Afar and the Issa were rendered for aerial bombardment.

In spite of the harsh measures, the system of violence instilled by Derg was to be used by both the Afar and the Issa to destroy each other by joining the rank of the Derg regime. A certain group of educated elites of Afar-led by Habib Mohammed Yayo joined the Derg to protect their peoples' interest. The Issa similarly reciprocated by with lesser success. The playing out of state system of violence for one's groups' needs came to be the system of the period. Apart from this, out of the sight and reach of the government, the Issa and the Afar were interlocked in a violent struggle. The prevalence of arms from illicit armed groups and the insurgencies was a conducive condition in exacerbating the dynamics of violence (Mohammed A. , 2016).

However, as compared to the historical manifestation of continued territorial eviction and massacre, this period saw a significant reduction in a level of violence and the territorial



penetration and eviction of the Afar by the Issa. As though to counterbalance the decline of Issa-Afar direct violence, another subtle form of violence was to be installed instead. The regime imposed strict limits on freedom of pastoral movements and took vast pastoralist land for state development projects. This engendered scarcity and its evil consequences of violent completions.

This constituted the structure of marginalisation and land alienation, which stands as continuity from the era of the Monarch and a condition which laid the ground for future structural violence. Among the Afar, this period is considered less violent because of the inhibition of Issa territorial conquest (Aydahiso, 2015). For the Issa, it was the worst time because of the repeated military measures by the regime (Fure M. , 2016). However, both groups had been subjected to harsh control and subjugation.

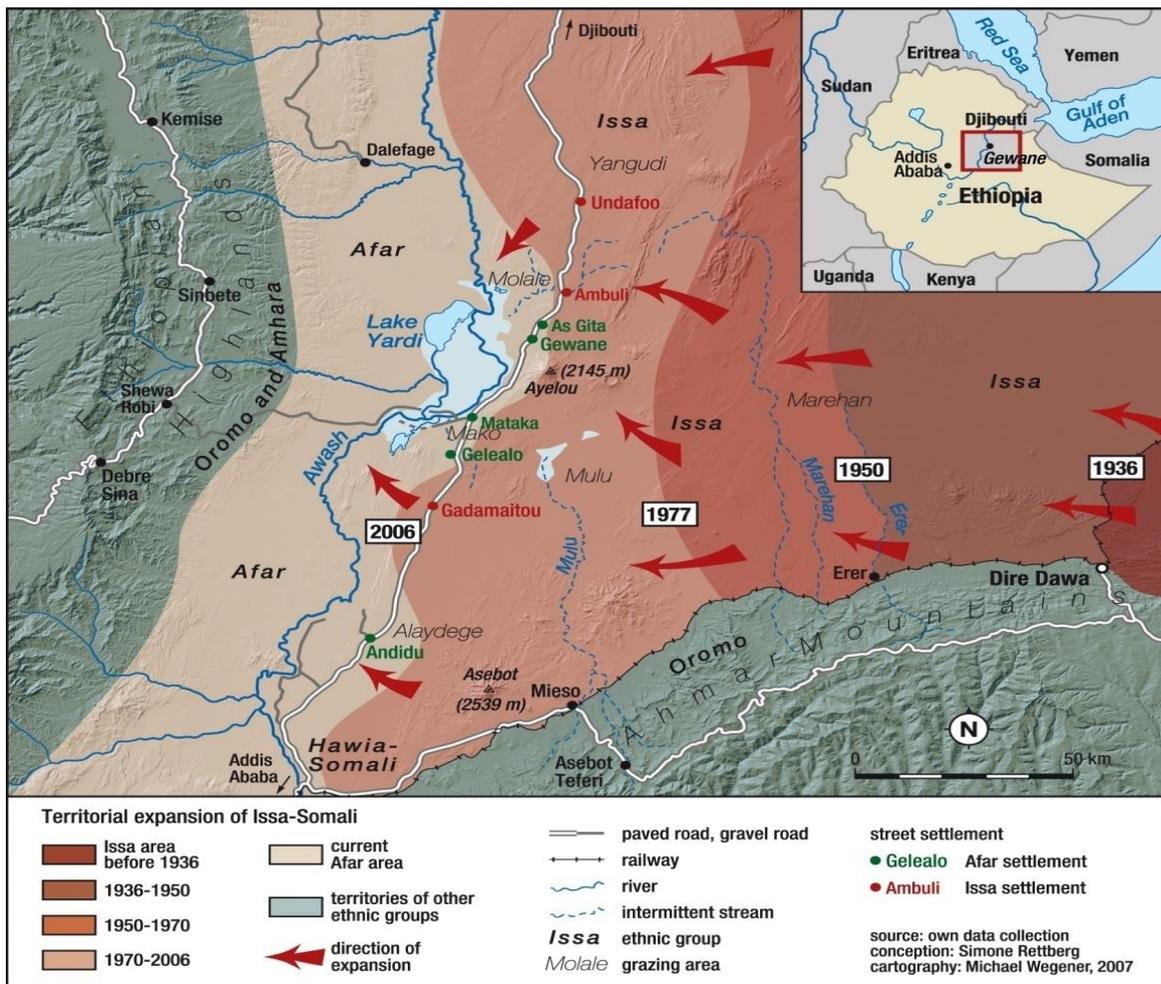
The main security sensitive focus of the regime was the tarmac road from Addis Ababa to Assab and Djibouti and the Addis Ababa-Djibouti rail line. So, it restricted the appearance of both groups within 15 km radius of those infrastructures. Appearance within this limit carrying arms was punishable by death. In effect, this pushed the violent confrontation between the two groups obscured and far away from government attention. During this period, even though direct violence and raids along these infrastructures were checked, small-scale violent clashes, the intensity of hatred and animosity had been simmering beneath the surface. The regime easily associated any kind of Issa and Afar mobilisation with the insurgency, which was often brutally suppressed by the military. Consequently, the Issa-Afar violence used to manifest in terms of the search for access to and control over water and pasture (Tahiro, 2009).

The way the regime tried to approach the problem besides the military suppression of any form of Issa-Afar violence, was the establishment of the military administrative council of the Afar and Issa settlements. Partly, this was an aspect of continuity from the martial law declared by the imperial government of Haile Selassie twenty years before the revolution. By its own right, it was also a new mixed approach of open military measures and peacemaking efforts by imposing a military administrative structure. Committee for the Eradication of Afar and Issa Nationalities conflict (CEAINC) was established but to no avail. In the final analysis, it constituted both structural and direct violence which distorted the image of the violence as though it solely the question of resource-based conflict. On another scale, the regime identified the problem as part

of the nationalities question which it promised to answer with the New Democratic Revolution (NDR) but did not materialise in spite of repeated rhetoric (HPO, 1982; HPO, 1983).

The overall visible impact of the Issa-Afar violence is reflected in the continued eviction of the Afar from their ancient homelands. At least a look at the most documented part of the history of Issa Afar violence is correctly captured by Rottberg in the following map. After the revolution, even though massive scale violence as it was during the imperial period decreased, however, away from the sight of the military government the process of eviction of the Afar as depicted in the map continued. The size of the eviction from 1977 onwards until the fall of the Derg took the substantial size of the Afar old homeland to the Issa.

**Map 1: The Historical Expansion of the Issa and Eviction of the Afar from 1936 to 2006**



Source: (Rettberg, May 2014 )



To summarise, the transformation of violence during this period as a model of political rule by the regime and the prevalence of armed groups engaged in civil war defined the context of Issa-Afar violence to latently gather momentum. The subjugation of both groups under the military regime deescalated the level and frequency of high scale Issa-Afar manifested direct violence. However, it did not inhibit the violence to occur at villages and settlements far away from government security sensitive areas and infrastructures. It installed new structural forms of violence, which would come to contribute to the escalation of direct violent clashes after the fall of the regime. The representation of Issa-Afar violence was the safest way of channelling the issue of conflict for a regime, which brutally suppresses any form of manifestation of traditional Issa-Afar violence. However, with the demise of the regime in 1991, the container opened unleashing the violence which had been simmering for nearly two decades and contributed to its perpetuation thereafter. As the dynamics were shaped by the prevailing national, regional and local contexts so do the nature and purpose of Issa-Afar violence across the historical period. The next section briefly explores this aspect of Issa-Afar violence.

### **3.4 Nature, Organization and Purpose of Issa-Afar Violence**

The discussion in this section attempts to cast Issa-Afar violence across the historical continuum from the vantage point of its nature, organisation and purpose. The nature of violence entails the causes, the meaning it constituted and the manner it was functioning. The organisation is about the instruments and tools of violence, the mechanism and level of mobilisation, nature of leadership and the actors involved. The purpose is an examination of the positions, goals, interests and needs the violence was meant to serve. In this, even though Issa-Afar violence is treated in a general as pre-1991 periodization, however, its nature, organisation and purpose cannot be considered monolithic.

The nature of Issa-Afar violence during the pre-Italian occupation period can be viewed as mainly caused by resources competition, cultural of cattle raiding and rustling and the history of vengeance inherited from the history of violence which continued from the medieval times. Both groups used to conceive of the struggle between them as part of lived reality approximating to normalcy. Elders reflect on the memory of pre-Italian violence as “common place pastoral



violence”, which made it appear as though violence is a normal state of affairs. Reciprocal raiding and killing were common between Issa and Afar as it was also among other Somali and Oromo pastoralist groups in the area. The meaning attached to it was about clan man’s valour and heroism (Asebot, 2010). This attitude of viewing violence as normalcy was not exclusively because of its frequency or that violence was endemic to the Afar and Issa society rather than that the customary conflict resolution mechanism was also comparatively effective enough as compared to latter periods (Muauz , 2013). They used to have the antidote to violence at least to halt it tentatively. Nevertheless, the cultural violence justifying vengeance, raiding and even killing for social status had been stronger than ever. Early traveller accounts and testimonies of members of other ethnic groups have it that the both groups used to practice genital emasculation for just cultural reasons (Lewis, 1955; Yasin, 2010; Abbink, 1995). Even though the structural violence of the division of Afar and Somali homelands which affected the fate of the people took place during this period, however, it did not manifest itself during this period as contributing factor to the meaning of Issa-Afar violence.

In terms of the organisation of violence, the main actors in the routine Issa-Afar violence were herders and trekking along satellite camps and dry season retreats. Raids were organised by intra-clan and inter-clan mobilisation. Mostly, the higher customary political leaders were far from such activities even though they may condone it as a matter of custom or economic returns of war booty. The instruments of violence were mainly using rudimentary weapons. Among both groups, the weapons of choice were a dagger, javelin and spear. The non-automatic shotgun was also used but only warriors were capable of and allowed to carry shotguns. The destructive power of violence was limited before the advent of the massive supply of guns with the coming of colonial forces in the Horn. However, the use of rudimentary weapons made the violence more personal to be engraved in the memory of people and to be transferred to the future generation (FGD-Gewane, 2017). However, the socio-psychological impact of using modern weapons of violence and rudimentary weapons on the perpetuation of the memory of violence is a topic requiring further research. This relates to the tendency towards depersonalising in the case of the former and personalising in the case of the latter.



The manner and modality of wars were mainly targeted at striking fear at the heart of the enemy by making quick raids which may raze whole villages to the ground. The actual battle used to take few hours and the formation of attacking and defending was based on the traditional way of showing personal valour than a coordinated attack. Comparatively, the Issa showed great manoeuvrability and coordination which gave them superior war capability. The Afar, on the other hand, depend on a massive raid to overwhelm the enemy than tactical manoeuvrability. Sheer demonstration of fearless bravery used to overwhelm the Afar. Leaders of war could be clan leaders, warriors or age set leaders. In every raid, there is an initiator and leader after whom the raid would be known. Spiritual leaders may give their blessing and fortune tellers predict outcomes as well as which way and when to attack for successful results. The clan, spiritual leaders and fortune tellers do have a share in the war booty and can be considered part of the leadership (FGD-Gewane, 2017; FGD-Adaytu, 2017).

The purpose and utility of violence were mainly about gaining access to highly regarded assets in both Afar and Issa society, namely live cattle, gun and vengeance. Territorial conquest was not for territorial occupation *per se* rather than for securing access to pastoral resources: grazing land and water points. In the presence of an abundance of these resources during the rainy season the above factors intervene to make violence for the sake of war booty and vengeance. Another important factor is the divergent conception of territory held by the Afar and the Issa. The Afar have a fixed idea of territory while in the Issa world view there is no such a thing as fixed homeland. As far as the Issa man can go and Issa camel can step foot in belongs to the Issa. This is often represented in a sublime expression that land belongs to no nation or to no man but to the creator. The land equally belongs to all human beings and whosoever manages to maintain it at any cost is his own. The basic principle of land ownership among the Issa is effective control and utilisation of its resources (Lewis, 1955). While for the Afar communal ownership of land is strictly a matter of lineage and historical claim whether or not the land is controlled and utilised by the respective clan whatsoever. The symbolic utility of land and territory is equally valued as its instrumental utility that they have a fixed conception about the land territories of Afar homeland (Muauz , 2015b).



This seems to be a radical conception of effective control legitimising violence. This thinking changes the moral colour of territorial penetration and eviction of another people as morally acceptable. Contrary to this, the Afar believe in the presence of sacred Afar homeland where the first camel and Afar step on and which cannot be negotiated about. This goes in radical opposition with the Issa view of territory and the value of space in addition to the pastoral utility common to both groups. So, dying and killing for one's land is justified in the eye of God and society. The interest and needs served by the violence were both tangible security needs of securing access to basic resources and the intangible symbolic, identify and cultural needs.

Consequently, the pre-Italian period, Issa-Afar violence can be summarised as the prevalence of memories of inherited violence, the prevalence of cultural norms justifying violence and the socio-cultural and economic structures of pastoralism which facilitate encounter in raids and counter raids. However, at the state level, the Highlander Christian Dominated Ethiopian state was the embodiment of excessive violence on peoples the periphery among which were the Afar and the Somali. The memory of Somali and Afar violence against the Ethiopian state and between themselves can be said to have partly shaped the orientation of the Ethiopia state towards this part of the country. On a bigger scale, the violence of the Ethiopian state affected the nature violence between the Issa and the Afar. The interaction between the peripheral people and the Ethiopian contributed to the deepening of the view of accepting violence as an ideological and instrumental framework.

According to Jon Abbink (1995), in the Highlander Christian Ethiopian Abyssinian Custom namely that of the Tigray and Amhara, the unaccounted and excessive use of violence, which no longer have any military purpose was unacceptable. It was manifested only in the extreme violence of Emperor Tewodros, which was not accepted by the people. He qualified his assertion in light of the excessive violence of Emperor Menelik II on the subjugation campaigns of the people of South, West and East Ethiopia, which happened outside of the Tigrigna and Amharic speaking historical core of Highlander Abyssinian society. This means the concept of check and balance on the instrumental use of violence used to apply only to the geographic and political limits of the Highlander Abyssinian society. The use of extreme violence without instrumental



utility on the people of the periphery, which contributed to the problem of identification of the peoples of the historical peripherals with the Ethiopia state currently, was therefore not governable by the old Abyssinian custom of taming the use of violence.

However, Abbink (1995) has not noted the racial and political nature of Abyssinian violence as it was exhibited in the 600 years of senseless violence over the Semien Falasha people in the Amharic speaking hinterland of the historical Semien. From the medieval to the modern age the Semien Falasha people even though they share basic identity and geographic similarities but owing to their Judaic religious belief became victims of wave after wave of Abyssinian war of mass extermination. The tolerance the Abyssinian Empire had shown to Islam and Sidama in the south was not seen, and senseless and extreme violence of extermination was waged on them as an enemy of the state and the church (Abir, 1980; Lapiso, 1982; Trimmingham, 1952). This disproves Abbink's contention that violence was not the central ideological basis for power authority and legitimacy but a tool for politics and strengthening power. The Semien Falasha People's religious identity was transformed into the racial identity of aliens in order to exterminate and subjugate them because they had the aspiration of realising their own homeland. The custom, therefore, Abbink (1995) explained does not work on those who are assumed to be racially different and wishing for political autonomy.

During the Italian invasion, two major processes affected the nature, organisation and utility of Issa-Afar violence. The first is the influx of modern arms; the second is the interpenetration of pastoral violence and the politics and machinery of violence of the modern state. The modern state here is the colonial machinery of Italian fascism and the feudal violence of imperial Ethiopia. The prevalent influx of automatic and group weapons to the pastoral world changed the goals, organisation and utility of violence. The capability to inflict heavy damage with automatic weapons and hand grenades transformed the pastoral violence used to be carried out in small groups into a new type of war formation. The involvement of colonial forces and state actors also changed the organisation of violence from pastoral into a political one. The purpose of Issa-Afar violence changes into territorial conquest and eviction. The politics of the modern nation-state cast its shadows on the nature of pastoral violence as the former was in turn affected by the Issa-



Afar pastoral violence. The Italians used excessive violence of mass execution in Harar, massive rape as war strategy all over the country and extermination of the intellectual generation in Addis Ababa ushered new form of violence (Abbink, 1995). This along with the old custom of the Ethiopian state of using violence strengthened the ideological and instrumental legitimacy of excessive violence. Moreover, it shaped the goals and the interest pastoralist violence was used for. Because the formation of the post-colonial Afar and Somali Horn states were shaped as much by the colonial wars of this period as the local context of the pastoral violence. A case in point is the impact of Issa-Afar violence in the formation of the Djibouti Republic and the politics of Somalia and vice versa (Kasim, 1985). Therefore, this can be said to have brought political objectives into the platform of pastoral violence which was later to be augmented by regional and domestic factors.

The same trend continued determining the nature of Issa-Afar violence even after the post-restoration period until the independence of Somalia. However, during this period the domestic policy reflected in the administrative restructuring of the Issa and Afar administrations exacerbated the frequency of violence for access and control over pastoral resources. In short, the nature of violence was both political and pastoral with territorial annexation goals and search for basic pastoral resources. In terms of actors both traditional leaders, Somali nationalists and colonial forces had their involvement until the total incorporation of the Afar and Ogaden area into Ethiopian state after the end of the second WW II (Harbeson, 1978). This trend continued undisturbed until the independence of Somalia, which brought the Greater Somali project into the nature of Issa-Afar violence, for the realisation of this project the Issa served as a frontline force. The Issa, in doing so, the aim was to realise greater territorial gain and the nationalist identity need of realising a united greater Somalia. The Afar, on the other hand, used the violence for their self-preservation and for the protections the Ethiopian state. The nature of violence, therefore, was by far defined by inter-state war more than communal violence. The two groups appear as pawns in the Great War games (Muauz , 2009).

However, according to the testimony of Issa and Afar informants, deep down their desire to secure the victory and to avenge their enemy at clan levels were also prevalent that both groups



used to be mobilised to impact greater damages on each other. The tools and mobilisation remained the same except that the government has stationed garrisons in the highlands of Hararge to give a rapid response to their devastating moves. Found between inter-state relations, the Issa and the Afar plaid hard to outmanoeuvre each other by availing the security and political concerns of both Ethiopian and Somalia (Yayo A. , 2016; Aden A. , 2009). This came in the open when Somali invaded Ethiopia in 1977 after the Ethiopian revolutions.

After the Ethiopian revolution and the PMGE coming to power, the Issa were heavily punished for their collaboration with the invading army of Somalia. Many fled to Djibouti and Somali to either be citizens or join the Somali insurgency against the Derg. So, what is new in the Issa-Afar violence of this era was the introduction of what used to be bandit attack tracks and government institutions by insurgents. Afar and Somali insurgency redefined the political objectives introduced during the Italian occupation into the politics ethnicity with regional tentacles. The Afar for the realisation of the Greater Afar Triangle and the Issa for the realisation of the Greater Somalia. The new Afar and Somali elite working with the Derg were also locked in silent violent confrontation and mutual accusation of supporting their own insurgency (Mohammed A. , 2016). Beneath this the commonplace pastoral resource conflict continued. At times while violence was meant for control of territory without any resource significance only for the sake of its symbolic significance and psychological gratifications were camouflaged in the name of access to grass and water (Muauz , 2009). Another important development in the use of violence was the emergence of contraband trade along the tarmac road which gave birth to the establishment of track stop town. Those towns were a source of new wealth from illicit trade including arms trafficking which was also used to bribe arm officers and finance insurgents. In this, the Issa excelled the Afar to the extent the later openly complained to the office of the president of the Republic (FGD-Gewane, 2017).

The organisation and mobilisation of massive forces were inhibited by the harsh military measures of the regime. The objective and purposes of violence were forcefully made to be or pretend to be only matters of equal access to resources. By so doing, the regime made the violence appear ordinary and normal but hidden beneath the ground Issa-Afar relations



undertook violent transformation waiting to explode after the fall of the regime. Both war violence, animosity and the open justification for both were muffled during this period as though they were not there any longer. But that was not the case; instead under the extreme violence of the regime, Issa-Afar violence was undergoing a mutation into a higher form of violence. Partly invisible and structural and partly direct but away from the sight of the regime. This is evident from the discussion in the next chapter on the nature of post-Derg violence. This is a classic case of using direct violence to tentatively decimate direct violence but in the long run exacerbating both direct and structural violence, and their justification as Ethnic nationalism.

The above discussion is about how Issa-Afar violence evolved in time and manifested itself at various times and the uses it was put into. These features have influence nature Issa-Afar violence in post-1991 Ethiopia. One piece remains to fill the jigsaw puzzle of Issa-Afar violence, namely the narratives of the violence. How memories of the violence are represented in the current generation has its own impact on the over dynamics of the violence; because the justifications, inputs of hatred and the sparks for direct violent action are provided in narratives. Inversely, for the capacities for peace and reconciliation are challenged in the narratives of violence.

### **3.5 The Narratives of Old Issa-Afar Wars**

The Issa and the Afar have competing narratives of violence often analogized with Israeli-Palestinian competing narratives. The continued violent confrontation and bloody history are conceived as the history of the Israeli-Palestinian history of violence. This view is most popular among the Afar whose fate they considered as the fate of Palestinians in the hand of the Issa conquest and eviction (Alo, 2016). The Issa, on the other hand, buy this analogy for a different reason though. They believe the lack of a solution to end the violence in the eye of the Issa looks like the Israeli-Palestinian case but not in the unjust Israel occupation of Palestinian land to their role (Kayre, 2016). However, both groups have their own narratives of the continued violence during the pre-1991 period. Therefore, this section presents the competing narratives of Issa-Afar violence owing to the intensity and continuity the author found it to name Issa-Afar wars.



### 3.5.3 The Afar Narrative

According to Afar collective memory represented in their narratives, Issa-Afar violence has been a continued uprooting of the Afar people from their traditional homelands and creating new front lines of further evictions. Through the successive penetration of new Afar territories, Issa violence continued making the territories conquered earlier as natural rights of the Issa. The mention to their eviction from Dire Dawa, Erer, Asbuli, until they are pushed totally out of their traditional homelands in the Harerge plateau. The mass killing of Afar warriors in Kebri Adashe (means the graveyard of the elders), in Asbuli, Ayrori, Erer and Mefaydela were not mere acts of pastoral violence for cultural and resource reasons rather than a coordinated long-term strategy to eliminate the Afar people (FGD-Gewane, 2017). This view is a widely held the opinion of the ordinary person as well the political elites and customary leaders. From a theoretical perspective, this pertains to the continuity of foundational violence which changes the established values and manners of relations between the Issa and the Afar.

The Afar identify even old medieval wars not as a matter of cultural and historical development associated with the general population movement, which characterised the region, but as part of a strategic plan of the Issa to overrun Afar land and the greater Somali project of taking the territory below the Awash Valley (Ibid). Even though the Issa too had been victims of environmental, economic and political marginalisation, the Afar narratives present the Issa as the roots of all their predicaments.

Children are told about old wars presenting the Issa as natural enemies of the Afar people. The dominant nature of then narrative is reflected in the absence of individuation among the Afar about the history of Issa-Afar relations. In a discussion with any Afar, this narrative is without change repeated and reiterated for generations that constituted the elements of shared communal memory of victimisation. The role segmentation of the Afar society and the divide and rule strategy continued by states in the Horn is another leitmotiv alongside with the narrative of victimisation by Issa constant invasion (Kediga, 2010).

Successive Ethiopian governments are also to blame in two ways as contributors to the wars. One is that their negligence to react to the Somali threat against the state, which manifested repeatedly to destroy the territorial unity of the country. On the other hand, the support provided



by the Djibouti government and Somalia created grievance among the Afar against the Ethiopian government. They believed the Issa wars against the Afar are the tip of the iceberg. Failure to take proper intervention enabled the Issa to expand unabatedly through Afar homeland. This is a euphemism for Ethiopian government failure to take military measures against the Issa to restore Afar land. Failure of the state to govern effectively contributed to the problem. The second is that the policies they followed resulted in the Afar pastoral land alienation which exacerbated the competition over pastoral resources providing the Issa with a pretext for invasion (Getachew, 2001; Kasim, 1985; Harbeson, 1978).

The overall Afar narrative of the history of the wars can be reduced to six points. First, the Afar are always the victims of Issa violence. Second, the Issa evicted them from vast Afar homelands. Third, the Issa always had external backing while the Afar had not got any support from the Ethiopian government. Fourth, the segmentation of the Afar in the region weakened the Afar for the benefit of the Issa and the control of Ethiopian and Djibouti governments. Fifth, Ethiopian governments were either negligent or inconsiderate to Afar cause which repulsing the Issa invasion which is more than ordinary pastoral violence than a sinister danger even for Ethiopia. Six, consequently, they believe they have just cause of preserving their identity and land. In sum, this narrative contributed to the extreme animosity, hatred and the justification for engaging violence with violence.

#### **3.5.4 The Issa Narrative**

The Issa have their narratives of the old wars. One important distinction to make one the manner of presenting their stories is important to note before dealing with the Issa narratives. During the interviews, the researcher identified that while the Afar vehemently and with burning anger remember the past, the Issa narrate it in the sober and ordinary way. In the Afar voice, one clearly hears remorse, resentment and the desire for vengeance, while in the Issa voice is the spirit of confidence as though they were discussing normalcy.

According to Issa elders, the Issa-Afar wars are nothing special because the wars were since the time of the remote ancestors. They think that such wars are behavioural of the pastoral way of life. However, they also identified the problem of escalation of the violence in time because of the following reasons. First, they believe Issa violence is a matter of survival of their cattle,



children and their society at all. They argue, “When the only survival is controlled by someone who does not want to share it with you what will you do? Will you wait and see until you die of starvation while you could have survived by taking it?” (FGD-Gedamaytu, 2016).

They believe that it is the Afar greed to share with their brothers the vast land and water points and rivers, which made them strive to survive by taking it by force. They think all pastoral land is equally provided by Allah equally available to all people but the Afar by claiming exclusive control created the wrath of the Issa. Second, they believe that the Issa were not victimised any less than the Afar, though the later over exaggerate their side of the story. There had been periods of Afar overwhelming invasions which razed Issa villages to the ground killing everyone they found indiscriminately on their way. Informants refer to what happened in Aydora in the 1940s. According to an elder’s view “as our proverb has it ‘In war young man is not born but dies’, both sides lost many lives. We had lost our warriors as the Afar lost many of their warriors during the wars” (Hamsi, 2016)

Furthermore, the Issa narrative capitalises on another type of silent war the Afar waged on them. They bitterly remember the Afar denying them access to resources in time of the great famine and drought of the 1930s, 1940 and the 1975. They believe that the Afar left them to starve to death which they believe is crueller than to die of fighting. Raids and counter-raids, avenging the dead and other trophy killings had been common in the history of Issa-Afar relations, but what is most hurting in the eye of the Issa is that the Afar had been exposing them to famine and harsh state military campaigns. As opposed to the Afar narrative of the Issa always bent on working with enemies of the state, the Issa contends that the Afar had been manipulating the security concerns of Ethiopian governments to take inhuman measures against Issa pastoralists (FGD-Adaytu, 2017). Here, the Issa claim reminds us the structural type of violence of exposing a population to avoidable starvation being more powerful than war violence.

The greater Somalia project, the Djibouti involvement and Somali insurgency had been used by the Afar to instigate the government of Haile Selassie and Derg to take military punitive measures and imposition of restriction on Issa pastoralists’ mobility and access to grazing land water points. As a result, thousands of cattle and human life dies of deprivation, exposure to thirst and starvation. Moreover, though contentious, the disarming of the Issa during the two



regimes was the worst thing that happened to them. Because they believe that disarming the Issa means exposing them for Afar invasion which happened during the 1940s after the restoration of the monarchy (Ibid). Central to their narrative is that the Afar indirectly use the hand of the oppressive structures of Ethiopian governments to cause damage on the Issa. While the Issa concede that they routed the Afar from their old settlements, but they considered what the Afar did against them more sinister than theirs (Hassan, 2016).

The external involvement accusation of the Afar in the eye of the Issa is only the denial to accept the military superiority of the Issa which had always been so with or without the availability of arms. The Issa consider the Afar novice during wartime; they are often emotionally driven than meticulously engaging. Consequently, they are more often than not on the losing side because of their poor organisation and battle formation. The Afar instead of recognising their weakness, Issa elders argue, they always externalise it to Issa gaining military training, arms and logistic from Djibouti and Somali. Besides, they said to have been fighting for their survival while the Afar fought for maintaining extra land and exacting revenge for what they lost (FGD-Gedamaytu, 2016). This narrative stands for a very radical realist version of stating the most important element in Sun Tzu's the Art of War namely motivation.

Therefore, the Issa narrative sidetracks the whole ethical and legal claim of the Afar and makes the violence as a matter of success in the war on the one hand, and the purpose of the war as a matter of accessing scarce pastoralist resources on the other. The latter is conceived as artificial scarcity caused by the greed and not grievance of the Afar.

Both the Afar and Issa narratives, however, converge on one leitmotiv, that the nature of the Highlander Christian political system of the emperors and the military government has been engineering social violence, distrusting arms and support to checkmate each other (Michealson, January 2000). Nevertheless, this theme often falls through the cracks in the face of the victimisation narrative each group promotes.

### **3.6 Summary of the pre-1991 Issa Afar Violence**

This chapter set out to address two basic objectives; firstly, to explore the early formation and transformation of the origin, nature, utility and organisation of Issa-Afar violence. Secondly, to



examines what is constituted in the Issa-Afar narratives of violence in the form of communal memory and representation of past violence. From the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence discussed above the following central themes can be drawn as a summary of the chapter.

The violence had its own ebbs and flow, aspects of continuity and discontinuity in history. While the discontinuity has been mainly characterised by the involvement and disappearance of actors of violence at regional and national levels, the continuity manifested in cycle of violence with the following features. Except for the inherited medieval violence, Issa-Afar violence has not been purely pastoral conflict based on traditional and customary causes or pastoral socio-economic factors *per se*. Even the violence of the medieval period was affected by elements of religious, political and identity factors. This is not to mean that pastoral conflict stands devoid of such factors rather than that the dominant defining forces were not issues emerging from the resource needs of pastoralists. The ceaseless repetition of the cycle of violence and the suffocation of the communal memory of the Issa and the Afar by narratives of war and mayhem part of the behavioural template of Issa and Afar individual and group behaviour.

The predisposition of both groups and their individual members has been overshadowed and shaped by narratives. Most disturbing is that even memories of medieval violence are inherited not in the way they eventuated in history but recast by latter time relations of animosity. These provide the system of values justifying the continuity of violence. The element of structural violence characteristic of the alienation and marginalisation of the Afar and Issa pastoralists is downplayed by both groups to focus on mutual incrimination. This pertains to the Galtungian concept of (cultural violence) horizontal penetration which either allows partial view or blocks the real view of reality (Galtung, 1996). The consciousness, in our case, of the Afar and the Issa is clouded by the cycle of Issa-Afar violence on the one hand and the conspiratorial mutual incrimination and justification of violence each group peruse on the other.

In the final analyses, the memory of the violence and its competing narratives have contributed to the transmission of the structures and cultures of violence in the post-1991 period. Therefore, the next chapter which deals with the nature and organisation of Issa-Afar violence in post-1991 era is to be understood with hindsight to the arguments in this chapter.



## Chapter Four

### **The Overlapping Contexts of the Issa-Afar Violence in the post-1991 Period**

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#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter lays the overall contexts of Issa-Afar violence in the post-1991 period as a prelude to the discussion on the changing face of Issa-Afar violence in chapter five, where the form, organization and meanings that the new Issa-Afar violence assumed and the (tangible and intangible) purposes it was used for during post-1991 period are included. This chapter, therefore, presents the regional, national and local contexts as conditions for the way the nature, organization and utility of violence has changed in the post-1991 period. The discussion brings in the role of the contexts to a better understanding of the violence. The central argument of this chapter is that the changes ushered during the post-1991 period at various levels have transformed Issa-Afar violence. Accordingly, besides this introduction, the chapter is organized into four major sections and a conclusion. The first section explores the regional context, the second section examines the national context and the third deals with the local contexts of Issa and Afar peoples. The fourth section presents the overlapping contexts as systems of overlapping violence.

#### **4.2 The Regional Context**

The Horn of Africa region witnessed a remarkable reconfiguration of forces in the post-Cold War era. The demise of the military governments in Ethiopia and Somali, and the subsequent state collapse in the later, the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia and the rise of civil war in Djibouti are few among the political reconfigurations. At the national level, each Afar Horn state has undergone multidimensional dynamics, which affect Issa-Afar relations in Ethiopia. The Local contexts of the Afar and the Issa in Ethiopia have undergone change and transformations briefly discussed in the coming sections.

The post-1991 context of the Horn of Africa has shifted in many ways making the explosion of virulent forms of violence. The focus of the changes in this subsection is limited to those relating to different forms of violence. Accordingly, certain patterns characterizing the changing context



and its association with the dynamics of violence can be identified. First, there was a general trend of the disappearing of dictatorial regimes and their replacement by a wave of insurgents, to the extent of forming a separate state as in the case of the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia. Second, a paramount crisis of legitimacy of the state and regime security gave legitimacy to the violence of insurgents and ethnic armed groups. Third, the tentative disappearance of big power interest and involvement was observed that the field was open for the interplay of local forces to play as regional actors. A case in point was the rise of local insurgents like Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF), Eritrean People Liberation Front (EPLF), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Front pour La Restauration de l'Unité Democratique (Front for the Restoration for Unity and Democracy (FRUD) and Somali armed groups to determine the regional balance of forces. Fourth, the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) and abundance of people with military experience and ready to engage in violence shaped the context. This means, hundreds of thousands of former members of national armies and insurgent groups were roaming without getting proper Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). Among these groups were Afar and Somali insurgent groups. The Afar insurgent groups in Ethiopia, Djibouti and armed Afar members of the EPLF in Eritrea were let loose in great numbers. On the part of the Issa from all Somali speaking, Horn had been mobilized. Therefore, the regional context of the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence was embedded in the regional tide of the struggle of forces to redefine the nature and identity of the nation-state.

In Djibouti, the struggle between the Afar and the Issa was simmering for decades which exploded into civil war in 1991 led by the FRUD. What is so different about this Afar movement, besides its short-lived impact, was that it made the civil war in Djibouti a regional war involving all Afar and Somali Horn states and facilitated the return of French interest in its former colony. Because of this regional connection of the Afar and the Issa, the Afar violence of this time was aimed at recasting the constituency of the Djibouti Republic than mere victory over the Issa elite in Djibouti.

Djibouti financing and mobilizing the Issa violence in Ethiopia was reciprocated by an all Afar involvement and mobilization in the Djibouti civil war. This is an aspect of regionalization of locally rooted violence (Schrader, 1993; Yasin, 2008; Muauz, 2009; Yasin, 2010; Muauz, 2015b;



Belachew, 2009). The Djibouti Civil war took the pre-1991 Issa-Afar violence to a new height. The Afar mobilized all Afar in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti along with members of the various Afar insurgencies. The Issa dominated government of Djibouti went for an all Somali mobilization that Issa, Hawiye Abgal, even survivors from the United Somali Front (USF) and even Digil and Wa Gosha members from Ethiopia, Somali land and Somali flocked to rescue the Issa. The call was for any mercenary to come and immediately acquire Djiboutian nationality. Yasin quoting Bollee argues that even Oromo mercenaries were involved (Yasin, 2010). According to Ibrahim Wenbede, the leader of Ethiopian Afar wing of FRUD during the war, the Afar similarly had gathered all supports from all insurgent movements (Ibrahim, 2010).

The regional dynamics took the nature of local violence to a higher scale with the involvement of nationalist and insurgent groups. The continuity of local violence got ideological justification that in Galtungian parlance means a change in the moral colour of violence. The level and organization shifted from the local to inter-ethnic and civil war mode with the involvement of nationalist and insurgent groups. The goals ranged from securing a deserved place in the national politics up to the formation of separate states. A case in point is the Afar triangle movements and the Somali liberation movements the Issa is part of. This came to threaten the self-preservation of the Afar and Somali Horn states that it invited the leading involvement of the states. This, in turn, set the context for greater escalation of violence. Therefore, Issa-Afar violence in the post-1991 period is rooted in this regional context. Furthermore, the national context of Ethiopia defined the nature of the dynamics of violence discussed below.

#### **4.3 The National Context**

The post-1991 Ethiopian dynamics was a phase of transformation of the state and society on many counts. To mention those aspects related to the nature and organization of violence, the following are major changes ushered in this period: political, legal, organizational and policy aspects. To properly comprehend the nature of change, the post-1991 period entailed, first it is vital to briefly mention the inherited violence from the Derg regime. The post-1991 period is a



post-civil war context where the Ethiopian state and society came out of the devastating war. The damages done on the social and psychological fabrics of society required an overall multidimensional transformation. Above all the experience and effect of the cycle of violence in the collective archival of the memory of society was so heavy a burden to deal with (Conference-FGD, 2009).

EPRDF, the coalition of armed groups led by TPLF which ended the military regime faced the responsibility of dealing with the inherited violence and the need to engage in constructive transformation. According to Abbnik (1995), to look at the worst form of direct violence, the Red Terror had transformed the Ethiopian state and society at least in two ways. First, it ended the legitimacy of violence in whatsoever form. Second, it undermined the structure and social fabric of society by immense fear, intimidation and uncertainty of the future. According to Girmay Abriha (2005), the author and survivor of the *Red Terror*, the way violence was used during the Derg defied any form of rationality and instrumental utility. Making sense of the indiscriminate killing, maiming, and methods of torture used in Derg prisons and centres of interrogation and detention were designed to extract the maximum pain out of the victims than nothing else. Violence was aestheticized and dramatized in language, dance and performance for its own sake than for visible and identifiable goals. It was a total dehumanization which destroyed mutual trust and Ethiopian tradition of the dignity and sanctity of man (Girmay, 2005). Similarly, Abbnik in interpreting the *Red Terror* correctly identified that violence “can take on the life of its own, generating its own language and semantic space” (Abbnik, 1995:69). However, for Girmay, unlike Abbnik’s instrumental explanation that says that violence was the basis of authority and rule, the violence of the period was directed at everything sacred and at core Ethiopian values and even included killing the very proponents of violence. It was nihilistic that it did not distinguish the enemy from the friend. Consequently, it left a society totally trembled and confused as to where to put its trust. It was left sceptical of the intentions and deeds of state and members of a society (Girmay, 2014; Girmay, 2015).

The transitional government, which convened to determine the future direction of the country, therefore, was faced with dealing with the trauma, victimization, call for justice of victim as



much as giving closure to the bereaved. The constructive transformation of policies, institutions and structures of the state were required with the spirit of rendering reconciliation and ending the dynamics of violence. Accordingly, at least, in the beginning, the government, which came to power after designing a democratic constitution shone a ray of hope that things would go as required. Accordingly, multiple transformative efforts were embarked amidst fear and scepticism among substantial share of the society other than Tigray and historically oppressed minority groups. These changes and transformations which shaped the nature of violence in this period are the following.

At the political level, the major focus of the post-1991 discourse was on the transformation of the authoritarian political culture of the Ethiopian state. This was meant to address the historical structures of violence embedded in the political system. Accordingly, one fundamental aspect of transformation was the introduction of a democratic political system and the federalization of the unitary state system. Multiparty system, periodic election, freedom of assembly, of expression and thought along with press freedom, at least in principle as enshrined in the transitional charter and later in the federal constitution, were introduced. These were aspects of the imperative to redress the impact of the direct violence of the past done to deny these rights and the structural violence caused by the prohibition of these rights. Other human and civil rights, the recognition of the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples as bearers of sovereign rights to the extent of bearing the right to self-determination including secession (FDRE, 1995) were meant to end the history of repression, marginalization and penetration based on language, identity and religion. To end the violation of women, children and the elderly as well as to protect the rights of historically marginalized groups, special recognition to the vulnerable groups and their rights were offered. The repressive state machinery of the Derg was totally dismantled to be replaced by institutions reflecting the democratic spirit of the era. Accordingly, following the federal arrangement, as per article 47(1) of the federal constitution, a bicameral parliament (House of Peoples Representative and House of Federations) and in nine federative units (called regions) and city administration composed of their own executive, legislative and judiciary organs were established. The self-governing constituent units were organized based on ethnoterritorial considerations as a way of addressing the history of national oppression. Accordingly, the Afar



National Regional State Government and the Somali National Regional State Government were established as self-governing entities as per article 39(1-4) of the federal constitution.

