TOWARDS BUILDING STABILITY IN A MULTINATIONAL/ETHNIC SOCIETY

CONFLICTS IN SIDAAMALAND, ETHIOPIA

PHD THESIS IN PEACE STUDIES AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Kifle Wansamo, S. J.

January 2007

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Kifle Wansamo, S. J.

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of doctor in Philosophy.

Lancaster University

January 2007

I certify that this thesis is entirely my own work, and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Kifle Wansamo, sj
January 2007

Towards Building Stability in a Multinational/ethnic Society: Conflicts in Sidaamaland in Ethiopia

ABSTRACT

Transformation of identity-based protracted social conflicts in a multinational/ethnic society benefits from geographical area-based three-level knowledge (i.e., knowledge of historical context of conflict development, a deeper understanding of the current conflict through an in-depth conflict analysis, and local social capital including cultural worldview). This thesis, therefore, takes a particular conflict-ridden area in Ethiopia (a micro-level study) and complements the general (macro-level) studies of conflicts in the country and the Horn of Africa. The analysis of the unpeaceful relations and their outcomes in Sidaamaland of the current Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) in Ethiopia indicates the absence of meaningful participatory structures, lack of the rule of law, and the poverty of top-down approach in addressing the needs (social, economic, political and security) of the Ethiopian peoples. The horizontal unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland are mainly a spill-over of the unresolved vertical protracted conflicts (Sidaama vs the government), and are not from what is called 'old ethnic hatred.' Basically, the communities in conflict raise more or less similar issues, but lack of the use of avenues for dialogue between them causes misperceptions and lack of understanding. Given the existing local and national provisions (which the thesis will also present)— that can meaningfully be used in transforming unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland/SNNPR and ultimately in Ethiopia— the current conflicts need not be violent.

A. M. D. G.

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All comes from God. My words are insufficient to thank Him/Her. Every error that may appear in this work is mine.

Kifle Wansamo, sj
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ABBREVIATIONS

1994-PHCE	The 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia
AU	African Union
AMC	Agricultural Marketing Corporation
CFDRE	The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
CR	Conflict Resolution
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
EPLF	Eritrean People Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MIA	Multilateral Interactive Approach
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogadenian National Liberation Front
PA	Peasants' Association
PCA	Peasants' Cooperative Association
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
PSCs	Protracted Social Conflicts
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SC	Sidaama Concern
SEPDF	Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Front
SHPDO	Sidaama-Haadichcho People's Democratic Organisation
SLM	Sidaama Liberation Movement
SLF	Sidaama Liberation Front
SNLO	Sidaama National Liberation Organisation

SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
SPDO	Sidaama People's Democratic Organisation
SSI	Sub-Saharan Informer
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UEDF	United Ethiopia Democratic Front
UN	United Nations
UDA	Urban Dwellers' Association
WPE	Workers' Party of Ethiopia
WB	World Bank
WIC	Walta Information Centre

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1. INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter provides: (A) an explanation of the interest in undertaking this work, states the main task of the thesis, and presents the importance of this work and its main contribution to the CR literature; (B) a general statement of the thesis and its main argument, the objectives envisaged and questions that the thesis tries to address; (C) a general outline of the thesis; and (D) the research methodology.

This thesis seeks to analyse protracted "unpeaceful relations"[1] in Sidaamaland in Ethiopia. The macro- and micro-level knowledge of the historical contexts of socio-political, religious and economic relations of peoples in conflict-ridden areas, and of their "social capital"[2] (cultural resources)[3], are essential elements for transforming unpeaceful relations. Since there exists scant literature on micro-analysis of conflicts in Ethiopia, this thesis makes a contribution to micro-level knowledge of conflicts in the country, taking Sidaamaland as a case study. The primary goal of this work is to offer to those engaged in building peace and stability in Ethiopia and in the Horn of Africa a comprehensive study of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. It can provide insights into the understanding and handling of unpeaceful relations in other parts of Ethiopia. It also provides a resource for comparative studies in Conflict Resolution (CR). Conflicts in Sidaamaland are "protracted" (Rupesinghe, 1994: 65) conflicts, and the thesis will try to find out whether Azar's theory of "protracted social conflict" (PSC) [Azar *et al*, 1978; Azar, 1990] correctly portrays them. The conclusion of the thesis will try to present the possible prospects of conflicts in Sidaamaland, and propose an alternative model (in outline form) for managing PSCs in Ethiopia and in Africa.

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[1]Adam Curle divides human relationships as peaceful and unpeaceful. In the former he implies positive peace, and in the latter conflict. 'Unpeaceful relation' is a relation (structural, social) that causes pain, emotional distress, frustrations and anger, and mistrust; a relation that brings more division than cooperation among groups and individuals and has a level of violence (physical, economic, social or psychological) on the human person (Curle, 1971: 1; 1995: 11-12, 58).

[2]Poulton and Youssouf (1998: 15) define 'social capital' as "the sum of the human, cultural and spiritual values and patterns of personal interaction in a society."

[3]In Lederach's terms, 'culture' denotes a system "rooted in the shared knowledge and schemes created and used by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to social realities around them" (Lederach, 1995: 9).

1.A. GENERAL SETTING, IMPORTANCE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE THESIS

> "International discussion of the Horn of Africa is a relatively recent phenomenon which presupposes some kind of uniformity in the conflicts in the various countries. Whereas there is a certain degree of similarity between the problems faced by the three major countries of the region — Somalia, Ethiopia and the Sudan — it would be a mistake to assume that such similarities are sufficient to warrant generalizable solutions to these problems. The conflicts in each of these countries have arisen out of their own particular circumstances and histories" (Malwal, 1992: 6).

Violent conflict actions and outcomes in Africa predate the colonial period, although (save some instances of conquests in the formation of the Ethiopian empire) their intensity and number of casualties were low compared to those in colonial and especially post-colonial Africa. Traditional[4] subsistence (e.g., farming and grazing land, water) and honour-based conflicts among most of the neighbouring groups in the Horn of Africa (Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, and Kenya),[5] had internal mechanisms of balance and proportionality to control adverse conflict outcomes, and the casualties were low. Baggara versus Dinka in Sudan (Duffield, 1990: 18-19), inter-ethnic raids among the Nilotics in Sudan and Ethiopia (ibid.), Mursi versus Nyangatom and inter-ethnic relations among many south-western groups in Ethiopia (Turton, 1994: 15, 24), agro-pastoralist Sidaamas versus its pastoralist Oromo neighbours (Guji and Arusi) in Ethiopia, Borana vs Somali groups in Ethiopia and Kenya (Bassi, 1997: 25-26, 29-36, 49-50; Ayalew, 1997: 146-166), conflicts among Somali groups (A. Farah: 1997: 81-103): these serve as some of examples of traditional conflicts in the Horn. As the cited authors note, today the nature of traditional conflicts and conflict outcomes has taken historically unprecedented magnitude, leading to the weakening of the cultural mechanisms and methodologies of conflict management. The Horn of Africa from the 20th and into the 21st century reveals economically, socially and psychologically devastating conflict outcomes. Responsible factors to this new situation include the undemocratic and authoritarian nature of the Horn states with their economic policies and bad governance leading to economic underdevelopment; unfavourable international geopolitical and economic structures; easy availability of modern weapons;

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[4]In this work the term 'traditional' implies some practices, ideals, institutions, activities and attitudes that come from the past and are still — to some extent — in existence within a society or community.

[5]The Abyssinian areas may remain an exception for it had been monarchic and controlled by the emperor.

national, regional, and ethnic-based insurrections or rebel groups; high population density and struggle to control scarce economic resources; water politics (including the Nile issue); and continuous devastating droughts and famine. These and other macro phenomena are proposed by the scholars of the Horn.[6] However, as Malwal notes in the citation above, some variations in the causes and goals of unpeaceful relations (due to varied historical backgrounds, nature of social relations, economic resources, and environment) exist from one geographic area to another. Hence, building stability and bringing economic development in the Horn of Africa, and Ethiopia in particular, require not only macro-analyses, but also micro-analyses of conflicts and a knowledge of the 'social capital' of individual areas in the Horn. Such context-based and localised conflict analyses (micro-level) and knowledge of the peoples' social capital are few, and this work stands as a contribution. *It complements and supports the macro-level conflict analyses in the Horn and macro projects of UN, AU and IGAD[7] to build stability in the Horn of Africa. It presents a micro-analysis of the current unpeaceful relations and the existing social capital in Sidaamaland, south-west Ethiopia, to enhance the Conflict Resolution capacity in Ethiopia and ultimately the Horn of Africa*.

The Importance and Contribution of this Study

This study makes contributions in three areas. First, Ethiopia stands at the centre of the Horn countries, and its ethnic/national groups at the borders share affinities with those in their neighbouring countries. A violent conflict action that affects Ethiopia directly or indirectly affects the neighbouring countries (e.g., by refugee influx). The stability of Ethiopia, therefore, plays a great role in the stability of the Horn of Africa. Modern Ethiopia is the result of the Abyssinian imperial expansion during the late 19th century. Owing mainly to the experience of the conquest and the imperial governments' failure to integrate and accommodate the conquered nations in the south, east and west, the country has remained unstable. Currently, there exist protracted unpeaceful relations and several

[6]See the works of some of these scholars: Bereket Habte-Selassie, 1980; Clapham, 1995; de Waal, 1997; Duffield, 1990; 1992: 49-62; 2002; Edkins, 2000; Keen, 1998; Nyong'o, 1991: 95-114; Reno, 1998; Zartman, 1989.

[7]Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a regional organisation of the Horn countries (Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti and Eritrea).

armed movements, most of which are found in the conquered parts of the country. Because of their shared historical memory of socio-cultural and political relations (as Periphery groups) with the Ethiopian Centre, these armed groups have sympathy towards each other and can unite themselves to wage armed conflict. The Sidaama is one of the national groups in southern Ethiopia with a history of armed movement. Protracted unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland, therefore, contribute to the instability of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Although essential, studying and addressing the country-level macro-analyses alone are not sufficient to bring stability in Ethiopia. Micro-analyses of unpeaceful relations are equally essential, but they are in short supply in Ethiopia. This analysis of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland contributes towards filling the gap.

Secondly, this study is the first of its kind in Sidaamaland, if not in the SNNPR and Ethiopia. It provides an in-depth knowledge of the people's perceptions and unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland, and brings new information to the CR literature, particularly for comparative studies. It also helps to track the future development of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland, and provides information for building or widening online conflict-database for tracking the development of unpeaceful relations in Ethiopia and Africa.

Thirdly, except to some extent John Hamer,[8] there is no author (at least to the knowledge of the researcher) who has made a detailed study or work on the Sidaama cultural methodologies and mechanisms of conflict management. This work gives more comprehensive information than that of Hamer, and is the first of its kind in Sidaamaland. It contributes to the CR knowledge, especially in the area of cultural resources in CR. Moreover, there exists (in Ethiopia) scant literature in area-based comprehensive studies of cultural methodologies and mechanisms for handling unpeaceful relations.[9] This thesis also makes a contribution towards the project of collecting and building up such cultural resources in multi-national and multi-ethnic Ethiopia. Such a project is important to discern common elements across cultures in Ethiopia and Africa, which is essential in handling inter-ethnic unpeaceful relations and building stability in a country based on the common ground of its

[8]John Hamer (1998a: 137-153) concentrated mainly on one aspect of conflict management, namely rational discourse under the principle of *halaale*.

[9]One writer who has written on cutltural mechanisms of handling conflicts in Ethiopia is Giday (2002). He presents the traditions of four national groups in Ethiopia, namely Guraghe, Amhara, Oromo, and Tigre.

peoples.

This thesis has a further importance for the author. He is interested in carrying out area-based conflict-analyses in Ethiopia, and this work is the beginning of the project; hence, the title of this thesis — Towards Building Stability in a Multi-ethnic/national society. There are or will be other area-based conflict analysts with whom the researcher will be cooperating and working. Both national and international organs and groups that are interested in transforming unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland, the SNNPR, Ethiopia, the Horn region and Africa will also find this project helpful.

1.B. THESIS STATEMENT, ARGUMENT, OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This thesis argues that although Sidaamaland has unpeaceful relations which have many of the characteristics of protracted social conflict (PSC), the current conflict need not take a violent form. The needs and aspirations of the Sidaama people are not necessarily incompatible with those of the Federal government of Ethiopia (save the need for regime security) and the non-Sidaamas. The field research reported in this work shows that the attitudes of the Sidaama people would be favourable to a co-operative coexistence with other peoples within the federal structure, and if the rule of law is respected, the current Ethiopian constitution provides a legal space for conflict regulation.

Although roots of unpeaceful relations in Ethiopia stretch back to the late 19th century imperial conquests, the rejection and/or fear of political-economic domination or exclusion and search for territorial integrity serve as principal factors of the current unpeaceful relations and the deepening of nationalism in Sidaamaland. This study reveals that the *fear* and rejection of being politically and economically dominated by 'others' account for the Sidaama quest for equal socio-cultural and political status within the country, and the recognition of their socio-political and cultural identity. Coupled with this, the *fear* of losing their land or territorial integrity implies the want to control their meagre economic resources for their developmental needs. Within the existing constitutional provision of the country, the two fear factors are expressed today in the Sidaama political demand for self-determination (i.e., for a regional status), which serves as the principal element of current vertical and horizontal unpeaceful relations, resulting in violent outcomes. The two fear factors in turn result from lack of avenues of dialogue and democratic participation, undemocratic authoritarian

and identity-based hegemonic political structure, bad governance, human rights abuses by those in power, and struggle to control the meagre economic resources.

Given the protracted nature of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland and in Ethiopia, a contextually relevant participatory and inclusive system, good governance, rule of law, the building of bridges towards dialogue and cooperation, empowering cultural authority to work with the government in handling local (micro area) conflicts, and international support are essential elements in conflict de-escalation. There is a need for the cooperative and constructive interaction between the macro (national, international) and the micro (local socio-cultural provisions ["social capital"[10]]) approaches in transforming identity-based PSC. Such an approach offers better chances for rapid transformation of the protracted conflicts than the unidimensional (top-bottom or bottom-up) approaches.

Three levels of knowledge are essential in transforming PSC in a multi-ethnic/national society such as Ethiopia: the knowledge of local cultural worldview through which those involved in conflict interpret and understand their world, and of the local social capital (cultural and national provisions for handling conflicts); an understanding of the socio-political, economic and historical (macro- and micro-level) contexts in which the conflict has developed; and an area-based in-depth analysis of current conflict. This thesis tries to provide these levels of knowledge for conflict transformation in Sidaamaland. They provide insights into and knowledge of why violent conflict expressions exist and how they can be transformed.

Generally, the local social capital has not received its due recognition in favour of the top-down approach. Consequently, conflicts in many multiethnic societies in the developing world often take a protracted character. In the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia in particular, the top-bottom conflict management and economic policies have failed to build internal capacity for conflict transformation and positive economic development. A one-size-fits-all methodology has overlooked the peoples' contextual/local needs, fears and grievances in favour of the interests/needs of the state-government as well as of the donor agencies and states. A meaningful level of decentralisation that allows genuine

[10]The term 'social capital' applies only to positive values that are helpful for building peace. Hence, it should not be taken as lumping together uncritically all cultural elements, for there are those oppressive and divisive ones which cannot be 'social capital'.

cooperation between the macro-level (e.g., state, international organisations and bodies) and micro-level (e.g., communities) in managing identity-based horizontal and vertical conflicts can greatly enhance opportunities for stability and economic development. Working with and empowering local people (by the state-government and international organisations and bodies) to handle their own issues (micro-level) contributes towards building positive peace. African local social capitals are important elements in transforming micro-level unpeaceful relations, because they involve bringing justice and reconciliation — two essential elements for conflict transformation— while at the same time imposing effective deterrents.[11] Moreover, cultural systems (such as the Sidaama one [see chapter 9]) are not opposed to modernity, but rather offer solid basic structures for it.

Objectives

Resolving or transforming unpeaceful relations in a larger area (macro level) requires transforming unpeaceful relations in its smaller areas (micro level); hence, the need for both macro-analyses and micro-analyses of conflicts. The main task of this thesis is to present a micro-analysis of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland in Ethiopia. The thesis also presents the Sidaama social-capital (cultural resources) which can greatly contribute to the transformation of conflicts in Sidaamaland. Through this work, the author hopes to achieve the following objectives: to provide a comprehensive conflict analysis in Sidaamaland with a view to providing micro-knowledge for those interested (including the author himself) in resolving conflicts in Sidaamaland; to supplement the meagre micro-level conflict analyses in and the meagre CR literature on the Horn of Africa; to offer a resource for comparative studies in CR, especially a knowledge in the area of cultural methodologies and mechanisms (social capitals) in conflict management. The Sidaama social capital offers elements that are common to

[11]From 'mediation' aspect, Curle notes about three traditional African values in the transformation of unpeaceful relations: i) mediators are carefully chosen on the basis of their wisdom and impartiality, and their relevance to particular cases; ii) "both the mediators and parties in contention have a deep and unwavering respect for human life and the search for harmony;" hence, mediators aim at examining "how the conflict may disrupt the harmony of the community and consider the responsibility of each side in restoring it," i.e., they do not aim at apportioning blame by noting who is right and who wrong; iii) in the process of transforming the unpeaceful relations, the mediators are patient, thorough, listening and understanding; their goal is to bring both parties into a pact not to restart the quarrel again (Curle, 1995: 91).

other Ethiopian groups (and to the CR provisions) and can have a wider application in the SNNPR and Ethiopia in transforming unpeaceful relations.

Thesis Questions

Transforming deep-rooted unpeaceful relations requires a deeper knowledge of the social groups involved in or affected by the unpeaceful relations, the nature of the unpeaceful relations (e.g., fundamental issues of contention), their historical, socio-political, economic and environmental backgrounds and contexts, and exploring and assessing the existing local/national/international resources that can help their transformation. Such a knowledge or understanding is what "conflict analysis" seeks to provide. Conflict analysis is not so much about discovering and presenting a new thing, but rather providing a deeper and more systematic knowledge or understanding of the present unpeaceful relations (Bloomfield *et al*, 1998: 39). Every protracted unpeaceful relation has its historical roots/legacies/factors (structural [political, economic], cultural, and resulting psycho-social effects [relational]). A study of these historical legacies is part of conflict analysis. These factors are essential for understanding the current unpeaceful relations.

There are principal and specific questions this thesis tries to address by way of conflict analysis in Sidaamaland. The principal questions are those that tie all the specific questions that each chapter addresses as shown in the thesis outline below. The principal questions are: since the 1950s, concrete state-governments' initiatives and measures (e.g., centralisation, modernisation and homogenisation efforts, removal of the feudal system, distribution of land to the rural people, equal chances in education, constitutional arrangements for political representation, the drawing of geographical boundaries for each ethnic/national group, and the creation of a federal system) have been undertaken to transform the unpeaceful relations in Ethiopia and Sidaamaland (see chapter 4). Yet unpeaceful relations seem to persist and even expand. Why is this so? Why does the conflict in Sidaamaland persist and deepen rather than attenuate? What possible avenues are there to transform them? These questions will be answered through particular questions which each chapter addresses, and the thesis outline introduces them.

1.C. THESIS OUTLINE

The thesis is divided into three Parts. Part I (chapters two and three) deals with theoretical introductions; Part II (chapters four and five) provides historical backgrounds to the current unpeaceful relations; and Part III (chapters six, seven, eight, and nine) provides the in-depth analysis of the current conflicts in Sidaamaland and the Sidaama 'social capital'. Chapter 10 concludes the thesis by discussing the prospects of conflicts in Sidaamaland and suggesting, albeit in an outline form at this stage, an alternative approach to conflict transformation in Ethiopian and other multiethnic/national societies in Africa.

Part I: Conceptual Backgrounds to Conflict Analysis

This Part concerns the understanding of the concepts conflict and identity (chapter two) and theoretical framework for conflict analysis (chapter three). Chapter two provides the conceptual understanding of conflict and identity (on the basis of which conflicts are waged) both from the general (academic literature) and the particular (the Sidaamas). The dialectical relation between the general (e.g., academic literature on the conception of conflict and identity) and the particular (e.g., the Sidaama conception of conflict and identity) enriches both the general and the particular, and also provides sufficient contextual knowledge for those involved in conflict transformation in Sidaamaland.

The way people define conflict marks the types of conflict situation they experience or deal with and their concerns. There are generally three approaches towards understanding conflict both in the general and the particular. Depending on the type of conflict experience, some define conflict in terms of pre-behavioural unpeaceful state of being, some as violence, and others as both. However, even if the approaches in defining conflicts differ, a group's general attitude towards conflict is conditioned by its socio-cultural worldview, the knowledge of which is essential in transforming conflicts in its context. Hence, *how is conflict understood in general literature? How do the Sidaamas understand it?* In many parts of Africa and Ethiopia in particular, conflicts are waged on community level. Scholars (e.g., Eller and Coughalan, 1993; Geertz, 1963; Smith, 1991) are divided in understanding communal identity (ethnicity and nation). Since, the understanding of

identity is contextually conditioned, it is definitionally fluid. An identity marker that one group values highly does not have the same intensity in another. In the efforts of transforming identity-based conflicts, it is therefore essential to know what a group in conflict (e.g., the Sidaama) considers as its important identity markers. Hence, *what are the general theories about identity? How do the Sidaamas understand their identity?* These will be treated in chapter two.

Chapter three provides a theoretical and analytical framework for conflict analysis in Sidaamaland. The first section presents Azar's theory in understanding protracted social conflict. The choice of this theory will be discussed later in the section. PSC denotes "hostile interactions which extend over long periods of time with sporadic outbreaks of open warfare fluctuating in frequency and intensity" (Azar *et al*, 1978: 50). It involves a whole society and serves "as agent for defining the scope of national identity and social solidarity" (ibid). At the conclusion of Part II, it will be seen whether this theory reflects the Sidaamaland/Ethiopia case. In the second section, we will provide an analytical framework that places conflict within the human development approach, and we name it "existential process in human development". In this work, 'social conflict' is defined as a pre-behavioural unpeaceful relation among individuals and groups *(conflict parties or actors*), emanating from the awareness of adverse or contradictory situations (structural [political, economic], sociological, and psychological) which serve as *sources/causes*, and leading to conscious actions (*conflict actions*) in bringing change in social relations. This definition contains all the elements of analysis we will use in Part III: causes for conflict formation (e.g., adverse/contradictory situations), parities in conflict (primary [direct contenders], secondary [those who will be directly affected by conflict outcomes among the primary parties], and tertiary [third parties]), conflict actions, and change [conflict transformation or escalation]. The value of peaceful existence is dependent on the way 'conflict' is perceived/understood by those directly or indirectly experiencing it. This is so in the cases of both the Sidaama/Ethiopia (as field research data reveal) and the CR literature. The knowledge of such perceptions (cf., chapter two) and the underlying cosmology (cf., chapter three) facilitates finding relevant ways of transforming conflicts. People understand 'conflict' within the context of their cosmological view of the world which Galtung calls "cultural genetic code that generates cultural elements and reproduces itself through them" (Galtung, 1990: 301).

Having laid this theoretical foundation in understanding conflict and identity both from the

general and the particular, we now embark on the provision of socio-political and historical roots/contexts for understanding current conflicts in Sidaamaland.

Part II: Historical Backgrounds to Current Conflicts in Sidaamaland

> "... Each facilitator should therefore be an outsider, but one who has a clear understanding of the conflict and who can appreciate the *emotional* aspects of the situation. ... [T]he possibility of resolving protracted social conflicts is enhanced by improved knowledge of the history of the dispute, of the needs and interests at stake, and an appreciation of the participants' emotional investment in the outcome" (Azar, 1990: 36-37).

This is what Part II and also Part III do: provide to those involved in conflict transformation in Sidaamaland and Ethiopia a knowledge of the history of dispute, of needs and interests of the disaffected, and their emotional situation. Every protracted unpeaceful relation has its roots in the past. In conflict analysis, tracing the roots of the current unpeaceful relations in history and understanding their socio-political, environmental and economic contexts are essential, for without these contexts understanding and transforming them becomes difficult. Part II (chapters 4 and 5) addresses these historical contexts and factors in the development of unpeaceful relations in Ethiopia within which the current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland (Part III) can be understood. Chapter four deals with macro-context: it provides a historical overview of the formation of modern Ethiopia, and underlines the nature of the relationship of the peoples during the imperial, *derg* and EPRDF regimes. Chapter five, a micro approach, will provide a historical knowledge from the Sidaama people's point of view, and highlight stages of conflict development in Sidaamaland.

Since this thesis is concerned with a micro-context study, the general tone in the one paragraph recapitulation of factors causing unpeaceful relations in the Horn of Africa that are gathered from macro-analysis of conflict in the region (see pp. 2-3 above), is sufficient at the moment for this thesis. Ethiopia is at the centre of the Horn region, and its situation epitomises the situation of the Horn in general. Those factors of unpeaceful relations from macro-analysis are found in Ethiopia and set a macro-context for unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. Ethiopia is a multicommunal society with identity-based nationalisms. Generally, the colonial factor, the prolonged

Centre-Periphery socio-political and economic relations, bad governance, "ethnocracy"[12] and/or "chorocracy"[13], territorial and/or land issues, and prolonged authoritarian political system: these serve as key factors or sources of protracted conflicts and nationalisms in the country (chapter four). How these factors play in the protracted conflicts in Sidaamaland, which are both vertical (Sidaama vs State) and horizontal (inter-identity groups), and how the Sidaamas themselves see their relation with the State and other communal groups: these will be studied in chapter 5. At the conclusion of Part II, we will have answers why conflicts in Sidaamaland continue to deepen rather than to lessen. We will also see whether Azar's reasons for protraction of conflicts portray the Sidaamaland case, whether conflicts in Sidaamaland manifest Azar's characteristics of PSC. In short, Part II tries to respond to the following questions: *What factors contribute to and maintain the prolongation of unpeaceful relations in Ethiopia/Sidaamaland? What are the roots of the current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland? Who are the Sidaamas? What is their perception of self and their relation with the State?*

Part III. Analysis of Current Conflicts in Sidaamaland

The previous Parts offer background and contexts for understanding the current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. This Part provides analysis of the current conflicts by applying the theoretical tools of analysis and understanding that Part I offers. It relies on the information gathered from the field research data, regarding the parties in conflict (chapter six), issues in conflict (chapter seven) and dynamics that maintain and intensify the conflicts (chapter eight). The key questions that underlie this part are: *Who are the parties in the current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland? What are the issues of dispute? What are conflict dynamics that contribute to their escalation? What are the peace dynamics that can contribute to conflict transformation?*

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[12]Mazrui coined the term 'ethnocracy' to denote a multi-ethnic/national state controlled by one ethnic group (Mazrui, 1975). In this work, it is used to denote a state that is controlled or dominated by the elites belonging to one ethnic group and generally in favour of that ethnic group. Markakis and Merera consider Ethiopian state 'ethnocratic' (Markakis, 1994: 222; Merera, 2002: 2).

[13]This author uses the term 'chorocracy' to denote a state system that is controlled or dominated by the elites belonging to a particular region and generally in favour of that region.

The Sidaamas perceive their relation with the government within the category of conflict as *gatoite* (2A3) which is marked by the situation of power asymmetry with underlying attitude of enmity. From the Sidaama perception, conflict as *gatoite* is always acted out communally (e.g., nationalism). Such a conflict can only be transformed by properly addressing the root causes. For the Sidaamas, and confirming Burton's (1990) human need theory, the communal need-values that cause conflicts of this (conflict as *gatoite*) category are non-negotiable. The real or perceived threats to these values have united the Sidaama people in the quest for self-determination and deepened Sidaama nationalism. This deepening has expanded now affecting horizontal relations with other communal groups.

Chapter six presents who the contenders (primary and secondary conflict parties [Wehr, 1979: 19]) are in the current conflicts, capacity builders (national and international) in the conflicts, the types of relations existing (e.g., symmetric, asymmetric) among the contenders as well as capacity builders, and the stages of conflict escalation (e.g., discussion, polarisation, segregation, destruction [Bloomfield *et al*, 1998]). This chapter also offers complete information about the Sidaama political parties, giving their backgrounds of origin. The conclusion presents a comprehensive summary map that captures the parties and their relations.

Chapter seven presents the key issues or sources of the current conflicts. According to the field research data, the following general categories of factors are responsible for the current unpeaceful relations: the Sidaama quest for its own regional status, bad governance, lack of democratic participation, struggle to control the regional power and its capital (Awaasa), political-economic interests of the elites in power, struggle to control economic resources in Sidaamaland (including land issues), territorial conflict, and actual or perceived threats to cultural and linguistic factors. The conclusion of the chapter captures the whole issues on the table of need, interest, and positions.

Chapter eight deals with factors (conflict actions and dynamics) that sustain or negatively influence the current state of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. There have been violent and non-violent conflict actions in Sidaamaland (e.g., war, armed movements, requests for constitutional rights, peaceful march, coercive measures and punitive actions from the government, lobbying). Since there is no rule of law, the existing constitutional structures for conflict regulation are not

implemented, hence lack of avenues for dialogue and expressing grievances. The dynamics that escalate the conflicts are termed here as *conflict dynamics*, and those that help in reducing conflicts as *peace dynamics*. The factors that are deepening and maintaining the protraction of the unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland include the abuse of human rights, the government policies of development (e.g., urban policy, SAPs policies), authoritarianism, ethnocratic nature of the government, lack of free and fair election, imposed local/zonal leadership, growing poverty, and violent suppression of grievances, and negative attitudes and stereotypes.

The key position of this thesis is that the knowledge of the socio-political, economic and historical contexts and actual issues of the current unpeaceful relations, and of the social capital of the communities involved in the unpeaceful relations, serves as an essential element for a successful conflict transformation and building a stable and harmonious multiethnic/national society. Chapter nine provides the latter aspect of the knowledge. It begins with a general presentation of the existing *peace dynamics* in Ethiopia: the constitutional provision (e.g., rights for self-determination, democratic participation and equal representation, respect for human rights), educational institutions, religious institutions, cultural authorities, civil organisations (both local and international NGOs), state and private media, and then local social-capital. Within the limits of the federal constitution of Ethiopia, the local Sidaama social capital is the readily available resource which— if the government recognises, empowers, supports and works together — can facilitate resolving horizontal conflicts in Sidaamaland within a relatively short period of time and with less financial cost. It serves as an essential element of peace dynamics. A presentation of it will show that, in fact, the Sidaama social capital is not opposed to modernity, but rather even enhances modernity. The idea of democratic participation, negotiation and mediation are not new things to the Sidaamas, and are deeply ingrained in their tradition. The emphasis on taking consideration of local culture in identity-based horizontal conflicts should not imply that it is perfect. There are certain cultural elements (e.g., unequal position given to women and artisans) that certainly need to be removed. Such elements do not enter into the concept of 'social capital', for 'social capital' implies conflict management provisions (positive values or elements). The state can help in removing them through dialogue, education, working together with the cultural authorities, and maintaining the human rights principles which are enshrined in the federal constitution. After the presentation of the local Sidaama social capital, the thesis will have

achieved its objectives. It will be closed by highlighting the prospect of conflict in Sidaamaland, as well as providing an outline of an alternative way for transforming protracted social conflicts in Ethiopia. This suggested model, which remains as an outline/programme for another work in the future, is termed as 'multilateral interactive approach' (MIA).

1.D. METHODOLOGY

1.D.1. Methods and Scope of the Research

The field research was carried out during a period of six months (July - December 2002). The target groups involved peoples living and working in Sidaamaland, the total area of which is between 5000 to 7000 sq. kms. The research was based on a qualitative ethnographic methodology, comprising open in-depth group and individual interviews (both direct and phone interviews), a questionnaire, and observation.[14]

During the field research the researcher managed to interview 7 councils of elders (relating to different Sidaama *ga're*), 1 sub-*ga're* council of elders, and 12 notable individual elders in different parts of Sidaamaland. Later on (during the period between 2003-2006), the researcher carried out interviews (through telephone and also in person) with 12 more Sidaama individuals both in Sidaamaland and in diaspora and 1 non-Sidaama army general. Among the former, two have served as government officials of the Sidaama zone under the current government, three were from politically active and significant Sidaama educated elite during the period since the late 1950s, individuals who were among the founders of the SLM. In addition, the author has used data from his 9 tape-recorded interviews of July and August 1996 — which concern the Sidaama oral history, culture and religion — and 3 tape-recorded interviews (concerning the Sidaama cultural conception of 'reconciliation) by a friend in July and August 2000. During the field research, questionnaires were also distributed. Of the distributed copies (270 in English and 250 in Amharic versions) of the questionnaire, 76 Sidaamas, 49 non-Sidaamas, 12 offspring of Sidaama and non-Sidaama mixed

[14]The questionnaire is provided in the Appendix.

parentage, and 2 expatriates responded. In total, data for this work comes from 44 interview sources and 139 individuals who responded to the questionnaire. The work is supported by personal observations during the 2002 field research. The researcher has also kept in contact with several other Sidaama nationalists who helped in providing information on some specific issues (e.g., positions and interests of the nationalist movements).

Open (unstructured) in-depth individual and group interviews were used to gather data from notable individual elders, councils of elders, and leaders of opposition movements. The *open interview* included the respondents' discussions and reflections in relation to the questions and at times hypothetical situations presented to them on selected issues. Gathering information from all the Sidaama groups (*ga're*) was among the main criteria in selecting interviewees. Individual elders were selected on the basis of the enquiry the researcher made at different areas of Sidaamaland in order to find who had the knowledge of the Sidaama (oral) history and culture as well as the notable individuals in the area of handling conflicts. In other words, they were individuals who were regarded as authorities (in knowledge and in mediating conflicts) by their respective communities. Such individuals, as a customary practice, were always with one or two of their close/trusted companions or bosom friends who always accompanied them and with whom they travelled and shared their activities. Hence, during individual interviews, they were always present with their interviewed friends. This was an advantage for gathering information, for often such companions seem to have more detailed knowledge in certain areas than their speaker-friends whom the community regard as authorities. During the interview, such companions added, corrected, and/or clarified the information the interviewees gave. Those in group interviews were anointed elders with their councils, representing different Sidaama *ga're*.

The *questionnaire* provided data from the educated groups (the teachers, workers and officials in public offices, some persons involved in politics, and students in tertiary institutions). The only criterion used in distributing the questionnaire was that the group represent all the groups living in Sidaamaland (both Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas, men and women, middle-aged and the beyond). For some data, the researcher relied on informal conversations (with ordinary people, friends, and others) and *observation*. This included observation of the reactions of the respondents during interviews, the attitudes of the people towards each other and the government officials in

Sidaamaland, and the behaviour of the governing elite and what they were saying on the media.

The SNNP regional state of Ethiopia has been experiencing violent conflicts and many lives have been lost. Taking the whole region for a case study would present many difficulties. Concentrating the field research on one zone promised better coverage within a period of six months. Taking the Sidaama zone for study proceeded from several considerations. It has many ethnic groups, though about 90% of the population are Sidaamas. The administrative centre of the region is in Sidaamaland. The Sidaama area has been experiencing political instability for decades. It shares more or less the same experience of being dominated with other Southern nations. The researcher's knowledge of the Sidaama language and his having friends and relations in that area present a better chance of collecting data for this research thesis.

The field research in the Sidaama area of the SNNPR was aimed at collecting data for multiple objectives: to know how the Sidaamas view themselves; to gather information on the history of the relationship between the Sidaamas and the state-government according to the Sidaama oral history; to understand the views of the peoples in Sidaamaland about peace and conflict; to gather information from both Sidaama and non-Sidaama groups on the current unpeaceful relations, their nature and causes, and on the conflict parties; to collect information on the Sidaama cultural mechanisms and methodologies for managing conflicts and maintaining peace; to gather what the peoples of Sidaamaland consider important to bring peace. Apart from the field research data, this thesis relies on other written primary data such as interview reports, and research reports by individuals and organisations, documents from newspapers, electronic sources, and literature from different disciplines (anthropology, CR, economy, history, politics , and sociology). The thesis outline below will indicate which particular sources are used in writing each chapter of the thesis.

The *interview* was not structured and was dependent on the type of interview group or individual. The approach was left open, dependent on the mood of the interviewee as well as to gain more information. The subjects on which the researcher wanted to gather information were the following: perception of 'conflict' and 'peace'; Sidaama local ways of handling conflicts; conflict awareness; the history of the relationship between the Sidaama and government, and the Sidaama and the non-Sidaama; and the criteria for being 'Sidaama'.

The *questionnaire* is composed of one opening statement and eight questions (seven for all

respondents and one [question six] specific for the Sidaamas). Apart from question six, all the rest are interrelated and complementary. The opening statement seeks the identity background of the respondent. Question (Q) 1 is intended to gather the understanding or perception of 'conflict' in Sidaamaland/Ethiopia; Q2, to gather information on the level of awareness of the unpeaceful relations; Q3, to gather information on the identity of the parties in conflict (Q3 i- ii), issues of contention (Q3 iii-iv), source of information of the respondent (Q3v), and the respondent's assessments and views about the issues causing the unpeaceful relations (Qvi); Q4, to gather issues causing inter-zonal conflict; Q5, to gather issues causing conflicts between the Sidaamas and the government; Q6, to gain information on how the Sidaamas consider themselves and what criteria they use for 'being Sidaama'; and Q7, information on what the respondents present as solution to build peace in Sidaamaland and on their perception or understanding of peace. Q8 invites respondents to make their free comments or add any more points they would like to make. It also invites them to sign their names if they want. The questions in the questionnaire were interrelated: if a respondent avoided or skipped a question such as Q3 as a whole, at least some information that the answer would offer could be captured indirectly from other questions. For instance, conflicts between the Sidaama and the non-Sidaama (as it will be seen in chapter seven) were related to the conflicts between the Sidaama zone and the SNNPR, and between the Sidaamas and the government. Hence, those answering Q 4, 5 and 7 would be offering relevant information for Q3. Answers intended for Q3iii-iv can indirectly be gathered from the appraisal in Q3vi. The following paragraphs present a brief report on how the research was carried out, and on the field experience during the research.

1.D.2. Gaining Entry and Conducting the Research

Gaining the acceptance of the interviewed (the Sidaama elders) posed little problem for the researcher, though the reluctance to answer questions that implicated the current government was observable. His friends and relations throughout the Sidaama zone and his status as a priest facilitated an easy entry as well as the trust of the interviewed. The friends and kin at different areas arranged and facilitated for him ways of meeting notable individuals and elders of the areas. However, with the educated groups and the ruling local political elites it was not so easy: his hope

of gaining an automatic trust because of his status as a priest proved to be false. The local officials perceived the researcher himself as a threat and tried to prevent him from carrying out the research. Getting entry into the ruling circle was impossible. There was no way that he could approach them without being sent to jail, at least according to the warnings and threats he received from some insiders. He did not want to jeopardise his research by trying to be friendly to them and working to gain trust. So he decided not to interview them, but covertly observed them through the eyes of the people, i.e., asking privately or in person how they viewed their officials' behaviours towards them. Such a difficulty in studying political elites was also shared by Hill in a study of Moldavian party elites: "...in general it proved impossible to penetrate the propaganda facade of the security-minded bureaucrats, so contacts with local political leaders were of little real worth" (Hill, 1977: 5).

It was also difficult to gain the educated groups' enthusiastic cooperation. They reacted saying that they did not want anything associated with politics, and they perceived the questionnaire to have political issues in it. In Q8, some even speculated whether the government was trying to know what they were thinking through the questionnaire.[15] The constant intimidation and harassment the local intelligentsia were experiencing could also partly account for the resistance. The peasants were also reluctant to talk freely and openly concerning the issues that touched the current government. There had been harassment and imprisonment of many notable peasants among whom were some who refused to be members of the government party, while others were accused of being members or supporters of the SLM. Peasants showed a very wary attitude towards the government and were always suspicious of every government movement, even where this seemed to be in their favour. Hence, respondents avoided questions that they perceived as relating to politics.

1.D.2.i. Open In-depth Group and Individual Interviews

During the interviews, the researcher presented to the Sidaama groups of elders themes (one at a time) on which he wanted to have information. Those with opinions or information presented their views, while others played the role of adding, clarifying, purifying, or backing-up the former. Where

[15]One wrote "it is better if the organiser of these questions explains his identity and aims ..." Another said, "It [the research] is probably tied to the government policies and would lead to another conflict".

necessary, and where a clearer view was needed, the researcher interjected questions and hypothetical situations that helped in elucidating their conception or perception. For instance, when the interviewed gave an automatic answer that they had no problems with other ethnic or national groups, he simply presented events from his observation or that he had heard from his casual contacts and discussions with friends and others that seemed to give a different view from theirs. The views and reflections of the interviewees were recorded in the notebook. The researcher had already recorded on tapes some interviews with individuals who had extended knowledge of the oral tradition (both pre-conquest and post conquest Sidaama history), experience of mediation, and knowledge of the Sidaama cultural practices in solving problems. The researcher also gathered from the interviews sufficient information on how the Sidaamas see or understand themselves.

Originally, the researcher intended to carry out interviews with both the rural Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas. During the field research, he concentrated on the rural Sidaama people alone. Several factors influenced this: first, in the countryside where about 93% of the population of Sidaamaland and about 98% of the Sidaama population lived (1994-PHCE, 1999: 9), the rural non-Sidaama population (about 4% of the total 10% in Sidaamaland [ibid]) was very thin and dispersed, and integrated in the Sidaama culture (unlike the urban groups), in some cases integrated in the kinship system with the Sidaamas through intermarriage. Certainly, the research would have benefited more by interviewing the rural non-Sidaamas, but unfortunately because of logistic difficulties (e.g., difficulty to arrange meetings with them) and security reasons, the research lacked the rural non-Sidaama input. Secondly, the Sidaama elders and cultural leaders were well positioned to inform about the Sidaama cultural system; thirdly, it was far more difficult to arrange interviews with the urban non-Sidaamas and Sidaamas during this field research period because of the socio-political upheavals in the zone. Moreover, the urban non-Sidaamas (even the Sidaamas who are born and live in the towns) were much less-informed about the Sidaama culture. Since most of the non-Sidaamas were literate and their educated children and relations lived in the urban areas of the zone, where interethnic unpeaceful relations and the awareness of it existed, the approach through *questionnaire* was more appropriate and effective.

The researcher underlines the importance of having someone accompanying him during the field research. His local friends (educated and interested) who accompanied him during the

interviews have played a great role. The researcher's original intention has been simply for companionship and guidance to the areas of which he has no prior knowledge, to meet particular groups. A companion with kin relation with the interviewee negotiates for the researcher and makes the interviewed feel comfortable interacting with the researcher. He/she does a work of building trust that reduces any concern or fear or anxiety on the part of the interviewee. From his experience in the field with a companion, the author has discovered other invaluable contributions a companion makes: during discussions or interactions, the researcher's companions have at different moments drawn attention to something he has ignored by asking questions that have not been in his mind, at times sparking inspirations and awareness of aspects that he has neglected. In addition, where the researcher is frustrated by several factors or where he is in disagreement with the viewpoints of the interviewee, after the interview the companion offers a chance for him/her to share his/her views and frustrations. This reduces psychological strains or burden.

1.D.2.ii. The Questionnaire and Observation

The *questionnaire* was set to allow reflection, which served both ways: gave respondents opportunity to review and express what they thought and/or felt, and offered data for the researcher. While in Ethiopia, the researcher himself prepared the Amharic version of the questionnaire with some modification (e.g., rearranging Q3vi, dividing Q7 into two questions, and distinguishing question 6 [which is meant only for the Sidaamas] from question 7 [which is for all to respond], and divided the question). The modification did not alter but clarified the idea of the original version (the English version). An instruction was added at the beginning of the questionnaire inviting the respondents to use any of the three languages (English, Amharic, or Sidaama language). Except for the expatriates who received only the English version, the Ethiopian respondents received both versions together with envelopes.

Regarding the questionnaire distribution, the researcher explained the aim or intention which the questionnaire sought to address to friends (Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas) and relations teaching or working in different parts of the zone. He asked them to encourage their friends to participate fully through answering the questionnaire and even distributing it with envelopes to their trusted

friends and co-workers. These were to answer the questionnaire privately without indicating their names, their professions and areas (a space was available in the questionnaire if someone wanted to sign his/her name), then enclose the questionnaire in the envelopes, and return the envelopes to the distributors without writing anything (address or name or school or town) on it. This was done with the intention of encouraging the individuals to respond to the questionnaire by freely expressing their views with a guarantee that their names and whereabouts would remain unknown. It is to be noted here that the many respondents to the questionnaire chose to respond to some questions and ignored others. One reason could be their perception of the questions relating to politics.

The *observation* during the field research was not merely passive but also active as the researcher interacted in a casual way with people at friends' homes, coffee places, after religious celebrations in different areas where people gathered to greet and share a meal with their spiritual ministers, at neighbours' leisure gatherings where they shared news and gossip as well as discussed issues of concern in their communities, and in the Toyota Land-cruiser which the researcher used during some of his journeys in the Sidaama area as well as outside the area where he always gave lifts to people). He joined in their discussions but mainly from the point of view of an inquirer, often asking questions and being devil's advocate (with caution) intending to provoke more reflections. The researcher also enquired of the people what the officials said and how they argued about conflicts in the zone on the media; he listened to some of their arguments on the radio; he observed how they were treating people; he got a text reflecting the answers given by the regional president to an interview carried out by an EU delegate concerning the conflict and the killings in the Sidaama zone and the region.

1.D.3. Difficulties and Discrepancies

The Sidaama area was/is a political hot-spot, with violence on varied levels. Researching in a political hot-spot — where fear, misperception, misunderstanding, mistrust and suspicion reign — may not be an enviable activity. The researcher him/herself can be perceived as a threat to one or all conflict parties and face persecutions. These in turn can cause pain, anger, and frustrations. This author himself could not escape or remain immune to such experiences. He carried out the field research

under difficult situations and intimidations from local government officials (who were the Sidaamas themselves);[16] hence, the research was conducted in a clandestine manner. This partly accounted for reluctance to search for and interview the rural non-Sidaamas. Moreover, during the interviews (except the private person-to-person interviews) and also in other social interactions outside the interview, this researcher observed the people avoiding to talk about any issue that they perceived as having a political connotation. It indicated the unpeaceful relation that existed between the people and the government, the absence of freedom, and the bilateral mistrust between the people and the government.[17]

Besides the political difficulties, the researcher had to face physical hardships: in the hilly and mountainous areas which were inaccessible by car, he had to walk on foot, at times for four hours, climbing and descending the hills and mountains, and walking through muddy roads. Arranging appointments with interviewees was time, money, and energy consuming partly because they were found in places that were very far. There were no telephones; one had to travel and meet them either in person or through friends. The frustrating aspect on several occasions was not finding the interviewees on the appointment day. Lack of modern communication facilities meant that they could not inform the researcher ahead of time about the change of the plan. However, none of these difficulties prevented the researcher from covering all the districts in the Sidaama area and completing the field research. After each interview, he found himself very tired (partly physical from having walked a distance), and reviewing and re-writing the notes on the same day proved to be hard. Apart from assessing the events on a daily basis while walking or quietly seated alone to keep in focus his role as a researcher and make ad hoc strategies, he did not manage to re-write the collected data and experiences on the same day; partly because the notes he took covered more than ten pages of a large notebook, and were in the Sidaama language. During the interviews, there were several issues the researcher was unable to record, partly because he could not concentrate sufficiently on observation while at the same time recording the interview answers. The interview notes could not cover all that

[16]The field research was carried out during the period July -December 2002. On 24 May 2002, i.e. just a month and some days before the field research, the security forces killed about 50 and severely wounded more than 50 Sidaama protesters.

[17]See also the experience of Kjetil Tronvoll in the Hadiya area of the SNNPR (Tronvoll, 2002: 161-164, and footnote 10 on p. 177).

the people said, though sometimes the interviewer asked the speakers to repeat their points.

The original intention to carry out some interviews with some neighbouring ethnic groups of the SNNP regional state did not materialise. The non-Sidaamas who responded to the questionnaire belonged entirely to those living in the Sidaama zone. Several reasons (mainly the political situation, the vastness of the area the researcher had to cover for the research in Sidaamaland, and transportation) made it impossible. Moreover, the views of the rural non-Sidaamas in the zone were not covered mainly because of logistic and security reasons. The interview also lacked the government officials' direct views, except those received through covert observations and some documents. There were already individuals (about whom the author learnt later) following his movements, observing the people he met, contacting and informing their employers about his activities. Getting entry to the local government officials was not possible. The views of women among the interviewees were also not covered. The Sidaama society, being highly patriarchal, would allow very little interaction between men and women outside the family. In this society, men associated with men alone and women with women. A few women were educated and employed in the public sector; more than 95% of the Sidaama women were house wives. A man interviewing women in the Sidaama society was culturally difficult; people would not like it. It needed a woman to interview women there. In like manner, it would be generally difficult for a woman to interview men in Sidaama society. And finally, since the researcher was unable to visit different areas of SNNPR, apart from Sidaamaland, extrapolating the experience of the current conflict in the Sidaama area to the experience of the whole areas of the region would be a sweeping generalisation.

With respect to group interviews, there can be disadvantages too: the group may avoid offering certain issues less favourable to their self-image and give prominence to other more favourable ones. However, the researcher has had person-to-person interactions and individual interviews in private which offer some data that were not mentioned in the group interviews. Moreover, the informal interactions with individuals and also the researcher's knowledge of the culture and language of the Sidaama are helpful in being sensitive to what they say and hide. Hence, the danger of losing or missing out data pertaining to the less favourable issues is not high.

With regard to the questionnaire, in the Amharic version, one sub-question that asked respondents what the Sidaamas were asking for was left out by mistake (without deliberate intention).

The researcher has realised it while analysing the data. Although the wanted data could still be gained from other related sub-questions (Q3iii and 3vi) and questions (Q4, 5, and 7), it has nevertheless affected the possibility of the direct information or documentation the Amharic respondents might give concerning the issues that the Sidaamas were raising in the conflict.

1.D.4. Ethical Dilemma

The people in group interviews were not willing to talk about issues relating to politics and the government for fear of imprisonment. The ethical dilemma was: should one disguise one's purpose or use an indirect approach with a view to gaining some information which the interviewed might not offer one if one were to ask them openly or directly? The researcher felt he had to tell them only the more attractive aspect of the research: that he wanted to collect their cultural values, methodologies, systems and so on in order to keep a good written record for the coming generations (which he will do). He usually began to ask about different cultural issues and inserted into these the items he wanted, presenting it at times as casual talk, at times making it seem to be part of the aim he had told them. For instance, in order to gather their feelings about the current government, he had to take them back to the history of their conquest: he asked them how the Sidaamas felt during the Abyssinian conquest which made them part of modern Ethiopia, about their experiences under different regimes of the past and the present in a comparative way, about the positives and negatives of the previous communist government, and then asked them about their hopes and wishes under the incumbent government. Can such a disguised approach be ethically admissible? This was the dilemma that the writer faced. Although he felt somewhat uncomfortable about the idea of disguise or manipulation, he thought that so long as the goal remained ethical (e.g., this research aimed at advocating the betterment of the peoples in the zone, region and country) and the respondents' identities were kept safe, the morality of the procedure could, in certain cases, be compromised.

A second dimension of a moral dilemma pertains to mentioning the names of those who participated in the interviews. Without their cooperation and invaluable contribution, this work could not take place. Hence, they deserve acknowledgement, not just as anonymous contributors but mentioned by their names. Yet given the sensitive nature of the political situation and the level of

suspicion in the Sidaama area, the author has not named them, lest they face problems, especially where arbitrary actions (and not the law) rule.

1.D.5. Assessment

In gathering data directly through interviews, the identity and personality of the interviewer himself has an influence on how the interviewees respond and the information they give: they may exaggerate an issue, hide certain elements that they prefer others not to know, trust the interviewer and tell honestly what they feel and perceive or believe, or refuse to tell needed information for fear of it being used against them or for the sake of keeping secret their fundamental or underlying projects. Researchers (mainly feminist writers [Phoenix, 1994; Ribbens, 1989; Tang, 2002], Bourdieu, 1996) have already discussed and underlined the impact the interviewer's identity (e.g., race, social class, language, gender and age) has on the responses of the interviewees, and also the fluctuating and relative power dynamics between them. This interviewer-interviewee relationship makes an impact on the quality and quantity of research data. In assessing retrospectively, how did the respondents identify this researcher? How much did his person as a Sidaama priest influence their responses?

As a Sidaama customary procedure in dealing with a person about whom one has insufficient knowledge, groups and individuals that the researcher went to interview enquired first where he came from, to which Sidaama group (*ga're*) and family he belonged, and whose son he was. He responded accordingly, and also told them that he was a priest, a non-political person, interested in collecting, writing and preserving the Sidaama culture, history and views. Being a religious priest was an extra bonus for the researcher: gaining their trust was almost automatic. The interviewees never trusted some individuals present during the interviews; they perceived them as informers to the government's security agents. Consequently, during group interviews, the interviewees were not willing to talk about things that they perceived to be political (especially any thing involving criticism of the present government). In all gatherings and council meetings within the Sidaama community, those interested (from young to adult) could come, sit and listen to the issues being discussed, provided that they do not disrupt the discussion. In all group interviews, people (both young and adult [except women]) came and listened. One could not tell them to go away, for it was not cultural and also would raise

suspicion of a political nature which would pose danger both to the interviewed as well as the researcher. In almost all other areas (except that which touches the Sidaama-government relation) the interviewees were relaxed and willing to share their views. They showed a great interest in talking about their history and culture, their activities as elders, and the way they handle different conflict cases.

Was there something that the interviewees hid from the interviewer? In addition to their resistance to share about their relationship with the government and refusal to talk about things that they perceived as political, there was one issue about which they did not want to say much and about which they were defensive: the unpeaceful relations between the artisan and non-artisan Sidaamas. Most of them simply said that there were no problems, for they were of the same blood; that they all live harmoniously; that they all participate together in political power and the Sidaama struggle. At least one respected elder of R8 acknowledged it by saying that the discrimination of the artisan was simply "a way of oppression and nothing else." They did not also see gender issues as a problem; they did not even see it as an issue worth discussing; yet it was (and still remains) a latent conflict factor. In this, being a cultural and linguistic peer and insider is a great help. The author being the insider, and having informally discussed such issues with educated Sidaama friends (from artisan and non-artisan Sidaama groups) many times, knew well about these issues or unpeaceful relations.

With regard to the Sidaama culture, could there be exaggeration and idealised presentation of it? First, the researcher was not a cultural alien to the Sidaamas and things that will be presented in this thesis were observable in the daily lives of the rural Sidaamas. He had time to sit and observe at several places the elders carrying out their duties in their communities. Moreover, in group interviews, he himself followed the Sidaama procedures in the ways of enquiring and engaging in discussions. Secondly, the individual interviewees, all of whom were above 65 years of age, were always accompanied by their trusted close friends during the interviews, and the latter seemed to know well internal cultural intricacies and contributed a lot in clarifying, qualifying, and sometimes even negating some of the interviewees assertions. This phenomenon of correcting, qualifying and clarifying was also observed during the group interviews. Thirdly, the interviewees come from different parts of Sidaamaland and different Sidaama groups. The consistence in the cultural data they have given and similar data existing in the few existing anthropological works on the Sidaama

culture also reveal that the danger of exaggeration and idealisation was minimal. The researcher also had close relations with cultural knowledge who were always helpful in noting things that were in practice and not in practice (e.g., by saying 'it used to be...'), and the problems the community faced in applying their cultural values and principles.

Were the views of individual and group interviewees influenced by the researcher's political views? He did not talk to them about his political views and positions. He simply asked them questions (at times provoking discussions) and sought for clarifications where he did not understand well what they meant. Main questions where based on collecting information on how the respondents viewed their relations with different regimes since 1893 (the time of the Sidaama conquest by the Abyssinian empire), the positives and the negatives of each regime, how they saw the Sidaama life in comparative terms among the successive regimes, and what they viewed to be the Sidaama grievances or quests during these regimes. Moreover, beyond the academic interest, the researcher had (and still has) deep interest to know what the people themselves think and perceive, and how they go about with their life and experiences.

Above all, this work is going to be read by the Sidaamas and those who live among them, hence the work must remain credible and what is presented should reflect the facts on the ground. Where things have changed, the writer will make note of the changes in this work.

1.D.6. Organising and Analysing Data

The personalised and reflected answers to the questionnaire, information from the newspapers and other research works on the Sidaama, are considered in this work as *documents*. Open interviews and the questionnaire serve as primary sources, and the rest as secondary ones to help to elucidate the former. However, where the secondary ones offer information that the primary sources fail to give (e.g., the views of the government officials), they serve as primary sources. The use of multiple data-collection methods, which researchers term *triangulation* (Berg, 1995: 5; Glesne, 1999: 31-33; Denzin, 1988),[18] hopefully guarantees the capturing of what actually *is,* across bias and other

[18]I am aware of the critique of G. McFee concerning 'triangulation', where he highlights two claims: 'triangulation *between* methods' (for validating the outcome of one method with another) and 'triangulation *within*

limitations in the data collection. The socio-political contexts and types of the researched groups have necessitated the use of a variety of methodological approaches in order to collect data that would help verify, shed light on, and present a bigger and truer picture of the views about the nature and causes of conflicts in the Sidaama area of the SNNPR.

In his article, J. Kennedy (1998: 56-76) analogically used the story of blind men's experience of an elephant in the 1869 (date) tale of Saxe (para. 36), to indicate the importance of using multiple experiences of different groups in gaining a holistic picture of an event. In the story, each believed the entire elephant to resemble the particular side of the elephant which each touched by chance: one touching a the swinging tail perceived the elephant to be like a rope, another by touching tusks perceived the elephant to be like a spear, still another touching the squirming trunk believed the elephant to be like a snake.[19] Kennedy commented:

> "Of course, the moral of the story is that people derive incomplete beliefs from their incomplete experiences in the world. In reality, if a group of blind men took turns announcing a description of his particular part of the elephant, it is clear that by listening to each other, all the blind men would come to a rather complete and correct understanding of the heterogeneous qualities that make up an elephant. All members of the group would know that the creature has a side like a wall, tusks like spears, legs like trees, and so forth. Through discussion, they might even figure out how the parts are connected and how they function together" (Kennedy, 1998: 56.)

Kennedy's article addressed an issue somewhat different from the writer's, which is the field research. This was not carried out with a view, at least not at the moment, to bringing different groups together (the Sidaama community elders, educated members of different ethnic groups, and other people involved in my observation) to share their views and experiences of life in the Sidaama zone of SNNP region, in order to have a complete knowledge of their situations. Rather, the data which were collected from varied groups with varied research methods would be brought together and analysed, in an attempt to get a more or less complete picture of the nature and causes of the negative and destructive manifestations of conflict in the zone.

In using the questionnaire data, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approach is applied. From the quantitative aspect, three procedures are followed: First, answers to the questions are

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a method' (bringing in two or more viewpoints on a particular event, e.g., the views of a teacher, a pupil, an observer) [see McFee, 1992: 215-219]. My research involved the two aspects of triangulation metaphor.

[19]The poem Kennedy refers to can also be found in the citation of Frewer (1994: 315).

broken into variables (distinctive ideas) and are coded (see a sample below). At the end of each variable a number is placed indicating the number of times the variable is mentioned in the responses. Second, the related individual variables are brought under parent codes. The 'family' metaphor is well suited here: data are coded as 'parent' and 'children', hence under a parent code several related individual codes ('children') are gathered. For example, all the individual elements that pertain to 'rights' are brought under the parent code, 'Rights'. Third, in a parent code, the number of times the variables are mentioned are added in order to understand the weight or the degree of importance placed on the parent code. Further analysis follows from the last approach. Among the individual variable codes some are mentioned many times and some fewer. In PSC, individuals belonging to a conflict party have experienced different conflicting situations with the other, and therefore their concerns and grievances differ from one to another. To address these diverse concerns, they come together under common issues of concern, the ones that the elites define. In a PSC context, these issues pertain to what Azar calls 'spill over' of conflict into what would, in a normal situation, be less significant (e.g., disagreements among individuals) in group relations. For this reason, the author thinks that even if some elements are mentioned fewer times in the *questionnaire* responses, in the cases of PSC, they do matter; for there are individuals who view them as things that affect them and involve them in negative conflict expressions or joining conflict parties. Such elements receive their weight when they are gathered under a parent code. The parent codes will reveal the nature and causes of the existing unpeaceful relations and the quests of the groups. In this manner, this work aims at highlighting the types of conflict and their main causes in the Sidaama area of the SNNPR. To elucidate what has been said, a sample is presented on the next page.

The sample presents the answers that are given by the non-Sidaama respondents to the question 'Q3vi1a'. These answers are broken into distinct ideas or variables, coded as a, b, c, ... Some of these variables were common to different respondents, hence the number at the end of each variable [e.g., "'x' times" where 'x' stands for a number] reflects the number of times the variable is mentioned, i.e., the number of respondents who have mentioned the same variable. In the sample, at the end of Q3vi1a, number 44 reflects the total number of all the variables mentioned in the replies.

A sample of data processing

Q3vi1a. What are the points on which you agree with the non-Sidaamas? Why? [total # of variables = 44]

a. their quest to work and live equally, for it is their constitutional right as Ethiopians (e.g. Art. 34: 1 and 2) [5 times]
b. the rights of every citizen to live anywhere without feeling superior or inferior must be respected (Art 34) [4 times]
c. the call to live united without being divided along ethnic and racial lines [6 times]
d. [no answer]
e. the policy that prevents children in the towns from learning in their own languages except the Sidaama language is wrong [2 times]
f. the rule of law must be respected [1 time]
g. forcefully removing individuals from their homes in towns in the Sidaama zone is illegal [1 time]
h. all citizens must have equal rights in urban areas [2 times]
i. there must be equal justice or fair treatment for all in the court [3 times]
j. the Sidaamas' taking of land by force from others' territory is wrong [2 times]
k. that the rights to equal participation for the inhabitants of the region must be respected [3 times]
l. that Awaasa should be the capital of the SNNP region [2 times]
m. that the Sidaama zone must be a multi-ethnic zone [1 time]
n. distributing building plots in Awaasa for the Sidaamas alone is unfair [2 times]
o. (see 'i')
p. that all must work and live together in peace [3 times]
q. that administrative power should be given to the educated regardless of the ethnic background [1 time]
r. none, because they disagree while they could work and live together in harmony [1 time]
s. that every able person should have the right to hold administrative office [1 time]
t. that all must live together in peace [2 times]
u. that people must intermarry freely [1 time]
v. equal political power-share, for an inclusive system removes divisions and ethnocentrism [1 time]

If all the respondents (139) respond to the question, the total figure of the variables will be at least 139, not 44. This lesser figure reveals that only some of the respondents have answered the question; others have skipped it. Three possible reasons can be given: some respondents may have skipped it for political reasons, suspecting the research to have been connected with the government wanting to know what they think (there are indeed similar comments given under Q8); some others may have avoided the question perceiving it to have a political connection (there are individuals who do not want to have anything to do with politics); or some did not know the answer (some have answered Q2 stating the non existence of conflict between the groups in Sidaamaland, except bad governance). The question 'Q3vi1a' proceeds from a question which asks the respondents about the issues the non-Sidaamas raise as causes of their grievances. The question in the sample allows the respondents to

sift out the points on which they are in agreement with the grievances mentioned in the previous question (Q3viii).

In the table below, the variables [a, b, g, h, i, k, n, s] pertain to the issue of rights, so a parent code 'Rights' is assigned to them. By adding up the number of times each of these variables is mentioned one finds that within the question 'Q3vi1a', the issues of rights are raised 21 times. The variables [c, m, p, r, t, u] are gathered under a parent code 'Attitude'. This parent code reflecting a cosmopolitan tendency is mentioned 14 times in the question. [It is a positive element mentioned by both Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas, which is relevant for conflict transformation.] A parent code 'Governance' is assigned to the variables [f, q], and is mentioned 2 times in the question. The variable [e] is coded under 'Culture' (mentioned 2 times), [j] under 'Economic' factor (2 times), [l] under 'Awaasa' (2 times), and [v] under 'Political' factor (1 time). The following table presents a clearer picture.

Variables	Parent Codes	No. of Times Parent Codes are Mentioned
a, b, g, h, i, k, n, s	Rights	21
c, m, p, r, t, u	Attitude [cosmopolitan]	14
f, q	Governance	2
e	Culture	2
j	Economic	2
l	Awaasa	2
v	Political	1
Q3vi1a: Total number of times the variables are mentioned		44

The questionnaire data will be analysed in the same manner and the total number of mentions of each parent code across related questions in the questionnaire will be calculated. Further analysis will follow from this. It is to be highlighted here that the parent codes are not isolated monads; they are interconnected and influence one another. For instance, the issue of 'rights' is found in a wider spectrum (e.g., political, cultural, economic, social rights). Nevertheless, the method used here is

helpful at least for ordering and making sense of the multiple data gathered from the field research. Moreover, the data gathered from *observation* will help to understand the dynamics involved in the conflict parties, the factors contributing to the worsening of relationships. The *open in-depth interview* will offer insights to the cultural approaches to peacebuilding, the Sidaamas' view of others in history, and their view of themselves.

PART I: CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND TO CONFLICT ANALYSIS

This thesis is analytical. The general aim in writing it is to make a contribution to "conflict management"[1] in Sidaamaland, Ethiopia, and the Horn of Africa. Its task consists in presenting an analysis of conflicts in a particular area (Sidaamaland) in Ethiopia, providing Sidaama views about conflict and identity and their methods of managing conflicts. This Part presents some theoretical grounds for understanding social conflict and identity (chapter 2), and frameworks for conflict analysis (chapter 3) from academic literature. Chapter 2 presents the general understanding of the concepts both from the global/academic (macro) and the local/Sidaama (micro) vantage-points. Many, if not most, conflicts in the developing countries today are intercommunal with their national and international linkages. It is for this reason that a section on understanding communal identity (2B) is included in this part. It also presents the Sidaama conception of conflict (2.A.3) and identity (2C). Chapter 3 deals with providing a holistic analytical framework and the understanding of key elements in conflict analysis. It will also choose some analytical images that will be used in Part III to capture current conflicts in Sidaamaland.

2. UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT AND IDENTITY

The reader is accustomed to terminologies such as conflict, ethnic conflict, and nationalism. Conflict in Sidaamaland is perceived by some as ethnic, by others as nationalism. This chapter presents a general theoretical background in understanding the concept conflict and theories about communal identity (e.g., ethnie and nation). The way one defines and perceives these concepts determines the type of solutions one gives. In this presentation both views from general literature and local are

[1]The term 'conflict management' is used in this work in a broader sense. Conflict Resolution literature generally attributes to it rather a narrow meaning (i.e., keeping negative peace) than its potential to be the umbrella concept that includes all the methodologies of Conflict Resolution. It needs to be liberated from that narrow sense.

included. The questions that will be addressed here are: what is conflict? How do the Sidaamas understand conflict? What is communal identity? How do the Sidaamas see their identity (i.e., what criteria do they use to identify themselves)?

2.A. CONCEPTUALISING CONFLICT

2.A.1. Conceptual Definition

> "Defining conflict has been a popular activity among researchers in and outside the discipline of communication. One reason definitions are important is that the way something is defined will determine the judgements made about it" (Lulofs and Cahn, 2000:3).

'Conflict' does not exist without 'source' (cause); but conflict is not source. Violence indicates conflict; but conflict can exist without violence or any conflict action. Conflict action proceeds from conflict and influences conflict direction (towards transformation, stagnation, or escalation). Conflict indicates a strain in human relationship which can lead to the breakdown of the relationship. Adam Curle's definition as "unpeaceful relations" (Curle, 1971: 1-18) expresses well what social conflict is. Social/interpersonal conflict, in this work, is an 'unpeaceful relation' (Curle) among individuals/groups, arising from the 'awareness of'[2] real or perceived incompatibility of interests, real or perceived threat (of structural or relational nature) to one's sense of 'being' and 'having' in relation to the other and also to what each side values and cherishes.[3] From an analytical perspective, it is a conscious *pre-behavioural experience* of *contradictions* (e.g., in values, understanding, interests, goals, expectations) *or incompatible* situations by individuals and groups, negatively affecting their psychological state of being (e.g., emotional stress, changes in attitudes) and

[2]The aspect of awareness is underlined in K. E. Boulding, 1962, p. 5. "Conflict is always conscious" (Park and Burgess, 1924: 574).

[3]The ideal of 'being' and 'having' are expressed by Azar and Burton in terms of "human needs" (e.g., identity, security, and material resources) which are essential for human development (Azar, 1990; Burton, 1990a: 36-48; Burton, 1990b).

relationships, ultimately leading to "*conflict actions*"[4] (constructive/ transformative or destructive/escalating) with a view to bringing a *change*.

The factors that give rise to conflict include structural and other relational social issues which are both "objective" and "subjective", i.e., real or perceived.[5] From the perspective of conflict as the *pre-behavioural experience* of contradictions and its psychological outcomes, conflict is neither good nor bad. As Lulofs and Cahn (2000: 7) indicate, it is the mismanagement of 'conflict' that has given rise to a negative judgement of, or attitude towards, it. Although integral and highly interrelated, conflict (being a human experience of adverse situations) is not behaviour (violent or non-violent conflict action) and causal factors (Wehr, 1979: 13; Stedman, 1991: 330; Bloomfield and Reilly, 1998: 18; Toure, 1999: 23; Galtung, Jacobsen and Brand-Jacobsen, 2000).[6] Conflict can exist without conflict action, i.e., conflict can exist without riot, fight, or other forms of conflict expressions. Unlike violence, conflict is an unavoidable fact of human and interactive life within the world inside and with the outside world (Lulofs and Cahn, 2000: 9-12; Rupesinghe, 1998: 3), but does not constitute human 'nature'[7] as 'reason' and 'body' do. In the absence of causal factors (sources), one can experience moments of tranquillity; hence conflict is not an ontologically integral part of human nature (Rapoport, 1995: 11-13). Only *conflict action* by or "behaviour"[8] of parties in conflict can be judged as good/constructive/productive, bad/destructive, or stagnating (cf., Lulofs

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[4]Bartos and Wehr apply the term 'conflict action' to both violent and non-violent behaviour (see Bartos and Wehr, 2002: 14, 22-28).

[5]According to objectivist approach (e.g., Coser and Horowitz) fundamental source of social conflict is scarcity of status, power and resource (Coser, 1956: 8; Horowitz, 2000: 95). For subjectivists (e.g., Rubin, Pruitt and Kim), the fundamental source is belief or perception (Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, 1994: 5). Avruch correctly sees both objective and subjective factors underlying conflict (Avruch, 1998: 24-25).

[6]Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen, "Peacebuilding, Peace Empowerment, and Peaceful Conflict Transformation: Social, Political, and Economic Transformations in Romania and the Challenge Ahead," available at http://www.transcend.org/t_database/articles.php?ida=101; posted on 17 May 2001; accessed 5 June 2006.

[7]Here 'nature' is understood as not in the sense of human tendencies or characteristics or behaviour (phenomenological aspect), but the *esse* of the human existence (the ontological aspect).

[8]Behaviour here implies an action that is taken to address or resolve a situation of unpeaceful relation; it concerns conscious actions towards the real or perceived adversary with a view to altering the latter's goals, interests, values, or behaviour. Conflict behaviour takes violent or non-violent forms (cf., Mitchell, 1981: 29-32, 120-122; 125-132).

and Cahn, 2000: 12; Folger and Poole, 1984). It requires conscious human decision. It is the conflict-action with resulting psychological effect (attitude) that transforms or deepens unpeaceful relations. Depending on the type of conflict actions, a *change* from the state of unpeaceful relations can be that of transformation or regression of the relation within the general axis of human development. Conflict serves as an invitation to transform human relations into a better state of human development or existence. More on this will be said in chapter 3. In the analysis of current conflicts in chapter seven, the author will be dealing with both conflict and conflict actions existing in Sidaamaland.

2.A.2. Approaches to Conflict

There exist many definitions of conflict both in the general (academic) and local (the Ethiopians in Sidaamaland) levels. But all the definitions come down to three fundamental approaches: conflict as internal (mental/psychological) or pre-behavioural experience of incompatibility/ contradiction and/or disjunction between what is and what ought to be; conflict as behaviour or the outcome of the pre-behavioural experience; and conflict as both pre-behavioural experience and its outcome. Consider the following definitions:

Approach 1: Conflict as pre-behavioural experience of incompatibility/contradiction...

- "[A] social conflict exists when two or more persons or groups manifest the belief that they have incompatible objectives" (Kriesberg, 1998: 2);
- "Conflict is that which brings quarrel, that which disrupts peace, that which gives rise to insults, fights, bringing one to court, bitter argument" (R13);
- Conflict is "disagreement among groups on issues (ideas, goals, view, rights, methods...) at times leading to loss of life" (from questionnaire answers).

Approach 2: Conflict as behaviour

Conflict is:

- "a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each part wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other" (Boulding, 1962: 5);

- "a quarrel based on domestic animals and territory" (R5);
- "a situation (e.g., war, disturbance, clash) resulting from disagreement between individuals or groups on issues" (from questionnaire answers).

Approach 3: Conflict as experience and behaviour

Conflict is:

- "a social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources" (Wallensteen, 2002: 16);
- "antagonistic feelings and their expression among groups and individuals" (from the questionnaire answers).

The definitions above reveal (although some of them show some vagueness) that there exist three general approaches to which diverse definitions from both the general (academic) and local (Sidaamaland) levels can be brought.

Q1 of the questionnaire (see the Appendix) asks how the respondent understands 'conflict'. The questionnaire answers reflect the views of the educated group (both the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas in Sidaamaland) who are more integrated in the Amharic culture. After having regrouped the definitions the respondents gave under the three general approaches, the author found that the approach towards conflict as behaviour (conflict action) and its outcome is dominant among the Sidaama respondents. The approach to conflict as the pre-behavioural experience (i.e., an experience of unpeaceful relations before 'conflict action') stands as the dominant position of the non-Sidaama educated groups and of those who are born from mixed [Sidaama and non-Sidaama] parentage. To the interview question "What do you understand by conflict?" most interviewees have contented themselves with presenting the causes of conflict rather than defining it. Nevertheless, as the definitions gathered from those who have tried to define (e.g., R5, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13) reveal that the approach to conflict as a pre-behavioural mental/psychological experience also dominates the views of the Sidaama 'elders'.

Why do the three approaches exist even among the Ethiopians living together within Sidaamaland? Here, the author's field research experience in Sidaamaland can offer an answer. *The different definitions of and approaches to conflict within the Sidaama area indicate the different types of conflict experiences the parties to the conflict undergo*. The gathered data through observation during the field research confirm this point: in Sidaamaland, generally, the Sidaamas have

experienced violent suppression, intimidation, imposition and harassment, and feel more as victims of oppression and abuse of their human and constitutional rights by the government. This explains the tendency of educated Sidaamas and those who have suffered violence to define conflict from the approach of 'conflict action' and outcomes. Generally, the Sidaama elders (mainly those from the hinterland) define conflict by describing its causes (e.g., quarrel among individuals over territory, grazing land, property ownership, violation of one's property, tampering with someone's wife, stealing, verbal abuse, quarrel in between husband and wife...). They begin by saying "conflict comes from...." Overall, according to the interview data, the Sidaama elders approach conflict from the experiential aspect, reflecting *seera* (the procedure that every individual is expected to follow when he/she is in conflict: e.g., informing the elders [as soon as a relationship breaks down] who in turn and promptly deal with the problem). There have been arguments between the Sidaama and the non-Sidaama elites (the educated and urban) over the status of Awaasa (the Sidaama and the SNNPR administration centre) and over the use of the Sidaama language for primary education in Sidaamaland. The non-Sidaamas of Sidaamaland also fear that the Sidaamas' quests and goals may undermine their own minority status and rights: e.g., while the Sidaamas seek their own regional status, most of the urban non-Sidaamas (the middle-class and educated) tend to disapprove of this; whereas many Sidaamas feel they have right to control politics and administrative offices in their area, many non-Sidaamas disagree and favour equal status or representation in power-sharing, and so on. These explain why the non-Sidaamas tend to define conflict mainly from the aspect of disagreement. The author concludes, therefore, that the different approaches to conflict reflect the nature of experiences of those who define it, hence, the context. In this, Kriesberg's statement is confirmed: "Evaluation of conflicts often vary with the perspective taken by the observers and analysts" (Kriesberg, 1998: 6).

Conflict situations leading to the three approaches in defining conflicts influence judgements made about conflict (Lulofs and Cahn, 2000: 3): many see it as bad, some as good, and others (including this author) as neither good nor bad. In classic Western approach, conflict is viewed negatively as a moment of danger. Beneficiaries of a system or particular type of relation and the liberal economy fundamentalists regard conflict negatively and tend to suppress it by force, as conflict settlement refers (Lulofs and Cahn, 2000: 6-9; Kriesberg, 1997: 64; 1998: 4-6; Salem, 1997).

Journalists and many academics present a negative view of conflict. Many from the underdogs, nationalists, and some scholars (from all continents) see conflict positively as a means of bringing a positive social change, as a moment of opportunity. There are other groups that regard conflicts both as good (constructive) and bad (destructive). As the research data from the Sidaama area reveal, most of the respondents to the questionnaire and the interviewees also perceive conflict negatively or as bad. These views are influenced by the type of conflict situation (e.g., disagreement, competition, externalised conflict expressions [e.g. violent or non-violent actions]) that each of these group experience or deal with. Nevertheless, conflict ought to be understood as an essential challenge where it plays a positive role in offering chances for creativity, correcting wrongs, and enhancing progress (Rupesinghe, 1998: 27).

Whatever attitude the people have, the understanding of conflict is always dependent on the people's historical and cultural contexts, or commonly shared sphere. Conflict "emerges through an interactive process based on the search for and creation of shared meaning," and the interactive process "is accomplished through and rooted in people's perceptions, interpretations, expressions, and intentions, each of which grows from and cycles back to their common sense of knowledge" (Lederach, 1995: 9). In this way Lederach invites a reader to approach a conflict from its socio-cultural and historical context, by taking account of the understanding or the cumulative knowledge of the people involved in the conflict. In other words, the people that create and experience conflict must not be dissociated from the process of understanding and handling it. With this, Lederach draws the attention of the readers to understand the fact that every conflict possesses an aspect of particularity owing to the nature of its causes, the environment, the parties in conflict and their history of interactions in understanding and shaping it. This author places the understanding of 'conflict' within the context of human development, which is always a process (see 3B). This process he calls 'existential process'. Within this process, the triadic conflict structure (Galtung's 'conflict-attitude-behaviour' triangle [Galtung, 1996a: 70-73) serves as agent of social change. These three elements are interrelated and affect each other. Conflict actions affect and determine the life of a particular unpeaceful relation: it either terminates, attenuates, deepens, protracts or widens (through spill-over).

2.A.3. The Sidaama Perception of Conflict

In the Sidaama language there exist distinct words for 'conflict': *gibbo* (conflict/quarrel without involving physical force), *ganama* (physical fight among individuals and groups which involves inflicting physical harm but not intentional killing), and *urde/ola* (war). The Sidaamas have methods and mechanisms particular to each in order to manage them. Any conflict and conflict action among individuals (regardless of the social and cultural backgrounds of the involved parties) and among the Sidaama groups (*ga're*) is understood within the conceptual understanding of *gibbo* and *ganama*. When the Sidaamas speak of *urde* or *ola*, it automatically refers to *group-based* conflict actions among different identity groups that the Sidaamas term as *gosa*. Although now non-existent but possible, in the Sidaama past, there were *ola* among the Sidaama *ga're*. The state of violent unpeaceful relations between the Sidaama *gosa* (= nation) and other non-Sidaama groups including the government are perceived as *urde*/*ola*. Issues at the level of *gibbo* and *ganama* are resolvable within a short period of time, because there are appropriate traditional conflict resolution procedures and mechanisms through which broken relations are healed, and parties are reconciled. The *ola* situation among the Sidaama *ga're* can also be resolved through the existing safety mechanisms (see 9B6.i). But the situation of inter-*gosa urde/ola* has no easy solution and possesses some aspects of Azar's 'protracted social conflict' (see 3A). Within Sidaamaland, there has not been *ola* between the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaama minorities, although the spill-over of the vertical unpeaceful relations (Sidaama vs government) is now threatening horizontal (Sidaama vs non-Sidaama) relations. Individual unpeaceful relations (regardless of ethnic/national background) are treated within the category of *gibbo* or *ganama*. There has been *ola* with the government. Relation with it is asymmetric, and for the Sidaamas it is always a relation of mistrust, submission and burden.

The gathered information from the field research concerning the understanding of conflict has revealed different approaches towards conflict in the Sidaamaland/Ethiopia. Yet the underlying attitude towards conflict across its different approaches remains negative. The Sidaama community elders view conflict as disruptive of harmony in the community, unavoidable, and at the same time manageable. Harmony (*keere* which literally means peace, but the peace that comes from the presence of *halaale* [truth-justice] and the fear of *Magano* [God] in one's relationship with others

[human beings, God, and nature]) is a concept that marks the holistic world-view (*cosmopneumanthropic* [see chapter 3B2]) of the Sidaama elders and the non-elite rural population that practice their cultural ways. Harmony for the Sidaamas (save many educated elite and urban Sidaamas) does not imply the total absence of conflict, but the maintenance of balance in human life. And *halaale*, from one angle, is about doing what is right, just, and good within the limit of what the Sidaamas understand as right, just, and good. From another angle, it is ultimately associated with God. The difference between the rural and urban Sidaamas consist in that the latter are more integrated into the way of life and attitudes of the Amharic culture.

When the author enquired of the interviewees whether conflict could be good, every respondent spontaneously (although R11 showed a bit of hesitation) disapproved of the suggestion.[9] One even suggested that "conflict and evil are the same, and no one likes conflict" [R4], for conflict would lead to killing, bewitching, disharmony, and poverty [R4, R9]. However, when the researcher presented some cases implying that conflict could be necessary and helpful, their answers generally came down to the reactions or views of R2 and R3, which can be summarised in the following terms: where a conflict brings about the *halaale* that has been suppressed and then reconciliation, it can be said to have a good side; however, conflict in itself is not good and is undesirable. Some held that conflict was a double-edged sword: it could be said to be good in so far as it would bring liberation from abuses (e.g., oppression, domination, and other forms of injustice) and then reconciliation; but bad where it would lead people to division, killing or harming each other [R8, R12]. Following this line, R11 termed conflict as *gatoite* (liberating, corrective) and *galteite* (cohabiting or living together). Structural and social asymmetric unpeaceful relations (e.g., conflict that arise from domination, subjugation, exploitation) fall within conflict as *gatoite*, and in the case of vertical and horizontal unpeaceful relations, it relates to *ola*. The conflict that arises out of the need for liberation (conflict as *gatoite*) would defend and restore *halaale* truth, hence, would not be bad; but conflict outside the need for liberty, the conflict that arises from other social interactions (conflict as *galteite*), would cause division among groups and individuals and bring disharmony, and therefore bad. The value of togetherness and cohabitation with neighbours is deep in the Sidaama culture and world-view, this

[9]R11 is a code for one anointed leader (and some members of his council of elders) of one Sidaama clan.

aspect has a positive significance in conflict transformation in the Sidaama area.

The Sidaamas consider conflict bad even for the aggressor, for the victim may make an appeal to God. The Sidaamas believe that an appeal (known as *mallaha*) made to God by a weak and/or abused person will bring retribution on the offender in the form of calamity, sickness or death. They hold a view that an offence against a physically weak person is an offence against *halaale* or God, and the offender will not have progeny [R4]. The appeals individuals make to God take the following forms: *Magano, ati Affi'e ani atera ku'loomohena* ("God, see this for me, for I have appealed to you"), *Magano, Halaale, ati affitto eweli togo assi'ena* ("God, *Halaale*, do you see how 'x' treats me?", or *halaalu yoohe, Maganu yoohe* (Let the *halaale* [truth-justice] judge you; let God judge you [R4]. To avoid the consequence arising from *mallaha*, reconciliation is sought for, with a view to bringing harmony (*keere* [peace], *mittimma* [oneness], and *gutama* [cooperation]; and *danchchumma* [goodness]) [R8].

The distinction of conflict as *gatoite* and *galteite* offers a good tool for understanding inter- and intraethnic relations. In the Sidaama case, conflict as *gatoite* relates more to the relation of Sidaama as a group with the state and the non-Sidaama as a group. Conflict as *galteite* fits well for intra-Sidaama relations and relations among individuals regardless of their ethnic background. It falls in the category of *gibbo* and *ganama*. Whereas a conflict as *galteite* is effectively managed within a reasonable period through their traditional mechanisms and methodologies (see chapter 9), a conflict between the Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas as *groups* tends to become a protracted one. R9 notes that when oppression occurs within the Sidaama group (Sidaama against Sidaama), it is resolved through *seera* (traditional rules and procedures in handling conflict); but when oppression or aggression comes from another *gosa* (ethnic or national group), this group is regarded as an enemy of the Sidaama people. This can also be confirmed from the following Sidaama sayings: "*Gobba miciica murriro mine meemo hoxi'dawo*" (Cutting *miciica* [a type of grass with which a sieve is made] outside makes the sieve inside the house tremble); *fiixa kinsiro godowu xisawo* (violence against one's relation [a group to which one belongs] pains one in the stomach) [R4]. The main problem with this conflict lies in the perceived difference: the groups in conflict may not recognise the cultural values and worldviews of each other, for they perceive each other as foreign or enemy. This can be altered through research, education and structures of dialogue which help to highlight and

capitalise on common cultural values and visions of the parties in conflict with a view to enhancing their knowledge of each other's cultural traditions.

As the study above shows, all the definitions people (both academic and non-academic) give can be brought into three approaches: as mental/psychological experience of incompatibility, as violence or conflict action, and as both experience and its expression. Their definitions are conditioned by the type of conflict experience that they deal with, and helps one understand the period of conflict situation i.e., whether it is at the moment of conflict formation (e.g., the early stage of dialogue [discussion], argument [polarisation]), or at the level of violence. From whatever window individuals define conflict, their attitude towards and understanding of conflict are ingrained within their cultural conception of the world (see chapter 3B2). Generally, people perceive conflict negatively. Such is also the Sidaama view where the nature of conflict is other than conflict as *gatoite*. In the case of conflict as *gatoite*, they view its outcomes as good, but only when it leads to the correction of the abuses, serves the *halaale*, and brings reconciliation. This conclusion reflects the understanding of the rural Sidaamas, who generally practice their cultural ways in their daily life. Contemporary academics also regard 'conflict' in terms of constructive/productive and destructive, depending on the outcome it brings. This author has argued that conflict is neither good nor bad; only conflict action can be judged in that way. Conflict is an opportunity that invites people to transform their relations to a better one within the holistic axis of human development.

2.B. UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

Conflicts in many developing countries have been based on communal identity. By 'identity', we refer here to 'ethnicity' and 'nation'. Scholars from sociology and anthropology define them on the basis of *objective* markers (e.g., primordial elements such as language, culture, common blood/ancestry, and soil/territory [homeland], religion) and *subjective* elements (e.g., will, idea [creative imagination, ideology], belief, common psychological make-up, free choice). In this work, 'ethnicity' is defined as a pre-national group that emphasizes more than one of the elements both from objective and subjective sphere, recognizes/perceives itself and is recognized by others as a distinct single cultural

and/or political entity with its own specific name, but without seeking for internal or external self-determination. A 'nation' is a politically and culturally self-conscious linguistic and territorial group that already has or demands to have self-determination (internal or external) in view of managing its own affairs within its own territory.[10] For the purpose of the thesis, we follow the division of horizontal and vertical conflicts. The former refers to intercommunal conflicts (e.g., ethnic conflicts), and the latter to identity group vs state (e.g., nationalisms) or transcommunal movements vs 'regime state' (i.e., state controlled by a regime). There exist debates on what is ethnic and nation as it will be presented below. The latter is divided as ethnic nation (from which comes 'ethnonationalism') and civic nation (from which arises civic nationalism).[11] An ethnic nation defines itself in terms of objective factors (e.g. Germany, Japan) however elusive these factors may be. Civic nation is defined in terms of geographical and juridical boundaries with equal citizenship rights for all member cultural groups (e.g., modern nations of Western type), a sort of what Anderson calls 'imagined community' by political elites (Anderson, 1983).

Studies in ethnicity and nation reveal that the criteria which groups use to identify themselves vary from one place and group to another. What one group sees as an essential factor for its communal identity, is not necessarily an essential factor for another group. The factors and goals that raise identity-based association vary from place to place, hence nationalisms (not just nationalism) [Ozkirimli, 2000: 228). The goals of cultural association in the US in itself may differ from one group to another: however, none of the cultural communities aim for self-determination. In Canada, the French community distinguishes itself primarily by language (Canovan, 1996: 52), and it has achieved internal self-determination. Croatians and Serbs are both Slavs, but their difference mainly derives from religious association (Catholic-Orthodox). In Sudan, the northerners (the products of Afro-Arab intermarriages) differentiate themselves from southern Sudanese on the basis of race (regard

[10]This definition of 'nation' is similar to that of A. Cobban: a nation is "a community that is, or wishes to be, a state" (Cobban, 1969: 108).

[11]For detailed information on civic and ethnic nations, see Geertz, 1994: 29-34; Hastings, 1997: 13; Smith, 1986: 134-152; 1991: 8-13, 15).

themselves as Arabs, although they are children of Arab-African marriages), language and religion.[12] Among the Nilotics in southern Sudan, perceived difference and identity may be in language (or dialect), "cultural specialty" (i.e., its social rituals [the rituals that the members share regardless of their religious and ideological affiliations], customs, life styles, dress, food, and so on),[13] group occupation (pastoralist or agriculturalist or hunters). In Rwanda, Hutus and Tutsis share common language and culture, but they differentiate themselves by traditional group occupation and ancestry. Socio-political, economic, historical and environmental contexts determine the defining criteria of a group's identity (e.g., ethnicity or nationhood), and for this reason definitions of ethnicity, nation and nationalism remain always context based, hence fluid (Connor, 1978: 386; 1994: 43; Hutchinson & Smith, 1996: 5; Ozkirimli, 2000: 224-5, 226-8). Since identity formation is dynamic and its criteria change in time, what a group values as essential elements to define its identity and socio-cultural worldview cannot be pushed aside from consideration in managing conflicts and building a nation. For this reason in 2B2 below, the author presents how the Sidaamas define their identity. In order to relate and understand their views, it is necessary to provide briefly first general theoretical approaches from academic debates in understanding communal identity.

2.B.1. Major Theories in Understanding Communal Identity

There exist many theories in understanding group identity on the basis of which horizontal and vertical conflicts are waged in many developing countries. These are brought to three very broad camps: objectivist (primordialist), subjectivist (modernist-postmodernist) and objectivo-subjectivist (e.g., ethnosymbolists). There exist different perspectives within each of the three camps, owing mainly to positions (extreme or mild) the scholars present. Generally, however, in the situation of identity-based conflicts, the general theoretical approach of each camp influences types of mechanisms (e.g., institutions and practices) to manage them (Sisk, 1996: viii).

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[12]A. Mazrui notes that, while racial purity/impurity criterion marks being white/black in the US, in northern African countries like Egypt and Sudan patrilineal ancestry determines being Arab (Mazrui, 2002: 113).

[13]Ralph Linton in his book (*The Study of Man*, 1936) categorized cultural elements in terms of 'cultural universalis', cultural specialties and cultural alternatives. See also Oommen, 2000, pp. 12-13.

2.B.1.i. Objectivists (Primordialists)

The primorialists (pioneered by Geertz, 1963: 108-113; van den Berghe, 1995: 359-368; Shils, 1957: 113-145) see the objective markers as defining factors of communal identity. They, especially those holding extreme position, are essentialists (as opposed to constructionist); they see objective factors as 'natural', 'given', innate, immutable, ineffable, and non-manipulable (Geertz, 1963: 108-113; Grosby, 1996: 51-56). These predetermine a group's identity and are ascriptive, distinguishing one group from another. Threats to these primordial elements results in violent and intractable conflicts, leading to irridentism and secession, thus disrupting the state boundary (Geertz, 1967: 111). The only possible solution to identity-based conflicts in a multicommunal society, if one takes the logical conclusion of the primordialist approach, is self-determination. Accordingly, a society with homogenous objective factors is guaranteed to have political stability. However, the case of the homogenous Somalia challenges such a prediction: serious conflicts can easily exist within a single cultural group.

History tells us that for a variety of reasons and causes ethnies change territorially and in their population composition through the processes of assimilation (fusion) and differentiation (fission). In the former case, through the process of amalgamation, which includes intermarriages in all fields, two or more groups may become a new single group with a new identity. A group can also assume the identity of another. In the case of differentiation or fission, a group may split itself up into two or more entities. It may also be that religious affiliation (e.g., Bosnians who were formerly Serbs and Croats) or racial intermingling (the 90% population of Tunisia, Algeria and Libya that resulted from Berber-Arab intermarriage) may give rise to a separate identity or additional new group.[14] The question of immutability of objective identity markers in primordialist theory is, therefore, questionable. In any case, objectivists forget the importance of subjective elements in identity creation, and the ability of the human person to re-formulate their identities depending on their socio-political, historical, economic and environmental contexts.

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[14]For all that has been discussed in this part of the paragraph, see Horowitz (1975: 111-140) and Smith (1991: 24, 28-32). For information on the racial composition of Tunisia, Algeria, and Lybia, see the profiles at http://www.lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html; accessed in December 2001.

2.B.1.ii. Subjectivists (Modernist and Post-modernist Constructionists)

Subjectivists are constructionists, and all that matters in identity formation is the subjective factors (e.g., will, free choice, collective historical memory [Renan], belief [Seaton-Watson], imagination [Anderson]) and contextual need. For them, identity (both ethnic and national) is a social construction, and can be reformulated and recreated as contextual needs dictate (Anderson, 1983; Renan, 1947; 1996: 48-60; Seaton-Watson, 1986). Identity markers like culture are just arbitrary human inventions (Gellner, 1983: 56). For Gellner, will, free choice, loyalty and solidarity, on the one hand; and fear, coercion, compulsion, on the other: these are important agents in the formation and maintenance of group identity (Gelner, 1983: 53). Some like Eller and Coughlan hold an extremist position, viewing the concept 'primordialism' as "theoretically vacuous and empirically indefensible" (Eller and Coughlan, 1993: 187). They think that it is unscientific and unsociological, and thus should be banned altogether from the sociological lexicon (ibid). Subjectivists are generally modernists and many of them associate ethnic identities as backward, divisive and sentimentalist lacking rationality (Eller and Coughlan, 1993: 191-192; G.M. Scott, 1990: 163). Identity-based conflicts and ethnonationalisms are perceived by modernists (save Gellner, for whom nationalism is simply a consequence of a new form of social organisation and the need for homogenisation [Gellner, 1983: 45-46, 48-49], and some others) as works of 'ancient ethnic hatred' and a danger to the stability of a modern civic nation state (cf., Roberts, 1998: 29); hence, modernists naturally show favour towards suppressing such conflicts. Such scholars prefer to construct a political system (democratic or authoritarian) that promotes homogeneity and removes ethnic identity, and use coercion if necessary for the purpose. Such a negative view about ethnic identity marks international policies of non-intervention in a state's internal affairs (ibid.) and also of state-strengthening. They regard 'ethnicity' as "a cleavage splitting groups between us and them in a politicised setting" (Jeong, 2000: 72).