This trajectory was interfaced with the presence of more than three dozen armed nationalist movements threatening to return to the war of secession unless their political rights were respected otherwise. Among these were the Afar and the Somali insurgent groups. Long after the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the armies of the defeated Derg and the victorious EPRDF forces, Afar and Somali armed groups administering their respective regions and illicit resistance groups were swarming the regions (Ibrahim, 2010). During this period, Issa-Afar violence was situated in the context of ethno-nationalist groups struggle to ensure their proper place in the emerging political reconfiguration. As part of this struggle, the Afar and Somali ethnic groups in a bid for ensuring their place went into a double struggle with the federal government and between themselves. This was reflected in the power politics in both regions among various political forces and getting the new administrative regional demarcations to be carried out in a way it maximizes respective group's interests. Accordingly, the Issa and Afar boundary and the overall Issa-Afar issue were used as a political trump card for political groups to gain legitimacy.

The period underwent the organization of Ethiopian state and society based on a new ethno-nationalist federal experiment and the principles of self-determination of territorial based ethnic groups. Former provincial administrations were reconstituted into ethnolinguistic units called regions (locally known as *Kilils*). The measure was a response to undo the historical oppression of nationalities based on ethnic, cultural and linguistic bases. The nationalities question and the land question were the rallying points of the left-wing student moment of the 1960s and the various ethnic insurgent movements which came into being after the coming into power of the military regime in 1974. With the constitutional recognition of the nationalities sovereign rights, as per article 40(3) of FDRE constitution, the land question was vaguely recognized as the joint ownership of the state and the people of Ethiopia. The rural and urban land is stipulated as the common property of nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia. Article 40(4-5) of FDRE constitution provided that, peasants and pastoralists have the right to obtain land free of payment and are protected from eviction from their land.



The federal government, as part of the post-war transition to democracy, implemented the principle of effective control and settlement patterns of ethnolinguistic groups to determine the boundary of regional states. Pursuant to the provision of article 48 (1-2) of the federal constitution, future bilateral negotiations between neighbouring regions and the use of the House of Federation as the arbiter in case of the failure of the former were laid as mechanisms of resolving boundary conflicts. The empowerment of historically oppressed and marginalized groups like the Afar and Somali for self-governance came as a blessing. However, the fact that they are victims of double marginalization, that of being pastoralist and their peripheral political identity was not fully addressed, and it would come back to haunt the new democratic dispensation in the form of deeper levels of violence.

The political arrangement, despite all its slacks, gave the opportunity for the transformation of historically-emended violent conflicts. This was evident from the opening of the political space for political and legal pluralism, multi-party system and periodic election, which unfortunately did not last the 2005 national election which ended up with the fiasco. The opportunities created by the federal and democratic experiment can be considered an attempt to institute a democratic system to resolve the problem of violence. However, the political dynamics mainly characterized by an Ethno-nationalist struggle on the one hand, and the tight party centrist and authoritarian rule under EPRDF on the other hand, caused the decline of universality national sentiment, growing ethnocentric orientation and undemocratic practice. This brought about two consequences: one, it caused the radicalization of ethnonational boundaries and identity conceptions which manifested violently among ethnonational neighbouring groups like the Afar and the Issa. Second, it caused the radicalization of political stances leading to the development of a binary divide between the opposition and the ruling party camps, where Somali and Afar political parties aligned themselves with either side.

The new political arrangement opened the opportunity for self-governance and democratic representation of the people through their democratic institutions of self-rule. However, the political intervention and control from the federal government continued until 2001. After 2001 due to the factionalism created at the heart of TPLF and the late Meles Zenawi's full control of



TPLF and EPRDF, a new policy direction, which reduced intervention in region states came into effect. According to informants from both Afar and Somali regions, this caused great frustration among the ruling elites and the people. This is an aspect of structural violence, which is different from the one caused by the prohibition of rights. This one, it gave the rights but denies the practical operation on the ground in these regards (Awol, 2012; Abduljibriel, 2015). The degree of frustration-aggression involved because of the gap between the expectation and potential of the people for self-rule and what they have realized constituted an aspect of violence against basic human needs. This contributed to the spiral of local violence among ethnonational groups as a way of venting out their frustration.

The post-2005 election period can be considered as a watershed considering the changing political dynamic, as a swing from an emergent democratic experiment into authoritarian rule and one-party domination. The restriction on freedom of expression, association and heavy-handed measures against the opposition brought back the memory of fear and victimization of the military rule under the Derg. Abbnik (1995) correctly observed that the post-1991 Ethiopia succeeded to take direct violence off the public arena it to back stage. If he was to write about the post-2005 dynamics of violence in Ethiopia, he would have said violence reclaimed the public space. There is a comeback of violence in both structural and direct forms, affecting the quality of relationship among ethnocultural groups. Fear and intimidation, arbitrary arrest and torture, the overall human security of citizens have been compromised by lack of good governance, rampant corruption, police brutality and draconian laws silencing political dissent. The noble promises of the constitution have been gradually denuded by progressive stipulations of laws discussed below which constituted the cultural dimensions of violence in this period.

At legal level, the federal constitution gave ample promises of equality, freedom, peace and democracy at all levels of social organization. The preambles of the federal and regional constitutions recognized the historical violence and the need for its rectification based on the principle of sovereignty of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia as bearers of the ultimate sovereign rights of nations, nationalities and peoples.

The policy frameworks pertinent to the transformation of violence were enshrined in the federal constitution and the role of handling ethnonational conflicts involving regional states was given



to the House of Federation (HoF), the second house in the Ethiopian federal system. The HoF hosts representatives of all ethnonational groups as a symbol of their shared rule and the proportional representation in the federation. It is endowed with the power of addressing issues of boundary disputes when bilateral negotiations between regions could not solve the problem. Along with the democratic dispensations provided by the constitutions, the HoF stands as the highest level of peaceful resolution of conflicts (FDRE, 1995). The transformation of violent relations is predicated on the implementation of democratic rights and developmental policies which are deemed to resolve conflicts involving economic and political issues. The nature of violence at the national level was characterized by the rise of overlapping violent confrontations among various actors. The major violent conflict includes state vs. ethnic groups, among ethnic groups, among pastoralists and between pastoralists and agrarian Highlanders.

#### **4.4 The Local Contexts of Afar and Issa**

At the local level, the Afar and Issa reality has undergone its own dynamics and produced its own particular implications on the dynamics of violence. The Afar National Regional State and the Somali National Regional States were established as per article of 47 of the federal constitution. The two regions were formed out of the amalgamation of various principalities of Afar and Somali that were divided and incorporated during the imperial and Derg period to the Wollo, Hararge, Shoa and Tigray Provinces. The political identity of the Afar and the Somali as self-governing units were born by bringing together those principalities distributed to the historical dominant groups for the sake of divide and rule.

The local governance structure of the Afar and Somali regional states was established pursuant to article 47 of the federal constitution. The Afar region was first organized into five zones and twenty-eight Weredas, after 2008 it was reorganized into thirty-two Weredas. The Somali Region is organized into nine zones and 69 weredas. Shinile currently known as Sitti Zone (Somali: Gobolka Sitti), is one of nine Zones of the Somali Region of Ethiopia. Located at the north-western point of the Somali Region and stretching across the savannah north of the Ahmar Mountains, Sitti is bordered on the south by Dire Dawa and the Oromia Region, on the west by the Afar Region, on the north by Djibouti, on the east by Somalia, and on the southeast by Jijiga. Other towns and cities in this zone include Aysha, Adi Gala, Shinile, Dewelee, Harewa, Adigale,



Erer, Bike and Āfdem. Part of the north-western corner is occupied by the Yangudi Rassa National Park, which is a notable local landmark.



Figure 2 Regional Administrative Boundaries of FDRE by Zones.

The Shinile (currently known as Sitti) Zone of the Issa shares administrative boundaries, which have for long remained not demarcated, with zone 1 (Awusi), Zone five (Hari) and Zone three (Gebi) of Afar National regional state. The violence in post-1991 Ethiopia has been across and beyond these into the traditional Afar homeland. Because of this boundary has been at the centre of the violence, it is no the totality of what Issa-Afar violence is though.

The issue of the boundary is one of the basic problems that has become boldly the bone of contention between the Afar and the Issa in the post-1991 period. This has been reflected at various levels of engagement. Among others, the direct violent confrontation between adjacent



neighbouring weredas, the conflictual boundary claims of Somali and Afar political parties and the contradictory conception of territory and boundary the ruling parties of the two regions have been promoting (Muauz, 2009). This has been more pronounced boldly in the Somali and Afar regional constitutions than any other place. Article 2 of the Revised Afar National Regional State constitution, which defined the regional boundary, provides that,

Afar National Regional State is established as per FDRE constitution and it is adjacent to Eritrea in the North East, Tigray Region in the North West, Oromia Region in the South, Amhara Region in the South West, Somali Region in the South East and the Djibouti Republic in the East (ANRS, 2002).

The Afar view of the Afar Regional State Boundary is defined in relative terms and even though, the FDRE constitution does not clearly define the specific boundary demarcations of regions, the Afar constitutions prefer to capitalize on the shared fact that it was established as per the FDRE constitution. It seems that to indicate that what has been established by the FDRE constitution cannot be changed and that other ways of reconstituting the regional boundary are not acceptable. According to Mohammed Tahiro, the ex-vice president of Afar Region, during the revision of the constitution, the phrasing was meant to indicate and criminalize the all-time-all expansionist view of the Somali region through the Issa Shinile Zone currently known as Sitti Zone (Somali: Gobolka Sitti) (Mohammed T. , 2010). This goes in line with the permanent and well defined Afar conception of territory as opposed to the dynamics and shifting Somali conception of territory (Muauz, 2015b). This is evident from the way the Somali constitution framed the boundary limit of the Somali region.

Comparatively, Sub-article 1, Article 2 of Revised Somali National Regional State constitution provides that,

Somali Region is contiguous territory where the Somali people and other people who wish to live in Somali region reside in and that is adjacent to Djibouti, Afar and Somalia in the North, Kenya in the South, Somalia in the East and Oromia in the West (SNRS, 2002) (the underlining is mine).

The above stipulation is a very subtle presentation of the territorial claim based on effective control of the territory occupied by the Somali as provided in the underlined phrase “the Somali people and other people who wish to live in Somali region resides”. Traditionally, the Somalis’ conception of the territory is dynamic and believe that anywhere their people and their cattle set



their foot is a Somali homeland (Muauz, 2015b). The same conception is reflected herein the above sub-article. The Dynamic nature of boundary is further provided in sub-article 2 of the above provision goes further to show the dynamic nature of the regional boundary which provided as, “The provision of Sub-article 1 of this article notwithstanding, in case of the need for redrawing of the regional boundary it shall be accomplished as per art 48 of the federal constitution” (SNRS, 2002).

The reference to article 48 of the federal constitution is a careful recognition of the use of the effective control of the territory for demarcation which termed as settlement patterns of the population which favours the Somali claim of territory. Article 48 of the federal constitution reads,

All-State border disputes shall be settled by agreement of the concerned States. Where the concerned States fail to reach an agreement, the House of the Federation shall decide such disputes on the basis of settlement patterns and the wishes of the peoples concerned (FDRE, 1995).

Because the Issa have been historically on the move towards Afar homeland and have been occupying vast Afar traditional homelands, the legally sound way of establishing ownership is claiming settlement patent and population interests to defend the status quo. Whereas among the Afar the conception of the territory is based on historical ownership (Muauz, 2015b). So, the difference in the provisions of the constitutions of the two regions depicts the underlying interest they wish to protect. And the violence in post-1991 period has been partly about boundary claim.

The reorganization of the administrative and political structures of the Ethiopian state in the post-1991 period, therefore, brought blessings of self-rule to historically marginalized groups like Afar and Somali peoples as much as adding unresolved issues of contention around boundary and resources. This issue has continued to define the context of Issa-Afar violence and the quality of relationship among various ethnic groups in Ethiopia at large.

The other important issues that defined the local context of the Afar and the Issa are the prevalence of arms, the rise of virulent insurgency and the politics of insurgency, contraband trade, arms and human trafficking through Djibouti and Somali through Yemen towards the Middle East, as well as recurrent environmental and climatic calamities. These issues are separately discussed below. Before exploring the post-1991 local context associated with the



prevalence of arms, it is appropriate to briefly express the utility and meaning of arms in Afar and Somali societies. As both societies have the same value systems regarding arms, the issue is addressed at once.

Arms are highly regarded in the Afar and the Somali societies for various utilities. It is almost inconceivable to think of a pastoralist Afar and Somali male without arms in modern day Ethiopia. This is often misunderstood by foreign and domestic writers, and among central government officials, as the barbaric and backward culture of the two peripheral peoples. However, the truth about the high regard and prevalence of arms among the Afar and the Somali has both socio-economic, political and cultural reasons besides the security and warfare utility it is used for. A gun symbolizes valour, determination and rite of passage to manhood from childhood. In both Afar and Somali societies, children are trained on the skill of dismantling and assembling a Kalashnikov or AK-47 within a short period of time and aiming and firing as preparation for manhood. This emanates from the social division of labour of the male as protector of the family, the village, the homestead and the clan and it goes on to the nations of Afar or Somali. Culturally gun is used to symbolize oath of restraint and reconciliation by conflicting groups jumping over a gun portrayed on the ground. This is like an oath to sanctify the reconciliation that the breaching of which is believed to be as lethal as the gun.

Another utility is economic in the sense that gun is vital for the protection of live cattle from cattle robbery and cattle resettling. When cattle loss because of massive cattle death or robbery happens, availability of arms is vital for organized robbery for restocking. Also, availability of arms is required to give security protection and escorting of contraband tread which must pass through clan territories. This service is one source of income to clans in both societies that it has economic dimensions to the utility of arms. In terms of social values, a man without arms is considered manly, respected and honoured due to two reasons. One is that arms are vital to ensure the security of its clan; second, a man must have arms to reciprocate in case of contributing to the payment of restitution or blood money in case of his clan member killing the member of another clan or nation (Awol, 2012).

The responsibility to avenge the dead is another issue requiring arms that a man without arms will be less visible to play social and security roles in society. At the political level, a clan with



well-armed members can have the power of influencing political decision making because real political power resides in the power of the clan than the parliamentary representation. At times a clan that has arms superiority can threaten to raise armed resistance or send their youth to the insurgency to get their interest respected.

The demise of the Derg military regime in 1991 brought three major factors for the prevalence of SALWs in Ethiopia, particularly in Afar and Somali regions. One is the availability of abandoned arms. These arms were supplied by traders and traffickers to the pastoralist lowlands, besides the arms, which were already in Afar and Somali regions. Second, the Afar and Somali armed insurgent groups, which swamped this part of Ethiopia was another source of arms supply. The third is the influx of arms across the boundary from Somalia and Yemen. In sum, the two regions were overloaded with automatic and semiautomatic, light and heavy machine guns. The researcher witnessed in markets like Gedamaytu, Adaytu, Endufuqo, Meiso, and Shinile were places where arms openly sold in the open. The attempt to disarm the armed among the Afar and the Somali was met with heavy resistance from both societies and regional governing bodies. In effect, the post-1991 period context of Issa-Afar violence was shaped by the prevalence of SALWs which plaid as a proximate factor to the rise and continuity of Issa-Afar violence.

The rise of virulent insurgency and the politics of insurgency are the other factors that defined the nature of Issa-Afar violence. Afar and Somali insurgency rose to resist the Derg military regime as part of their quest for self-rule and the national question. During the Derg period, the insurgents were not directly connected to Issa-Afar violence but implied indirectly as they were used to mutual incrimination. The military government was also in open struggle with the insurgent groups that they were not directly involved in the violence. After the fall of the Derg regime, the former insurgents became regional governments or rival parties in regional politics or armed resistance groups. Both regions were using insurgents and carried out attacks against each other. Unlike the past the battle-hardened former insurgents now part of the regional police and militia force, others merely returned to civilian life were readily available to provide new tactics and skills of war-making. At times insurgent Somali and Afar groups that are considered illegal by the federal government were invited to give regular military training to pastoralist folks (Ibrahim, 2010) that caused the transformation of the nature of violence as discussed in the next section.



Moreover, the use of insurgent groups as a haven for offenders wanted by law enforcers for homicide, robbery and instigating invasions has complicated the issue of addressing Issa-Afar violence. While, on the one hand, the presence of insurgents is used as a political trump card by the Afar and Somali regional government in dealing with the federal government, on the other, they used insurgents to wage Issa-Afar wars on their behalf in order to evade responsibility. So, in both cases, the politics of insurgency has created a cause for the continuity of the two regional governments unaccounted for their role in the continuity of Issa-Afar violence. Thus, insurgency and its politics have set the context for a new form of Issa-Afar violence in the post-1991 period (Anonymous, 2016).

The rise of new contraband trade, insurgency, arms and human trafficking are other related and interdependent factors associated with Issa-Afar violence. Contraband became a very lucrative business involving clans, politicians at federal and regional states, international companies and insurgents. The control of the contraband routes and destination places like the three above mentioned towns on the tarmac road from Addis Ababa to Djibouti became the hot spot of struggle. This struggle involved mainly the Afar and the Issa. However, powerful politicians and huge companies of the Gulf States known as *Shirkades* who use these places to dump their second-hand clothes, electronic equipment and arms were also involved. Insurgents use contraband trade to finance their struggle and the contraband routes to do their military and intelligence operation against state institutions. Furthermore, the ever-growing illicit migration and human trafficking network running through the Afar and the Somali regions added another source of revenue to corrupt politicians, traffickers and dealers, on the one hand, a recruitment bonanza for an insurgent to take them to Eritrea for training. The overlapping of the above four factors made the context of Issa-Afar violence affected by the interplay of interlinked complex challenges (ECA, 2010).

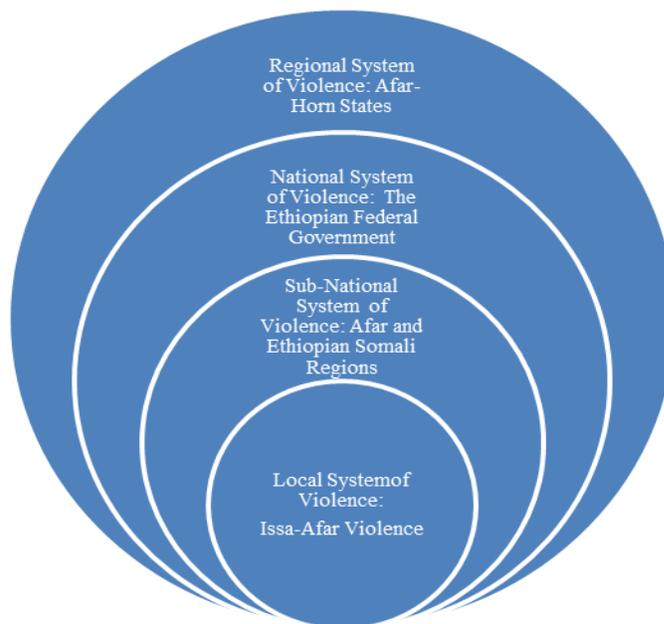
Another group of factors that shaped the local context are related to resource scarcity, vulnerability to artificial and natural calamities. As an aspect of a continued continuation of the past, the development induced displacement of pastoralists from their traditional grazing lands. According to Afar and Somali informants, the Afar land was taken for mega-state projects adding the element of scarcity to the already scarce pastoralist resources (Robele, 2017). In addition to the artificial scarcity, the recurrence of climate changed induced drought and famine

resulted in massive animal death and a chronic food shortage and starvation. The chronic failure to meet basic human needs, in turn, put pressure on resources, which further exacerbated the scarcity of pastoralist resources. Besides, the climate change created environmental degradation that added to the environmental marginalization of an already marginalized people. According to OCHA Ten Years Report on drought and famine vulnerability and level of dependence on relief aid, the Afar and Somali are the most affected part of Ethiopia and the Horn (OCHA, 2012). Therefore, the sum effect of the above factors immensely affected the nature, organization and utility of Issa-Afar violence discussed in chapter five. Moreover, based on the above the discussions the overlapping contexts can be conceived as an overlapping system of violence briefly discussed herein below, which have their own contribution in defining the nature, organization and utility of violence.

#### 4.5 Overlapping Systems of Violence

The above overlapping contexts constitute a separate but interconnected source of violence, which contribute to the continuation of violence and failure of peace-making processes discussed in the subsequent sections.

*Chart 1: Overlapping Systems of Violence in The Afar Horn as the Context of Issa-Afar Peace-Making*



At the regional level, the volatile relations among the Afar-Horn states is one of the contexts constituting the regional system of violence. It has always overshadowed the designing and



implementation of Issa-Afar peace-making since the EEBW period to date on the one hand and set the context for the continuity of Issa-Afar violence on the other. This includes the no-war-no-peace but violent relations between Eritrea and Ethiopian and the tension between Eritrea and Djibouti. National security considerations emanating from this context has contributed to the Federal government emphasis on the top-down peace-making approach than designing an authentic and bottom-up way approach. The regional context as a regional system of violence has also the role of insurgents and contrabandists playing a negative role in disrupting peace-making efforts. The only success recorded in the post-1991 period, paradoxically during the EEBW owing to the authentic and participatory approach the peace-making adopted, was disrupted owing to the repercussions of the authoritarian turn the political system took in the post-EEBW period that constituted the national system of violence.

Furthermore, the lack of responsiveness of the federal government to the demands of the Afar and the Issa people on the hand and the inappropriate management of peace-making efforts and articulation of the Afar-Issa issue only as territory reflections of the invisible violence from the national political system that continued affecting the participation of the people affected by violence. The later losing trust on the federal government, in turn, kept on resorting to arms. At the sub-national level, the Afar and Somali regions have their own system of violence as the most insecure, underdeveloped and most vulnerable to direct war violence and other forms of insecurities. Moreover, the authoritarianism and lack of accountability to their people, abuse of power at times verging to anarchy provides the context for the continuity of Issa-Afar war violence and the failure of peace-making efforts. Here, the spillover effect of similar systems of violence involving the Somali, and Oromia regions have an impact on both the cycle of Issa-Afar violence and the failure of the peace-making. Therefore, the problems of Issa-Afar peacemaking discussed in chapter six are closely knitted with the above overlapping systems of violence at various levels. Similarly, the continuity of Issa-Afar violence should be understood with this context in mind.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The post-199 period has ushered multifaceted changes at various levels of the Issa-Afar contexts. The new political, economic, administrative and geopolitical contexts defined the political



change ushered at regional, national and local level in the post-1991 regime change in Ethiopia have contributed to the change in the nature and utility of Issa-Afar violence during the period. The nature of Issa-Afar violence became very complex, self-perpetuating and the utility of the violence has moved from the resource and economic factors into identity, political and psychological. The way the contexts are play out their role in shaping the behavior of the two groups and making the context for continuation of violence has been tremendous that, a proper understand of Issa-Afar violence without the clear understanding of the overlapping contexts is futile. Besides, these contexts are vital for understanding the changes in the nature, organization and utility of Issa-Afar violence discussed in detail in the next chapter.



## Chapter Five

### **The Changing Face of Issa-Afar Violence: Organization, Meaning and Utility in the post-1991 Period**

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#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the changing face of Issa-Afar violence. The form, organization and meanings that the new Issa-Afar violence assumed and the (tangible and intangible) purposes it was used for during post-1991 period are included. The discussion shows the place of Issa-Afar pastoralists in contemporary Ethiopian state and society and the changes and continuities of Issa-Afar violence. By doing so, it presents the nature, meaning and purpose of Issa-Afar violence in post-1991 Ethiopia, as an aspect of continuity of the violence discussed in chapter three and as born of the changes eventuated in the post-1991 period, discussed in chapter four. This provides the big picture of Issa-Afar recurrence and its immutability to repeated peacemaking efforts discussed in chapter six. The central argument of this chapter is that the changes ushered during the post-1991 period have transformed Issa-Afar violence. The system of violence, the means and relations of violence, the meaning and utility of the violence are redefined by the new political and economic reconfiguration. Issa-Afar violence has become deeply engraved in communal memory propelling people into reciprocal escalation and perpetuation of violence. Accordingly, the chapter is organized into four sections other than this introductory note. The first section delves into the organization of Issa-Afar violence including the changes involved in actors, instruments, impacts, and victims of violence are examined. The second section casts the meanings that the Issa-Afar violence has and creates, as well as the purposes it is used for. The third section addresses the dynamics of violence and casts the recurrence in perspective to grasp the factors involved in escalation and de-escalation. Section four wraps up the chapter by identifying major themes and corresponding theoretical implications as a chapter summary and conclusion.

#### **5.2 The Organization of the new Issa-Afar Violence**

Issa-Afar violence as a system has assumed its own modality of organization, which affected its function in the post-1991 period. This mainly pertains to the changes in nature of actors, the modalities and instruments of doing violence, the impacts of the violence, the victims and the



role of the state. The organization of violence also investigates the various underlying causal interactions which shaped the manifestation of violence during this period. As a manner of presenting the local voice from a phenomenological viewpoint, the experience of people in violence is documented and analyzed in the following sections.

### **5.2.1 The Actors of Violence**

The change of actors of violence in the post-1991 period accounts for the overall changes accompanying the post-1991 dynamics indicated in the preceding chapter. Historically, actors of Issa-Afar violence were not limited to pastoralists per se. The central government of Ethiopia, the government of Djibouti and Somali have been involved at various levels. In terms of the nature of local actors among the pastoralist communities of Issa and Afar, clan leaders, cattle trekkers and age set groups were involved in mobilizing, organizing and launching attacks. Women, children and the elderly were excluded from direct participation both as actors and targets of violence. In the post-1991 this has changed to include new actors and societal groups traditionally excluded from violence.

One major shift relates to the emergence of the Afar and Somali self-governing regional states, with their own organization of locally sanctioned monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. They have their own police, militia, rapid force detachment and national army reservists. Regional states have the authority to purchase arms through the federal government to supply the above forces except for the national army reservists. Therefore, for the first time in the history of modern Ethiopia, the two peoples have owned their own legitimate organization and system of enforcing law and order. This came as a success in terms of realizing the self-rule right of the people. However, considering Issa-Afar violence, these organizations have become tools for perpetuating Issa-Afar communal violence. The arms and organization of the regional police, militia and rapid forces are used in Issa-Afar wars. The author has witnessed on many occasions that both groups used state organs to conduct violence. According to an informant, they are using state structures as a matter of mutual reciprocity between the two regions. Both regions engage in mutual incrimination of starting the use of state organs in communal violence (anonymous-2, 2017). The basic fact is that both are using them irrespective of who fired the first shot. Consequently, it made the violence intra-state involving regional governments besides the communal of the violence.



Afar, Somali and Oromo insurgent groups are also involved in the violence due to the contraband, arms and human trafficking involved. Traditionally, the historical caravan trade routes traversing the Afar and Somali homelands are controlled by clans, which benefit as escorts and guides. The same trade route is used by contrabandists, insurgents and human traffickers. According to the National Customs Authority report, the interplay of contrabandist, insurgents and arms traffickers has a very complex network of connections from the local up to the federal level that made the uprooting of the network very difficult. As much as this connection is fueling Issa-Afar violence, it is also feeding on the arms and revenue demands the violence creates. These groups have a strong army capable of overrunning custom and security checkpoint with arms when bribing field officers fails to secure free passage. This, in turn, brings an element of federal organs like members of the national defence, federal police, national security and customs forces into the heart of both the struggle to control and falling victim of the violence. The report also added that the possibility of these federal organs to be involved in corrupt dealings is huge (ECA, 2010). Local sources, however, accuse these federal organs of being leading actors in the illicit trade itself. The two regions often engage in mutual accusation of each other for bribing out these federal organs (AJSAB, Report on the problem of Contraband , 2010). All the above scenarios are expressed at various times in shaping the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence. This aspect of the actors has even attracted a huge number of highlander community to be involved in the illicit business. The involvement of trans-national companies and regional actors in this illicit trade indicated above is also to be noted as a new addition to the nature of actors in Issa-Afar violence.

In terms of the scope of involvement of the local people, the new aspect is that it is not only the frontline Afar and Issa communities but also outlying communities are involved in the violence. Informants in outer parts of Afar and Issa societies are equally involved as, if not more than, are frontline communities. Lederach (1999:13) argues that immediacy and proximity to each other between conflicting communities with a history of violence increases the propensity to go into armed conflict. Yet, in the case of Issa-Afar violence, the involvement of distant communities defies this theoretical argument. Truckloads of people are often mobilized from far corners of the two communities to take part in an ongoing war (Muauz, 2010). This is an aspect of transformation of the nature of violence from being limited to front-line commutes to an all-encompassing Afar nation and Issa clan level. Moreover, the traditionally excepted sections of



society from violence like women, children, the elderly and frail as well as peacemakers and go-betweens (locally known as *Jallas* to mean neutrals) are no longer excluded. Therefore, the constituency of the local, national and regional actors has substantially changed casting its influence on the nature of Issa-Afar violence in the post-1991 period. The changes are also observed in the instrument (means) of violence and the role of actors examined below.

### **5.2.2 The Instruments of Violence**

The means of violence is a vital aspect of the organization and effect of violence. In the history of Issa-Afar violence, modern firearms have long taken a central place. The new development is associated with the nature of firearms and other technologies used in post-1991 period. One major departure is the use of heavy automatic and group machine guns and hand grenades which were not common in Issa-Afar communal violence and are supposed to be used in regular military formation. According to informants on both sides of the divide, these types of weapons are proof of the escalated and war level nature of the violence involved. Moreover, the communal violence is referred to as war by both groups to show the change in the level of violence because of the change in the instrument of violence and the involvement of organized para-military actors in the communal violence (Awol, 2012). This perception is believed to have caused mimetic reciprocity of escalating the level and organization of preparedness for war.

The influx of new advanced weapons with night vision accessories and snipers has sent a shock wave of fear on both sides. The use of remote field vision binoculars gave the communal confrontation a highly organized way of making war. The advent of mobile phone technology also added the battle field communication element vital in modern warfare. The latter made the dissemination of rumours of war and the mobilization society for battle easy, what could have taken days even within the most efficient communication technique of the Afar, now takes minutes to accomplish. Another addition to the new organization of violence is the availing of basic infrastructures like road and transportation facilities to mobilize people to battlefronts. In both regional states, the many cars supplied by the federal government and bought by the regions annually for government services are often used to transport people to battle front when war breaks out. During the time of violent incidents, these vehicles are used for the war purpose. Even the vehicles of the security and paramilitary organs are used for the same purpose (Muauz, 2009).



Therefore, the availability of the means of transportation and communication has made involvement in battles easier than before. In particular, the author has witnessed during 2008-2010 that mobile phones were used to take the picture of victims of war back home, which contributed to the level of trauma and the obsession for revenge. Furthermore, the phones of the deceased are used by both sides to send insults and intimidation to the family of the fallen, amounting to an added insult to injury. In sum, the instruments of violence and the use of other facilities as part of means of war have changed the nature, effect and visibility of Issa-Afar violence. Consequently, it has contributed to the continued recurrence of the cycle of violence. This was taken further by the expanding scope of the types of victims of violence examined below.

### 5.2.3 The Birth of New Victims

This section is meant to show the impact of violence on a new category of victims that were not observed before this period. As indicated above, by tradition, the protection of women, children and the elderly are shared values among the Issa and the Afar. During wartime, these groups are afforded protection. The death of warriors and members of the youth age-set groups is considered inevitable in war. But not these along with peacemakers, *Jallas* and religious leaders. One of the changes that shock both groups is the new trend of targeting women and children. In many occasions, women and children have been killed, raped and abducted by both sides. In both groups' worldview, an attack on women is considered as genocidal and interruption of genealogical continuity of a family (Leader-MA, 2009). According to the Testimony of Medina Haji, a resident of Gewane Wereda in Afar Region, she witnessed the slaughtering of women and girls. A woman, Alefi Ali, from Amibera Wereda witnessed the extreme degree of targeting women in the new trend of Issa-Afar violence:

“I was helping my husband in his work as a peace committee. I used to take part in the reciprocal exchange of arms and cattle to bring peace among us. I had been feeding and honorably accommodating our Issa brothers in my own home. At times, I used to remove the grass roof cover of my house to feed the Issa cattle during drought. This Issa man whom I have done all the best possible help found me as I was going to market place to sell my goats. He asked me for sex. I got terrified and pretended as though I have not heard what he said. He repeated it with intention of raping me, and I picked a stone to resist. He took his *Gile* (long dagger) to rip off my belly. Accidentally, people came to rescue me, my life was spared” (ASJPC, Decmeber 4, 2003).



Issa women similarly accuse the Afar for acts of rape and flogging of women and girls (Anonymous-IW, 2018). Therefore, women and children have become the new victims, an abomination in the culture of both people. It is often responded to by extreme violence to avenge the dead and the wounded. Because of the taboo nature of the practice the degree of vengeance against this type of violence involves excess use of violence. This is a recurrent leitmotif appearing in many of the interviews with Issa and Afar informants in explaining the cycle of violence; that the new practice created an obsession for revenge.

Another category of the new victims are government officials: In the past, there were incidents of targeting government soldiers and at times invading army garrisons. But not the killing of government officials. According to elderly informants, a single police officer was powerful enough and influential to create stability, not to be shot cold-bloodedly. This time the violence has targeted elected parliamentarians and regional representatives. The elders used the phrase “the government that dies” to express the seriousness of the violence. Here, the focus is not on giving exaggerated values to the life of government officials which is not the case in egalitarian societies like Issa and Afar (ASJPC, May 27, 2000).

It was the level of insecurity the act entails that alarms the two groups. Furthermore, the manner of killing itself is another vital case requiring attention in examining the nature of victims and violence. As the story is briefly described in the coming section, the manner of killing of the warriors in battle and the federal police and customs authorities involves an overkill. The abuse and mutilation of the corpus have been observed on many occasions (AJSAB, Issa-Afar Violence Incident Report, 2006). This stands in stark contrast with the Islamic dogma of the sanctity of the dead body commonly upheld among the Afar and the Issa. The impact on the two societies became a mutual dehumanization. They began painting a monster picture of each other that gives license to kill the other and justifies whatever level of violence. What stands even worse is the attacking of cattle as an expression of anger, given that cattle are held dearly in pastoral society. Cattle are the apple of a pastoralist’s eye. Robbery is understandable though not acceptable but killing, mutilating and decapitating cattle in the manner of the overkilling of humans was a terrifying experience for pastoralists. Even though this act has been committed very few times around Gewane locality allegedly by the Issa against the Afar cattle, but the story resonated more than the death of warriors (AJSAB, Gewane Peace Building workshop Report, 2010). It



strengthened the enemy imagery and created immense fear and hatred. Consequently, it caused the mimetic killing of each other on sight.

The federal government organs working in the hot spot areas were caught in the crossfire of the Afar-Issa violence. However, the federal government did not take time to understand the nature and the gravity of the problem, rather it employed a fire brigade approach to violence reduction. So, in the eye of the local people, the federal government is considered a sinister bystander who watch while the brotherly people are butchering each other (Qalo A. , 2012; Yayo M. , 2017). Among radical political elites of both societies, the federal government is accused of fermenting hatred and at least deliberately omitting legal intervention to checkmate the greater Afar and Greater Somali threat (Anonymous-3, 2017). Regardless of the truth values of the above factual claim, the mere feeling is powerful enough to create the sense of being left by oneself to defend one's security and justify extreme violence. Owing to the above features of the new violence, the author probes to understand the meaning and purposes of the violence by examining real-time cases below.

### **5.3 The Meaning and Purpose of the New Issa-Afar Violence**

This section deals with the meaning Issa-Afar violence constitutes and creates, and the purpose for which it was employed. The meaning and purpose of the old Issa-Afar violence are as discussed in chapter three. Here, the new Issa-Afar violence refers to the new manifestations of the violence in the post-1991 period, which were not experienced before this period. Therefore, the nature of the new violence is to be understood considering the major changes, which redefined the context of the violence discussed in the preceding sections. During the pre-1991 period, both the Afar and the Issa were marginalized from the national mainstream politics. This was changed in the post-199 period. The transitional period and its principles introduced new group rights. The right to self-rule within the general framework of self-determination later enshrined in article 39 of the federal constitution (FDRE, 1995) was manipulated by ethnic elites to ignite new wars for the acquisition of new territories. Since self-determination is defined as the sovereign right of ethnoterritorial nations, nationalities and peoples, control over territory has become the mechanism of ensuring the aspiration of self-determination (Muauz, 2015b; Tobias and Alemmaya, 2008). The Issa-Afar violence of the time, in addition to the defining role of the history and deposit of violence discussed in chapter three (Muauz, 2009), was feeding on these



new general dynamics. According to John Markakis (2003) the quest for new self-governing administrative units and the benefits-*new resources*- is one of the factors for the unabated continuity of Issa-Afar violence. The following narratives are examples of the new form of violence showing the lived experiences of the Issa and the Afar.

The invasion and control of *Adaytu*, *Gedamaytu*, *Gelaelo*, *Yangudi Rasa* National Park, *Qundafuqo* and the dry season retreat land of *Hilaydegy* planes in 1992, except for *Gelaelo* restored to the Afar control in 1998, was the turning point for Afar presence in these vast areas. The loss of these territories is perceived in the Afar society as multi-dimensional catastrophes. An ex-military officer provides the popular opinion peppered with expertise detail.

“This time, it was a different enemy, totally invincible, cruel and committed to the destruction of the Afar identity and to scrap us from the map of the earth. The invasion over 250 km long Afar homeland was carried out in a coordinated campaign led by well laid military strategic operational plan with the involvement of military experts of Djibouti army and ex-military commanders of Somalia. This is evident from the look on the map of the Penta-tong *pincers* operation utilized to control the five strategic places for further invasion into Afar homeland. More does the meticulous *scissor* military strategy of controlling *Qundafuqo* and *Gedamaytu* to sandwich and outflank Gewane in between, *Adaytu* and *Qundafuqo* to control *YangudiRasa*, *Hilaydegy* and *Gedamaytu* to crash *Amibera* and its environs. It is absolute naiveté to take this Issa pastoralist doing *per se*.” (CMA, 2009) (emphases mine)

The Issa, on the other hand, claim that the Afar are exposing their poor Issa brothers to famine and starvation by denying them access to water points and grazing lands. The new violence they consider is a war of self-preservation:

The Afar has ample water points and grazing land to accommodate both the Afar and Issa society but they do not wish us to have access. This is a condemnation to die of famine and deprivation. It is a silent war on our people. We are left with no another way out than fighting to have access to the abundant water of Awash River and the grazing lands. In 1992, 1998 and 2002 because of lack of access to water and grazing land our animals were wiped out and our people starved to death. We cannot allow this to happen (Leader-MA, 2009).

In the western theoretical parlance, the Issa focus not on the war violence but on the structural violence imposed by the Afar on their people. The environmental marginalization and the vulnerability of the Issa to famine and drought is a well-established fact. However, all Issa-Afar



wars were not always for resources (AJSAB, 2006). There have been Issa-Afar wars during the period of abundance and shortage that challenges the Issa argument that all wars were resources driven. The second challenges against the purpose and meaning of Issa-Afar violence are the inseparability of resources and the monopoly control over territory.

On the Afar side, they consider the violence not as over resources but for territorial control and annexation. This view is a bold leitmotiv that the new tide of eviction has resulted in extremely paranoid and exaggerated assessment of the purpose of Issa violence, as ‘*extermination*’. This view is held by not only Afar elites but also ordinary folk. The following view from FGD with Afar elderly best represents the communal anxiety.

“The Issa are implementing the strategic project of *Greater Somalia*, though we wonder why successive Ethiopian governments fail to see it; the invasion of the five geostrategic balconies is meant first to cut and choke us by denying outlet to the highland then engulf and exterminate us. Second, as they did now, upon controlling the Addis Ababa-Djibouti highway, their next target is to intercept the Mekelle-Addis Ababa road. This is the exact and effective plan laid by Greater Somali strategists and the agenda which had been propagated by the Somali Democratic Movement for the integration and exclusive control of all territory below Awash River under Somali control. From their current effort to get government blessing of the conquered territories you can see for yourself that in the long run, they will not retire until they realize this objective.” (Elders-FGD, 2016) (emphases mine)

The author has witnessed the same exaggerated assessment promoted among the youth and members of the senior and higher political elite of Afar society. The comprehensiveness of the impact of the eviction described by a cattle trekker is worth quoting at length;

“Our fathers and grandfathers have told us many stories of victory and defeat of the Afar people; they did not forget to add the total humiliation, dispossession and helplessness of being forcefully routed out of the land trodden by our ancestors and their cattle under Issa invasion. Henceforth, the land is gone and so is done the destruction of our livelihood. Since then we have nowhere to trek that put us in the cut-throat struggle among ourselves. They torched and maimed out villages, killed our youth, flogged and raped our women, what do you call such mayhem in your culture? We call it catastrophe! You know (what) Mohammed Iraq told us we are like Palestine; we are like Kurd. Allah forsaken us for our sins and men betrayed us for their selfishness to be humiliated by the Issa. Do you know how it hurts to realize that our girls will no longer sing in the plains or our women do pride in their men nor our elderly take comfort in and get consoled of past grief by their heirs? At all times to kneel in such good time of equality is to be less than the wild prey, the donkey of *Yangudirasa*.” (Loquyta, 2009) (Emphases added)



For the Afar, the new Issa violence is a catastrophe that they compare to the *al-Nakba* of Palestine and the fate of the Kurds. The underlined phrases carry deep-rooted hatred, anguish and victimization narrative inherited by the youth. Their current predicament continued to reactivate old war memories and their losses.

The Issa, on the other hand, complain about the use of the Greater Somali narrative by the Afar to make the Ethiopian state violate the right of the Issa people. They argue that the Afar have become a region with improved living standard and huge government budget earmarked for the development of developing regions besides their natural resource endowment. They compare their predicaments to the life condition of the Afar in the post-1991 era, which they consider is better than theirs. They associate their predicament with the Afar conspiracy, which animated every regime that came to power and marginalized and oppressed the Issa (BDA-Anonymous, 2016). Even for the Issa, as much as for the Afar, the violence is viewed at least at perception level as a matter of existence. There have been continued escalation in the tempo of violence and the birth of new types of violence, which cannot be explained by mere ontological reasoning

It is appropriate to present a minority view that recognizes the intertwined tragic fate of both Afar and Issa people. An interview with an elderly Afar woman named *Genne* (Mother) Maryema offers extraordinary empathy that transfixes one in the unfortunate common destiny of both people and the wish for the bright horizon of the future.

“A day has not passed without killing each other. In my time I have observed things getting worse on both sides though we suffer much. I know not a mother, wife or daughter say it Issa, Afar, Galla or Arab who know not the pain of missing the lost one around. The grief comes as the last thing during the evening and the first thing at dawn. I heard our boys are government and sadly I heard our boys in government are shot killed on sight for the only sin of crossing the land of their ancestors, which was the playground of their children yesterday. We have now a government that dies and for the Issa a government that kills. But tears are shredding the heart and faces on both sides. My first born *Ayidahis* was untimely killed fighting the Issa at *Detbahri* and is valorized for slaying four before his rest; but how would it be for the four widowed or orphaned or left male less or childless as I mourn my own?! My son, please tell our government boys, we need to reconcile with the *Dinn* (Dogma) of Islam, to observe *Hakika* (the truth to the others and duty to us) and listen to the *Hukuma* (wisdom) of both fathers of Afar and Issa. *Allah we'alem* (who knows except Allah, the miracles to come), time may come young and good-spirited boys like you wouldn't wander in search of



[scavenge over] the sad stories but learn *Lale* (Afar traditional dance) and *Kuquso* (Afar soccer).” (Gene-Meryama, 2013)

Sadly, the views of empathy, shared fate and reciprocal recognition of their tragedies are minority voices silenced by the gruesome nature of the violence. Even peace-loving and sympathetic voices like that of Gene Meryama have often found themselves confused under the spell of extreme violence. This must have been one among many reasons for cruelty that does not spare any empathy to reign in the episodes to come. Some of the unusual manifestations of the new Issa-Afar violence are discussed hereinbelow.

The three areas mentioned below, where the violent incidents occurred, have been the centre of Issa-Afar confrontations with massive consequences of frequented reciprocal violence. However, the discussion at hand is not to deal with the statistics of ordinary violent episodes rather than show the sharp twist in the manifestation of Issa-Afar violence and the excruciating saga of the trauma bearers. Even though the events relate to different areas and sequences of occurrence of violence (*During 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2010*), yet, they are thematically framed with the view to set the narration in perspective.

The immensity of trauma caused by the attack on women and children in the preceding narration is to be noted; this time an act of cruelty that undermines the former has been done on women and children in *Gewane in 1996 and 1998*. Let’s give the relatives of the victims a voice.

“The Issa had swarmed *Gewane* in 1996 and done huge causality, maimed everything on their way women and children were among victims. I lost my son in law and my nephew during this war. A total of extended family members killed is fourteen. 1998 was the wrath of Allah, one of them was my daughter. She was 13 betrothed to the hero of our clan and was to be wed the next winter.” (V-5, 2016)

It is too outrageous to discuss the details of the scene with a father and had to let another witness narrate the tragic event:

“It was totally inhuman to see the remains of women and children littering the blood-soaked ground like the playground of a jackal. How could a human being do such an act, still worse cut the body of poor women and children into pieces?! It was too painful for anyone to collect and bury the remains. It is absolute insanity! What word could explain it?! It is just nonsense!” (WV-5, 2016)



In both Issa and Afar worldview as discussed in the preceding sections, attacking women and is tantamount to disruption of the continuity of genealogy and hence a genocide. What is interesting to note here is that in their worldview genocide, unlike the western conception, does not need to be the extermination of a group of people. The disruption of the continuity of heredity of one person is enough to call it genocide. Adding insult to the injury, the acts of abusing and overkill has created an unimaginable sense of enmity with their Issa neighbours. The Issa also have similar stories of attacking women and children:

An innocent Issa woman from Djibouti was travelling in a truck to visit her relatives at Adaytu. When she arrived at Mile Town Afar youth found she was Issa and they flogged her until she lost consciousness. Had it not been for the intervention of the federal police she would have been dead. In *Buremodaytu* and *Mateka* area, three adolescent boys were shot by the Afar on sight just for being Issa (Abdulah, 2017).

From the above narrative, elements of mimetic violence are involved. The mutual incrimination and reciprocity in violence went on to provide justification for acts of violence which were considered taboo among the Afar and Issa societies. Besides, both groups focus on such types of stories with a subtlety of depicting the cruelty of the other and justifying their actions. However, the most disturbing thing is that the trend to take the women body and the life of children as the battlefield of violence observed by anthropologists in extreme case of violence in Somali territories and Rwanda has begun.

The immediate cases of scarcity, access to new resources, control over the three major contraband destination towns and the ambition to create a self-governing local administration by the elite to tap into government finance, infrastructure and political leverage are the boldest substantive causes behind the above acts of atrocities. In terms of the meaning, the violence serves to the ordinary Issa and Afar pastoralist, only the element of resource scarcity is relevant. The other two reasons relate to the work of contrabandists and political elites. Both groups conduct misinformation and provide the instruments of violence against each other with the view to get their interests served. This elite manipulation succeeds to escalate violence because it feeds on the entrenched memory of mutual victimization and hatred, and the current substantive issues of various interests amounting to the security needs of the ordinary pastoralist.

This is captured in Issa's mixed stories of victimization by Afar war violence and extreme exposure to famine and destitution for which they blame the Afar and the Ethiopian government.



During my visit to *Yangudirasa* National park, one of the hot spots of Issa Afar contention currently under Issa control, I witnessed few Issa satellite settlements erected in the extreme heat without water and any access to any basic services. Often Issa boys and girls are seen on the Addis Ababa-Djibouti high way waving at passing trucks begging for water. Within the radius of approximately 10 km, the federal government erected one water tanker supplied from the nearby town of *Adaytu* occupied by the Issa. The supply is too small and not regular to provide for the daily needs of the pastoralists. Their animals must trek long distance towards Awash River running the possibility of an armed encounter with the Afar. The Issa experience of violence is well depicted by the following informant.

As you see it for yourself, we are living in a very precarious situation. The government does not care about us. We always wonder if it considers us its citizens. While the Afar has all resources and budgets, we cannot even get water. They are driving modern cars and living in modern air-conditioned houses. Our boys and women are begging for water from the Afar under the merciless sun. The federal government cares only about the safety of the Afar and the road. It comes to ensure the safety of the transport line and not us. Sadly, we are being blamed for trying to survive against all odds. Here, we are victims of two wars, one is the drought and famine, and the other is the Afar war supported by their police and militia (Anonymous-4, 2017).

Basically, there is a strong grievance against the federal government and relative deprivation contra the Afar, even though the ordinary Afar lives the same life they live. The Issa consider the chronic famine and mass cattle death during 2002 as artificial one, which could have been averted if either federal government had timely intervened to rescue them or they could have trekked to Afar grazing lands. The combination of deprivation of basic needs, historical animosity and intervening economic activities like the contraband trade, national and regional political developments augment the continuity of Issa-Afar violence filled with hatred and anger. The following case depicts the uncommon type of violence which occurred in *Mile* and *Afambo* districts in 2008.

Mile is the last line of defence at the threshold of the seat of the Afar Regional State administration; major battles had occurred in the neighbourhood of Mile and *Aliwuha* in the *Qada'qar* locality since 1992. For fear of imminent Issa takeover, *Aliwuha* in the *Qada'qar* locality was promoted from *Qada'qar* kebele to Wereda in 2008 for defence purpose. The 2008



Issa-Afar war was different in terms of triggering factor, intentions, organization and consequences which makes this particular event worth discussing.

This war was triggered by emergent regional dynamics: the invasion by Eritrean forces in *Ras Dumera*, a strategic territory of Djibouti (Berouk, 15 September 2008; Medhane, October 2008). Weeks before the *Ras Dumera* incident, there was a small-scale Issa-Afar fighting without severe consequences in and around Leedi Kebelle located within Mile wereda. The *Ras Dumera* showdown had caused many casualties of the Djibouti militia, paramilitary and border guards inviting Ethiopian army involvement which helped in deescalating what would have been a major territorial invasion by the Eritrean army. Meanwhile, the influx of Djibouti Afar into the Afar Region for fear of the unknown has made the Afar political elite to speculate that the Issa in *Qundafuqo* and *Adaytu*, as is often the common practice, would be leaving to support their kin in Djibouti. The war in *Ras Dumera* was considered the right time to wage war to restore these territories from the Issa with the erroneous assumption that they would be caught off their guard in the sudden massive invasion. The researcher has been in person at Mile town and observed the episode firsthand. The organization of the war on the Afar side was massive mobilization of folk from many weredas (though they arrived too late to be of use, the famous warring ex-insurgents were beckoned from as far away weredas as Berahile, near Eritrea border-500 km from the the battle field) and regular law enforcement and security personnel joined the battlefield stripping their uniforms. People in the high rank and file of the ruling party and veteran military commanders were involved in providing leadership in the like of regular military formation.

The consequence was a total fiasco for the Afar; the Issa are known for their superior battle maneuvering that they had made invincible defensive preparations anticipating the Afar attack. The tragic carnage of the Afar occurred. Within an hour the Afar retreat began leaving thirty dead and many wounded behind. The euphoria in marching to the battlefield was followed by a return in frenzy and devastation of morals. The major humiliation to Afar collective identity was to come after this yet. The Issa began playing cruel games after the war ended by keeping hostage the remains of the killed left unattended. According to an informant mourning the death of close relative:

“We heard the Issa were mutilating and abusing the remains of our fallen men; many among us in fury rushed to retrieve them only to be killed on sight by the



Issa stationed on strategic positions. When no more easy prey is coming to their killing zone, they continued calling to relatives using the mobile phone of the fallen men. They were insulting, mocking and humiliating the poor relatives saying if at all they had balls to leave their relative to rot in the wilderness. They mimicked at Afar manhood saying let alone men, Issa girls would not run to spare their skin leaving their fallen men. This is the worst damage to our people that has ever happened. We could not even mourn our dead. It hurt our women and children more than anyone. To kill is one thing but to play dirty games on the honour and spirit of the fallen is unheard of barbarity no human species but only the Issa can do.” (Isaytu, 2008)

Even the new mobile phone technology was taped in the service of violence. For the Issa the utility of such an extreme violence was to send a message of “never try it again” but it has created the obsession for righteous vengeance among the Afar. For the Issa, it was a self-defence against the well calculated Afar invasion to decimate their villages and inhabitants. According to an Issa policeman who took part in the war,

The Afar came well prepared and anticipating that our men will be going to Djibouti to support their brothers, and they will find *Adaytu* in the hand of defenceless women and children. Some Afar even came without arms anticipating robbing the contraband goods. If we had not been prepared, they would have overrun and evicted us from *Adaytu* us like they did in 2004 from *Buremodaytu*. We had to defend our family and our property. We prefer to die than to allow the Afar defeat us (Anonymous-p-5, 2009).

However, the situation caused a different reaction among the Afar. The situation sent collective anger not only among the Afar but also among non-Afar ethnic group in the region. The Issa sent the war back home as a constant reminder of Issa invincibility and shame on Afar self-image. The general mood in Afar Region capital *Semera* long after the war was total depression and anger against the federal government and even their own leaders. This resulted in a suicidal reaction among the Afar.

The researcher observed (in the immediate vicinity of the fighting) nihilistic responses among unarmed youth and adults rushing barehanded to the raging fire upon hearing their men are under Issa fire. An Issa informant (in an interview), a policeman at *Adaytu*, who did not care to hide his involvement in the fighting, ridiculed the streaming barehanded Afar to the battlefield as novice rushing not to fight but mobilized to collect war booty (Anonymous-p-5, 2009).

But the truth was, contrary to this. They were animated by the deposit of rage and deep-rooted hatred to the enemy, which they considered a constant source of fear and humiliation. Getting



killed trying to kill was accepted than to witness the carnage alive. The act was no different from active suicide, but they were doing what Raphael Lemkin calls ‘resorting to suicide to escape unbearable trauma.’ They were crying ‘*Rabtiem Tayse!*’ meaning ‘*Better to die!*’ that tells the immensity of not the immediate loss but the deposit of trauma in the communal memory which got its expression in nihilistic self-negation. It was a tragic existential rebellion against their shameful circumstances. The Issa too, as depicted in the above quote, were ready to die than accept defeat, choosing suicide to escape the trauma of past violence and current humiliation.

The tragic story of a woman from *Dubti* wereda is representative of the Afar saga. This researcher saw the woman during the fighting encouraging men and women to join the battle; she was armed with Kalashnikov and rounds of ammunition said to belong to her brother killed by the Issa in a battle five years ago. She was not allowed to get to the line of fire, but she was threatening to kill those retreating. During the whole time of the fighting, angry, revenge-obsessed and shouting in rage, she was insulting the men to pee seated like women. Upon seeing the total demise rage got good of her, engulfed in agony, she collapsed puffing hysterical foam. She was taken back home unconscious and had to languish physical and emotional breakdown for three months before appearing at the office where she worked as janitor only to apply for elongated sick leave permit. The researcher has not seen her after the traumatic incident that devastated her to be bedridden.

Similar psychological and physical trauma has been experienced by Issa women during the aftermath of the *Buremodaytu* war. *Buremodaytu* is one of the Afar districts which was taken by the Issa invasion in 1992 which made it the fourth contraband centre on the main tarmac highway to Djibouti. Issa occupation of *Buremodaytu* was viewed intolerable by the Afar regional government. They tried to take back the district to no avail. So, they resorted to secretly brought the battle-hardened legendary Afar insurgents known as *Ouggugumo* (In afar language means rebel or rise up). The latter trained the locals and participated in the war which evicted the Issa from *Buremodaytu*. This caused heavy causality among the Issa. The women of Issa remember this war with a heavy heart for the loss of many of their heroes and they, to date, lament on that (Meyru, 2009). Besides the trauma of women, among the Issa men, the involvement of the *Ouggugumo* insurgents added the sense of victimization and legitimized the use of their police and militia against the Afar then after.



Another point in Afar memory of Issa violence most frequently appearing in stories of traumatic experiences is *Jalla* killing, the prototype of the *death of innocent*. *Jalla* is an *Oromiffa* term representing the neutral person to conflicts involving his own clan. *Jalla* is taken as friend-relative and is often treated as potential and reserve capability for peace and is immune from any kind of reprisal killing. As is the custom among the Afar, Issa and Oromo, the *Jalla* helps to clear miscommunication, build trust and may act as a middleman for the commencement of negotiated settlement of conflicts. Yet, in the Afar view, the Issa is conceived as too cruel even to spare the *Jalla* from targeting. The following story that happened in 2009 in *Afambo* neighbourhood is provided to elucidate this point. The story has it that,

“Below the *Afambo* area, there is Issa settlement with which we had had better relations as compared with the rest of the Issa community. The Issa used to have the Afar *Jalla* men in peace and conflict to get commodities from Afar market. The recently killed man was *Jalla* who have served them for years. The slain was sent by the Issa to fetch them consumables from *Aysa’eta* market, upon his return and after years of serving them with honesty, they slaughtered him. If not sheer cruelty what else can explain such barbarity. This is proof of the Issa incurable obsession to destroy the Afar irrespective of good deeds.” (Qalo-Ahmed, 2009)

The Issa also claim that their man who lived among the Afar were killed in Gelelo district for mere suspicion of informing the Issa about Afar movements (Abdulah, 2017). This act of killing the innocent and potential channel of communication opens the opportunity for dialogue and negotiation is an extreme sign of escalation and transformation of the nature of Issa-Afar violence. The deep-rooted hatred is further exacerbated by incidents that target the highly valued assets of Issa-Afar society—live cattle.

The multi-dimensional utility and paramount value live cattle constitute in Issa-Afar society are provided in the introductory section. Cattle raiding, and rustling has been within Issa-Afar custom that contributed to violent conflict dynamics. Slaughtering cattle was not also uncommon. However, violence against live cattle without any imaginable utility is unknown to both societies. The violent attack against live cattle by the Issa that began since 2000 is viewed among the Afar as proof of the evil desire to destroy the Afar livelihood. According to an eyewitness of the butchering of Afar live cattle in *Gewane*,

“I went out along with my village men in search of lost cattle; we thought the Issa had trekked them. What we found out from children from far away village is shocking to believe until we saw for ourselves. They took us to the site to find



four cattle quadrupled and two calves disembowelled. We could not believe our eyes; they did not take the meat but wished to see us losing. They wished to see our children and women starved that is why they merciless quadrupled our providers. What is their guilt except that they belong to the Afar? This has established beyond any doubt that the Issa has incessant obsession for the destruction of anything belonging to Afar. Why federal government fails to see this evil malice has always puzzled the Afar.” (Yakud, 2010)

In a peacebuilding workshop organized by the researcher in 2010 at Gewane, the Afar clan leaders and elders expressed their confusion that they could not make any tangible meaning and purpose to the changing face of violence, which manifests where there is a tangible benefit or not (AJSAB, 2010). The changing faces of violent practices that defy instrumental utility and rationality observed above are indicative of the strong impact of the cognitive and symbolic utility violence is utilized for. Important at this stage is a growing hatred, obsession for revenge and inextricable trauma in the communal memory the power of animating people to commit seemingly senseless violence.

Besides the symbolic value of territorial, contraband and economic purposes Issa-Afar violence is used, among the political elite, it is used as a tool of legitimation of political power. Both Afar and Somali regions are known for rampant corruption, lack of accountability and responsiveness to the needs of the people (OCHA, 2012; UNDP, 2014; USAID, 2009). The reason for being the least achieving regions in all human development index and the worst affected by vulnerability to famine and disease is partly the problem of leadership to deliver services to their people. The political leadership suffers from illegitimacy. This is where the Afar-Issa violence fits in. Leaders in both regions use the blatant propagation and supporting of the wars as the means of getting political legitimacy. The most popular politicians in both regions are those who have radical positions on Issa-Afar issue and who arm and support their people to war. Pre-election periods are often characterized by escalating violent episodes because of the involvement of the political elite to get the favour of the electorate. The federal government has repeatedly sacked such popular leaders like Ousman Anisa, the vice president of Afar region, and other Shinile Zone officials of the Issa because of their radical stances and involvement in the Issa-Afar wars (anonymous-2, 2017).

#### **5.4 The Dynamics of Issa-Afar Violence**



This section delves into the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence because of the transformations in the nature, organization and purpose of Issa-Afar violence and overlapping contexts of violence in post-1991 Ethiopia.

#### **5.4.1 Issa-Afar War Violence**

According to informants who had participated in the war, the communal violence was transformed into a war of armies by the involvement of battle-hardened ex-Derg army members and insurgents. This was further escalated because of the involvement of regional factors. The former armies of Siad Barre and the clan armies from Somalia flocked into the Ethiopia Somali region and Djibouti. Also, the Afar insurgents that were with EPLF and the Issa Somali from Djibouti contributed to the escalation of the war violence ignited in Ethiopia. This was even taken further by the eruption of civil war in Djibouti in 1992 which galvanized an all Afar and all Issa mobilization (Ibrahim, 2016; Fure, 2016). This showed a dangerous interface among regional, national and local violent conflicts that kept the cycle of violence through the period of the transitional government led by EPRDF up to the rise of EEBW.

According to Habib Mohammed Yayo, a powerful politician and customary leader in the Afar society, Issa-Afar violence during this period became very frequent and was situated in a triangular struggle. First, the struggle between the Afar and Somali Nationalists controlling Afar and Somali Regional states with the Federal government for greater autonomy. Second, conflicts involving regional state governments, a war between groups controlling regional state apparatus was created. Third, the involvement of state and non-state actors from Somalia, Djibouti, Somaliland and Eritrea gave Issa-Afar violence regional dynamics. Therefore, the Issa and the Afar found themselves being animated into violence by new factors not within their own control (Habib, 2015; Awol, 2012). Archival sources of Issa-Afar violence incident reports showed the occurrence of on average three major incidents every year since 1991-1999 claiming the lives of hundreds of people every year and the destruction of pastoralist assets. More than the frequency and intensity, what is so important to notice is that the continuity of the violence is rendered possible by what should have been a capacity for the peace-the establishment of self-governing ethnic regions. While one of the historical questions and structural challenge of the Afar and Somali people as any other ethnic groups in Ethiopia has been the denial of self-government, the



realization of this aspiration was not used for self-improvement rather than for settling old scores. Because of the new federal state arrangement, the Afar and Somali regions took it unto themselves to decide the state of war and peace which often does not favour the latter (MoFedA, Issa-Afar Violence Incident Reports: 1991-1999, 1991-1999).

In effect, the involvement of federal government in regional states became bold and contributed in the escalation of the tempo of violence. Unable to control or contain the violence by getting regional governments accountable to the laws, the federal government staged a political manoeuvring by changing ruling parties in both regions. This, in turn, gave legitimacy to those politicians in both regions who wished to rule in the name of their people while igniting the Issa-Afar violence, destroying the lives of the people of Afar and Issa. This, in turn, intensified ethnicity as a tool for the mobilization of people into violence (Muauz, 2010). However, during the EEBW period, the tempo of violence de-escalated, and war violence stopped, and positive reciprocal gestures were seen. This was partly because of the sense of national solidarity created by the war against Eritrea and. The main explanation is that the federal government embarked a series of peace-making efforts considered authentic in the eye of the conflicting parties. Peace-making efforts brought encouraging hope of enduring peace (AJSAB, 1999-2001).

To the dismay of the Afar and the Issa, the violence reemerged with intensity after the end of EEBW. According to some observers, the relative peace of this period was not at all real peace. They argue that both groups fought side by side in trenches against a common enemy, thus displacing their historically accumulated anger on a third party. That means, they were scapegoating the Eritrean aggressor force to vent their accumulated urge for violent reprisal. They consider the relapse into violence with the end of the EEBW to be related to this very reason (Mesfin, 2011). However, this fails to explain the mimetic peace ordinary pastoralists away from the trenches were showing. Instead, the explanation could be searched in the changes which occurred at the various level of government accompanying the end of the war.

With the end of EEBW, two separate dynamics has occurred at the same time: the political dynamics affecting the federal government and the escalation of Issa-Afar violence. A post-war party crisis relating to the way the war was carried out hit hard the ruling party EPRDF's leading member party TPLF. This interrupted the Issa-Afar peace effort and war violence began



escalating once again. The change in the military and security leadership of the federal government also brought shockwaves affecting the incumbents in the regions. Consequently, the recurrence of Issa-Afar violence was left to keep on escalating. Since then up until the last peace agreement in 2015 which resulted in very slow de-escalation, Issa-Afar direct violence continued unabatedly. Consequently, the historical evolution of the direct violence has passed from the armed pastoral clashed to the war of pastoralists, and then to the war of insurgents and at last the ethnonational war of Afar and Issa supported by their respective regional governments.

The federal system, which kept the Issa-Afar issue in limbo for long, gave a context of escalation of violence because by claiming for their right to maintain their security and territorial rights in the name of self-determination and self-rule each groups pursued the violent means. While the continuity and frequency of the violence have created a mindset up that peace is not possible and group safety can only be secured by war violence, however, the prevalence of unaddressed and hidden elements of structural and cultural violence discussed in the subsequent sections was also instrumental in the perpetuation of the cycle of violence.

#### **5.4.2 Issa-Afar Structural Violence: Precarious Pastoralist Existence**

The recurrence of Issa-Afar violence has been assured by the presence of structural factors of violence in every historical period. This section presents the various aspects of structural violence that set the context of the rise and continuity of direct war violence and defined the perpetuation of structural violence as well.

The major factor for the misfortune of all Afar and Somali people is their segmentation into separate political constellations by the creation of the colonial state boundaries in the Horn of Africa. The Issa Somali are divided into Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somali land. While the Afar are separated into Ethiopia, Djibouti and the last is Eritrea. The Afar and Somali aspiration of a united Afar have been considered a continuous nuance to the unity of the Afar-Horn states (Ethiopia, Djibouti and Eritrea). Despite their political differences, the Afar-Horn states follow similar policies of keeping the Afar people divided to keep the status quo political boundaries. Like the unique geological feature of Afar Triangle characterized by the Afar triple junction where the three tectonic plates (the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and East Africa Rift) meet in Afar



Triangle, so does the United Afar aspiration known in Afar language as the *Ciddahammo* or the Afar Triangle as one homeland.

As the Afar triangle is the only Ridge-Ridge-Ridge (RRR) triple junction above sea level (McKenzie and Morgan, 1969), so does the aspiration of the Eritrean, Ethiopian and Djiboutian Afar people, which form a triple rebellion in the three states in the form of Afar insurgency, different strategies and origins they do have though. The aspiration of a united Afar triangle, like the tectonic plates, laying hidden beneath Afar insurgency maintains the continuity of the violence in two ways. One, the separation of Afar homeland among different states created Afar vulnerability. The fact that dividing what should not be divided is also a form of structural violence. Second, the triple Afar rebellion to end this domination and separation, in turn, created continuous war violence. The violence for the realization of this dream of all Afar has been taking place in violence against the Afar-Horn states and the Issa who are ruling in Djibouti and hampering their security in Ethiopia (Mohamed T. , 2010). This had been going on since the Italian occupation through the era of the monarchy manifesting itself as rebellion and resistance to pay tax to the central government. During the Derg and the current regime, it has been manifesting in the armed insurgency and war violence with the Issa.

On the Issa side likewise, the Issa question has been part of the Greater Somali project-the unification of all Somali speaking horn in one and unified Somali state. The Issa cooperation with any foreign invading force (except the recent Eritrean army) against the Ethiopian state and the Afar have been the manifestation of their thwarted aspiration of greater Somalia. Besides, Issa violence against the Afar has been supported by the governments of Djibouti and Somali, since recently by Somaliland (Muauz, 2015).

The historical resistance to the nature of the state in the Afar-Horn as exhibited in Issa and Afar struggle was used as justification of the historical marginalization of pastoralists in general, and specifically Afar and Somali pastoralists. In all governments since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to date, they were either totally excluded from basic decisions affecting their lives and the fate of the country or they were considered second-class citizens. In politics, economy, cultural and infrastructural issues, the Afar and the Issa continued to live in a rudimentary state of existence. Their land and resources were taken away from them for commercial agriculture from which



they do not benefit much (Getachew, 2001). This has been compromising their basic human needs and the safety of their animals.

The historical marginalization of the Afar and the Issa has been double fold. One because of their Islamic identity and their historical antipathy with the highlander Christian state of Ethiopia. Second, because of their pastoralist economic and social mode of production and reproduction. Pastoralism is considered unproductive, uncivilized, and inferior and resources wasting rudimentary way of life which should be transformed into settled agriculture. The double bias and marginalization have been causing vulnerability on top of the cycle of drought, famine and massive human and cattle death. Their eviction from their fundamental survival and coping mechanisms to open space of settled agriculture set their livelihood in a downward spiral of livelihood deterioration (Muauz, 2015).

In turn, their livelihood deterioration is used for the repudiation of the pastoral way of life as a viable way of life. This is the classic case of blaming the victims for their victimization. This is further exacerbated by their climatic vulnerability and environmental marginalization year in year out. According to OCHA and FEW data, the Afar and the Issa stand crimson red in the level of famine vulnerability and critical food shortage in the region (UN-OCHA, March 2007; USAID, 2009). Beginning from the post-WWII era to early 21 century, on average every year there has been at least one major drought causing major famine in the Afar and Issa homeland. The last two decades the trend has continued claiming thousands of human lives and hundred thousand cattle (Ibid).

The only change came in the post-1991 transition to democratic rule and federal state system when after the Issa and the Afar began to play their own role in administration, politics and economic affairs. But this failed to end the marginalization of pastoralists because the implementation of policies and basic issues affecting their lives remained low. The old trend of eviction and displacement is continued in a soft euphemism of development-induced displacement that took away vital pastoralist resources (Yayo M. , 2017). Consequently, the lack of resources contributed to the violent conflict over access to and control over scarce pastoralist resources.



The human development index of the two peoples is one of the lowest in all parameters. Service delivery and basic amenities are non-existent. Even the recent human development reports do confirm the continuity of being vulnerable to curable diseases, malnutrition, the lowest rate educational achievement, infrastructural development, good governance and security (UNDP, 2014). According to government officials view, this is so because of lack of peace and security in the region that government cannot facilitate development endeavours to benefit the poor pastoralists (Tesfasilassie, 2016). Moreover, Federal authorities characterize the marginalization of the two people because of rampant corruption which the two regions are at a national level known for (Sisay, 2016).

Corruption is another element of structural violence which dominated the Issa-Afar socio-economic landscape. Corruption is associated with the prevalence of contraband trade including arms trafficking and illegal migration networks. These ills are in mutual interface with corruption and the wastage of public resources for personal and clan benefits only. The author as an insider to the system of government in the Afar and well informed about the Issa administration confirmed this connection to have a devastating effect on the safety and security of the peoples. What is so disturbing is that the political elites and clan leaders use ethnic nationalism and instigating Issa-Afar to buy popular support and be immune to accountability. According to Issa and Afar officials, the federal government allegation is just another pretext for intervention and an instrument to get them into submission of whatever the federal government wants them to do than a genuine concern for their people. They argue that the federal government could have expanded basic infrastructure and industry if it was a genuine concern (Hussien, 2012; Abduljibriel, 2015). Although the federal government has not done enough to end the historical marginalization and exploitation of the two peoples, however, the robbery and abuse by the regional authorities, their hidden strategy of arming and later on request disarming insurgent groups, instigating Issa-Afar violence to appear important in the face of the federal government are additional aspects of structural violence which continue to be insulting to the basic human needs of the people of Afar and Issa.

The tragic consequence of the above scenario is that it invited the legitimacy of another form of structural violence, namely the intervention and control of local affairs and institutions of self-rule and conflict resolution. Under the post-1991 democratic system, the two regions were



indirectly controlled by people assigned by the federal government on the pretext of providing special capacity building and support for the regions. This is a continuation of the practice of preceding regimes but with a less degree of force and coercion. The Derg military regime had weakened the customary peace-making systems by using punitive measures and discouraging them not to use their customary institutions. The post-1991 regime has legally recognized their right and policy-wise encouraged them to flourish. However, because of the rampant corruption and the use of these institutions for political ends as well as the commercialization of peacemaking their essence was destroyed. In the Afar and Somali custom elders as peace-makers are not paid for their roles. In the post-1991 period, elders are paid well for their peace-making roles that their customary role has become a commercial enterprise open to abuse (Awol, 2012). This constitutes an aspect of violence against well-established customary conflict transformation institutions. In effect, it weakened the power of peacemaking local institutions, which have a direct bearing on the containment of violence and maintenance of peace, a very scarce asset in the region. Likewise mentioned above, the absence of peace, development and good governance are used to justify intervention and control over the internal affairs of the two people, which in turn exacerbate the need for expressing resistance in violence. Thus, it instead of deterring violence perpetuated it.

The major types of structural violence involved in the Issa-Afar violence are dominant parts of Afar and Issa daily existence, which also breeds further structural violence, and on the other hand cause and perpetuate direct violence. As discussed above, both war violence and structural violence play out in tandem with the sustenance of mimetic violence in the Issa-Afar world. However, this could not have been sustained long enough had it not been for the values, norms and ideas justifying the continuity of violence. Therefore, the next section examines the type of cultural violence created by the continued experience of direct and structural violence, and which in turn legitimize their continuity.

### **5.4.3 Issa-Afar Cultural Violence**

Cultural violence involves “changing the moral colour” of direct and structural violence as acceptable and at least not abominable acts. This includes value systems of scapegoating, stereotyping and prejudice dehumanising the other as a non-moral and non-human entity. This,



in inter-group conflicts involving race, ethnicity and religion, in turn, gives way to massacres, as morally commendable acts or at least as admissible acts without any moral consequence. The second is making reality oblique and obscure by rendering the consciousness to identify and resist oppression impossible. Creating false consciousness that makes people accept structural and direct violence as facts of life. In short, it makes attacks on survival needs (negation: death and mortality), wellbeing needs (negation: misery and morbidity), identity and meaning needs (negation: alienation and estrangement) and freedom needs (negation: repression) acceptable (Galtung,1990:292). Therefore, the use of cultural violence here addresses both the kind of cultural violence state actors use against both the Issa and the Afar people and the kind of justifications each group use for the use of war violence and structural violence against each other.

Inherited trauma and victimization are a common aspect of cultural violence shared by the Ethiopian state, the Issa and the Afar people. The Ethiopian state has always been sceptical of the intention of the Afar and Somali people. This owes an explanation to the inherited trauma of destruction of the Highlander Christian state by the Gragn invasions during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Gragn syndrome is an inherited trauma of the state that obscures the imposition of repression, marginalization and exploitation of the Issa and the Afar (Muauz, 2015). In return, the Issa and Afar have developed a stereotype and scepticism towards the Ethiopian state. The only improvement in the quality of relationship with the state has begun in the post-1991 era because of the paradigm shift the new state system declared it was perusing; that unequal historical relations and oppression would be rectified. However, the lack of praxes between the avowal and the practice has denuded the trust of the two groups towards the federal government.

Furthermore, the continued blood shade, eviction, raid and counter-raids have internalized enemy imagery that even memories of medieval violence are inherited in the mindset of current and future generations to come. Among both groups, mutual-demonization is deep rooted that the other is viewed as a natural enemy bent on destroying the survival of the other group. This justifies the use of whatsoever type of violence against the other. Even Afar and Issa children are being told during their evening stories about the evil act of the Issa against the Afar and the selfish motive of the Afar. The enemy imagery formation, demonization, scapegoating and stereotype is so immense that one cannot think of explaining anything undesirable happening



among the Afar without a repeated reference to the Issa. Say it from political crisis, environmental calamity or lack of voice at national political plate forms the Issa is allegedly associated with (Qalo A. , 2012).

On the other hand, the Issa constantly accuse the Afar of being instrumental in the many military expeditions and punitive measures in the hand of past regimes and their massive death in time of great famine and drought. In short, both groups share the imagery of eternal enemy, which naturalizes the use of violence as inevitable. Still, an addition is that Issa-Afar war is perceived as the battle for the survival of one's groups and the extinction of the other. Consequently, this way of framing the nature of violence justifies any kind of action as acceptable and deserved. This applies to denying access to basic resources like grazing land and water points during extreme drought and famine or undertaking coordinated attacks, poisoning water points and wells, as well as the use of insurgent and state actors to destroy the other has become acceptable in both groups (Awol, 2012).

Another dimension of cultural violence is the sacralization of death, killing and martyrdom for the homeland in the Afar society and expanding the limits of Issa boundary among the Issa groups. As indicated in the preceding sections instruments of violence like firearm and sword, warrior ethos and practice are highly regarded in the Afar and the Issa societies. Revenge killing is also a major duty of a clan man to his clan and society at large. The highest honour among the two groups, however, is to die or kill in fighting for the sake of protecting once homeland, family and clan. Because death, killing and martyrdom are rendered a sacred duty (Habib, 2015).

The Ethiopian state has embarked on a campaign of realizing sustainable development to end all types of violence, which it believed are rooted in poverty and backwardness. Development is the holy grail of EPRDF's political philosophy and nation-building project. Development is articulated as a matter of the survival of the Ethiopian state and society to which there is nothing too holy to sacrifice. One area of focus to realize sustainable development is the introduction of massive mechanized agriculture and commercialization of pastoralist land. This imperative required the transformation of pastoralist commons into a settled agrarian livelihood (FDRE-ADLI, 2001). The developmental values, which change the moral color of eviction and displacement of pastoralist from red to green, constitute a form of cultural violence.



Consequently, it gravely threatens the livelihood wellbeing, security and safety of both groups that it set the ground for the escalation of direct war violence between Issa and Afar to vent their grievances.

The above cases are few among major manifestations of cultural violence, which are subtle but play a fundamental role at the individual and societal levels for the eruption and escalation of violence in the Issa and the Afar world. In line with Galtung (1990: 294), the above construction does constitute an invisible form of violence animating the unleashing of direct violence and operation of structural violence and is the subterranean nutrient for both. Therefore, the self-perpetuating nature of Issa-Afar violence is rendered possible owing to the dialectical interplay of the three types of violence discussed in the coming section.

#### **5.4.4 The Cross-Fertilization of the three forms of Issa-Afar Violence**

This section analyzes the different types of interplays of the three types of violence in shaping the self-perpetuating nature of Issa-Afar violence. It attempts to show the process of cross-fertilization of direct and structural violence against the dormant background of cultural violence discussed above.

Theoretically speaking, the prevalence of structural violence augments direct violence as we see in the prevalence of resistance against the top dog, the Afar Horn states. It caused the escalation of horizontal direct war violence among the historically oppressed and marginalized, the case in point here is the Afar and the Issa. The two groups under the powerful spell of the multidimensional structural violence, they engaged in a cycle of mimetic violence.

In the historical period considered above, Issa-Afar war violence has been foundational in the sense that it erases down old relationships in history by opening a new chapter in the history of the two peoples. In this, the Issa is always on the victorious side. It was expressed in continuous territorial eviction and securitization of the region that not only breed the continuity of the obsession for revenge and decimation but also gave justification of state coercion, repression, marginalization and alienation of the Afar and the Issa. The Issa have certain memories of foundational violence associated with the Afar collaboration with the monarchy and the Derg in destroying Issa settlements. Most important with the foundational nature of Issa-Afar violence is



that it is considered and remembered as a catastrophe, a turning point in the fate of the people of Afar and survival of the Issa. This perception adds to the deep-rooted hatred and enemy imagery both groups have for each other, which clouds reasonable thinking and conscious understanding of the causes, consequences and way out of the cycle of violence. Hence, it contributes to the cycle of violence by providing justification to continue war violence to restore lost honour, territory and avenging the dead. This has made the past violence to be inherited by the post-1991 period, which made the violence hard to reduce and control. Another important feature of Issa-Afar war violence relating to the other forms of violence is its repetition. The presence of famine, resource scarcity, and marginalization has contributed to the continuity of direct war violence, and the vice versa. Galtung (1969) asserted that direct violence is often frequented in dynamics society than in static one, while the inverse applies to the prevalence of structural violence. The Afar and the Issa societies are highly static societies in the sense that the society continued lives nearly the same way of life their ancestors lived hundreds of years ago. However, unlike the Galtungian assertion, both direct and structural violence are prevalent, making Isa-Afar violence unique. The repetition of direct violence, against Winter Yvest's assumption that it creates normalcy, created constancy that peace cannot be attained and group security should be maintained through violence only. However, Winter's explanation that direct violence lends itself to cross-generational continuity is true even though it is not so by rendering structural violence invisible. Because unlike the dominant assumption of the invisibility of structural violence because of lack of obvious agent and action like direct war violence, in the Afar and Issa world structural violence dominates the landscape and is too much visible in the form discussed above.

In everyday life, the mark of structural violence is vividly visible in the life of Afar and Issa society. The precarious existence of their pastoral way of life always vulnerable to drought, famine and epidemic disease, chronic food shortage and dependence on relief aid are the dominant features of structural violence the Afar and the Issa are vulnerable to. In turn, their experience of structural violence triggers a tsunami of direct violence as a reaction to the unacceptable condition the people live in. However, the direct war violence is often directed between the Afar and the Issa than against the state, the agent of the main source of structural violence.



However, unlike Galtungian conception, the structural violence is not as such invisible in the case of the Afar. Instead, it is very visible and boldly manifesting itself in continued resistance against the state and horizontal war violence between the Issa and the Afar for the last century. Therefore, the continuity of Issa-Afar structural violence can be said to have perpetuated partly because of its deep-rooted nature, and partly because of the visible prevalence of manifestations of structural violence in the Afar-Issa socio-economic and political landscape than its hidden nature. In short, it is not its invisibility rather than its domineering visibility to the perception and day to day engagement of the two people which makes it self-perpetuating.

On the other hand, the continuity of direct Issa-Afar war violence is used as justification for the imposition of structural violence by the state. This is in addition to what Winter (2012) said about the state of normalcy of violence, a mindset of taking violence as ordinary part of real life because of its repetition. That the repetition of Issa-Afar violence indeed has created the erroneous perception that it is the usual Issa-Afar thing, a normalcy of the Issa-Afar world in the mind of policy makers, which is wrong, but not in the mind of the people. This perception naturalizes violence to the Issa-Afar world by intellectuals and government organs. So, it keeps direct violence self-perpetuating because of the use of direct violence to decimate it or by the omission of taking proper action.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The discussion in this chapter underscored the importance of understanding Issa-Afar violence beyond the visible war violence in a capacious framework inclusive of the invisible forms of the violence. Accordingly, the nature, organization and utility of Issa-Afar direct violence is complimented and supplemented with the presence of structural and cultural violence. So, the inner working of the visible direct war violence and the invisible (structural and cultural) forms of violence in the lived experience of Issa-Afar violence is that they work in tandem in sustaining its continuity. Moreover, the nature and level of visibility and invisibility, normalcy and abnormality of perpetual violence varies from those directly affected by the violence and the third party, in this case, the Afar and the Issa on the one hand and the state which is the agent of structural violence. However, this does not fully explain why Issa Afar violence has become intractable to the various peacemaking efforts, until examining the nature of peacemaking



processes and the reasons for the continued failure to abate the continuity of violence. Therefore, the next chapter is devoted to addressing the peacemaking processes to develop the explanation for the recurrent and self-perpetuating nature of Issa-Afar violence.