Canovan recognizes the importance of subjective factors in identity formation. However, she warns (in line with Eric Hobsbawm [1992: 8]) against the extreme voluntarism of Renan and the like, for belonging to a nation is not just in the mind and a mere individual choice. There are aspects (e.g., social conventions, common origin or destination or birth, for – the majority of cases – people belong

to a nation because their parents do so) that one cannot individually alter by will or choice (Canovan, 1996: 54-56). Subjectivists fail to explain why the elements depicted as primordial (e.g., attachments to ancestry and place of origin; and in some cases religion, language and customs) persist and remain ubiquitous through centuries in communal identification (Grosby, 1996: 51, 55-56; Smith, 1991: 24-25; Canovan, 1996: 62). Brass, despite his heavy instrumental position giving political dimension as the only important factor for identity formation, recognizes the persistence of what he calls 'core culture' (primordial elements) of a group and the impossibility of manipulating or removing certain symbols of the core culture in constructing new identity. Political elites use such markers as a ticket to advance their political interests or projects but cannot remove them (Brass, 1991: 75-99). Hastings points out that despite the constructive approach that the African states have undertaken nation-building, primordial factors have proven to be unavoidable (Hastings, 1997: 166). Horowitz also states the impossibility of abolishing ethnic affiliation, a phenomenon that pervades the world in general, not only Africa and Asia (Horowitz, 2000: xi, xvii, 3). However, the intensity and importance of such a bond depends on the social, political and economic context (e.g. ideological and institutional currents – equality, justice, new state systems, and so on). It is under faulty institutional currents that the elite can mobilise their communities for nationalist or other projects (S. Gashaw, 1993: 138-58). Hobsbawm explains in terms of the elite selecting contextually relevant primordial symbols and also creating new symbols to mobilise people towards modernisation (Hobsbawm, 1992). Hence, conflict is caused not by ethnicity *per se* but by socio-political and economic motives or some ulterior purposes (Brass, 1991: 72). This argument will be taken up later.

2.B.1.iii. Objectivo-Subjectivists and Ethnosymbolists

Objectivo-subjectivists (e.g., Weber, 1968: 389; 1994: 25; Stalin, 1973) generally regard the objective factors as part of human construction (e.g., convention), mutable and alterable depending on contextual needs; however, they are indispensable factors in definition and formation of communal identity. Ethnosymbolists (e.g., Allahar, 1996; Deng, 1997; Smith, 1991) argue that identity is not built on tabula rasa; it bases itself on what is there, the primordial factors are unavoidable; hence national identity is not a pure modern creation. They note that despite all efforts towards creating

new identities (e.g., modern nations), ethnic primordial ties still refuse to disappear. Both ethnosymbolists and objectivo-subjectivists adopt the middle ground, and see both subjective and objective elements as equally present in the identity formation. Stalin thinks that for a nation to be a nation all of the following characteristics must be present: common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up. A nation cannot exist if one of them is absent (Stalin, 1973: 57-64). Within the belief that nationhood is temporal, which withers away with the coming of a classless society, Stalin (in line with Lenin) supports the idea of self-determination of every group with those four factors in order to manage conflicts (Stalin, 1925: 87; Zaslavsky and Brym, 1983: 79). For him (and Lenin), national self-determination is, therefore, a strategic principle rather than the will to create a nation or nation-state.

Human beings exist in becoming and the construction of an identity cannot be denied. The type of socio-political and economic structures determines whether the primordial values militate against or give way or even promote the recreation of a new 'imagined community' with new physical and ideological boundaries. The intensity towards primordial attachment depends on circumstances (Allahar, 1996: 6; Brass, 1991: 72). In a society without prolonged historical grievances, with conducive socio-political and economic structures that respect and promote the well being of all groups and individuals, cultural identity can be recreated and transformed into a wider and more inclusive society.

Max Weber approaches 'nation' as a community of 'power and prestige' with a sense of cultural mission. He defines it as a community of sentiment "which normally tends to produce a state of its own" (Weber, 1994: 25). He underlines the ambiguity of defining nation through empirical qualities; a common language bears no absolute necessity to belong to a nation but rather solidarity based on cultural values (religious creed, common presumed descent) [Weber, 1994: 24]. The only thing that differentiates the nation from ethnicity, according to him, is its commitment to a political project. Weber's approach allows context-based national-identity formation. He also indicates a level of self-consciousness of a group. Walker Connor polishes Weber's 'community of sentiment', whose self-consciousness is somehow still left vague, by stating that every ethnic group that sees itself unique from others, a self-conscious ethnicity, is a nation (Connor, 1978: 388), i.e., ethnic nation.

Hastings emphasizes the idea of 'horizontal bond', political and cultural 'self-consciousness',

and the usage of a group's language for literary work, as the key markers of 'nation'. He defines 'nation' as "a far more self-conscious community than an ethnicity," but "formed from one or more ethnicities, and normally identified by a literature of its own" (Hastings, 1997: 3). It is a "historico-cultural community with a territory it regards as its own and over which it claims some sort of sovereignty, so that the cultural community sees itself with a measure of self-awareness as also a territorial and political community, held together horizontally by its shared character rather than vertically by reason of the authority of the state" (ibid.: 25). Every ethnic group with a horizontal bond that uses its language in literary work can become a nation and is potentially a nation-state (ibid: 12, 31).

For Smith, the elements like common economy, common legal rights and duties (legal-political equality of members) and a common mass public culture and a legal-political community marked by political symbols (flags, coinage, anthems, uniforms, monuments and ceremonies) distinguish 'nation' from 'ethnicity' (Smith, 1991: 14). For him, ethnicity is the cultural element and nation is the political. However, there is some problem here. Politics itself is an element of culture, since culture (in a larger sense) constitutes spiritual (religious, aesthetic, intellectual)[15] social (political, relational), and economic[16] spheres which underlie all human creativity and activities (e.g. scientific and technological).[17] Deng correctly notes this in his definition of ethnic identity as "more than skin color or physical characteristics, more than language, song, and dance. It is an embodiment of values, institutions, and patterns of behaviour, a composite whole representing people's historical experience, aspirations and world view" (Deng, 1997: 28). This partly contributes to the resistance of communal identities in Africa and Asia to the creation of a Western-type civic nation-state.

The Objectivo-Subjectivists and ethnosymbolists do not see ethnic identity *per se* as a source

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[15]Arnold regards culture as intellectual or artistic endeavour for religious and ethical end (Arnold, 1882); also available at http://www.library. utoronto.ca/utel/nonfiction_u/arnoldm_ca/ca_titlepage.html; accessed in Oct 2004.

[16]Scholars like Marvin Harris, argue "that a culture's technology shaped its economy, which in turn shaped its beliefs and values. The theories of Harris and other anthropologists that focus on the strictly economic basis of culture are known as *cultural materialism"* (http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761561730_4/Culture.html; accessed in Oct 2004).

[17]"A people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems" (http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761561730/Culture.html; accessed on 16 Oct 2004).

of conflicts in a multi-communal society, but rather the lack of democratic participatory systems and inequalities (social, political and economic) [Horowitz, 2000; Osaghae, 1999: 259-280; Sisk, 1996]. Lack of avenues for expressing grievances and dialogue (e.g., institutions, legal provisions, strong civil organisations and movements) should also be added among these factors as sources of horizontal unpeaceful relations. In the case of managing horizontal conflicts, the Objectivo-Subjectivist and ethnosymbolists favour the creation of accommodative and participatory (democratic) structures which is broadly known as consociational. Examples of it are: territorial autonomy with confederal arrangement, polycommunal or ethnic federation, proportional representation with consensual decision-making, highly proportional electoral system in parliamentary framework, and corporate (nonterritorial) federalism in the sense of respecting group rights. Different to this are those that are termed as integrative mechanisms, which are favoured by subjectivists. They are: mixed or non-ethnic federal structure, an inclusive centralised unitary state, ethnically neutral majoritarian systems of government, semi-majoritarian and semi-proportional electoral system, and 'ethnicity-blind' public policies.[18]

2.B.2. Ethnicity as a Means of Social Transformation

Human beings can have multiple identities, and the intensity of loyalty to a particular identity is dependent on the context within which it is raised. Ethnic belonging is one of several identities to which one may associate oneself. Where there is justice/fairness in political representation and distribution of economic resources, where there is less threat to a group's culture and existence, and where there are more benefits in participating in a wider society, generally nationalist sentiment does not take a high place in one's preoccupation (Brass, 1991: 99). The source of one's social, spiritual, physical and psychological well-being comes from and is nourished by the layers of identity (e.g., familial, social, professional, political, economic, religious). One feels as nobody without identity. One draws a sense of self-worth or meaning and security from one's multiple identity. There is no hierarchy of these identities; "there is no hierarchy of loyalty but only contexts of identity" (Oommen,

[18]For all that is said about consociational and integrative practices, see Sisk, 1996, pp. ix-xi and 34-45; concerning consociational democracy, see Lijphart, 1969.

2000: 11). An explicit attention to one layer of identities depends either on the context of its immediate necessity, the level of real or perceived threat to it (e.g., injustice or mistreatment on the basis of such an identity), or the advantage that identity may bring at a particular social, political, or economic context (cf., Brass, 1991: 72). Human persons almost invariably know each other as belonging to specific groups. This sense of belonging can carry enormous social and political significance, depending on the context or the nature of factors necessitating it. Every layer of identity is good in itself, provided that it is not used as an instrument of intolerance, exclusion or domination of others.

Many people (ranging from journalists, politicians, developmental policy-makers, to academics) approach ethnic identity negatively and think that it causes conflicts because of its primordial attachment.[19] They regard horizontal conflicts as irrational 'ethnic' or 'tribal' loyalty and sentiments ('ethnism'/'tribalism'). However, it is less common that ethnic belonging *per se* becomes the cause of conflict. Brass (1991: 72) states that there is no empirical evidence which suggests that primordial attachments cause more disruption in a civil society than economic or class conflict. Taking the case of Asia, Varennes also sees ethnic conflicts as "not a very common phenomenon."[20] Banton finds in his case study in Malaysia that "self-interest in saving money or gaining social status, and sentiments of obligation to a friend, neighbour or fellow worker, were often more influential than ethnic identification" (Banton, 1996: 99). Conflicts that exist on the basis of ethnicity can have several reasons: i) it may indicate competition to control meagre economic resources which are found in the territory of particular groups; ii) it may indicate a felt threat to the existence of one's cultural values and the social status of one's community with which one associates one's identity; iii) it may indicate a socio-cultural, economic and political discrimination or domination on the basis of one's ethnic affiliation, or a delayed justice (Markakis, 1994: 217, 222; Seyoum, 2001: 246-249). The policies and mechanisms that have been applied on the basis of the approach to horizontal conflicts

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[19]In 1995, the journal *Economist* referring to one African case writes about 'ethnicity' saying, "a dog whose bark has halted or diverted quite a few democratic camels" (*The Economist* [6 May 1995]: 72).

[20]Fernand de Varennes, "States Versus Minorities: A Legal Human Rights Approach to Understanding the Causes of Ethnic Conflicts in Asia;" <http://lugh.incore.ulst.ac.uk/home/esn/Devarennes.html>; posted in August 1999; accessed on 5 June 2006. This paper is presented at the Fourth International Conference of the Ethnic Studies Network, Moscow, 8-11 June 1999.

as simple ‘ethnism’/‘tribalism’ have intensified them rather than mitigating them. Such a negative perception of ethnic identity is certainly unhelpful in comprehending and managing conflicts in Africa (Adedeji, 1999: 8; Green, 1999: 31; Markakis, 1994: 217). It blocks the recognition and addressing of the problems and issues that contribute to horizontal conflicts (Brown, 2001: 3-25).

The causes and reasons for ethnic movement vary from one place to another, owing its relationship to varied socio-political, historical, cultural and religious contexts. Every new context brings some newness in social organizations. As the term 'ethnicity' is new (appeared in the 1950s in the English language [Hutchinson & Smith, 1996: 4]), contemporary ethnies, at least in Africa, have also acquired novelty, and like 'nations' they are also modernized forms of social organizations. Ethnies have recreated themselves to fit their contemporary situations or contexts (Seyoum, 1997:13). The novelty of contemporary ethnies is not merely in the forms and purposes of association. They make use of modern forms of education and the products of modern technology with improved communication, mobility, and interactions. They have intellectuals and technocrats. Compared to interest-based associations, an ethnic-based association (so long as it is not based on hatred and intolerance towards others) can offer a more fulfilling basis for 'being' and creating humane society (Nabudere, 1999: 90).

People need 'horizontal relationships' within inclusive and rational states. Ethnic association plays an important role in the contemporary societies of Ethiopia and other parts of Africa, where exists what Tarekegn calls 'poverty in political culture' (Tarekegn, 1997: 11, 12). In these societies, ethnicity remains as a social relationship that gives them purpose and hope; people have understood its importance and use ethnic associations and pressure, which they had not previously done, to counteract the tyranny of their dictators or autocrats. If proper state institutions are provided to accommodate and assure mutual respect, tolerance and honest democratic process to protect unity in equality, ethnicity in Africa poses no threat to the stability of a state, but serves as a civil society. In fact, it will even facilitate free assimilation and integration of the peoples within the state. Ethnic relationship based on kinship, culture and language, in the contemporary political situations in many African countries, may be regarded as a primary unit of societal relationships, and “ethnic interests can be asserted as part of a sum total of the national interest” (Tarekegn, 1997: 11, 13). In Deng’s term, “Deprive a people of their ethnicity, their culture, and you deprive them of their sense of

direction or purpose" (Deng, 1997: 28). Moreover, organizations along ethnic lines can also facilitate responsible governance and economic development, for freely and fairly and locally elected leaders (legitimate local government authority) show more openness towards the needs of their peoples and have interest for the development of their area (Salih, 2001: 55-56).

Ethnicity is both cultural and political. In the contexts of bad governance, ethnocracy, chorocracy, autocracy and the absence of the rule of law, in the societies where civil organisations are suppressed or remain weak, modern ethnies act as civil societies, and form political pressure groups to guarantee their equal rights in socio-political and economic spheres. Individuals and groups use communal association to address their grievances (Horowitz, 2000: xvii). Communal nationalism in a multicommunal society arises due to lack of relevant structures to accommodate communal groups. It does not arise just because of the hatred of other groups, although it (nationalism) may lead to antipathy in the long run if the real issues causing such a sentiment remain unaddressed. Nationalism is a form of resistance to the existing system of a multi-ethnic/national state, and is based on the historical and actual grievances of a group (Merera, 2002: 26). Colonial past, ethnic control of the state (e.g., ethnic hegemony [ethnocracy], regional hegemony [chorocracy]), a history of economic and political exclusion, a group's sense of being backward, and a threat to its identity (linguistic and cultural): these are important elements that give rise to nationalist sentiments (cf., Azar, 1990: 7-11; Horowitz, 2000: xvii; Keen, 1998: 71). From this approach, writers like Seyoum (1997) come out as strong defenders of identity-based nationalism. Identity-based conflict management here requires, therefore, addressing the root causes and preventing them from happening again (Keen, 1998: 67, 69), and creating necessary structures of dialogue and participation. Ethnonationalism without sufficient provision for respecting and accommodating others, however, can degenerate into exclusivism or 'ethnocentrism', and can lead to the violation of human dignity and rights. This danger always exists, calling for some 'social capacity' for handling the conflict.

To some degree, ethnic conflict is different from ethnonationalism. 'Ethnic conflict' denotes primarily identity-based horizontal unpeaceful relations that exist among identity groups in a multi-ethnic/national society. Its principal causes are bad governance (i.e., unfair and ineffective distribution of economic goods, lack of the rule of law, absence of clearly agreed and defined participatory structures), prejudice and threat to one's territorial, linguistic and cultural values.

Nationalism of a group can give rise to 'ethnic conflicts' because of its political aspiration for self-determination (internal or external). Minority groups living within the territory of a group that seeks autonomy feel politically and economically threatened and tend to resist or oppose the group's aspiration. In the case where the state-government fails to address the issue constructively without simply relying on coercion or suppression of the aspiration, the aspiring group for autonomy perceives all those opposed to its quest as allies of the state-government that it sees as oppressive and against its socio-political and economic development. In this case unpeaceful relations extend from a vertical to a horizontal dimension. Nationalism can also arise from 'ethnic conflicts' in the situation where the state-government is perceived by a group in conflict to be taking sides with its 'other'.

In conclusion, this section has provided from academic literature how communal identities (ethnicity and nation) are understood and defined. The author holds the objectivo-subjective perspective. Both ethnicity and nation are cultural and political modern forms of social identities with their roots in the past. Ethnicity is without political aspiration for self-determination while nation is with aspiration for or already has the status of internal or external autonomy (see their definitions in the first paragraph of 2B above). Communal identities can serve as a force for good (when approached as pressure groups and civil association for the defence of justice, equality and development) as well as bad (when promoted with a spirit of intolerance and exclusion of others) [Horowitz, 2000: xii, 4]. In building a stable multicommunal society, it is essential to provide contextually relevant infrastructures of participation and accommodation that guarantee cooperation and fairness.

Whatever the academics, economists, journalists say about communal identity, in real life and where there exists instability as in Ethiopia, it is essential to know how the identity groups see themselves, what they consider essential as their identity markers, in order to be able to find ways of building cooperation and neighbourhood, as well as building kinship and friendship across borders. From this principle, the researcher presents below what the Sidaamas say about their identity, what they regard as essential in being and becoming a 'Sidaama', what elements they present as essential for cohabitation with others and building effective ties across boundaries (physical and psychological).

2.C. FACTORS IN THE FORMATION OF THE SIDAAMA IDENTITY

The previous section has presented three broad theoretical approaches (objective/primordialist, subjective/modernist, objectivo-subjective/ethnosymbolist) in understanding group identity. What are the identity markers for the Sidaamas? Who is a Sidaama, and why? Can one become a Sidaama, and how? The Sidaama approach towards their identity supports the ethnosymbolist camp. First and foremost, the Sidaama is a person who traces his/her origin to the two presumed originators (Bushè and Maldea) of the Sidaama people. There exist a high level of inter-*ga're* (= sub-national) solidarity among the Sidaama people, which is cemented by the complex net of cross-*ga're* kingship ties through marriages. As a *gosa* (= nation) the Sidaamas are endogamous, and marriage with other *gosa* is also allowed so long as such *gosa* groups are considered acceptable by the Sidaamas. As *ga're*, although exceptions exist among some Sidaama groups, the Sidaamas are generally exogamous. The affinity or kinship factor through intermarriages serves the purpose of uniting the Sidaama society and is an important factor that marks the Sidaama identity.

All the Sidaama *ga're* speak one single language, and have common culture, common historical memory and psychological makeup (although certain aspects of both history and psychological makeup [e.g., in the case of the artisan groups] may differ), commonly held ancestral roots, and soil (homeland). Together with common ancestry and kinship solidarity, these elements are raised (by the Sidaama interviewees and the respondents to Q6ii of the questionnaire)[21] as criteria that mark the Sidaama identity. By raising them, the Sidaamas see themselves as different from others. They know themselves and are known by others as Sidaama; they have full internal political structures of their own, and see themselves as one *gosa*, linguistically and culturally distinct from any other identity groups. When asked in Q6i of the questionnaire how they feel about being Sidaama, 45% of the respondents say 'happy', 26% say 'proud'. In their reasoning, they emphasise culture, their social structures and way of life, and for some just being 'Sidaama'. 13.4% respond saying 'nothing special', emphasising the equality of every human person and highlighting identity factors just as accidental and not substantial to human nature. Another 13.4% responded by saying 'sad' for

[21]Question 6ii in the questionnaire asks: *What makes you feel that you are a Sidaama? (Or what are the characteristics which explain that one is a Sidaama and not any other group?)*

the following reasons: some say they are sad because they are oppressed on the basis of their identity, others feel sad because of the behaviour of their Sidaama brothers in power, and some others feel sad because they are prevented from exercising the Sidaama right to self-determination. All in all, these indicate the Sidaama level of self-awareness as a distinct identity group.

Secondly, 53% of the respondents to Q6iii — *Can other individuals from other groups become Sidaama? If yes, how? If no, why?* — say 'Yes'. Among the interviewees, a bit more than half of them have responded 'Yes', followed by a 'No' camp, and then a divided group-response. The last reflects the views of the group interviewees whose voices are divided between 'Yes' and 'No'. Based on practice, and taking the majority 'Yes' camp, anyone who considers him/herself a Sidaama (note the aspect of free will), speaks the language, upholds its culture as his/her own (whether he/she practices it or not), shows solidarity with or loyalty to Sidaama, and intermarries with the Sidaama: such a person is accepted as a Sidaama. The 'No' voice from the interviewees in the rural area is somehow very surprising, for it reflects the trend against the traditional Sidaama practice. Such a 'No' view indicates the changing aspect in the outlook of the Sidaama society: from assimilative (constructivist) towards exclusive (primordialist) culture in identity formation, which is indicative of the spill over of conflict to horizontal dimension. The rural people seem to be even more nationalistic than the educated groups. The 'No' camp's reason is based on their view that being Sidaama is simply biological, i.e., being born into the community. However, the majority of the Sidaamas still remain open to assimilate those who want to be part of the Sidaama *gosa* in Sidaamaland.

The traditional Sidaama society has a culture of accommodation and assimilation. A migrant family, individual or group from other *gosa* is tolerated and accommodated within the Sidaama society. For the traditional Sidaama, being inhospitable to a stranger is an act displeasing to God and ancestors. Compassion and hospitality are deeply ingrained in the traditional Sidaama society. In the case of abuse of any human person (regardless of his *gosa*) and even of animals, the people say, *Magano waajj* (fear God), *gafo ikkawohe* (it will be a serious offence that will bring you divine retribution). The fear of God and also their own experience of migration and intermingling in the past has made the traditional Sidaama a tolerant society. The traditional Sidaama is also an assimilative society. Any migrant family or individual from other *gosa* has open possibility of being assimilated

and made part of the host community. However, although every foreigner migrant can receive accommodation, the assimilation aspect is selective: it excludes artisans such as potters, tanners, and blacksmiths.

The migrants who settle in the territory of a Sidaama *ga're* from other *gosa* are known simply by their *gosa* name (e.g., as Amhara, Oromo, Guraghe) so long as they consider themselves as such. Since the Sidaama society is a patrilineal society, every child with a Sidaama father becomes automatically a Sidaama. An individual from migrant ancestry, who wants to become a Sidaama, needs an association to one of the originating ancestors of Sidaama *ga're*, i.e., he needs to be assimilated or grafted into the host *ga're* through public communal recognition. Hence, to the question, "can one become a Sidaama?" the answer is dependent on the free choice and will of the non-Sidaama individuals. The Sidaamas, therefore, have both primordialist and constructionist methods in the history of formation of their Sidaama identity.

The Sidaama *gosa* was conquered by the Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II in 1893 and was made for the first time part of the Abyssinian empire. Traditional Sidaamas lived in a democratic confederacy, each *ga're* having its autonomous status. However, the Sidaama *ga're* knew each other as Sidaama, and their conscience/awareness of belonging to the Sidaama *gosa* was already highly developed even before the conquest. Their tie with each other was strong, because they were (and still are) all interwoven by the kinship system through intermarriages. When there occurred an external threat to one Sidaama group, all the Sidaama *ga're* came together to defend themselves. An attack against one *ga're* by another *gosa* was perceived as an attack against the Sidaama. Killing a Sidaama by a Sidaama was (and still is) perceived as spilling the blood of one's brother, and hence strictly forbidden. Moreover, one issue that clearly marked the sense of the Sidaamas being one was the fact that in the situation where an individual was formally sanctioned for his offences in one *ga're,* he was automatically sanctioned in others, i.e., he could not have any support among the Sidaama people anywhere in Sidaamaland (Hamer, 1972: 237).

Is the Sidaama, then, a nation or an ethnie? We have defined nation as a self-conscious cultural and political group with aspiration for or already having autonomous status. And an ethnie is a self-conscious cultural and political group. Following these definitions, the Sidaama is a nation. Part II and III of the thesis will make this clearer. The Sidaama nationalism for internal self-

determination goes back more than two decades. Whether it is an "ethnic nation" or "civic nation" (Smith, 1986, 1991), this depends on one's position. Although Bushè and Maldea are ascribed to be the originating ancestors of the Sidaama, in reality, Sidaama is the product of the fusion of peoples from different groups. Connor (1978) distinguishes 'nation' from 'ethnie' by the factor of a group's self-awareness as unique, i.e., a group that is not aware of itself as unique is not a nation but an ethnie. Canovan (1996) puts more emphasis on 'mutual recognition' of individuals as belonging to a particular community as the criterion for nationhood. Smith (1991) emphasises the political as criterion for nationhood. The Sidaamas fulfil the criteria of Connor, Canovan and Smith. For Stalin (1973), a nation is marked by the existence of four factors: common language, common territory, common economic life, and common psychological makeup. The Sidaamas have all of them. According to Weber (1994), what makes a group a 'nation' is the group's commitment to its political project. The united political aspiration of the Sidaama for self-governance, as will be discussed in Part II and III, makes the Sidaamas a Weberian nation too. Hastings (1997) emphasises 'horizontal bond', political and cultural self-consciousness, and the usage of a group's language for literary work as the key markers of 'nation.' Although the last factor is debatable in assigning nationhood to a group, the Sidaamas also fulfil the nationhood criteria of Hastings. In all these accounts, the Sidaama is a nation.

This general theoretical chapter has provided sufficient theoretical understandings of the concepts (conflict, communal identity, ethnic conflict and nationalism) both from the general academic literature and the local Sidaama perspective. In the situations of horizontal and vertical unpeaceful relations, each approach in defining and understanding those concepts influence the types of mechanisms needed in transforming the unpeaceful relations. Hence, to know how the Sidaamas approach towards understanding themselves and conflicts offers knowledge for policy-makers and for those interested third parties in transforming the conflicts in Sidaamaland. Having provided such knowledge both from the general and the local, now it is time to introduce analytical frameworks and fundamental elements of conflict analysis.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMES FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS

The previous chapter has laid the theoretical aspect of what conflict is and is not, the judgement towards it that one may adopt, and hinted at the importance of understanding conflict within the framework of human development. This last aspect will be highlighted below in this chapter. Chapter 2 has also given brief general theoretical grounds on social identity (e.g., ethnic and national), since social conflicts in the developing countries are often waged on both horizontal (inter-communal/ethnic) and vertical (e.g., nationalisms) levels. With such a general theoretical perspective on conflict, this chapter presents Azar's theory of PSC (3A) which will be verified through the case study in Sidaamaland (Part II), fundamental elements (parties in conflict, sources [causes] of conflict, conflict actions, and changes [outcomes]), and some analogies in conflict analysis (3C) which will be used in conflict analysis in Sidaamaland (Part III).

3.A. AZAR'S THEORY OF PROTRACTED SOCIAL CONFLICTS

Ethiopia suffers from protracted conflicts based on socio-political, historical and economic grievances. They are acted out on a communal basis. Azar's PSC is chosen here mainly because it deals with communal conflicts and links them with their structural and historical foundations. There is no single universal theory that applies to all conflict situations in the world. Every conflict possesses peculiarity of its own. One conflict theory may generally resonate well with some conflicts, but not with all types of conflict. Azar's theory is selected here because it appears generally to resonate well to the Ethiopian situation. However, does it provide a complete explanation for Ethiopian protracted conflicts? Could there be some crucial elements in understanding Ethiopia's PSC which Azar's theory does not include? These questions will be addressed at the conclusion of Part II.

PSC is a hostile interaction which extends "over long periods of time with sporadic outbreaks of open warfare fluctuating in frequency and intensity" (Azar *et al*, 1978: 50). Political and economic marginalization and insecurity about a group's cultural identity underlie the PSC. "[P]olitical and economic impoverishment or gross exploitation of communities on the basis of their collective

identities and historical misfortunes" contributes to intercommunal conflict (Azar, 1990: ix). Protracted conflicts affect "whole societies and act as agents for defining the scope of national identity and social solidarity" (Azar *et al*, 1978: 50). It has the propensity to involve neighbouring groups and states. Neither military nor legal strategies can succeed in bringing a definite end to the violence it brings. Use of force may help to contain violence for a short while only (Azar, 1990: viii, 2). In the PSC there is no winner; all the parties in conflict lose. PSC originates from four sets of conditions: *i) the communal content of a society, ii) needs, iii) governance and the roles of the state, and iv) international linkage* (Azar, 1990: 7-12; cf., Miall *et al*, 1999: 72-75].

i) The communal content of a society: In a multicommunal (multi-national/ethnic) society, colonial legacy and historical pattern of rivalry and contest among communities (defined by shared ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other cultural characteristics) have caused strain in the social fabric, weakening the nation-building process. Societies formed through the colonisation process (e.g., forcing different identity groups to form one society) creates a history of intercommunal struggle, and produces "disarticulation between state and society as a whole", the state being often "dominated by a single communal group, or a coalition of a few communal groups that are unresponsive to the needs of other groups in the society" (Azar, 1990:7).

ii) Developmental Human Needs (ibid: 7-10): "individuals strive to fulfil their developmental needs through the formation of identity groups" (ibid: 7). Developmental needs are expressed in terms of cultural values, human rights and security. These are pursued through every possible means for over a long time, and cannot be easily suppressed (ibid: 2). Individual and communal physical survival and well-being is an ontological need, and is contingent to the satisfaction of material needs. The deprivation of these needs prepares grounds for a PSC. It is not so much the material need that causes the problem, but unequal distribution of social and economic goods, and lack of structures that allow equal participation in the socio-political and economic spheres and decision-making. Within a deprived or grieving identity group, such a situation produces communal solidarity and cohesion, and promotes collective violence. Policies and strategies for rapid development also benefit some groups and regions and marginalise others. If these groups are unable to attain (i.e., deprived of) full participation in political and economic power, it creates social discord. Providing access to political and economic power is principally about recognising the identity of a community. "In many cases,...,

deprivation of physical needs and denial of access are rooted in the refusal to recognize or accept the communal *identity* of other groups. Formation and acceptance of identity thus also may be understood as a basic developmental need, with collective identity manifest in terms of cultural values, images, customs, language, religion, and racial heritage" (ibid: 9). Such deprivation affects also physical security of individuals and community, for the "deprivation of security cannot be understood without reference to equitable access to the institutions of government, cultural tolerance and acceptance of diversity" (Azar, 1990:10).

iii) Governance and the State's Role: The role of the modern state is to stand impartial and regulate socio-political and economic interactions and satisfy basic human needs in order to "promote communal harmony and social stability" (Azar, 1990: 10). It is "endowed with authority to govern and to use force where necessary to regulate society, to protect citizens, and to provide collective goods" (ibid: 10). "[I]ncompetent, parochial, fragile, and authoritarian governments that fail to satisfy basic human needs" produce PSC because they fail to stand as impartial arbiters of conflicts among their constituent groups. Such governments tend to be monopolized by dominant identity groups or coalitions of hegemonic groups. These groups use the state as an instrument for maximizing their interests at the expense of others (ibid: 10). "The monopoly of political authority by one or more groups denies the state a capacity for fair and successful governance. As a result, the means to satisfy basic needs are unevenly shared and the potential for protracted social conflict increases" (ibid). In order to "sustain their monopoly of power, these dominant groups limit access to social institutions by other identity groups and thus often precipitate crises of *legitimacy*. Such crises exacerbate already existing competitive or conflictive situations, diminish the state's ability to meet basic needs, and lead to further developmental crises. Thus, regime type and the level of legitimacy are important linkage variables between needs and protracted social conflict" (ibid: 11).

Policy capacity of the state is also an important element in governance. It is about the state's ability to evaluate basic needs of its various constituents, formulate policies accordingly, and implement them. Such ability or policy capacity is limited in most countries with PSC, because of their rigid or fragile authority structures. "This happens because the state is often unable to insulate the decision-making machinery from the political pressures of the dominant identity groups. Thus, the relative strength and autonomy of the state is directly linked to the level of satisfying basic needs"

(ibid: 11).

iv) International Linkage: patterns of international linkage with international system, through *economic dependency* within the international economic system and political-military *client* relationship with strong states, greatly influence the formation of domestic social and political institutions and their impact on the role of the state. *Economic dependency* "distorts the pattern of economic development, impeding the satisfaction of security needs" and "often exacerbates denial of the access needs of communal groups, distorting domestic political and economic systems through the realignment of subtle coalitions of international capital, domestic capital, and the state" (Azar, 1990: 11). In the clientage case, "the patron provides protection to the client state in return for the latter's loyalty" (ibid). This relationship "involves some sacrifice of autonomy and independence, which induces the client state to pursue both domestic and foreign policies disjoined from, or contradictory to, the needs of its own public" (ibid).

The four elements (communal, need, governance and international) are preconditions for the rise of a PSC. Overt conflict actions are then dependent on activating factors or variables (i.e., communal and state actions and strategies and 'built-in-mechanisms' of conflicts) that Azar calls 'process dynamics' (Azar, 1990: 12-15). Within the situation where needs and values clash (contradictions/incompatible goals, 'latent conflict'), a simple effective trigger factor, a trivial event, sets off the PSC. What may have been directed at individuals is taken up and recognised in the sense of collective victimisation. This collective recognition of individual victimisation leads to a collective or communal overt conflict action [behaviour], involving protests, civil disobedience, collective violence, guerrilla warfare and/or secessionist movement. Because of the asymmetric power relations, such a communal group seeks external military and economic assistance (often from neighbouring actors) [ibid: 12-13]. In reaction, the state actors also involve in conflict actions (coercion/containment or cooption/accommodation, and seeking external assistance). The 'built-in-properties' of conflict (e.g., attitudes and perceptions, interpretation of events, stereotypes, fear of marginalization or loss of communal integrity) takes up its role either in conflict escalation (protraction) or de-escalation, depending on the types of conflict actions (ibid: 15).

PSC is marked by four characteristics: *protractedness, fluctuation, actor and issue spill-over, and absence of clear termination*. The PSC *fluctuates* in intensity and frequency of violence and has

a tendency to *spill-over* in issues and actors. There exist strong "equilibrating forces" (e.g., frustration, anxieties) which cause fluctuation in the intensity of the conflict in the sense of bringing the rise and fall of tension into relation between the primary conflict parties. A protracted social conflict is marked by trends of interchange between periods of extreme tension and cooling-off ones. The period of extreme tension cannot be sustained by both parties due to high anxieties it causes to them. It cools down bilaterally for a limited time, and then explodes again, making it difficult to predict a final end (Azar *et al*, 1978: 51-53, 55-56). In the situation where appropriate actions in removing grievances or satisfying the basic needs of identity groups are not taken, the conflict escalates and spills over all areas of life: "the victimized communal groups begin to draw the attention of their constituents not only to the event itself, but also to a broad range of issues involving communal security, access, and acceptance needs (e.g., selective poverty and political inequality)" (Azar, 1990: 12). In the situation of spill-over, non-essential issues become important issues; grievances expand; different new groups or conflict parties emerge; and rivalry moves outside the normal boundary into neighbouring groups and states (Azar *et al*, 1978: 53, 56). The spill-over increases momentum for organizing and mobilizing resources. If conflict actions of the state are based on maintaining status quo through coercion/containment and strategies of fragmenting the opposition, they have amplifying feedback in a negative way, the consequence is increased insecurity, institutional deformity, social fragmentation, psychological ossification, and perpetual underdevelopment. When things become out of hand, the ruling seeks external assistance from its patron strong states in the name of maintaining order. When the patron acts in the defence of its client, it simply magnifies the problem and the conflict is protracted *without clear sign of termination*. If the conflict actions of the state are responsive to the human needs of its constituent identity groups and provide structures of accommodation and participation in socio-political and economic spheres and decision-making, then the conflict gradually attenuates or de-escalates, and issues are redefined (Azar, 1990: 12, 14-15; Azar *et al*, 1978: 43, 56). This redefining of issues makes it futile to look for any ultimate resolution. "The conflict process becomes the source rather than the outcome of policy" (ibid: 51).

The perpetuation of social conflict devastates people physically, psychologically, politically and economically. The cost is high and undermines the satisfaction of basic needs. The meagre

resources are excessively spent on security; protracted social violence institutionalises underdevelopment (Azar, 1990: 15-16). PSC exacerbates the initial insecurity through more loss of life and means of support. PSC *deteriorates physical security*. It paralyses socio-political and economic institutions, renders the government weak, and causes the degeneration of the broader social fabric. The "prospects for cooperative interaction and nation-building become poor" (ibid: 16). Psychologically, PSC generates psychological ossification (rigidity): people become more disorientated, demoralised, and pessimistic. When it comes to finding answers to their problems and grievances, people become apathetic; they do not take initiative in finding solutions. There is a vicious cycle of fear and hostile interactions among the contestants; perceptions and attitudes become reality (ossified); war culture and cynicism dominate. No meaningful communication among conflicting parties exists (Azar, 1990: 16, 17). PSC increases dependency on the support and aid from external actors, thus submitting the society's decision-making power into the will of the external actors. This diminishes the communities' ability to take control of their lives (ibid: 17).

The following section follows from 2A and provides a general analytical framework that takes account of worldviews through which groups interpret and understand their conflicts. They are referred to by Galtung as cosmological underpinnings.

3.B. EXISTENTIAL PROCESS OF CHANGE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The author takes 'existential process of change in human development' as providing a broad analytical framework. Several analytical approaches (e.g., Galtung's conflict triangle, Azar's PSC) can be its aspects. Human life is relational: one lives in relation with the physical, spiritual, and human worlds which we term *cosmopneumanthropic* (cosmic-spiritual-human).[1] One is always

[1]In his 1983 article, "Christologie au Village," E. J. Penoukou uses the term *cosmotheandric* to express the African worldview. The term expresses the organic conception of reality, the symbiotic unity of physical, spiritual, and human worlds (Penoukou, 1986: 76-79). From Indian context, Raymundo Panikkar also uses the same term (*cosmotheandric*) to explain reality as the unity of God, nature, and humankind. He states that neither humankind nor nature is the centre of the world, but rather *cosmos* (physical world with all that it contains), *theos* ("God"), and *anthropos* (the human) are the three irreducible dimensions of one reality (Panikkar, 1993: 18-19, 60 [cf. 58]). In this research thesis the term *cosmopneumanthropic* (*cosmo-pneum'- anthropic* [natural-spiritual-human]) is used in favour of more inclusive terms like *pneuma* (not *theos*) and *anthropos* (not *andros*). *Cosmos*, *pneuma*, and *anthropos* are Greek words.

'being-there-with' (*mit-dasein* [Heidegger, 1962: 153-168]),[2] and this is what the author calls 'existence'. The term 'existential' comes from 'existence'.[3] Galtungan triadic conflict structure (contradictions-behaviour-attitude) highlights continuous and dynamic interactions among the *sources* (causes), individuals' or groups' experience of real or perceived contradictions and resulting attitudes (unpeaceful relations), and *conflict-actions* with a view to bringing *change* (Mitchell, 1981: 16). Elsewhere they are referred as 'built-in mechanisms of conflict' (Azar, 1990: 12-15; Miall *et al*, 1999: 74-75). This author calls this continuous dynamic interaction 'existential process of change' in human development. This process involves conscious choices of actions, which determine human progress or regress. Hence, source, experience of contradiction, attitude, and conflict action are integral elements of the process and are agents of change. The actors in this process are the human beings (individuals and groups), who are known in particular conflict analysis as 'conflict parties' (Wehr, 1979: 9).

3.B.1. The Process in Human Development

Human development involves all the socio-cultural, political and economic aspects of a human community and its individuals. In other words, it includes all the aspects of 'being' (e.g., identity, dignity, freedom, life [security]) and 'having' (material resources that are essential for survival and development as a whole) [Azar, 1990; Burton, 1990a; 1990b]. The constant interaction between source, conflict and conflict actions makes human existence an existence of 'becoming': continuously moving from one state of being to another in the form of either progress (transformation) or regress

[2]"Being-with is an existential characteristic of Dasein [being-there] even when factically no Other is present-at-hand or perceived. Even Dasein's Being-alone is Being-with in the world" (ibid.: 156-7). "Being-with is in every case a characteristic of one's own Dasein; Dasein-with [being-there-with] characterizes the Dasein of others to the extent that it is freed by its world for a Being-with" (ibid.: 157)

[3]The International Alert [IA] 1996 resource pack also provides more or less similar approach to understanding conflict. It sees conflict "as a **multi-dimensional social phenomenon** [original highlight] which is an integral feature of human existence, essential to the ongoing processes of history, to social change and transformation" (IA, 1996: chapter 2, p. 3).

in human development (3C4).[4] 'Conflict' and 'conflict action' are key contributing factors to social change, or movement from one to another state of being in social relations (cf., Lederach, 1995: 18). Such a movement indicates the underlying linear aspect of human progress-regress as pictured below in 3C4. In every human person and community, there also exists a natural urge (aspiration) to move towards the perfect (evolution towards the ideal). This is mainly due to human capacity to imagine infinitely new and better possibilities. However, an imagination that does not take into account the importance of maintaining balance between the good of 'self' and 'other' (e.g., nature, spiritual being, individuals/communities), and between 'being' and 'having', will cause unpeaceful relations and directly lead to regression or stagnation in human development. Unpeaceful relation (conflict and attitudes), conflict action and human ability to imagine better possibilities and actualise them serve as powerful agents that set human existence in constant motion, in the process of becoming.

3.B.2. Cosmological Underpinnings in Conflict Formation

In managing conflicts, the knowledge of the worldviews of the parties in conflict is important. This section discusses the underlying human worldviews (e.g., individualist, communalist, holistic) or cosmological underpinnings, through the angles of which human beings order and make sense of their existence. These cosmological underpinnings are the points of departure and end (goals, meanings); hence, they mould and direct one's existence, i.e., relation-with, ways of life, behaviours, understandings, perceptions and values. They are the cultural underpinnings that explain why people do what they do. Galtung defines them as the deepest underpinnings of cultures, the 'substratum', the 'roots of roots,' or "cultural genetic code that generates cultural elements and reproduces itself through them" (Galtung, 1990: 301). It is "rooted in the collective subconscious" (Galtung, 1996a: 81).[5]

Conflict results from the fact of existence ("being-there-with") which is *cosmo-*

[4]On existence being a continuous process of becoming, see Alfred North Whitehead, 1929; see also Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 1964, pp. 37-60; 270-288.

[5]"The deep culture or cosmology of a civilisation obviously conditions not only the perception of conflict life-cycle, but also the actual behaviour in conflict, with a major bearing on conflict transformation" (Galtung, 1996a: 81).

pneumanthropic. Any disruption of the constitutively tridimensional human existence results in unpeaceful relations. From the natural *cosmopneumanthropic* existence arise three existential worldviews (which Galtung locates in the 'social cosmology')[6]: communalist, individualist, and holistic. The first is exemplified in Mbiti's expression "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1969: 108-109; cf., Magesa, 1997: 65). The second is exemplified in the Cartesian principle – *cogito ergo sum* (I am thinking, therefore I am) [Descartes, 1947: 32-33; cf., 1986: 16-19, 68]. The third is found in the Buddhist conception of the world, with the underlying principle that we are all related with common destiny that we can destroy or improve (the principle of *karma*: "whatever you say, and whatever you do, sooner or later comes back to you" [Galtung, 1996b: 88; cf., 83]). The individualist and communalist philosophies can have egalitarian or hierarchical conceptions of the world, resulting in different socio-political systems. The holistic outlook provides conditions for egalitarian and democratic socio-political systems.

As Galtung states, in the individual-centred outlook which underpins the Christian-Occidental worldview, social reality is conceived as a net made up of 'individual knots', in which conflict is individualised and even understood to originate from an individual, affecting others. The individual is endowed with ability and will to act, and individual responsibility comes first. Within the holistic outlook (e.g., Buddhist society), social reality is understood to be 'social nets', and the origin of conflict is placed within 'a collectivity of significant others'. The collective is then the ethical unit of account; collective responsibility comes first (Galtung, 1996a: 81-82). In communalist societies (which include most ethnic/national groups in Ethiopia, the Horn, and Africa in general) social reality is also understood in terms of 'social nets'. One is known in relation to one's group and homeland. One is nobody without community, and communal needs come before individual needs. Loyalty to one's community takes priority. An individual's faults are tied to his families, i.e., if a member of a kinship group is guilty, the whole kinship group shares the consequences. Hence, an individual is always conscious that his behaviour affects the image of his whole extended family or kindred. However, in contrast to the holistic outlook, people with a communalist outlook deal mainly with their own cultural community. It has the potential or tendency to group 'particularism', and in the

[6]Galtung sees two fundamental approaches or worldviews (individual-centred [occidental] and community-centred [oriental]) in his 'social cosmology' (Galtung, 1996a: 81-82).

threatening situations to its identity groups, it can lead to harbouring exclusivist attitude, and mobilise its members in conflict actions.

Within the individualist and communalist philosophies can be found some weak points which can give rise to conflicts. The individualist outlook offers environment for social inequalities (e.g., class creation, exploitation, and structural injustices), and insensitivity towards the needs of others (e.g., community needs) and physical environment (e.g., destruction of forest, pollution) in favour of 'my needs' (individual self-interest) and 'freedom from... to do what I want' ('negative freedom' [cf., Berlin, 1969]). The communal outlook creates an environment for individual human rights abuse and totalitarianism. The right of the community takes priority over that of the individual. It also offers an environment where one group's interest is promoted at the expense of others (e.g., ethnocentrism, caste system, centre-periphery structures [domination, subjugation]). Hence, both outlooks, if taken to extremes, have their vices which threaten one's identity and security (of 'self' and 'other'), and give rise to conflicts which cannot be transformed without removing the threats. For, unlike most of the interests, identity and survival needs (which include protection of one's dignity and necessities of life) are non-negotiable (Burton, 1990a: 38-39). A holistic approach that holds the individual and community in balance, presents a better cosmological ground for achieving a genuine transformation of a society and maintaining harmony among human groups. Rather than the 'individual' or the 'community', the 'individual-in-communion' offers a viable point of departure in which the individual lives for the community and vice-versa. It also offers ecological protection, for without ecological well being human existence is disrupted (Galtung, 1990: 291-305).

To put it in different form, the *cosmopneumanthropic* existence requires the maintenance of balance or harmony (the *keere* of the Sidaama). Maintaining this balance requires creativity, and it is this creative maintenance of balance that marks human development or progress. Creativity is a human capacity and activity for human development and maintenance of a healthy balance (harmony) between the three relational elements (i.e., protecting and promoting the *cosmopneumanthropic* harmony). Whatever philosophical outlook one follows, failure to keep the balance leads to negative outcomes.[7] The disruption of the *cosmopneumanthropic* harmony (the unpeaceful relations) results

[7]"The desire for balance is a natural one. Imbalance leads to violent impulses in search of one's natural equilibrium" like the water filling a balance of height in two vessels connected with tube that allows water to flow from

in different acts of violence (e.g., human rights abuses, exploitation, domination, homicide, ecocide, fundamentalism, and so on). Where the individualist and communalist worldviews give rise to the disruption of the *cosmopneumanthropic* balance, they serve as cosmological underpinnings of the causes of unpeaceful relations.