## Chapter Six

### Issa-Afar Peace-Making and the Recurrence of Violence

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#### 6.1 Introduction

In chapter five, the nature, purpose and organization of Issa-Afar violence are examined as an explanatory factor for its unabated continuity. To put it in the analogy of medical science the case of an incurable disease can be understood in terms of its unique characteristic features and pathogens. Similarly, considering violence as social illness violence can be understood from its phenomenal manifestations and unique features. However, the analysis of the nature of violence is not enough to understand why certain violence is recurrent. As the chronic or incurable nature of disease cannot be understood without understanding the nature of the treatment, so it is with the nature of violence without understanding the nature of peace-making interventions. Therefore, the main purpose of this chapter is to examine the nature of Issa-Afar peace-making to understand the recurrence of violence when explained by the failure of peace-making efforts. In other words, it provides explanations for the recurrence, which cannot be grasped by the discussions made on the inherited violence in chapter three, the changed context of violence in chapter four and the transformation of the nature of violence during post-1991 in chapter five.

Following the disease vis-a-vis treatment analogy, the relationship between Issa-Afar violence and Issa-Afar peace-making is analyzed to show how the nature, purpose, organization and outcome of the peace-making process affected the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence. This is done by a critical appraisal of the peacemaking process on the basis of brief description of the customary conflict resolution and peace-making systems of the Afar and the Issa to highlight the divergence and convergence of the state-led peacemaking process with the customary system. This is important to show the degree of authenticity and legitimacy of the process in the eye of the people. This is followed by an examination of the nature, organization and process of the peace-making to appraise the correctness of the means of peace-making. Third, an appraisal of the outcomes of the peace processes is addressed and the reasons for the continued failure except for the brief period during EEBW are examined. Fourth, the exceptional improvement of relations as the result of the peace-making during EEBW is examined in a separate section to



elucidate what can be learned from that period for the designing of a successful peace-making. Fifth, attempt is made to develop logical connection and explanation between the peacemaking efforts and the dynamics of violence. The central argument of this chapter, therefore, is that the ill-designed peace-making attempts and their continued failure have contributed to the perpetuation of the cycle of violence and the creation of new forms of violence.

## 6.2 Issa-Afar Customary Peace-making

The Afar and the Issa have similar types of customary conflict resolution systems known as the *Madaqa* and the *Hera* respectively. The *Madaqa* is a collection of unwritten codes developed at various times by various clans. There are five types of *Madaqa* sharing similar basic principles of punishment and compensation, the mechanism of resolving conflicts. Since 2005 the effort to consolidate the *Madaqa* in a written code is underway. The *Hera* (*heer*, *Xeer Cisse* in Somali) is a customary law of 362 unwritten codes developed to end inter-clan wars which have caused chaos among various Somali clans, of which the Issa is one. These are mainly intra-ethnic constellations the effectiveness of which is immense for intra-ethnic cases involving their own members. They have also inter-ethnic systems of the Afar known as *Xinto* and the Issa known as *Edibile*. They share similar guiding principles with slight variation (Muauz , The *Madaqa* and the *Mablo*: Customary Systems of Conflict Transformation among the Afar , 2013; Yasin M. Y., 2010). This section is not meant to delve into the examination of the entire conflict resolution and transformation systems rather to show the common features of the two systems for the purpose of analysis of the Issa-Afar violence. Both the *Madaqa* and the *Hera* are based on customarily established norms defining the rules of engagement and the mechanisms of adjudication of disputes, resolution and transformation of conflicts. The governing values of justice, reciprocity and fairness as well as the process of implementation are obeyed by every member of society. The mechanisms of reconciliation and transformation are governed by the respect for the decision of elders and based on consensus on the measures to be taken. The legitimacy of the systems is based on the nature of mutual trust, mutual interest, authenticity and reliability of the systems. Elders presiding on cases of arbitration, mediation, resolution and reconciliation have time-tested wisdom of ensuring the resolution of conflicts not only without severing the social fabrics of society but also by strengthening and transforming the quality of relations to a higher level than it was before (Aden A. M., 2011; Muauz , The *Madaqa* and the



Mablo: Customary Systems of Conflict Transformation among the Afar , 2013; Hagmann T. , 2007).

One fundamental feature of the customary systems is that they function and enforce their rules without apprehending or incarcerating the perpetrator of violence. The social and psychological control mechanism are respected well because of the degree of stability and security they offer to the society. Important in this is that the systems function by way of providing restorative justice through compensation, giving a lasting solution to the issue of conflict and transforming the nature of relation into a more cooperative and symbiotic one. Both systems are believed to be inherently fair and are led by the most trustworthy elders that they are embraced by every member of society (Muauz, 2013). The proximity and accessibility of the whole process to the knowledge of members of society and that this is done in the space of the community and not handed over to the state, which they consider alien is another addition to its legitimacy in the eye of the people. Furthermore, the elders and clan leaders leading these institutions provide free services to society other than ceremonial festivities and gifts as a token of their irreplaceable role and functions. The function of the systems is built on a series of roles of arbitration of issues, handling mediation processes for a cooperative resolution, healing and transformation of relations to the best. The enforceability of the decisions made by these systems is made effective by the above factors and, unlike the individual-centric state system of dealing with problems, the community-centric nature of the customary systems and the shared nature of responsibility ensures its enforceability. While western academics criticize the system of group accountability for crimes committed by an individual clan member as contrary to modern of thinking that individuals are accountable for their actions; but communal responsibility sets the context of enforceability of peace-making and reconciliation decisions (Ibid).

The high level of legitimacy of the customary system is reflected in the degree of prominence they have in Afar and Somali societies. For instance, in a survey of issues of conflict involving the Afar showed that 96% of them are resolved by the *Madaqa* and the *Mablo* than the courts. State courts and institutions have very little legitimacy in resolving conflicts in the Afar and Issa community (Muauz , The *Madaqa* and the *Mablo*: Customary Systems of Conflict Transformation among the Afar , 2013). In Somali society, taking matters to court is almost a taboo and



betrayal of one's clan man to an alien system. Overall, state institutions of conflict resolution and law enforcement have little legitimacy or none in the eye of the local people (Hagmann T. , 2007).

The importance of customary institution in keeping peace and security is further demonstrated in the bold and pioneering move of the regional governments of Afar and Somali regions in instituting a parallel structure of representation of clan leaders and elders as counterparts of the district and regional authorities. The council of elders and clan leaders are salaried to advise the local government structures in matters of peace and security. They are also entrusted with the task of leading the resolution of violent conflicts. Considering the degree of empowerment of elders, the federal system in Ethiopia has brought, the role the council of elders and clan leaders render in cases of inter-ethnic conflicts is not satisfactory, however. According to local sources, the lack of effectiveness is partly due to the involvement of money which commercialized peace-making and the sacred duty of elders and clan leaders. Partly, the deep-rooted memory of Issa-Afar violence and the growing radicalization of ethnic boundaries of has weakened the symbiotic functions of the *Xinto* and *Endile* in handling inter-ethnic violent conflicts (Hagmann T. , 2007; Muauz , The Madaqa and the Mablo: Customary Systems of Conflict Transformation among the Afar , 2013). Therefore, while the intra-ethnic Issa-Afar customary system of conflict transformation and peacemaking enjoys prominent legitimacy and vitality the intra-ethnic peacemaking suffers great burns of failure to control violence let alone to transform relations. In effect, as the spiral of Issa-Afar violence became a treat to the security of state and society, it beckoned the involvement of state-led Issa-Afar peacemaking discussed in the next section.

### **6.3 Nature, Organization and Process of Issa-Afar Peace-making during EEBW**

Issa-Afar peacemaking has been taking place in various forms and stages at various levels. Behind those efforts were issues of boundary demarcation between the Afar and Somali regions, the reciprocal exchange of looted assets, the payment of blood money and compensation for physical damages. The federal government has not set a clear demarcation between the two regions because this is to be settled by negotiation between the two regions. However, this has



not come as anticipated. Instead, various forms of violence, including territorial expansion, cattle raiding, road robbery and homicide have continued for years.

Cattle raiding as a form of an economic violence is considered as a commonplace because of its repetition, making it the dominant feature of Issa-Afar relations. This is demonstrated by the ceaseless reciprocal cattle robbery, homicide, and raids and counter-raids. The returns from the raid of live cattle, especially camel, and the sale of guns are so lucrative that the reciprocal robbery and raiding continued. Also, the raids to control and expand the contraband destination towns along the Addis Ababa Djibouti Corridor (ADC) is for controlling the huge revenue coming from the illicit trade. In sum, the violent confrontation was feeding on immediate tangible gains which are other than the traditional factors of the search for water and grazing land and revenge killings (AJSAB, May 8, 1998).

During the early 1990s, efforts of peace-making were dominated by an incessant cycle of violent confrontation and reprisals. This was more prevalent during the transitional period when Afar region was administered under the government of the former insurgent movement Afar Liberation Front (ALF) and Somali region was under the crisis of representation because of the tumultuous competition among various insurgent groups to control the regional administration. After the end of the transitional period and following the enactment of the federal constitution, which formally established regional states, there have been negotiations between the two regions to stop the war. However, the result has been discouraging because of the constant return to violent engagement. The hotspot contraband towns become the symbol of Issa-Afar animosity and violence. Peace-making efforts until the end of the ALF rule, therefore, was totally unstructured and irregular only dominated more by war postures than preparedness to a negotiated settlement.

After the end of the ALF rule in the Afar region and the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL) in Somali region, the federal government got better leverage to get regional governments initiate formalized peace-making efforts. In 1998 the Somali People Democratic Party (SPDP, currently known as Ethiopia Somali People Democratic Party-ESPDP) was formed from the ESDL and splinters of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and assumed power in Somali Region in 1998. In 1999 four political parties namely ALF, Afar People Democratic Organization (APDO), Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF) and Afar National



Democratic Movement (ANDM) merged into the Afar Nation Democratic Party (ANDP) ruling since then to date in the Afar region. Until the coming to power of both SPDP and ANDP affiliated to the EPRDF in the Somali and the Afar regions, the two regions were in a tumultuous political condition that meaningful peace-making was unthinkable. Consequently, Issa-Afar violence came to threaten the security of the ADC. The coming to power of the two political organizations in Somali and Afar region, and the improvement of security in the regions coincided with the outbreak of EEBW (Mohammed, 2018; Ibrahim, 2018).

The new initiative brought the leaders of the two regions into roundtable discussion and addressed the following major issue. One of the basic issues which came to dominate the negotiation was the issue of boundary and the ownership of the Issa occupied Adaytu, Gedamaytu, Quandafuqo and Ambuli at the heart of Afar traditional homeland, which serves as Issa contraband destination and selling point. The Somali region claimed that these towns are part of Afdem Wereda in Shinile zone of Issa, which contradicted to the Afar historical claim that these places were always Afar territories until the Issa invasion. Issues of access to water points and grazing land also came to be overshadowed by the issue of a territorial claim. Cattle raiding and robbery, issue of homicide and blood money, which involved weak law enforcement worsened the situation. The whole process of peace-making failed before it got any formalization of peace-making (Ousman A. , 2018).

Consequently, the Afar regional state resorted to a mixed approach to the problem. On the one hand, it used the violent reaction to restore the Issa settled territories. On the other hand, a formal application demanding the restoration of lost Afar territories and the demarcation of Issa-Afar boundary was presented to the office of the prime minister of the federal government. The Somali region similarly logged an application for the recognition of the Issa settled territories to be included in its regional map. Up until the outbreak of EEBW, the case did not show any progress; nor did the violence deescalate to make meaningful peace-making possible. After the outbreak of EEBW formalized peace-making guided by the federal government commenced at the historic Awash conference in 1998. Before discussing the conferences, which initiated the peace-making, it is vital to describe the overall background of the peace-making and the nature and level of Issa-Afar violence (Ibid).



### 6.3.1 Background and Context of Peace-Making

Ethio-Eritrean Border War erupted in April 1998 around territorial claims in the Northern sector of Ethio-Eritrea border. The war brought the two leading parties, Eritrean People Liberation Front (EPLF) of Asmara and Ethiopian People Revolutionary Front (EPRDF) of Addis Ababa, into catastrophic armed conflict. The radical deterioration of relations between the two historical allies caused regional security crisis. The Afar of Eritrea and Ethiopia were caught in the crossfire (Medhane T. , *The Eritrean- Ethiopian War: Retrospect and Prospects: Reflections on the Making of Conflicts in the Horn of Africa 1991-1998*, 1999).

After the closure of Assab and Massawa ports because of the war, Ethiopia became totally dependent on the port of Issa-led Djibouti for imports of arms and logistics of war (Yasin, 2008). The war required an all-out mobilization on both sides. On the part of Ethiopia, this means the mobilization of all Ethiopian nationalities in a strong unity. The Eritrean government pursued aggressive divisive propaganda to make Ethiopian people believe that the war was between Eritreans and the Tigreans, and not with the whole of Ethiopian people. At the backdrop of creating a united resolve of all Ethiopian and the need to guarantee secured access to the sea through the Issa-dominated Djibouti, Ethiopian government could not afford to have groups like Issa and Afar divided by violent confrontation. The strategic location of the Afar and the Issa along the Ethio-Eritrea border and the outlet to the sea made the restoration of Issa-Afar peaceful relations a matter of national security concern. According to the then Federal Affairs Minister, Bitew Belay, before addressing the peaceful settlement of the Issa-Afar conflict, defending national sovereignty of the country against aggression was the top priority agenda. Hence, mobilizing both Somali and Afar groups against the aggression by Eritrea was given much focus. Besides, Bitew emphasized how much the Eritrean government prays on weakening the united resolve of Ethiopian people by adding fuel to the fire of local conflicts like Issa and Afar (AJSAB, May 8, 1998).

The other context was the spiralling dynamics of Issa-Afar violence and the need to reconstruct Issa-Afar violent relations. The conflict arose from unsettled issues of territorial claims and occupations requiring demarcation. Containing the persistent raids and counter-raids, the need



for restitution for the loss and reconstruction of relations caused by the violence were top of the Issa-Afar agenda. Moreover, the need for reconciliation, giving closure to the decades-long mutual bloodshed and loss were vital impetuses for ensuring peaceful relations (Siyum, 2010).

The nature of actors involved in Issa-Afar conflict made it an issue requiring immediate intervention during the period of war. Besides Afar and Issa pastoralist commons, local government organs, opposition political parties, powerful contrabandists and traders, and insurgents were involved in the local conflict. Therefore, stabilizing Issa-Afar relations means precluding the possibility of subversive involvement of these actors in EEBW (Siyum, 2010). Therefore, these were the major contexts which necessitated the commencement of the peace-making led by the federal government.

### **6.3.2 The Awash and Dire Dawa Peace Conferences (5/11/98 to 15/12/98)**

Five months after the outbreak of EEBW, the federal government organized two major peace conferences that served as initial platforms for future peacemaking processes. The first conference was held in Awash town on November 5, 1998, attended by the Afar and the Somali regional governments, customary and religious leaders, community representatives. The major objective of the conference was to commence Issa-Afar peace-making by a declaration of commitment to pursue negotiation and to stand together in the war against Eritrea. The conference was a major departure from past peacemaking efforts because it created an open platform for the discussion and identification of the nature of Issa-Afar violence, the pain and suffering caused by the conflict. Both sides recognized the immense loss, damage and animosity they were living in and their commitment to peaceful resolution of the conflict to end the blood shade. On the part of federal government, ending the cycle of violence during the time of aggression was framed as the highest patriotic duty of the two peoples (ASJPC, 1998).

According to participants of the conference, they recollect that the conference had identified the major challenges of peace, the major structures supporting the cycle of violence and the immense impact of the violence. Participants realized the sense of shared destiny of the Afar and the Issa and accepted that the only power to get out of the cycle of violence was in their hands. Overall mutual understanding of the future direction and process of peace-making were made (Ousamn, 2018). Another important agreement was made regarding the issues of compensation and



restitution. Because of the vastness of material and human damages suffered by both groups, the conference recognized the impracticality of accounting and settling material and blood money lost on both sides for more than seven decades. Addressing all damages was considered as practically impossible to enforce rather pursuing this would hamper the peace process. Consequently, the conference agreed on putting a period of limitation on the reciprocal restitution and compensation of damages. Accordingly, all damages committed before 27 March 1997 were not to be compensated (ASJPC, 1998). Therefore, reciprocal compensation and restitution were to be enforced on damages committed after this period.

The conference agreed on establishing multi-layer structures of peace-making extending from the local up to the federal levels. It also initiated the operationalization of these structures. These structures were meant to serve as vehicles transmitting agreement made at the highest level mediated by the federal government. Besides, these structures were mandated with the role of organizing peace and reconciliation conferences and enforcing local and high-level agreements. The details of the peace process were to be laid out in the next major conference in Dire Dawa. In effect, on July 13, 1998 joint meeting of state presidents signed a memorandum of understanding for the cessation of hostilities and commitment for peace (Ibid).

The Dire Dawa conference was held after a month and laid detail strategies of the peace-making process which was to be fully launched after forty days. The conference identified six major goals of the peace process. First, the process involves mitigation of violence as an immediate task, and management of incidents of violence in the short term, resolution of issues of boundary and restitution in the middle term and the overall peacebuilding in the long term. Second, the removal of illegal settlements and structures in the contested territories and three flashpoint towns. Third, the commencement of joint utilization of water points and rangeland, the opening of common markets and social service provision institutions. Fourth, the identification, apprehension and enforcing accountability of spoilers and criminals. Fifth, establishing a functioning law enforcement and security structures along the ADR to ensure the normal flow of the heavy traffic supporting the war effort. Six, launching people to people relations, mobilization and reconciliation process at the local level based on the Afar and Issa customary conflict transformation systems (ASJPC, October 17, 1998). The multi-layered structures of



peace-making were put in place assigning various mandates and responsibilities for action. The time frame and periodic system of reporting, evaluation, control and feedback systems were established to guide the normal functioning of their operations, as discussed below.

## **6.4 Structures and Process of Peace-making**

### **6.4.1 Peace-Making Structures**

The structures of peacemaking established from the local to the federal level served as platforms of planning, evaluating and feedback mechanism, as well as enforcing the peace process.

At the top of the peace structure is the Office of the Prime Minister of the Federation (OPF) represented by its regional advisor on Afar and Issa affairs. The OPF was entrusted with overlapping roles. In principle, the OPF stood as both a neutral arbitrator and at the same time a mediator. It initiated the peace process, organized the two vital conferences at Awash and Dire Dawa, which laid the ground for further process, plan, evaluate and supervise the implementation of mutually agreed actions, settlements and the challenges and opportunities faced during enforcement. It convenes and chairs the meeting of Regional Presidents' Joint Session (RPJS) every two months where the RPJS presents reports of performances and progress made by the peace-making efforts of the Afar-Somali Regions Joint Peace-Making Committee (ASJPC), a regional level peace-making structure. Besides, the OPF participates in both zone and wereda level peace-making committee meetings and peace and reconciliation conferences organized at the local level to oversee their practical dynamics of the peace-making at all levels (RPJS, September 1999).

The Ministry of Federal Affairs (MoFedA) entrusted with the intergovernmental relations (IGR- of regional states) and peace and security affairs in the country came into action in 2004 at the time when the Issa-Afar conflict case has already been handed over to the HoF and OPF. MoFedA, therefore, have been waiting like the two regions for the decision of the two federal authorities that its role had been limited to at the beginning to capacity building and supporting the two regions through its Regional Affairs Desks (RAD). The Afar and the Somali region desks were two among others. Experts of the ministry were busy assisting the regions and creating various platforms to develop spirit of cooperation between the regional leadership system.



However, the efforts of MOFedA, far from ensuring the safety of the Addis Ababa Djibouti Corridor (ADC) was not a success in resolving Issa-Afar problems. After 2006, its mandate widened and began engaging in mitigation of violent conflicts through the federal police force under its command. The federal police forces and the customs authority have been engaged in fierce battle against contrabandists, arms traffickers and criminals. They discharge their functions under the unbearable heat of the desert, while travelling on foot. They do not have patrol cars and are left to their own ways and means to travel on foot during duty hours. The author has also observed that even the passerby private and government traffic for the safety of which the police officers are standing do not give them a ride. According a truck driver-informant who have worked on the ADC for twenty year, they do not wish to give a ride to federal police officers because high way hit men have used the federal police uniforms to stop and rob them (Ibrahim A. , 2018). Thus, the federal and customs police officers have been exposed to frequent ambushes by the above actors. According to the Afar Region police records, there have been repeated cases of not only killing but also abuse and mutilation of the dead body of the federal police and customs officers. The contrabandist dismembers the police officers to send shock wave of fear among the police detachment to get the latter limit its patrolling and tight inspection (ARPC, 2010). According to two federal police officers interviewed in Adaytu and Gedamaytu, their vulnerability is caused by the rampant corruption at the level of the leadership of the Federal Police, which failed to provide the benefits the federal government is sending in their name. They even reveal that their own members have been caught involved in on-road robbery because of the relative deprivation and resentment caused by their assignment in the unforgiving desert without sufficient transport, provision and encouragement to fight a powerful criminal and contraband network. Many among those involved in the robbery and contraband activity are tempted by the huge amount of wealth of the country flowing through this vital corridor they are protecting under harsh conditions (Federal-Police 1, 2017; Federal Police 2, 2017). In an interview with two federal police inmates at Asayta Prison convicted of robbery in 2012 also confirms the same story of the federal police vulnerability to the war violence of criminal syndicates and contrabandist, and to the structural violence of corruption within the Federal Police system as well as the psychological violence of being tempted to commit crime (Muauz , 2012).



Since 2007, the ministry organized itself into two main departments, the Conflict Prevention Department (CPD) and the Inter-Governmental Relations Affairs (IGR) created after the BPR carried out in the ministry. After the Business Process Reengineering (BPR) launched at national level in all government sectors to improve institutional performance, which was implemented at MoFedA, the CPD has embarked National CEWARN system through full participation of all regions and the City Administration of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa in which Afar and Somali Regions participated as the National CEWARUs. Controlling exploded violent conflicts after seven hours of the report, settling it after forty hours and solving it after ninety hours of its occurrence, and controlling and solving situation reports of violent conflicts in three hours and forty of reporting are provided as realizable objectives. The total settlement of post-violence older conflicts like the Issa-Afar Issa Conflict is envisioned to be achieved in 180 days of from the day the demand is made by any reliable body (MoFedA, 2007). Since 2009 the conflict situation report and conflict incident reports from all regions including the Afar and Somali Regions have been produced through regional focal persons.

The IGR is relatively successful in creating cooperative platform among region in fields of joint peace and development. The relations of the Afar region with the Tigray and the Amhara regions have succeeded to substantially reduce violent conflicts. Changes of a similar nature could have been an asset for dealing with the Afar-Somali relations. But the Issa-Afar relations have continued unstable. Consequently, for the last five years, the issue of Issa-Afar conflict has become unattainable. In effect, the Afar Security Justice and Administration Affairs Bureau (ASJAB) erased Issa-Afar peace-making out of its strategic plan. Along with it, except the office of the state president, the IGR has no relations with security and law enforcement organs of the Afar region on Issa-Afar conflict (AJSAB, Five Years Performance Report of Administration, Justice and Security Affairs Bureau of Afar Region , May 29, 2010).

The second top structure at the regional level is the RPJS composed of the presidents, administration and security affairs bureau heads, members of the executive and ruling parties of the Afar and Somali Regional states. This structure is accountable to the OPF and meets every two months to plan, execute and evaluate the overall peace-making process and enforce



decisions made the session led by OPF. It also attends to the monthly meetings of ASJPC and evaluates the performance of ASJPC and gives a guidelines on future action based on the overall

direction it gets from the OPF and the agreements arrived at its own joint session chaired by the representative of the OPF. The RPJS every 2 months evaluates the activities of ASJPC and gives guidelines on the resolution of major issues of contradiction between the two regions and designs programs of public mobilization for peace and, plans law enforcement with JTACCT, RNDF, FPD and Issa and Afar Police (RPJS, September 1999).

The third top structure is the ASJPC composed of customary leaders, influential political executives and top members of the ruling political parties of Afar and Somali regions. ASJPC is entrusted with the role of planning, supervising and evaluating the action plans for the enforcement of the peace-making. This includes the reciprocal exchange of looted assets, the payment of blood money and restitution, law enforcement, hot spots requiring peacekeeping and immediate issues of allowing access to water points and grazing land as well as plans and oversee the opening and shared use of markets and other socio-economic institution. It is directly accountable to and reports to the RPJS every month. It oversees the performance and progress of Afar-Issa Zone Joint Peace-Making Committee (AIZJPC). The ZAIJPC is one of the three middle-level peace-making and peace-keeping structures connecting the top with the grassroots peace-making structures. The ZAIJPC is composed of the zone administrators and administration and security affairs office heads of the zones. Regional representatives to make their respective ideas heard and to take proper action and at the same time they mutually commit to enforcing measures, provide direction and evaluate performances of the three zones and twelve weredas of Afar and one zone and two weredas of the Issa (AJSAB, May 8, 1998; ASJAB, June 23, 1999).

The Joint Transitional Administration Council of Contested Territories (JTACCT) was composed of representatives from both Afar and Somali regions, and members of the RNDF. It formed transitional administrative structures in Qundifuyo, Adaytu and Gedamayto kebeles pending the final determination of the status of the kebeles. The JTACCT's mandate was to carry out administrative matters including control over the construction of new buildings and was accountable to the AIJPC established at Zonal and Wereda levels. Adaytu, Gedamayto,



Qundifuqo and Qambuli Kebeles were to be administered by JTACCT. The DireDawa Conference Resolution had mandated JTACCT to establish courts, police, office of the prosecutor, and organize administrative organs. The resolution set guidelines towards equal representation of the Afar and the Issa in the structures like the assignment of 30 police officers, 2 traffic officers, 4 police investigators. The representation in courts took a different turn due to the introduction of impartiality criteria in the assignment of judges. This required the appointment of non-Afar and non-Somali judges selected on equal bases from Afar and Somali regions. Accordingly, the Afar nominated 1 judge but the Somali region did not get a non-Somali to represent the. Therefore, two of the non-Afar judges assigned to resign on Issa-Afar court were brought from Afar Region. Accordingly, the interaction of these organs from October 1998 up to 2005 went through the ebbs and flows of the conflict. The peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts, achievements and failures involved multiple of the process that determined outcomes of the total process (ASJPC, Afar Somali Regional Peace Committee Conference Minuet., May 8, 1999).

The Afar-Issa Wereda Joint Peace Committee (AIWJPC) and the Afar and Issa Joint Special Committee for Peace /AIJSCP/ are directly engaged in bringing grassroots, investigating crimes, conflict incidents, looted assets and the performance of compensation for material damage and payment of blood money (*Guma*) and formed special task forces (*known AIJSCP*) that evaluate their performance and report to Zone and participate in regional Peace committee meetings. They carry out peace sensitization activities at grassroots in cooperation with clan chiefs, wereda, zonal and regional administrative and law enforcement organs (AISJCP, Afar and Issa Joint Special Committee for Peace Report , June 23, 1999).

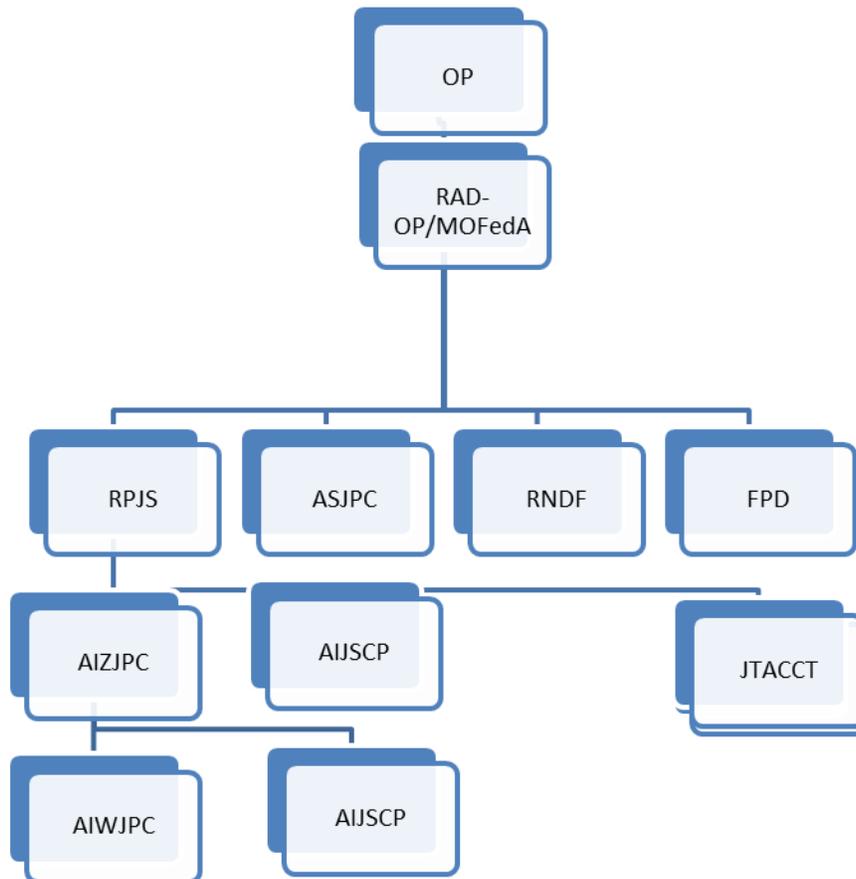
The AIJSCP is a grassroots structure that directly works with the grassroots in the identification and verification of crime, culprits and damages in collaboration with AIWJPCs and law enforcement as well as administrative bodies. Influential individuals, elders, clan chiefs and representatives of regional government organs and the one and only federal government Representative of National Defense Force/RNDF/ constituted the AIJSCP. It, in turn, is accountable and answerable to AIWJCP but as might so require they participate in wereda, zonal and regional JPCs and the State Presidents Joint Platform /RPJS/ meetings (AISJCP, January 30, 1999).



The RPJS carries out the same functions as RAD-OP in the jointly chaired platform. The Importance of RPJS was to give a symbolic message of cooperation, capability and their commitment to solving their common problems to grassroots. It also provided space for cooperative and creative local endeavour for independent and collaborative decision making for peace.

The RPJS had achieved, for a brief period, in sensitizing grassroots to peace though it did not last long. Moreover, the two presidents had demonstrated cordial and cooperative spirits (RPJS, Menuet of the Public Peace Conference held on 5/7/2001 at Adaytu Kebelle. , July 5, 2001). Giving directives, guidelines to administrative, law enforcement and security organs of the regions. The RPJS had the advantage of directly addressing the Afar and Issa Grassroots by organizing comprehensive Joint Public Peace Conferences/JPPC/. Though the comprehensiveness aspect was not there, from 1999-2003 the RPJS has organized more than Ten public Conferences and convened thirty regular meetings (ASPJP, December 4, 2003). The above organs of the Peacemaking structure are organized in such a way that they have a formal relationship of accountability and responsibility in discharging the goals set during the Dire Dawa and Awash Conferences. The hierarchy of the peace-making structure looks as provided below in the chart.

**Chart 1: The Organizational Structure of Issa-Afar Peace-Making During the EEBW**



*Source: Chart Generated from the Issa-Afar Peace-Making Archives for the period 1998-2002*

The OP was following up the peace-making process first through the RAD-OPF and after 2006 (the RAD-OP became) through the MoFedA. It oversees the activities of RPJS, ASJPC, RNDF and FPD. The RPJS on the oversees the activities of AIZJPC, AIJSCP and JTACCT. The zone structure (AIZJPC) controls the activities of Wereda level joint peace committee and the special committee for peace. The peace-making structure stands as an elaborate attempt by and commitment of the federal government to resolve the Issa-Afar problem. The structure is crucial in establishing systems of accountability, control, supervision, evaluation and feedback at various levels of public participation. It was perceived by the Issa and Afar people as expression of the federal government’s genuine commitment to work with the people. It seems the principle



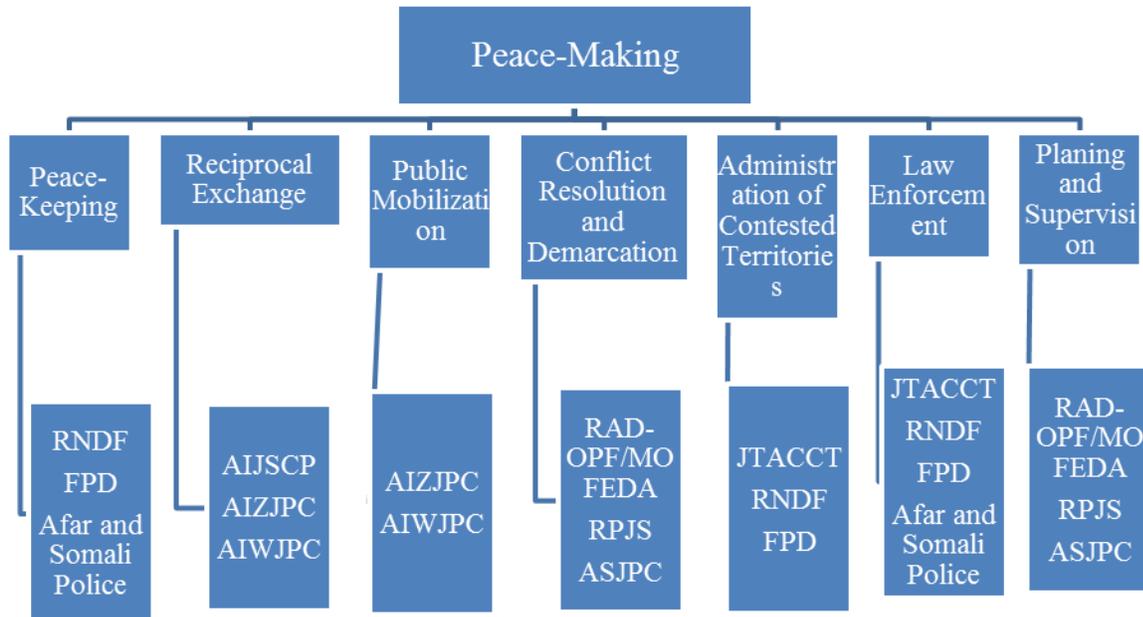
of inclusive, multilayers of engagement and accountability were key principles behind the design of this structure. However, given the complexity of the process of Issa-Afar peace-making, the structure, as discussed below, was not adoptive and agile enough to respond to unfolding dynamic events.

#### **6.4.2 The Processes of Peace-making**

Any peace structure is evaluated not by the beauty of its organizational format but by the degree of reactivity, adaptability and flexibility without losing the permanency of its structure. This is what Jean Paul Lederach (2003) call the process-dynamics, that a peace-making structure should have a sense of permanent form and at the same time it should be dynamic, which is responsive and adaptive to the ebb and flow of peace-making efforts. For instance, a peace-making structure must have a strategic goal, must be strong enough to withstand the rise of a cycle of violent incidents and also reactive and flexible enough to respond to the immediate security needs of the people in a violent confrontation. Peace-making structures must have agility within permanency to deliver the required services to society. Therefore, this section critically evaluates the peace-making structure as a system of process-structure dynamics by examining the process of peace-making carried out by the various organs of the peace-making structure. First, let's look at the nature of interaction involved among the various organs and the functions they were entrusted with. To simplify the roles and function of the various organs the peace-making as process dynamics is presented in the chart below.



*Chart 2: Issa-Afar Peace-Making as Process Dynamics*



*Source: Chart Generated from the Issa-Afar Peace-Making Archives for the period 1998-2002*

As it is presented in chart 2 above the peace-making process constituted seven inter-related major processes. The first is the peace-keeping dimension. Issa-Afar peace-keeping involved the prevention of and mitigation of violent incidents like cattle raiding, communal armed confrontation and individual level revenge killings. The major actors in this are the RNDF, Federal Police Detachments (FPD), and Afar and Somali Regional police forces. The focus of the peace-keeping was on the prevention and mitigation of direct/war violence from disrupting the ADC which is the artery of Ethiopian foreign trade. During EEBW, the safety of ADC was number one national security priority area in the service of which the peace-making was geared. According to an Issa informant who had been a member of the regional peace committee,

“as former governments did, the main interest of the current government in the peace-making process in general and the peace-keeping, in particular, was securing the undisturbed flow of the ADC traffic. We, Afar and Issa, know that our safety was not the government’s priority area of concern unless Issa-Afar violence disturbs the traffic. Because of this, we were using the blockade of ADC as bargaining cheap to get government attention and keep our interests respected.” (Issa-Anonymous, 2017)



Afar informants similarly confirm the above view of the Issa informant, but they blame the Issa for the continued violence along the ADC (Ahmed, 2018). According to a member of the FPD, the peace-keeping effort was one of the major challenges to the progress of the peace-making on the daily basis. The Issa and the Afar frequently got into mutual robbing, raiding, and killing of people on sight. In this, politicians at all levels of government, insurgents and clan leaders who were taking part in the peace-making structures were involved (Federal-Police 1, 2017). Archival sources of the peace-making evaluation reports unequivocally showed that the government structures of both regions were behind the cycle of violence. This made the peace-keeping process a daunting challenge (RPJPC, 2004). An informant from RNDF emphasized that the task of keeping the internal peace while fighting a bloody war with Eritrea required a securitized approach to Issa-Afar peace-keeping. It, in effect, added a challenge to the success of the peace-making, because the peace-keeping was the most fundamental precondition for the implementation of the other components of the peace-making. Against all odds, the peace-keeping component achieved significant progress in reducing violence during the first two years of the peace-making (RNDF-Anonymous, 2017). This is evident from the brief positive achievement of the peace-making process during this period in spite of all the weakness the process had.

The second component is the reciprocal exchange of looted assets, cattle, rifles, the payment of blood money for the family of the deceased and the apprehension of perpetrators of violence. This process was led by the AIJSCP (the Afar-Issa Joint Special committee for Peace) which works in corroboration with the AIZJPC and AIWJPC. The reciprocal exchange process involved the identification and verification of the perpetrator of the violence, the damages caused by it, the identity and number of people killed, the whereabouts of looted assets and the people wanted for the violence in collaboration of the concerned administrative structure, clan leaders and members of the community. The AIZJPC and AIWJPC do this task at the grassroots in collaboration with the AIJSCP and enforce exchanges in all front-line areas involved in the violent confrontation. Accordingly, in comparison with the other components, the reciprocal exchange has been one of the most successful components of the peace-making. Tens of thousands of camels, equines and cattle and hundreds of guns were retrieved through the mutual



exchange. The value of lost cattle and guns was also paid in cash. Hundreds of cases of paying blood money were performed as per the period of limitation set by the Dire Dawa conference. Hundreds of perpetrators of violence were apprehended and brought to justice. Local communities and their customary leaders facilitated the exchange (AIZJPC, 1999-2003; AIWJPC, 1999-2003).

However, this was not without challenges. According to the AIJSCP, AIZJPC and AIWJPC mutual exchange reports for the period 1999-2004, the reciprocal exchange committee was challenged by local chief who resisted to handover culprits wanted for crimes and the exchange of looted assets because of lack of positive mimesis on the other side. Second, members of Wereda and Zone committees for peace leaked information to wanted people to escape from legal accountability. Furthermore, looted assets were hidden from the AIJSCP which made effective reciprocal exchange difficult. Third, Djibouti was the hub of Issa and Afar criminals escaping justice in the regions. Fourth, there was a problem of exaggerating the amount of compensation and blood money payable to the affected clan and family of the victims. Fifth, the rise of cattle raiding and killing added to the burden of enforcing reciprocal exchange while the old issues were not yet resolved. Sixth, reciprocal committee members were attacked by spoilers and contrabandists to deter them from enforcing the reciprocal exchange vigorously which in effect would have exposed their crimes and make them accountable. At times, members of the committee were attacked by their own clan accused of being insensitive to their interests. For instance, Boko from the Harellla clan of the Issa was excommunicated by the whole Issa society for being impartial in enforcing the reciprocal exchange. Similar cases were also reflected in Afar society. Finally, the lack of transportation facility, financial support and protection of the committee members in their day to day activity limited the success of the reciprocal exchange component. Nevertheless, this component had been the most successful in the peace-making process (Ibid).

On another scale, the reciprocal exchange had a paramount importance to the overall success of the peace-making in that it underscored the level of mutual trust each group invested on each other and the confidence they go on the overall process of the peace-making (RNDF-Anonymous, 2017). Theoretically speaking, the progress in this respect had been an important



positive reciprocation (mimesis) in the sense that the people were positively reciprocating to the positive acts of the other party. Conversely, the challenges the committee faced during this period were also the causes behind the negative reciprocation (mimesis) which later on dragged the peace-making into violent clashes. The overall trend in this respect can be said to have been a progress that showed the people of the Afar and the Issa that they can still have the capability and will for cooperative peace-making.

The success of the reciprocal exchange despite the overlapping challenges was due to the progress in the public mobilization component of the peace-making. This component was established to sensitize the local communities towards normalization of relations and active participation in the reciprocal exchange as well as the identification of potential threats for the peace-making process. Accordingly, during the first two years of the EEBW period, 52 public conferences were carried out, mobilizing 39, 000 people into the peace-making process. AIJPC and AIWJPC were entrusted with this task. In many of the conferences, the majority of the population were motivated and mobilized to end the cycle of violence. This was evident from the dramatic positive mimesis demonstrated by both the Afar and the Issa. Archival sources of the peace conferences showed that the grassroots were highly motivated to support the peace-making and were extending their help at their disposal to the process. However, they complained that their customary and political leaders were playing the role of the spoiler (SASO, May 1998; AJSAB, June 23, 1999).

In all the RPJS and MOFedA conference minutes, and regional and Zone peace committee evaluation reports, the grassroots are considered as the real potentials for peace. Their readiness to end the cycle of violence and embark on reliable peace-making was the dominant trend but the leadership. In RPJS archive, the political leadership and the elders made self-criticism of their actions which contradicts the grassroots mobilization for peace. According to Issa informant who had been members of the regional peace committee, the grassroots mobilization was doing tremendous work making the public ready to support the EEBW effort on the one hand and the peace-making effort on the other. Unfortunately, the problems on the leadership and the destructive role of the spoilers had derailed the mobilization for peace into mobilization for war (ASPJP, December 4, 2003).



The towns of Adaytu, Gedamytu and Qundafoo are the flashpoints of repeated violence administered by an organ known as the JTACCT (The Joint Tentative Administrative Council for Contested Territories). The JTACCT was entrusted with the role of ensuring law and order in the towns and to provide basic administrative and judicial functions in these towns. Accordingly, a joint council was formed composed of representatives of both Issa and Afar, the national defense and the federal police. Law enforcement like the police and prosecutor office were put in place with equal representation of both Afar and Issa. Even a controversial Issa-Afar court was organized in Gedamaytu, which looks into cases involving the Afar and the Issa. It was controversial because in the Ethiopian constitution and the legal system at large there is no legal ground to establish courts based on ethnicity or nationalities' courts. For this reason, the court was abolished after two years of operation. In the court arrangement an indirect equal representation of Afar and Issa was the rule. It was indirect because it was not members of Issa and Afar who were to be assigned, rather members of other ethnic groups residing in Afar and Somali regions. This was meant to ensure the neutrality of the courts. Accordingly, the Afar assigned its own representative but not the Issa. The Issa representative position was filled by members of other ethnic groups residing in Afar. This brought a challenge on the legitimacy of the courts and their decisions besides the major problem of legality of establishing the courts (ASJPC, May 8, 1999).

The JTACCT was also entrusted with the prevention of new settlements and the demolishing of settlements established after 1998 to keep the demographic balance of the territories from being changed by the influx of new settlers from both sides. This was vital because the Issa had been strengthening their hold by expanding their settlements and bringing in new dwellers with the anticipation that on the time of referendum, they can secure their claim to the territories. The JTACCT, therefore, established Afar-Issa joint administration and had been functioning well in preventing new settlements, demolishing new construction and provision of basic services to the towns and the pastoralist community around the towns. RNDF and FPD were stationed in the town as both keepers and are also represented in the JTACCT as neutral elements to oversee the function of the administration and play the role of a balancing actor in time polarizing relations. During the first two years of peace-making, the JTACCT in collaboration with the public



mobilization and reciprocal exchange components, managed to create peace and stability in these towns and opened markets, water points and grazing lands for a shared use, which had been exclusively controlled either by the Issa or the Afar. It had halted new construction and settlements in and around the towns (Ibid).

The positive achievements of this component were strongly associated with the law enforcement component, which was composed of the members of the JTACCT, and the Afar and Somali police. This component was entrusted with the enforcement of the decisions made by the Issa-Afar court, agreements made by the regional and Zone peace committees and support the peace-making by ensuring peace and stability. It was also responsible for carrying out its regular functions of fighting contraband trade and patrolling the ADC. Members of the law enforcement were called upon to capture wanted people provided the JTACCT and the local militia was not able to execute the task. In short, the law enforcement component as depicted in chart 2 above was composed of the actors and function of the peace-keeping component and aspect of the JTACCT. Because of this overlapping composition of actors and roles, the function of the law enforcement deteriorated along with the problems created at the peace-keeping and JTACCT components.

The performance of the JTACCT weakened with the growing fear and suspicion created after Issa-Afar violent incidents in the ADC. As it is customary among the Afar and the Issa avenging the other group by acting on any member of the rival group is common. So, with the growing frequency of violence, the Afar representatives of the police, prosecutor and the town's administration were afraid to stay in towns mainly populated by Issa. They were anxious about being killed on sight for the death of an Issa killed by an Afar. So, they left the towns and the JTACCT was apparently dissolved as a functioning organ. The towns became an exclusive territory controlled by the Issa. This became even more obvious after a violent incident that caused the assassination of a very popular Afar politician and member of the federal parliament known, Nina Tahiro, by the Issa at the Issa occupied territories in 2000 while travelling from Addis Ababa to Afar. The contested territories, therefore, became areas where the presence of an Afar would guarantee his death (ASJPC, May 27, 2000). Consequently, the JTACCT and the law



enforcement components were weakened and at last quitted to be a functioning component in 2004.

The other related two components owned by the higher structure of the peace-making process were the planning and supervision component and the conflict resolution and boundary demarcation component. They were composed of the RAD-OP/MOFedA, RPJS and the ASJPC. These organs are from the federal and regional government structures. They were entrusted with the role of planning, organizing and supervising the implementation of the various decisions arrived at the regional level by the zone and wereda structures. The planning and supervision component were one of the most active components in terms of making persistent evaluations, providing direction of future action and coordinating regional peace conferences to complement the public mobilization component. The conflict resolution and demarcation component were limited to the following up the implementation of the decision of the Dire Dawa and Awash conferences (ASPJP, December 4, 2003). The boundary demarcation aspect, which falls on the jurisdiction of the federal government organs was left totally inactive until the 2014 Addis Ababa Peace deal, which brought about the proposal for the demarcation of the Afar and Somali boundaries and made the contested territories special Issa kebeles within Afar region.

Peace-making as a process composed of the above components and organs achieved a short-lived positive outcome through a coordinated effort. However, with the failing of each component, the peace-making as a process fell apart after the end of the EEBW for reason discussed in the preceding sections. To understand the achievements and failures of the peace-making as a process the following section divulges into examining the outcomes of the peace-making.

### **6.5 The Outcome of Issa-Afar Peace-making during the EEBW period**

The peace-making process achieved various positive outcomes<sup>2</sup> observed during the two years period. The major positive changes observed during this period, as recorded in the minutes of the



federal government led sessions, regional, zone and wereda level meetings, Peace and reconciliation conferences, performance evaluation reports, are summarized in the table below.

***Table 3: The list of activities and changes observed after the two years Peacemaking efforts***

- Reciprocal returning of lost cattle and helping each other in case of accidents and emergency.
- Sharing of basic supplies during drought season. Mutual accommodation of each other as a guest.
- Taking care of each other's' girls and women, sharing of marketplaces, water points and grazing together. Sleeping together by leaving their guns in common places.
- 15 rounds of Issa-Afar soccer tournaments were carried out in one year at Gedamaytu.
- Mothers have become confident and willing to send their children to the other's place for sport.
- Issa and Afar girls and women were taken care of instead of raping, abduction and killing.
- Afar Supplying cereals for the Issa at Qundafuqo by buying by their own money.
- Celebrating Eid Alfetir Festivity and Praying in the same mosque.
- Elders from both sides began to solve their problems by meeting at their own initiative.
- They established common rules on the payment of *guma* or blood money.
- An Afar took care of an Issa sick man at his home and when he died he performed his burial and other religious ceremonies by slaughtering his own cattle.
- The Issa Taken care of the house of an Afar who went in search of his lost wife.
- Tricks can stop at and the Issa can come to Mateka to get back their missing women to their home. Women began taking part in the peace meetings and conferences.
- Religious leaders began participating in peace Committee. Celebrating joint festivity by sharing contributions to the event.
- Willingly returning cattle which were stolen and lost eight years ago, establishing Issa-Afar marriage and friendship, exposing stolen assets and criminals on their own accord.
- Taking unilateral measures against spoilers, and resistant to change by exposing them and pressurizing them to accept the peace.
- Free movement of Issa and Afar anywhere they wish without fear of being killed.
- The Issa-afar joint commercial association was established and asked for legal recognition so that they could stop illicit trade. The commitment of Issa and Afar community to support the Issa-Afar soccer club established by the peace committee.
- They take care of sick and lost people they found in the desert.
- They prepared themselves to be employed in manual labour and began to request to be employed in the road projects being carried out in their locality.
- The mutual sharing of blood money paid by each other to consolidate the idea of reconciliation.
- Forgiving the payment of blood money for the Afar killed in Erer, Gurgura locality.
- Hospitalizing Issa girls who came to get vegetables in Afar market.
- Developed amazing mutual trust of sending each other to provide some supplies.
- Began demanding the continuation of the peace orientation.



- Both sides said that they could have lived in peace if this was done long ago and that the effort must be continued further.

*Source: Compiled from Somali-Afar Regions Joint Peace Committee Reports, 1999-2001 (ASJAB, June 23, 1999-2001).*

These are a classic case of positive reciprocal actions demonstrated in action during the two years period of peace-making. Some of the acts are not virtuous by their own merit instead that they are indicative of the kind of animosity and deep-rooted violence the two groups had had. Otherwise in normal circumstances, not killing, raping or kidnapping an innocent Issa or Afar girl should not have been recorded as an achievement by itself. Instead, many of the changes recorded as positive achievements were the only aspect of negative that shows the level of violence the people have gone through for long.

Unfortunately, the positive reciprocity was not maintained for long after the end of EEBW. The various components and organs of the peace-making were dismantled. The only organs which continued to appear in the archival of the Issa-Afar peace-making were the regional actors. With the collapse of the process a new tide of Issa-Afar violence erupted. Relations between the two groups and organs of the federal government like the defense and the federal police deteriorated. Both Afar and Issa used the involvement of the regional police and militia to support the war. Part of the leadership of both regional governments used the help of Afar and Issa insurgents to train and support their respective groups in war. This is well captured in following speech of Siyum Awol, the then Security Bureau head and currently president of the Afar region, made in the peace conference meeting:

“Both regions, we were the major problems of Issa-Afar Peace. We were declaring war, mobilizing and arming the people for war. Sadly, it is the innocent people who gets killed and not us. You, the people need to say no to us when we call for you to rise in arms for war. We the leaders are to blame. We were collaborating with anti-peace elements to wage war against each other. Now the people should return to peace by saying no to the call for war.” (AJSAB, december 3, 2004)



In terms of the nature of violence, violent acts like the mutilation of precious assets like camel and cattle, rape and abduction of girls which has never been before and are considered a taboo among both the Afar and the Issa began happening. Targeted killing of politicians and influential people were another development in the nature of violence. In light of frequency and nature of organization, armed clashes took a regular war formation often supported and led by police and security officers of the region and those returned from the EEBW who were not formally reintegrated to society. Contrary to the hope kindled during the EEBW period, the outcomes of the failed peace-making during the post-EEBW period had devastating consequences (Ibid).

## **6.6 Post-EEBW Issa-Afar Peace-making**

The peace-making of this period is unique in the fact that it was carried out in the post-war era and the expectations of the Issa and Afar people were to see a lasting solution to the conflict. However, to the dismay of the people the peace-making process deteriorated, and fresh cycle of violence arose.

### **6.6.1 Masha Allah The War is Nowhere! Oh, Allah, the War is Now Here!**

Following the interruption of the regular peace-making process in 2001 violence had escalated on both sides. This was reflected in various forms ranging from the targeted killing of regional government officials, cattle raiding, highway robbery and should up to and including rape and abduction of women and girls. At the invisible level fear and mutual suspicion were created between the government representatives and customary leaders of Issa and Afar who had been working in good spirit for almost two years during the period of war. Rumours of imminent invasion were circulated among both groups by groups and individuals who are wanted for crimes and would face justice if the peace process had succeeded (SASAB, July 5, 2001). In peace parlance, the spoilers effect had its tolls in exacerbating the tempo of violence. The strong belief in, commitment and efforts for the possibility of peace created during the war period evaporated into the thin air right after the end of EEBW. As the title of this section attempts to capture the dramatic shift of state of war from inter-state into intra-state, at the time when the people decried the EEBW is gone, Issa-Afar violence erupted to take its tolls.



In this, the post-war political dynamics at the centre of political power controlling the federal government has brought its own effects. The TPLF one of the leading members of the EPRDF the ruling party faced split that resulted in the expulsion of senior TPLF members and sacking of those in high government offices. As the peace-making had been led and organized by the federal government led by EPRDF in which the TPLF is the most dominant powerhouse, power reconfiguration and reshuffling of federal government officials and the rank and file of TPLF had a direct bearing on the dynamics of Issa-Afar peacemaking. An important fact to consider here is that in the name of offering special support to emerging regions (of Afar, Somali, Harari, and SNNRP) TPLF had assigned its members and leaders in almost all regions except in Amhara region. These party members and leaders were the tentacles of control and supervision of regional political dynamics (SASAB, July 5, 2001). This practice had been vehemently resisted by regional and local political elites. Among these were the political leaders of the Afar and Somali regions who consider the presence of the TPLF leaders in their regions in the name of special support as an infringement on their right for self-rule and violation of the constitutionally guaranteed federal system of government. According to an Afar informant close to the customary ruling House of the Aydahiso clan of Sultan Alimirah, the social base of the ALF, Ambassador Kedafu is believed to have criticized the TPLF practice saying that “leave exercise their self-rule rights and function independently on political matters affecting their people alone , the Afar were not allowed to go even to restroom without the campaign of TPLF representatives or surrogates” (Ahmed, 2018). Similarly, in Somali Region, the presence of TPLF appointees and advisors was resisted in various ways at times including the forceful overthrow of regional government leaders in a funny way of coup d’etat whom they accuse them of being TPLF surrogates (Abduljibril, 2018).

This was well captured by the shared views of both Afar and Somali leaders reflected in one of the Regional Presidents’ Joint Sessions (RPJS) not attended by the federal government (RAH-OP). The rule had been that the RAH-OP chairs the RPJS as both independent arbitrary and stakeholder in the peace process. According to both Afar and Somali informants, this was conceived as a continuation of TPLF-EPRDF control over on the two regions and failure to leave them to handle their own affairs and resolve their own conflicts (Qolo, 2018; Hassen, 2018). This



perception came in the open in one of the speeches of the Somali Region President Abduljibril made in the absence of the RAH-OP, representative of the federal government. He dubbed the latter a stranger whose absence he considered as an opportunity to settle the problem between the two people by themselves. He said, " *Now me and Ato Ismail Ali Sero are sitting side by side without any stranger between us; we should be able to solve our problems before strangers come in between us.*" (ABAO, Minuet of the 16th Meeting of RPJS held in AwashSebatkilo , June 22, 2002).

This is an expression of political and identity fault lines running between the traditionally Christian dominated highland state of the centre and the Muslim, pastoralist lowlander people of Afar and Somali people. In terms of politics, the politics of Afar and Somali people are peripheral and share similar aspirations in some ways more than they do with the Highlander political forces in the past and the present. Therefore, the Somali president Abduljibril was making an appeal to such similarities and considering the intervention of the RAH-OP as the destructive role of strangers.

In a peace workshop organized six years after this meeting in 2006 by the Afar Administration, Justice and Security Affairs Bureau led by this author, Afar elders expressed similar sentiments regarding the negative role of the federal government. Their criticism focused on the inability of the federal government to make an unequivocal decision on the Issa-Afar matter as a political strategy of keeping them entangled with each other from directing their resistance at the Highlander led federal government. They expressed this in a poetic anecdote as:

"Both Afar and Somali appeal to the federal government to give us exact judgment about whose claim is right. The federal tells us to turn our faces and give our back to it. Then it scratches the back of both Afar and Somali representatives and tells us that the legitimate claim is that of the one whose back has been scratched by it. Both of us consider our claims are considered legitimate by the federal government without knowledge that the back of the other party also has been scratched. Both of us go to our people with such understanding and try to enforce it that in effect bring us into more vehement violent clashes than ever"



(AJSAB, Five Years Performance Report of Administration, Justice and Security Affairs Bureau of Afar Region , May 29, 2010).

So, in one way, the heavy-handed TPLF-EPRDF intervention in the regional affairs of the Afar and Somali can be considered as a form of structural violence in terms of hindering the exercise of their constitutionally guaranteed self-rule and political power. On the other hand, as it is presented in the above long quotation it constituted a form of violence which blurs perception, consciousness and understanding about the violent condition the Afar and Issa people are found and the way out of it. The Afar and Issa consider this a form of violence which further breeds violent clashes though they do not use Galtungian terminology of cultural violence.

However, to show how the political dynamics at the center affects the Issa-Afar peace-making at the periphery, a couple of critical questions should be asked at this juncture. First, given the history of violent relations between the two groups and the mutual lack of trust involved, could the mere absence of the TPLF-EPRDF (the federal government) considered before and after the EEBW as part of the violence system be enough to make peace as Abduljibril considered it? Second, If the TPLF-EPRDF was part of the problem how did its party split and political crisis be considered to have negatively affected the success of Issa-Afar peacemaking? The absence of federal or ruling party intervention cannot be considered as *sin qua non* to the success of the peace process. The Somali president was also making an appeal while knowing about the failed bilateral efforts carried out in the absence of such actors. It can be considered as a psychological mechanism of creating uniting factor by totally shifting blame to and externalizing problems to a third party considered an outsider. Yet, this is not to underestimate the contribution of the imposed intervention of the federal government and the tentacles of the ruling party control to the cycle of violence.

The party split at TPLF affected the success of the peace process in two ways. But first we must consider the fact because of the necessity of the war period, the ruling party had embarked on an ingenious and genuine process of peacemaking during the war period. Therefore, after the party crisis, all processes of peacemaking and even other political and developmental activities which were being undertaken by the faction removed from power were disrupted by the victorious faction led by the late premier Meles Zenawi as a way of penalizing and erasing their legacy in



any aspect of society (Anonymous-TPLF, 2018). This constituted a violent act by its own merit at the national level that had a direct bearing on the dysfunction of the peace capabilities and structures created during the peacemaking processes carried out during the EEBW period. Because of this, it played into not only the failure of the peace process but also the continuity of violence.

Before delving into the subsequent developments in the dynamics of new Issa-Afar peacemaking initiatives, it vital to look at the major political developments that shaped the nature of politics and the nature of violence at the national level. This basically relates to the major shift in the political landscape, power and political reconfiguration in the governing party-EPRDF and the nation at large after the party split within the TPLF. The power struggle camouflaged as an ideological struggle within TPLF after the end of EEBW brought two rival groups, one led by the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and the other led by TPLF Old guard Siye Abriha. The split posed a challenge on the leadership of Meles Zenawi. The outcome of the struggle influenced the politics of post-1991 Ethiopia on many counts that relate to the nature of Issa-Afar violence and interventions thereof. The Prime Minister of FDRE, chairman of EPRDF and TPLF, the late Meles Zenawi came out victorious against his political rivals. He launched a political purge under an agenda he termed as “*Ye Dirijit ena Mesmer Tehadiso*” (Amharic term meaning Party and Ideological Renaissance). This laid the ground for the establishment of a dominant one-party state system led by one-man rule. With all the merits of double-digit economic development to his name, the late prime minister consolidated a policy of tightening control over the media, narrowing down the democratic political space and using the law as an instrument of persecuting any political dissent (Bach, November 2011).

In this, the post-2005 national election crisis represented a point of a radical shift from what had been observed during the pre-election period. Major cases in point are the use of the anti-terrorism law and the civil society proclamation to persecute journalists, the political opposition and activists (Vaughan, November 2011). The revolutionary democratic party ideology that provides no space for any other political alternative opinion but EPRDF only was used as the tool of legitimizing violence against any political dissent. According to the EPRDF ideological magazine published every two months, Addis Raey, the main contradiction in contemporary Ethiopia was between evolutionary democratic forces and neoliberal decadent forces. The



struggle should be, according to the party, decisively concluded with the total victory of revolutionary democratic forces over the neoliberal decadent forces (Addsi-Raey, March to April, 2014). On the political-economic front, EPRDF declared Ethiopia to be a democratic developmental state as an ingenious and authentic political economic design of the party to embark fast economic development to take the country into the level of middle-income countries by 2025. The democratic developmental state framework also applied a binary view of the politico-economic struggle in the country as between the developmental forces and the rent-seeking forces (Addis-Raey, EPRDF's Megazin of Political-economic Analysis Published very two months, 11th year, Vol.5, No.4 , March to April, 2016 ). EPRDF identified the major threats to its internal cohesion and commitment of all members of the front to party centrism principle as elements of narrow nationalism and chauvinism. It boldly argues that both elements have to be uprooted to ensure the success of revolutionary democratic agenda in Ethiopia (Addis-Raey, February to March 2017). In this, a unique Manichean political and ethical morality has been put in place valorizing and lionizing everything belonging to the ruling party and demonizing and vilifying the opposition as an enemy of the constitutional establishment and the bright future of the country.

Even issue of national and ethnic questions has been subdued to fit into the binary quasi-class analysis of the political ideology and the political-economic philosophy briefly discussed above. In effect, the ground was set to the rise of virulent violent conflicts on the ground of religion, ethnicity, political alignment and class issues. According to an Afar informant, in the political dynamics, an important factor to consider has been the role of the ruling political parties of emerging regional states like Afar and Somali that are affiliated with EPRDF but that are not proper members of EPRDF. This is important because it has a direct bearing on the way they approached the issue of Issa-Afar violence and the role of the federal government as well. These political parties preferred to remain close allies of EPRDF to sustain their power. So, the issue of Issa-Afar peacemaking was left to the will and whim of the federal government, thus keeping the issue in limbo for long only to come up with new proposals eight years after the failure of the peacemaking process commenced during the EEBW (Mohammed A. I., Politcs and Peacemaking in the Afar Region during the pre-EEBW , 2018).



Accordingly, during the post-2005 national election, both Afar and Somali regional states have taken the Issa-Afar issue out of their annual conflict resolution plans. They have been waiting for the federal government response to their applications lodged to the House of Federation (HoF) and the office of the Prime Minister in 2004. During this period up to the commencement of the next peacemaking initiative led by the MOFedA in 2010, 79 Issa-Afar violent incidents were recorded. The dynamics of violence influenced the immediate role of the federal government. The role of federal government was reduced to the level of peacekeeping through the federal police detachment and National Defense force regional divisions. In a word, mitigation of violent incidents ensnared the role of the federal organs. The customs authority, on the other hand, had been engaged in an uphill battle against the complex contraband network of arms and consumer goods the distributing hub of are the three contested towns of Adaytu, Gedamaytu and Qundafuqo occupied by the Issa. Therefore, this period can be considered as a period of withdrawal of the regional state parties to the conflict leaving their poor pastoralist people of Afar and Issa to the dictate of violent means. The federal government organs engaged in peacekeeping single-handedly to de-escalate the violence for no avail. Often these organs are accused of partisanship by both sides in every violent incident they took part to control. Consequently, before the commencement of the 2010 peacemaking initiative the level of confidence involved among all parties had touched rock bottom and the hope of mutually agreed peacemaking had been weakened (Meres, 2010).

### **6.6.2 The New Peacemaking Initiatives**

The nature of peace-making during the post-EEBW period had variegated features and stages. A critical examination of the peace-making documents and informants' testimony shows that the ebb and flow of the peace-making can be categorized into three main periods namely the 2002-2005 period of regression, post-2005 election period of stalemate, and the reinstatement of peace efforts in the 2010 Awash Peace conference and the 2014 Addis Ababa Peace deal. The peace-making efforts are variegated in that they have passed through various stages of the dynamics of peace-making namely progress (de-escalation of violence), stalemate (no war no peace), blockage and regress back to the state of violence. Two or more of these dynamics had been



reflected during each of these periods. For instance, during the 2002-2005 period, a major regression accompanied by both blockages of the efforts of ASJPC and RPS was observed. Considering the dynamics of violence, 2003 and 2004 testified the viral escalation of violence and mobilization for violence at an unprecedented scale (ASJPC, March 18, 2002; MoFedA, April 2, 2002; RPJS, July 26, 2002). The post-2005 election period because of the multiple political factors and the new political dynamics discussed in detail in coming section was a period of stalemate on the top level peace-making but regression into violence at the grassroots. This distinction is important because the top-level peace-making efforts were halted putting the peace-making process in a stalemate, but the pastoralist communities were engaged in a fierce battle. Both the ASJPC and the RPJS were halted, so did all the peace structures which had already stopped functioning long before the former (Mohammed A. I., Politics and Peace-making in the Afar Region during the pre-EEBW , 2018).

This continued up to the 2010 Awash Peace initiative. This initiative was, however, a failure from the outset. It can be considered as a period of a stalemate at the top level and regression into violence at the grassroots. The most recent peace-making initiative is the 2014 Addis Ababa Peace Deal mediated by the federal government and signed between the presidents of the two regions. The deal reinstated the peace process after 12 years of its interruption. At this juncture, it is vital to realize that the dynamics have moved full circle back to initial stage of progress observed during the EEBW peace-making period. It is also composed of both de-escalation of direct war violence at the grassroots level and declining suspicion at the middle structures of Zone and Wereda, but the escalation of war of words propaganda campaign between Afar and Somali diaspora communities on the one hand, and the threat of use of military force by Afar and Somali armed groups against the Ethiopian government on the other (Tedla, 2014).

The hopes and expectations of realizing lasting Issa-Afar peace that was kindled during the EEBW have undergone ebb and flow owing to various factors internal and external to the Issa-Afar reality and located at various levels of involvement. However, still even now after the signing of the 2014 Addis Ababa peace deal Issa-Afar violence has assumed various forms and levels than showing significant positive development. Providing an explanation to the intractability and immutability of the violence to various efforts is an aspect of the central objective of this thesis. In doing so examining the peace-making efforts in their contexts on the



one hand and as part of the overall post-2002 peace-making efforts is vital. Therefore, the peace-making efforts of the various periods are detailed in the following sections.

### 6.6.3 The 2002-2005 Peace-Making

The period 2002 and 2005 are taken as a benchmark for the dynamics of peace-making because 2002 is the year the regular and formalized grassroots and medium level peace-making structures vital for the enforcement of the peace agreements and consolidation of peaceful relations ceased to function. Even the regional level ASJPC was beginning to engage in an acrimonious war of words and mutual incrimination during this period. The federal government and regional government initiatives during this period were also led by new faces of the TPLF-EPRDF reconfiguration following the political purge and thaw of 2001. Because of what happened in 2001, the 2002 peace-making effort carried its own departure from the past. The 2005 National Election was a watershed by its own merit because of the historic 2005 national election and its post-electoral crisis. This period brought major political shifts in power and actors' configuration that changed both the nature of violence, peace-making, democracy and governance in Ethiopia. The dynamics in this period shared a dramatic similarity of political developments observed at party level during 2001 happening at the national level. Like the emergence of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenaw's dominance in the TPLF-EPRDF power block and consolidation of one-man rule in the front in 2001, so did EPRDF emerged in 2005 as the only dominant political forced controlling all state apparatus and muffling any political dissent in the country. Like the Party and Ideological Renaissance of the post-2001 party split, the post-2005 was characterized by massive *re-ideologization* campaigns designed to make the Ethiopian people believe that the country would descend into chaos in the absence of EPRDF. Politics was defined in primary colours and neutrality was unacceptable (Tronvoll, 2011 ). In a fateful twist of events, the criminalization of neutrality has deep-rooted precedent, the period of the Red Terror. All the political forces were calling for "middle-roaders to identify themselves "either as enemy or friend (Girmay, 2012).

According to informants who participating in a series of Federal Government mediated peace conferences and negotiations, the whole process of peace-making at the federal level was owned by new appointees who returned the process to square one because of lack of knowledge and



understanding of what the process has passed through (Mohammed, 2018). In effect, they failed to take it any further. Besides, the changed political atmosphere faring from democratic governance into one-party dominant state had cast its shadows on the whole process of peace-making.

Wereda, Zone and JCACT structures, as well as the Issa-Afar joint courts, the office of the prosecutor, police and town administration, put in place in the three contested towns of Adaytu, Gedamaytu and Qudafuqo to administer justice, ensure security, law and order left to their regions without notice. The structures can be said to have evaporated into thin air. Even federal organs like the representatives of the National defence and federal police moved to their former place of assignment leaving their participation and roles assigned to them in the above peacemaking structures. According to an informant who was the Gedamaytu court registrar, regional and federal actors left because of the gradually growing fear that war may erupt any time and they were anxious about being caught unprepared. So, he said that with the growing fear and uncurtaining, and the rumours of abrogation of the peace deal, they left to the place of safety to their respective regions of Afar and Somali, and to the federal place of assignment (Teshome, 2017). The whole dynamics of the peace-making process is best captured by the following ASJPC evaluation report and plan of action of March 2002. The report describes the overall conditions characterized by the following scenarios.

**Table 4: Summary of the 2002 Conditions of Peace-making**

- Propagation of rumours of the abrogation of the peace deal and mobilization of people towards mutual raiding to restock lost cattle and restore assets lost in the war.
- Accordingly, mutual raiding was observed at Gewane and Mateka districts of Afar by the Issa and at Gedamaytu area of Issa settlements by the Afar.
- The propagation of the commencement of a one to one, an eye for an eye reciprocation of harm on anyone from both groups for crimes committed by any member of both ethnic groups.
- This discouraged the positive mimesis reflected in the reciprocal exchange of looted assets and payment of blood money replacing it by the logic of individual revenge.



- The absence of resistance to raiders or being passive observant of acts of robbery done by members of one's ethnic group on both sides.
- Resistance to abide by the agreement for the mutual exchange of assets and bringing criminals to justice on the ground that the other party is not reciprocating similarly.
- The Afar took the rigid stance of apprehending and handing over of Afar culprits because of the Issa resistance to commit to the same principle.
- The peace committee of reciprocal exchange faced strong challenges from and lost their legitimacy in the eye of the local communities of Afar and Issa.
- The one to one reciprocation of revenge by revenge sent a shock wave of fear and suspicion among the communities of Zone three of Afar, and Meiso and Afdem districts of the Issa that they stopped cooperating with the joint peace committee at the grassroots.
- In effect, regional government officials, influential individuals, elders and clan leaders of both Afar and Issa began propagating that the peace deal is over.

*Source: ASJPC Report, 18 March 2002*

The overall scenario in the table above shows the nature of rapid regression from the spirit of cooperation, mutual recognition of harm and the positive reciprocity which was observed before two years. According to Seyum Awol the current president incumbent of Afar region who was part of the regional presidents' joint peace-making session, this period was a gradual dismantling of the peace-making structures put in place during the preceding years (2010).

This trend is collaborated by the Strength, Weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis reports of ASJPC for the period 200-2004. The SWOT result showed that there had been as an ever-growing weakness of the effectiveness and legitimacy of the peace-making structures at various levels and the process they had been executing (ASJPC, May 27, 2000). Consequently, the peace-making efforts of yesteryears relapsed into the of violent confrontation and mutual aggression.

These dynamics reached the highest point with the escalation of the armed conflict along the Issa-Afar settlement fronts. The frequency and intensity of violence pulled both state and non-state actors into the armed conflict. The involvement of Djibouti and Issa insurgents on the Issa side and the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF, locally known as Ugugumo)



in training, arming and leading the Afar against the Issa threatened the overall peace and security of the region. Consequently, the federal government took stern measures against regional government officials of both regions suspected of involvement in the mobilization of the insurgents to take part in the local Issa-Afar war. The federal government measure was a continuation of the political purge it had executed in its party inner circle and high ranks and files of the TPLF. This measure, though not significant in terms of promoting the peace-keeping, sent a stern warning to politicians of both regions to accept federal government orders without question (RPJPC, 2004).

On another note, it created a rift between those politicians sacked because of supporting their people and those who exposed them. While those belonging to the former category were taken as the hero of their people, the later were considered sell-outs whose continuing in power was tarnished by a popular opinion from contributing to the peace-making in the future. Most of them were not trusted by their people whatever noble idea they may come up with. Cases in point are the state president Ismael Alisero of Afar and the minister Mohammed Durir of Issa. Leaders losing legitimacy in the eye of their people are a liability to peace-making. In effect, it had a negative repercussion of reducing capabilities for peace-making (Ibid).

#### **6.6.4 The Post-2005 Election Peace-Making**

According to the memoir of the then communication minister and member of the executive committee of EPRDF, Bereket Simeon, the 2005 national election brought an avalanche of political mobilization against the ruling party EPRDF (Bereket, 2013). To survive electoral defeat in the hand of the leading party Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD), EPRDF pulled all strings that led to the post-electoral political crisis. Thousands of political activists and supporters were imprisoned, and innocent civilians killed by live bullets. After the election EPRDF instituted various legal measures to secure its grip on power and avert any potential political threat to its power the like of CUD. Proclamation of the anti-terrorism law, Civil society organization and media control extinguished the ray of hope of democratization which emerged during the 2005 election (Tronvoll, 2011 ; Vaughan, November 2011). This shift from a democratic experiment into authoritarian turn had a direct impact on the way conflicts are handled in the country. Issa-Afar Peace-making was one of the processes affected by these



political dynamics. Afar and Somali Regional governments led by EPRDF affiliated parties were supposed to prove their absolute allegiance to EPRDF by stopping any nuance to the ADC. Ensuring safety and security of the export national artery was once again, as during the EEBW, became number one priority. The issue of ending the day to day suffering caused by the continuing Issa-Afar violence was relegated in the interest of the national security-sensitive ADC. To this effect, federal peace-keeping forces were stationed in Issa-Afar conflict hotspot areas to patrol and guarantee road safety (AISJCP, January 30, 1999).

Regional governments of Afar and Somali lodged their appeal to the house of federation and the office of the Prime Minister for the demarcation of their boundaries. They were told to wait for a lasting solution to come. Accordingly, both regions cancelled the Issa-Afar peace agenda from their annual plans on conflict and security issue. During this period, as was the case during the 2004 Uguggumo involvement in the communal conflict, government organs on both sides were involved in active armed engagement supporting their communities. According to Afar region, violent incident reports from 2005 up to the commencement of the 2010 Awash Peace initiative by the MoFedA, 79 Issa-Afar violent incidents were recorded (AISJCP, 2010).

Paradoxical as it may seem, the Afar Region Administration, Security and Justice Affairs bureau entrusted with handling the regional peace and security continued to state in its annual plan about Issa-Afar conflict as “Waiting to get Federal government response to our territorial claim and demarcation of Afar and Somali region boundary.” This wording was both ironical as in showing the intolerance of the Afar towards federal government’s lack of concern for their suffering. On the other hand, the reduction of the issue of Issa Afar peace to the level of “boundary demarcation” was a blunder to the understanding of lasting peace. Because whatever good boundaries are established the most lasting and secure are those established between two good neighbours. Moreover, considering the imperative for realizing reconciliation and ending hatred accumulated for a long time, this articulation of Issa-Afar problem as such was lacking in either interest in or understanding of a meaningful peace-making.

On the Somali side, they were demanding for the implementation of the right for self-determination of the Issa community to half its own administrative unit in the territory they are settling today that in turn are claimed by Afar as occupied territories by war. The Issa approach



to the problem of territorial claim is based on Article 39 of the federal constitution, which provides for the right to self-determination up to and including a secession of all nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia as the expression of their ultimate political power and sovereignty. This most controversial article is considered sacred for the ruling party, the EPRDF. By making their case a question of self-determination as stipulated in article 39 of the Federal constitution, the Issa pursued a legalistic and political strategy. Therefore, both regions were entangled in the task of political outmanoeuvring each other in relation to the federal government. Thus, the issue took too much of political struggle than the organic demand of the pastoralist commons for peace and security. Until the 2010 Awash Peace initiative, this defined the overall scenario of the Issa-Afar problem of peace.

#### **6.6.5 The 2010 Awash Peace-Making Initiative**

In 2010 the MoFedA minister, Shiferaw Teklemariyam, invited both parties to another Awash Peace-making Conference to launch federal government direction for Issa-Afar lasting peace. The solution was based not on the wider peace-making considerations commenced during the EEBW but on the applications for demarcation of boundaries the parties to the conflict made to the House of Federation and the Office of the Prime Minister in 2005. Even before going into the details of what the solutions had in store, the manner the minister approached the problem caused concerns from the outset. The meeting commenced with introduction of the issue and was followed by the minister calling out the names of representatives of Afar and Somali representatives to confirm their presence. After calling the Afar as representatives of their respective areas and administrative units within the Afar region, called out the names of the three Issa representatives as administrators of Adaytu, Gedamaytu and Qundafuo. Afar Representatives vehemently opposed this as an act of recognition of Issa controlled territories by the federal government, which the Afar wished to restore to their regional government. The association of contested territories with Issa representatives went contrary to the spirit and objective of the peace-making initiative which tries to get resolution on the very issue of claim and control of the territories. Emotions ran high in the meeting hall among the Afar. Representatives of zone three adjacent to Issa settlement said:



“Do you know what you are saying by recognizing land taken and under Issa administration by force of arms? you are telling us to the bush. If that is the only way to resolve a problem for which we have decently and patiently waited for a decade, I will assure you that we will not be short of men and arms to restore our land and dignity. But we did not wait for long while our people were being killed to resort to arms. We have no more words to discuss with you (Muauz , 2010).”

Among the Afar representatives, the sense of disappointment was so strong that many of them accused the Afar regional state president Ismael Alisero who has strong ties with and backing of the TPLF of being a sell-out. Federal government representatives were frustrated by the Afar walk-out at the meeting. To handle the volatile situation, the former Minister of Federal Affairs, a powerful TPLF politician, had to be flown from Addis Ababa to Awash in order to save the situation. However, it was to no avail, for the damage was already done, and it was considered irreparable.

Among the Issa representatives, it was a moment of victory that exposed the defiance of the Afar against the federal government. They remained calm and undisturbed and tried to calm down the Afar fury. According to Aden, an official from the Shinile zone of the Issa, the Afar were overreacting, thus disrupting the peace process from the outset.

The most important thing in this fiasco was that to the parties, which had passed through painful memories of violence and continuously failed peace-making processes, this appeared as the last straw that breaks the camel's back. Mutual suspicion and conspiracy theories of imminent danger coming from the other is a common mindset up among the Afar and the Issa. There is no simple event or speech act which can be taken at face value. This fact is an important element of understanding the peacemakers must grasp about the behaviour, attitude and action of people going through the experience of violence. Unfortunately, this shows consequence of the assignment of politicians without the deep knowledge, language and approach towards a volatile case of peace-making like the Afar and the Issa. Even the expert assigned to support the minister was a fresh master graduate from the renowned Addis Ababa-based Institute of Peace and Security who had no prior exposure to the reality of the Issa-Afar violence more than a literature review.



The cumulative effect was the generation of a resentment that defied the involvement of even seasoned politician like Abay Tsehaye who had known the case for a long time.

The failure of this peace initiative had further unintended consequences on the tempo of Issa-Afar violence, and political dynamics in the Afar region. The news raged fast like wildfire in the Afar land and back in the regional capital, Semera, it triggered political resentment against the ruling Afar People Democratic Party (APDP) led by the infamous Ismael Alisero. Similarly, the Afar diaspora community strongly condemned APDP and the federal government for attempting to take away Afar land. The Afar insurgent movement called for all the Afar to resort to arms against the invaders the Issa, the sell-out APDP and the federal government of Ethiopia. As a result, after two days, armed conflict erupted between Zone Three of the Afar and the neighbouring Issa communities got caught up in the rise of another cycle of violence. From a peace-making perspective, the initiative had committed multiple blunders.

First, the whole issue of peace-making requiring immediate peace-keeping, mid-term agendas of resolution and confidence building were reduced to an issue of territorial claim only. Second, it did not consider the mutual suspicion between the two parties and towards the federal government, the two parties developed because of the successively failed peace-making efforts. Third, the initiative was mainly a sudden communication imposed on the parties without prior preparation made to them to make psychological and emotional preparations to contribute to the success of the peace-making initiative. Fourth, it was insensitive to the emotional, psychological and political impacts of the use of language that naming in a certain way carries with it legal, ethical and political messages beyond the face value of terms. Fifth, it totally lacked the technical support and expertise of professionals and seasoned peace-makers. consequently, the continuity of Issa-Afar violent clashes after that meeting bore the fingerprints of this wrongly handled peace-making initiative.

#### **6.6.6 The 2014 Addis Ababa Peace Deal**

Four years after the failed peace-making initiative of 2010 the federal government came up with the arbitration decision on the issue of territorial claims of the Afar and the Issa over the contested territories. The Addis Ababa Peace Deal is a combination of arbitration decisions by the federal government on the application the regions lodged for demarcation and an initiative



for negotiation between the two regions. Because it was obvious that without prior negotiation the arbitration decision will not be enforced. Before delving into the content of the new arbitration decision it is worthwhile to examine the contents of claims and counterclaims. The Afar claim is based on historical ownership of the lands occupied by the Issa through continuous invasion and eviction of the Afar pastoralists from the lands lying beyond the Issa-Afar boundary determined during the reign of Emperor Haileseilasie. That boundary was delimited using the Erer River as a benchmark, to the East the Afar and to the West the Issa. Based on this, the Afar claimed that the whole Issa occupied territory must be restored to the Afar National regional state administration and the Issa can live as any other ethnic groups living in the region without any ownership or claim to their own separate administration (Mohamed, 2018).