3.C. ELEMENTS IN CONFLICT ANALYSIS

3.C.1. Conflict Parties

Social conflict involves two or more parties or "actors in the conflict" (Bloomfield *et al*, 1998: 41). Wehr (1979: 19) identifies three general categories of conflict parties: primary, secondary, and interested third party. The first category belongs to the real or core contenders in the conflict, i.e., individuals/groups who are directly involved in it. The second category belong to those (e.g., minority groups and others) who have indirect stake in the outcomes (either conflict escalation or conflict resolution) of conflict actions among the primary contenders. The secondary has the potential to become a first party primary party in the PSC situation. Wehr sees third party as one interested in conflict transformation. Here we refer to it as tertiary conflict parties, i.e., those who are indirectly involved in the conflict. They are capacity builders either in conflict transformation or escalation. The tertiary includes both local, national and international bodies, organisations, and donor agencies. Groups (intra-national or international) that are involved in building capacities for conflict transformation (e.g., builders of avenues and infrastructure of dialogue and accommodation) or for conflict escalation (e.g., financial or material contributors to a primary party in conflict, traders in arms) fall within the category of tertiary conflict parties.

Within a party in conflict, as Burton (1969: 14-23) highlights, one can find a variety of motives and interests (personal and group). Individuals with different personal as well as group motives can join a party to a conflict. One can join a party in conflict on the basis of regional, social

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one with water to another with less water (Hose Sols, 2003: 13). Domination, exclusion, oppression, unfair treatment, social inequality — these disrupt one's natural equilibrium. Destruction of the natural world (ecosystem) also disrupts natural equilibrium.

or ethnic identity and/or of class (ideological) interest while one's principal motive is something different from the concern for one's group identity or interest. One can make a rational choice and join a party in conflict primarily with a view to achieving one's frustrated or other personal interests. This is a case, for example, with economically poor individuals. A poverty-stricken individual can join or show solidarity with any party that seems to offer him/her more chance or opportunity, although the party's aim may be in search or in protection of an ideology, a particular set of values or interests. This often happens in the situation of a protracted conflict.

3.C.2. Sources of Conflict

The 'sources' of unpeaceful relations are factors which contribute to the breakdown of relationships among individuals and groups. They give rise to grievances. They include disruptive socio-cultural and structural elements (e.g., domination, exploitation and other forms of direct and indirect acts of violence [Galtung, 1990: 291-305]) that affect the relations of harmony among human beings, and other contradictory goals that threaten ontological or 'deepest' human values (such as the ultimate concern [element of faith], life, freedom, belonging [identity], and recognition) which are universal and non-negotiable. Burton (and also Azar, 1990) sees these ontological human values as essential elements "that are required for the development of human species"; he places them in the sphere of 'needs' for human development, hence '*need-values*' (Burton, 1990a: 21, 36-37). Any activity (e.g., policy, trigger factor) that threatens or is perceived as a threat to fundamental aspects of 'being' (e.g., deepest values) and 'having' (e.g., material resources that are considered essential for survival), in a society with a troubled history, serves as a 'source' of overt conflict, underlying different interests and positions (e.g., ideology).

Apart from the need-values, Burton also distinguishes '*cultural values*' which are characteristic to particular social communities. These become important and socio-politically significant elements in times of oppression, discrimination or exclusion. In such times, they "impinge on needs and can be confused with them" (Burton, 1990a: 37). Values differ from needs in that the former are somehow malleable depending on contexts. While identity remains as a need-value, criteria for communal identity, for instance, are never universal, for what one group sees as an

essential value for its identification is not so essential for another: religion for some (e.g., Northern Ireland; ancestry for others (e.g., Rwanda), clan for some others (e.g., Somalia), culture-language-territory for several others (e.g., the Sidaama). Hence, during favourable situations (when fundamental needs are not threatened), values can be altered to some level through the process of devaluation of some, addition of others (by constructing new ones or borrowing and integrating some from other cultures).

The third element after needs and values that Burton distinguishes as causing or at least contributing to conflicts is individual/group '*interest*'. Interests concern transitory motivations that can be negotiated, reconciled or altered at any moment (Burton, 1990a: 36-48; 1990b; cf., Miall *et al*, 2000: 9). In a protracted conflict situation, interests can serve as triggers of violence and conflict escalators. In conflict analysis, issues can, therefore, be divided as needs (non-negotiable), values (partly negotiable depending on contexts), and interests (always negotiable). This division of sources of conflict is a helpful analytical tool in conflict management. Conflicts arising from deepest needs can *only* be prevented by removing every threat to them (Burton, 1990a: 32-33; Azar, 1990: 7-10).

Sources of conflicts are diverse, and recently scholars like Collier (2000) have categorised them under 'greed' and 'grievance'. Collier (also Duffield, 1998; Keen, 1998, Reno, 1998) suggests that economic agendas are central to understanding the sources of civil wars. The greed factor manifests the 'dark side' of conflict which is based on personal or narrow group economic interests. From this approach, leaders of primary parties to conflict and third parties (e.g., business or commercial companies, individuals and agencies) find more economic opportunities and benefits by creating and maintaining the conflict. The theories concerning the greed factor are less useful in this work, mainly due to the lack of sufficient information from the side of zonal, regional and federal government officials in Ethiopia.

3.C.3. Conflict Action

This theoretical aspect will be helpful for chapter eight (Conflict Actions in Sidaamaland). From experiences of contradictions or differences (conflict) result psychological dynamics (e.g., attitudes, perceptions, frustrations, fear, anger), leading to 'conflict actions'. Conflict action include all overt

conflict expressions (e.g., verbal and physical) and preventative actions by parties in conflict. Conflict actions are conscious human behaviours (violent and non-violent) aimed at removing factors causing conflicts, achieving goals, or resolving unpeaceful relations (i.e., bringing change to broken human relations). Making decisions and choices of actions are a constitutively integral element of conflict action. Some actions lead to conflict transformation/resolution while others to conflict escalation/protraction.

The life of conflict is dependent on the sources and conflict actions. Where the causing source is altered either before or after a conflict action, that particular conflict dies. But if the source remains unaddressed, even if a negative peace is maintained, especially in an asymmetric relation among the parties in conflict, the conflict deepens. Suppressed conflict leads to future problems. "It becomes violent when: there are inadequate channels for dialogue and disagreement; dissenting voices and deeply held grievances cannot be heard and addressed; there is instability, injustice and fear in the wider community and society" (Fisher *et al*, 2000: 6). The process of protraction and transformation/resolution of a conflict is expressed in terms of 'escalation' and 'de-escalation'/'termination' respectively (Mitchell, 1981: 60-63; Kriesberg, 1998: 23-26, 149-150, 341-348), and conflict actions that escalate (destructive actions)/de-escalate (constructive actions) are known as 'escalators'/'de-escalators' of unpeaceful interactions among the parties involved. 'Conflict actions' (both constructive and destructive) include soft and hard actions. From a constructive or de-escalating dimension, 'soft actions' involve clearing misunderstandings and grievances through discussion/dialogue, solving problems cooperatively through removing the root causes, mediation [through legal means or individual mediators] and negotiation. From a destructive or escalatory dimension, 'soft actions' involve stereotyping or name-calling, accusing each other, favouritism, and the likes. 'Hard actions' can also have constructive and destructive elements, and involve determined and organised protests and other effective but non-violent actions, violent actions, riots, looting, killing, raping and so on. Conflict action aims at addressing issues (the causes of conflict) and brings change. Depending on the type of action (constructive or destructive) taken by the parties involved, the 'change' it brings becomes either transformative of regressive. This will be captured later in the diagram of 'existential process of change' in social development.

While individuals and groups are in harmonious relations and working together, their relations

are generally marked by the attitude of 'your gain/loss is my gain/loss'. In a conflict situation, such an attitude is affected. Scholars highlight different attitudes among conflict parties during the escalation/de-escalation process: 'win-win' (seeking joint solution), 'win some and lose others' (competitive), 'win-lose', and 'lose-lose'. These can be located in what Bloomfield *et al* (1998: 46-47) term as 'stages of escalation'. Bloomfield *et al* present four stages of escalation: *discussion stage, polarization stage, segregation stage, and destruction stage*. At the *discussion stage*, the parties to conflict are in disagreement, and their perceptions of each other are reasonably accurate; they are close enough to work together, and reach a joint solution with win-win attitude. At the *polarization stage* they distance themselves from each other and from direct communication with each other; their perceptions of each other are marred by mutual stereotyping. Their issues of concern become more of a psychological nature (as opposed to the objective one). Finding a solution in this is perceived in terms of making compromise (competitive negotiation: win some and lose others) rather than cooperative decision-making. At the *segregation stage* communication among the parties is limited to issuing threats. Their perception of each other is marked by 'we-the-good' and 'they-the-bad/evil' principle, full of suspicion of each other; and win-lose position (highly exclusivist). Issues of the dispute concern core needs and values of one's group against the other. The *destruction stage* is the stage of physical violence; interaction or communication with each other is through violence, and abusive (dehumanising) words and attitudes. Killing and harming the other is seen as a moral duty, for the 'other party' is perceived as less human and dangerous to the existence of one's community. Their perceived possible outcomes of their relations are a lose-lose game (Bloomfield *et al*, 1998: 46-47). This division of stages is just a general way of trying to locate the level of escalation, but one needs to know that violent actions do not necessarily respect the stages. They can occur even at the first two stages although not often. In presenting conflicts among parties in the Sidaamaland, these stages will be used to measure (generally) the level of their unpeaceful relations.

From the aspect of Conflict Resolution, one can locate different conflict action mechanisms and methodologies following two general periods: of conflict formation (at the level of sources and conflict) and of violence. At the level of conflict formation, a better conflict action is assessing (e.g., through early warning system) and removing all the factors that create a conflict environment before

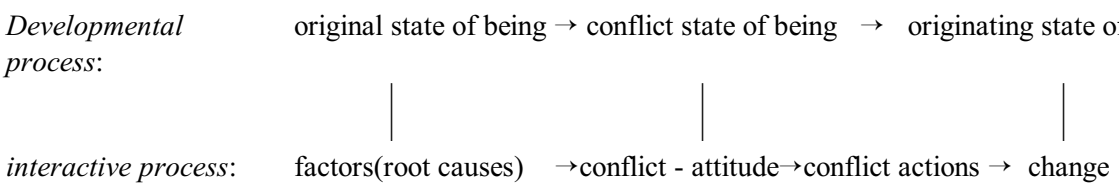
any physical violence among the primary parties in conflict. Burton (1990a) calls this 'conflict provention'. However, once overt conflict expression takes place (the period of violence), combination of many methodologies are required. Any violent or coercive group action may (in some cases) produce a desired change; even then, such a change does not occur without harming human life and economic development. In most cases, violent conflict behaviour begets violence; it produces and reinforces psychological conflict dynamics (e.g., attitudes, prejudices), and deepens the unpeaceful relations and their violent conflict outcomes. A combination of relevant conflict management methodologies (such as coercive measures, diplomatic pressure, negotiations, and so on) can be helpful at the period of violence. Once violent conflict outcomes are contained, they require transformative actions (Lederach, Galtung), namely addressing properly the root-causes of unpeaceful relations. This follows the cyclical schematic illustration of 'conflict dynamics and conflict resolution' of Miall *et al* in which 'conflict formation' can go through 'conflict transformation' [which requires peacemaking activities], leading to a desired 'social change' [where peacebuilding and maintenance activities are most feasible]. 'Conflict formation' may manifest in 'violent conflict' [requiring some hard conflict management methodologies, e.g., use of force or coercion], which results either in direct 'social change' or passes through the process of 'conflict transformation' for a desirable change (Miall *et al*, 1999: 15, 16). It can also result in undesirable change, i.e., the process of regression (deepening of conflict), thus making conflict protracted and intractable.

3.C.4. Change (Outcome)

'Conflict action' brings 'change' to a 'state of being' (a life situation of a community or society at a particular period of time) that has been riddled with unpeaceful relations, whether that change is progressive (transformative) or regressive (deepening conflict). With a change comes a new 'state of being'. Every state of being is a state of 'becoming' with its own inherent agents (conflicts and conflict-actions) for change, for progress (a better state of being). Conflict results from the upset of balance (i.e., *cosmotheanthropic* balance that maintains harmony among humans, and between human, natural and spiritual worlds), for disturbance of one affects the rest. The upsetting factors (causes of conflict) of a harmonious state of 'being' lead to a state of unpeaceful relations, requiring a change

through addressing the factors. Every change involves making decisions.

As two mental diagrams below show, every state of being is 'being-in-potency', i.e., being in the position of 'becoming'. Every state of being is, therefore, an 'originating state of being', for, on the one hand, it originates from the previous state of being; and on the other hand, it is a cause-in-potency for another state of being. In other words, there is the aspect of continuity and discontinuity in every state of being. A regressive process takes place where conflict actions are not constructive but regressive. Here, a conflict is deepened and becomes less tractable; it even expands the dimension of the conflict, for it affects attitudes by reinforcing the old fears and perceptions or even adding new ones. But where a conflict has been managed constructively, conflict actions are transformative; the new state of being (hence, a new state of relation) resulting from them will bring a change in attitudes. Here a particular conflict is either terminated or transformed. However, a new state of being will have its own contexts and adverse factors, leading to another conflict state of being. Such is the state of interactive life, moving from one state to another state of being. All this reflect the existential process of change; and human existence is a process (Whitehead, 1929; de Chardin, 1964).[8] The following image captures what has been discussed thus far:



While *developmental process* is linear, *interactive process* in each state of being is cyclical. The whole integrated process is shown in the mental diagram on the next page. In the diagram, the long linear line with arrows on both sides is cut across by three shorter parallel lines without arrows from left to right. These lines mark different 'states of being' and it marks three states of being, each with its own conflicts and conflict-actions. 'Change' above the long line reveals progression

[8]Chardin speaks of the evolutionary being that acquires a new level of being at every step towards the Absolute, the Omega point. Every evolutionary movement forward involves struggle and choices to make. "In a broad terms it may be affirmed that the Human, having become aware of its uncompleted state, cannot lend itself without reluctance, still less give itself with passion, to any course that may attract it unless there be some kind of discernible and definitive consummation to be looked for at the end, if only as a limit" (Chardin, 1964: 277).

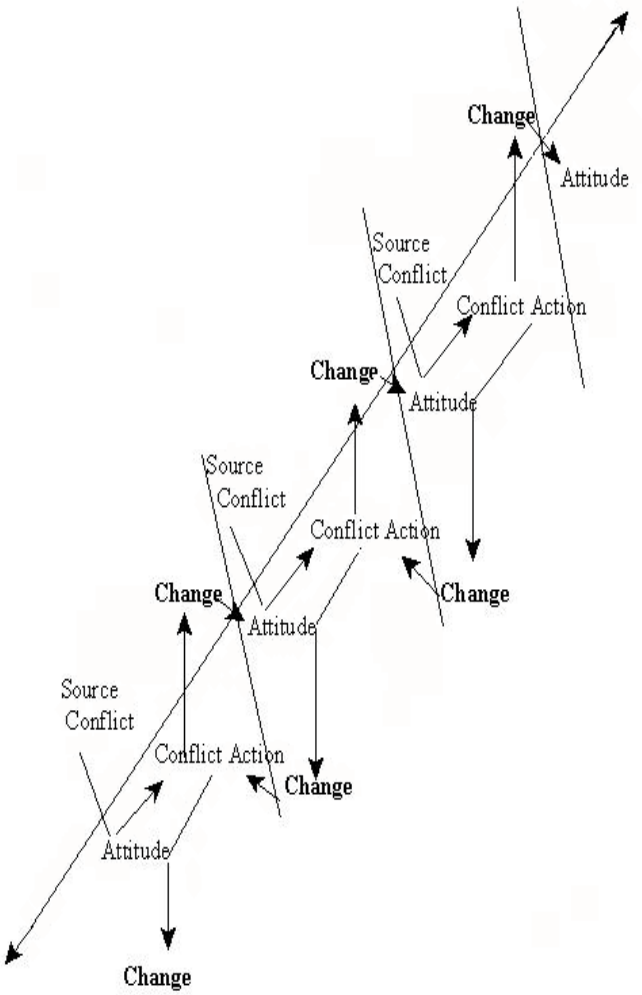


Diagram 1: Existential Process of Change in Human Development

(transformation from one state to another); 'change' below the line reveals regression (deepening conflict). Change in regression is a state of violence. A constructive 'conflict action' will lead to a positive 'change' which in turn positively influences the original 'attitude'; while a destructive

'conflict action' will reinforce the original attitude and brings a regressive change. However every regressive change can be corrected by a constructive conflict action which will lead to a change in 'attitude'.

3.D. SOME ANALOGICAL TOOLS OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Scholars present different analogical tools that capture the interactions between sources, unpeaceful relations, and conflict actions. This interaction is presented variously as 'conflict dynamics' (Miall *et al,* 1999: 15), 'conflict processes' (Mitchell, 1981: 51-55), 'conflict cycle' (Kriesberg, 1998: 342; cf., Lulofs and Cahn, 2000: 76-87). For Part III of this thesis, three analogical tools (onion, tree, and pillars) are chosen to capture the whole interactive process. The human need theory that Burton presents as the causes of conflict distinguishes them as need, value, interests and positions. Need-values are non-negotiable; cultural-values can partly be altered depending on contexts; and interests are negotiable. Positions are the means (e.g., tactics, ideologies) through which the parties in conflict try to achieve their interests. At the conclusion of the chapter on "Conflict Issues", the author uses the three concentric circles or three-layered 'onion' analogy (from Chiapas, Mexico) of conflict mapping in terms of position (what one says one wants [external layers or circle]), interest (what one really wants [middle layers or middle circle]) and need (what one must have [the nucleus or core circle]) for each conflict party (Fisher *et al*, 2000: 27-28; IA *et al*, 2004: ch 3, p. 24; IA, 1996: ch 3, p. 17). The author will follow this tool but in a tabular format (for the sake of convenience).

In dealing with conflicts on the basis of identity groups, the image of a tree provides an analogical tool, which is termed as 'conflict tree' (Fisher *et al*, 2000: 29). The *tree* as a whole stands as a state of unpeaceful relations and their outcomes. The *roots* of a tree stand for root causes of and contributors to conflict formation, escalation and protraction. Bartos and Wehr distinguish three main sets of causes: "those that lead to goal incompatibility, those that lead to the beginning of open fighting, and those that promote escalation" (Bartos and Wehr, 2002: 177). While all these are presented as *roots*, the *trunk* captures the main issue that a group sees as the core element, and the *branches* the effects resulting from the core element (Fisher *et al*, 2000: 29-30). Basing on the field research data, this tool will be used at the conclusion of Part III to capture the unpeaceful relations

in Sidaamaland.

Jean and Hildegaard Goss-Mayr provided an analytical tool: 'pillars of conflict', according to which "some situations are not really suitable, but are 'held up' by a range of factors or forces — the 'pillars'" (Fisher *et al*, 2000: 31; IA, 1996: 22, 31; Jean and Goss-Mayer, 1990). In this the core problem or unhealthy situation is presented in the form of inverted triangle which in order to stand is supported at both sides by factors that are called 'pillars'. Such pillars that maintain and deepen the undesirable relations can be: international interests, inactivity of forces of peace and transformation (e.g., local regional and international forces), fear, absence of communication, insensitive policies, political exclusion, prejudice, security concern, lack of mediating structures, donor reluctance, and so on (Fisher *et al*, 2000: 32; Diana Francis, 202: 123). This analytical tool will be used to capture the dynamics that maintain the undesirable relations the Sidaamaland/Ethiopia.

CONCLUSION

Thus far, we have seen Azar's theoretical frame in understanding why conflicts protract and their resolution becomes difficult. He presents four factors (communal content, human development needs, state role and governance, and international linkage) as fundamental causes of PSC. He also presents four elements (protractedness, fluctuation, actor and issue spill-over, and absence of clear termination) as characterising PSC. In Sidaamaland, unpeaceful relations have existed for about a century now. Is Azar's theory a relevant one in understanding unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland? At the conclusion of the following part (Part II), which provides macro- and micro contexts for the development of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland, the validity of the theory will be tested.

Section 3B has posited that human existence is a process of 'becoming'. This 'becoming' is about human development. Placed within the holistic human development framework, conflict is not something bad, but rather an agent of existential process in human development. The dynamic process of conflict formation and conflict action which we have termed as 'existential process of change' is an avenue of bringing social changes. Human development requires maintaining balance between the developmental aspects of 'being' and 'having'. The imbalance will result in conflict and disrupts *cosmopneumanthropic* harmony (positive peace, the *keere*). 3B has also highlighted different

worldviews that affect the understanding of conflict among communities. They help in finding contextually relevant methodologies in a society affected by unpeaceful relations and violence. Section 3C has presented key elements in conflict analysis (e.g., sources of conflict, conflict parties, conflict actions, conflict outcome [e.g., change]) which will help in analysing current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland (Part III). The following part provides historical macro- and micro-contexts and factors in understanding the current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland, and also gives an answer to why conflicts in Sidaamaland continue to deepen rather than attenuate.

PART II: HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS TO CURRENT CONFLICTS IN SIDAAMALAND

This part deals with providing macro- and micro-contexts in understanding why conflicts in Sidaamaland persist for a long time. Ethiopia is a home of ethno-nationalisms with deep rooted and protracted conflicts. Sidaamaland is one of the geographical areas in Ethiopia that has been experiencing unpeaceful relations (conflicts) periodic violent expressions for a long time. Despite regime changes that have taken place since the formation of modern Ethiopia (i.e., from the end of 19th century onwards), rather than attenuating, they continue to deepen both vertically (e.g., Sidaamas versus Ethiopian state) and horizontally (e.g., Sidaama versus other non-Sidaama groups in Sidaamaland). Why do some social conflicts like those in Ethiopia, and in Sidaamaland in particular, become intractable? Azar in his theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) provides reasons for it, as seen in 3A. After exploring macro- and micro-factors for the protraction of the conflicts in Sidaamaland, at the conclusion of Part II, it will be seen whether Azar's reasons for protraction of conflicts apply in the Sidaamaland case, and also whether his criteria of PSC accurately portray behavioural patterns in the conflicts in Sidaamaland. If they do, one needs to study and take account of Azar's propositions in resolving PSC in Sidaamaland/Ethiopia.

4. MODERN ETHIOPIA: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

To understand unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland, this section presents an overview of the socio-political, historical and environmental contexts of Ethiopia within which Sidaamaland is found. Since this work is more about the causes and protraction of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland and Ethiopia, the author concentrates more on conflict sources. This, however, should not be interpreted as implying he devalues the positive factors that the Ethiopian peoples and each of the successive regimes have contributed to the formation of Ethiopia. The efforts of successive governments to unite Ethiopian people to defend the country from external aggressions, and to set up educational institutions, national security structures, national relief organisations, efforts to build infrastructures

(e.g., roads, modern communication facilities, electricity), contributions of religious organisations and other civil societies towards peace and development in Ethiopia: these are some examples of positive factors. Moreover, the current government's constitutional structure and territorial demarcations in terms of federal arrangement are positive steps towards bringing stability and development to the country. It should also be noted here that a factor that serves as a solution in one context may sometimes give rise to further conflicts in another context. Education, for example, gives rise to a wider social awareness, and opens more avenues for conflicts. But this is an existential developmental process towards a more humane world, and each context needs to find its own solutions (see chapter three above).

4.A. INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia, one of the least developed countries in the world,[1] is a conflict-ridden country and a divided society. Generally, its conflicts arise from political-economic factors, and have intranational and international dimensions (Clapham, 1995b: 72-91; Eide, 2000: 15-22; Merera, 2002: 2). Environmental (e.g., meagre economic resources, drought), historical (e.g., the conquest, exclusion, exploitation), demographic explosion creating economic resource scarcity,[2] socio-cultural, political and economic Centre-Periphery relations (e.g., exclusive or zero-sum power control among the political elites, undemocratic and ethnocratic/chorocratic nature of the Ethiopian state; land-tenure system, unequal economic resource control, and bad-governance), and external factors (e.g., the foreign powers' interests, some aspects of the policies of market-oriented Structural Adjustment Programmes): these contribute to the development and protraction of conflicts and violent conflict outcomes in Ethiopia.[3] They have driven the disaffected groups to seek security in their regional or

[1]According to the UNDP's Human Development Report 2003, Ethiopia stands at 170th position on Human Development index (HDI), Sierra Leone being at the bottom of the list with the HDI no. 177. 80.7 % of the population live below $2 a day (available at http://hdr.undp.org/ statistics/data/cty/cty_f_ETH.html; accessed in Sep 2004).

[2]In economically backward and less industrialised societies, which also lack good governance and resource management, population increase contributes to unpeaceful relations.

[3]Although not fully overt, there also exist sort of caste and quasi-caste socio-political structures among the southern nations in Ethiopia, and these are potential conflict factors.

ethnic/national identity, thus promoting nationalisms.[4] Most of the political elites in Ethiopia understand political power as the means for controlling economic resources and advantages, hence politics in Ethiopian history have remained interwoven with economics.[5] Below is a historical overview of conflict development in Ethiopia within which the unpeaceful relation in Sidaamaland is situated.

Map 1: Ethiopian Territory: 1890-1993

4.B. MACRO-LEVEL BACKGROUND TO THE CURRENT UNPEACEFUL RELATIONS IN ETHIOPIA

4.B.1. Description

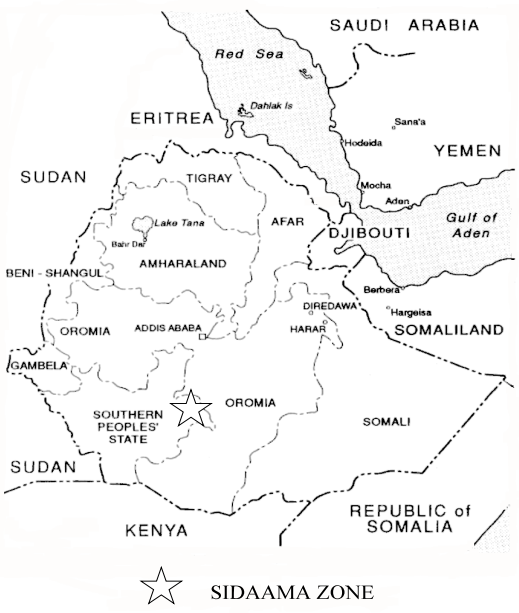
Modern Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic/national country, located in north-east Africa, at the centre of the Horn of Africa, with the population of 74,777,981 (according to the CIA's 2006 estimate).[6] Linguistically, Ethiopia is inhabited by a population of Semito-Hamitic and Nilotic origin (Bender, 1976: 1-24). Currently, the country is called the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), and is composed of nine regional states and two city states (see Map 2). The modern Ethiopian territorial boundary goes back to the end of the 19th century. Menelik, the king of Shoa (1865-1889), began expanding his territory towards the east and west of Shoa already in the 1880s. At the death of Emperor Yohannes IV (r. 1872-1889), Menelik became the Emperor of Ethiopia (r. 1889-1913) with the title Menelik II. He expanded his empire through a series of conquests between 1890 and 1906 (Bahru, 2001; Henze, 2000). Before the conquest, there had existed independent identity groups (some were even kingdoms) in parts of modern Ethiopia. These parts included today's

[4]Hizkias comments: "a conflict started by the elites ends up becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy engulfing the entire ethnic group" (Hizkias Assefa, 1993: 23).

[5]Clapham(1985: 40) sees such an attitude as a general characteristic of the Third World political elites.

[6]CIA, "Ethiopia," *The World Factbook* (2006); available at http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/et.html; accessed in April 2006.

regional states of Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, and parts of Oromia in the western parts of Ethiopia; the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP), parts of Oromia, and southern parts of Somali in southern Ethiopia; and most parts of Afar and parts of Somali regional states to the north-eastern and eastern parts of Ethiopia (see Map 2). In the eyes of Menelik II and some historians, the act of imperial expansion was seen as regaining Medieval Ethiopian territories and unification of the country (Henze, 2000: 152; Andargachew, 1993: 4). Some writers and most of the nationalist movements in the conquered areas regard it as colonisation (Keller, 1988: 36, 45, 59-64; Asmerom Legesse, 2000; Bereket H-S, 1980; cf., Markakis, 1987: 28).[7] Today, most of these areas have been affected by insurgencies and nationalist armed fronts (e.g., Oromo Liberation Front [OLF], Ogadeni National Liberation Front [ONLF], Sidaama Liberation Front) and other armed and non armed nationalist movements from several conquered groups.



Map 2: Federal Ethiopia since 1994

While some nationalities in the conquered areas never had contacts with the Abyssinian empire until the last decade of the 19th century, most of the Eastern Highland Cushitic (Hamitic) groups, whom linguists and historians term as 'Sidama groups', were sometimes tributaries to and under the dominion of the Abyssinian empire in the Middle Ages. However, from the mid-16th century until 1890, many of them functioned as independent kingdoms. The period between 1883 and 1935 marked the expansion of the Abyssinian empire through conquest and subjugation of independent ethnic/national groups, consolidation of the conquered territories and creation of modern Ethiopia.

[7]R. Pankhurst (1966: 143) characterised the Ethiopian style of rule in pre-1987 'Sidamo' province as "a real system of military colonialism." Concerning the views of nationalist movements, see their web sites: http://www.oromoliberationfront.org/OLFMission.htm; http://www.onlf.org/Political_Struggle.htm; http://www.sidamaliberation-front.org. Menelik is quoted to have said in 1891 "If Powers at a distance come forward to partition Africa between them, I do not intend to remain an indifferent spectator" (Markakis, 1987: 26, 28).

The regimes under which Ethiopia has subsequently been governed are: 1936-1941, Italian occupation; 1941-1974, a period of modernizing Ethiopia under Haile-Selassie's imperial regime; 1974-1991, Ethiopia under a communist military junta (the *derg*); and since 1991, Ethiopia under the rule of the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front rule (EPRDF) which is controlled by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

Sidaamaland/Sidaama zone, the subject of this study, is found in the far eastern part of the southern peoples' state (the SNNPR). During the pre-1987 period, it was found in the province of 'Sidamo', for which 'Awasa' (since the 1960s) was the provincial capital. The 'Sidamo' area was conquered by Minilik II during the period between 1892 and 1895. It contained about seven groups: Sidaama, Wolaita, Gedeo, Burji, (possibly Amaaro), Guji, Borana, and Garre. In today's federal territorial boundaries (Map 2), the latter three belong to the Oromia territory, for they are Oromo sub-national groups. The former four belong to the SNNPR territory and each of them are defined as 'zone' except Burji and Amaaro which are termed as 'special *woreda*' (special districts) of the SNNPR. According to the 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia (1994-PHCE), the SNNPR accounts for more than 12m population, of which a little more than 2m inhabit the Sidaama zone (1994-PHCE, vol II, 1999: 9).

4.B.2. Historical Background: A Macro-Level Overview

The creation of the modern Ethiopian empire-state towards the end of the 19th century took place through the interaction of international and internal (e.g., religious, regional, ethnic) factors (Eide, 2000: 15-22; Merera, 2002: 2; cf., Clapham, 1988: 21, 25-26, 28-31; 2002: 10). Throughout Ethiopian history, international political-economic and religious factors have directly and indirectly contributed to the formation and maintenance of and conflicts in the country. For centuries, the relations between Ethiopia and Arab nations (e.g., Egypt, Saud Arabia, Syria, Sudan) have been unpeaceful, and Ethiopia has lived under their threat (Bereket, 1980), needing military and economic support to defend itself. Modern Ethiopian regimes have relied on the external powers for their ideological, economic and military support for their security, state building and modernisation projects (cf., Andargachew, 1993: 18-34; Clapham, 1988: 220-240). During the colonial scramble

for Africa, the European colonialists supplied firearms to the Abyssinian rulers (Clapham, 1969: 14; Donham, 2002a: 28, 30-31), which enabled Menelik to achieve his ambition to conquer the southern nations. The Ethiopian emperor, Menelik II, was in need of economic resource to purchase fire arms for the defence/security of his dominion, to feed his soldiers, and finance his modernisation projects.

From the conquest until 1945, at different moments and in different capacities, France, Italy and UK played their roles, ranging from supplying arms, giving administrative and economic advice to Ethiopian rulers, to posing threat to the country's independence (cf., Clapham, 1969: 14; Donham, 2002a: 28, 30-31). From 1945 to 1974 the US took the principal role in supporting the imperial regime. The communist countries such as the ex-USSR, those of Eastern Europe, Cuba, and others helped the *derg* regime (Bereket, 1980: 129-171; Henze, 2000: 295-307). Since 1991, international donor agencies (e.g., WB, IMF) and governments have been involved in helping Ethiopia economically. Today, Ethiopian diaspora communities are also actively involved in the shaping of the future of the country. These international factors themselves — insofar as they contribute to enhancing the capacity of the autocratic/dictatorial regime to maintain illegitimate power, or to the support of armed movements — have also contributed in varying degree to the protraction of conflicts in the country.

Internally, during the conquest, religion played its role: along with its mission of evangelising the so called 'pagan nations', the Orthodox Church supported the emperor (by providing the guiding ideological and spiritual blessing) in his endeavour of conquest and expansion (Eide, 2000: 15-16; Merera, 2002: 2; cf., Markakis, 1974: 104). Between the conquest and 1974 revolution, it also served as a factor of discrimination and domination. Structurally, from the conquest until the revolution, the Shoan aristocracy provided political leadership (Andargachew, 1993: 15; Clapham, 1969: 78; 1975: 75-78; cf., Keller, 1988: 136). Ethnically, the Shoan Amhara elite dominated the centre of the leadership (Clapham, 2002: 9-36; Eide, 2000; Merera, 2002). The imperial regime was, therefore, a mixture of chorocracy and ethnocracy. Although regional and ethnic factors did not figure during the *derg* regime, the Amharic culture dominated the period. The representation of the Abyssinians was also higher than the rest. The EPRDF regime represents a mixture of ethnocracy and chorocracy. The modern Ethiopian state throughout the three regimes (Haile-Selassie, the *derg* and the EPRDF) have remained highly centralised, although constitutionally, the country under the

EPRDF regime is federal democratic.

What has been presented thus far remains a general overview of some principal contributing factors to the formation of modern Ethiopia and also the conflict protraction in the country. Below, the author concentrates on significant factors in each regime that have shaped the country and also served as principal causes of its conflicts.

4.B.2.i. Imperial Period (from the Conquests to the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution)

After the conquest, the collection of revenue and security dominated the imperial state's concern (Markakis, 1974: 136). For these ends, the emperor set up garrison camps, which became administrative towns, throughout the *qign ager* (colonies), and appointed administrators from the military commanders, nobilities from the north (mainly from Shoa), and a few local middlemen from the conquered groups. The new masters imposed a hierarchical political system which, for most of the southern peoples who lived in a participatory and more or less egalitarian system, was foreign (Braukamper, 1973: 46). It was also an extremely exploitative tributary system.

In the Abyssinian imperial tradition, all conquered land belonged to the state, and the right to dispose of it remained entirely the prerogative of the emperor (Keller, 1988: 50; Markakis, 1974: 108; Taddesse, 1972: 98). After a series of conquests, Menelik II appropriated the conquered land, and distributed parts of it to the Orthodox Church, his generals, soldiers and others individuals (including some local leaders) who rendered service to the state. In the economically resourceful areas (e.g., Arusi, Sidaamaland, Bale), the victors confiscated the land from the rightful owners (the conquered groups) and made the latter serfs and *gebbar* (tribute payers).[8] They subjected the

[8]Egalitarian societies in the conquered areas (e.g., Sidaama, Alaaba, Timbaaro, Kanbaata, Hadiyya, Oromo groups [Arusi, Borana, Guji]), had communal land tenure system. As Markakis (1974: 110-114) notes, after the conquest, the emperor expropriated their land and divided it in the following ways: (a) land for the Crown and the needs of the Palace (land selected for fertility) on which the *gabbars* were forced to work; (b) state land which the emperor distributed, in the place of salary, for the maintenance of officials and soldiers during their period of service; it could also be granted for life as a form of pension, but could not be sold or transferred through sale or inheritance. The *gabbar families* worked on this land for the land grantees; (c) land for the nobilities who led Menelik's armies during the conquest: these became governors and were rewarded with *gult* rights (which entitles the grantee to collect tributes from the *gabbars*) and *rist gult* (right for permanent possession of the land by the recipient who administers it by himself or through his representatives called *melkegna*); (d) land for the Church which was for permanent possession: like the nobility, Church officials were granted *rist gult*; wherever a church was built, a sufficient piece of

conquered people to the payment of a plethora of taxes, fees, fines and forced gifts, treating them as an underclass (Betana, 1991: 173-182; Clapham, 1995: 118; Mahteme-Selassie, 1970: 108, 122-123; Markakis, 1974: 105-140; Markakis & Ayele, 1978: 21-29). The conquered groups were politically, economically, militarily and culturally dominated and excluded. They were alienated from their land and production, except some of their traditional leaders (the *balabbats*) to whom the emperor granted land and privileges in return for their submission and service. Unlike the southerners, the northern Abyssinian peasants functioned under a land inheritance system (*rist*), and were not alienated from their land and produce, although they paid tribute proportionate to their earnings.

In the conquered areas in the south, the *balabbats* became imperial local lower-ranking administrators and a separate landholding class in mostly egalitarian societies to which it was alien. This alien nature of class system was expressed in the regarding of the *balabbats* as 'Amhara' by their own people. Chiefs or leaders in most of these societies had not been a separate hierarchical and landholding class; they had held more spiritual functions, performing rituals and guaranteeing peace and harmony in their communities. They had never possessed an absolute rule (Braukamper, 1973: 46-47). Donham, for example, wrote how Maale ritual kings in south-west Ethiopia became like rich Abyssinian landlords, behaving towards their people like the latter (Donham, 2002b: 69-70). He noted the following hierarchical structures in Maaleland in a descending order: 1894-1936, Emperor - Provincial Governor - Maale Political Elite; 1941-75, Emperor - Provincial Governor – Sub-Provincial Governor – Maale Political Elites, i.e., the *balabbats* (Donham, ibid.: 76-77). The *balabbats* controlled their people at local level and collected tributes to the governors and the imperial state (Donham, 1999: 38; Markakis, 1974: 105, 107, 115-118).

The system that the emperors instituted in the formation of modern Ethiopia created political, social and cultural centre-periphery (Donham and James, 2002: xvii, xviii; Donham, 2002a: 3, 4; Eide, 2000: 15-17; Markakis, 1974). Although subordinate to Shoan Amhara, at least the Shoan Oromo elite and the northern Abyssinian elite — from Tigray (today's Tigray region), Wollo, Gojam and Gonder of today's Amhara region— were able to participate in political positions, but those of the

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land (called *samon* land) was granted for every priest residing there; (e) one-third of the conquered land (*siso* land) was in principle left for the locals. The emperor took part of this land and granted it to his local administrators (the *balabbats*). In addition, they were given *gult* right over the remaining *siso* land. In the cases where the land was granted permanently to the settlers, the original owners of that land were turned into tenants of the grantees.

southern nations remained marginalised (Clapham, 1975: 75-78; 1969: 78; Keller, 1988: 136; Merera, 2002: 2-3). All of the ruling political elites remained under the control of the emperor who appointed them and gave them favours on condition that they remained loyal to him (cf., Clapham, 1988: 101). The material reward the control of power brought to the ruling elites left the southerner elites in the margin (except a few local elites with the second highest social class).[9] Both the northern and southern rural people were the peoples of Periphery, but with differences. The experience of exploitation and alienation was less in the north than in the conquered areas: first, the exaction of tributes for state revenue from the northern socio-political and economic periphery (since the imperial expansion to the south) was by far lighter than the one from the conquered regions (mainly form those in resourceful areas) [Donham, 2002a: 26];[10] secondly, the northern peasants were not alienated from their *rist* land; thirdly, northern rural people were members of the cultural Centre, for they shared the same cultural (including religious) values and language with a considerable level of integration, while the southerners (except a few local elites in the imperial administration) were at the cultural Periphery with a status of second class citizens. Consequently, this raised identity consciousness: all those claiming higher status, all the settlers as well as the integrated local elites, were known as 'Amhara', whose identity was marked by political power position, language, religion, and culture. The conquered people, and the Sidaama in particular, regarded anyone who adopted these identity markers as 'Amhara' (Clapham, 1988: 21, 23-24; Keller, 1988: 63).

Without modern weapons (firearms) and organisation, the conquered peoples were powerless and helpless amidst the exploitation and exclusion.[11] Any resistance posed a threat to the rulers and

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[9]Keller divided the social stratification in the southern conquered regions into five categories: in the highest category were found governors and large-scale landowners (mostly the Amhara-Tigre nobilities, the clergy, and highest-ranking military officers); in the second, large-scale landowners (indigenous elites and their descendants); in the third, medium and small-scale landowners (mainly Amhara-Tigre soldiers and office workers); in the fourth, those small-scale landowners who were granted inheritance right to land in the depopulated areas (the settler peasants, and a few indigenous peasants); and in the fifth and lowest category, the southern indigenous tenants. Such stratification contributed to a sense of identity consciousness among the "colonised" (Keller, 1988: 62).

[10]Those areas with less economic resources and at the fringes of the country or far away from the political centre (Addis Ababa) with less strategic importance to the imperial state: these areas remained semi-independent until the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. They did not suffer the burden of domination and exploitation by the victors.

[11]In areas where the imperial state had no strategic interests (e.g., security and economic resources), where there was no easy access because of lack of roads, and those geographically far away areas: the peoples enjoyed freedom and semi-independent status (cf., Clapham, 2002: 12).

the interest of building a modern state; consequently, it was met with severe punishment, incurring the killing of many as a warning (cf., Markakis, 1974: 104-106). The abuse of the people by the individual landlords in those areas was not controlled. The conquered peoples acquiesced in the conquerors' authority not because they considered it legitimate but because of their powerlessness (Keller, 1998: 39). Until the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1935-1940), except intra-elite power struggles at the Centre (Bahru, 2001: 114-137), the military or coercive power advantage in favour of the ruling elites allowed them unhindered or unchallenged domination and exploitation of both human and natural resources. The mass throughout Ethiopia served the ruling elites as providers of means for the satisfaction of their needs, and as suppliers of human and material resource for their endless wars (Merera, 2002: 3; cf., Markakis, 1974: 136). The occupation of the Italians (1935-41) brought marked changes among some of the conquered peoples. The Sidaamas, for example, got most of their land back, no more endless tributes (although Italians collected a reasonable amount of taxes and required one day's work in a week for their projects). Compared to the Abyssinians, the Italians interacted more with them and showed a more friendly approach, at least in the early period of the occupation. These heightened the people's consciousness that social changes were possible (Tolo, 1998: 122-123). This had a political implication for the future imperial state after the departure of the Italians.

After the departure of the Italians, the Emperor Haile-Selassie (r. 1930-1974) regained control over the country but with difficulty, since rejection of the return of the old system of rule was intense among some identity groups (e.g., the Sidaamas [Tolo, 1998: 121], the Tigreans [Bahru, 2001: 215]). It required the help of the British to put down the resistance and gain control. Soon after he had the whole country under his control, Haile-Selassie wanted to build a successful modern state. He undertook modernising projects, such as replacement of the tributary system with tax-paying one on the basis of one's acquisition of wealth and land (Aberra, 2000: 161-163; Markakis, 1974: 118-129), economic liberalisation, modern education, urbanisation, homogenisation (integration), bureaucratisation of the state, the institution of a centralised autocratic system, militarisation (with the help of British, then Israelis and German, and finally the US), commercialisation and industrialisation policies under laissez-faire type capitalist economy (Bahru, 2001: 92, 108-110, 207; Markakis, 1974: 144-323). Economic liberalisation in the rural areas in the south led to land

privatisation, which together with commercial farming in a huge scale, not only raised awareness of the stark reality of the dispossession of the southerners from their ancestral land, but also brought further loss of their *siso* land. It left more people landless and brought a manifest class conflict that led to peasant rebellions in some areas and raised the national question.

The emperor was interested in modernising Ethiopia while at the same time concentrating power on himself (Keller, 1988: 2). He sought to follow the Japanese model, as the 1931 constitution reflected the Japanese Meiji Constitution of 1889 (Aberra, 2000: 183; Bahru, 2001: 110). However, Haile-Selassie's "half-hearted modernisation policies", as Keller notes, were not based on an equitable development strategy, for it favoured the status quo and the feudal elite (Keller, 1988: 132). Partly these traditional elites in different provinces (e.g., in the south) were very resistant to embrace modernity as it threatened their favoured status and benefits. Consequently, very little was done in the area of national political integration of the country's multiple social groups and organisations. The development plan tended more towards "efficient exploitation of the economic potential of each region," rather than "improving the living standards and life chances of the people in the peripheral areas" (Keller, 1988: 138). Moreover it favoured Shoa and the Centre, neglecting the development of other provinces of the country (ibid).

Apart from the factors we have seen thus far (conquest, land alienation, exploitation [tributary system], centre-periphery cultural and political structure, and uncontrolled economic liberalisation), religion also served as an important contributory factor to conflict development in Ethiopia. One would think that the principal reason for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to support the imperial conquest was its interest in evangelisation. However, in many conquered areas like Sidaamaland, apart from benefiting from a generous imperial land grant, it made very little effort to evangelise the local people until the departure of the Italians (Braukamper, 2002: 5). Until the eve of the 1974 revolution, Christianity had been the state religion. Adherents of other religions (e.g. Islam and traditional religions in the south) had been victims of discrimination: they were isolated from national life (e.g., from political and social integration) [Markakis, 1974: 135-136]. Even those local chiefs in the conquered areas who were used by the imperial government to control their people had to adopt Amharic culture and Orthodox Christianity in order to be accepted into the circle of the local imperial administrators. This religious discrimination would mainly explain why followers of Islam

in Ethiopia had become generally businessmen (traders, retailers). They could not get land grant. By the late 1960s, they resented being treated as second class citizens and the subordination of their religion to Christianity (Markakis & Nega, 1978: 53). The Periphery people in many conquered areas (e.g., the Sidaama, Arusi, Borana) generally associated the Orthodox Church with their oppressors; they regarded Orthodox Christianity as the religion of the settler-oppressors.[12] Some like the Arusi group became Muslims in reaction to the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity (cf., Braukamper, 2002: 163).

Even within Christian churches, the state favoured the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity; and the Orthodox church continuously harassed the Protestants and Catholics (Eide, 2000: 2). Ethiopian nationalism was culturally connected with the Orthodox faith, and only those who were converted to Orthodox Christianity were counted as 'true Ethiopians' (Donham, 1999: 102). Haile-Selassie, however, allowed Christian missionaries (Protestants and Catholics) to work in the conquered areas. This was partly because he preferred non-Orthodox Christianity to Islam and indigenous religions, but mainly to enhance his modernisation policy: he needed modern education and health institutions to be built in the country (Donham, 1999: 103). Unlike the Ethiopian Orthodox church, the missionary groups, especially the Catholics, preached the gospel through the local languages of the conquered peoples. The struggle against socio-political, ethnic and religious inequalities found a powerful expression in Christianity that was brought by the missionaries (Eide, 2000: 2). The non-Orthodox Christianity and Islam, therefore, served as agents of conscientisation and deepening realisation of the oppressed groups about their status in the country.