The Issa, on the other hand, claimed that movement of pastoralists across territories in search of pasture and water has been a natural part of pastoralist way of life that their occupation of the territories they are settling in should be considered in terms of the scarcity of resources to which they were pushed by environmental marginalization. On the one hand, they claim that the territories they settled in cannot be the land of Afar because definite boundary contradicts the logic of pastoralist way of life. On the other hand, they argue that as citizens of the country they deserve to exercise their right for self-determination based on the constitutional principle of the right of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia for self-determination (MoFedA, 2014). The underlying logic behind Issa claim is the principle of effective control of the territories. In the Afar claim, the important principle tacitly being invoked is the unjustness of the foundational reason for effective control, which is the use of violence. In peace studies parlance, the Afar claim is based on the importance of the foundational violence involved in establishing contested territories. Leaving the political rhetoric of establishing a territory which related to the dream of the greater Somali project (a long overdue one this time), the Afar claim for ownership rejects any form of agreement which repeats the same foundational violence which had been enforced by agreements during the past regimes.

On the Issa side, based on the above reasons, they argue for the determination of the claim for these territories to be carried out through a referendum among the people settling the land (APP, 2016). This claim, however, stands faulty as the territories in question are occupied by the Issa and the number of Afar residing close to these territories are small in number as compared to



their counterparts. So, the claim for a referendum to determine territorial ownership by the Issa was a foregone conclusion for asserting the right of Issa by the principle of effective control that the Issa have over the territories. On the Afar side, the argument that the Issa must live like any other ethnic groups in the region has practical problems emanating from the pastoralist way of life of the Issa requiring free movement across multiple ecosystems and the incomparably high number of Issa population to the other ethnic groups in Afar region. So, the Afar demand is out of touch with the facts of Issa life on the ground. Therefore, the federal government arbitration decision came was an attempt to resolve the contradictory claims set by the two parties.

On September 21, 2014, an agreement was entered into between the president of Afar Region Ismael Alisero and the president of Somali Region Abdi Mahmud Omar for the creation of three special kebeles of Gadamaytu, Undafuuo (Undafoo in Somali) and Adaytu as self-governing Issa kebeles in the Afar regional state. The agreement obliges the Somali Regional State to hand back the administration of these kebeles to the Afar regional state. After a long deliberation, both parties agreed. This deal also recommended the demarcation of Afar and Somali regional boundaries in due course. In light of the contradictory claims of the parties, the arbitration decision appeared to have made an optimal win-win decision because it has avoided both the referendum issue and the claim based on effective control alienating the Issa from their settlement. In detailing the relationship between the special kebeles and the Afar and Somali regions, the kebeles could be accountable to the respective closest Afar Wereda and their budget, administrative and political affairs were to be considered in the same way. Accordingly, Adaytu Kebele under Mile wereda, Gedamaytu under Gewane Wereda and Undafoou under Gelaelo Were. All service delivery, law enforcement, security and the civil services are to be handled by the Afar region respective to the weredas the special Issa kebeles are included in (MoFedA, 2014). The Addis Ababa peace deal was presented for further deliberation in Afar-Somali Joint Peace Conference held at Awash in November of the same year. The idea was accepted with mixed reactions on both sides. However, the local people were kept in the dark because there was no formal communication. In localities like Mile and Gelaelo small-scale clashes erupted after the Awash Conference but were contained by armed forces (Mohamed A. , 2018). Yet, the battle was transported to the two diaspora communities and their respective armed insurgent groups which engaged in a war of words. The insurgents even threatened to use armed attacks



against the Ethiopian government. The war of words continued in the social media, in the Deutsch Welle and in the VOA Amharic service (Tedla, 2014).

The ARDUF emphatically condemned the Issa diaspora and politicians' resistance to accept the decision and warned the federal government against vacillation in enforcing it. The press release of the front stated that,

ARDFU is deeply concerned by the Ethiopian Federal Authorities' irresolution, vacillation and hesitation to implement and enforce its own decisions passed down to end the conflict and turn all the occupied land back to the Afar people. The government's inability to enforce the decision that "no territorial acquisition resulting from aggression shall be recognized as lawful", and maintain law and order in the region, has encouraged the Issa-Somali invaders to seek legal recognition for the territories they seized from the Afar by inadmissible use of force (ARDUF, 2014).

The ARDU Military Command Centre also went further to make demands out of the spirit and content of the Addis Ababa Peace deal. The press release goes,

That the Ethiopian government not only demarcate the boundaries between the Afar and the Somali regional state but additionally returns the Issa-Somalis to the area demarcated by the Haile Selassie government in the 1940s at the Ere River, in order to ensure lasting security and peace in the country. ARDUF asks the Ethiopian Federal authorities to dismantle all illegally constructed settlements in the Afar Region namely Adaytu, Qunda-Foo, Gadamaytu, Afdem, Meisso, Erer, Aydoora, Asboli, Garani, Yangudi, Han le Siira, Manta, Gabulli and As Elwas immediately and unconditionally (ARDUF, 2014).

The ARDUF declaration went to the level of including territories which were not claimed by the Afar region in the 900 pages application lodged to the HOF in 2005. The ARDUF call was one extreme of the polarized stances created by the announcement of the Addis Ababa Peace Deal and it was also a reflection of its animosity towards the Afar ruling party, the APDP, which it considered as surrogate of the TPLF. On a more critical note, ARDUF an armed insurgent



movement based in Asmara and vowed to overthrow the EPRDF could not be expected to show balanced views on the deal. It even threatened to close the Addis Ababa-Djibouti corridor by arms unless its demands were met otherwise (Ibid).

On the Somali side, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) Central Committee through its secretariat Rayaale Hamoud (former Vice President of the Somali Region and founder of the Issa and Gurgura Liberation Front-IGLF) called upon the people of Afar and Somali to rise against the TPLF. ONLF accused TPLF of causing the trouble between the two brotherly nations. The statement emphasized that TPLF was working to stifle the aspiration for self-determination of nations in Ethiopia which has been growing since 2005. Rayaale Hamoud, by reminding the shared values and history of the Afar and the Issa, appealed to the Sultan of Afar and the Ugass of Issa-Somali to make positive interventions. After a detailed externalization of the problem to the TPLF, emphasizing that this was a TPLF schema not to recognize the right to self-determination, he warned the Afar and Somali communities that unless they take caution against the TPLF schema to create a war between them, they would eventually go into an unnecessary fight. Rayaale Hamoud called for urgent action. The twist and blow, however, was in his short statement that, “I am convinced that we shall do our utmost to take any measurable steps that are necessary to repeal the aggression of TPLF and any attempt of dislocating our people from their ancestral land” (ONLF, 2014). On a similar note, Musa Ibrahim, the leader of ARDUF in Asmara, issued threats to cut the transport routes to Djibouti unless ARDUF’s demands are met properly (Indian Ocean News Letter, 2015).

The Afar Diaspora Network (ADN) representing all Afar diaspora organizations all over the world condemned the formation of Issa special kebeles within Afar territories as unconditional and undemocratic as it legalized the forceful seizure of a territory. Besides, it condemned the active involvement of the Issa-led Djibouti government and called upon the federal government of Ethiopia to rectify the mistake by making a territorial demarcation based on the 1940s decision of the Haile Selassie government and restoration of all Afar territories. ADN condemned the instrumental role of the APDP in getting the agreement signed without the active and proper participation of the Afar people. It stated,



The Afar Diaspora Network (AND) condemns and rejects that the Afar puppet ruling group sign this agreement under the coercion of the TPLF/EPRDF federal authorities without any consultation with the Afar regional parliament, cabinet, traditional Afar leaders or inhabitants of the region in general. Calls on federal authorities to reverse immediately its unprecedented decision of creating special kebele autonomous entity because it is not part of the formal hierarchy of the politico-administrative division of the country. . . . The Somali-Issa residing in any part of the Afar region can live side by side in peace with Afars just like other non-Afar are living in the urban centres of the Afar region (ADN, 2015).

The interview informants from both Afar and Somali region similarly confirm the fact that between 2010 and 2017 there was no consultation and the usual public peace conference to bring to light what was being done in the name of the two people. Even the conferences carried out during 2017 were limited to the three weredas and the three kebeles of Issa decided to join Afar regional state as special Issa kebeles in Afar (Yimam, 2018; Shemshedin, 2018).

The Afar People's Party (APP) identified the subordinate status of the Afar people as the root of all Afar predicaments in its political program (APP, Afar People's Party Home page , 2016). It opposed the decision of the federal government and requested rectification based on the 900-page evidence provided to the House of Federation by the Afar Boundary Affairs Bureau. It opposed Issa-Somali claims and the arbitration decision of the federal government as based on falsification and fabrication to take Afar land. It called for guerrilla warfare by ONLF and Issa-Somali diaspora and advised for a cooperative engagement by both parties, Djibouti and Ethiopian governments, and the Sultan of Afar and the Ugaas of the Issa for peace reconciliation (APP, 2014). According to an independent observer close to the Issa-Afar conflict, the whole issue of the peace deal was interpreted as war strategy of taking land at the expense of the other for future autonomy or full independence if the federation falters (Tedla, 2014).

The Afar Nationalities Day Organizing Office Head and the former Boundary Affairs Office vice head, Mohammed Awol, reiterates the same:

The preparation of the Issa whether getting the territory to the Somali region or within the Afar special kebele is a strategy of getting legal ground to settle and



expand peacefully. After a while, with the growing number of population and covering wide area they would go for a full referendum which would constitute a zone, not even a wereda. Currently, the special kebele are accorded in terms of financial and budget apportionment, decision making, and power are given the status of Wereda de jure but in name only they are kebeles. Even the salary of the Kebele administrator is equal to any of the Wereda administrators in the Afar region. The Afar region is preparing them for a peaceful expansion with eventually a disastrous consequence (Mohamed A. , 2018).

Even though the APP statement was made four years before the deal, the Afar informants still reiterate with remorse the same opinion three years after the implementation of the peace deal. From the outset, the federal government mediated deal was the result of resistance even among traditional leaders of both Afar and the Issa. The young Ugaas Moustapha Mohamed Ibrahim of the Issa showed resistance to the idea of the special kebele, thus sending the tremor of fear that Issa invasion was imminent. The Ugaas maintained his positions up to date. According to African Intelligence News, the former Prime Minister Haile Mariam Desalegn accused the Ugaas of fueling Issa resistance to rise in arms against the decision to hand over the Issa Kebeles to the Afar region. Haile Mariam Desalegn is said to have requested Ismael Omar Guelleh, the president of Djibouti (an Issa) to persuade the Issa to accept the federal arbitration decision. The same report also exposed that the Somali president labelled the Ugaas as a supporter of the “anti-peace forces” mainly the ONLF. He made it clear to federal government’s top officials his plan to replace Ugaas Moustapha Mohamed Ibrahim by the son of the former Ugaas Hassen Hirsi, Mohammed Hassen Hirsi. This is due to the antagonism between the Ugaas of the Issa and the president of Somali regional state (African Intellenegence, 2015).

According to Afar informants in Gewane, the Ugaas is making frequent visits to the Gedamaytu Special kebele as a show of his continued authority and control over the area. In a most dramatic shift of events, the Ugaas has taken an Afar girl in marriage from the special kebele locality. Among the Afar, this is viewed as the long-term strategy of dividing the Afar of that locality by forming an alliance in marriage (Alimirah, 2018).



Despite the popular resistance and scepticism, the war of words between the diaspora communities and the threat of war by the armed insurgents, the decision was approved by the presidents of the Afar and the Somali regional states. The Somali region accepted the boundary demarcation map produced by the federal government. The Somali president toured on a reconnaissance helicopter to see the possible landmarks of future boundary demarcation and he consented pending the resolution of the Oromo-Somali armed conflict, which led to the death of hundreds and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people on both sides (Ibid).

The implementation of the agreement began in 2015 by undertaking orientation programs at regional level about the creation of the special kebeles and the required paraphernalia for its establishment. The regional parliament approved the establishment of the Kebele without the need to revise the regional constitution that did not recognize such structures to be put in place. Two Issa-Afar Peace conferences were carried in Gewane and Adaytu to introduce the people with the new peace deal. Local authorities were given the mandate of mobilizing and orienting the grassroots for the implementation of the decision. Even at this stage, there has been resistance by both sides to the decision at all levels of society. Yet, given the national level instability and political crisis looming, it was easily imposed on the people. The Issa Kebeles, however, showed their resistance by killing an Issa assigned by the Afar region to be the chairman of Gadamaytu Kebele. In Qunda-Foo too, the Issa resisted cooperating with the new arrangement by chasing the kebele authorities. The only Kebele that accepted the arrangement is the Adaytu kebele included within Mile Wereda (Bilay, 2018).

The Administration and Security Bureau directly concerned with keeping the peace and security of the region had only two contacts with the dynamics of Issa-Afar relation to date. On both occasions, the bureau provided training on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The regional police trained 15 Issa policemen and assigned them in both the special kebeles and the weredas. During the fieldwork, this author interviewed five Issa policemen in Mile and Gewane who perceived that Issa-Afar relations have significantly increased and that both groups could move and work anywhere in the region without the fear of being killed. Issa pastoralists had begun to come to Afar markets and the vice versa. Afar and Issa policemen are assigned to the same positions of law enforcement. They recognize this development as unprecedented and would have been unthinkable few years ago. Though they appreciate the progress in terms of the



absence of major formal Issa-Afar war and the decline in the spontaneous killing. But they believe that the traditional cattle raiding, individualized homicide and contraband trade continue to date (Constable-Ahmed, 2018; Constable-Mohammed, 2018).

According to the Mile Wereda and Gewane Wereda administrators, they had seen great improvement, with the absence of repeated violence and spontaneous group raiding and counter-raiding. Unlike the Issa of Adaytu, the Issa of Gedamaytu and Qunda-foo kebeles are still resisting the structure and the Afar are not confident enough to spend a night in their towns. Ordinary Issa and Afar pastoralists interviewed in these towns also confirm that the sense of safety and security, confidence in each other is not yet dependable because of the accumulated hatred and the desire for vengeance that did not settle yet (Bilay, 2018).

According to Conflict Prevention Department's Head of Afar Administration and Security Bureau, the problem is being ignited by the Shinile Issa administration. The zone has recently constructed a road connecting the special kebeles and the Zone capital as though reasserting its claim for the kebeles assigned to the Afar. Besides, Zone authorities are frequently observed in the kebeles addressing the people to claim to be included in the Shinile Zone (Yimam, 2018). The above scenarios and the contested legitimacy of the 2014 Addis Ababa peace deal have, in effect, put the peace-making effort in a precarious situation.

A more serious challenge to the success of the peace process is the perception of the Afar and the perceptible practice of the Issa expansion of their settlement along the Addis Ababa Djibouti corridor. The number of hamlets is growing very fast that to the Afar this appears as the continuation of the long-term strategy of controlling the territory peacefully and then later claim them for recognition by referendum. With this threat and anxiety in store, it seems impractical to expect that the peace-making effort would bear fruits (Zelalem, 2018).

A critical look at the nature and results of the whole peace deal shows that from the outset it was snared by overlapping challenges. First, it was imposed and did not consider the wider implications of forwarding an arbitration instead of an all-inclusive peace-process. Second, it committed all the mistakes of the failed 2010 peace initiative. Third, the involvement of the diaspora, insurgent movements and traditional leaders and Djibouti in the problem has a complicating effect that affects the success of the endeavour. Four, partly, the outcome of the



peace deal is creating the absence of violence the people name peace because of their experience of living in war for long. Even the peace requires a vigilant peace-keeping because the possibility of relapsing into a cycle of violence. Finally, the peace deal by avoiding direct war violence for a while has invited fear, threat and anxiety-a form of structural violence- to replace it.

Nevertheless, with all its setback, the peace deal has created a tentative de-escalation of war violence and given hope of peace after the aborted peace process launched during the EEBW. This notwithstanding, the evaluation of the peace process carried out in the post-1991 period and their implication on the dynamics of violence is examined in detail in the following section.

### **6.7 Issa-Afar Peace-Making and the Dynamics of the Violence**

The preceding sections have dealt with the various peace-making efforts in the post-1991 period. This section examines the perpetuation of Issa-Afar violence from the vantage point of the overall national and regional context and the peace processes put in place and the most recent peace-making undergoing pending the demarcation of the Afar and Somali boundary. Except during the EEBW Issa-Afar violence has not deescalated significantly. Not only was direct war violence escalating but also dimensions of structural violence and cultural violence increased across time. The hope of peace created during the EEBW period was abruptly because of the national political dynamics that made the peace-making process dependent on the role of individual political leaders at the national centre than the very people affected by the violence. The formulation of the strategy to give a lasting solution to the Issa-Afar problem based mainly on the decisive role of the governing party controlling the federal government made the fate of Afar-Issa peace dependent on what happens in Addis Ababa that the commitment of the people for peace. Consequently, the crisis that affected the power dynamics in the EPRDF stifled Issa-Afar peace-making.

This was further exhibited in the relapse into Issa-Afar war violence after the authoritarian turn EPRDF took in the post-2005 national election. The narrowing of democratic space during this period made the regional governments of Afar and Somali regions dependent on the blessing of the federal government for their continued existence in power besides constricting the opportunity of democratic resolution of conflicts. The federal government legalized intervention in the internal affairs of regional governments encroached on their right for self-governance



through proclamations and institutional reforms. The inability of the regional governments to deliver services and protect the rights of their people, on one hand, and the illegitimacy of the regional governments and the rampant corruption they got into, on the other, strengthened their dependence on the federal government. This in effect brought about the continuity of popular resentment against the regional and federal governments expressed in armed insurgency and formation of political parties which use the Issa-Afar issue as a political trump card. The regional governments on their part used the same issue to gain favours from the federal government and to gain the favour of their electorate by igniting ethnonational sentiments. In doing so, they tell their people that the federal government is reluctant to resolve the problem any time soon at the same time they secure the support of the federal government by showing that they are containing the popular anger of their people about the continuity of the unresolved problem. They point to the periodic explosion of Issa-Afar war violence as proof of the danger they are struggling to contain which in the absence of their role would have a devastating impact on the security of the country otherwise.

Similarly, armed insurgents and legally registered political parties attempt to use the issue as a political trump card to secure recruits to their armed struggle and get votes in the seldom democratic elections respectively. The volatile Ethio-Eritrean and Eritrea-Djibouti relations having unresolved issues of borders settled by armies of the two nations readily available to fight at any time comes into this complex context of Issa-Afar violence. Insurgents and contrabandists use the Ethio-Eritrean tension as an opportunity to maximize gains at the cost of exacerbating the cycle of Issa-Afar violence.

The people of Issa and Afar caught in these overlapping contexts became victims of bad governance, famine, drought and starvation. Political repression and persecution, the abuse of public funds at the cost of providing basic amenities and services caused a growing destitution and inability to sustain their pastoralist way of life. This, in turn, catapulted the pastoralist commons to zones of violent confrontation with neighbours to vent out their frustration, to settle scores and use war violence economies and contraband as a source of income to complement the declining living conditions. The Afar and Somali diaspora also have a hand in the exacerbation of the violence in that they provide financial support and ignite hatred between the two people that fit into the continuity of war violence. Therefore, the sum of the abovementioned contexts and



actors have been a recurring leitmotiv and contributing factors sustaining the continuity of Issa-Afar violence during and after the failure of every peace-making efforts discussed above. To put the dynamics of the violence along the peace-making efforts, all peace peace-making efforts have left the unique type of violence behind.

The peace-making during the EEBW, its positive achievements notwithstanding, caused the feeling of betrayal and frustration by the federal government after the end of the war. The political purges of regional government officials by the federal government that followed the direct involvement of regional governments in Issa-Afar war using insurgents was perceived as an infringement on the self-rule of the Afar and Somali people, a blow to the perception of the people to the federal government more than the direct impact of the war violence. More important, however, is the growing animosity and mutual mistrust created after the end of the war between the two people. After having encouraging results and commitment to peace on both sides, the rise of a new tide of violence cemented the attitude that Issa-Afar peace is a far-fetched possibility and that the only guarantee to protect their respective interests and security are the use of arms. This mindset was a violence on its own besides being the condition that prepares people for direct/war violence against each other. Consequently, the role of the federal government was reduced into a precarious peace-keeping often challenged by uncontrollable violent incidents. The escalation of violent incidents justifying the need for peace-keeping, and the latter taking the role of federal government from giving a lasting solution towards a fire brigade approach that never succeeded to de-escalate the violence in mutual causation made Issa-Afar peace-making a highly securitized area.

Also, violence emerged against the momentum of Issa-Afar peace-making put in place during the EEBW. After this period the idea of Issa-Afar peace-making was reduced into the issue of boundary claim and demarcation as though the other issue vital for a lasting peace has been achieved. The chances for close cooperation were lost because of making the matter an issue of territory. Issues pertaining to the psychological and emotional recovery and healing, cooperative engagement to give closure to past wounds and loses were left unaddressed. Festering wounds which can easily trigger people to violence remain unbandaged. This dimension was so powerful that during the 2002-2005 regional law enforcement and security organs of the two regions, insurgents which declared war against the federal government were directly involved in Issa-



Afar wars. This continued escalating through the post-2005 election period accompanied by another form of violence, the authoritarian turns the ruling party controlling the federal government and its affiliated regional parties took. The federal and regional governments became more violent than before that in turn shut down the space for democratic dialogue and non-violent resolution of conflicts. This had a wide arching ramification on the way conflicts were handled in Ethiopian in general and on the exacerbation of long-lasting violent conflicts the like of Afar and Issa.

The 2010 failed peace initiative, as disastrous its immediate impact on the chances of the peace-making as it was, shattered the credibility and neutrality of the federal government to solve the Issa-Afar people. On the Afar side, the naming of Issa representatives as administrators of the very contested territories was taken as a unilateral recognition of Issa ownership of these lands. This has created two forms of violence. One direct war violence with the Issa and a strong resentment against the federal and regional government. During the subsequent weeks of the failed peace initiative, many Afar youth joined the Afar insurgency to fight the Ethiopian government. Besides zone and local administrators, the police and the militia of both Issa and Afar were spearheaded to armed clashes. The lasting consequence of this failed peace initiative on the Afar, however, was that unless they stand for themselves the federal government was not to respect their claims. On the Issa side, the vehement reaction of the Afar during the conference and the war that came after the conference confirmed to them that the Afar were not ready to negotiate for lasting peace. This has cast its shadows on the 2014 Addis Ababa Peace deal. The second is that it reinforced the violent mindset that only arms can solve the problem.

The last peace-making- the 2014 Addis Ababa Peace deal- has addressed the issue of territory and deescalated the war violence for now but it has ignited new forms of violence. A growing radicalization among the diaspora community has been behind the igniting of direct war violence in the past. Insurgents and political parties of both Afar and Somali are calling for arms even though the situation at the grassroots is better than before. The most worrying issue is that the demarcation of the boundary that the Somali have accepted in principle is still contingent on the settlement of major violent conflict the Somali have with the Oromo and the continuity of Afar and Somali leaders in power. Now, the president of Somalia is in jail accused of gross human right violation in Somali region and the Afar president is under threat of loss of power. The



possibility of enforcing the deal seem even narrower. Hence, failure in the conflict system involving Somali and Oromo may have unintended consequences on the possibility of successful demarcation. The peace-deal has left the invisible form of Issa-Afar violence unattended of at all. The mutual scepticism has grown further in a different form. The Afar look at the inclusion of the Issa settled towns in Afar region as a partial victory but are anxious about the expansion of Issa settlements as a long-term threat to their security. They perceive this peace-time expansion as the gravest danger that would tear apart their territory. In sum, Issa-Afar violence has continued in various forms because of the interplay of factors located at various levels of.

To put in perspective the various intervening factors emanating from the regional (Afar-Horn states- Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia), national (the federal government of Ethiopia), the subnational (Afar and Somali Regional states) and local (Issa-Afar communities) levels affecting both the nature of Issa-Afar violence and the Peace-making efforts must be conceived as overlapping systems of violence. Issa-Afar violence is not a mere sum of violent episodes, as often is erroneously characterized by academics and policymakers, around resources competition *per se*.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

From the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence and the various peace-making efforts discussed above, the overall pattern to pick up is the continuity of the violence in various forms, except the brief discontinuity during the EEBW period. Even when the guns are silent, still the people of Afar and Issa have been exposed to the famine, destitution, fear and uncurtaining linked to the authoritarian system of rule in the Afar and Somali regions. With the intermittent continuity of violent incidents and the continued failure of the various peace-making efforts, the more invisible form of violence that Issa-Afar peace is not possible and that even the best of all possible intentions are interpreted through cold-hearted conspiracy theory. This, in turn, has cemented the form of cultural violence that justifies the continuity of using violent means to secure short time gains. This is evident from the mistrust and scepticism involved around the



local people around the 2014 Addis Ababa peace deal which has at least resulted in de-escalation of war violence. Even this is accompanied by an ever-growing war of words and the threat to arms among the diaspora community and the armed insurgents of both Afar and Somali community. This is due to the mismatch between the gravity of the contradictions that the Issa-Afar violence is rooted in and absence of commensurate peace-making approaches by the federal government. Moreover, the narrowing of democratic space during this period, besides constricting the opportunity of democratic resolution of conflicts, constituted a national system of violence. The continuity of Issa-Afar violence, therefore, is partly owing to the failure of the federal government to design and execute peace-making strategies based on the perception and wishes of the people affected by the violence. The continual failure of peace-making, in turn, triggered fresh cycles of violence, intensifying the belief in and commitment to the violence.

At another scale, the continuing violence is the result of the peace-making being situated in but incognizant of and irresponsible to the overlapping systems of violence. All peace-making efforts did not consider the influence of the regional, national, sub-national and local systems of violence on the peace-making. Neither did they design interventions to preclude the influence of the systems of violence in the continuity of Issa-Afar violence at the local level. Therefore, the central argument of this chapter is that the perpetuation of Issa-Afar violence is because of (a) its embeddedness in overlapping systems of violence namely regional, national and subnational, which made Issa-Afar violence itself a local system of violence; and (b) the continuity of ill-designed and failed peace-making interventions defined under the influence of the overlapping systems of violence that keep on triggering successive cycles of violence.



## Chapter Seven

### Changing the Structures of Violence and the Future of Issa-Afar Peace

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#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a critical reflection on the future of Issa-Afar peace and presents the way forward for the constructive transformation of Issa-Afar relations. It takes note of the prevalence of inherited violence in the form of memory and narratives of the history of Issa-Afar relations presented in chapter three, the changing nature of Issa-Afar violence in chapter four and the multidimensional explanation and factors for the self-perpetuating nature of Issa-Afar violence in chapter five. This chapter attempts to answer the final question of the study on how to transform the violent relations into peaceful relations. Therefore, the chapter focused on the envisioning of Issa-Afar peace through the constructive transformation of the energy of violence. The central argument of this chapter is that transforming the structure of Issa-Afar violence and building lasting Issa-Afar peace requires three major interventions. First, the transformation of overlapping systems of violence located at various levels. Second, the design of peace-making processes informed by an understanding of Issa-Afar violence beyond violent incidents but including the invisible dimensions of the violence. Three, the peace-making processes should be considered authentic, ingenious and reliable in the eye of the local community rather than arising out of national security concerns and political utilities. Accordingly, this chapter has four sections and a conclusion.

The first section deals with the task of transforming the overlapping systems of violence. The second section reflects on ways of transforming the trauma of inherited violence. The third section presents the bottom-up approach to Issa-Afar peace. The fourth section addresses the issue of territory and boundary demarcation as complimentary issues to be addressed and as entry point of building lasting peace within a comprehensive and integrated peacebuilding than considering it as the totality of the Issa-Afar violence.



## **7.2 Changing Overlapping Systems of Violence**

From the examination of the failed successive peace-making efforts, one major problem is the fact that Issa-Afar violence is embedded in overlapping systems of violence discussed in chapter five. So, one of the imperatives for transforming Issa- Afar relations must be that it be done in tandem with efforts of changing these systems of violence or delinking the local system of violence from the regional, national and subnational. However, delinking appears challenging as the relationship between the local and the other systems of violence are inextricably entwined. Therefore, however challenging the task of transforming the overlapping systems may be, the true transformation cannot be realized without venturing into this aspect of the problem. Accordingly, the strategy to transform the various systems of violence located at various levels is separately dealt with below.

### **7.2.1 Transforming the System of Violence in the Afar-Horn Sub-Region**

The Afar Horn sub-region constitutes a system of violence because of the presence of unresolved issues of border conflict among the three Afar Horn states: Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia. The borders between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Eritrea and Djibouti are flashpoints of violence requiring comprehensive transformation at the regional level. The inter-state tension among the Afar-Horn states has a direct influence on the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence in Ethiopia. This can be observed from four vantage points. First, it set the context for the continuity of mutual-insurgency in the sub-region that continues to be the arms supply line for local violent conflicts like the Afar-Issa. Second, the militarization and securitization of the borders created a general environment of insecurity and antipathy that adds up to the local level of tension and violence. Third, the absolute dependence of the Ethiopian state on Djibouti ports for its access to the sea and the vested interest of Issa-dominated Djibouti government on the fate of Ethiopian Issa people have precluded the federal government of Ethiopia from embarking on peace-making efforts which can bring lasting Issa-Afar peace. Because of the Djibouti connection, Ethiopian government is hand tied from taking decisive measures for lasting that can damage Issa interest that are considered illegitimate in the eye of the state. Decisions of the federal government have been influenced by the interest of the Issa dominated Djibouti government to ensure the benefit



of Ethiopian Issa. Fourth, because of the involvement and influence of the Djibouti government, the Issa have got ample influence on the way Issa-Afar peacemaking is handled.

According to informants at the federal (Meresa, 2010) and regional level (Mohammed, 2018), the unresolved border conflict among the Afar-Horn state and the prevalent sub-regional insecurity involved remains the major impediment to successful Issa-Afar peace-making. Similarly, community informants from both sides underscore that the inter-state problem with Eritrea and Djibouti's involvement in the Issa-Afar violence is a challenge to the success of Issa-Afar peace-making (Alimirah, 2018; Issa-Anonymous, 2017). Governmental and community informants differ on the extent of influence the regional context contributes to the perpetuation of Issa-Afar violence. While the Issa do not give much concern to regional connections in general and the Djibouti connection, the Afar consider both the Eritrean and Djibouti connection as a major contributing factor. Yet, both sides believe in the need to take note of the role of the regional context in thinking about Issa-Afar peace.

Therefore, the transformation of the regional context from the system of violence into cooperation requires the concerted effort of continental and regional organizations like the AU and IGAD, and other external agencies. This, among others, must include the lasting settlement of the border issues of Eritrea and Ethiopia as determined by the Algiers agreement and the decision of the Eritrea and Ethiopian Border Commission (EEBC) (UN, Reports of International Arbitral Awards. Decision regarding delimitation of the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia. 13 April 2002, Volume XXV pp. 83-195., 2002). The stalemate so far has been maintained by the lack of flexibility on the part of the Eritrean government to sit for negotiated settlement based on the give and take principle in order to arrive at lasting demarcation as proposed by the Ethiopian government. It is also caused by Ethiopia's intransigence to implement the final and binding decision of the court of arbitration as per the Algiers agreement it signed (Medhane T. , The Djibouti-Eritrea Conflict, Briefing Center for Dialogue on Humanitarian, Peace and Development Issues in the Horn of Africa, October 2008). Hence, intervention on this part of the sub-regional problems requires a creative engagement to ensure the flexibility of the Eritrean government on the one hand and the readiness of the Ethiopian government to honour the Algiers agreement and the decision of the arbitration court. At this level, the second requirement seems to be on the horizon. The Ethiopian government through the decision of the Central



Committee of the ruling party EPRDF has announced its readiness to unconditionally accept and enforce the Alger's agreement and the decision of the arbitration court (EBC, Ethiopia Accepts Badme Town to Eritrea, June 6, 2018; VOA, June 5, 2018).

However, two problems are still standing on the way of the Ethio-Eritrean peace initiative taken by the Ethiopian government earlier in 2018. First, there is positive reaction on the merit of the initiative and the Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki reiterating that this was what the Eritrean government has been struggling for the last eighteen years and expressed his readiness to send delegates to Addis Ababa for further discussion. Yet, the outcome remains to be determined by future negotiations between the two states (VOA, June 20, 2018). The second, the borderland people of Erob and residents of the Badime locality, an area at the center of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, vehemently protested the decision of the Ethiopian government to handover the Ethiopian land and Ethiopian people to the Eritrean government. Unfortunately, even though the people believe in their Ethiopian identity and yet, the commission's decision declared Badime to be Eritrea's territory (DW, June 7, 2018). The popular resistance of the Erob people was presented to the TPLF, the ruling party in Tigray region, and the latter promised them to solve the problem by give-and-take arrangements, exchanging the territories lost to Ethiopian by the territories lost to Eritrea, which includes the most contentious locality of Badime (DW, June 11, 2018). The TPLF response to the people is nothing but the same position maintained for the last eighteen years by the ruling party, the EPRDF, and the federal government. It totally contradicts the spirit of the new peace initiative of the Ethiopian government. So, the response is nothing but a tentative response to cool down the emotions running high among the borderlanders than a genuine concern.

Nevertheless, in terms of transforming relations to a lasting peace, an ingenious strategy of addressing both concerns of the two state parties and the special interest of the borderland people remains vital. Otherwise, the Ethio-Eritrea problem cannot be constructively transformed in a win-win solution addressing all local concerns and the settlement of the boundary issue along the Afar homeland cannot be realized otherwise. Hence, it will remain part of the sub-regional system of violence. Therefore, the transformation of Ethio-Eritrea relations through normalization and cooperative engagement should consider the possibility of transforming the controversial 980 km long borderlands and the borderlanders into a common zone of peace and



special relations where the harmonization of policies and strategies of Afar Horn states can be implemented and expanded to cover all relations.

Between June and August 2018, a lot has happened between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Things dramatically changed, Ethiopian unilaterally declared its readiness to accept the EEBC decision unconditionally. Following that, a peace agreement is signed both in Asmara and Dubai consolidating the peace agreement (EBC, September 2018). The Ethio-Eritrean border was opened in September and free movement of people and goods has started. One can say, a new Abiy-Isayas pact is on the making with flamboyant ambition of forming a united Horn of Africa under one government (EBC, November 2018). In relation to this study, as to whether the new developments will have positive effect on the transformation of the region is to be seen.

The same consideration must be taken on the other pair of states (dyad) Djibouti-Eritrea relations mainly symbolized by their unsettled clash on the territory of Ras Doumeira and the Doumeira Islands (UNSC, December 2011). The territories are currently occupied by Eritrean forces, and peacemaking and peace-keeping efforts have so far failed to bring any change. One factor that complicated the matter is the strong ties between Ethiopian and Djibouti that cast its shadows over Eritrea-Djibouti relations (BBC, 2017; Reuters, 2017; UNSC, November 2017). The transformation of relations of the second dyad should consider both the resolution of the boundary claim but also the wider consideration of creating the zone of peace in the Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia triad in the Afar triangle along with the Eritrea-Ethiopia dyad of the zone of peace in the northern and western frontiers. However, the spirit of the new Ethio-Eritrean peace while including Somali into the Ethiopia-Eritre-Somali triad, have excluded Djibouti (EBC, November 2018). This is will have negative consequences on the need for the transformation of the Afar homeland which cannot be done without the involvement of Djibouti.

This takes note of the example of the zone of peace established by the pairs (dyads) of Southern Cone countries: Argentina-Chile and Argentina-Brazil examined by Andrea Oelsner (July 2003). The dyads have sustainably solved the problem by changing the borderland into zones of peace.

For this material, ideological and diplomatic conditions were set by regional and global actors (Oelsner, July 2003). Similarly, by establishing a zone of peace the Eritrean-Ethiopia, and Eritrea-Djibouti dyads can be transformed into a triad of peace provided other geopolitical



considerations, ideological rigidity and diplomatic obstinance characterizing the Afar-Horn states is relaxed to allow pragmatic agility. At more critical level, the three states need to undergo basic transformation and transition to democratic rule. All of them practically lack the democratic credentials and legitimacy in the eye of a substantial portion of their people (Leta, *The Horn of Africa as Common Homeland: The State and Self-Determination in the Era of Heightened Globalization*, 2004). Without such changes from within, transforming the sub-regional system of violence into the arena of peace will not be realized. The dictatorial rule in Eritrea and the ethnocratic rule in Djibouti and authoritarian government in Ethiopia are facing challenges from within and outside to enforce transition to the real democratic system. Such efforts should be integrated with the sub-regional imperative to transform the Afar-Horn into the zone of peace. As the Issa-Afar violence is in Ethiopian, the next section will deal with the need for transforming the system of violence at national in the Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopian.

### **7.2.2 Transforming the Ethiopian Federal System**

Alluding to the national system of violence in Ethiopia does not mean that the entirety of the state system is immersed in violence. But the idea is to show that aspects of the state system affecting various dimensions of life in the country play into the creation and perpetuation of violence. It is meant to show how the national system of violence framing and contributing to the local violence, like the case of the Issa-Afar, must be transformed before addressing the violence at the local level. Applying Galtung's typology of violence discussed in chapter two, the components of violence requiring transformation will be examined by taking examples for structural, cultural and direct war violence.

Structural violence in Ethiopian is exhibited in various forms. The silent and invisible forms of violence is instituted in the form of rampant corruption, political repression and lack of access to basic amenities resulting in chronic poverty, high mortality and low life expectancy. Life expectancy is at 65, and Africa low income at 61 but global average at 72 constitute a significant health and mortality challenges. Globally, Ethiopia ranks 150th (out of 186 countries) in infant mortality and 154th in life expectancy. Lack of access to improved water and sanitation facilities and a high level of food insecurity for much of the population means that Ethiopia also has some of the highest rates of child malnutrition (21st) and stunting (9th) in the world (USAID, 2 March



2017: 53 and 60). This has its roots in the rampant corruption, repression and lack of personal, economic and human freedom as well as overall authoritarian rule elucidated below with the indexes for each category based on data from continental and global research organizations.

According to Corruption Perception Index reports of Transparency International for the year 2007 rated from 10 (highly clean) to 0 (highly corrupt) scores, Ethiopia stands 138<sup>th</sup> from 179 countries with the score of 2.4 in terms of public sector corruption. In the sub-Saharan Africa standard Ethiopia is included with the high-level corruption level countries (TI, 2007: 7). The index for 2012 was 3.3 at 113<sup>th</sup> rank out of 174 countries (TI, 2012: 3); while for 2016 it was 3.4 score at the rank of 108<sup>th</sup> out of 167 countries (TI, 2016: 2). UNECA report for the same period ranking public sector corruption from 0 (Highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean) shows that the score for Ethiopia is 35 at the rank of 107<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries (UNECA, 2017: 10). In terms of democratic governance and politics, the state is one among those countries suppressing and repressing freedom of expression and punishing political dissent (Puddington and Roylance, 2017: 16). The Freedom Index of the country is located among the lowest ones at world standard. The global measurement of Human Freedom Index understood as the absence of coercive constraints and which uses 79 distinct indicators of personal freedom and economic freedom for the years 2014 and 2015, Ethiopia's rank is 142<sup>nd</sup> and 146<sup>th</sup> out of 159 countries with a score of 5.48 and 5.39 out of 10 (0 being unfree and 10 More free) respectively. At both global and regional level, Ethiopian's score signifies unfreedom (Vásquez and Porčnik, 2017: 10, 150-151). A more elaborate and comprehensive study on the 2017 democracy index of 159 countries measured in terms of electoral process and pluralism, functioning government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties scored from 0 (authoritarian) to 10 (democracy), Ethiopian's score at 3.42 is closer to authoritarian index ranking 129<sup>th</sup> out of 159 countries. The respective score for electoral process and pluralism, functioning government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties are 0.00, 3.57, 5.56, 5.63 and 2.35 out of ten. Among the rank of 44 authoritarian regimes in Africa, Ethiopia is 30<sup>th</sup> (The Economist, 2018: 8 and 16). The same report has ranked Ethiopia's performance in media freedom measured from 0 (unfree) to 10 (free) at 154<sup>th</sup> out of 159 countries with zero score. With this rank it is included with the worst media freedom offenders ranks with North Korea, Eritrea and Syria. Ethiopia is way below even the African average score of 4.8 and average rank of 93.4 (Ibid, 42, 55-58). Similarly, the Freedom House report for the same year has included Ethiopian into the not free



category with the worst human freedom index scores as one of the 39 % of African countries as not representative of human freedom (Puddington and Roylance, 2017: 10).

In terms of social progress, despite achieving great macro-economic successes year after year and achieving health and wellbeing improvement, Ethiopia's Social Progress Index that measures the overall social development score out of hundred is 45.29 with the rank of 121<sup>st</sup> at the bottom of the fifth tier of 27 low social progress countries. Kenya at the top of this tier is 95<sup>th</sup> with the score of 56.7. At global level, Ethiopia's rank is seven ranks above the 128<sup>th</sup> very low-ranking country (Porter and Stern , 2017: 34-35). These major features are elements of structural violence decimating the life of thousands which must be transformed for building a system of peace at local level.