Education was another factor that raised the awareness of socio-political, economic and cultural disparities existing within the country, and also Ethiopia's political-economic status on the international level. Besides raising awareness, education also became a contributing factor of unpeaceful relations. Haile Selassie needed educated or trained personnel for his modern state and for modernisation in general. He put a lot of effort into education. This modern education created a modern elite (educated class); a good number of the educated Ethiopians went abroad for studies and returned with hope to participate fully in the transformation of their country. Although not

[12]The Sidaama case in the next chapter will substantiate the role of religion as a factor of deepening awareness and conflicts in the conquered areas.

opposed to the idea of centralised political system for the benefit of modernisation and development, and although they enjoyed employment benefits and good salaries, the educated class felt progressively alienated (e.g., in decision/policy-making) from the autocratic regime (Clapham, 1988: 33). Those who were trained in the 1950 and 1960s were resistant to the feudal aspects of the imperial rule and the control of power by the traditional aristocracy whom they viewed as the main cause for Ethiopia's 'backwardness' (Bahru, 2001: 213; Keller, 1988: 132; Markakis, 1974: 180-191). A UNESCO conference on education in Addis Ababa in 1961 revealed the status of Ethiopia trailing behind other African countries (see also Harbeson and Myers, 1964: 68), and this became a humiliating issue for the students who thought they were doing better than others. Even before this revelation, some of the educated individuals like Girmame Neway — whose brother Mengistu Neway, a colonel who (in 1951) apprehended those who conspired against the life of the emperor, and a brigadier general who participated with Girmame in masterminding the 1960 coup attempt against the emperor — saw the dehumanising level of oppression and exclusion of the indigenous conquered people (e.g., in Wolaita and Somali areas) by the landed aristocracy of the settler community (Bahru, 2001: 210, 212-213; Keller, 1988: 132). The existence of many expatriates (e.g., scholarship students from other parts of Africa, attendants at the international conferences like that of UNESCO, aid workers, technical advisors, diplomats, teachers, businessmen) widened the space of interactions, increasing the Ethiopians' awareness of the world around and of their place in it. One significant factor also involved the programme of Ethiopian University Service that required students in the 1960s to give one year of service in rural areas in different parts of the country. For the students, the service was an eye opener about the situation of the rural peoples in different parts of the country (Vaughan, 2003: 139-140). All the factors mentioned in this paragraph gave rise to the socio-political consciousness and the resulting demands for change by the educated groups (Henze, 2000: 253-4).

For the first time since the creation of modern Ethiopia, towards the end of the 1950s and in the 1960s, the educated class raised nationality questions (Merera, 2002: 15). This was partly due to the global phenomena of nationalisms (e.g. decolonisation movements) and prevailing ideologies (capitalism and socialism/communism). Marxism-Leninism was particularly influential on the issue of the national question. The idea of 'self-determination up to secession' had the influence of the

works of Lenin and Stalin, for Ethiopian students in Europe were fully exposed to and debated upon them (Bahru, 2001: 225).[13] Eritreans were already emphasising on this issue, and the Eritrean nationalism was on the move. As national question intensified, and also modernity required a united nation, the emperor tried a policy of cultural, linguistic, and religious homogenisation (Eide, 2000: 19). This followed the already existing inter-ethnic royal and nobility intermarriages during Haile-Selassie's regime, which the emperor encouraged to avoid inter-ethnic political rivalry (Amanuel Gebru, 2001: 4).[14]

On the general Ethiopian level, the emperor takes credit for some important and significant achievements that are essential for constructing the modern Ethiopian state: destroying the power and influence of the traditional aristocracy and replacing them slowly with educated or professional groups, creating bureaucratic administration, and producing an educated class with modern education. Several factors, however, came together to prevent the emperor from achieving his project of building a successful modern state with the emperor at its head. The emperor made very little effort to formulate policies that would address the grievances of the rural population (e.g., land alienation), especially in the conquered areas. He failed to provide structures through which the grievances of the alienated peoples and groups (e.g., secondary and tertiary level students, armed forces, unrepresented urban groups) could be heard effectively. Because of lack of structures that could facilitate relationship with the central government and the people, connection between the two was very thin. In the event of a major crisis — which was surely to come— he could not count on the support of the people (cf., Clapham, 1988: 33-37; 1975: 75-81).

The emperor continued maintaining the centre-periphery structure of relation with the conquered groups who differed in culture (including religion) and language. He favoured an

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[13]The article of Walleligne Mekonen (1969: 4-7) on national question (and on the idea of national self-determination including secession) was probably the first written document in Ethiopia. Walleligne, an Amhara from Wollo, broke the taboo in Ethiopian politics by bringing into public the idea of self-determination up to secession, and proposing a project to build a society in which all national groups have equal status (politically, economically and culturally) without hegemonic control of one group over others. He also emphasised that the national groups should be allowed to develop their language and culture (p. 5).

[14]The practice of inter-ethnic/national royal marriages for political purpose goes back to the 15th century in Ethiopia. The Queen Mother, Eleni — a wife of Emperor Zera-Yaiqob (r. 1434-1468) — was a daughter of a king of Hadiyya (Henze, 2000: 72).

autocratic system and chorocracy; in southern provinces, he appointed governors mainly from Shoa. He was intolerant of opposition parties and movements (cf., Spencer, 1984: 257-258), and resistant to the pressure for creating a more inclusive and democratic society. The emperor's drive was to modernise the country, while promoting autocracy and keeping the socio-cultural, economic and political exclusion of most of the non-Abyssinian groups: these were contradictory projects which provided conditions for revolution.

In implementing the policies of *laissez-faire* liberal economy, the government provided no law, prescribing a minimum wage for an employee. Consequently, the non-educated workers suffered exploitation. Retrenchment created job insecurity for all workers. The connection of Ethiopian economy to the global economic system meant that any external economic change (i.e., changes in price of import [e.g., oil] and export goods) affected directly the internal economy, and caused hardship to the urban population. For the indigenous population in the southern conquered areas, the 1960s and early 1970s brought further land alienation. With the policy of agricultural modernisation, the government evicted many peasants from their lands for commercial farming without any systematic and humane resettlement programme (Bahru, 191; Keller, 1988: 144). As a method of breaking the traditional regional aristocracy, the emperor continued the traditional system of land grants to his allies, leaving the conquered people more destitute. Land privatisation policy also brought indigenous *gabbars* total awareness of losing their inheritance land and being landless. These situations were "compounded and rendered far more serious by the correlation of ethnic, cultural, and class differences – a formula fraught with explosive potential" (Markakis, 1974: 140). Since the late 1950s, land tax was not high, although in the south it was abused by demands for extra tributes. The problem of tax burden came with the Education Tax and Health Tax for which the rural population throughout the country received no return benefit (Clapham, 1988: 103).

All the above mentioned factors provided ripe conditions for revolution. Due to such factors the 1960s saw many significant events. Debates on nationality issues and land reform began during this period and continued until the revolution among the radical student movements. The 30-year guerilla war of the Eritreans under the leadership of the Eritrean People Liberation Front (EPLF) that ended in 1991, the Ethiopian Somali nationalist movement (ONLF being its child), the Bale Oromo peasants' insurgency (OLF being its continuation) [Henze, 2000: 260-5]: these began in the 1960s.

The educated class was also divided into three: those supporting status quo (mainly those who were trained before 1945), those opposing it (the leftists) and the moderates. Ideological conflicts (both nationally and internationally), insurgencies, rejection of the traditionalist control of power by leftist educated elements, pressure from below for the abolition of land tenure system and exploitation, rejection of autocracy, unanimous call for social and political change, the feeling among the educated class of alienation and urgency to modernize and democratise the country, harsh economic situations (e.g., famine, poverty, unemployment, underpayment), and difficult living conditions of the armed forces: all these led to the 1974 Ethiopian revolution (Bahru, 2001: 215-226; Donham, 1999: 124-126; Henze, 2000: 253-256).

4.B.2.ii. Ethiopia Under the Derg Regime

Despite all the grievances and pressures from below for social and political changes, there was not a single organised political party to unite and represent the interests of different groups in a more orderly way. This was partly (if not mainly) due to the emperor's dislike of having an organised political party. Amidst chaotic situations, the absence of well organised political parties and divisions within civilian revolutionary groups made military takeover of the power not surprising and even predictable (Clapham, 1988: 41-42). In mid-1974, a group of low-ranking officers formed a committee of soldiers in an effort to coordinate the demands of various military units, "ranging from the improvement of their conditions of service to general political and social reform" (Bahru, 2001: 233). It began as a movement in the capital, and slowly widened itself through the inclusion of various military units throughout the country. It developed into the *derg* (the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, the Police and the Territorial Army) in its formal launching in 28 June 1974, becoming "a sort of military parliament" (Bahru, 2001: 233-4). Although in its infancy it began with the objective of advocating the improvement of the living conditions of the military, soon its area of concern expanded to encompass the situation of the whole country. The deteriorating socio-political and economic situations (including civil wars, civil protests, poverty, drought and famine), the threat of Somalia, and the rise of the oil price: these heightened the *derg's* concern for national unity and stability, security of the country, and general socio-political and economic reform,

and modernisation. The *derg* used 'Ethiopia First' as a slogan to rally the public behind them and probably as a programme of a *coup-d'etat*. Through systematic and calculated gradual moves, the *derg* deposed the emperor on 12 September 1974, and assumed power.[15] The emperor died (or possibly was killed) a year later.

The young educated groups generally saw the imperial system and traditional aristocracy as causes for Ethiopia's backwardness and as obstacles to modernising and developing Ethiopia. For some educated elites, as Henze (2000: 259) notes, involvement in opposition movements was self-interest (e.g., desire for personal betterment, stable employment). For the conquered rural people their desires were to get their land back, be freed from socio-political and cultural domination by the settlers and from taxation, while their elites also sought to modernise their own areas. For these and various other reasons, the Ethiopian people generally greeted the revolution with optimism (Donham, 1999: 31-35).

The *derg* was already aware of the debates on and calls for political and constitutional reforms, and land reform by the Ethiopian intelligentsia. Having deposed the emperor, it transformed itself into the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC). The late 1960s and the aftermath of the revolution, apart from the already existing armed movements and insurgencies — e.g., the Eritrean armed nationalist movements which were progressively purged into the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) , the peasant rebellion movement in Bale (a precursor of the Oromo Liberation Front [OLF] that came into existence in 1976), the Ogadenian rebellion movements (the precursors of Western Somali Liberation Front [WSLF] that appeared in January 1976 and then became the Ogaden National Liberation Front [ONLF] around the mid-1980s, asserting itself as a nationalist group opposed to Ethiopia and Somalia) [see Markakis, 1987: 131-136; 175-179;191-201)— brought in many political and civil organisations (e.g., university students and teachers, Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions, section of the military and leftist organisations). Most of these were opposed to the creation of the PMAC — for they rightly perceived in the *derg* the unfolding military dictatorship— and called in vain for the setting up of a Provisional People's Government (PPG). Some among them (principally from aristocratic opposition) formed the

[15]For all that is said in this paragraph and for more detailed information, see Andargachew, 1993: 37-81; Bahru, 2001: 228-235; Clapham, 1988: 36-40; Henze, 2000: 284-288.

Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU). The rest joined different leftists organisations: the *Democracia* [democracy] which later became the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), *YeSefiw Hizb Dimts* ('Voice of the Broad Masses') which was an organ of the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement [MEISON - Amharic acronym], the Ethiopian Oppressed Peoples' Revolutionary Struggle (I'CHAT -Amharic acronym), the *Wezlig* (Labour League), and the Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organisation (MALERID). The TPLF (the predecessors of which were the Tigrean Student Association of the early 1970s and the Tigrean National Organisation of the 1974) was formed in early 1975.[16] The SLM was formed in 1978. The TPLF, OLF, ONLF, and SLM were nationalist armed organisations.

Originally, the *derg*, except the idea about political reform and order, had no preplanned wider political/ideological agenda to lead the country; it sought help from the leftist intelligentsia for policy guidance, and gradually (in 1976) appropriated the leftist ideology (Andargachew, 1993: 156, 164; Markakis, 1987: 202, 239). The civilian left (from the literate class) had a major influence in the process leading to the revolution and in the process of the political organisation of society during the period of 1974-1977. When the *derg* set up the Provisional Office of Mass Organisation Affairs (POMOA) in early 1976, the ideologues of MEISON and EPRP seemed to enjoy favour by the office (Henze, 1988: 294), until early 1977 (when POMOA became directly under the control of Mengistu Haile-Mariam). The *derg* shared with the civilian left the idea that the land tenure system (particularly in the south) and traditional aristocracy were major obstacles to national unity and the main causes of the country's ills (e.g., social and economic backwardness). This would naturally lead to undertaking policies to abolish the traditional aristocracy and land alienation that had severely affected the southern population.[17]

In its first move, in January and February 1975, the PMAC nationalised financial institutions, and private commercial and industrial enterprises. It mobilised teachers and students (*Zemecha*) to

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[16]For detailed works on these political parties, see Andargachew, 1993: 71-81, 123-155; Bahru, 2001: 236-254; Clapham, 1988: 41-56; Henze, 2000: 290-295; Markakis, 1987: 239-248.

[17]Land reform policy did not affect much the situation of the peasants in the north, for (unlike the southerners from resourceful and strategic areas) the northerners had never suffered socio-cultural alienation and expropriation of their communal land; the tribute they paid was also somehow proportionate. There had been socio-cultural, economic and familial ties between them and their local leaders.

carry the revolution to rural areas. They were to enlighten rural people about the revolution and economic development, carry out a literacy campaign, and help in the organisation of the peasants (Andargachew, 1993: 89-96, 102-103). In March 1975, the *derg* "abolished all forms of private land ownership and prohibited the sale, lease or mortgage of rural land," giving peasants "usufructory right over land holdings, whose [*sic*] ceiling was set at ten hectares" (Bahru, 2001: 242; cf., Markakis, 1987: 241). This measure brought the end to landlordism, benefiting the tenants and the landless. Since it did not spare the Orthodox Church which had owned huge land and received tributes, to some degree even the northern peasants benefited from the land reform. The reform, therefore, drew support and legitimacy for the *derg* principally from the formerly exploited and excluded southern rural population except the Ethiopian Somalis (Pausewang, 1997: 196; Bahru, 2001: 243; Clapham, 1988: 47; 1995: 80-81; Markakis, 1987: 241). The *derg*, through the help of *zemecha*, organised rural population and created Peasants' Associations (PAs) which served as the base units of local administrative and political power (Clapham, 1988: 48-49). In August 1975, the *derg* nationalised the urban land and extra houses, and then established Urban Dwellers' Associations (UDAs), the urban counterpart to the PAs. Thus, within one year of the revolution, the *derg* implemented successfully those key revolutionary policies (land reform and nationalisation) which effectively saw the end of the aristocracy and land alienation.

The PA was divided into *qebele* (the smallest political and administrative unit) and Peasants' Cooperative Association (PCA). The PA had executive committee (with directly elected members) and judicial tribunal (with authority to preside over criminal offences). As reflected in the 'Sidamo' province, the PA functioned within the following structure of administrative and political hierarchy: *qebele* — PCA (constituted three to six *qebeles*) — *woreda* (district) — *awuraja* (province) — region — central level (for a while the Ethiopia Peasants' Association [EPA], but later the state and party hierarchy). In urban centres, the UDA was divided into two levels: lower (*qebele*) and higher (*keffitenya* [equivalent to *woreda*] — a combination of more than one *qebele*). Both PA and UDA had elected executive committees, control committees, welfare committees, and judicial tribunals. The city council administered towns with more than one *kefittenya*. Towns with more than four *keffitenya* were administered by intermediate administrative structure, the *zone*, which had equivalent status of *awuraja*. As reflected in Addis Ababa, the UDA operated in the following structure: *qebele*

— *keffitenya* — *zone* — central level (Ministry of Urban Development and Housing) [Andargachew, 1993: 116-117; Clapham, 1988: 130-136; 157-161]. In this way, the *qebele* is linked into a hierarchical structure of administration, governed by the principle of revolutionary democratic centralism (Clapham, 1988: 131).

Meanwhile, the period between 1974 and 1979 experienced serious threats to the stability and development of the country. Despite the revolutionary measures the *derg* undertook, unlike in the south, the *derg* did not secure support among the northerners, for Eritrean and Abyssinian peasants had not experienced land alienation. What they needed was more political accommodation at the Centre. Had the *derg* allowed a decentralised political structure, it would have earned legitimation and support from northern areas. Around early 1976, the EDU (not an ethnonationalist movement) started armed struggle (with the help of Sudan) in Gondar region, with liberal political goals. It was making significant military gains in the region. Eritrea had been under Italy for about fifty years. After WWII, it was under the British protectorate for ten years, and Eritrean national independence movement (although not armed) began during this period. Under the UN decision, Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia in 1952, but the federal structure was dissolved in 1962 under the instigation of the imperial government (Andargachew, 1993: 25). From this time on wards, Eritrean nationalists were involved in armed struggle for Eritrean liberation. By 1978, the EPLF controlled most of the areas in Eritrea with political aspiration for external self-determination. In 1979, with the support of the EPLF, the TPLF was emerging as the sole Tigrean nationalist movement by eliminating successfully other armed movements in Tigray. Its aspiration consisted in achieving internal self-determination (while keeping national independence as option) and against the prospect of the centralised state under the *derg*.[18]

In the south-east, a neighbouring country, Somalia, began infiltrating its armed forces into Ethiopia (with a view to building a 'greater Somalia') in June 1977 through the then irridentist Western Somali Liberation Front and the Somali Abo Liberation Front (which has more of the Oromos of Bale and Arusi provinces). Colonial powers (France in Djibouti, Britain in Somaliland and north-west Kenya, Italy in Somalia, Ethiopia in parts of Hararghe area) had drawn territorial

[18]For details and more issues, see Bereket, 1980: 48-73, 86-96; Clapham, 1988: 57-58; 204-214; Markakis, 1987: 245-258.

boundaries that fragmented the Somali groups into four countries. Menelik had conquered the Ogaden area until the current Somali border towards the end of 19th century. Ogaden was legalised as part of the Ethiopian territory under Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1897. After the removal of the Italians at the beginning of the 1940s, under another Anglo-Ethiopian agreement signed on 31 January 1942, Ethiopian sovereignty over Ogaden was recognised. However, the British held administrative control over parts of Hararghe (Jijiga area) until 1948 (Bereket, 1980: 100-103). Now, the Somali government, which was enjoying the Soviets' support, wanted to bring all Somali groups and territories from Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya into one 'greater Somalia' state.

The *derg*'s objectives included bringing national security and stability, development, and the building of a united and successful modern nation-state within Marxist-Leninist ideological framework (cf., Clapham, 1995: 72-74, 84). To achieve these, the *derg* saw the state under military control as the best instrument (Clapham, 1988: 107). In the beginning, the stability of the country urgently required solution. During the 1974-1978 period, urban centres saw serious conflicts among the revolutionary groups, leading to a series of alliances until late 1976, and thereafter assassinations and bloodshed (e.g., White Terror, Red Terror), ultimately enabling the *derg's* hardline faction (under Mengistu's leadership) to control and exercise absolute political power: by March 1977, it eliminated the *derg* moderate members; after the bloodletting urban conflicts that took place mainly between September 1976 and early 1978, the *derg* destroyed the leftist political parties (e.g., EPRP and MEISON [the *derg's* mentor]). It also reduced the threats of the armed movements in northern rural areas: by the end of Summer 1977, it removed the threat of EDU; by the end of 1978, the EPLF's threat also appeared to be under control (at least at that time); the *derg* did not see any threat in the newly organised armed nationalist movement (the TPLF) that was already making significant gains in Tigray. After the Ethio-Somali war (July 1977 – March 1978), Somalia's threat on Ethiopian sovereignty also ended as Ethiopia achieved military victory (with the help of communist countries [e.g., ex-USSR, Cuba, Yemen and others from Eastern Europe]). The latter gave the *derg* popular approval and a level of legitimacy in the eyes of the populace.[19] Its victories over internal and external forces also encouraged the *derg* to outlaw for good the idea of concessions to nationalist

[19]For detailed presentation and discussion about the *derg*'s ascendance to absolutism, see Andargachew, 1993: 205-226; Bahru, 2001: 246-248, 253; Clapham, 1987: 54-64; Markakis, 1987: 237-258.

movements or accommodation of political parties (Clapham, 1988: 196, 200; cf., Markakis, 1987: 137). It regarded them as reactionaries and forces of division, causing obstacles to the achievement of homogenised 'national unity' and rapid development.

Conflicts among leftist groups during the 1974-1978 period were mainly over the control of the central political power and policy differences: the main dividing issue among them pertained to those seeking united central state (e.g., Mengistu's group) and those seeking decentralised democratic political structures which would recognize ethnic and regional differences (Andargachew, 1993: 123-155; Bahru, 2001: 236-237, 245; Clapham, 1995: 81; Donham, 1999: 132). The elimination of the moderate *derg* members (e.g., General Aman Andom, General Teferi Banti and the likes) that sought the politics of accommodation and negotiation, and the destruction of the leftist parties that aspired for "decentralisation and regional autonomy as a way of resolving the national conflict" (Markakis, 1987: 270), revealed the hardline *derg's* commitment to the sovereignty of state and its rejection of loosening central control of socio-political and economic power for the bureaucracy and the military (ibid.). Although social reform was swift through the policies of land reform, nationalisation, destruction of landlordism and aristocracy, and the health and literacy campaign [using local languages], the refusal to reform the state failed to address the national question and would prove to be a principal source of conflicts for the whole coming period of the *derg* regime and ultimately for its overthrow (ibid.: 237, 270). For the *derg* land reform and elimination of "the cultural and religious trappings of Amhara supremacy" (Clapham, 1988: 199) seemed to dissolve "the correlation of class and national contradictions" (Markakis, 1987: 261). The *derg's* refusal to provide a legitimate arena — e.g., parliament, independent mass media, informal milieu where positions could be debated and theories tested, elections— and its choice of military or coercive means to resolve political problems and aspirations (cf., Henze, 1988: 294-5) led to the creation of nationalist armed fronts (e.g., the TPLF, OLF, WSLF, SLM) and intensification of the already existing ones (e.g., the EPLF).

After having achieved the relative stability and security of the country, in 1978-9 the *derg* embarked on building institutions and implementing its policies of building a homogenised society and economic development. The political and administrative units that were created in 1975 (e.g., the PAs and UDAs) — they owed their origin to the civilian left (e.g., MEISON) — served as important institutional tools in implementing the government policies and directives ranging from land

distribution, collecting taxes and cyclical financial contributions, military conscriptions, maintaining peace and stability in their territories, to collectivisation and villagization (Clapham, 1995: 82). In the early period (1975 and 1976), both the PAs and UDAs reflected an impressive exercise of democracy and devolution of power, but gradually they became politicised and militarised, and turned into the *derg*'s instruments of elimination of all the opponents of the *derg* and subjugation of the people (cf., Andargachew, 1993: 116, 208-209; Clapham, 1988: 55). The government's centralisation drive brought conflicts of interests between peasants (who want their leaders to implement their own [the peasants'] projects) and the officials (who disregard the PA's projects and want the PA leadership to be the instrument of implementing the government's projects), ultimately resulting in peasant resentment.

The relative end — armed nationalist movements were not finished — of the serious crisis the country was facing during the first four years after the revolution allowed the formation of the Commission for Organizing the Party of the Workers of Ethiopia in December 1979.[20] Since the *derg* saw the state as the best tool to achieve its goals, it completed instituting a military dictatorship. The Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), a vanguard party of the revolution, came into existence in 1984, and had the Soviet backing. The PAs and UDAs became its best instruments of penetrating the whole society and controlling it. In 1987, Ethiopia was transformed into People's Democratic Republic with a constitution. The WPE directed the constitution in accordance with Marxist-Leninist theory. The constitution "provided the division of the country into administrative areas and autonomous regions and left the determination of their size to be governed through bylaws" (Andargachew, 1993: 281).[21] Although Amharic remained the official and commercial language of the country, Article 2 of the constitution ensured "equality, development and respectability of the languages of the various nationalities" (Clapham, 1988: 94). Whatever the constitution provided with regard to the recognition of nationality and self-governance, *de facto* it did not change the autocratic, militaristic and centralised nature of the government in the country (Clapham, 1988: 94-96).

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[20]Clapham (1988: 68-69) notes continuous pressure from Soviet Union to form a Leninist revolutionary vanguard party for the purpose of bringing union between working class, peasantry and intelligentsia, and of maintaining 'friendly ties with other vanguard communist parties.'

[21]For full details of the constitutional provisions see Andargachew, 1993: 280-284. For more information on this paragraph, see Clapham, 1988: 65-100.

External conditions were also encouraging for the *derg* to embark on its project of building a successful and united modern Ethiopian nation-state, based on the communist principles (e.g., emancipation of the oppressed, equality, and development) [cf., Donham, 1999: 21-27, 134-135]. Ideologically and militarily, the Soviets and East Germans (the latter concerning the organisation of security ministry) offered support; diplomatically, the international convention of 'state sovereignty' was in the *derg's* favour; and economically, the support from Western donors and famine relief supplies to Ethiopia continued (Clapham , 2002: 17; Henze, 2000: 304-7). These, together with the lack of a history of a democratic state in the country, contributed to the *derg's* refusal/failure to build internal state capacity (e.g., structures of participation and accommodation of different political parties, avenues that would promote dialogue and genuine negotiation) as possible means of conflict transformation and of development.

The *derg* regarded 'national question' as fundamentally arising from class conflict that involved alienation and exploitation. It sought to resolve this problem by bringing a total socio-political, cultural, linguistic and economic integration which, it hoped, would create a homogenous communist society. To achieve this project, it implemented policies of land distribution, destruction of feudal structures and aristocracy, nationalisation of means of production, ideological unity, equal education and opportunity for all, one language and the mixing up of the population. These were implemented during the period of crisis (1974-1978), and now they needed further strengthening. The first three effectively destroyed class division. The *derg* adopted Marxism-Leninism as the only ideology relevant for the country. Until the end of the 1980s, apart from EDU and other beneficiaries of the structures of the *ancien régime*, almost all of the opposition groups (including the armed nationalist movements) also favoured Marxism-Leninism as opposed to capitalism (Andargachew, 1993: 360-361). In fact, the EPLF and TPLF used the combination of Leninist political organisation and Maoist-style guerrilla strategies to fight against the *derg* regime (Andargachew, 1993: 318-319).

Through literacy campaign, schools (however insufficient) were built throughout the country, with equal opportunity for all and free of charge. Amharic language remained the official language of the country. While adult education was carried out through local languages, Amharic served as the vehicle of primary level education. By the end of primary school, the younger generation throughout Ethiopia was expected to speak Amharic as a means of national integration. Effectively,

all primary school leavers spoke Amharic. Those leaving tertiary level education were assigned to different areas throughout the country as a way of mixing up the population. The government avoided appointing individuals to political and administrative offices on the basis of their ethnic/national identity. Moreover, the government created youth, women and professional associations (which also served as mechanisms of control) partly as tools of indoctrination and promoting Ethiopianness. However, these policies of homogenisation had some drawbacks. First, they did not address the grievances of the population in northern Ethiopia (e.g., Eritrean political aspiration for self-determination, the Tigrean rejection of the centralised state system which they regarded as Amhara domination); hence, they contributed nothing to building peace there. The EPLF and TPLF grew stronger and stronger, causing major military defeats to the *derg* towards the end of the 1980s. Secondly, in the southern areas — where the people have been always ruled by the settlers and non-natives— since 1977, almost all administrators and functionaries of *woreda, awuraja,* and region involved non-locals. These were insensitive to the local cultures and perhaps in denial of historical master-slave type relations between the settler-indigenous groups, and were even brutal towards the people they administered. Consequently, the indigenous groups still felt being dominated by 'others' (cf., Clapham, 1995: 83). In Sidaamaland, for example, this sentiment contributed greatly to the Sidaama nationalism, boosting the capacity of the SLM (see below 6A1.ii.a).

When severe drought affected the country (especially in Wollo and Tigray) in 1984, the government implemented the policy of resettlement. Primarily, it was aimed at saving the lives of the drought-affected people. Mostly the Wollega, Kaffa, and Illubabor provinces were used for resettling the drought-affected people. The resettlement programme also served other secondary objectives: to mix up the population in an attempt to build one Ethiopian spirit and also promote producers' cooperatives for collective farming. It was also alleged that, in the case of resettling the Tigreans, the *derg* partly wanted to deprive the TPLF of the means of capacity building. The TPLF "accused the government of intending to depopulate the region and undermine the movement" (Andargachew, 1993: 349; cf., Clapham, 1988: 193). Nevertheless, in the programme of resettlement, the locals saw the reduction of their lands and were resentful. The OLF was able to exploit this by evoking the domination of Oromo by the north and the usurpation of their land (Andargachew, 1993: 366).

In addressing the problem of economic underdevelopment, the *derg* adopted a socialist model,

some of the characteristics of which involved nationalisation of means of production, a centralised national planning system and control, collectivisation of rural land, fast industrialisation, villagization, and state farms. The *derg* saw nationalisation of means of production (e.g., land, industrial plants, commercial farms) as the best tool to bring fast economic development and industrialisation of the country. It restricted private trade, and discouraged those wanting to venture in business. State ownership and management of more sectors of the economy did help to attenuate the existing class contradiction. But it failed to bring economic development and even elimination of class and regional disparities (Markakis, 1987: 202; Clapham, 1988: 161-186). Bureaucratic authoritarian approach (state controlled and guided economic development programme) did help countries like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan to achieve fast and successful economic development. Both the Haile-Selassie and the *derg* regimes did not lack administrative ability that was necessary for achieving economic development. However, the complexity of socio-political, historical and cultural context of Ethiopia appeared to question the value of state *dirigism*. The *derg's* political objectives often overrode what would be better for the interest of the country's economic development.[22] In the Ethiopian context, state centralism (since it lacked structures of dialogue and accommodation) failed to address the national question and incorporate opposition political parties and movements (cf., Clapham, 1988: 32-37, 203-209, 241-243), and served as a cause of conflict protraction.

The distribution of land did bring a lot of relief to the formerly alienated rural population in the south. In fact, during the first four years of the revolution, when the urban centres were undergoing its worst political crisis, the rural population (particularly in the south) was enjoying a relative economic gain, and was living a far better life than the urban population was (Clapham, 1988: 48). Since 1977, the government instituted a state-controlled marketing system — the Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) with its bureaucratic structures— to extract surplus from rural population, at the expense of agricultural production. The institution fixed prices, i.e., forced peasant farmers throughout the country to sell much of their produce to the state at a lower rate than the actual market price, and this was termed a 'quota system'. The cooperatives and state farms could

[22]Henze notes that one of the reasons presented for the killing of Lt. Colonel Atnafu Abate (the veteran derg member and the deputy Chairman of the *derg)* by Mengistu on 13 Nov 1977 was that Atnafu "placed the interests of Ethiopia above the interests of socialism" (Henze, 1988: 302).

only sell to AMC, again at a fixed price which remained lower than that of the market. The state farms were paid better than the cooperatives. The individual peasant farmers were paid less than the cooperatives. (Andargachew, 1993: 348; Clapham, 1988: 168-171). The objectives of the institution included guaranteeing a livelihood for the urban population, and financing wars as well as industrialisation policy. The bulky bureaucracy and quota system gave no incentive to the farmers, and prevented the free flow of agricultural produce from rural to urban areas. The huge state farms received disproportionate inputs, but produced less than private peasant farms. The fixed price also meant that the farms made no profit but loss. Moreover taxes and continuous forced contributions and subscriptions to the numerous organizations (e.g., farmers', youth, women's and professional associations through which forced contributions [both human and financial]) burdened Ethiopian people and even countered the benefits of revolution (Andargachew, 1993: 348). All these — together with short and long droughts, famine and continuous civil wars — affected the project of economic transformation (Andargachew, 1993: 347-351; Markakis, 1987: 264-269, 350).

The collectivisation policy was aimed at freeing land (a means of production) for collective farming which would enable farming to be modernised by applying modern technology to achieve a better yield. The government was not successful in implementing this policy and achieving its objectives (mainly because of peasants' resistance and/or subversion). Starting from 1984, the *derg* pursued the policy via the policy of villagisation (cf., Andargachew, 1993: 347). The government argued that the villagisation policy would help rural population to have easy access to modern infrastructures (e.g., health care, communication [e.g., road and transport system, telephone], education, water, electricity), facilitate rapid intervention during environmental ills, and also free more land for modernised collective farming (Taddesse Berisso, 2002: 117-118; Clapham, 1988: 175,178). However, villagisation had other political-economic objectives. Politically, it would enable the government to have greater control over the people; in the rebel movement areas, it would weaken the rebel activities by undercutting their information network among their peoples. For example, the programme was first implemented in Hararghe, targeting the OLF and the Oromo Islamic Front (Andargachew, 1993: 347, 367). Through villagisation, the government could easily enforce military conscription for its wars. It could also easily extract surplus from the peasants (Andargachew, 1993: 348). This policy was insensitive to the physical and cultural environments and the people's way of

life, as will be explained in the next chapter (pp. 156-158). Villagisation hampered economic development, brought peasants' disfavour of the government and deepened unpeaceful relations. "Villagisation marks the disappearance of the autonomy conferred by land reform, and may lead to the very rural opposition which it was partly intended to prevent" (Clapham, 1988: 179).

Generally, the development programmes failed to achieve their goals partly because of civil wars and drought. The development policies themselves were also criticised as faulty, for they aimed at achieving not only developmental goals, but also the political ends of the ruling group. The land reform proclamation and implementation did not enable the rural farmers to have mastery over their plots, for the *derg* attached to it a series of unpopular measures (e.g., state control of agricultural marketing, fixed government prices, high taxes, cyclical financial contributions, obligatory subscriptions to various mass organisations, subservience to various government officials, peasant association leaders and cadres, forced resettlement, collectivisation, villagisation). In highly populated areas, the allocated plots were overcultivated and too small even to apply modern technology. These did not help to bring desirable agricultural production. Moreover, the government controlled the movement of the population in such a way that chances for migration to other areas were reduced (Andargachew, 1993: 107; Bahru, 2001: 243; Clapham, 1988: 48; 2002: 17-21). All these brought dissatisfaction to the rural population, leading them to passive resistance, and (in war areas) offering support to rebel movements. In admission of the failure of its socio-political and economic policies to achieve their goals, the government abandoned socialist system in 1990; hence, the abandonment of villagisation, collectivisation, quota system. This precipitated the loss of government control over the people, who then took "the law into their own hands and destroyed the new villages, the co-operatives and the quota system" (Andargachew, 1993: 351). This revealed how much the people resented the government and its system that had overburdened them for at least fourteen years.

Despite the strength of Leninist organisational structure of control, failure to reform the state by creating more accommodative political economic structures (which would create avenues for dialogue, participation, negotiation and/or conflict regulation) greatly contributed to the escalation of the unpeaceful relations. Within this background, the combined struggles of the nationalist fronts and movements and their ability to organise (using Leninist political organisation and Maoist-style

guerilla strategies [Andargachew, 1993: 318-319]) as well as create supporting allies (e.g., NGOs, and governments like Somalia and Sudan), plus the dissatisfaction of the rural population, led to the progressive decline of the power of the *derg*. Internationally, the fall of the USSR and communist block of eastern Europe in the beginning of the 1990s also created a crisis of confidence among the *derg's* supporters (e.g., party members, functionaries, military officers and government officials) in the country and deprived the *derg* "of friends on the international scene" (Andargachew, 1993: 365), ending its hope of survival.

The revolutionary activities that appeared after 1974 in general, did not bring the promotion of legality, democratic rights, respect for human rights, and accountability to the people. With this regard, the quality of socio-political transformation was low (Andargachew, 1993: 336); it simply escalated conflicts and contributed to the capacity building of the nationalist armed fronts. Almost all revolutionary measures took place during the period of 1974-1977, and thereafter the *derg* (without the reform of the state) had nothing substantial to offer for the people (Clapham, 1995: 83). The early period brought effective socio-political reform in the country, but also saw seeds of totalitarianism and nationalisms. The nationalisation policies (of land, financial institutions, private commercial and industrial enterprises, and urban extra houses) constituted economic foundation for totalitarianism, through which the government would become the ultimate dispenser of rewards and sanctions (Bahru, 2001: 241). Although a proclaimed goal of the *derg* involved "broader popular participation in government, the superimposition of the military hierarchy on the state administration carried centralisation to new extremes" (Markakis, 1987: 202). State-controlled economic policies of development and systems of surplus extraction from peasants in order to support the state and also cater for the urban population, produced rather resentment and resistance from the populace than achieving their objectives. Such political and economic failure, together with drought intensified civil wars (mostly in the north) and produced more support for nationalisms. In addition, changes in international arena and internally significant military defeats of the *derg* in favour of the EPLF and TPLF (Andargachew, 1993: 367-368), contributed to the fall of the *derg* in 1991.

All being said and done, it must be recognised that (although the government lacked widespread legitimacy after 1979) under the *derg's* rule, life for historically oppressed nations was qualitatively better than the one under the former imperial regimes. They were more literate, more

organised, more independent, and had better access to formal education, modern health care, and other social services (Keller, 1988: 4). The *derg* should take credit for addressing burning issues of land and social position which had served as fundamental grievances of the people of the Periphery; they had access to land and were treated no more as second class Ethiopians. It should also take credit for at least recognising cultural or ethnic/national diversity within the country. However, the conquest factor (which took place about a century earlier) and ethnocracy/chorocracy being at the background of modern Ethiopia's history, the failure to reform the state (e.g., by decentralising political power and allowing participatory democratic structures) left the question of nationality as an unresolved issue of the country, preventing the project of building a successful and integrated modern state. The civil wars from which the *derg* era suffered capitalised the factor of 'national question' as their principal cause.

4.B.2.iii. Ethiopia under the EPRDF

In 1991, the coalition of the nationalist forces (the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front [EPRDF]) under the leadership of the TPLF defeated the *derg* and took power. The EPRDF saw Ethiopian problems as resulting from centralisation of power, underdevelopment and poverty. It has embarked on addressing them through administrative decentralisation (e.g., policy of self-determination), adoption of a liberal economic policy (mainly because of external pressure), Agricultural Development-Led Industrialisation, health and education, poverty reduction and rural development policies.

In the former USSR, Stalin (basing on Lenin's work) devised a system in which different national groups in the empire could exercise cultural freedom and a limited administrative autonomy in their own areas, but under the overarching control of the communist party. The TPLF had always held this Leninist-Stalinist cultural conception of self-determination (cf., p. 50 above) as an appropriate theoretical model to employ to address the national question in Ethiopia (Andargachew, 1993: 368-369; cf., Clapham 2002: 21).

The 1994 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian (FDRE) gives one

single definition to 'nation,' 'nationality,' and 'people.'[23] It appears to relate to the Stalinist theory of 'nation', but in a modified manner to fit the Ethiopian socio-political and economic contexts. The economic aspect of Stalin's definition is removed. According to Stalin, for a group to be called a 'nation', four elements (language, culture, territory, and economic life) must be commonly shared; to the EPRDF, these elements (save economy) with a belief in common identity define not only 'nation', but 'nationality' and 'people', as shown in the following table.

[Stalin]	[EPRDF]
historically constituted and stable community of people	a group of people with a belief in common and related identity
with common	
language	Language
culture (psychological make-up)	culture (psychological make-up)
territory	territory
economic life	

If Stalinist theory underlies the FDRE's adoption of the terminologies of entitlement, then (as Dereje writes) "[n]ations are historically well developed and attained a higher form of collective consciousness. Under the context of a repressive regime nations are thus qualified to form a state of their own. Nationalities, on the other hand, are those, which have attained a lesser degree of historical consciousness, thus qualify only for a regional autonomy" (Dereje Feyissa, 2004: 8). In this, the criterion of 'collective consciousness' determines the entitlement, and therefore it can help to determine which group is what. However, apart from the constitutional provision for every socio-cultural group the right to 'self-determination up to secession', the criteria to determine who is

[23]"A 'Nation, Nationality or People' for the purpose of this Constitution, is a group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory." [CFDRE, 1994, Art 39, 5].

entitled to the status of a 'nation', 'nationality' or 'people' in the current Ethiopia remain unspecified (ibid).

Since the EPRDF leadership saw the national question as the main source of serious conflicts from which Ethiopia suffers (Vaughan, 2003: 37-38), and following Stalin's theory, it instituted a linguistic and territory-based federal structure (except the regional states of the SNNP, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz) under the control of the EPRDF with its principle of 'revolutionary democracy'. It created local ethnic-based parties, termed as the People's Democratic Organisations (-PDO), by prefixing the names of ethnic/national groups (e.g., SPDO, 'S' standing for Sidaama; OPDO, 'O' standing for Oromo, and so on). The PDO party members were selected from the *derg's* prisoners of war, and individuals who did not form part of local intelligentsia, technocrats, the people with personal income, and local opposition parties. The PDOs were collected together and made members of the TPLF-controlled umbrella ruling party, the EPRDF.[24] The leadership hopes that ethnic-based parities will slowly disappear giving way for national parties (Amanuel, 2001: 5).[25] With a reduced territory — since Eritrea got independence in 1993 after its 30-year struggle — Ethiopia is now constituted as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), with nine regional states (Amhara, Tigray, Benishangul-Gumuz, Afar, Gambella, Oromia, SNNPR, Somali, and Harar), and two self-governing administration (Addis Ababa and Dire-Dawa). At least in its early age, the EPRDF government drew huge support from most of Ethiopian identity groups, and legitimation from such structural arrangement that recognises identity groups and gives them opportunity for self-governance (Pausewang, 1997: 197).

The regional states have their own constitutions. These constitutions remain structurally similar to each other, and reflect the federal constitution. Since this work deals more with the Sidaamaland, the administrative structure can be explained by taking the SNNPR as an example. The SNNPR is composed of about 45 ethnic and national groups, whose peoples, history and contributions for the formation of Modern Ethiopia have been marginalised. These ethnic/national

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[24]Concerning the creation and function of PDOs, see Vaughan, 2004a; 2004b: 15-16; Merera, 2002: 123, 140-142, 206.

[25]There exist skeptics of 'ethnic federalism' as means of solving Ethiopian problems. Such skeptics include Wale Engdayehu, 1994: 149-192; 1993: 29-52; Aaron Tesfaye, 1992; and also Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRICO) [see http://www.ehrco.net/reports/special_report59.html].

groups had remained anonymous or nameless peoples in modern Ethiopian history with little mention under the general name 'Sidamo' or 'Sidama', which did not distinguish the socio-cultural and linguistic distinctiveness of the groups. They had no written record of their own: and not much of their past was recorded in Ethiopian history. They were not constituted as 'peoples' with 'identities' of their own (Odiambo, 1991: 292). On the pre-1987 map, they were under four administrative provinces (Sidamo, Gemu-Gofa, Kaffa, and Shoa). From 1991 to 1993, they were constituted into five regional states, respecting their approximate linguistic and territorial setting, which gave them much more recognition and sense of being peoples with identity. In 1993, the EPRDF government merged them into one regional state, under the name 'The Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples', Amharic being adopted as the language of the state.

The SNNPR is constituted into nine zones (Guraghe, Hadiya, Kambata-Alaba-Timbaro, Sidaama, Gedeo, Semen Omo, Debub Omo, Keficho-Shekicho, Bench-Maji) and five 'special districts' (Yem, Amaro, Burji, Konso, and Dirashe), on the basis of language and territory (1994-PHCE, vol II, 1999: 9-10). The region comprises: i) its state council (legislative body – the highest authority of the SNNPR state) that is accountable to the people whom it represents, and is elected for a term of five years; ii) executive committee (the region's highest executive organ accountable to the state council) which comprises 21-25 members (chief-executive, deputy-chief-executive, and other members elected by the state council) of which 7 are permanent members;[26] and iii) an independent judicial power, exclusively vested in the courts. Hierarchically, the judicial organ comprises the regional state's supreme court, zonal/special *woredas'* high court, and *woreda* court.

Each zone has a zonal administration centre and is divided into districts, and the latter into *qebeles* (local administrative units with their own councils) and are organised hierarchically (region-zone-*woreda*-*qebele*). In the case of special *woredas*, each one of them directly relates to the centre (region) without zonal administration. Its hierarchical organisation is region-*woreda*-*qebele*. Each zone and special *woreda* has its own council (elected for the term of five years), executive committee, and judicial organ, and uses its own national language. The executive committee constitutes chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and 11-15 (for zone)/9-13 (for special *woreda*) members, and all

[26]The chairmen of the zones/special *woredas* are members of the regional state's executive committee.

are elected by the people of the zone/special *woreda*. The executive committee is accountable to zonal/special *woreda* council and to the executive committee of the regional state.

Each *woreda* (district) comprises its own council (composed of directly elected representatives of *qebeles* for the period of two years), executive committee (selected from the council members, accountable to the *woreda* council and to the zone), judicial organ (the lowest and first instance judicial organ of the regional state), public prosecution office, and security and police force office. *Woreda* is a subordinate organ to the zone and regional state, although it is vested with all necessary powers for self-administration. The executive organ is made up of chairman, vice-chairman, secretary of the *woreda* council, and other members.

Every *qebele* (the lowest administrative unit) comprises its council called *shengo*, executive committee (accountable to the *shengo* and to the *woreda* council executive committee), and socio-economic, security and social-judicial organs. All are elected by the *qebele* people.[27] In such ways, the people are effectively linked to the central government.

Among other things, the *derg* saw its role as protecting national unity against divisive forces. Homogenisation interest mainly reflected this aspect. The EPRDF regime understands itself as representing and protecting the identities of all the peoples in Ethiopia, allowing them to make voluntary choice to create a united society in diversity (Clapham, 2002: 26). It maintains that with identity-based federal structure, nationality questions are properly addressed and ended. The EPRDF tries to guard unity in diversity under its overarching power and through its ideological means ('revolutionary democracy').

The EPRDF government has adopted the SAPs as its development policies, and relies heavily on economic aid from the developed world. The IFI and donor governments have been involved in helping to finance the development projects of the government. From the economic aspect, a lot of efforts are being made (especially building infrastructures) to bring development. The land — a vital resource for about 85% of the country's population — remains under state control. The government sees land nationalisation as vital to prevent the land from being concentrated in the hands of a few able individuals, leaving the majority of the population impoverished and without means of survival.

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[27]Information for the current organisation of the SNNPR is taken from *The Constitution of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State* (Awasa, June 1995), Arts. 45-91.

It also sees Agricultural Development-Led Industrialisation as the best policy for economic development of the country (cf., Vaughan, 2004b: 31). It has undertaken poverty reduction policies (mainly resettlement programmes and rural agricultural development [by favouring genetically engineered grains]). Under the resettlement programme, families and individuals from drought affected areas are moved to other areas that are considered free and safe. The EPRDF also sees education and health as important factors for the country's development. It has done impressive works in building health and educational institutions in the country.

Politically, the EPRDF government — like its predecessors but with a slight difference — has been exclusionary and authoritarian. Only those with membership to the party and its ideology ('revolutionary democracy') have been able to participate in the government. All administrative offices down to the local level have remained under the ruling party's control. Those with a different political outlook or understanding of democracy (e.g., pluralist democracy) are allowed to function, if they uphold and work with the policies of the EPRDF. Threatening opposition movements to the party's power are suppressed through various coercive mechanisms (cf., Clapham, 2002: 30; Vaughan, 2004a). The political system is controlled by the elite belonging to one ethnic group and has its own Centre-Periphery relations. There still exist armed movements and the country still lacks peace and stability.

CONCLUSION

Although international political-economic factors influence the situations of Ethiopia, its problems are mostly internal. Although the conquest *per se* need not become a ground for future instability of a nation, types of political-economic structures and governance that follow can determine its potential in initiating and maintaining conflicts. Failure to provide solid structures that serve to integrate the conquered peoples and mediate the grievances of the ruled in general, and bad governance: these can make the conquest itself a factor of conflict creation and protraction. Such has also been the case in Ethiopia. Since the conquest, the country's socio-political and economic structures and governance have not been conducive for building a stable and united society. Central key factors to this have been cultural, political and economic inequalities and centralised party-authoritarianism. Progressive

land alienation in the conquered areas, absence of proper infrastructures (of accommodation, mediation and dialogue), the half-hearted modernisation effort of Haile-Selassie in which the larger sections of urban forces (e.g., tertiary and secondary level students, army, the unrepresented urban dwellers such as workers, petty traders down to lumpenproletariat) experienced alienation from the regime (Clapham, 1988: 33-34), a prolonged domination of conquered groups (the Periphery) by traditional elites (the Centre), *lassez-faire* type economic policies (which further deepened land alienation in the conquered regions [Markakis, 1974: 140]), and the provision of Marxist-Leninist ideological and analytical framework: these enhanced the people's awareness of inequalities and also a perceived (by the country's intelligentsia) economic backwardness. They led the country into crisis, culminating in the 1974 revolution. The factors undermined the policies for economic development and of homogenisation through religion, culture, and language. The failure of the socio-political and economic integration of the conquered peoples and development policies occurred partly because of the resistance of the traditional landed aristocracy towards the policies.