The federal system put in place in post-1991 period to promote equality and fair representation has become a structure of ethnic exclusion and persecution (Puddington and Roylance, 2017). In many regions of the country, the ethnic system of administration has been used by the ruling elites to instigate conflict among ethnic groups. This has foregrounded the identity factor as one that determines the way people are affected by the overall system of structural violence. This, in turn, has bred resentment and hatred that feeds the cyclical nature of structural violence and the eruption of violent conflict in Ethiopia. Therefore, the federal political system has been manipulated for and used as a framework of launching inter-ethnic conflicts. This has led to the rise of political groups resorting to arms and using legal means that are committed to the utter destruction of the federal system. On the other hand, the governing EPRDF is committed to the maintenance of the system at all cost that led to the rise of virulent explosion of communal violent conflicts, popular protests and armed confrontation between society and government organs since 2015 to date (Puddington and Roylance, 2017: 16). Although there is nothing inherently violent in the federal system, the failure to establish genuine constitutionalism and a functioning federal system has set the context for the perpetuation of both structural and direct war violence. So, the need for transformation of the federal system of government entails addressing rule of law and implementation of the federal constitutions that has all the tools and systems of governing all forms of conflicts at group and individual levels. This entails embarking on genuine constitutionalism and a fully functioning federalism.



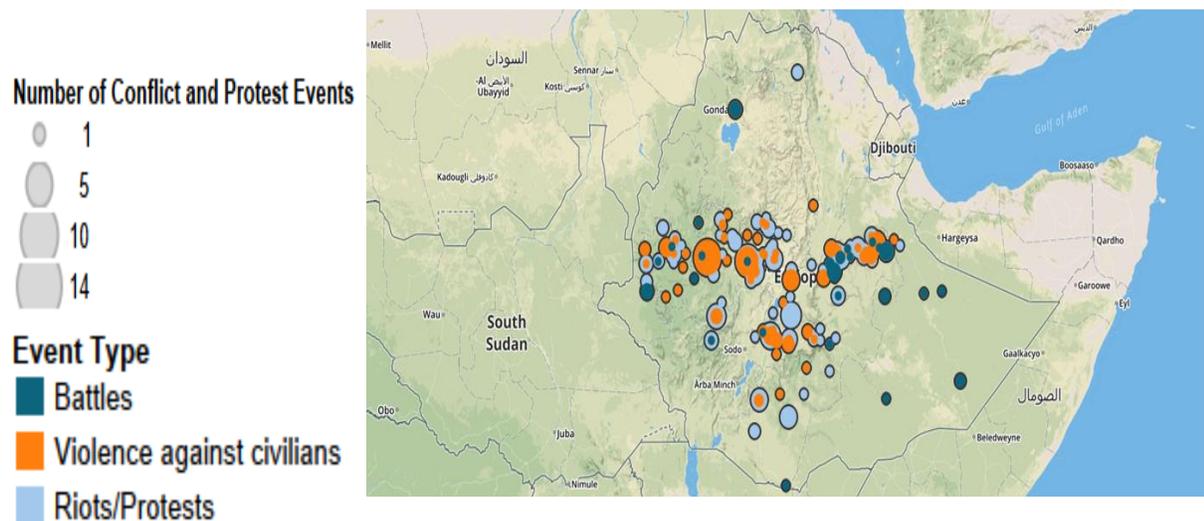
Another reason for the growing opposition against the federal system emanated from the nature of party politics installed in Ethiopia. The EPRDF domination of all aspects of political and economic life through its front members and affiliated party tentacles in the regional states have denuded the constitutionally guaranteed self-rule and representation system of regional states. EPRDF through its system of democratic centralism has secured absolute obedience of members of the front and affiliated political parties like the APDP in Afar and Ethiopian Somali Democratic Movement (ESDM) in Somali regions at the cost of sacrificing their genuine mandate of serving their constituencies (Asnake, 2013; Samatar, 2004).

In effect, the EPRDF rule lost legitimacy both in its core power bases areas and regions led by affiliated parties so much so that spontaneous eruption of violence has become the way of struggling against the its rule. Political critics have dubbed the economic-political nexus involved in the absolute control of the country through the party system and the federal system as a typical form of state capture (Vásquez and Porčnik, 2017; APP, 2014). Thus, transforming the state federalism and the party federalism nexus should promote rule of law, constitutionalism and the creation of genuinely functioning federal system as a prerequisite for non-violent and peaceful transformation of violent conflicts in the country.

The overall authoritarian control and intervention in the self-governing regional states notwithstanding, the nature of control and intervention in the pastoralist regions like the Afar and the Somali regions has elements of denigration of the pastoralist way of life and resistance to accept the pastoralist livelihood as a valid livelihood for the people. This is evident from the policy of the federal government to transform the mobile life of pastoralists into settled agriculturalists modeling the highland agricultural livelihood. The latter is considered as an advanced way of life for reasons of provision of public goods and services, as well as improving the quality of life of the mobile pastoralist society. However, this goes against the age-old value systems and comprehensive totality of life the pastoralists consider to be the good life (Mohammed A. I., Issa-Afar Peace-Making, 2018). Hence, the federal pastoralist policy and orientation constitutes a form of structural violence that takes away vital institutions and resources-like communal pastoralist resources in the name of development projects-which are irreplaceable capabilities for peace (ETV-EBC, June 28, 2018). This speaks to the conceptualization of Arturo Escobar (the invention of development) that the imposition of an

alien form of development programs and discourse that injects a disruptive element into the authentic way of life of the commons by development professional who promise improvement of quality of life that however exacerbates the misery of the poor sections of third world countries (Escobar, November 1999).

Therefore, this is an indication of the need to transform the federal development and pastoralist policy in a way that it takes the subjective values, customs and way of life of pastoralists into consideration, because a society devoid of practicing its own authentic way of life and not allowed to improve what it considers “the good life” cannot have the opportunity and capability for the realization of its potentialities. Consequently, instead of promoting the fulfilment of basic human needs, the policy orientation becomes an insult on basic human necessities in as far as pastoralists are concerned. The cumulative effect of the various dimension of the system of violence at national level is demonstrated by the spontaneous explosion of violent conflicts in many parts of the country threatening the country’s unity and the safety of its population. The report of Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project on Ethiopia for the period November 2015 to January 2016 presented in a diagram show the spatial distribution of the violent episodes all over the country.



Source: Adopted from (ACLED, March 2016: 3) Report of Real time Analysis of Political Violence.

This is indicative the need to transform the system of violence at the national level. These direct violent incidents at the national level are also indicative of the deep-rooted hatred inculcated by the above types of violent practices and structures the last twenty-five years since the



establishment of the federal system. Ethnicity, religion and historical narratives of past violence have become battle fronts that in place of combining national sentiment, parochialism and narrow nationalism have become the rule. This entails the need for an overall national reconciliation to transform the values and attitudes justifying the use of violence. By doing so, the cultural violence entrenched in the state organs and members of society can be defeated at all levels. Therefore, the transformation of the system of violence at national level to contribute to the realization of peace at local level should be considered as an effort to replace a system of violence by system of peace. The same imperative for transformation is required in the two regions.

### **7.2.3 Transforming the Afar and Somali Regions**

Constructive transformation of Afar and Somali regions first requires addressing the sub-system of inter-ethnic violence in the lower Awash Valley. This area is a vestibula of Somali-Afar, Somali-Oromo, Afar-Oromo, Afar-Amhara, and Oromo-Amhara ethnic armed conflicts.

Complex overlap and interplay of various sub-systems of violence are interwoven complicating the resolution of conflicts. Therefore, the need to transform the Afar and Somali region should go hand in hand with the task of addressing the other sub-systems of violence or delinking the Afar and Somali violence from the inter-ethnic violence sub-system in the lower Awash Valley. In both Afar and Somali regions there are five pairs of pillars of the system of violence: ethnocentrism and clan politics, poverty and disease, authoritarianism and corruption, drought and famine, and contraband and insurgency (AJSAB, 2009; AJSAB, 2010).

Ethnocentrism is one of the major challenges to peace in the Afar and Somali regions. A look at the boundary of the two regions shows multiple flashpoints of violence with all their neighbors on this basis. This is due to the ethnocentric agenda promoted by the political elites of the two regions to maximize their benefits from conflicts by harnessing ethnic identities. Also, promoting ethnocentrism gives the authoritarian and corrupt administration of the two regions a false legitimacy by externalizing their mistakes to the conflicts across the borders (AJSAB, 2009; AJSAB, 2010; ABAO, 2009). The longtime conflicts of the Afar with Tigray in the North, Amhara in the West, Oromo and Issa-Somali in the South, the Issa-Somali conflict with Afar and Oromo are cases in point. Especially the recent Somali-Oromo armed clashes that caused the



displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and the death of hundreds are the result of interplay of factors. The source of the problem, however, is ethnocentrism. As ethnocentrism is directed against the out-group, both regions are also known for clan politics that caused the death of thousands of people within both regions. Clan politics has been the cause of instability and political crisis in the regions. Legal and political positions and benefits are distributed across clan lines that those excluded from the benefit system have been resorting to armed confrontation (BBC News, September 19, 2017; Al Jazeera, February 17, 2018). As the saying “that bleeds it leads” has it, the subsequent endless clan reprisals involved in the case of death and loss keep the cycle of violence perpetuating. Given the high commitment to vengeance, the responsibility of all for his clan and relative deprivation involved in exclusion from power and benefit, the cycle of violence creates a chain of events not easy to break. Therefore, the combined effect of ethnocentrism and clan politics have created one of the five pillars supporting the system of violence where a person is weighed, judged, rewarded and punished not on the merit of his qualities or deeds but because of the ethnic group or clan he by accident happened to be born from. This pillar is also supporting the other pillars of violence in the region.

By manipulating ethnocentrism and clan politics, the ruling parties in both regions have created an absolute authoritarian system where rule of law and accountability are just a legal fiction. Consequently, rampant corruption is characteristic of the two regions. The rampant corruption is so out of control that, the former Prime minister of FDRE the late Meles Zenawi had to confess that “Providing budget subsidies to Afar Region is like the futile act of trying to fill a bottomless barrel with water.” On another occasion, he is reported to have said in parliament that “what kept me restless is the proverb of Amhara and the Somali budget” indicating the numerous proverbs in the Amharic language used for political polemics and the endless budget requests from the Somali region (ETV, 2006). Currently, the authoritarian and corrupt system is transformed into system of kleptocracy. The huge amount of public fund disappearing into private accounts has been taking the health, quality of life and substance of millions of people in both regions. Consequently, the third pairs of pillars of violence namely poverty and disease are most critical in the two regions. As it is discussed in chapter five in all measurements of human development and health the peoples of the two regions are the least developed. The chain reaction of the three pairs of pillars is further exacerbated by the environmental marginalization of both regions that they are often exposed to cycle of drought resulting in chronic food shortage and periods of



famine and starvation. This has been caught by the succinct reports of FEW Net USAID and other donor agencies. The chronic poverty and malnutrition exacerbated by period of drought and famine are ripe contexts for the outbreak of new cycle of violence and exacerbation of the dynamics of old violence. Reciprocal cattle raiding and robbery often followed by armed clashes increases during periods of drought and massive animal death, which creates the desire for restocking cattle lost by robbery and death (OCHA, 2012; UN-OCHA, March 2007; USAID, 2009; UNDP, 2014). The cumulative effect of the four pillars is that millions of people are living in poverty, suffering from diseases, malnutrition, losing its animals by drought and famine, languishing under the corrupt and authoritarian rulers who use identity as pretext to put it into ethnic and clan armed conflicts.

The final piece to the jigsaw is the contraband and insurgency pillar. The people under the above type of system of violence have no other alternatives to complement their livelihood security but being engaged in contraband (arms trafficking included) activities and recruitment of others for insurgency (Mohammed A. I., Issa-Afar Peace-Making, 2018). Even regional and federal government officials are reported to be involved in the contraband network. According to the official explanation for the outbreak of wide spread violence between the Somali and the Oromo regions is the struggle between the leaders of the two regions to control the contraband network passing through their regions. The leaders of both regions wanted to monopolize the contraband network for their own benefit and at times they use the support of the insurgencies to get their things done without being implicated in the act (EBC-News, September 2018).

Therefore, dismantling the system of violence in the two regions and transforming it into capability for peace requires ending ethnocentrism and clan politics through education, and instituting accountable and democratic governance to end authoritarian rule, corruption, contraband trade and insurgency. Moreover, it means reducing the poverty-driven violence, disease, drought and famine by installing a responsible government that can respond to the immediate human needs of society and strategically undertake the democratic and non-violent resolution of differences. It must end to use identity fault lines to instigate violence as a means of resolution of differences. With law and order, and accountable and legitimate leaders in place, controlling the system of contraband networks and undergoing peaceful demobilization and reintegration of insurgents will not be a daunting task. Consequently, by demolishing the pillars



of the system of violence, the regions can be transformed into capabilities for peace. The same consideration should also be taken at the local level, where the Afar and Issa community are facing cycle of direct violence and structural violence.

### **7.3 Transforming the Trauma of Inherited Violence**

One of the recurring leitmotifs in the story of Issa-Afar peace-making is the unsettling effect of memory of past violence stored as communal trauma. As it is detailed in chapter three, the memories of tragic events of loss, eviction and victimization have become the framework of analyzing current events and envisioning the future. Bluntly put, memory of violence has become a cognitive framework capable of commanding behavior towards violence. This has been obvious in the discussion under chapter three that deals with how memory of eviction and victimization have influenced the way Issa-Afar violence is represented, and consequently, the way the actors have been responding to the violent dynamics in post-1991 period. In many peace-making efforts there have been attempts to give period of limitation over compensable damages and loses that happened in the past. However, two major issues have remained a major challenge for both the Afar and the Issa side: on the Afar side, the continuous eviction of the Afar by the Issa and the subsequent legalization of conquered territories through peace-agreements that did not last for long have given birth to the Afar perspective that Issa violence is a strategic long-term design to gradually conquer Afar land. This is also conceived as part of the Great Somalia project than an ordinary conflict between two pastoralist communities (Qalo A. , 2018). The Afar refer to the memory of Issa campaigns supported by the Somalia state in the past. The Issa, on the other hand, have bitter memory of victimization by Afar invasions and punitive military campaigns by successive Ethiopian governments. The Issa remember the Afar manipulation of successive Ethiopian governments' security dilemma regarding the Somali question to get the Issa issue to be lumped together with the Greater Somalia project. The Issa believe that the Afar compromised the citizenship right of the Issa (Abdulahi, 2017).

In short, on both sides the strong feeling of victimization, bitter memory of trauma and the obsession for revenge constitute a component of Issa-Afar cultural violence, which has not been addressed by any of the peace-making processes carried out so far. According to informants, such memories, in effect, have cast their shadows on the level of mutual trust and confidence the



parties have towards whatever well intentioned peace-making initiatives (Mohammed, 2018). In the post-1991 period, none of the peace-making efforts have attempted to address this invisible form of violence that provides the moral justification for the continuation of violence. This is captured by two anecdotes told by Afar women about why peace with the Issa is not possible without transforming the trauma of violence. One of the anecdotes talks about how Issa violence has affected everyone that peace-making is rendered dead before it was born. The other entails how the readiness to say “the bygone be bygone” was rendered impossible by the continued violence from the Issa side. In both cases the memory of violence is used as cognitive structure to conclude that peace with Issa is not possible.

#### *Anecdote-One: The Hyena’s Dead Body*

*Once up on a time the dead body of a hyena was found in the field. People took the hyena body to the village to call up on the village dwellers to bury the hyena body. But everyone in the village was against it. Because everyone in the village had the story of the hyena attacking their cattle and their family members. So, they were against collaborating in the burial of the body of the hyena. The people who carried the hyena body door to door in the village, at last abandoned hope and asked the villagers what to do with it. The villagers told them to throw it away down the cliff to the valley and they did. Issa peace is like dead body of the hyena because there is no Afar not affected by Issa violence (AJSAB, December 3, 2004).*

This is a typical anecdote representing how the Afar feel about making-peace with their Issa neighbors. Even though the political elite, which has been the leading cause of resolving the problem in post-1991 period, and elders may agree for peace, yet the overall feeling in the society is that there has been too much victimization by the Issa to easily bury the pas. This is an indication of the need to address past violence properly in order to realize lasting peace. The second anecdote presented below also relates how past violence is perpetuated to the present and is being projected to the future through continued violent action.

#### *Anecdote-Two: The Eternal Pregnancy*

*An Afar woman was the first to get pregnant in the whole hamlet. The other women in the hamlet got pregnant after her gave birth to healthy children after nine months. But the first woman who got pregnant did not give birth. She remained pregnant for years. The wise women of the hamlet asked her what happened to her pregnancy that she could not give birth in time while the other*



women who got pregnant after her had given birth to healthy babies. She responded, “I know the other women have given birth because they were impregnated only once, and they gave birth in time. But me, how could I give birth to a baby like the other ladies while my husband is impregnating me and adding another child every night?! It has become eternal pregnancy for me” (Muauz, 2010).

The second anecdote above presents past violence as pregnancy and peace as the birth of a child. The figurative representation shows how much the continuity of violent action in the present is perpetuating the memory of past violence into the present and projecting it into the future. Unfortunately, not even the most recent Addis Ababa Peace deal has recognized the important of transforming the structure of memory and representation of violence. The Issa-Afar issue is truncated only to the issue of land (territories) leaving the most powerful element of violence inherited from the past as irrelevant. The need for closure to the loss and trauma of the past, however, is repeatedly raised in various occasions by the grass roots, the people who lived in violence. Therefore, to make a successful peace-making, the memory of violence must be positively reconstructed through forgiveness and reconciliation first. This should include the transformation of the Issa-Afar narrative of violence in a way that makes it possible to have a wider reconciliation over the lived experience and memory of violence. One important element requiring transformation is the narrative structure (the way of interpreting) of the Issa question as part of Somali project and the Afar position as denial of the citizenship right of the Issa.

An important capability for peace to be used in the transformation of the energy of the inherited violence is the cultural value of forgiveness discussed in chapter four, known in Afar and Somali languages as *Qaffu* and reconciliation rooted in the mutual recognition of the harm done in the past and expressing genuine remorse towards victims (Muauz , 2013). This would change the cognitive structure of both groups, the way they understand current violence and envision future peace. Moreover, it takes way the system of justification for the continuation of the violence. Therefore, the transformation at this level enables positive reciprocation (positive mimesis for peace) in place of negative reciprocity (negative mimesis perpetuating violence). This requires avoiding the spoiler role of the political elites and interest groups of both regions, and reorganizing the peace making from below.



#### **7.4 A Bottom-up Approach to Issa-Afar Peace-Making**

The peace-making and peace-keeping approach followed by the federal and local government is another problem that contributed to the failure of peace-making efforts and, in effect contributed to the continuity of violence. In all peace-making efforts embarked upon the post-1991 period, the approach used was a top-down approach. The federal government has been the originator and controller of the initiative, idea, process and destination of peace-making endeavors. The problem has not been the case that federal and regional governments took the initiative in peace-making rather that the local people of Afar and Issa have been denied the agency and their voice in the whole dynamics of the peace-making. Government organs have been organizing numerous public gatherings, peace and reconciliation conferences of peace-making during the EEBW period, which was one of the most successful efforts albeit in that producing lasting peace. However, the unique interests, needs and aspirations of the people from the peace-making efforts was dominated by the security interests and concerns of the federal government and the power interests of regional government and politicians. The local world views, the customary conflict transformation mechanisms of Afar and Issa, in general the local capabilities and institutions for peace were not utilized. Consequently, because of being inclusive at the beginning, though not all inclusive, the peace-making was initially considered with good faith as genuine and authentic. Nevertheless, due to lacking in the basic elements of ownership by the local community and failure to create a social space for dialogue based on primarily, not political and national security consideration, the interest of the people, the peace-making collapsed. Therefore, the top-down approach of the peace-making has been one of the challenges against successful peace-making. Therefore, the peace-making approach must be turned head to heels towards a bottom-up approach with basic objectives, destination and strategies of the peace-making from the lived experience of the local people at the center. This entails the following basic considerations.

Adoptability of peace-making structures can be realized if it is based on local frameworks of thinking because doing so gives legitimacy and enforceability of decisions and agility of the process to take different directions in case the peace-making faces road blocks and a blind alley. A bottom up approach in the Afar and Issa society means that the people are bound together by oath of obedience and commitment, that they need utterance of elders' word of mouth to mobilize the public and get things done. This is possible if and only if the public believes that



there is no sectional political agenda involved. So, to create a social platform considered by the public and opinion makers in society as genuine and authentic means to create a local capability for peace which can transcend any impediment. According to elders of Afar and Issa, most peace-making efforts are still born babies because from the outset they were controlled and defined by the state at the cost of diminishing the power and influence of customary leaders and institutions (Abduljibril, 2018; Alimirah, 2018).

This is, however, only one part of the problem. There is another, which is related to how the post-1995 ethno-federal system perpetuates the problem of Issa-Afar violence, on the one hand, and the shifting role of elders that makes them also part of the problem than part of the solution, on the other. In the regional government structures of the Afar and Somali regions, the elders' councils are organized as parallel structures to the regional government structures. They have become salaried workers and advisors of the regional and local government administration. This has brought about two types of developments. First, the elders are involved in a conflict of interest with the various politicians occupying different positions of power and decision making in their own regions. The clan politics discussed in section two above plays into this conflict of interests as an identity faultline and elders are indulged in playing power brokers to get their own clan members to come to power. Second, the elders are accused by the youth of Afar and Issa for commercializing the peace-making, because they are being given a lump sum of money for their role and they want to delay and spoil the success of peace-making efforts to secure their economic interest (Abduljibril, 2018; Alimirah, 2018).

In short, the peace-making roles of elders and customary institutions are politicized and commercialized. Therefore, making the peace-making approach bottom up and empowering the elders and customary local institutions requires two basic imperatives. One is the depoliticization of the elders' role in the regions and the peace-making process. Second is the decommercialization of the peace-making role of elders by restoring the indigenous mores of functioning as peace-makers as part of one's social responsibility without any pay. This enables the empowerment of those elders who are motivated by devotion to serve their society and those that are genuine in the interest of peace and reconciliation. Moreover, doing so adds the credential of authenticity of the process in the eyes of the local community as much as avoiding the exaggerated national security anxiety of the state.



The adoption of bottom-up approach does not, however, mean that the involvement of government is to be curtailed fully rather it will be focused on vital elements of peace-making and peace-keeping. One such an area is law enforcement. The government organs should be uncompromising in regard to law enforcement regardless of clan and ethnic affiliation or political partisanship of offenders. The political elites of Afar and Issa as well as the elders must be capable of facing any opposition within their groups which goes against the idea of peace and non-violence, otherwise the issue of law enforcement will be crippled by partisan agenda as was the case after the end of EEBW.

One of the reasons for the lack of confidence in the many of failed peace-makings, which also reinforced the belief in violent means, is the lack of effectiveness of the law enforcement. The federal and regional governments must devise an ingenious body of law enforcement composed of federal and regional law enforcement organs, community vigilante and part of the civil society and the media to scrutinize the overall performance of the law enforcement organs. Even the police and national defense force members to be assigned to such missions must acquire special training in peace-keeping and peace-making beyond mere military and policing training. Unfortunately, members of the national defense that have acquired international level peace-keeping experience have not been part of the domestic peace-keeping and peace-making operations. The local Afar communities posed the following question in a very sarcastic way:

“We know the Ethiopian government is well known in peace-keeping in Africa and the rest of the world. Members of our national defense have done tremendous work and secured remarkable results in Rwanda, Burundi, Darfur, . . . and other African countries. My question is why is this government, which became a successful peace-keeper and peace-maker outside of its country, not able to solve its own domestic problems? Why can it not carry out Issa-Afar peace-keeping and peace-making?” (Muauz , Issa-Afar Conflict In Post-1991 Ethiopian. A thesis for the Partial fulfilment of MA in Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa University , 2010).

The question is indicative of the need for creating a section of the national defense and police force trained to handle domestic armed conflicts and peace-making processes. Additionally, an important consideration is the need to equip such peace-keepers with the necessary ethical, attitudinal, logistic and financial resources so that they will not be bribed out by contrabandists, insurgents and even corrupt government officials to spoil peace efforts discussed in chapter five.



The second area where government involvement is desirable by necessity is the provision of technical and professional support, not political involvement, on methods of organizing and leading peace-making processes in a way the modern approach can be synchronized with the customary system to facilitate fruitful outcomes.

Other than the above, the government role should be kept minimum. Even the depoliticization of the peace-making should be applied more sternly on government than other parties. Because as we have seen in chapter five, attaching too much political string has caused Issa-Afar peace-making effort to be dependent on what has been going on in the political center in Addis Ababa, Asmara and Djibouti than on the grassroots dynamics of the Issa and the Afar. The sacking of politicians had determined the fate of millions of people affected by Issa-Afar violence. Therefore, in calling for a bottom up approach, it means the forces, actors, institutions, processes and resources of future Issa-Afar peace-making should be mainly within the control of the local communities' that any kind of political change would not easily affect the outcome of the peace-making, and the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence and peace.

On a more particular note, the most recent Addis Ababa peace-deal of 2014 is promising on many counts one among which is the fact that the Afar and the Somali regions have agreed to a win-win settlement on the territory issue. After this deal a lot has gone under the bridge, with the coming of the new Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopia is going into uncharted territories. The signatories of the deal, the President of Somali region, Abdi Mohammed Oumer, and the president of Afar region, Siyum Awol Aydahis, are facing internal and external crises of legitimacy (Mohammed A. I., Issa-Afar Peace-Making, 2018). Therefore, without depoliticizing and depersonalizing Issa-Afar peace-making, the fate of the peace deal will surely face crisis along with the fate of the signatories and other politicians in the federal government. Any change affecting those actors will have unintended consequences on the peace-making.

Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed began his reform agenda by promising to transform the structure of violence, which for example showed by releasing political prisoners and detainees, sacking penitentiary, security and law enforcement officials. Contrary to the rising hope and expectation of the general public to see the transformation of the structures of violence, Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed, like the medieval monarch of Ethiopia working for the centralization and



consolidation of power, by contravening the federal constitutions non-intervention clause followed the path of sacking regional government presidents and replacing them by his loyalists. He changed the regional leaderships of Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP), Somali-Ethiopia, Beninshangul and Harari. Consequently, one of the signatories of the Issa-Afar peace deal, the President of Somali region, Abdi Mohammed Oumer is detained and charged with gross human right violation (EBC, September 2018). Then he tried to dislodge the president of Afar region, Siyum Awol Aydahis, the signatory on the Afar side, and failed after an armed confrontation between federal defense forces and the special forces of Afar region. However, sources in Afar confirmed that sooner or later Seyum will be removed from power (Solomon, 2018). With new leaders that has good knowledge of the problem coming to power, this leaves the hope of implementing the Peace deal dark. In general, at national level, contrary to the media acclaim the Prime Minister of Ethiopia is getting, the country is undergoing downward spiral. Since his coming to power, mob justice, lynching and ethnic violence, sporadic eruption of armed clashes between government forces and insurgents have become common daily news (Business Day, 2018; ESAT-News, 2018; Hadra and Goldstein, 2018; ecaDef, 2019; Hiiraan-Online, 2019; Deutsche-Welle, 2019). In six months of his rule, Ethiopia has become the first in the world in the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)-even more than the totally failed states of Syria and Yemen (IDMC, 12 September 2018 ).

The regions whose leadership has been changed have become totally lawless, with the exception of Tigray-the home base of TPLF and the Afar region. Consequently, the national level transformation of violent structures seems going from bad to worse. Three cases can be mentioned to support the above assertion. Firsts, the illegal arms trafficking in the country is reported to have become so prevalent by the national defense and federal police commissioner. Even Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in his recent press release disclosed that “Ethiopian has become one of few countries whose per capital arms possession is greater than the total population size” (EBC, ETV News: Prime Minister Abiy Speaks to the Parliament , 2019). The statement of the Prime Minister is not supported by any reliable data as there was no effective system of arms registration in the country. However, given the everyday news on the state media about the number of illegal arms captured while being transported to the capital (APA News, 2018) and the researchers first hand knowledge of what is going on the ground confirms the



insecurity created by prevalence of arms following the reform enforced by the new prime minister.

The second case, as elucidated by the graph on armed incidence reports in page 209, is that the only region where there is no armed confrontation and eviction is the Tigray Region. Almost in all part of the country, conflicts are erupting spontaneously. For instance, the most recent eruption of Issa-Afar war that raged for days during December 2018 and January 2019 (ecadf, 2019) and the war drumming between the Amhara and Tigray regions (), are cases showing the downward spiral. Third, the prime minister warned against the threat of disintegration, provided the current fearful condition of violence is not controlled in time (EBC, ETV News: Prime Miniter Abiy Speaks to the Parliament , 2019).

The bottom-up approach consisting of the depersonalization and depoliticization of the peace-making is vital for another pragmatic reason. As it is discussed in detail in chapter five, the politicians of the two regional governments have repeatedly confessed to have been sabotaging the peace-making process by mobilizing their respective people for war during 2002. On other occasions in a bilateral meeting of the presidents of the two regions they indicated that the absence of representative of federal government was considered as a good opportunity to solve their problems by themselves. They also considered the federal government as alien. Even among the Issa and the Afar community members, there is a dominant belief that it was the federal government that is perpetuating the problem, which has an element of truth. Considering the above contexts, therefore, the bottom up approach will take out those unnecessary involvements of government organs and the possibility of scapegoating local problems on either federal and regional or other illicit actors. Because being owned by the local community, it will be under their control and their full knowledge to avoid rumors and manipulations by spoilers. Besides, it eliminates the sense of accepting an imposed decision from above. Also, doing so will do away with the feeling that they are not controlling their destiny to the detriment of the Issa-Afar peace.

### **7.5 A Comprehensive Approach to Issa-Afar Peace-Building**

The relationship between land and peace is another component of Issa-Afar peace-making that needs transformation. In general terms, all peace-making efforts hitherto carried out were



dominated by addressing substantive issue like implementing the reciprocal exchange of assets, payment of blood money, administering contested territories, conferencing on peaceful relations and land. Territorial acquisition and restoration have been the center of the Issa-Afar violence and the peace-making efforts. However, as deeply examined in the preceding three chapters, the issue of land is only the visible manifestation of the overall issue than the totality of the Issa-Afar problem. The matter has been often framed as ensuring land for peace: the restoration of Afar territorial ownership and the right of the Issa to use the land. The 2014 Addis Ababa peace deal attempted to address this issue through signing an agreement and the peace-making is still ongoing pending the demarcation of Afar-Somali regional boundary.

Nevertheless, the framing of the Issa-Afar problem as an issue of land for peace only misses the point. Because the issue has also become psychological, emotional, historical, economic and political problem that addressing the issue by solving land ownership right only is a reductionist approach that cannot fully address the problem. This is evident from anxiety of Afar informants who think that even now that the Issa are pursuing their expansion through non-violent means, perpetuating war violence. Therefore, the Issa-Afar problem must be framed widely in a way that peace-making effort become capacious enough to solve both visible and invisible problems created by all forms of violence. Even the demarcation of the regional boundary of Afar and Somali states may end direct war violence, yet the fact that it cannot do away with the invisible dimensions of (structural and cultural) violence is evident from the continued anxiety between the two groups even after the signing of the peace deal and commencement of peace-making efforts.

Moreover, the violence has affected many dimensions of the Issa-Afar life, involved various actors and created destructive relationships as discussed in chapter four. The transformation of the effects of the violence cannot be done by establishing water tight boundary demarcation and not by giving title deed certificates rather than addressing the problem in its entirety. Hence, this requires following a comprehensive approach to the problem which is inclusive of the following major components.

### **7.5.1 Reconciliation**



The concept and practice of reconciliation have strong social bases in Afar and Somali societies. Yet, in the peace-making process carried out so far, reconciliation has been either simplified or relegated in the interest of political solutions to the Issa-Afar problem. Reconciliation among the Afar and the Issa is based on the acknowledgment of faults and the readiness to compensate and be compensated as well as the reciprocal guarantee of peace by mercy and forgiveness. This practice is captured in the Afar concept of *Qaffu*, which means forgiveness that, in turn, is based on its own assumptions about the source of harm and crime. The Afar world view is partly drawn from the Islamic tradition they share with the Issa also, where any harm against the other is caused by the interplay of four extenuating circumstances. Unlike the western view of crime and punishment, they believe that the perpetrator is fully accountable to his act and is also extenuated. They believe that an act of harm emanates from four sources, the role creator (irreversible destiny), the evil spirit, inherent human frailty and finally the will of the perpetrator. In effect, the perpetrator is takes one fourth of the totality of the act (Muauz , The Madaqa and the Mablo: Customary Conflict Transfoamtion Systems of the Afar , 2013; Aden A. M., 2011).

Therefore, the practice of reconciliation conceptualized by scholars like Jean Paul Lederach (1999) as the space located among Truth, Justice, Mercy and Peace is made easy in this case. The paradoxical nature of relations involved between the two pairs, Truth-Mercy, on the one hand, and Justice-Peace, on the other, observed in modern reconciliation is not at all a problem in the Afar and Issa customary system of reconciliation. Unlike the western model the perpetrator is not accountable on the full extent of the harm. So, the challenges posed by speaking out the truth and possibility of giving mercy, ensuring justice and peace at the same time is made easy by the extenuating circumstances they used and that speaking the truth and enforcing justice does not have paradoxical nature and effect with ensuring mercy and peace. Another important issue here is the fact that the Afar and the Issa strongly believe in addressing, compensating or restituting what is reversable only (Muauz , The Madaqa and the Mablo: Customary Conflict Transfoamtion Systems of the Afar , 2013). In many peace-making occasions the Afar and the Issa have agreed to set period of limitation on the compensable damages and loses by fixing a pre and post certain year. This was a realization of the immense mutual harm they have went through and the impossibility of reversing all the damage. The most recent case in point is the period of limitation set by the Dire Dawa conference discussed in chapter five.



Furthermore, the longtime mutual harm and victimization has created undeclared empathy and fatigue that speaks into their shared experience that they came to know what it means to be a victim and that there is no way out of the cycle of violence than through non-violence and reconciliation. These are the important energies of violence that can be transformed into capabilities for peace building. Combining the concept of Afar reconciliation, their idea of reversibility, empath and the sense of fatigue created by the violence, it speaks more than what Johan Galtung framed as the frame work of transcending violent relations (Galtung J. , 2000).

On a more empirical basis, embarking on reconciliation constitutes venting out long standing anguishes and animosity. It serves as the moment of catharsis between two groups. Specially the sense of recognition of mutual harming and expression of empathy can be an important element for developing mutual trust the absence of which has been the cause of continuous failure in peace-making processes. The sublimation of hatred and accumulate anger, the desire for revenge and settling old scores restores the humanity of both victims and perpetrators to think rationally about the mutual maximization of interests than nihilistic obsession with violence. However, reconciliation itself will not have sufficient meaning unless it is complimented by more tangible activities that can change of the quality of relationship the people of Afar and the people of Issa. One such a foundation is embarking on mutual development activities.

### **7.5.2 Joint Development Projects**

As discussed in the background chapters three and four, the Afar and the Issa pastoralists are the first from the bottom in every indexes of development. This makes the issue of development relevant in the Issa-Afar violence in thee ways. One is that lack of development is one of the causes of the violence. Second, lack of development is partly the result of the incessant violence. Third, embarking Issa-Afar joint development activities is one of the ways out. From a simple rational calculation, embarking on Issa-Afar joint development projects would create the sense of hope and makes the opportunity cost of continuing violence so expensive. Joint Development efforts will surely do away with the despair and the attitude of “If I live in violence, I have nothing to lose anyway!” This has been attested in areas where Afar and Issa were mutually using water points and grazing lands, getting relief aid in Dubti and Detbahri areas, they have kept their relations relatively well longer than other Afar and Issa communities. The level of



poverty and hopelessness created by the absence of necessities like water supply and ensuring subsistence to the family (UN-OCHA, March 2007; USAID, 2009) is a powerful push factor that motivates both the Afar and the Issa into the economy of war violence involved in mutual raiding, looting and killings.

One such an effort can be promoting joint pastoral development projects that encourage sharing of pastoralist resources and pastoralist livelihood improvement supports from government, NGOs and donor agencies. The second is embarking on the Issa-Afar development fund where Issa and Afar intellectuals, the diaspora (the negative energy of the members of the diaspora which are the spear head of intellectual war should be constructively transformed) and business communities can play constructive roles of financing the joint development rather than the mutual assured destruction of the two people by financing their wars.

The federal government of Ethiopia has realized the importance of development for peace and reconciliation and there were efforts of embarking on joint development projects (AJSAB, The Minute of Afar-Somali Peoples' Peace and Development Conference on 03/12/2004 at AwashSebatkillo, december 3, 2004). Nevertheless, these were thought without first controlling the spiral of violence that the idea did not materialize. Besides the political rhetoric and instrumentality of such projects was another problem. Other than using such ideas as tools of political legitimacy, there was not practical commitments out there to at least address the under development induced part of the Issa-Afar violence. Therefore, as was the case for depoliticization of peace-making was clearly made above, similarly the joint development efforts and projects should be depoliticized and owned fully by the grassroots. Development has too also included the mental development of the communities and their capabilities for peace should be advanced in peace education.

### **7.5.3 Peace Education**

In general, access to education in the Afar and the Issa communities is very low. Given their mobile mode of life, the modern educational system which is established on the assumption of a settled life is not suitable for the pastoralist way of life. The Ethiopian government has embarked on a mobile school system to enable pastoralists get access to education. Nevertheless, the success rate is still below the lowest minimum in the country. Lack of access to education is the



topsoil for the development of generations brought up in violence and inherited the memory of violence to the future. Addressing the educational problem of the Afar and the Issa in general is disarming violence its potential recruits for future wars. The way forward should be thought by going out of the box and designing a creative approach to entrench educational services pastoralist society. Like the mobile education scheme, there must be an ingenious mechanism of fusing religious and secular, customary and formal institutions so that girls who are by traditions not encouraged to go to school can also have access to education. This will make half the sky (women) to be important capabilities for peace.

Moreover, parallel to the overall all expansion of generic access to education, a parallel system of peace education is required to unlearn the society of its inculcated and inherited languages, attitudes and behavior of violence. A peace education system designed in line with the cultural and religious mores of the society is vital to defeat cultural violence that justifies violence and its effects that perpetuate violence as the just means. For instance, the Islamic *Daewa*, a community outreach program of preaching the Quran, which is very active in the Afar and the Issa can be used as vehicle of expanding the peace education. Training children on the ethics of peace can be the foundations for building future sustainable peace. In this direction, the establishment of boarding schools and hostels where Issa-Afar children may grow together and developing Issa-Afar scholarships for higher learning may open the opportunity for the creation of a generation uncontaminated with the memory of violence and can provide a reliable foundation for lasting peace. At societal level a process of social reintegration of the two communities is indispensable for the transformation of relations.

At local level peace education is vital to unlearn the mutual hatred, deep animosity and stereotype of the Afar and the Issa. Also, it enables them to heal themselves from the obsession for revenge emanating from the inherited violence from history through memory and narratives transmitted through word of mouth. Success in peace education can open window of opportunities for future generations of the Afar and the Issa to engaged in cooperative problem solving and the transformation their violent relations. Moreover, peace education can shape socio-cultural values and norms justifying the use of violence to settle conflicts. This, in turn, adds up to the improvement of democratic political culture, tolerance and non-violent approach to conflict. At regional level, success in this respect in Afar-Issa relations though peace education



will link the Afar and Somali speaking Horn of Africa in a zone of peace for greater regional transformation of inter-state relations.

#### **7.5.4 Social Reintegration Programs**

The long history of Issa-Afar violence has destroyed the social fabric and symbiotic relations built on centuries old communalities that had survived periodic episodes of violence. Restoring and transforming the social relations by embarking on social reintegration of the two communities to rejuvenate their shared values and build lasting peace on the same is vital. This includes organizing social and religious festivities and activities bringing the people to celebrate their communalities. For instance, one remarkable improvement achieved by the peace-making during the EEBW period was the convening of Issa-Afar customary Afar soccer tournaments known as *Kuquso*. The celebration the Islamic fasting season of Ramadan and Eid holidays together (AJSAB, June 23, 1999-2001). Similar activities like attending to funerals, participating in marriage ceremonies and even encouraging Issa-Afar marriage relationships have the power of bringing peoples' together to celebrate their shared identity over their differences.

Another development hailed by the grassroots during the EEBW peace-making was the opening of access to markets for both groups to exchange their products (Ibid). The most important thing about markets goes beyond their economic utility. Markets are the venue of social marketing, platform of bonding and fraternity that promoting the opening of old markets to be accessible and safe to both groups and the formation of new markets in adjacent areas provides the common socio-economic space for social proximity. With proximity and closer understanding deep rooted stereotypes, prejudice and hatred which serve as justificatory values can in time be defeated. The economic exchange in market brings about a change of values, products, dress codes and implements which are considered as the whole mark of enemy identity. This, in turn, denudes the mutual and communal enemy imagery.

Also, social reintegration can be promoted using age set groups like the Afar *feqama*, the youth club of age set groups that exists among the Issa groups as well. Such age set groups are used in time of war as the combatant legions by both groups. Through long history of violence their role has become to be leading actors of violence. Yet, the role of such institutions can be transformed to play an inter-ethnic structure of peace than violence. By bringing an alliance of Issa and Afar



age set groups together in a league of fraternity, the *feqamas* can serve as the instrument of social reintegration. Besides, the myth and history of the inter-clan fusions between the Afar and the Issa can be promoted to serve the same purpose of promoting shared destiny and symbiotic relationships. Other ingenious social reintegration programs can be designed with the help of experts in the field and further separate and multi-disciplinary research on how to use social institutions and values for the transformation of societies dilapidated by cycle of violence is required, though. In short, the sum of various social reintegration programs can transform the cognitive frame work of enmity into amity so that positive mimesis replaces negative mimesis. Yet, the rise of violent episodes in the making of such efforts appear to cause fall back into mimetic violence. Therefore, parallel activities of peace-keeping should complement the comprehensive strategy of transforming relations. One element of controlling violent episodes is controlling the instrument of violence.