The *derg*, influenced by the communist ideals, perceived the Ethiopian crisis from the window of 'class struggle'. Although they produced their own conflicts, its policies of land reform and nationalisation of the means of production ended land alienation and the class struggle of the time. The *derg* also brought equal education opportunities for all Ethiopians in the effort to bring development and remove Centre-Periphery relations that had marked the society. These too brought a deeper socio-political consciousness among the peoples. To some extent, the *derg* also recognised linguistic diversity, but from a functional term (e.g., for adult education purpose). The failure of its socialist economic policies to bring economic development, authoritarian or highly centrist political-economic structures, the burden of surplus appropriation, reliance on coercive power: these multiplied nationalisms throughout the country, and the *derg* was overthrown in 1991.

Generally, not because of the interest of the traditional "Amhara hegemony," but due to the educational advantages and political exposure they had had during the previous regime,[28] the northern elite dominated the political centre. The political dominance of the non-indigenous settlers (whom

[28]"According to preliminary surveys carried out by the Haile Selassie I University Testing Centre in the late 1960s, more than 80 per cent of those who entered the University belong to the Amhara-Tigre group. This ethnic group, particularly the Amhara, is also heavily represented in the secondary-school population in the southern provinces..." (Markakis, 1974: 182-183; cf., Langmuir and Bowers, 1967; Langmuir and Getachew, 1968).

the conquered people generally regarded as "Amhara") was even more pronounced in the conquered areas (cf., Clapham, 1988: 72-73, 203-204). The traditional periphery people resented this; but the *derg*, because of its interest in homogenisation, seemed to be less sensitive to it. In Sidaamaland the provincial and regional as well as almost all district governors were the non-Sidaamas.

The EPRDF approaches Ethiopian crisis from the 'national question' window, and sees this as arising from centralisation of power, underdevelopment and poverty. By inculturating the Leninist-Stalinist approach with regard to 'national question,' it has undertaken structures of decentralisation to allow a self-governing status to national groups. In fact, the EPRDF's legitimation (at least during the early period) came from its adoption of this principle (Pausewang, 1997: 196). Through this institutional mechanism, the EPRDF should be able to address the problem of 'national question,' but it does not appear to do so. To address economic underdevelopment, the EPRDF has adopted liberal economic development policies as pioneered by the IFI, and controversial poverty reduction policies (resettlement and use of scientifically engineered grains). It remains to be seen whether these policies produce a significant positive effect.

Despite the federal structure and economic liberalisation policies, several nationalist movements (e.g., the OLF, ONLF, SLF, and some other insurgent groups in the southern Ethiopia) still continue their armed struggle. In 19-22 May 2006, at Utrecht (in The Netherlands), these movements and an opposition party — Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP) — have created an alliance under the name 'Alliance for Freedom and Democracy' (AFD).[29] The AFD has potential to counterbalance the EPRDF. Ironically, the country is still facing conflicts and instability on the basis of 'national question' in the 19th century conquered areas, making the conquest partly responsible for Ethiopia's current nationalist problems (cf., Keller, 1988: 142; Foster-Carter, 1976: 49-75). Inter-communal conflicts are also emerging, confirming the fear of some who argue against the viability of the identity-based federal structure that the EPRDF has instituted.[30] Multi-

[29]AFD, "Statement announcing the formation of the Alliance for Freedom and Democracy," Press Statement (22 May 2006); available at http://www.ethioindex.com/pressreleases/AFDpressrelease.htm; accessed on 13 June 2006; AFD, "Statutes of the Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (AFD)," Press Release (29 May 2006); available at http://www. ethiomedia.com/carepress/afd_statutes.html.

[30]Skeptics of 'ethnic federalism' include Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) [see http://www.ehrco.net/reports/special_report59.html]; Wale Engdayehu, 1994: 149-192; 1993: 29-52; Aaron Tesfaye, 1992.

ethnic/national regional states like the SNNPR also lack clearly defined and agreed rules of power-sharing by their constituent groups; this has created competition to control the regional state. As will be discussed later, the region's annual budget share is law and its distribution is also contested among its constituent zones.

One factor has remained common to the regimes we have studied so far: centralised authority and 'state dirigism'. The Haile-Selassie regime was autocratic; that of the *derg* a single party-authoritarian (even totalitarian); and the current TPLF-controlled EPRDF, a mixture of ethnocracy and party-authoritarianism. In pursuing economic development the three successive regimes have adopted centralised economic policy-making strategy. Despite the state drawn and controlled economic policies and their forced implementation, the Ethiopian economic situation continues to stagnate or even worsen, and contribute to the protraction of the underdevelopment and conflicts. This questions whether a centralised political-economic system addresses effectively the situations of Ethiopia. The problems and protracted social conflicts in modern Ethiopia have not arisen because the successive leaders lacked ability to administer or implement their policies (all the regimes have possessed administrative capacity), but their failure to provide meaningful political and economic structures of participation. All in all, unpeaceful relations in Ethiopia persist and are even deepening. Ethiopia suffers from protracted social conflicts (PSC), and the following chapter takes the Sidaama case to illustrate this.

5. MICRO-CONTEXT: HISTORICAL SETTING

Chapter 4 has given us the general macro-context within which conflicts in Sidaamaland are situated. This chapter deals with the micro-level background for the current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. After a brief introduction to Sidaamaland and its people, the chapter deals with the steady development of conflicts since the late 1890s. Few anthropologists, linguists and missionaries have written about Sidaama. The Ethiopian historical and political writings offer very little about this identity group. Until the coming of the EPRDF, it can be said that many Ethiopians were not even aware that a distinct identity group called 'Sidama' existed. This chapter offers only information on how the Sidaamas read the history of their relationship with the Ethiopian state. The current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland are the extension or the development of past unpeaceful relations. This chapter offers comprehensive micro-level background information that reveals steady development of conflict culminating in Sidaama nationalism. In writing this chapter, the author relies heavily on the field research data from interviews and on the few existing documents (historical, sociological, anthropological [e.g., Berhanu Z., Betana, Braukamper, Hamer, Maccani, Stanley, Tolo]) on the Sidaama people, and some documents (historical, anthropological, political) on Ethiopia.

5.A. INTRODUCTION TO SIDAAMALAND AND THE PEOPLE

Sidaamaland is located about 275 kms south of Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital city, and about 600kms north of Moyale, the Ethio-Kenyan border town. It occupies the far eastern part of the SNNP regional state in Ethiopia (approximately between 6.3 and 7 degree north latitude and between 38 and 39 degree east longitude). The capital of the SNNPR, Awaasa (one of the deepening factors of conflict), is found in the Sidaama territory. The size of Sidaamaland according to Stanley (1966: 215) is about 4700 sq. kms (6793.6 sq. kms according to Betana [1991: 11]), with lowland (*wo'richcho*), midland (*gammoojje*), and highland (*alichcho*) climates, and with altitude ranging from 4500ft to 10000 ft (i.e., 1371 - 3048 metres) above sea level (Betana, 1991: 11-13).

Sidaamaland is endowed with many rivers that serve as sources of and tributaries to the three

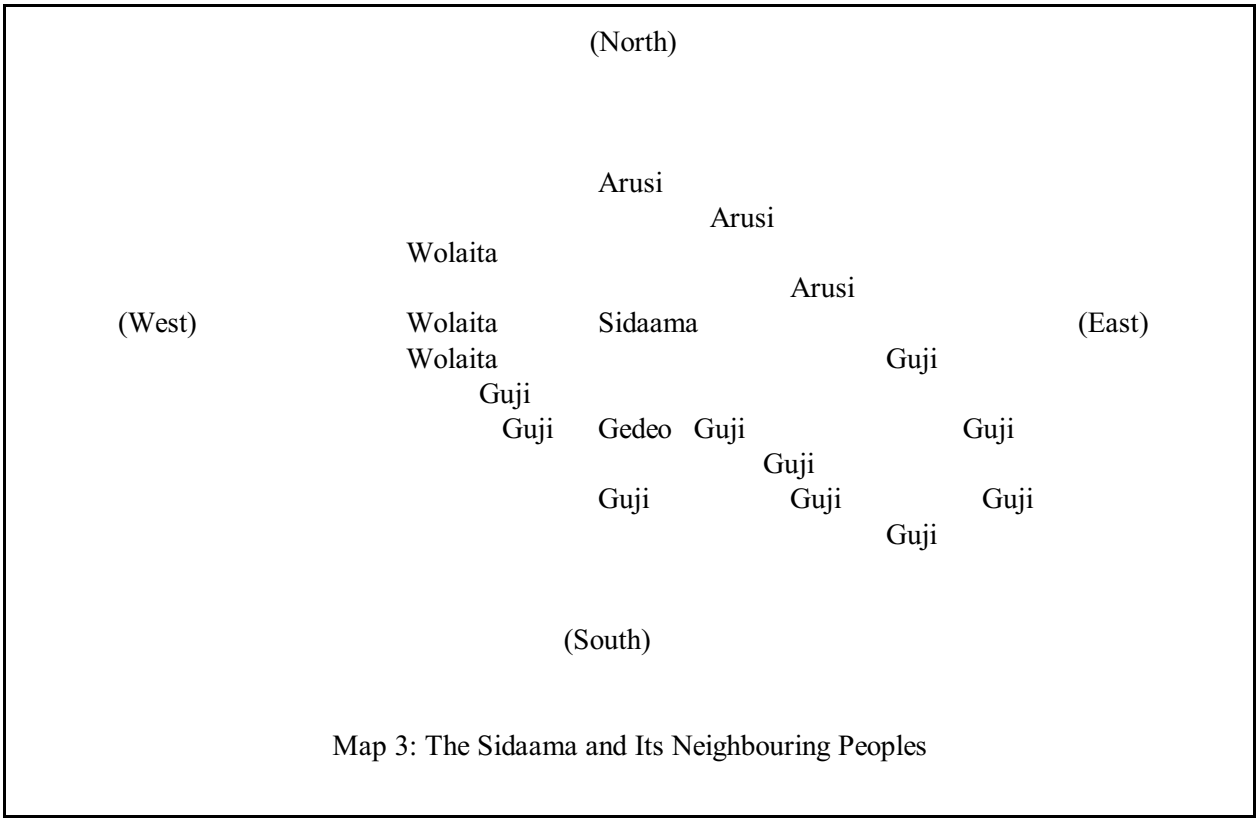
relatively big rivers (Hamile, Genale, and Bilate). To the west, it extends far beyond the Bilate river up to Gamo area and Wolaitaland; to the south-east it extends to the Hamile river, which borders the Sidaama and the Arusi as well as the Jemjem territories; to the south it extends to the Genale river which borders the Sidaama and Guji/Jemjem peoples; and to the north Lake Awaasa (just the eastern part of the Lake) borders the Sidaama and the Arusi peoples. More than half of Lake Awaasa is entirely surrounded by the Sidaama people and is within the Sidaamaland. The Sidaama nation is surrounded by Oromo groups (Arusi to the north and north-east; Guji/Jemjem to the east, south-east, south and south-west), the Gedeo people to the south, and the Wolaita people to the west (see map 7 below). The Sidaama shares about three-quarters of its borders with the Oromo nation, as map 3 reveals (for a general picture, see map 2 in chapter 4). This partly explains the traditional quarrel between the agro-pastoralist Sidaamas and the two pastoralist Oromo groups over farming and grazing land.

Traditionally, the Sidaamas are agro-pastoralists, although today, because of the high population density,[1] the pastoral aspect of their livelihood is progressively declining. Pottery, metal works, carpentry and tannery are also part of the traditional Sidaama economic activity. Part of Sidaamaland is in the Rift Valley, mainly with the midland climate that is favourable for agriculture and coffee. The midland areas are heavily populated. The lowland areas are mainly used by pastoralists. Apart from animal herding, the Sidaama highlands are also favourable for many types of cereal crops, beans and *weese* (*ensete edulis, ensete ventricosum*) plantation. The highland, midland, and lowland climates make Sidaamaland a favourable place for a variety of agricultural products. Predominantly, coffee plantation, *weese* (the source of the Sidaama-staple food), cereal crops and animal-herding account for the economy of the peoples of Sidaamaland. 55-60% Ethiopia's foreign currency comes from coffee export,[2] hence coffee is a very valuable cash crop for

[1]Yonas, relying on the 1984 census figure, noted that with the density at 208.4 persons per sq. km, the population of Sidaamaland was the third highest in the country (see Yonas Youma, 1990: 2); quoted by Haileyesus Seba, 2003: 221).

[2]See *Ethiopia: Ye1994 Ametawi Metsihaf* (Addis Ababa: Information Ministry, 1994 E.C. [2002 A.D.]), p. 84. According to Getachew Assefa, coffee accounts for 54% of the country's export (Getachew Assefa, "Why Ethiopians in the Diaspora should join the "Big Noise," *Walta Information Centre* [2004]; available at http://www.waltainfo.com/ Conflict/Articles/2004/Aug/article1.htm; accessed on 19 Sep 2004).

the Ethiopian economy. More than 30% of the country's washed export coffee comes from Sidaamaland.[3] *Chat* plantation (a stimulant plant which also brings in a lot of money) is also



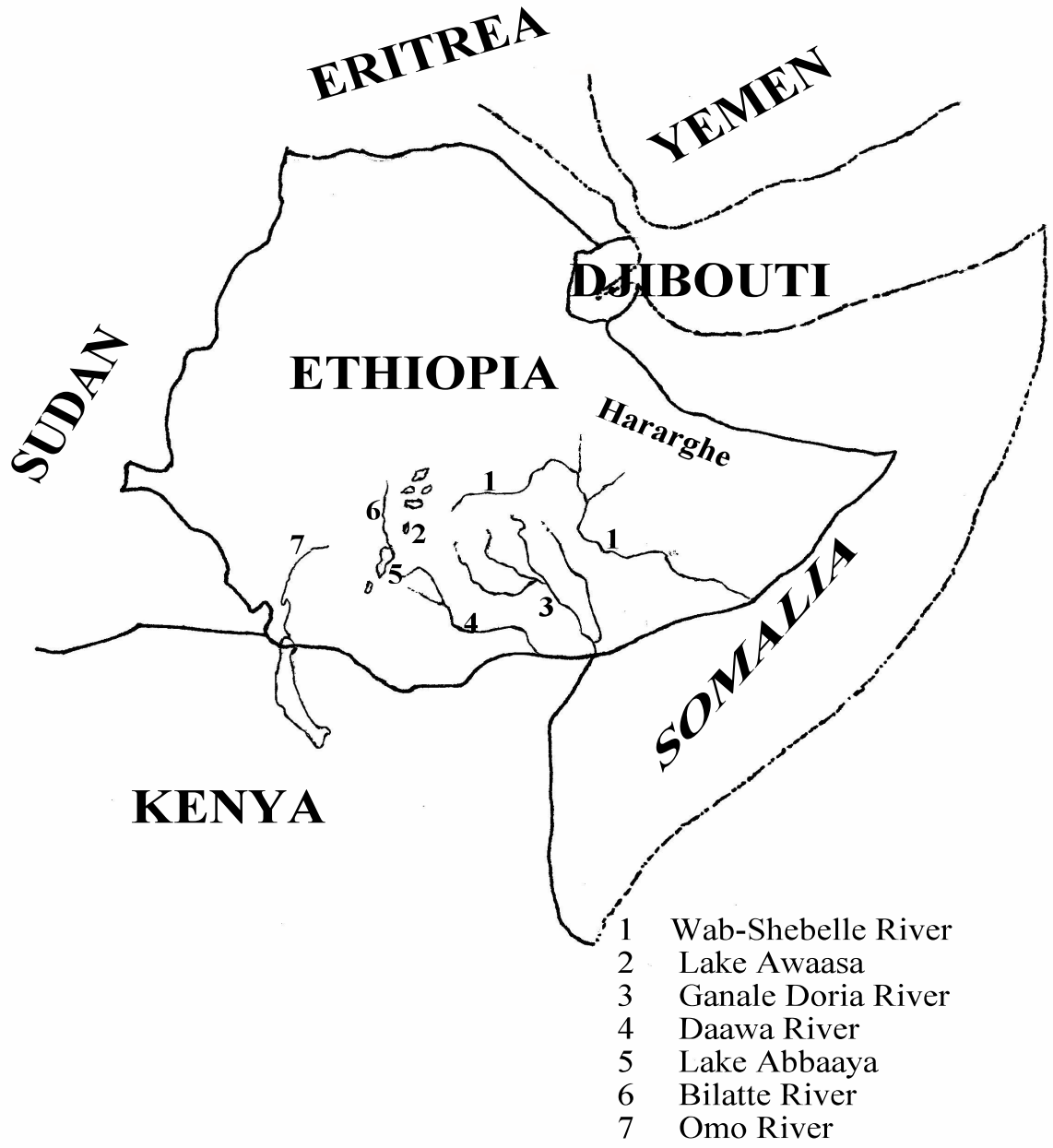
Map 3: The Sidaama and Its Neighbouring Peoples

widespread in Sidaamaland. Being economically resourceful and an evergreen area in the country with favourable climates for living, Sidaamaland attracts peoples from different areas in the country. Sidaamaland also offers resources for Tourism.

5.A.1. Introduction to the Sidaama Nation

In the pre-13th century, the Sidaama occupied the Hararghe (Eastern Ethiopia) area and its adjacent Bale area (south-east Ethiopia, the area between Wab-Shebelle river to the north and Genale Doria to the South [see the map below]), and then with the coming of other Cushitic peoples like the

[3]See SCFCU, "Sidamo Coffee," available at http://www.sidacoop.com/production.htm; accessed on 22 June 2003.



Map 4: Sidaama Movement and Settlement Areas

Somali and Afars, they were dispersed into different directions: to west and south, and possibly to the Abyssinian highlands too (Taddesse Tamrat, 1972: 6; R. Pankhurst, 1997: 71; Stanley, 1968; Berhanu Zerfu, 1983; Huntingford, 1993; Braukamper, 1977).[4] The Bale kingdom was said to belong to the Sidaama people (Betana, 1991; Huntingford, 1993).[5] As they occupied wider areas and dispersed, some became Hadiyya, others Kambaata, Alaaba, Timbaaro, and Arusi (cf., Betana, 1991: 70-71; Tolo, 1998: 26; R10; R16; Maccani, 1989: 75-76). A group of them (the ancestors of the current Sidaama) left a place called Dawa (which the Sidaamas regard as their place of origin [probably a place around the current Dire-Dawa?]), apparently went as far as today's north-eastern part of Kenya and then moved up to the southern-most part of the then Bale kingdom (somewhere between Daawa and Genale Doria rivers), away from the Abyssinian (Christian) and Muslim spheres of authority (Stanley, 1968: 12; cf., Maccani, 1989: 77, 79). Sometime in the early 16th century, they moved up again and settled in their current place (between Lake Abayya to the west, Lake Awaasa to the north, Genale Doria river to the south). The 16th century saw the identity formation of the current Sidaama people (generally from the coming together of Hamito-Semitic groups and a few others) as a distinct *gosa* (national group) from others, all grafting and tracing themselves to the presumed primogenitors of the Sidaama people (Bushè and Maldea), under common language, culture, economic activities, psychological make-up (generally speaking), territory and a complex net of kinship across the Sidaama *ga're* (sub-national groups) through inter-*ga're* marriages.

The Sidaama nation is composed of nine principal and a number of smaller *ga're*. The principal ones are: Awaado, Faqisa-Xummaano, Haadoo, Holloo, Malga, Alatta, Haweela, Qeweena, and Sawoola. The first five are referred to as the descendants of Bushè, and the latter four of Maldea. All the principal ones (except Awaado) are territorial, thus dividing Sidaamaland into eight territories, and Awaado and the smaller Sidaama *ga're* (e.g., Alaawa, Hofa groups, Aruujje and some others) are dispersed within these eight territories.

The Sidaama society set up its own socio-cultural and economic structures. In a descending order, it is constituted as *gosa* (= nation), *ga're* (an autonomous group with common ancestor going

[4]For southward dispersion: R2, R9, R15, R17, and R25.

[5]The area lying between the Wab-Shebelle River and the Ganale Doria River was known as Bale and was inhabited by the Sidaama people, some of whom at least adopted Islam by the 14th century (see Pankhurst, 1997: 71).

back to fourteen-sixteen generations and with its own complete political structures), *booso* or *ayidde* (= family, denoting sub-*ga're*), *mine* (= house, denoting agnatic group going back to the fifth or more degree of affinity), and *boosaallo* (agnatic group with common grandfather).[6] At the *gosa* level, the Sidaamas live in a democratic confederacy and at the *ga're* level, a federal democracy. Its political-economic organization, which includes families or individuals regardless of their social and ethnic background, is divided into three political and administrative levels: *cinachcha* or *qachcha* (a village, a local unit containing between ten and forty families occupying a particular territory), *ollaa* (a territorial association with many *cinachcha/qachcha*), and *ga're* level (Tolo, 1998: 44-46; Betana, 1991: 99-104, 139-141; Hamer, 1970: 52, 54; 1972: 234-237; Stanley, 1966:220-221). Each of these levels has its own council of elders. The *ollaa* and *cinachcha* have *Murra* (elected executives [singular form is *Murrichcha*]). These *Murra* are elected (from the elders) by their respective local communities on the basis of their abilities and managerial skills. These individuals are experts in organising, mobilising, and summoning all the members of their respective communities. *Cinachcha* has one *murrichcha* who assures a clear flow of communication and the maximum cooperation of every member of his community in all communal activities, such as building houses, laying bridges, funerals, marriages, and so on. He is also a liaison between his *cinachcha* and *ollaa*. At the *ollaa* level, *cinachcha* executives form their own council and elect one among themselves to be responsible for the administrative issues of the *ollaa* and communication. The councils of elders, on the other hand, solve juridical matters and various ad hoc social problems, handle religious rituals, make deliberations, and maintain harmony in their communities. The executives communicate clearly to their communities all the agreements and policies that the council of elders makes, and guarantee their implementation. As an elder himself, the *murrichcha* also participates fully in all activities of the council of elders.[7]

Its land-tenure system is communal-private. The Sidaamas regard earth as mother, and land has a sacred value. For them, land is created by God and belongs to Him who distributes it as a gift to people. They use the image of husband-wife to express the relation of God to earth (Maccani,

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[6]Maccani (1989: 11) identifies *gosa* with clan and *ga're* with lineage (sub-clan). The possible error may have come from his informers, for some individuals do mix them up.

[7]R43. This paragraph is taken from Kifle Wansamo (2003: 14).

1989: 71). When they offer a sacrifice of reconciliation to God, they also spray blood on the earth as a sign of being reconciled with earth too. They see any offence against God as having also a negative effect on man's relationship with earth. Because the traditional Sidaama see land as sacred and as the gift of God (cf.,Tolo, 1998: 92), they do not sell it; for them, land cannot be sold. But he can give it to someone he loves; he can lease it too, but never sell land. God has given each *gosa* a place to live. They see their land as the land of inheritance, the land that is demarcated by their common ancestors of each *ga're* for their descendants. Hence, each *ga're*, except the Awaado, is territorial, and it is named after its (the *ga're*) name. Each *ga're* occupies the land of its male common ancestor (going back to 15-16 generations). Being ancestral land, and belonging to the *ga're*, one can only use it but cannot sell it. "*Ilamoommo bushsha*" (the soil on which I am born) has a strong sentimental value to the Sidaama. Any form of interference often results in a serious conflict. Although internally Sidaamaland is divided into different *ga're* territories, as a *gosa*, it is known as the territory of the Sidaama. Any threat to any part of Sidaamaland mobilises all the Sidaama *ga're*, and solidarity is very strong (R9).

Land is divided into private and communal. Every Sidaama owns land, and privately owned land is administered by the owner, who distributes it in form of inheritance to his male children at their marriage. The public/communal land is administered by the *ollaa* and *ga're* through the council of elders, and every member has right to the *ga're* land. The communal land is left for pastoral purposes, for private land is not sufficient for both farming and pasture. The elders determine the periods that the land should be left free from any pastoral use. They also distribute it to those members of their community who need land. Once the land is allocated to someone, it becomes his and his descendants' possession. It is a mix of communal-private ownership system. Being communal land, one cannot sell the plot/s that is/are given to one's ownership. As privately owned plots one can use it in any way one wants, plant anything one wants, and pass it to offsprings or relations (biological or other) in form of inheritance. Tolo's "Private ownership of land ... was an unknown phenomenon" among the traditional Sidaama (Tolo, 1998: 72) is an overstatement. Although the size of plots may differ from person to person, traditionally, there are neither landholding classes (for every Sidaama has right to a piece of land), tribute system, nor tax. The creation of landlords, tribute system and tax are post-1893 phenomena, which are alien to the

traditional Sidaama worldview and system.

In the past, when there was plenty of public land, the Sidaama elders distributed land to individuals from different *ga're* as well as *gosa*/*daga* who were in need of land, but the land still remained under the ownership of the host *ga're*. Like the rest members of the host *ga're*, the migrant individuals could own that land for generations but could not sell it. Traditionally, if someone wanted to leave, he/she would either leave it for the community from whom he had received it, or lease it to someone until his/her return. Since the late 1950s, however, selling the land has been common, and originates from the Western *laissez-faire* liberal capitalist policy that the emperor adopted to bring economic development. Otherwise, selling land is alien for the traditional Sidaama and even to the Abyssinians.

5.A.2. Demographic Composition in the Current Sidaamaland

Sidaamaland (or Sidaama zone) is composed of the Sidaama people (about 90%) and other Ethiopian groups (Amhara, Wolaita, Guraghe, Kambaata, Oromo, and others) who have come to settle since the Sidaama conquest (1893-6) by Menelik II. The 1994 census figure of the population in Sidaamaland is 2,044,836, of which 1,842,314 (about 90%) — 1,804,654 [about 98%] rural and 37,660 [about 2%] urban — are the Sidaamas (1994-PHCE, vol II, 1999: 9, 43). The Sidaamas estimate their population figure to be no less than 4 million; they argue that many areas were not covered during the census (Atrie, 2002: 23).[8] According to the census report about 75% of the Sidaama population is Christian, 15% the Sidaama religion followers, and about 8% Muslims. They speak a Cushitic language which has a lot of lexical similarity with Kambaata, Alaaba, Gedeo, and Hadiyya languages.

Since the conquest, because of its economic resources, Sidaamaland has attracted migrant settlers from other groups. Government officials, public workers, and soldiers were among the settler community, who became landlords. The 1960s also brought investors (e.g., coffee traders,

[8]Atrie provides an estimate figure of 3.5 million based on a survey on infant vaccination (p. 23). R37, who worked in the rural development office in the Arooreesa district in 1996, noted that according to the 1996 census record, the population of the district was about 90,000. According to the vaccination survey on the same year the Sidaama population figure in the district was about 250,000.

commercial farming companies) and people looking for employment. Migration and settlement of other peoples in Sidaamaland continued until the 1974 revolution. Most of the settlers lived in urban areas, and set themselves apart from the local *gabbar* (tribute paying) Sidaamas. Even today, Awaasa (the capital of the Sidaama and the SNNPR) has been a centre of attraction for many migrants, specially the Wolaita people. All in all, the migrants make up today 10% of the Sidaamaland population (1994-PHCE, vol II, 1999: 9, 48).

The Sidaama *gosa* was conquered by the Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia between 1893 and 1895, and came for the first time in their history under the Abyssinian authority (*pace* Levine, 2000: 21). The conquest, the Centre-Periphery structures of relations that came with it (chapter 4) and progressive land alienation initiated the Sidaama-State unpeaceful relations and sowed seeds for the current Sidaama nationalism. Much has been written concerning the situation of the conquered peoples in Ethiopian historical, political, and anthropological studies (e.g., Markakis, 1974; 1987; Clapham, 1975; Keller, 1988), mostly at the macro-level. This chapter now presents a micro-level view from the Sidaama case, the historical relation of the conquered with the Ethiopian state.

5.B. HISTORY OF SIDAAMA-STATE RELATION AS VIEWED BY THE SIDAAMAS

The conquest was very dramatic for the Sidaamas, and the beginning of the unpeaceful relations between the Sidaama and the Ethiopian state. Before the conquest, they were ignorant about the Abyssinian empire and modern weapons (firearms). With their traditional weapons (e.g., spears, swords, knives, spears, and shields made from the hippopotamus skin) they would not manage to defeat an enemy with modern weapons (firearms) and disciplined organisation. Being organised in a confederal form (each *ga're* functioning autonomously under its own *moote*) the Sidaamas had no overall leader or council of elders who could make policies and decisions for all in preparation for any eventual external threats (cf., Tolo, 1998: 64, 65, 66). They were also unprepared for the type of enemy they were to face, an enemy that was probably different from what they had ever experienced in the past. In the past, the Sidaamas and some of their neighbours regarded each other as enemies. They all had traditional weapons alone and rules of war. Their wars involved periodical raiding of each other and taking livestock as well as young women to marry. Taking women in the raid saved

them from paying dowry. Their wars did not involve taking over someone's territory and inheritance, making him a servant and tribute payer on his own land. The last two were regarded as offensive to the Sidaama (as well as Arusi and Guji) sense of human dignity and to *Magano* (God). The new 'enemy', the conquering imperial force, was however a different one, coming not only to raid, but also to colonise, stay there for good, subjugate, exploit, and do things that were offensive to the Sidaama sense of human dignity. Hence, right from the conquest, the Sidaamas saw the conquering group as "our enemy", "they" the "Amhara",[9] the alien oppressors who have occupied their "God-given land", "the land of the ancestors" (Tolo, 1998: 199). In this chapter, the term "Amhara" or "Amharas" applies to the pre-1974 Sidaama usage, and not to those belonging to the Amhara national group alone.

5.B.1. From the Conquest (1893) to the Italian Occupation of Ethiopia (1935)

The first Abyssinian governor that conquered the Sidaama was *Dejazmach*[10] Beshah Aboye, the then governor of the regions of Hadiyya, Kambaata, Alaaba and Timbaro to the north of the Sidaama. When the Sidaamas received a message from him to submit to the imperial authority and pay tributes, the Sidaama elders representing all the Sidaama groups held a meeting during which there was a general agreement to go to war against the advancing imperial army, but there was disagreements on the military tactics. So they postponed the meeting for another non-specified day. Meanwhile, the Yanaase (a clan of Faqisa-Xummano) elders, sensing the impossibility of resisting the mighty enemy and knowing that they would be the first victims of the advancing imperial attacks, made a tactical decision to submit peacefully to the imperial authority and pay tributes. They sent one *hayyichcha* (=a shrewd, clever and wise elder), Baallicha Worawo by name, to Beshah. Baallicha brought Beshah and his soldiers from Kase in neighbouring Arusi area and settled them first at the place called Lakko.

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[9]Anyone who became an Orthodox Christian, spoke Amharic, took Amharic culture as his/her own, socialised with Amhara and held a public office: such a person, the Sidaamas termed as "Amhara". All the non-Sidaamas that came with the imperial force and settled in Sidaamaland were regarded as Amhara, unless one refused to regard oneself as Amhara. The imperial force was composed of Amhara, Tigre, Oromo, Guraghe, and others.

[10]*Dejazmach* is an honorific politico-military title below *Ras*; the latter is a title for a high government official below prince.

He then sent to the *Moote* (the leader) of Alatta *ga're* to receive the "important visitor". The elders of Alatta were divided on the issue. A concerned elder, Daalacha Cuukko, with the support of those who saw no option, went to Lakko and invited Beshah to Alatta. The latter came and camped at the place called Gaalama. In general, when Beshah came with his soldiers, except two of the Faqisa groups (Yaanaase and Shabadiino) and part of Alatta, each of the rest of the Sidaama *ga're* resisted and opted to fight, only to learn in the end the hard fact that they were nothing with their traditional weapons in the face of the well organised imperial force with modern firearms. One by one, they engaged the imperial force in many battles, lost many of their brothers, lost the war and were subjugated. The information in this paragraph comes from R3, R9, R10, R15 and Betana (1991: 169-171).

According to R9, the imperial force under the leadership of Beshah stayed for seven months, at which point all but four of them (including Beshah) were massacred, as described below. The following is the story about the event of the conquest as told by R9:

> "The Beshah Amaara (i.e., the "Amharas" under the leadership of Beshah) came, with more than 1000 soldiers, via Kase in Arusi. They came with rifles called *naase* and *wojigira*, and also swords. Baallicha Worawo first submitted to the Beshah Amhara and later on he finished them. He brought Beshah Amhara to Shiisha in the Hollooland at a Shontore (a Holloo sub-*ga're*) area, and they were camped there. The Beshah Amhara made the people pay tributes, and bring bulls. All the eight Sidaama *ga're*, each one of them brought 80 bulls and paid their tributes. After seven month after their settling at Shiisha, Baallicha brought a suggestion to Beshah: 'Let us divide the Amhara here. It is too burdensome for the people coming from Malga, Qeweena, Alatta..., carrying heavy tributes. Let us send two two hundred to each *ga're*. Rather than coming from such distant places carrying their tributes, it is easier to divide and send soldiers. We keep for ourselves here two hundred soldiers.' Baallicha was made the chief *balabat* and each of the eight *ga're* chose one one *qoro*.[11] They chose, therefore, in total eight *qoro*. In the past, Baallicha was only a *hayyichcha*; he was never a Sidaama *moote*. Only the Amhara made him a *balabat*. When Beshah agreed to Baallicha's suggestion, the soldiers were divided accordingly. After the allocation of the soldiers to each *qoro*, Baallicha called the eight *qoro* and shared his plan with them. 'It was difficult to fight all of them together, for this reason I have made them to be dispersed into small numbers. When you arrive home, allocate one soldier to every courageous man. Tell the soldiers that until the camp is made ready for them at the place of the *qoro*, they may rest and stay in houses they are allocated. Then tell those individuals to whom the soldiers were allocated not to say anything to anyone else, especially to women. Tell them to study well their guest on the first night and to finish them on the second night. On the fourth day

[11] *balabat* was a local administrator (often a chief/king of a conquered area) to whom the emperor granted land (especially after 1941 in the Sidaama case) and used as an instrument to control his people and guarantee the payments of tributes. He was under a district governor who was always from the conquering group whom the conquered groups always knew as Amhaara. A *qoro* played a similar function to a *balabat* but was below the *balabat*.

> come back to me.' In that way, the Sidaamas finished the Amharas and only Beshah with three Amhaaras escaped after having killed three Sidaamas. It was after this event that the Sidaamas danced during their *qeexaala* (an Sidaama traditional public dance)[12] saying: *Dooyyiwa dooyye*, *Sidaamu Lello duqulimma soorre* (After having moved back and fro[filled with heroic zeal], the Sidaama (pruned) [its enemy] at Lello like young *enset*).[13] Before the coming of the Amhara, Shiisha was known as Lello. Also when the Sidaamas say in their *weeddo* (a chant in which the Sidaamas recount past events in poetic forms) '*Siichche Agaarihu gorre madaarrihu*' (The Siichche of Agaara that slaughtered and buried), it also comes from that time" (R9).

In chapter 3B2, we have discussed three cosmological worldviews (individualist, communalist, and holistic or cosmopneumanthropic) and the positive points and aberrations that exist within them. When one type of worldview is imposed on a people with a different type of worldview, it produces unpeaceful relations and violent expressions. Generally, it is natural for a conquering force that sees its culture as superior to impose its culture and ways on others and arrange things accordingly (cf., Asmarom, 2000: 26-30). The worldview of the settlers in the Sidaamaland, "the Amharas", is individualist and hierarchic (Levine, 2000: 128, 138), and the traditional Sidaama one is holistic. Since the conquest, the individualist worldview has been imposed on the people of the holistic and communalist philosophies in the south, causing fractures and disruption in their normal social fabric, especially those societies with an intensive Abyssinian settlement (Donham, 2002: 7). Such an imposition of a different outlook has contributed to unpeaceful relations in Ethiopia and in the Sidaamaland. The relationship that the Beshah Amhara established between the Sidaamas and themselves was totally alien to their culture: the Sidaamas were asked to feed them; pay tributes; cut grass for their horses and mules and clean them; collect firewood and make fire for them; and grind their grains. For the Sidaamas such a relation was against their culture and way of looking at things and human beings. After all, for the people that had enjoyed independence, equality, freedom and full participation, for the people that prided itself as strong and unassailable, the conquest itself was a big humiliation and shock.

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[12]The Sidaamas express their decision and determination through *qeexaala*. This dance also expresses the mood and strong feelings (be it joy or anger). When the Sidaamas begin *qeexaala* one should take it seriously, for they mean what they say.

[13]*Enset* (false banana — *ensete ventricosum*) is the plantation from which many of the south-western peoples get their staple food. The Sidaamas prune their *enset* plantation before it matures, by removing some to allow others have space to grow.

A year and two or three months after the slaughter of the imperial force (the Beshah Amaara) by the Sidaamas under the leadership of Baallicha, *Ras*[14] Li'ul-Seged came and was able to re-conquer the Sidaama and also conquer the land beyond Sidaama. He killed Baallicha. The following story explains the event:

> "Liu'l-Seged (L-S) said to Baallicha (B) 'Now, come! We are going to conquer Gamugofa,' and took him there. When they arrived, "B, were you not the one who finished the Beshah Amhara?' asked L-S. B responded, 'It was not me.' L-S said, 'Whether you accept or deny, you are not going to live today. All I am asking you is to tell me why you killed them. I have already got witnesses concerning what you have done.' 'Oh, even if I deny, I am still going to be killed and not taken home and have my case examined?" asked B. L-S returned, 'you are going to be killed.' B said, "Was it I who made them be killed? Did I come to kill Amhara in Gojjam and Gondar? Didn't they come to kill me? Didn't they burn my women and children? Didn't they raid my livestock? When they raided me, I gave in and let them stay. But then, after all this, didn't they say 'pay tributes, cut grass?' They were malnourished and full of skin rash, and when I fed them with my bulls and made them well, didn't they say, 'clean horse dung, collect firewood?' How can a human being pay tributes to another human being? That was why I finished them; to liberate myself from such (pain and humiliation). Had I ever paid tribute (to another human being) before? I had always lived in freedom and harmony" (R9).

After this, continued R9, L-S discussed with his council what to do with Baallicha. One side suggested that he should not be killed but imprisoned. However, the majority opted to have him killed, for they saw him as a very dangerous man, posing a great threat to the occupying Amharas. They also argued that if they left him alive, the Sidaamas would not pay tribute. Hence, Baallicha was condemned to death. R9 explained further that after having killed Baallicha, they agreed among themselves not to have one overall *baalabat* for the Sidaama, but to divide the Sidaamas according to their ga're and place a *balabat* for each *ga're.* They made the Sidaamas quarrel and fight against one another. For they reasoned that "'if the Sidaamas are divided, the Amharas can live here.' This was the origin of the Sidaama fight against each other during every *Fichée* (the Sidaama new year)" (R9).

R9 is a notable elder (now in his 80s), who cannot read and write, but an oral historian. He does a lot of work in reconciling the divided in his community and is well respected by the people. He may have heard about what happened to Baallicha from those whom L-S recruited to fight his war of conquest, and who (including Daalacha Cuukko) returned after the completion of the conquest. Whether those words in the above quotations are those of Baallicha or R9, they represent and

[14]*Ras* is a title for a government official below prince.

summarise the Sidaama feelings towards and relationship with the imperial government through the conquering and occupying force. The clash between the Sidaama and the Abyssinian understanding of the human person (culture clash) is evident in the citation above. It also tells the level of resentment the Sidaamas have had towards the treatment they have received from the new masters.

The emperor or king, in the Abyssinian tradition, claimed authority and ownership of all the land under the imperial sphere of control (Keller, 1988: 50; Taddesse, 1972: 98). He would declare the conquered land as his own personal possession by right of conquest. Hence, Menelik II expropriated the conquered land in the south and instituted an alien and highly exploitative system. He and Haile-Selassie distributed the land at their free will to their loyal supporters, governors, soldiers and other loyal functionaries who became landlords (Bulatovich, 2000: 95; Keller, 1988: 76). During the pre-1974 period of modern Ethiopia, within the Amhara and Tigré areas governors and feudal lords were hereditary, but in the periphery (conquered or tributary areas), the emperor was in direct control and exacted the benefits (Donham, 2002: 8-11). The conquered people were politically and socially excluded except a few local notables used for controlling their peoples.[15] The Ethiopian rulers' economic policies in these conquered regions were principally aimed not so much at bringing equitable development and distribution of their fruits, but maximising their extractive capabilities (Clapham, 2002: 11-12; cf., Keller, 1988: 41, 67). The south-west people were subjected to paying a plethora of taxes, fees and fines (Markakis & Ayele, 1978: 22-25; R2, R9), and were treated as the second class (Clapham, 1995: 118).[16]

After the conquest, Sidaamaland and all the areas south of Sidaamaland up to the Kenyan border was made one province under the name 'Sidamo', and the provincial seat remained in Sidaamaland. Beshah and mainly Leul-Seged spent most of their time conquering and pacifying the conquered areas, and did not have sufficient time to rule. Balcha was the first to rule and implement the imperial policies (e.g., setting up a tribute extracting and excessive rent collecting system [*gult* system]) in the newly conquered region, 'Sidamo'. He was among the most hated figures by the

[15]"The peoples thus largely excluded from the government are mostly from the south of Ethiopia, including the provinces of Ilubabor, Kafa, Gamu Gofa, Sidamo, Arusi and Bale" (Clapham, 1969: 78).

[16]On the situation of the conquered peoples in the south, see Mahteme-Selassie (1970: 108, 122-123) and Markakis & Ayele (1978: 22-25).

Sidaamas. "...*Dejazmach* Balcha came, made the Sidaamas slaves, brought Amharas to oppress, and ruled. The *qelad* system (confiscating, measuring and distributing land to the Amharas) began with Balcha" (R9).[17] After five years of Balcha's rule, the emperor Menelik assigned *Ras* Nadew and Dejazmach Teferi (who later became *Ras* and then Emperor Haile-Sellasie) to the Sidamo province. They divided the province into two: Teferi governed the highland (eastern part), Bule being his administrative centre; Nadew controlled the western part, his seat being at Gaalaama which is also in Sidaamaland, and later on the province was again united (Betana, 1991: 172). They and those who came after them (until 1935) continued functioning in the same political-economic system that Balcha initiated in line with the imperial policy. The political-economic relations between the conqueror-settlers (all of whom the Sidaamas and other conquered peoples in the south call the "Amharas") and the conquered peoples of the south were what some scholars termed Centre-Periphery relations (Eide, 2000: 15-17; Donham, 2002a: 3, 4, 9). The fundamental motive of the imperial conquest was the need for economic resources; hence, the system that was implanted in the conquered regions was the system of exploitation of both natural and human resources. The conquered nations were treated — mainly by the Shoans but also from other north Abyssinian groups of Gojjam, Gondar, and Tigray — as slaves and sub-humans, and the Sidaamas did not escape that fate, and have not forgotten about it (Tolo, 1998: 266).

> "They took our land; divided it as *utuwa* and *qelad*. The *utuwa* land was left for the Sidaamas to pay *kontriita* (tax) to the government alone and use it. The *qelad* was assigned to *melkegna* and the Sidaamas living in (the areas that were turned into) *qelad* paid tributes to the *melkegna* and also *irobo* (1/4th of the produce) to the government. If a person failed to pay these, he is removed from the land. Yet the land belonged to his father (inheritance land). The Amhara came and ruled by claiming that the land was his" (R10).

What the Sidaamas and other conquered peoples in the south called *qelad* and *melkegna* were respectively known as *gult* and *gultegna* in the Abyssinian areas. The former was more oppressive and exploitative than the latter: the northern *gult* was tribute-paying while that of the conquered areas

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[17] *Qelad* is a measurement rope (1 *qelad* = 133 cubits = 66.75 meters) that was used in distributing land to the conquerors in the conquered areas. Although the Sidaamas know this distributed land as *qalaada* (*qelad* in Amharic), it was known by the state as *maderia* land (compensation land). The emperor made land grants in accordance with the status of the grantees (*gultegna*); and the land served "as a means of remunerating persons who were in the service of the government in different capacities" (Aberra Jembere, 2000: 131, 137). Whether it was done in the similar manner in Sidaamaland, according to Aberra (ibid.: 141), the measurement of the compensation land in the conquered areas was as follows: to a captain 10-30 *gasha* (=400-1200 hectares); to a lieutenant up to 10 *gasha* (=up to 400 hectares); to a sergeant 5-10 *gasha* (=200-400 hectares); and to a private 1-3 *gasha* (=40-120 hectares).

in the south was rent-paying. However, both northern and southern peasant farmers, on top of their tributes and rents respectively, were subject to corvé and presenting gifts during all special occasions (Andargachew, 1993: 8). The political hierarchy that was implanted in Sidaamaland was as follows: between 1893-1936, Emperor—Provincial Governor (*Dejazmach* or *Ras*)—*melkegna*—*balabat*—*qoro*; from 1941 to 1975, Emperor—Provincial Governor—Sub-Provincial Governor—district governor—*balabat*—*qoro*. The latter two were the Sidaamas.

One can generally divide the pre-1950 imperial land tenure system in Ethiopia into *rist* (automatic inheritance right) and *gult* (non-inheritance but grant right as a compensation) systems. The latter can become *rist gult* when, at the death of one's father, one is allowed to inherit the land that is granted to one's father by the emperor or his provincial representative. In northern Ethiopia, following Markakis & Ayele (1978: 21-29; also Aberra, 2000: 131-156; Taddesse, 1972: 101- 103), *rist* pertains to an inalienable and inviolable right of land inheritance; and *gult* a system of surplus appropriation. The *gultegna* (a person with *gult* right) in northern Ethiopia collects tribute the *ristegna* (a person with *rist* right) owes the monarch. The *gultegna* is granted the right by the monarch (and in certain cases a provincial governor) over the population of a defined area to collect tributes and services. Depending on the nature of the grant held by the grantee (*gultegna*), he appropriates for himself the amount allowed him, while handing over the remaining to the state (he might keep all or part of it for himself). He is exempt from taxation on his own *rist* land; and also "entitled to labour service from the peasant" (Markakis & Ayele, 1978: 22; Aberra, 2000: 149). *Gult* rights are given the officials by the monarch to compensate for their services (since there were no salaries until the 20th century). "Permanent *gult* was granted to members of the aristocracy and higher clergy for their maintenance, to churches and monasteries for the living of their members, and to retired officials as a reward for service" (Markakis & Ayele, 1978: 22, 23).

The *gult* system in the south was different; the Emperor owned all the conquered land and the locals were turned into tenants (Andargachew, 1993: 8). In the north, the peasants had *rist* right; in the conquered areas in the south, the local peasants were deprived of their *rist* right. They were turned into 'serfs' according to some writers like Betana. Indeed from what the Sidaamas say, they were treated almost like slaves. The Emperor left one-third (*siso*) of Sidaamaland for the locals to pay tax and use, and the Sidaama call it *utuwu uulla* (*utuwa* land). On this *siso* land, he appointed

balabbats (low ranking local administrators taken from local traditional leaders and notable individuals), and gave them *gult* right. The two-thirds were appropriated by the imperial government (Aberra, 2000: 138) and distributed to his relatives, functionaries, soldiers and the church. The vast majority of the *melkegna* were imperial warriors, for which reason they have been termed *neftegna* (persons with gun). The land that was confiscated from the locals and distributed for private ownership and settlement, the Sidaamas called it *qalaadu uulla* (*qelad* land) and the state knew it as *maderia*. Among the individuals with *maderia* land were some northern nobilities (possible political rivals) who were removed from their *rist* and *gult* by the emperor from the Abyssinian highlands for the purpose of securing his own political position. The *maderia* land holders (except the church) were to pay tax to the state. Each soldier was also assigned a particular number of families from the conquered people to take care of him and his family in every thing (Amanuel Gebre-Yesus, 1993: 14, 23).[18] He was called *melkegna* (a soldier to whom are assigned households from the conquered groups by the emperor in the place of salary),[19] and those families under him practically became like his slaves. Those Sidaamas who refused to enslave themselves for the *melkegna* left for the inaccessible areas, as a consequence of which their ancestral land or inheritance were taken away. Those who accepted the burden of looking after the *melkegna* did so only for fear of losing their ancestral land. The *gultegna* collected tributes in northern Ethiopia; in the conquered regions they mainly collected rents (Andargachew, 1993: 8). The Sidaamas do not distinguish the *gultegna* from the *melkegna*, and call both of them *melkegna*. In any case, both of them were state representatives.

The excessive exploitation and dehumanising treatments the Sidaamas experienced under the *melkegna* system took place during the period between Balcha and the coming of the Italians in 1935 (R9, R2). According to R3, during the pre-1935 period, the *melkegna* demanded tribute (in cash or kind) for almost everything. The Sidaamas felt humiliated and hated the "Amharas". As all the rural interviewees claimed, the Sidaamas accepted them only under the threat of being severely punished

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[18]In the areas where the conquerors met stiff resistance, common soldiers were allocated small amount of land with two to five *gebbars*; for warrant officers large land with seven to ten *gabbars*; for high-ranking officers sizeable land with 30-80 *gabbars*; and for provincial governors a huge amount of land with several hundred *gabbars* (Keller, 1988: 61).

[19]"...200-300 who were adscripted to a military Shalleka and 10 were allocated to a rank and file soldier...Hence it became forbidden for a 'counted Balager' to leave the place where he resides so that he may not move to another country or district and stay behind" (Niecko, 1980: 84; quoted by Amanuel, 1993: 23).

or killed. They accepted them because they lacked means to defend themselves. The following were what the interviewees said the Amharas did to their people: "Our people worked for six days a week for the Amharas and Melkegnas, and only one day a week (on Sunday) for themselves" (R3). This same point was mentioned in the informal interactions and also by R6, R9, R30 (see also Betana, 1991: 173). The work involved working in the state's farm land and *qelad*, supplying firewood and cutting grass for the horses and mules of the Amhara on a daily basis, cleaning their mules' and horses' manure, grinding grain and carrying flour, fetching water on a daily basis, building houses and fences for the Amharas and their churches. Apart from the plethora of tributes they were forced to pay to *melkegna* and the state,[20] the former also forced them to pay *gubbo* (illegal extraction of money, e.g., bribery) in the form of lamb, butter, honey and so on.[21] "The Amharas forcefully recruited the Sidaamas to fight their war of conquest; ...they created for themselves *qelad* (from our land). The people lived in sufferings" (R10). The *melkegna* also held endless banquets and religious feasts. The Sidaamas were forced to pay all the expenses.

> "Before the coming of the Italians, the Amhara treated the Sidaama with cruelty and humiliation... One paid taxes according to what one owned. The rich paid five Birr a year (as tax); the middle group gave three Birr; and the poor two Birr.[22] They imprisoned those who failed to pay it for a full year: in day time they made them labour, at night they tied and kept them in prison. (As regards daily work), if the Amhara said, "The grass for mules or horses is not enough," "last night, firewood was not sufficient," the Sidaama paid fines as punishment.[23] He also paid 25 *taamuna* (coins like cents) for the Amhara to feast when his fasting period ended. The Sidaama women ground grain every nine days" (R16).

The interviewees unanimously regarded the pre-1935 imperial government as cruel, highly oppressive and exploitative. They expressed themselves as being treated like non-humans. The people were regularly beaten for one or another reason (Betana, 1991: 175). Some of the interviewees in Tolo's work (1998: 87) said that they were treated like dogs. In fact the settlers

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[20]For more information on the tributes the Sidaamas paid and the works to which they were subjected (see Betana, 1991: 173- 175; also Mahteme-Sellassie, 1970: 122-134 [cited by Betana, p. 173]).

[21]The information on the types of work the Sidaamas were forced to do come from R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9, R10, R16; Betana, 1991: 173-174.

[22]Birr is the name of Ethiopian currency. The pre-1935 value of Birr was very high, and two Birr for the poor was a very substantial amount.

[23]R6 claims that "the Amharas imprisoned the Sidaamas in the horse-manure and cow dang" as punishment.

stereotyped the Sidaamas *ximb-ansa* (scavengers or those who eat dead animals), the stereotyping which some *neftegna* families continued (albeit in private) to use even during the *derg* period. Yet for a person who knew the Sidaama well, it was an offensive insult, because the Sidaamas were very puritan when it came to eating meat. For a Sidaama, eating meat from a dead animal was (and is) totally abhorrent. Because of *anga* (purity codes) a Sidaama elder would stop even eating food if certain words or expressions were uttered while they were eating. Although Levine (2000) talked about cultural similarity and intermingling in his view of 'greater Ethiopia' as a culture area, there exist fundamental cultural worldview difference between the traditional Sidaama and the Abyssinian. For the Sidaama, because of its traditional *cosmopneumanthropic* worldview, it is not only a human person who is seen as sacred, but also nature, for they see it as God's property. In their view, every individual has an inalienable right to land. The individualist worldview that the rulers imposed on them sees the land as a commodity that can be sold or exchanged for a value. Apart from the conquest and different worldview, land alienation for the Sidaamas serves as another principal factor of the unpeaceful relations, contributing to the development of the Sidaama nationalism.

5.B.2. Sidaamas under the Italians (1935-1940)

The Sidaamas were ambivalent towards the Italian rule. Generally, they regarded life under the Italians as better than the one under the "Amharas". "The Italians came and made things better" (R5); "...; however, between the Italians and the Amhara, the Amharas were the worst" (R6). The Italians abolished the *gabbar* system (serfdom); they allowed the Sidaamas "six days to work for themselves and only one day (on Monday) for the Italians" (R3, R2). In this view, the interviewees were almost unanimous, but at the same time all of them put qualifications. The majority of the Sidaamas saw Italians better only in comparison to the "Amharas". "It was not that the Sidaamas liked to be ruled by the Italians, but since they had no means to protect themselves and to fight back, between the two rules they preferred the Italian rule" (R3). In their earliest period in Sidaamaland, the Italians appeared to have shown good will towards the Sidaamas, maybe to have the Sidaama acceptance and cooperation. Later on, they sought to eliminate any opposing or challenging voice. They searched for the informers who would tell them who was who, and then killed without hesitation those key

notable individuals in society without verifying calumnious accusations by some informers (R5, R6, R7, R9, R16, R27). R16 even claimed that the Italians left at the moment when they began using Sidaamas like ploughing bulls.

Unlike the "Amharas", the Italians — not being feudalist but interested more in a modern capitalist system — did not quarrel much with the Sidaamas over land (Betana, 1991: 179). Apart from the killings on the basis of calumny, R9 seemed to have a more positive view of the Italians: "During the Italian (occupation), the Sidaamas re-gained life. They only paid *kontriita* (annual tax), and worked for themselves (on their land) in peace. Where they made the Sidaamas work for them, the Italians paid salary. They used (machines) and not the Sidaamas to dig (build) roads. Even for farming, they used machines (tractors)" [R9]. Some like R6, R10 and R11 do not think that the Italians were any better.

In the final analysis, the "Sidaamas did not like the Italians either" (R17). However, in comparison to the "Amhara" rule, many Sidaamas see the early Italian rule as better or less burdensome. Some see it as more or less the same; some others as worse. From one perspective, it is possible that those who show a more favourable view towards the Italians may be from those who had suffered the direct "Amhara" abuse and domination. Those from the other extreme may be from those who had lost their relatives under the Italian rule. In each case, however, they liked neither "Amhara" nor Italians. Their views can be summarised as: both are bad, although one is worse than the other. However, as Tolo noted (1998: 120-123; cf., Betana, 1991: 179), the encounter with the Italians served as an important factor in the deepening nationalist awareness of the Sidaama. For the first time after 40 years of exploitation and subjugation by the Abyssinians, under the Italians they experienced a level of socio-economic development. The Italians abolished the excessive tribute extraction system (the *gabbar* system), and reduced taxes. The Sidaamas got their land back. Unlike the Abyssinian colonisers, at least in their early stage, the Italians lived close to the Sidaama people, communicated and interacted with them, thus influencing the Sidaama life style. In its early stages, the Italians' approach was friendly: they played football and other games with the locals. All these boosted the Sidaamas' sense of dignity that was marred by the former Abyssinian masters. According to Tolo, these approaches facilitated a way for the Christian missionaries (Protestants and Catholics), for the Sidaamas had a positive image of the *waajjo faranje*

(White foreigners), who did not burden them with tributes and services; they had given them back their lands and plenty of time to work for themselves. These, although done by the Italians to gain the people's confidence in them and their support, marked the socio-political and economic views of the Sidaamas. They came into contact with modernity and the realisation of the possibilities for socio-economic and political changes (Tolo, 1998: 120-123; cf., Betana, 1991: 179). Moreover, the Sidaamas were also able to get hold of firearms at the departure of the Italians. These led to the second stage of the Sidaama struggle: the first organised Sidaama resistance movement with modern firearms in 1941 as will be indicated below. The first stage of the Sidaama effort to free themselves from the Abyssinian force was the one under the leadership of Baallicha during the first conquest, but was without firearms.

Lapiso noted that when the imperial force was defeated and the emperor Haile-Selassie fled Ethiopia, the Kambaata, Hadiyya and Endagegn people that had suffered subjugation and oppression under the *gebbar* system burnt down the administrative town Hosa'ina and regained their land from the *gultegna* (Lapiso, 1975 E.C.: 95 [Betana, 1991: 176]). Almost similar things took place in Sidaamaland during the same period. The Sidaamas did not burn the towns, but took back their lands. Some Sidaamas who suffered mistreatment by the "Amharas" did kill *melkegna* or "Amharas" in retaliation. They were even ready to support (and some indeed supported) the Italians in order to eliminate the Amharas from Sidaamaland.[24] But the elders did not approve it for fear of God — by saying "Why do you kill what God has already removed from our (shoulder)?" (R7) — and also they did not see in the Italians anything better. As R7 and several others indicated, Duulo Bonoyya of Faqisa had already prophesied earlier about the coming of the Italians and their short-lived life. Even during the Italian occupation, before the Italians killed him, Aliito Hewano of Faqisa also prophesied that the Italians would live only for five years and warned the Sidaamas not to accept the Italians (Betana, 1991: 177).

[24]Contrary to the Sidaama motive, the goal of the Italians did not involve the elimination of the Amharas from Sidaamaland, but removing the rebellion and pacifying the area.

5.B.3. Life after the Italians and under the Haile-Selassie Rule (1941-1974)

After the departure of the Italians, the Sidaamas collected firearms that the Italians left behind and, under the leadership of Yettera Bolle and Hushula Xaadiso, fought for at least one year to prevent the return of the imperial rule and keep their independence (Betana, 1991: 178; Tolo, 1998: 121-122).[25] According to Betana (1991: 178), there existed conflict over leadership between Yettera and Hushula, and that weakened the resistance. Nevertheless, as Tolo notes, Haile-Selassie could not easily regain control over the southern peoples as well as Sidaama (ibid). Through the help of the British (Betana, 2004; Markakis & Ayele, 1978: 33) and the method of co-optation (e.g., by offering political positions to Hushula and Yettera as *balabat*), promising the change and removal of the *gebbar* system, as well as also the use of military campaigning with the help of the British (cf., Andargachew, 1993: 6, 9), Haile-Selassie was able to regain control. When I asked my interviewees what happened after the departure of the Italians, they omitted the Sidaama resistance war to prevent the return of the Abyssinian rule, and delved into what the Amharas did when they returned to Sidaamaland.

The Amharas organized the Halo-Guji in the south-west of the Sidaama, the Silte people (the latter used firearms) in the north, and the Arusi in the east, to attack and humiliate the Sidaama people as a revenge and punishment. They attacked them in all directions. According to R3, the terror campaign took six months, during the period of which they killed the Sidaamas, burnt their crops, raided their livestock (some they killed and ate, others they carried away), burnt the houses they came across. Today, this terror campaign is remembered by the Sidaamas as *Amaaru shibbirre* (the "Amhara terror"), but those from the areas where the Silte people campaigned call it *Silxete shibbirre* (the "Silte terror"). The "Amharas" hunted down and killed very brave Sidaama individuals who fought against them. This killing of the Sidaamas and systematic destruction of their survival means resulted in devastating famine which, although the informers did not mention it, probably killed many among the survivors. Information for this paragraph comes from R3, R5, R6, R7, and R9.

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[25]According to Betana, the resistance took eighteen months (Betana Hoteso, "The Sidama Struggle Against Tyranny," a speech at the commemoration of the 24 May 2004 massacre of the Sidaamas at Awaasa vicinity, (24 May 2004) available at http://www.sidamaliberation-front.org/events .htm; accessed on June 2005.

Modernisation involves homogenisation of the society, bureaucratisation, professionalisation, and economic development as well as development in communication (cf. Gellner, 1983). After having consolidated his power, Haile-Selassie wanted to modernise Ethiopia. He sought to achieve these objectives through education. In the south, it was not easy because of the aristocracy that was controlling and enjoying the benefits. However, the emperor's policy of evangelisation of the southern population and modernisation of the country (through modern education, the creation of modern civilian and military bureaucracy, highly educated modern technocrats controlling the highest government positions and ministerial posts, new land policy and a *laissez-faire* type liberal economic system, progressive income tax, centralised rule) greatly weakened the position of the nobility who had simply lived on the extraction of surplus from the peasants (Andargachew Tiruneh, 1993: 8-9, 14), but also enhanced the Periphery peoples' ability to understand their situation and organise themselves better in order to struggle for their economic and political rights. Let us see this in the Sidaama case through what they say about the post-Italian era.

Apart from the terror campaign, the interviewees generally declared that in comparison to the pre-1935 situation, the post-1941 rule of Haile-Selassie was better. The Emperor, under his modernisation policy, abolished the *gebbar* system (i.e., no more forced working, gate-keeping, collecting firewood and providing grass for the *melkegna*), undertook land privatisation, and changed tributes into tax-paying system. Every owner of land (both the Sidaama as well as the "Amharas") was asked to pay in proportion to the property he/she held (R6, R7, R16). The Sidaamas approved these aspects, but the issue of their land being taken by foreigners still remained. The compensation or grant land (the southern *gult* land [rent-paying]) that the Sidaamas call *qalada* (*qelad* in Amharic) remained under the land grantees or the settlers from the north, which included imperial soldiers, administrators and other public servants. As interviewees explained, those who returned after the Italians, made claims of the land that was turned into *qalada*, saying that it belonged to their fathers. In the process of land privatisation, the southern *gult* land became the settlers' *rist* land (inheritance land). The *utuwa* land remained in the hands of the Sidaamas. All of them paid taxes.

In comparison to the pre-Italian period, "things were better [...]. Haile-Selassie tried to bring changes, but only the Amharas (the land-lords) continued oppressing our people" (R3). On the *utuwa* land, "the tax was not much; it was paid as community rather than individuals" (R10). "However,

the poor did not benefit; they suffered. Through usury, the Amharas extorted their money; when they were unable to pay, the rich took their land, or bought and appropriated it" (R5, R9). Although Haile-Selassie proclaimed changes, these had little effect: the "Amharas" cheated, and through their deceptive ways, continued confiscating more lands from the Sidaamas until the revolution (R9, R11, R27). This, with other issues that will be mentioned below, created deep anger and, already in 1960s, the Sidaama elders began looking for ways to address their grievances through the constitutional means that was provided by the 1955 revised constitution (R30). This marked the third stage of the Sidaama struggle, this time through constitutional means. The Sidaamas used to go all the way to Addis Ababa, walking on foot almost 300kms distance, carrying their own provisions (R9).

As Aberra notes, after 1941, the privileged few landlords owned large tracts of land, thus making a large section of the population in the south landless, and developing an exploitative private landownership system (Aberra, 2000: 145). The Sidaamas resented that the emperor continued the land grant system. He granted freely more lands as rewards to those (both Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas) who fought against the Italians (R5). Due to the modernisation drive, he also continued to dispossess the Sidaamas from the *utuwa* land in lowland areas for commercial farms. R10 holds that "more and more Sidaamaland became the Amharaland. To everyone who claimed to have fought against the Italians, (Haile-Selassie) distributed (our land). Just before the revolution, by saying that all the *qelad* land should be the private property of the *melkegna*, they began digging out cemeteries, and destroying houses (of the Sidaama living on the land). It was when they were removing all the Sidaamas from the *qelad* land that the revolution came" (R10).

When I enquired what they regarded as positive things that the second Haile-Selassie reign (1941-1974) brought for them, some like R4 dismissed outright the idea that there was something good he brought. Some others like R27 and R11 saw the abolition of *melkegna* system, even if the *melkegna* prevented its implementation, as a positive thing. Although R11 appreciated the aspect of making the Sidaamas Christians under the injunction of Haile-Selassie, R10 did not see making the Sidaamas Christians as a positive point. He said that the Sidaamas lost even more of their land with the coming and adoption of the Orthodox Christianity. R2 added the prevention of violent conflict expressions among the Sidaama *ga're* and between the Sidaamas and their neighbours over territory as a positive/good thing. For example, the imperial government prevented territorial conflicts

between the Garbichcho (a Holloo group) and Haadiichcho by settling the "Amharas" between them. At the junction of Alaatta, Garbbichcho and Faqisa *ga're*, *Ras* Desta (the governor of 'Sidamo' from 1930-1935) founded a town called Yirgalem (= let the world be tranquil), and made it his administrative centre. Before the town was built, the three Sidaama groups quarrelled over that area and fought against one another. Balcha prevented the Holloo-Guji violent conflict expressions because of the territorial dispute by founding a town at Hula that he named *Hagere-Selam* (=the country of peace) in 1917, and made it the capital of the 'Sidamo' province (Betana, 1991: 172). However, some Sidaamas like R9 blamed the "Amharas" themselves as responsible in the first place by creating the intra-Sidaama unpeaceful relations through their divide-and-rule method when they conquered them. In any case, stopping intra- and inter-communal violent conflict expressions was a positive element.

Another thing that the Sidaamas generally regarded as good was the education that Haile-Selassie brought for all. The interviewees blamed partly the Sidaama themselves for their early ignorance, having refused to send their children to school: "It was only out of our ignorance, but the education that (Haile-Selassie) brought was a good thing" (R10). *Ras* Desta at one moment ordered the Sidaamas to send their children to school. There was such a total mistrust towards the "Amharas" that the Sidaamas simply perceived it as a trick to make their children *ashikara* (servants) to Amhara, and refused to do so. As quoted in Betana (1991: 175), they expressed their feelings in *qexaala* as follows:

Ras ooso yaanno	'children' says *Ras*
Ooso ma gowwi aanno	What stupid man surrenders his children
Annu beettisira reyanno	A father dies for his son.

Even if *Ras* Desta intended to send the Sidaama children to school, the *neftegna* and urbanites were opposed to it (R10) for it threatened their socio-political and economic position. Some among them, in fact, intensified the Sidaama suspicion by telling lies to the Sidaamas. They said to the Sidaamas that if they sent their children to school, their children would become servants. A Sidaama would rather die than give his child to become *ashikara* (a servant). They perceived being *ashikara* as a shameful thing. In their philosophy, a human being could not be an *ashikara* of or be a tribute payer to another human being but only to God. This was also reflected in Baallicha's response to Leul-

Seged by asking "How can a human being pay tribute to another human being?" (R9). In any case, the "Amharas" knew well the Sidaama psychology, and through false information about the outcome of sending their children to school, at least in the early stage they succeeded in making Sidaamas in some areas refuse to send their children to school. According to R30, the "Amharas" made every effort to prevent the Sidaamas from receiving education, settling in urban areas, and engaging in commerce or business.

In the 1944 proclamation,[26] the Emperor allowed missionaries to work among the non-Christian nations in the south (Art. 11), but they were expected to know Amharic and use it as the primary language of instruction (Arts 13, 14). Before this proclamation, the missionaries were not free and were not allowed to evangelise. Even when they were now allowed to work in the non-Christian areas, the interest of the Emperor was more on promoting modernity (e.g., modern education and health care). They were not allowed to proselytise or convert any Orthodox Christian. The decree was in general to control the missionaries and their activities. However, it gave some opportunity for evangelising and working in Sidaamaland. For more information see Tolo (1998: 127-131).

Haile-Selassie proclaimed a forced Christianisation of the south-western peoples among which the Sidaamas were one. With the interest to homogenise the people, he sought to impose the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, whereas in the pre-Italian occupation period the Sidaamas were not even seen as worthy of becoming Orthodox Christians (Tolo, 1998: 123-125), and cultural values (e.g., Amarisation), for he saw these as the criteria of equality and unity. "... Haile Selassie proclaimed that 'people should be one; that the Sidaama marry the Amhara and the Amhara marry the Sidaama' and required be baptised as Christians" (R5). Although some like R11 saw with favour the aspect of making Sidaamas Christian, the Sidaamas generally despised Orthodox Christianity as they despised the state and its officials (Eide, 2000:22). They preferred the Protestant and Catholic Christianity, and took this as a political issue as "the Amharas" in Sidaamaland were opposed to the missionaries. The coming of the Protestant missionaries in the 1940s and later the Catholics (early 1960s) opened opportunities for education and health care by building schools and clinics.

[26] *Negarit Gazeta* 12, Decree # 3 (27 August 1944).

Evangelical Christianity brought the Sidaamas together from different areas; it opened arenas where they met regularly from different parts and discussed their situations in the light of the gospel message. This helped the deeper and reflected understanding and awareness of their situations. An official from the imperial Ministry of Education, Emmanuel Abraham stated: "The change noticed in the people due to the preaching of the Gospel gave no pleasure to the governors and militiamen (neftegnoch) who had been sent to South Ethiopia from Shewa and imposed on the local population in the reign of the Emperor Menelik and later, and who had appropriated most of their land and reduced them to the status of 'gabbar' (serf)" [quoted by Tolo, 1998: 264].[27] The open persecution and illegal activities to undermine the Sidaamas and prevent them from gaining education as well as becoming non-Orthodox Christians, simply galvanised the Sidaama political conscience as the people who were discriminated against, and becoming Christians and the quest for education became even a political *champ de battaille*. When some of the interviewees mentioned being made Christians as a positive thing the Haile-Selassie rule brought to the Sidaamas, they were mainly referring to the emperor's permission to the foreign missionaries to work in the Sidaamaland and evangelise them. The Sidaamas took their struggle for education and evangelisation as their legitimate right which the *neftegna* were trying to prevent. The Protestant missionaries, who were also harassed and persecuted by the landlords and administrators of the Sidaamaland for having evangelised the Sidaamas and provided them with education in the 1940s and 1950s, and the local evangelists, offered the Sidaamas necessary understanding about their dignity as God's children and their legal rights. In Tolo's interview with Ronningstad, who was a missionary in the Sidaamaland, the latter remembered a reproach he received from one feudal master: "You have taught them not to obey, and when we bring the case to the court, the peasants appear with the book of law in their hands. You missionaries are our enemies, he continued, you have made them insubordinate by giving them education. Because you have encouraged them to subversive activities, they have become troublemakers" (Even Ronningstad; cited in Tolo, 1998: 198-199)

All in all, Christianity and the Bible provided concepts that appealed to the ears of the Sidaamas: demons (the enemy of God and his people), light (good) and darkness (evil), liberation.

[27]Emmanuel was a Mekane Yesus member from Wolega, and his views on preaching the gospel were different from those of most imperial officials.

The Bible revealed that God stands for the underprivileged; and the Sidaama converts came to view themselves as the underprivileged and oppressed (Tolo, 1998: 267). They saw their struggle against the Amhara domination as a struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. "In their view, the Amharas were not only guided by Satan, but they were demons themselves. The people considered the *Neftennya* as Satan who occupied the land of the ancestors. Satan was the occupier, who did not want them to become Protestants" (ibid.: 199).

One of the changes the emperor introduced in the revised 1955 constitution was the institution of parliament. The people were asked to elect a person to represent them. Apart from the education that the missionaries offered to the Sidaamas, the parliament issue also caused a great disturbance for the administrators and landlords in Sidaamaland. At the open parliamentary election that the Sidaamas had for the first time in the early 1960s, they elected Woldamanuel, a Sidaama who later became the head of the SLM from 1978.

> "Haile-Selassie said, 'choose individuals to voice your grievances,' and brought the thing called Parliament. During the first election, Woldamanuel Dubala, a Sidaama, was chosen. After five years in Addis Ababa, he came and asked the (Sidaamas), 'Because I am lonely in the majority (voting system), choose for me more Sidaama individuals.' ... During the second election, the people chose Asaffa Baalango, Taafasa Hammeesso, and Asaffa Caffiqe" (R9)

The Sidaama rejection of choosing an "Amhara" (despite the campaigns the aristocrats of Sidaamaland made to have their own), and their choice of a Sidaama in the first election to represent them sent a shock wave to the whole settler community in Sidaamaland, and the aristocrats conspired to silence the Sidaama through sustained massacre in the manner they did to the Sidaama neighbour, the Gedeo people (R30, R31). Parliamentary elections took place every five years, and at every parliamentary election year, the *neftegna* made similar conspiracy that, through the efforts of the Sidaama educated groups (and also mainly in the last parliamentary election case before the Revolution, through the children of the *neftegna* who were opposed to their parents' plans), the Sidaamas were saved (R31). When the first conspiracy failed, one of the leading figure in the conspiracies, Demisie Irda, chanted the following during an occasion as reported by R9:

> "*Buuyya Hoxeessiwa Gassira* (To Hoxeessa of Buuyya at Gassa)
> *Malloonnirino keeshshina* (The plan has delayed)
> *Malloonnire Shawwa tubbaamete beetti beeshshina* (The son of the hide-dressed woman has blocked what has been planned)
> *Daggu loosi'ra meessira* (The time has come to toil for ourselves)

Goojjaame Gondore malikki ba'i yuummohu taixe lamala dirootina (This is the seventh year since I said '[the children of] Gojam and Gondar, you are (in danger]')
Daggu loosi'ra meessira (The time has come to toil for ourselves)
Qottonna billawa hi'dite Amaara baatto loosattora heesh heesh (Buy the hoe and the panga, down and down to work)
Heeshsho di-seekkanno Sidaami gobbara beettinke beettira." (Life will never be good in the Sidaamaland for the children of our children)

In the poem, the "plan" indicated the conspiracy; "the son of hide-dressed woman"was Woldamanuel. During that time most of the Sidaama women used dresses made from hides, whence the term 'hide-dressed woman'. The landlords never used to work in Sidaamaland. They used the Sidaamas to work for them. Now they were seeing with their own eyes the Sidaama ascendancy to political importance. That was why Demissie said "The time has come to toil for ourselves." They knew very well what they had done to the Sidaamas; they feared that the Sidaama would take revenge or even reverse the role, i.e., the Sidaamas would become masters and the "Amharas" their servants. For this reason, he said "Life will never be good in Sidaamaland for the children of our children."

Were the Sidaamas happy to be part of the Ethiopian state? The answer was 'No'. The interviewees said that they only lived under Ethiopia because they were powerless or lacked means to defend themselves (R4, R5, R6, R7, R9). "...However, the oppression of the Sidaamas by the Amharas and *melkegna* was such that...the Sidaama never liked to be part of Ethiopia" (R2). In fact, R16 expressed the feeling by saying "*Amaaru ninke assiwoota Maganu layiinkita abboonke*" (What the Amharas did to us, God may not allow to happen again). Generally, the relation between the Sidaamas and the government/the ruling class (as represented by the *melkegna*) was asymmetric; the Sidaamas saw them as foreigners or in Andargachew's terms as the speakers of different language and the usurpers of their land (Andargachew, 1993: 15). R3 summarised it in the following terms: "The Sidaamas did not like their rule. Even if (Haile-Selassie) brought changes, he did not bring a satisfactory change."

The Sidaamas of the older generations had maintained until the 1974 Ethiopian revolution the sentiment that they were ruled and their land was occupied by the people whom they regarded as aliens and termed as 'Amhara'. They spoke about how strong '*Topyu mangiste*' (Ethiopian government) was, but in the sense that they did not belong to it. Just after the Revolution (1974), peasants' associations (PAs) were formed in rural areas and the people of each association elected

their own leaders. These leaders were called every now and then to their *woreda* (districts) and sometimes to the *Awuraja* (sub-provincial administrative centre) to be taught about '*hibretesebawinet*' (Ethiopian socialism) and Ethiopian unity, and also the government policies that needed to be implemented. As a boy, I once heard a chairman of a PA (to which my parents belonged) in the district of *Hagere-Selam*, explaining to the people around him what he and other participants were taught at one training meeting at the *Awuraja*. He said, "*Topyu ayeti? Topyu mangiste ayeti?*" (Who is Ethiopia? Who is Ethiopian government?); "*Topyu mangiste ninke wo'munku ganboot; Di-wosanantiwo gosa ccalaite; ninke Sidaamuno hatte gambo giddo mittoho. Topyu mangiste ninke wo'munku gashshootteet*" (Ethiopian government is the assembly of all of us; it does not belong just to some particular (ethnic/national) groups; we the Sidaamas are also members of that assembly. Ethiopian government is the government of all of us). After the revolution there was quite a huge excitement among the rural population; they were free from the burden of landlords and tributes. They felt that their land was returned to them and that they now owned it. They saw the *derg* as the liberator and offered it their enthusiastic support, at least during its early stage; they organised themselves to fight the *neftenya* (the aristocrats) who rebelled against the new government for the *ancien régime*.

One thing worth noting is that apart from the humiliation at the conquest, the loss of inheritance land that the Sidaamas regarded as God-given (Tolo, 1998: 92), and massacre and politically orchestrated famine during the early 1940s, not all but just a section of the Sidaamas suffered the extreme *melkegna* abuse. If all the Sidaamas seemed to hate the "Amhara" rule, it was partly out of solidarity with those who suffered the abuse (for they were their own relatives), and also because they lost their "God-given" land, their independence and freedom. The "Amharas" settled only in some areas and were few; they congregated in towns with little interaction with the Sidaamas. This partly accounted for the survival of the Sidaama traditional system of socio-political and economic organisation and structures in the rural areas and for protection of their culture. Moreover, not all who lived in towns had land grants; some were traders or businessmen/women. Even in the areas that were under the *melkegna*, some strong personalities like Hula (Abaa-Hula [alias name]) simply refused to pay any tribute in any situation to the "Amharas" (Betana, 1991: 174). Maybe for the reasons of avoiding confrontations and other eventual consequences, those individuals were left

free. Other Sidaamas who refused to be ruled by the "Amharas" and pay tributes gave up their inheritance land and went away to the areas that were free from the "Amharas." Almost the majority of the Sidaamas did not seem to suffer the "Amhara" abuse, although they paid taxes. But still some others in the non easily accessible areas payed neither tribute nor tax.

In general, during Haile-Selassie's second reign, missionary Christianity, education, modernised law, and international ideological provisions were highly significant elements which played a great role in the continuous deepening of the Sidaama national sentiments. This time the literate young men were also making their own struggles for the rights of their people, some organising their people for development activities, some defending the rights of their people through the existing constitutional means, and others through ideological alliances that would promote equality and justice for all the peoples. Some of them, especially from the areas that experienced the "Amhara" abuses, even sought hard measures. For example, Teklu Yotta, began armed activities, harassing and terrorising notorious landowners who mistreated the Sidaamas, and R9 and some other informers enumerated all the things he had done. His message to them was: "I, the son of hide-dressed woman, have come for you... You are robbers, and living on robbery; leave this land" (R9). Before Teklu, during pre-1960 periods, there were similar rebellious individuals (e.g., Yettera Boolle, Lanqamo Naramo, Gishe Korrooso, Fiissa Fichcho), all of whom were not literate, and their rebellion was based on their refusal to be ruled by the "Amharas". Teklu's activity was taking an even more nationalist tone, for he was acting in the name of the Sidaama people, and was therefore one of the precursors of the Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM). These individual-based and single-handed nationalist activities are one of the consequences of prolonged conflict with unresolved grievances. This reflects what Azar termed 'spill-over', one of the four consequences or characteristics of a protracted social conflict (chapter 3A). Things that would have little significance and support in normal situation take meaning as they are interpreted within the context of history of a people. History has provided heroes and models that a group which has lived in a prolonged socio-political underdog situation tends to look to for inspiration and to strengthen its struggle, nationalism. The second reign of Haile-Selassie raised the Sidaama nationalist struggle to its third stage of development.

5.B.4. The Derg Era (1974-1991)

Betana (1991: 182-192) writes in detail how the Sidaamas welcomed the revolution and the great sacrifices they made for its success. They did not only receive it, but actively participated with their own provisions by fighting the resistance army or loyalists of the imperial government. When the *derg* sent *zemach* (students from the senior secondary and tertiary educational institutions) with the task of bringing the spirit of revolution, explaining it and organising the rural population (1974-1976), the Sidaamas spontaneously received them with joy and ululations, arranged reception feasts for them by slaughtering bulls; provided them with food; they built houses for them; guarded them at night, and even gave the *zemach* some of their guns for protection (R38). The excitement and expectations of the Sidaamas for change and advancement was beyond telling. In Hager-Selam district, for example, one of the *qeexala* song the people sang in praising the new situation said: *Tamaarenna darge, xaalla dagu d'dagge* ("Students and *derg*, only now came wonder"). Now, they felt that they got their lands back, and were ready to sacrifice their lives for the revolution; apart from liberating their own areas, they even went with their own provisions to fight the strong and organised *melkegna* resistance army in Guji-Oromo areas. Information about this comes from Betana (ibid), R28, R30. The author himself witnessed the early Sidaama excitement and participation in the overthrow of the imperial government and all its loyal elements in Sidaamaland and Guji areas, and also the open-hearted reception of the coming of the campaign students (the *zemach*). "When the revolution came and the *zemach* explained it to the people, the people rejoiced and danced (*qeexa'liwo*). They were happy that those who oppressed them were removed. Only later on they got worried and hated (the new rule), for it became unbearable" (R6).

The interviewees noted several good things the *derg* rule brought: land distribution to people, education, rights for the poor, and self-help organisations (e.g., peasants' cooperative associations [PCAs])[28]. The land was confiscated from the landlords and given back to the people. In Sidaamaland, those landlords that did not resist or fight back against the revolution and those who had been friendly to the Sidaamas in the past were allowed to maintain part of their land for their own

[28]Each PCA brought together the peasant households of three to six *qebeles* and controlled the latter.

survival. The remaining parts of their land were distributed to their tenants. The aristocrats and landlords in Sidaamaland used to create every possible obstacle to the education of the Sidaama. Now, more schools were built. The previous government under the *laissez-faire* policy had no provision for the poor; the *derg* guaranteed for every excluded person land and education. The previous rulers in Sidaamaland always blocked chances for the Sidaamas to organise themselves politically and economically in modernised ways and to defend their interests. After the revolution the Sidaamas were organised in the form of cooperative associations that catered for cultural, political and economic activities of their areas. This raised the rural people's level of political and economic conscience to a higher level. Each PCA, which later became the higher administrative level of PA (see pp. 100 and 104 above), set up its own primary school, although the state provided them with teachers (one cooperative association in Aletta-Wondo district even built its own secondary school, thus setting up a new ground for competition); they also organised their own means of transportation. In the area of economic development, each association set up a market place, a cooperative shop that provided the members with necessary items they needed at an affordable price and at nearby. The associations had farms from the produce of which they raised needed funds for their development. They also prepared feeder roads and organised their means of transports. Several able associations bought Toyota pickups. According to R31, the PCA of Aletta-Wondo district alone bought 24 Toyota pickups to facilitate their transportation needs. Already the organisers had in mind enabling the farmers' associations to build their own health centres, but with the formation of the party-state since 1979, this did not materialise.

The associations were, in fact, in competition with each other. They competed in the field of culture (music and dance, education, poetry), economy and means of transport. Every association was carefully observing the others in a competitive manner, in such a way that when one produced a new thing, others worked hard not to be left behind. The early moments were indeed very exciting moments for the Sidaamas, and in a short period of time (1974-1978) the Sidaamas were able to achieve an impressive level of socio-cultural and economic development. It gave them confidence and showed their ability to achieve greater things. They did not receive any development fund either

from outside or from the government.[29] Those who controlled power in Sidaamaland after 1978 were the children of *neftegna* and other settler groups. According to R31, they seemed to show less enthusiasm to allow the Sidaamas to carry on with the decentralised decision-making in their economic development. "The sad thing was that the remnant of the feudal-bourgeois, pretending that they were concerned for the revolution, began their propaganda by saying 'because the farmers are showing orientation towards capitalism, they should be stopped'" (Betana, 1991: 192). If the *derg* administration had not interfered with this original 'space' of participation, organisation and a degree of freedom for PCA, Sidaamaland would have contributed greatly to the development of the country's economy (cf., ibid). The post-1980 situation (civil wars, homogenisation policies, surplus extractions, forced contributions, over-taxation and villagisation policy) simply drained the dreams, enthusiasm, and free participation of the people. The farmers' associations which were intended by their organisers to serve like self-help civil organisations for economic and cultural development were turned into the *derg's* tool for controlling the people, collecting tax and extracting surplus, and getting young people for its wars.

PCA became a higher level of (the lower level being *qebele*) what was known among the writers as Peasant Associations (PAs). The PAs were set up throughout Sidaamaland. The origin of the PAs went back to the early 1960s (R28, R31 and R38). It was planned by the Ministry of Rural Development of the imperial government. The system of implementation was on a voluntary basis. R28 mentioned that the Sidaama parliamentarians (e.g., Woldamanuel and others) were actively involved in helping the Sidaama people to organise themselves as associations. It was intended to ameliorate the lives of the rural people by organising them to help them modernise their situation, and in the long run to enable them to develop their own areas and address their economic, educational, and health needs. At least three associations were formed in Sidaamaland in coffee production areas. There was, however, an obstacle from the settler community that did not want to see the development of the Sidaama competitors (R31). Soon after the revolution, a group of the Sidaama educated class took up this idea of association and organised the people throughout

[29]Information in this paragraph comes from first from Betana (1991: 189-172), R30, R31, and R28. It also comes from the author's own experience: my father was a chairman of a farmers' association. I was present at several meetings of the association's committee and at its different social occasions.

Sidaamaland, but in a more contextually relevant way to the Sidaama situation. They actively participated and controlled the administration of the money the associations raised in order to prevent them from being swindled and to guarantee its investment in developmental projects. During the period 1976 and 1977, the Sidaama associations in coffee growing areas made a lot of profit and took part in economic activities.

The interviewees in rural areas believed that the organisational structure in the form of farmers' cooperatives (each being made up of several PAs) came from the *derg*. Indeed the *derg* opened the way for this, particularly the organisation of PAs (simular to urban *qebele* associations) which became "the base unit of local political power" (Clapham, 1988: 48). However, real organisers of the cooperatives and their localised internal democratic structure of administration were a group of the Sidaama intelligentsia. The *derg* used the cooperative organisations later on for its own purpose. According to R31, people from other neighbouring regions came to Sidaamaland to learn the self-supporting and developmental organisational structure (the farmers' co-operative organisation). The cooperatives were expected to use their resources (natural and human) to develop their areas and address their needs, to create markets, build mills, construct schools, roads, and clinics. The real architect behind the organisation of the Sidaama society that led to such an economic upsurge within a short time was Leegamo Dangiso, supported by his other Sidaama educated individuals among whom were Taddese Xagichcho, Betana Hoxxeesso, Futte Musso, Matewos Mashana, and probably some others. Leegamo, who held a university degree in Agriculture specialising in the economic sector, also had inspiration from a visit to Bulgaria during Haile-Selassie's reign. He was not a politician and did not interest himself in politics although his works had a deep political significance. In fact R28 saw him as an anarchist who did not want the central authority to interfere with the people's lives. He was shielded by the other four mentioned individuals who were politicians (although they had different professional backgrounds such as economics and education), and the project was successfully implemented. Before they were destroyed during the second half of 1977 by the *derg* (some killed, others were locked in prison, some left the country and some became freedom fighters [founding members of the Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM)]), their slogan, according R31 was: "Leave us alone, and we will make Sidaamaland New Jersey, and Ethiopia like the US!" They were high spirited and creative. The farmers' associations they created

continued functioning, but after 1978, the people lost their original impetus; corruption crept in, and the development activities were almost dead. At least the schools that the cooperatives built continued functioning and were renovated during the current [EPRDF] government through Irish Aid.

Why was there such enthusiasm among the Sidaama people and fast development during the early period after the Revolution? The followings are the reasons: First, at least during the first half of the *derg* reign, for the first time in modern Ethiopian history, the Sidaamas were offered a room for participation that they needed to exploit their potential (resources and ability). For the first time, they thought they were given equal participation in the country's socio-political and economic spheres. Secondly, the associations were local and almost identical to the Sidaama traditional socio-political and economic organisations like *Ollaa*. They followed the Sidaama principle of subsidiarity. Local issues and needs were handled within the local association. They relied on local resources (both human and material). Every dispute was settled by their own traditional methods and there was no competition between the traditional and the new association. In fact, the early period of the *derg* (1974-1978) was the moment for the rural Sidaamas when modernity and tradition fitted harmoniously and worked together with beneficiary effects. Thirdly, the aspect of full participation: the Sidaamas understood and took up the functioning of the associations in their traditional approach, in a democratic manner. Policies were not set up and imposed from above on these farmers' associations in the early stages; hence, the people set up their own agenda, and tried to address their own needs. Fourthly, mutual trust and cooperation between those in authority and the people: the early *zemach* and cadres were themselves close to the people and simply worked together with them; there was a close bond between them. Where the people were grieving for land, the government responded to it; where the people were hungry for education, the government's literacy campaign responded well to the need. Here the relationship between the state and the people seemed to be at its best; the relationship between the people and their educated members was one of trust and total self-less dedication. These reasons may give hints that it is possible to achieve peace and rapid balanced development without much cost and exclusion of many from the benefit.

The 1974-1978 period also marked for good the Sidaama self-awareness of their ability (i.e., of what they can do by themselves without state intervention), of the possibility of the people working in harmony with the officials in the spirit of mutual trust and support, of the possibility of democratic

participation between the people and the government. In fact, this awareness was one of the principal sources of the Sidaama quest for self-governance, that began in 1978, as centralisation of everything and autocracy began showing their grip on them. This was the period that the Sidaamas began an organised liberation movement, the Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM), demanding its own self-governing status. All of the interviewees have noted initial excitements and hopes of a better life, and the later sense of disappointment as the freedom and equality they hoped for was not forthcoming. Nevertheless, "The revolution was partly a relief from the Amhara oppression. The coming of the *derg* was twice as good for the Sidaamas as the Haile-Selassie rule, because we got our land and education" (R2; similarly R9, R10). The issue of land distribution and education were unanimously expressed elements that the Sidaamas appreciated about the *derg*.

Despite the changes the *derg* government brought on land reform, some (e.g., R3, R5, R7) noted problems even with land distribution:[30] "the *derg* divided the land of one to others. An individual during Haile-Selassie's time struggled for and protected his land from land grabbing, but when the *derg* came, it confiscated most of the land and distributed it to others" (R3; similarly R10). "The revolution killed us by saying that we were the aristocrats. They took our land and made us pay too much taxes. There was nothing good during the Derg. I had two tenants. They took our land and gave it to the tenants. It was good only for the poor; it gave the land to the poor" [R5]. However, according to R3 and R7, not only the land-owners but even the poor, despite the land distribution, suffered under the *derg* because of the policies of the *derg*. The interviewees raised four areas of discontent during the *derg* rule: villagisation, taxation, women's association, and forcibly sending their young ones to fight wars.

The villagisation programme was aimed at implementing the soviet-style collective farm system with a view to bringing about rural transformation and agricultural development, and systematising land use (Taddesse Berisso, 2002: 117). It was also aimed at providing the rural population with essential public services, such as security and easy access to education, water, health care, electricity, and communication. Through the policy the government expected to remove rural

[30]Although they did not like the "Amharas", nevertheless, R3 and R5 were some of the local beneficiaries of the post 1941 imperial government. They retained large plots of land, but under the new revolutionary government, part of their land was confiscated and distributed to the poor. Whoever had a large privately owned piece of land was accused as bourgeois or part of the exploiting class, and was harassed.

socio-economic, political, and environmental ills as well as urban prejudice towards the rural people (Taddesse B., 2002: 118). Villagisation (implemented in 1984) seriously affected the economic and socio-cultural life of the people, and the interviewees were unanimous in their discontent with it. "We needed cows and *weese* (false-banana plantation known as *enset* in Amharic) and we did not like to lose them;[31] without cows *weese* would not grow; our children also needed milk. Each one was better off to work for himself" (R2). "*Enset* needs *wiliile* (smoke) and cow-dung (to grow)" (R4), but with the policy of villagisation, the people were removed far away from their properties (e.g., *enset*). The government did not like *weese* and was interested only in cash crops. The Sidaamas could not keep their livestock and plant *weese* in the new village settlement, for the plot allocated to each individual was too small to keep livestock as well as plant *weese*. The new settlements were situated quite a distance away from the original homesteads. "The wild animals and thieves stole our *weese* and other removable property. ...we could not plant *weese* for it needed willliile and cow-dung. The people became poor and hungry" (R4; similarly, R10). Villagisation destroyed the traditional support system the Sidaamas had (e.g., the rich helping the poor by leasing some of their cows, and other altruistic activities) and patterns of traditional cooperative systems. It also affected the people's socio-cultural life: e.g., social passage right (*Luwa*), family structure, marriage system, religion, and the cultural burial system through which the dead were honoured, and so on. This similar experience among the Guji people was also recorded by Taddesse B. (2000: 123-129). R27 concluded that villagisation was the biggest enemy.

> "They destroyed houses and forced people into villagisation. The land that people protected and on which they worked, the land for which they paid taxes, they claimed that it belonged to cooperatives (associations); the *derg* distributed it to other peoples while the owners were still alive.[32] They made the young and the elder use the same open place for toilet. By keeping the in-laws together, they humiliated the people" (R10; similarly, R11).

With regard to culture, the Sidaama culture (including religion) received less respect: "The *derg* hated our culture and religion" (R4). In the Sidaama culture, there existed a very high respect between the in-laws to the point that both the son-in-law and mother-in-law avoid direct contact. In the villagisation setting, where the houses were very small and no space available for cover and

[31]The Sidaamas are agro-pastoralists. *Enset* provides the staple food for them. It is resistant to drought and is their essential means of food security.

[32]In the Sidaama culture, one's land is inherited or given away to someone else only when a person is dead.

privacy, the people found it very difficult. Usually, a mother-in-law would come from time to time to visit her daughter and grand children, but during the villagisation, mothers-in-law could not come due to the inconvenience. Elders could not find space that was traditionally allowed them. Villagisation was centrally constructed with a view to homogenising the society and bringing economic development, although it also served other political interests (e.g., for controlling people better, facilitating intensified taxation and easy military conscription [Henze, 2000: 309-311; Taddesse B., 2000: 118; Clapham, 2000]).