#### **7.5.5 Controlling the Instruments of Violence**

The analysis of the systems of violence in chapter five showed that there are overlapping systems of violence that feed the Issa-Afar violence. Within these overlapping systems of violence there are multiple instruments of violence. These are a prevalence of Afar and Somali insurgency, contraband and illicit arms trafficking networks, illicit arms possessed by the Issa and Afar pastoralists, the presence of huge armed militia, police and special police forces in both regions which have been used to exacerbate the communal violence. All elements have been used as the source of automatic and semi-automatic machine guns that are used in the Issa-Afar cycle of violence. Establishing an effective system of controlling the supply of instrument of violence is indispensable to control Issa-Afar violent episodes. This needs to address the supply lines at all levels. The first is addressing the issue of Afar and Somali insurgency. Peaceful Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of Afar and Somali insurgents have been rarely successful so far (Muauz , The Paradox of Micro DDR of Afar Insurgents in post-2002 Ethiopia. Conference Paper Presented at Humanities Faculty Annual Research Conference Day of University of Pretoria., 2017). Without effective DDR of Afar and Somali insurgents controlling the arms supply to Issa-Afar cycle of violence cannot be realized. Therefore, a sub-regional system of DDR involving the Afar-Horn states and the sub-regional region IGAD should be designed and implemented with the full participation of the Afar and Somali people.



Second, the excessively armed legal forces that constitute the regional law enforcement and security organs of both regions is easily manipulated by ethno-centric emotional mobilization agenda of regional politicians to be used in inter-ethnic armed conflicts. The case in point is the involvement of Afar and Somali, Somali and Oromia law enforcement forces in inter-ethnic conflicts. To avoid such reservoir of instrument of violence being used for communal violent conflicts, the federal and regional governments should design a program for the reduction of the armed personnel in all regional states in the federation.

Third, the contraband and illicit arms trafficking network pervasive in both regions should be controlled in collaboration with the neighbouring states of Djibouti, Somali land and Somali. The IGAD platform can an important multilateral stage to coordinate regional efforts. Moreover, the prevalence of arms in the hand of pastoralist Afar and Issa should be regulated in a way that considers the economic and cultural utility of guns in the pastoralist society. One way could be the registration and legalization of pastoralist guns and the confiscation and destruction of extra arms of the pastoralists by paying compensations. In short, the control over the instrument of violence should be one element of the comprehensive Issa-Afar strategic peacebuilding.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The current dynamics of Issa-Afar violence is located at an enviable level. At least for the last two years, direct war violence has de-escalated to individual and small-scale level violent incidents. This is due partly to the Addis Ababa peace and mainly the deflection of the Issa-Afar violence by the national level political crisis and the outbreak of Somali-Oromo conflict. A similar period of tentative de-escalation was observed after peace agreements in the past. A case in point is the EEBW period. Yet, it did not last long to be an opportunity for comprehensive transformation of relations into lasting. This is due to the interplay of many factors. First, the absence of war violence was taken for peace and further efforts to build peace availing of the period of absence of war violence was not utilized. Second, the invisible dimension of violence was not addressed at all. Third, the overlapping systems of violence embedded in the sub-regional, national, sub-national and local systems of violence were not constructively engaged towards the transformation of relations between the Afar and the Issa. Therefore, the future of Issa-Afar peace hangs on the commitment and efficiency to address the setbacks created by the



above three systems of violence and the lack of engaging Issa-Afar violence in a comprehensive framework of peace-building after a period of de-escalation.

Considering the multidimensionality of the tasks required to ensure the success of Issa-Afar peacebuilding, the future of Issa-Afar peace seems so difficult to realize. However, because it involves many factors located far away from the local peace capabilities does not at all mean that it cannot be realized. Instead without changing the intricate problems of the Afar-Horn region, the country and the two regional states. Rather it shows the imperative for a comprehensive approach towards designing local peace-making within the context of (a) overall transformation of systems of violence, (b) inversely addressing the constructive transformation of the visible and invisible dimension of the Issa-Afar violence at local level with ingenuity, authenticity and local ownership, (c) embarking on efforts of “a” and “b” in a diachronic manner at all levels than a sequence of programs to be executed one after another. Furthermore, the need for designing the Issa-Afar peace-making processes at hand and the boundary demarcation informed by the local realities as well as an understanding of Issa-Afar violence goes beyond violent incidents and into the visible and invisible dimensions of the violence is vital.

The imperative to make Issa-Afar peacebuilding authentic in the eye of the people and owned by them, ingenious and comprehensive in addressing the overlapping systems of violence constitutes the paradox of making it local as much as regionally embedded. However, this paradox is the space for creativity, thinking out of the box and envisioning the possibility of lasting Issa-Afar peace by utilizing the local capabilities for peace discussed in this and the preceding chapters. As it has been always the case, the commitment of the local people to promoting peace, engaging in the constructive transformation of the effects of violence and their realization of inseparable fate are vital capabilities not utilized yet. Thus, the future of Issa-Afar relations hangs on the utilization of the current lull in violence, the local capabilities, the recognition and implementation of the multi-tiered and multidimensional transformations as suggested in this chapter.



## Chapter Eight

# Theoretical Reflection on Recurrent of Violence and Peace-Making

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### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter brings the study to a close by providing some conclusions, pointing to the gaps observed and by identifying issues that require further inquiry and the contribution of this thesis to the study of violence and peace. In doing so, the study tests the assumption of the study and makes theoretical reflections on the explanation for the cycle of Issa-Afar violence and the perpetuation of pastoral violence in general. Accordingly, the chapter is organized into three sections; the first, based on the findings summarize the pertinent explanations for the continuity of Issa-Afar violence and areas requiring further study; the second deal the explanations for perpetuation of violence in pastoral societies; the third section makes a theoretical reflection on the contribution of the cycle of Issa-Afar violence for our understanding cycle of violence in general. Therefore, the chapter is presented in a reverse process of rewinding the research journey to situate it in the general discourse on a cycle of violence.

### 8.2 Recurrence of Issa-Afar Violence Explained

The study set out to investigate three major research problems questions. Firstly, what is the experience of violence among the Issa and the Afar in the post-1991 period? In answering this question, the study aimed at an in-depth description of the historical prognosis, change and transformation of Issa-Afar violent conflict in the post-1991 period. It attempted to understand the ways in which the Issa and the Afar people attend to perpetual violence and the effects of living in a violent situation. From this, it attempted to grasp the nature, meaning, history, memory and experience of violence constituted and instituted in their real-life experience. Furthermore, it aimed at opening access to the subjective experience of the people of Issa and Afar, for a better understanding of the nature of violence during the post-1991 period. This question carried a proposition that Issa-Afar violence in the post-1991 period has transformed into a multidimensional problem of society, independent of its substantive and originating causes.



Secondly, why has Issa-Afar violence in the post-1991 period become intractable and immutable to interventions? Addressing this question probes the research subjects' explanation for the perpetuation of the violent conflict and its intransigence in the post-1991 period. This endeavour brings to light the hitherto unheard views of the people about the causes of perpetual violence in the Issa-Afar world vis-a-vis the various peace-making efforts. The proposition behind this question is that while the violence has long been detached from substantive causes and has become embedded in deep-rooted mutual hatred which perpetuates and exacerbates the security dilemma of both groups, peace-making efforts by the state do not meet up with and are not moving up with the current transformed nature of Issa-Afar violence.

Thirdly, the study envisions on how to change the perpetual violence from mimetic (reciprocating in) violence into mimetic (reciprocating in) peace which underscores the constructive transformation of the violent relationship between the Afar and the Issa people. Their view of the violent conflict as dilemma and paradox, and of the future is to be discussed. Moreover, their prescription and proscription are thematically interpreted against orientations of the state towards the matter and preexisting theoretical constructs of constructive conflict transformation. It asks how can the Issa-Afar be constructively transformed into lasting peace? Addressing this question is based on the proposition that the constructive transformation of Issa-Afar violent relations requires interventions to be informed by the views and perceptions of Issa and Afar pastoralists as represented by opinion leaders.

The above questions are set within the context of a theoretical chapter that examines the conceptual construct, nature and dynamics of violence as a phenomenon and discourse in shaping the quality of relationship among groups in a pastoral context. Central to this effort is to provide a tentative theoretical construct and formulation helpful to understand the phenomenal self-perpetuating nature of violence and the way to its constructive transformation. In this, two major theoretical frameworks of understanding violence and peace by Johan Galtung and J. P. Lederach are used as capacious theoretical caveats complimented by arguments on violence borrowed from various fields of study. To understand the self-perpetuating nature, a workable definition is developed through the discussion. This is followed by an examination of the explanation on the self-perpetuating nature of violence from different theoretical orientations.



The overriding assumption the study adopted is that violence perpetuates itself by assuming various form at various periods, namely taking the form of visibility and invisibility as direct war violence, structural and cultural violence. In the Issa-Afar context, there is also another form of violence which an eclectic composition of the three types of violence is, foundational violence wherein a period of negative peace after a period of war creates a structural and cultural form of violence and perpetuates the direct violence in different forms. The possibility of a cross-fertilization of the different forms of violence is also suggested as a modality for perpetuating violence.

Accordingly, the peace-making and peacebuilding imperatives are the tasks of transforming the energy of violence to a constructive engagement and transformation of relations. This presupposes that violence is a human making and can be unmade with creativity, ingenuity, embarking on comprehensive and authentic efforts trusted by the parties to the violence. This is in line with the propositions made in chapter one and the questions the study set out to answer.

Argued here is that the theoretical explanation for the perpetuation of violence and the comprehensive strategy of transforming violent relations are not to be applied in a one-size-fits-all fashion. Instead, the explanations for the perpetuation of Issa-Afar violence and the future of Issa-Afar peace should be envisaged from the specific contexts of the societies, their lived experience of violence and their point of view of how to get out of the cycle of violence. Therefore, the theoretical framework is bracketed to allow the narratives and voices of the people affected by violence can come out and speak for itself.

To answer the first research question on the nature of Issa-Afar violence two chapters, chapter three and chapter four, provide the analysis. Even though the target is to understand the nature of violence in the post-1991 period, however, there is the need to understand how memory, narratives and representations of violence play out in the perpetuation of violence examined in chapter five. Besides the need to provide historical context, aspects of continuity and discontinuity in the nature of Issa-Afar violence, the pre-1991 trend and nature of violence is explored. Issa-Afar violence in the pre-1991 period covering circa the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century up to the fall of the Derg regime in 1991 is examined. The early formation and transformation of the



origin, nature, utility and organisation of Issa-Afar violence up to the end of the Derg regime are explored. Moreover, The Issa-Afar narratives of violence in the form of communal memory and the representation of past violence is investigated. Conversely, how the narratives of old Issa-Afar wars play out in the dynamics of contemporary Issa-Afar violence is examined in a historical timeline showing the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence. The central contention of this chapter is that the memories of old Issa-Afar wars and the various forms of experience of violence during the pre-1991 period are inherited as aspects of structural violence and cultural violence in the dynamics of the post-1991 Issa-Afar violence.

The violence had its own ebbs and flow demonstrative aspects of continuity and discontinuity in history. While the discontinuity has been mainly characterised by the involvement and disappearance of actors of violence at regional and national levels, the continuity manifested cycle of violence with the following features. Except for the inherited medieval violence, Issa-Afar violence had not been purely pastoral conflict based on traditional and customary causes or pastoral socio-economic factors *per se*. Even the violence of the medieval period was affected by elements of religious, political and identity factors. This is not to mean that pastoral conflict stands devoid of such factors rather than that the dominant defining forces were not issues emerging from the resource needs of pastoralists. The ceaseless repetition of the cycle of violence and the suffocation of the communal memory of the Issa and the Afar by narratives of war have influenced the predisposition of both groups and their individual members towards violent behaviour.

Most disturbing is that even memories of medieval violence are inherited not in the way they eventuated in history but recast by later time relations of animosity. These provide the system of values justifying the continuity of violence. Another vital point to note is that the element of structural violence characteristic of the alienation and marginalisation of the Afar and Issa pastoralists is down plaid by both groups to focus on mutual incrimination. This pertains to the Galtungian concept of (cultural violence) horizontal penetration which either allows partial view or blocks the real view of reality (Galtung, 1996). The consciousness, in our case, of the Afar and the Issa is clouded by the cycle of Issa-Afar violence on the one hand and the conspiratorial



mutual incrimination and justification of violence each group project against each other. In the final analyses, the memory of the violence and its competing narratives have contributed to the transmission of the structures and cultures of violence to the post-1991 period that is reflected in the nature and organisation of Issa-Afar violence in post-1991 era discussed in chapter four. There is enough evidence supporting the inference that the memory and narratives of violence are recurring leitmotifs which play out in the continuation of violence as a form of inherited violence. However, the psycho-social mechanisms of inheriting violence through the instrumentality of memory and narratives of violence is a question not addressed by this study and require a separate research endeavour.

In chapter four, the form, organization and meanings that the new Issa-Afar violence assumed and the (tangible and intangible) utilities of violence in the Post-1991 period are explored to address the research aim of depicting the nature of Issa-Afar violence as experienced by the Issa and the Afar people. This chapter embedded the contemporary violent conflict dynamics in the political and economic system put in place after the fall of the military government in Ethiopia. The discussion indicated the changes and continuities of the nature of violence considering the place of Issa-Afar pastoralists in contemporary Ethiopian state and society.

The nature, meaning and purpose of Issa-Afar violence in post-1991 Ethiopia are presented as an aspect of continuity of the violence of the pre-1991 period and as born of the changes eventuated in the post-1991 period. This provides the context and the big picture of Issa-Afar recurrence and its immutability to repeated peacemaking efforts discussed in chapter five. The central argument of this chapter is that the changes ushered during the post-1991 period have transformed Issa-Afar violence entirely. The system of violence means and relations of violence, the meaning and utility are redefined by the new political and economic reconfiguration carried out in Ethiopia. Issa-Afar violence has become deeply engraved in communal memory propelling people into reciprocal escalation and perpetuation of violence.

Accordingly, Issa-Afar violence is examined against the background of the changes carried out at the regional, national and local levels and gives a discernible understanding of the multidimensional dynamics which defined the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence. The interplay of



factors emanating from the various levels has shaped the nature of organization, actors, instruments, impacts, victims and observers of Issa-Afar. In effect, the agentive and non-agentive factors of recurrence of violence are vividly depicted. It is not only the nature and impact of Issa-Afar violence which is transformed but also the meanings of Issa-Afar violence in the eye of the people affected by it and the meaning it creates, as well as the purposes it is used for. It is transformed into a war of ensuring survival and existential struggle involving issues of history, identity, politics, economy and cultural values. The recurrence of Issa-Afar violence has become a self-nourishing phenomenon writing (constituting and creating) its own meaning. The interplay of various factors has characterized the dynamics of violence mainly as a trend of escalation with a brief period of de-escalation. The following major characteristics have defined the nature of Issa-Afar violence.

First, Issa-Afar war violence has been foundational in the sense that it erases down old geographic settlements, relationships and history by opening a new one often accompanied by peace deals which open a new chapter in the history of the two peoples. In this, the Issa is always on the victorious side. It was expressed in continuous territorial eviction and securitization of the region that not only breed the continuity of the obsession for revenge and decimation but also gave justification to the use of state coercion, repression, marginalization and alienation of the Afar and the Issa. While this conception of foundational violence belongs the Afar, the Issa conception of foundational violence is associated with the Afar collaboration with the Monarchy and the Derg in destroying Issa settlements. Most important with the foundational nature of Issa-Afar violence is that it is considered and remembered as a catastrophe, a turning point in the fate of the people of Afar and survival to the Issa.

Second, the foundational violence is an addition to the deep-rooted hatred and enemy imagery both groups have for each other which clouds reasonable thinking and conscious understanding of the causes, consequences and way out of the cycle of violence. Hence, it contributes to the cycle of violence by providing justification for the continued war violence for restoring the lost honour, territory and avenging the dead. This has made the past violence to be inherited by the post-1991 period, making it hard to control.



Third, another important nature of Issa-Afar war direct war violence relating to the other forms of violence is its repetition. The presence of famine, resource scarcity, and marginalization has contributed to the continuity of direct war violence, and the vice versa. Galtung asserted that direct violence is often frequented in dynamics society than in static one, while the inverse applies to the prevalence of structural violence. The Afar and the Issa societies are highly static societies in the sense that the society continued lives nearly the same way of life their ancestors lived hundreds of years ago. However, unlike Galtungian assertion, both direct and structural violence are prevalent which makes Issa-Afar violence unique. The repetition of direct violence, instead of Winter Yves's assumption that it creates normalcy, created constancy that peace cannot be attained and group security should be maintained through violence only. However, Winter Yves's explanation that direct violence lends itself to cross-generational continuity is true as seen in the Issa-Afar violence. Yet, it is not by rendering structural violence invisible. Because structural violence is visible in the Afar and Issa world in the form discussed above.

Fourth, the mark of structural violence is vividly visible in the life of Afar and Issa society. The precarious existence of their pastoral way of life always vulnerable to drought, famine and epidemic disease, chronic food shortage and dependence on relief aid are the dominant features of structural violence the Afar and the Issa are vulnerable to. In turn, their experience of structural violence triggers a tsunami of direct violence as a reaction to the unacceptable condition the people live in. However, the direct war violence is often directed between the Afar and the Issa than against the state, the agent of the structural violence. However, unlike Galtungian conception, the structural violence is not as such invisible in the case of Afar. Instead, it is very visible and bold manifesting itself in the mutual hatred and its contribution to the continued war violence against the state and horizontal war violence between the Issa and the Afar for the last century. Therefore, the continuity of Issa-Afar structural violence can be said to have perpetuated partly because of its deep-rooted nature, and partly because of a dominant presence in the Afar-Issa socio-economic and political landscape than its hidden nature. In short, it is not its invisibility but its visibility to the perception and day to day engagement of the two people that makes it self-perpetuating.



Fifth, the continuity of direct Issa-Afar war violence is used as justification for the imposition of structural violence by the state. By the bid to control direct Issa-Afar violence the state institutes its control over their This is in addition to what Winter Yves said about the state of normalcy of violence, a mindset of taking violence as ordinary part of real life because of its repetition. That the repetition of Issa-Afar violence indeed has created the erroneous perception that it is the usual Issa-Afar thing, a normalcy of the Issa-Afar world in the mind of policy-makers, which is wrong. This perception naturalizes violence to the Issa-Afar world by intellectuals and government organs. So, it keeps direct violence self-perpetuating because of the use of direct violence to decimate it or by the omission of taking proper action. So, the inner working of the visible direct war violence and the invisible (structural and cultural) forms of violence in the lived experience of Issa-Afar violence is that they work in tandem. Moreover, the nature and level of visibility and invisibility, normalcy and abnormality of perpetual violence varies from those directly affected by the violence and the third party, in this case, the Afar and the Issa on the one hand and the state that is the agent of structural violence.

Therefore, the nature of Issa-Afar violence has been transformed to become the kind of violence characterized by the above features and mainly contributing to the self-perpetuating nature of the violence. However, this does not fully explain why Issa Afar violence has become intractable to the various peacemaking efforts, that takes the discussion in chapter five devoted to addressing the peacemaking processes to develop the explanation for the recurrent and self-perpetuating nature of Issa-Afar violence.

In chapter four, the nature, purpose and organization of Issa-Afar violence are examined as an explanatory factor for its unabated continuity. However, the analysis of the nature of violence is not enough to understand why a certain violence is recurrent. As the chronic or incurable nature of disease cannot be understood without understanding the nature of the treatment, so does the nature of violence without understanding the nature of peace-making interventions. Therefore, the nature of Issa-Afar violence is examined from the vantage point of Issa-Afar peace-making to understand the recurrence of violence which can be explained by the failure of peace-making



efforts. It focused on grasping the explanations which are not addressed by the discussions made on the inherited violence in chapter three and the nature of post-1991 violence in chapter four.

Following the disease-treatment analogy, the relationship between Issa-Afar violence and Issa-Afar peace-making is analyzed to show how the nature, purpose, organization and outcome of the process affected the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence. This is done at four levels; first, the customary conflict resolution and peace-making systems of the Afar and the Issa are examined to highlight the divergence and convergence of the state-led peacemaking process with the customary system; and it shows that there is a wide divergence from the type of peace-making considered authenticity and legitimacy of the process in the eye of the people. Second, the examination of the nature, organization and process of the peace-making is appraised and the peace-making processes had weaknesses that contribute to the perpetuation of violence. Third, an appraisal of the outcomes of the peace processes is done and the reasons for the continued failure except for the brief period during the Ethio-Eritrean Border War (EEBW) are examined. Fourth, the exceptional improvement of relations as the result of the peace-making during EEBW is examined in a separate section to elucidate what can be learned from that period for the designing of a successful peace-making. Fifth, the attempts to develop a causal explanation between the peacemaking efforts and the dynamics of the violence is also done. The central argument of this chapter, therefore, is that the ill-designed peace-making attempts and their continued failure have contributed to the perpetuation of the cycle of violence and the creation of new forms of violence. This accounts for the following major explanations and corresponding arguments.

First, the escalation of direct war violence, except the brief discontinuity during the EEBW period, militating peace-keeping has created a mentality that peace is not possible, and the only workable strategy should be violence. Because even when the guns are silent, still the people of Afar and Issa have been exposed to the famine, destitution, fear and uncertainty linked to the authoritarian system of rule in the Afar and Somali regions. With the intermittent continuity of violent incidents and the continued failure of the various peace-making efforts, the more invisible form of violence that Issa-Afar peace is not possible is cemented in the communal



cognitive structure; and that even the best of all possible intentions are interpreted through cold-hearted conspiracy theory.

Second, the process of peace-making where imposed and considered unauthentic from the outset. The involvement of political agendas and actors at regional, national and sub-national levels was to the detriment of the peace-making process that in turn exacerbates the lack of trust in the peace process. This, in turn, has cemented the form of cultural violence which justifies the continuity of using violent means to secure short time gains. This is evident from the mistrust and scepticism involved in the local people around the 2014 Addis Ababa peace deal which has at least resulted in de-escalation of war violence. Even this is accompanied by an ever-growing war of words and the threat to arms among the diaspora community and the armed insurgents of both Afar and Somali community.

Third, the peace-making efforts were limited to addressing the visible forms of violence leaving the most important forms of structural and cultural violence intact to be the bases for another cycle of violence. Fourth, the peace-making processes do not meet up with the transformed nature of Issa-Afar violence; the responses and interventions at all levels were not moving up with the escalating and transforming nature of the violence. This is due to the mismatch between the gravity of the contradictions Issa-Afar violence is rooted in and non-commensurate peace-making approaches the federal government resorts to. The continuity of Issa-Afar violence, therefore, is partly owing to the failure of the federal government to design and execute peace-making strategies based on the perception and wishes of the people affected by the violence. The continuity of failed peace-making, in turn, continued triggering fresh cycles of violence intensifying the belief in and commitment to continue the violence.

Fifth, at another scale, the continuity of the violence is the result of the peace-making being situated in but incognizant of and irresponsive to the influence of overlapping systems of violence. All peace-making efforts did not consider the influence of the regional, national, sub-national and local systems of violence on the peace-making. Neither did they design interventions to preclude the influence of the systems of violence in the continuity of Issa-Afar violence at the local level.



Therefore, the central argument of this chapter is that the perpetuation of Issa-Afar violence is because of (a) its embeddedness in overlapping systems of violence namely regional, national and subnational, which made Issa-Afar violence itself a local system of violence; and (b) the continuity of ill-designed and failed peace-making interventions defined under the influence of the overlapping systems of violence that keep on triggering successive cycles of violence.

Based on the findings of the preceding three chapters, chapter six is devoted to a critical reflection on the future of Issa-Afar peace and presents the way forward for the constructive transformation of Issa-Afar relations. It takes note of the prevalence of inherited violence in the form of memory and narratives of the history of Issa-Afar relations presented in chapter three, the changing nature of Issa-Afar violence in chapter four and the multidimensional explanation and factors for the self-perpetuating nature of Issa-Afar violence in chapter five. This chapter attempts to answer the final question of the study on how to transform the violent relations into peaceful relations. Therefore, the envisioning of Issa-Afar peace by the constructive transformation of the energy of violence is addressed here. The central argument of this chapter is that transforming the structure of Issa-Afar violence and building lasting Issa-Afar peace requires three major interventions. First, direct the transformation of overlapping systems of violence located at various levels. Second, design peace-making processes informed by an understanding of Issa-Afar violence which goes beyond violent incidents and into the invisible dimensions of the violence. Third, the peace-making processes should be considered authentic, ingenious and reliable in the eye of the local community than national security concerns and political utilities.

The current dynamics of Issa-Afar violence is located at a level of de-escalation. At least for the last two years, direct war violence has deescalated to the individual and small-scale level of violent incidents. This is partly due to the Addis Ababa peace and mainly the deflection of the Issa-Afar violence because of the national level political crisis and the outbreak of Somali-Oromo conflict. The latter have a deescalating effect besides the peace deal. A similar period of tentative de-escalation was observed after peace agreements in the past. A case in point is the EEBW period. Yet, it did not last long to be an opportunity for comprehensive transformation of



relations into lasting. This is due to the interplay of many factors. First, the absence of war violence was taken for peace and further efforts to build peace availing of the period of absence of war violence was not utilized. Second, the invisible dimension of violence was not addressed at all. Third, the overlapping systems of violence embedded in the sub-regional, national, sub-national and local systems of violence were not constructively engaged towards the transformation of relations between the Afar and the Issa. Therefore, the future of Issa-Afar peace hangs on the commitment and efficiency to address the setbacks created by the above three systems of violence and the lack of engaging Issa-Afar violence in a comprehensive framework of peace-building after a period of de-escalation.

Considering the multidimensionality of the tasks required to ensure the success of Issa-Afar peacebuilding, the future of Issa-Afar peace seems so difficult to realize. However, because it involves many factors located far away from the local peace capabilities does not at all mean that it cannot be realized. Instead, it means that without changing the intricate problems of the Afar-Horn region and the Afar-Horn states, realizing lasting Issa-Afar peace. Rather it shows the imperative for a comprehensive approach towards designing local peace-making within the context of (a) overall transformation of systems of violence, (b) inversely addressing the constructive transformation of the visible and invisible dimension of the Issa-Afar violence at local level with ingenuity, authenticity and local ownership, (c) embarking the efforts of “a” and “b” in a diachronic manner at all levels than a sequence of programs to be executed one after another. Furthermore, the need for designing the Issa-Afar peace-making processes at hand and the boundary demarcation informed by the local realities as well as an understanding of Issa-Afar violence which goes beyond violent incidents and into the visible and invisible dimensions of the violence is vital. This requires making the peace-making local as much as regionally embedded. However, this paradox is the space for creativity, thinking out of the box and envisioning the possibility of lasting Issa-Afar peace by utilizing the local capabilities for peace discussed in this and the preceding chapters. As it has been always the case, the commitment of the local people for promoting peace, engaging in the constructive transformation of the effects of violence and their realization of inseparable fate are vital capabilities not utilized yet. Thus, the future of Issa-Afar hangs on the utilization of the current deescalated level war violence, the local capabilities,



the recognition and implementation of the multi-tiered and multidimensional transformations suggested in chapter six.

### **8.3 Reflection on the Recurrence of Violence**

Reflection on Issa-Afar violence brings to light critical questions about the recurrence of violence in general and pastoral violence, in particular. This takes note of the complex interplay of overlapping systems of violence. This sets one thinking about how to understand the recurrence of local violence embedded in a sub-regional, national, sub-national and local systems of violence. Currently, Issa-Afar violence is located at the period for post-peace deal and de-escalation that violence is limited to small-scale inter-personal level. Yet, the invisible forms of structural and cultural violence are still intact. Envisioning Issa-Afar peace within the present context poses a paradox and pessimism. However, as Jean Paul Lederach succinctly put it, this should be taken as the gift of pessimism that the present condition provides itself as an energy to think outside of the box. By the same token to Lederach and Galtung, this condition sets one thinking in an igneous and creative manner than going the usual manner of handling things. Yet, this requires reflecting on the meaning Issa-Afar violence contributes to our understanding of recurrence of violence.

One of the important issues the study of Issa-Afar violence brings into the discourse on recurrence of violence and peace-making is a praxiological question that how we can use violence and peacemaking as lived experience and academic study in complementary manner to enrich our understanding of why violence becomes self-perpetuating and immutable to a series of peacemaking efforts. In the bid to answer the three major research questions addressed in the preceding section of this chapter, another related question of theory and practice is how to relate the theory of peace-making and perpetuation of violence for a greater understanding of what makes violence self-perpetuating and how to design effective peace-making.

In chapter six an attempt is made to envisage the way of ending Issa-Afar violence and the way for a successful peace-making. Issa-Afar violence became self-perpetuating because of the interplay of complex and overlapping factors situated at various levels, which have direct bearing on the nature of violence on the one hand, and because of the ill-designed nature of peace-making on the other. Yet, this study cannot definitively establish which aspects of Issa-Afar



violence are sustained and rendered self-perpetuating because of the failed peace-makings and which aspect of it by the nature and internal dynamics of the violence itself. However, the interplay of the dynamics of Issa-Afar violence carrying its inherited features and creating its own new characteristic and the peace-making interventions have shaped its self-perpetuating nature. Theoretically speaking multiple explanations are suggested by the works of René Girard, J. Galtung, J.P. Lederach, Yvest Winter and John Cocks among others used in this study. Girard's theory of mimesis that underscores a reciprocal imitation of violent behaviour brings the cycle of excessive revenge which Galtung describes it as the obsession for revenge as the after effect of violence explains an aspect of Issa-Afar violence at the episode level. Issa-Afar violence mimetic as far as the reciprocation in violence is concerned about looking at the violent episodes. An examination of Issa-Afar violence beyond the immediacy of violent episodes takes us to the archaeology of invisible forms of violence built into the institutions, rules and relationships as well as value systems which Galtung termed as structural and cultural forms of violence.

Such an examination of Issa-Afar violence brings out to the front the unique types of mimetic violence involved in the Issa-Afar which goes beyond the violent episode of reciprocal envisions, raiding and killing which surely are in line with comprehensible originating causes and tangible utilities. These are the type of mimetic violence in narratives and memories which involved mutual demonization of each other that sets the bases and frames the moral frameworks of justifying violence. This corresponds to, in some way, to Gerard's theory of scapegoating and dehumanization of the other to explain the misery and suffering that unfolds. So, the mimetic nature of Issa-Afar violence that lends itself to the self-perpetuating nature that crosses the threshold of violent episodes of direct violence into the realm of discursive utility of violence discussed under chapter three as inherited violence, as a system of multi-layered violence undergoing various forms of transformation at various levels discussed in chapter four and as self-perpetuating phenomena intransigent to peace and partly also sustained by peace-making interventions discussed in chapter five. Therefore, the aspect of mimesis is involved in the



cultural, structural and direct forms of violence. This explains well the dominant aspects of the structural and cultural violence in the Issa-Afar violence system.

Consequently, the way the structural and cultural violence plays out and the two constructs of violence in the Afar-Issa violence constitute new dimensions of violence characteristic to the inherited, cross-generational and multi-tiered and overlapping nature of the violence. In this regard, the theoretical contribution of Issa-Afar violence comes as providing empirically established operationalizing elements to the constructs of cultural and structural violence and attested the contextual nature of what the constructs constitute in practice. It constitutes an element of structural violence expressed in the cross-generational inheritance of hatred, animosity, the desire to revenge and trauma rooted in what John Cocks termed as the foundational violence of eviction of the Afar. The violence has continued in different forms to be located currently in the state of de-escalation of violence after a peace deal the future of which is uncertain.

The main contribution of the study as provided in chapter six is the possibility of envisioning while living in incessant violence; in other words, it reaffirms the theoretical argument of both Galtung and Lederach that envisioning peace (as transcendence to Galtung and transformation to Lederach) is possible. Yet, unlike the conception of Galtung and Lederach, the Issa-Afar violence spiral vis-à-vis the failed peacemaking have shown that peace-making efforts besides the need to qualify to be authentic in the eye of the people, authentic, creative and addressing the impacts of the visible and invisible forms of violence, it should be brewed from the lived experience of the people and be methodologically bottom-up oriented. By way of articulating the future of Issa-Afar, the study has emphasized on the need to custom design and contextualize peace-making efforts to be culture and language sensitive expertise that this can be another area of further research on the role of culture and language in the design of effective peace-making. Moreover, the study has made argued for the imperative, that appears paradoxical at face value, of depoliticization of peace-making and at the time emphasizing changes entailing political decision making to transform the various systems of violence located at various levels. This paradox gets its resolution in the fact that the areas of political decision making are required mainly on issues of transforming systems of violence which falls within the mandate and responsibility of the state and its institutions. However, this does not mean there will not be areas



of peace-making where political decision making is required, or it will totally be free of politics. However, politics should not define the rules of engagement of peace-making and strategies should be within the public space, reach, control and conception of the people in violence than state actors or politicians. Even in areas of peace-making where political decision making is required ensuring the authenticity and legitimacy of the process in the eye of the people is the key to the resolution of the requirement of depoliticization of peace-making and the need for political commitment to transform of systems of violence.

It reaffirms the possibility of envisioning and embarking on peace while undergoing a violent experience in line with the articulation of Galtung and Lederach on the need to address the visible and invisible impacts and consequences of violence their models. The study went further (in chapter five and four) to establish that violence can be transformed to a level where more than the visible impact and tangible purpose and utilities the invisible impact, discursive and symbolic utility of violence becomes an impediment for peace-making. In other words, violence can be transformed (deformed) negatively to a level where it loses in touch with its originating causes and tangible utilities that addressing the same in the process of peace-making without due regard to the invisible becomes the cause of perpetuation of violence. However, developing an integrated model for the transformation of the visible and invisible impacts and utilities of violence for effective peace-making is a task requiring further research and not covered by this study.

Furthermore, the study has identified an addition to the dynamic conception and model of conflict transformation by Lederach that it must be able to respond to the immediacy of the episodes and address middle term and long terms needs. Yet, Lederach's integrated model is not particularly tailored to the issue of violence on the one hand, and not on perpetual violence but the conflict in general. The addition of this study is that it deals with peace-making as a dynamic process which can move up with the tempo and degree of transformation of the nature of violence while at the same time addressing traumas of the past. This recommendation as the theoretical contribution is cognizant of the fact that the perpetuation of Issa-Afar violence is sustained by the mutual causation between the unabated violence and failed peace-making the specifics of also can have a theoretical contribution to our understanding of perpetuation of violence discussed below.



The recurrence of Issa-Afar violence analyzed in chapter five owes multiple explanations that a single theory or theoretical construct of violence and its recurrence cannot explain it. Issa-Afar violence is self-perpetuating because of its foundational nature, the cross-fertilization of the visible and invisible forms of violence, and the mimetic violence built into Issa-Afar relations. Its foundational nature eroded the communal trust on the capability of peace-making processes. Issa-Afar foundational violence has its roots in the past and got consolidated in the post-1991 period as every other peace-deal was new rendezvous for the future coming violent clash. Especially, the failure of peace-making efforts which managed to create a tentative positive mimesis and improvement in Issa-Afar relations like the one carried out during the period of EEBW had devastating impacts in terms of eroding the mutual trust and belief in the possibility of peace.

However, a closer look at the peace-making during the EEBW period illustrates a unique experience of hope of peace that defies the logic of escalation of local violence during the period of inter-state war. As Issa-Afar violence is embedded in the system of violence of the Afar Horn states, and the wider Horn of Africa subregion, the overall trend is that local violence escalates with the eruption of the inter-state war period. The tentative improvement of Issa-Afar peace that even in such the contexts of inter-state war provided the people are engaged a process they believe is authentic and legitimate in their eyes, the capability for peace-making is an infinite possibility. Unfortunately, its failure also had an adverse effect on the opposite direction. A hypothesis for further research can be drawn from this finding that a well-planned and organized intra-state peace-making effort can succeed in deescalating violence and bring negative peace even in a period of inter-state war which is considered a period of escalation of violence. The possibility of changing mimetic violence into mimetic peace can be realized even during the context of inter-state war period that is often believed to play out negatively against it. Inversely, its failure results in not only the escalation of violence but also the erosion of communal mutual trust between conflicting parties but also the belief in the possibility of peace at all.

The uncertainty involved in establishing a definitive causal connection between peace-making and dynamics of violence (is not the objective of the study either) notwithstanding, the memory of the failed peace-making process and the subsequent rise of violence also adds up negatively to the lack of confidence in current peace-making efforts. Besides, the memories and trauma of



violence associated with it and left unaddressed for years developed its own organism of violence that serves as the sub-conscious of society to engage in violence. However, establishing a definitive causal connection between peace-making and dynamics of violence is an area requiring further study.

In the context of pastoralist communities surviving on the verges of the state and are victims of multiple forms of marginalization like the Afar and the Issa, communal violence is built into their daily life as reciprocation of violence with violence, raiding with counter-raiding. Looking at the big picture of the state and the regional system the Issa-Afar relation is located in, the level of structural violence is so visible in their dilapidated and precarious way of life that plays out in catapulting them to war, and inversely war gives license for the state to exacerbate its control and repression adding up to the cycle of violence. The interaction between war violence and structural violence builds a system of cultural violence at the local (Issa vs Afar) and a centre (federal government vs pastoralist periphery) that serves as the topsoil for continuity of violence. Therefore, unlike the overall theoretical explanations of the cycle of violence, the recurrence of violence in pastoral context brings in the need for a capacious theoretical framework that includes the regional, national and sub-national systems of violence as a vital element of analysis. In terms of time frame, it requires turnedness to past violence inherited as communal memory and fossilized into the system of violence as a cognitive structure, focusing on the transformation of all forms of violence in the present and envisioning peaceful relationships.

At another level, the recurrence of Issa-Afar speaks to the self-perpetuating nature of violence by undergoing a process of transformation of the nature, organization and utility of violence examined in chapter four. Violence feeds itself on the ever-changing characteristic, organizations and purposes of undergoing war while perpetuating and adding up on old forms of structural and cultural violence. It also perpetuates itself by (constituting) creating its own reality, writing its own script and a cognitive framework of understanding the reality and reading the script which takes it away from the tangible and originating issues like territory and resources to the invisible and discursive utility. This could be a small contribution of this study to the understanding of the self-perpetuating nature of violence in general and pastoral violence in particular. On the peace-making part of the theoretical consideration, in line with Lederach's idea of process dynamics that keeps changing and maintaining its basic form, the study speaks to the theoretical and



empirical imperative of designing an agile, adaptive, transformative system of peace-making which moves up with the dynamics of violence. Yet, other than indicating what imperatives are required in building a dynamic peace-making model, what such a model is to constitute, and institute depends on the specific context and nature of the violence under study which future researchers should engage on it separately.

The history of pre-1991 period Issa-Afar violence is depicted to have been inherited into the present with the possibility of being inherited and transmitted into the future. As the Holocaust narrative of the Jews and the Al Nakba (Arabic meaning-the catastrophe) narrative of the Palestinians is inherited to the current generations as history of victimhood and survival, the memory and history of Issa-Afar violence based on empirical evidence adds to the body of knowledge in the field of study of violence on the inheritance of violence. In a long-term peace-building effort the need to address the memory of violence as trauma is also a subtle addition of this study in line with the theoretical stipulation of Galtung to address the consequences of violence. However, the various mechanisms of transmission of the memory of violence and the contexts that allow them to be inherited by the current generation is an area open for multi-disciplinary inquiry. Moreover, the question of how to approach the memory of violence as trauma and transform and heal it can be another area of inquiry not covered by this study.

The last contribution of this study is the research approach adopted by study. The study is a phenomenological inquiry based on the lived experience of the people of the Afar and the Issa to generate a rich and in-depth description of the phenomena of violence and peace-making both as the subject of academic study and as a practice. By bracketing the dominant theoretical caveats and the dominant discourse on Issa-Afar conflict, the study has attempted to construct a body of knowledge of the subject that gives voices to the lived experience of the people directly affected by the violence. Argued here is that approaching a study of violence from a phenomenological design and critical subjectivist orientation of analysis brings out the people's lived experience of violence, how it affected their lives and towards transforming it, and have to constitute the constructive transformation of relations of the parties involved in the violence. Therefore, there is an epistemological and ethical imperative involved in using the phenomenological design in the study of violence. As there is a phenomenological theory of violence, the study suggests that



a phenomenological research design for the study of violence can be generated from the empirical field research experiences of similar research on violence.

In the final analysis, this study can be considered as a journey to understand the phenomena of violence and how it expressed itself across generations, writing their own history and animating people in its perpetuation. The various peace-making efforts that often ended in failure are aspects of the dynamics of the violence which are trapped to be the inputs of the perpetuation of violence than its constructive transformation. The researcher as the tool of the research and a reflective element of the subject of the study who have spent years among the Afar and the Issa is also part of the journey in the lived experience of the people as much as the part of the study. The researcher has identified the pain of living in violence and the very act of researching the violence as a challenging task impacts its analysis. Therefore, the task and imperative of transformation of Issa-Afar relations, as succinctly put by Leaderach, is also a question of positive and constructive transformation at the personal level of the people involved, over and above changing the culture, structure and relationships of violence.



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