In the area of taxation and forced contributions, the people found it very burdensome and impoverishing. Apart from taxes, "Within a family, the boys and girls paid (forced contributions and fees) through their Youth Association, the father paid through the Farmer's Association, and the mother paid through the Women's Association. These were hated" (R2; similar position with R9, R11, R16, R27). Although he disfavoured triple contributions within the family (through father, mother, and children), R10 had different position with regards paying tax: "The tax was not much. Since it was an essential thing to pay taxes so as to enable the government to (provide services), it was not a problem; it was not hated" (R10).

During the *derg*, there were continuous civil wars throughout the country. Young boys were forcibly conscripted to fight the war in the name of "national service" (R4). R10 and R27 did not mind about young people participating in national security, but R10 hated sending a young man, who is the only child of a family, to the war front. The *derg* conscripted young men without consideration of the sole child for a family. Traditionally, the Sidaamas did not send someone who was the only one in the family to war; they made sure that he was married and had at least a child. A Sidaama family without children was like a curse, for it meant cutting off a generation. A family with only one child would be devastated if their son died without leaving posterity. R16 (and also R9) did not favour sending young ones to fight wars: "(in fact), a main reason for the Sidaama rebellion was its refusal to give its children (to fight the wars)" [16].

The Sidaama culture was patrilineal and had clearly specified roles for men, women and young people. Men carried out farming and also other public activities; women looked after children, prepared food, and took care of cleanliness in the house; young boys looked after livestock and also collected firewood in the absence of their fathers; girls helped their mothers in all ways. The

Women's Association and Youth Association disrupted the traditional system; they disrupted the agro-pastoral community's way of life. Because of the meetings and different activities at these Associations, "the wife came at night; the boys came at night. It was difficult to look after the animals;" and children suffered hunger (R4). "Since they kept mothers in towns speaking of a 'seminar' for even one week, there was a lot of hardship at home" (R10). R9 said that it was for two to three days that the women were kept away from home in the name of 'seminars'.

In the final analysis, despite the changes the *derg* brought, the Sidaamas (nevertheless) found its authoritarian policies threatening their cultural survival and developmental needs. "The revolution has two sides: it was good because it removed the old rule, brought education to all, and prevented the rich from oppressing the poor; it was bad because the land-owners suffered; the young people were sent to fight (where many died); and it brought poverty" (R3). Between the *derg* and *Haile-Selassie* rules, the people felt unable to give unequivocal judgement. To the question — Between the *derg* and the post-1941 Haile-Selassie rule, which one was the better?— the following quotation summarises the general view:

> "(The *derg*) removed those who lived by robbing people; it organised the people in associations; it trained and formed militias (for protection). In these, it made life better. ...It abolished working in *qelad* on Mondays and Tuesdays (twice a week) and building houses for Amhara. In the past, those who could not work on the *qelad* paid *irbo* (one-fourth of one's produce). By abolishing *qelad*, it organised twenty twenty *gasha*[33] into one cooperative association under a chairman; and brought schools to every area. These are good things. However, later on, when it brought what is called *amrach* (communal ownership of means of production and labour suppressing the private one) and *sefera* (villagisation), the people hated the government" (R9).

The relationship between the Sidaama and the state was asymmetric with top-down authoritarian rule. Policies were made at the centre without consulting the people or allowing local debate. They were imposed on the people without their will and participation. The Sidaama educated and productive individuals were persecuted: some killed, some others imprisoned as political prisoners for a long time, and still others left the country into exile. Some others participated in the formation and leadership of the SLM. Since there was no avenue or structure to dialogue or express their grievances, many Sidaamas joined the SLM, and others remained in their passive resistance.

[33]One *gaashsha* = 400,000 sq. meters = 40 hectares (Aberra, 2000: 137).

Between 1978 and 1991, thousands were killed in Sidaamaland because of the war between the SLM and the state. [These will be presented later in chapter 6A1.i.b.] During the imperial rule, relationships between the Sidaamas and the "Amharas" were marked with top dog-underdog relation and generally in the form of segregation with less social-cultural interaction. The Sidaamas considered the non-Sidaama settlers as belonging to the oppressor class and as part of the government. Under the *derg* rule, that dichotomy between the Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas was low, although still (from 1978 onwards) the government officials (of district, zone and region/province) were almost entirely non-Sidaamas, mostly from Sidaamaland. Except in the areas of culture and appointing officials in Sidaamaland, generally, the *derg* treated all the peoples in the same manner. The whole conflict was between the government and the Sidaamas rather than the Sidaamas versus "Amharas". Since those who controlled power came from the settler groups, they carried their former fear and prejudices against the Sidaamas and worked in favour of the interests of the urbanites, the vast majority of whom were non-Sidaamas. However, in the field of education and land distribution, the *derg* did a lot for the Sidaamas. It also deepened the politicisation of the Sidaama community, by heightening their political aspiration for self-determination. The carrying out a well organised armed struggle with modern weapons and communication system marks the fourth stage of the development of the Sidaama political struggle. This is the first well organised modern form of nationalism with a clear goal for self-determination.

5.B.5. The EPRDF Rule (1991- ...)

Generally, the Sidaamas see their socio-political life as better during the incumbent government than that of the *derg*. The following are the things the Sidaamas appreciate: "it has given us (opportunity for) self-governance" (R5); "We have received a chance to govern ourselves in our areas rather than having other people from other groups to rule us in our land. We can freely use our language in the courts without having someone to translate" (R2); our children can study in their language and radio broadcasting is in the Sidaama language within Sidaamaland (R4, R9); more schools, roads and health centres are built (R10). "Now a person enters (and leaves) his home (without worry), looks after his livestock, and pays his tax, and lives in peace" (R5). R6 underlined the aspect that they

experienced less suffering than under the previous governments, that they did not pay the plethora of taxes that they had paid before. Under this government, the traditional conflicts that had existed between the Sidaama and its Oromo neighbours (Arusi and Guje) had now ended because of the clear territorial demarcation, and more and more cooperation was taking place between these communities (R16).

In spite of the positive things expressed in the above paragraph, there exist deep rooted socio-political and economic issues, accounting for the current unpeaceful relations within Sidaamaland. The issue of nationality is not yet resolved, and the Sidaama aspiration for self-determination remains a core problem. Questions about resource control in Sidaamaland are also a key issue. Moreover, for the first time in their history (except the deliberately orchestrated famine in the early 1940s), many of the Sidaamas have suffered hunger and experienced poverty under this government: "...However, poverty and taking away our self-governing status are not good things" (R5). When asked, "What are the things the Sidaamas wish to be ameliorated?"[34] R2 responded: "we wish the government to respect what it has given us", i.e., the constitutional right for internal self-determination. The 1991 charter of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia allowed the Sidaamas to have their own regional status, but the government (for valid or non-valid reasons) unilaterally abrogated it and merged it with four other south-western regional states in 1993 to create one regional state called the SNNPR. According to the data from the interviews, questionnaire and informal discussions, there exists general antipathy towards many of the Sidaama officials appointed by the EPRDF government: "we are not happy with them, because they are not doing the right things," (R2) and a similar point is raised by R27. R11 raises concern about the inter-Sidaama *ga're* disharmony among the Sidaama officials. Some interviewees (R4, R9, R16, R27) express suspicion about the direction of this government and unhappiness about the imprisoning, without trial, of many of their sons who have committed no crimes.

As will be discussed in the following chapter, although the Sidaamas appreciate many things under the EPRDF rule, their relation with the government remains unpeaceful, full of mistrust of each other. Generally, except for the few beneficiaries of the system, the Sidaamas still feel that they are

[34]In group interviews the question is asked in this way because the interviewees were afraid to say any negative things about the government, for fear of being imprisoned. There were paid informers everywhere.

being oppressed, deprived of their constitutional and human rights, and prevented from developing their areas. The unpeaceful relations between the government and them exist mainly because of the government's abrogation of their regional status, lack of the rule of law, bad governance and absence of avenues to dialogue and express their grievances. This has allowed the development of horizontal unpeaceful relations among the Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas. Before analysing current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland, the following section presents the history of the development of the unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. At this moment of time (as Part III will show), all the Sidaamas with all its political parties are united in one thing: for the Sidaama self-governing regional status. Although there was only one Sidaama political party during the previous regime, now there are four (see chapter 6). Hence this is the fifth stage of the Sidaama political socio-political and economic struggle.

5.C. CONCLUSION TO PART II

The process of building modern states or modernisation in the Third World has involved making "policies aimed at assimilating national and minority peoples, restraining their historical autonomy, and extracting their resources, revenues, and labour for the use of the state" (Gurr, 1996:62). In some societies, the net effect of state building through modernisation has simply raised "grievances of most culturally distinct groups, those who have either not been strong enough to protect their autonomy or not been allowed to participate meaningfully" in the country's socio-political and economic life (Gurr, 1996: 62). In pre-Italian era, building modern Ethiopia involved conquering, expanding the imperial power and territory, subjugating the conquered and appropriating their vital economic resources. Very little effort was made to integrate the conquered people, but rather to treat them as sub-humans, worthy only for satisfying the needs of the rulers. During the post-Italian era, Ethiopian regimes have committed themselves to modernise Ethiopia. Building the state through modernisation has involved the expansion of state power (centralisation) and repressive control over its society. It has also brought types of economic systems that create and maintain inequalities, discrimination and alienation of people from their vital resources such as land.

Modernisation requires education, specialisation, homogenisation and development in

communication (cf., Gellner, 1983). Brown and several other writers note that the modernisation process, rather than resolving problems, creates or deepens awareness of groups' identities and shared interests, giving birth to nationalisms (Brown, 2001: 11). Such is the case of Ethiopia as chapters 4 and 5 have revealed. Although some blame modernisation for causing inter-communal conflicts, it is not modernisation *per se* that causes nationalisms (for the groups in south-west Ethiopia that have come into contact with modernisation want it [cf., Donham, 1999]), but principally the failure of the regimes or rulers to accommodate and integrate different identity and political groups in the country on the basis of equality and full participation in the country's social, political and economic life. It is the presence of relevant social mechanisms that allow peoples in a multi-national/ethnic society to live together (Jung, Schlichte and Siegelberg, 1996: 52-61; Wallensteen, 2002: 22). The modern Ethiopian political structure has been authoritarian and exclusivist, favouring the ruling region- or ethnic-based elites and generally (except maybe the *derg*) favouring regions from which they come (Bereket, 1980: 166-167; Clapham, 1995: 117; Markakis, 1994: 222; Merera, 2002: 2). Although most of the time the Ethiopian state has remained "ethnocratic" (Markakis, 1994: 222; cf., Mazrui,1977), economic beneficiaries have always been the ruling elites and their allies (dependent elites for their economic and political interests) [Eide, 2000: 15]. It is within this context that the Sidaama nationalism developed and can be understood.

When a conflict arises and overt conflict actions take place, some methods of managing the overt conflict escalate the conflict rather than transform it. At the arrival of different regimes, Ethiopia had opportunities to transform conflicts and build a stable society; but those opportunities have been lost. The consequence is the proliferation of nationalisms. The Sidaamas did not remain passive under the oppressions and the imposition of foreign rules and ideals upon them. They resisted them and the policies that disadvantaged them. In reaction to the Sidaama resistance, all the four regimes (the imperial, the Italian, the *derg* and the TPLF/EPRDF) have committed atrocities against the Sidaama, with a view to controlling them politically and economically. None of the regimes tolerated any opposition but used force to suppress the Sidaama grievances. They ruled the Sidaamas with terror. Some events have remained vivid in the Sidaama memory. The Italians killed many able, wise and strong Sidaama individuals on the basis of rumours. They did not like strong personalities and wise elders, for they saw in them the possibility of eventual rebellion. Consequently, for the

Sidaamas, the term 'Italian' became synonymous with a person who kills and punishes someone just on suspicion, without verifying rumours or accusations. The *Amaaru Shibbirre* (the "Amhara Terror" at the return of Haile-Selassie after the Italian occupation) and the deliberately created famine decimated the Sidaama population. According to Betana's estimation, about 60,000 Sidaamas perished.[35] In response to the Sidaama resistance in 1979, at a place called Borrichcha, the *derg* also massacred at least 300 (according to Betana's figure) men, women and children. In 1980, it executed 32 innocent peasant prisoners in public in Bansa town, and placed their corpses on the streets for 36 hours for the people to see. Soldiers also raped young girls, and according to Betana, including 12 and 13 year olds. The current EPRDF government also massacred unarmed and peaceful Sidaama protestors on 24 May 2002 in the Awaasa vicinity. The latter have been commemorated every year among the diaspora Sidaama, and also clandestinely within the Sidaamaland. These atrocities and many other human rights abuses by the three regimes were meant to teach lessons to the Sidaamas that if they ever resisted the rulers' interests or policies, they would face serious consequences. However, these events, rather than achieving the rulers' goals, served as key moments in the Sidaama struggle for freedom and kept the Sidaama nationalism alive.

The *derg* government removed certain contributing factors to Sidaama grievances (e.g., attempted equal treatment, land distribution, education), but replaced them with the policies that the people found unbearable. It has, however, removed the horizontal dimension of conflicts, but intensified the vertical one. The EPRDF government have provided needed structures that the Sidaamas find favourable, i.e., the constitutional provision that guarantees individual and group rights. At the same time, because of its bad governance, lack of the rule of law, and failure to protect human rights as well as grant the Sidaama aspiration for self-governing status it has intensified not only vertical unpeaceful relations, but also created a spill over to horizontal dimensions.

In all that has been said in Part II, several issues remain common throughout the three successive regimes in Ethiopia: first, the state has been controlled or dominated by the elites belonging to the traditional Centre (Abyssinian groups), maintaining traditional domination over the conquered groups,

[35]Betana Hotteesso, "The Sidaama Struggle Against Tyranny", an unpublished Conference paper of May 2003. Concerning the British support of Haile-Selassie in restoring him to power (see Markakis & Ayele, 1978: 33).

always benefiting the ruling elites. Those controlling the state use its institutions to enhance and perpetuate their power (Clapham, 1995: 117). 'Chorocracy' and 'ethnocracy' have been part of modern Ethiopian history. Ethiopian society is still marked by political inequality among its identity groups. Secondly, relations between the state and people have been top-down or asymmetric. Where conflict arises, the government tends to use coercive mechanisms without providing effective mechanisms for participation and conflict transformation. It is a weak state, lacking legitimacy, and depends on external economic and military assistance. Thirdly, opposition groups are still not tolerated, and in a reciprocal manner the latter are also intolerant of the former; decisions are made by the ruling elite without the participation of the people and opposition groups. The state lacks the internal capacity to channel internal forces for the good of the country. The country lacks democratic culture since the successive governments of modern Ethiopia have been authoritarian. These have forced people to defend themselves on the basis of their identity groups. Fourthly, the state owns vital and scarce economic resources. These resources are not evenly distributed, and are often used for the benefit of the ruling elite. Fifthly, the country suffers from bad governance, hence the legitimacy problem. These relate well to Azar's four preconditions (see pp. 61-66 above) for the existence and protraction of social conflicts in a multi-ethnic/national society (Azar, 1990: 7-15; 1986: 28-39; 1991: 93-120): i) the state being at the core of the problem in a multi-communal society, as a result of which individual grievances are mediated through communal identification. He finds colonial legacy and ethnocracy underlying the disjunction between the state and society; ii) the deprivation of developmental human needs (security [survival issue], political access [fair representation in power-share], and acceptance [integration]); iii) bad governance (due to the promotion of narrow interests of the elites, absence of legitimate government, incompetence and authoritarianism); and iv) international linkage (the state's dependency on or clientage to strong [economically powerful] states, whose economic and military interest dictates the government's policies, and diaspora communities supporting their communities in their homelands). All these four categories of conditions are present in the case of Ethiopia and validate Azar's theory of preconditions for protracted social conflicts.

Where those preconditions exist, the development of overt conflicts depends on the contingent actions: communal and state actions and strategies, and the 'built-in-mechanisms' of conflicts — e.g.,

the three mutually reinforcing elements of the Galtungan conflict triangle (contradiction/situation-behaviour-attitude) [Azar, 1990: 12-15]. The communal actions in Sidaamaland have moved from protests and insurgency to open and organised armed movements/fronts. Although they attempted several policies to resolve conflicts and build a stable modern state from a constructionist approach, the two regimes that governed modern Ethiopia until 1991 relied heavily on military and coercive means until each one of them was overthrown by force. The current government, although it is making efforts to open-up spaces for the participation of the opposition groups, is fragile and authoritarian, and also uses suppressive measures against challenges or threats to its power. It relies heavily for its survival on the external support. In the southern regions, unpeaceful relations that have been traditionally and predominantly vertical (state-society/community), are now expanding to the horizontal (intra- and inter-communal) dimension, making situations more complex.

Do Azar's four criteria (*protractedness, fluctuation, actor and issue spill-over, and absence of clear termination*) for PSC accurately portray the patterns of behaviour that exist in Sidaamaland? Conflicts in Sidaamaland go back to the day of its conquest in 1893; it is a long conflict passing through different stages of development as indicated in chapter 5. It is therefore a protracted conflict. It has *fluctuated* in frequency and intensity. There have been violent conflict expressions with bloodshed, and the longest was the six years Sidaama vs State war. Violent periods have cooled down sometimes not because the conflict is ended, but rather because one side wins the war. Winning war means keeping negative peace. This makes it impossible to foresee a clear moment of *termination*, for every time when the regime changes and people expect the end of conflict, the problem does not end; Sidaama-State unpeaceful relations continue to deepen. During this long period of conflicts in Sidaamaland, the scope and level of conflict has expanded. There has been *spill-over* in actors and issues. More conflict parties, frustrations, anxieties, and issues of contest. Some of the current horizontal unpeaceful relations are spill-over of vertical unpeaceful relations. Social conflict in Sidaamaland is a PSC. There may be some explanatory differences owing to the contexts of the social conflicts with which one deals. Nevertheless, Azar's theory does offer a relevant analytical tool, and does portray the preconditions and patterns of behaviours that exist in Sidaamaland.

Part II has provided a general socio-political, economic, historical and cultural context (both macro and micro-backgrounds) in understanding the current conflicts in Sidaamaland. It has explained why conflicts in the Sidaamaland continue without abatement. The next part (Part III) offers the knowledge of the current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland and its social capital that can help to transform them.

III: ANALYSIS OF CURRENT CONFLICTS IN SIDAAMALAND

Part I has provided the general conceptual and theoretical contexts required for the understanding of the current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. The figure of 'the process of change' in human development offers a general theoretical frame of reference (macroscopic view) in which the place and the role of conflict is understood. Most identity-based conflicts arise from developmental needs (Burton, 1990; Azar, 1990), and conflict serves as an agent calling for change in relationship that is perceived as preventing a group's human development both in 'being' and 'having'. Part II has presented a general knowledge of socio-cultural, political, economic and environmental contexts within which conflicts in Sidaamaland can be understood. It has shown that conflicts in Sidaamaland are protracted social conflicts. This Part now tries to sift out what the groups in Sidaamaland perceive as obstacles for their human development and on the basis of which they currently live in the state of manifest unpeaceful relations.

Managing and/or transforming deep-rooted unpeaceful relations requires in-depth knowledge of them. This involves the knowledge of the socio-cultural, political, economic and environmental contexts of the unpeaceful relations, the conflict parties, the issues that underlie the current unpeaceful relations, the dynamics that escalate them, and the social capital (part of the de-escalatory dynamics) that provide avenues for meaningful and transformative actions and interactions. The process of acquiring such knowledge of unpeaceful relations in a given geographical area is termed 'conflict analysis'. The analysis of the unpeaceful relations is not necessarily concerned with learning something new, but essentially with understanding the unpeaceful relations in different and deeper ways. Contextualised and area-based conflict analysis is considered essential for managing and transforming conflicts, for a 'one-size-fits-for-all' solution has been found ineffective (Bloomfield *et al*, 1998: 13, 31, 39; IA *et al*, 2004, chapter 1: 3). Previous Parts have provided general theoretical and contextual backgrounds. This Part applies the theoretical provision of chapter 3B; it concentrates on the study of conflict parties (chapter 6), its issues (chapter 7), conflict dynamics (chapter 8), and a local peace dynamic, the Sidaama 'social capital' (chapter 9). Chapter 10 will provide a programmatic conclusion.

Conflicts in Sidaamaland are both vertical and horizontal. Most of them are based on

structural relations, and therefore, presenting Adam Curle's five types of unpeaceful relations in this introductory section and relating them to the complex unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland can give the reader a general glance of what types of conflicts chapters 6 to 8 deal with.

Types of Social Unpeaceful Relations According to Curle

Adam Curle (1971: 9-15) presents five types of unpeaceful relations, basing himself on the level of awareness of the relations among the parties in latent or overt conflicts. He classifies them as: (i) balanced relationship (ibid: 9-10), (ii) unbalanced relationship (ibid: 10-11), (iii) imbalanced relationship (ibid: 12, 97), iv) pseudo-balanced relationship (ibid: 13-14), and (v) relationships of alienation (ibid: 14-15).

i) In the 'balanced relationship', a considerable level of awareness of the conflict among the conflict parties exists, but in their conflict actions they uphold the zero-sum positions (i.e., win-lose position). It can lead to extremes of violence (e.g., Nigeria-Biafra, Ethiopia-Eritrea).

ii) In the unbalanced relationship, there also exists considerable awareness of conflict but the relation is asymmetric with very little redress. The underdogs are conscious of their subjugated position. "The top dog is free to withhold his resources from the underdog and devote them to his own people..." (Curle, 1971: 10). "The top dog makes decisions about the underdog that the latter should make for himself, and does things to or for him (including, in some cases, benevolent things) that invade his proper autonomy" (ibid: 11). This type of relation denies the underdogs opportunities to develop in the manner they could in a peaceful situation, and leads to "the eventual outbreak of physical violence in the form of insurrection, rebellion, civil war, and even international strife" (ibid).

iii) Imbalanced relationship: in this category, there exists lower awareness of conflict among the depressed and oppressed groups, living in an abject and poverty-stricken situation. They are ignorant and unaware of the abjectness of their position, and "accept and endure it as a fact of nature like the bitter winters and the annual time of hunger" (ibid: 12).

iv) Pseudo-balanced relationship: there is low awareness of conflict in this relation. It occurs "whenever a dominant group attempts to placate or assuage a less dominant group by creating a superficial appearance of balance" (ibid: 13). In reality, the dominant group exercises absolute power

over key aspects of the life of the less dominant groups, such as making policies and decisions over resources that are essential for the development and well-being of the latter (ibid), but often with an interest of preserving more its own status and power than the ruled groups.

v) Relationships of alienation: the pattern of unpeaceful relation here differs from the rest in the sense that it concerns not "objective incompatibility of interest, but the alienation of one group from another, often, but not necessarily, accompanied by a sense of grievance - even of conflict - which is completely unwarranted by the facts. In the single individual this is a condition approaching paranoia" (ibid: 14). Relationships "of alienation exist when one party to the relationship feels and acts as though he were the underdog in an unbalanced/higher-awareness relationship while the other feels and acts as though he were engaged in a peaceful relationship - or at least tries to do so. If, however, one is treated with suspicion and hostility one tends to react in kind, though probably not to the extent of changing the structure of the relationship completely" (ibid: 15).

Applied to Sidaamaland situation, Curle's types of relations offer categories of conflict types, but not all the conflicts in Sidaamaland can be attributed to the descriptions in each category. Each category has something peculiar to itself. Curle's 'balanced relationship' (type 1) figures to some extent the situation existing between Sidaama and Wolaita identity groups (a horizontal conflict). The conflict between these two is on the way to the 'segregated stage' (see pp. 74-75 above; Bloomfield *et al*, 1998: 46-47) of conflict escalation. The unpeaceful relation between the Sidaama and the government falls in type (ii) category in the sense that the Sidaamas are aware of their subjected status in relation to the ruling group, but the power relation is very asymmetrical. The government's position remains uncompromising and heavy-handed. It holds the position of "do what I want or I will do what you don't want" (Miall *et al*, 1999: 10).[1] Scholars have attributed this characteristic (not being able to dialogue and make compromises but rely on coercion/punishment) to the nature of a 'weak state' (Lake and Rothchild, 2001: 128-129). There are also some elements from type (iv): the government has provided an ethnic/national based federal structure. It argues that this addresses the issues of the national question and equal national status; and that every group is provided with self-governing rights to administer themselves. The opposition parties and critics argue that the provision

[1]Cited from Kenneth Boulding, 1989.

is simply nominal. Human rights groups (both international and national) also accuse the government of widespread human rights violations. Despite the constitutional provision of the right of self-determination even up to secession (the CFDRE, 1995: Art. 39) and the right to form a regional state within the country (Art. 47:2), the nationality issue is still not resolved. For the existing nationalisms, the government tends to blame some self-interested individuals and bad-governance by the ineffective local officials, and also those it terms as 'terrorist groups'.[2] The majority of the Sidaama people, although they appreciate the fact that they can now express their culture and use their language in primary education and also in public courts, in other areas they do not see a significant change in their relationship with the government; they are not participants in policy-making and their voices are not heard; their living standard has not changed; on top of the taxes they pay, the policy of paying education fees for their children means that only the able families can afford to send their children for secondary and tertiary education.

Although the aspect of the underdog being in an abject and poverty-stricken situation does not feature in Sidaamaland, elements of 'imbalanced relationship' (type iii) also applies to the situation of women. The Sidaama society, being patriarchal, relegates women to a lower position. There seems to be less awareness among Sidaama women about their lower status, for they still seem to accept the patriarchal philosophy of male supremacy. The Sidaamas need to address this issue.

Although certain description that Curle gives to the 'relationship of alienation' (type v) does not figure in Sidaamaland, certain aspects of it apply to the relations that exist between the artisan and non-artisan groups in Sidaamaland. In principle, the relations between these groups can be said to be equal and discrimination is now removed. They have equal opportunities for education, political offices, and other professional fields. Even within the Sidaama tradition, the artisan groups are not oppressed or exploited; they participate fully (save the segregation between the Awaado clan and the Holloo clan [the relationship of untouchables]) in community decision-making. However, in other social areas the discrimination (at least in stereotyped perception and exclusion of intermarriage) is still present within Sidaamaland, among the rural Sidaamas.

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[2]See the SSI interview-I with Prime Minister Meles (available at http://www.waltainfo.com/Conflict/Interview/2002/August/interview_1.htm); and an interview with Dr. Gebre Ab Barnabas, Minister of State *Ministry of Federal Affairs*, available at http://www.waltainfo.com/Conflict/Interview/2002/December/interview_2.htm.

With this highlight in mind, it is time now to present the current unpeaceful relations in a deeper and systematised way. The table below serves as a guideline to the questions that each chapter addresses. The table is more or less similar to the conflict mapping guide of *Miall et al* (1999: 92), IA *et al* (2004, chapter 2: 3-5), and Bloomfield *et al* (1998: 41-43).

Conflict Mapping Guide: Conflict Analysis

A. Backgrounds (Parts I [chapters 2-3] and II [chapters 4-5])

B. The Conflict Parties (Chapter 6)

1. Who are the core conflict parties?
   What are their internal sub-groups and on what constituencies do they depend?
2. What are the relationships between the conflict parties? Are there qualitative and quantitative asymmetries?

C. Conflict Issues (Chapter 7)

1. What are the current issues of disagreement among the actors in conflict?
2. What are the underlying motivations of the actors? Is it possible to distinguish between positions, interests (material interests, values, relationships) and needs?

D. Conflict Actions (Chapter 8A)

1. What is the current behaviour of the parties? Is the conflict in an 'escalatory' or 'de-escalatory' phase?
2. Who are the leaders of the parties? What are their objectives?

E. Conflict Dynamics [Chapter 8B)

1. *At the local level*: What are the attitudes, stereotypes, or perceptions that sustain and intensify animosities or antipathy among the conflict parties? How evenly are the economic resources and job opportunities shared? What is the level of social, political, cultural and economic integration among the parties to conflict? Or what is the level of political participation or representation in the local government?
2. *At the state level*: Is the nature of the state contested? How open and accessible is the state apparatus? How even is economic development? How effective is the governance? Is there human rights abuse?
3. *At the international level*: how do relations with neighbouring states and societies affect the conflict? Do the parties have external regional supporters? Are there outside geopolitical interests in the conflict? What are the external factors that fuel the conflict?

F. Peace Dynamics: Provisions for Conflict Transformation (Chapter 9)

What provisions are available locally, nationally and internationally that help or contribute towards conflict transformation?

G. Conclusion (Chapter 10)

Source of Information for the Current Conflict Analysis in Sidaamaland

In this Part, the author relies on the August-December 2002 field research data (from the questionnaire, observation, and interviews) and documents (articles and interviews from newspapers

and website, reports and articles by other researchers and writers in the SNNPR). The field research data offer information to distinguish the parties in conflict, to know their perspectives and issues of contention, and the way the conflicts are being expressed. The interview data with the Sidaama elders and notable individuals have been more useful for the previous Parts and will be also useful in Part III. When the author enquired whether the Sidaamas had conflicts with the non-Sidaama groups in Sidaamaland, the rural people (elders that he interviewed, the individuals he interacted with in informal context at different places which included both Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas) responded with 'no'. Instead, they perceived that the Sidaama conflicts are with the government and the elites in power.

> "*Ninke wolu manni baalu ledo keerulla noonke. Muli yannani ka'iwo coy kayiinni gashootu aanaanni ka'iwoho*" (We are at peace with all other people. What happened in the recent time came from the government) [R7].

This indicated that in rural areas within Sidaamaland, at least *manifest*/*overt* unpeaceful relations between the Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas did not exist. Some did mention periodic squabbles between the Sidaamas and their neighbouring Oromo groups (Arusi and Guji), which reflected not intra-Sidaamaland conflict, but a traditional unpeaceful relation existing between the two communities that will also be discussed later. The interview data from rural areas would not help much in analysing the current horizontal unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland, but that between the Sidaamas and the government. The interview data in the rural area offered very little information, for the rural people said that there was no conflict between the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas. Therefore, the data from the questionnaire (see the questionnaire at the Appendices) and observation serve as the main source for horizontal conflict. Now, who are the parties involved in the conflicts?

6. CONFLICT PARTIES IN SIDAAMALAND

We have already seen the structural sources of unpeaceful relations in Ethiopia and history of conflict in Sidaamaland in the previous chapters. Sufficient information about the Sidaamas and their environment is also presented in the above chapter. This section focuses on those involved in the unpeaceful relations (e.g., contenders, direct or indirect interveners [allies/meddlers/preventative

forces]), who are termed as 'conflict parties' (Wehr, 1979: 19; Miall *et al*, 1999: 92) or 'actors' in conflict (Bloomfield *et al*, 1998: 41). It deals with the questions: Who are the main actors? What are their capacities and relations? Wehr categorises 'conflict parties' as 'primary' (those in direct conflict), 'secondary' (those with indirect stake in the outcome of the disputes), and 'interested third parties' (those with interest in the successful resolution of the conflict). In this work, 'interested third party' includes not only those interested in conflict transformation, but also those whose interest becomes a factor of conflict escalation. Wehr indicates that the 'secondary' conflict parties may become 'primary' ones as a conflict escalates (Wehr, 1979: 19). In Sidaamaland such a movement from secondary to primary parties is in the making, for those with direct and indirect stakes in the outcome of the Sidaama-State unpeaceful relations are around the threshold of the polarisation stage of escalation.

Sidaamaland experiences *three-dimensional* unpeaceful relations which the author terms as primary, secondary and tertiary *dimensions* (not parties). Each dimension has its own conflict parties. The first dimension has Wehr's primary, secondary and interested third conflict parties. The secondary dimension has Wehr's primary and interested third parties; and the tertiary dimension has Wehr's primary party. The three dimensions of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland require different levels of approaches in addressing them, for they are at different positions or "stages of escalation" (see pp. 74-75 above [Bloomfield *et al*, 1998: 46-47]) and objectives. The classification of the conflict as primary, secondary, and tertiary dimensions is a way of prioritising in accordance with the most urgent one that needs to be addressed. The first two dimensions are directly and indirectly related, but the 'primary' one has more potential to deepen or worsen unpeaceful relations in the secondary one and to some degree in the tertiary one. To reflect the Sidaamaland conflict situation, the author reformulates Wehr's categorisation of conflict parties by identifying them as:

1) contenders in primary, secondary, and tertiary dimensions of the unpeaceful relations;
2) capacity-builders (e.g., stakeholders, sympathisers/allies), some of whom contribute to the protraction of conflicts, others to the conflict transformation.

These two categories of conflict parties have their own interests. Even within each party, as noted by Burton (1969: 20), individuals/groups may have different interests; but in a protracted social conflict situation they ally themselves to what they see to be commonly beneficial (e.g., security issue

and developmental needs). For this reason, the author recognises that the classification above is not perfect. However, it is helpful enough to allow readers and practitioners in conflict-transformation to grasp with reasonable accuracy who is who in the unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland.

6.A. CONTENDERS

6.A.1. Primary Dimension of the Unpeaceful Relations

Who are the main actors and what are their capacities? The conflict actors in the primary stage are the Sidaama people, the government, the Sidaama political parties (SPDO, SLM, SLF, SNLO), the Sidaama zonal administration, and the SNNPR administration.[3] The Sidaama political parties will be explained below (6A1.i.b.). Unpeaceful relations are carried out among these primary actors on three levels:

- the Sidaama people versus the government
- SPDO (as agent and beneficiary of the government) versus the opposition groups (SLM, SLF, SNLO and their supporters), excluded elites and activists for democracy and human rights
- the zonal administration (Sidaama) versus the regional administration (SNNPR)

6A1.i. The Sidaama People vs the Government

The unpeaceful relations within these primary parties involve arguments and acts of violence (physical and psychological). The Sidaama political organisations articulate the Sidaama people's grievances and aspirations, but with different goals and through various means. The SLM wants internal self-determination through legal means. The SLF wants 'self-determination' [not clear whether external or internal] through armed struggle. The SPDO expresses its desire for the Sidaama regional status but at the same time with guarantees for its power position. The SNLO (which is just in its infancy)

[3]The SNNPR is divided into nine zones (one of which is the Sidaama zone) and five special districts on the basis of linguistic territory.

wants total secession through armed struggle. The educated groups, although not organised formally as a civil society, also articulate individually the causes of their people and discuss them among themselves.[4] Conflict relation among the Sidaamas and the government is asymmetric. The government enjoys exclusive power in issues that it considers important, and therefore, it can decide either to listen to the requests and grievances of the Sidaamas and negotiate with them, or ignore them and do as it wants. It is Curle's conflict type (ii). When problems arise or conflicts begin to surface, some individuals and local officials are blamed and through the yearly assessment of performance they are removed from office.[5] This is a situation that comes closer to what Curle categorises as 'pseudo-balanced relationship' in which the dominant "attempts to placate or assuage a less dominant group by creating a superficial appearance of balance" (Curle, 1971: 13). So far there has not been a dialogue between the Sidaamas and the government (there are neither avenues for dialogue nor a civil organisation to represent the Sidaama); the government makes policies and expects them to be implemented without modification to suit local contexts. During one of my informal interaction with a trained agriculturalist working with rural farmers, the latter shared her anxiety: "I am torn apart. We were trained to teach the people the methods to improve their production. Yet we are asked to implement some unpopular measures within a given period of time, and the people hate us. How can you help people who despise you and do not trust you?"

The interviewees during the field research were unanimous in their assertion that they had no problem and *gibbo* (unpeaceful relations) with the non-Sidaamas in Sidaamaland. But during the group interviews in public, when they were asked about the Sidaama relation with the government, they tended to ignore the question. When the researcher tried to enquire further into it, they showed

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[4]In the year 2001, the Sidaama intelligentsia began to organise themselves as a non-political civil organisation, but the top SPDO officials disbanded it. Later on, the persecution against many educated individuals prevented any hope of realising it. Some members of this group are now in exile as refugees; others left the country through legal means; some others are dispersed within the country working in private firms and NGOs; some were imprisoned in a prolonged imprisonment without trial; and the remaining keep their heads down for fear of being imprisoned.

[5]For instance there have been no fewer than ten Sidaama zonal chairmen (presidents) within the period of 13 years of the EPRDF rule. The Zonal Council from which the executives (e.g., the chief and deputy executives of the zone) are elected, has five year's term of office before a new election (see the Constitution of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State, June 1995; Art. 70). Except in extraordinary cases (e.g., inefficiency), the Zonal chief executive stays in power for the duration of the Council's term of office. It seems that in the Sidaama zone there have not been competent or efficient leaders, since they have been changed frequently without finishing their terms.

discomfort and said with hesitation and lowered voice '*danchchaholla*' ('it is fine'). It was clear that the people were afraid to criticise the government openly or speak about their grievances. After the group interviews, some individuals from the group-interviewees privately confided to the interviewer that they did not like the government. The individual interviewees confirmed this position, adding that they were unhappy with the way the government treated them. The level of suppression of the people's grievances was reflected in the fear of not wanting to speak about political issues in public. Some of the conflict actions involved: attempted assassination of the Sidaama zonal chairman in May 2002 by some Sidaama individuals, the indiscriminate shooting of unarmed and peaceful Sidaama protesters by the security forces on 24 May 2002 some distance outside the regional capital Awaasa, soon afterwards the assassination of a government official by some Sidaama individuals in reaction to the 24 May atrocity, and imprisonments of many innocent individuals for political reasons without proper trial. The power asymmetry in the Sidaama-State relation is very pronounced by the fact that there is no dialogue among the parties, and the peace in Sidaamaland is maintained by coercion. During my field research, despite the fact that I explained to teachers at different schools about the questionnaire and its aims being non-political, and for building harmony and promoting development, they were still afraid and resistant to respond to it. They said: "It is political." I used all the best reasons I had, yet only some responded, and put their responses in an unaddressed envelope without signing their names.

6A1.ii. The Sidaama Administration vs Opposition Groups and Critics

There exist four Sidaama political parties: the SPDO (now merged into the EPRDF's regional party, the Southern Ethiopia Peoples Democratic Front [SEPDF]) that controls the current zonal government, and the opposition parties (the SLM, SLF and SNLO). The last two are the outlawed nationalist organisations regarded as terrorists by the government. In principle, the SLM has been functioning as a legal organisation since 1998; in practice, the pre-2004 SPDO has given no space for it to exercise freely its political activities in Sidaamaland. Before describing the conflict relations among these parties, let us see who these parties are, and their aspirations.

6A1.ii.a. The SLM

This is the oldest Sidaama political party, founded in 1978, in reaction to the *derg*'s autocracy. The Sidaamas actively participated in the Ethiopian revolution of 1974, and hoped for freedom, equality, democracy and internal self-governing status. From 1974 to 1978, there existed a severe internal struggle for controlling power at the Centre (Addis Ababa) among the principal political parties (MEISON, EPRP, *derg*). It was during this period of struggle at the Centre that a group of the educated Sidaamas took advantage of the chance to organise their people for development. The *derg* slowly transformed itself into a communist group in 1976 by incorporating leftist policies, and was led by a moderate group that was open to dialogue and to accommodating different political groups. However, in 1977, the hardliners within the *derg* took control of the leadership (under Mengistu Haile-Mariam) by eliminating the moderates. Faced with an approaching military autocracy, MEISON (which was working under a tactical alliance with the *derg* and was organising the Ethiopian society under communist ideology) saw that the people could not be guaranteed their rights and democracy. MEISON devised a system, borrowing from Stalin, to prevent the *derg* domination and dictatorship, but also as a way of addressing the hitherto burning question of nationality. It argued that a national group could only manage to demand and guarantee its rights as well as curtail military autocracy by being organised and militarised on a nationality basis, but under the umbrella of an overall national movement in which all organised national groups democratically participate; that in each nationality area the cadres should come from that national group. From this followed several identity-based organisations (e.g., those of the Oromo, Hadiyya, Afar, Sidaama, Kaffa). This was when (towards the end of 1977) and where the idea of self-governance and the Sidaama nationalism in a modern form began, and was carried out through the SLM (R31, R34). The *derg* wanted and tried to address the issue of nationalities, but ruled out the idea of 'national right' or self determination (Amanuel, 2001: 4).

According to Woldamanuel (the founding member and leader of the SLM), already in the 1960s, elders from protestant churches were meeting clandestinely (hiding from the *neftegna*), sharing information from different parts of Sidaamaland and discussing how to address commonly their problems. There were already elements that rebelled against the "Amhara" rule, living in not easily

accessible areas like Arooreessa district. The elders, however, were trying more to address their problems through legal means. After the Revolution, they were carefully observing the unfolding situations among the revolutionaries, and were even meeting in secret with Woldamanuel who was then the governor of Sidaamaland.[6] The educated groups were already discussing the idea of forming a Sidaama movement. In 1977, the Sidaama literate individuals like Ishetu Araarso began mobilising the Sidaamas under the slogan *Ka'i* (Stand up), and distributed papers under the title *Ka'i*. The *derg* hardliners began eliminating all the opposition parties and those educated elements who were organising ethno-national parties (cf., Clapham, 1988: 68-69). This brought the Sidaama educated and political elites (mainly graduates and students from tertiary institutions [Teachers Training Institutions, Colleges and university]), and the elders (both from Christian churches and other Sidaama groups) into one.[7] They all discussed among themselves and agreed to set up an organised armed movement as the only way to further their struggle for freedom, thus giving birth to the Sidaama Liberation Movement (SLM) in 1977, demanding 'self-determination' for the Sidaamas. Woldamanuel became its chairman. Among the literate Sidaamas, most of those actively involved in the Sidaama cause (e.g., Betana Hoxeeso, Futte Musso, Taddese Xagichcho, Mateos Korsisa, etc), and who were present at the foundation of the SLM, were imprisoned by the *derg*; Tadesse Xagichcho was killed during the inter-leftist war; Betana and Futte were locked in prison; and Woldamanuel and some others left for Somalia, where they got support to fight the *derg*; and provincial authority conspired against Matewos Korsiisa and killed him by fabricating false allegation.

The *derg* was in no mood to negotiate with the Sidaama quest for self-determination. It perceived the movement as separatist and pro-Somalia, and tried to manage the conflict through

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[6]He was a trained lawyer in the then Haile-Selassie I University. During the Haile-Selassie regime, Woldamanuel was a parliamentarian, and held different positions (e.g., council chairman, secretary) in the tribunal and also served as chief justice in the high court. He also travelled to several places in Sidaamaland, holding meetings with the people, helping in the organisation of the people for developmental activities and building schools. After the revolution, he served as the governor of Sidaamaland until he escaped the *derg*.

[7]The following (both elders and literate groups) were prominent members among those who discussed on the foundation of the SLM: Daarimo Hena, Kaayyamo Gurraachcha, Waaqo Hoorsa, Bolka Limaso, Shudura Hayyeesso, Deede Abraham, Matewos Korsiisa, Betana Hoxeesso, Futte Musso, Tadesse Xagichcho, Woldamanuel Dubbala, Haile-Michael Okkoto, Gujo No'ora, Baaso Geleelcha. Other prominent members who joined in later include Galfato Cebbo, Buu'ro from Alata, Fokkora Gada, Xagichcho Worrassa, Kabada Fokkora, Baramo ? (of Sawoola), Markos Duumo, Wola Gosooma, Kaffalle Kinbichcha, Kaasa Adiso, Gudura Gurrachcha, Roodda Utaala. Among these some became strong military leaders in the SLM.

military means. Many of the children of *neftegna* who became the local officials of the *derg* in Sidaamaland raised their voice saying that "the Sidaamas will be going to secede, and will become a hindrance" towards building the united Ethiopia (R30). Hence, an intensive war began between the government and the SLM, and lasted for six years. By 1983, the SLM controlled a little more than a half of Sidaamaland, and had 10,000 trained fighters (R30, R40).[8] According to Betana (2004), the civil war in Sidaamaland mobilised about 60,000 state armed forces, including a mechanized brigade, armed with tanks and a helicopter gunship. Those who joined the SLM had to walk for 32 to 54 days on foot in a difficult situation (with little food and water), across the southern part of the then Bale province (an Oromo territory), to Somalia where they received military training. After the military training, they walked back (again for 32-54 days depending on the security and climatic situations) on foot through forests, carrying their guns, bullet cartridges and other military equipment, dodging the Ethiopian government soldiers who were stationed to control the rebel movement at the Ethio-Somali border.

The Siad-Barre government of Somalia provided the SLM with military training and aid (e.g., guns, bullets). Woldamanuel informed the researcher that the US, having seen the success of the Sidaamas in fighting against the *derg* and the area of land it controlled within a short period, gaining victory after victory through guerrilla fighting, began making contacts with them. The US was exploring the possibility of giving them some military support, but things fell apart as one top SLM commander in Sidaamaland defected to the *derg*, exposed the SLM secrets and important personnel. There was a serious internal conflict between him and other SLM officials in the field which led him to defect to the government (R40). This defection cost the lives of many SLM fighters, and together with some other disciplinary problems, brought an end to the overt armed conflict in 1984, leading the struggle to what Azar terms 'cooling off' period, a characteristic of PSC (Azar *et al*, 1978: 51-51, 55-56). Thereafter, the SLM began functioning clandestinely, but also was assessing itself and reorganising to make a come back to continue the struggle, when the EPRDF came to power in 1991 (R30). Somalia's refusal to continue supporting the SLM, partly due to the Ethio-Somalia peace negotiation after 1986, also made it difficult to make a high level immediate resumption of the war.

[8]R40 was one of the top SLM officials in the field, commanding one wing of the SLM fighters.

According to the conversations the researcher had (until September 2005) with the SLM leader and members, the SLM struggled for a self-governing regional status, democratic participation and equal political status for the Sidaamas.[9] In 2006, the SLM leadership appears to have temporarily abandoned the Sidaama quest for its own regional status. The writer has heard very negative and discrediting talks about the leadership, and the change has brought unhappiness among the Sidaama people. However, according to one insider, the leadership appears to have adopted a non-confrontational approach towards the government, "to prevent the people from suffering violence and bloodshed for things that are not going to bring a change at this moment" (R43). He adds that the positional change towards the Sidaama aspiration for *killil* is "not about abandoning it, but rather postponing it." The leadership still appears to have with it a good number of rural elders who support the approach. Most of the educated ones appear to be very disappointed; hence, the change of the approach offers the potential to boost the position of other political organisations (e.g., SLF, SNLO, and other clandestine groups who could be drawn into the former two) in Sidaamaland.

6A1.ii.b. The SPDO-EPRDF (SEPDF)

The coming of the EPRDF brought a new political avenue for the SLM to participate in the country's politics. The SLM was one of the political parties that formed the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in 1991 together with the EPRDF, but soon it abandoned the TGE. Until 1991, the SLM remained the only Sidaama political organisation. TPLF/EPRDF seemed to see in the SLM a strong competitor in Sidaamaland and a non 'yes' group, and classified it as an organisation of a reactionary group, hence a sort of 'class enemy' (Vaughan, 2003: 191-192). It then recruited most members from the primary school teachers, the secondary school leavers who were jobless, and some needy individuals from all Sidaama groups. These were willing because of the economic advantages they were offered. There were also some young university graduates who agreed to become members because of lack of employment. It also collected some from the *derg* soldiers to use them as local vanguard of the EPRDF and paid them salary. From them the TPLF created a party called the

[9]More information on the SLM stand or goals can be found in Woldamanuel Dubale, "We have no [plan] of separating the Sidaama from other Ethiopians," *Ethop* 5, 59 (May 2004).

Sidaama People's Democratic Organisation (SPDO). The SPDO controlled the power in Sidaamaland until 2003, and the government made available the state institutions (e.g., judiciary organ, the police, and the army) and funds for it to use in controlling the activities of the SLM and other opposition or threatening figures in Sidaamaland. It was also to be the implementing agent of the TPLF/EPRDF socio-economic policies in Sidaamaland. The SPDO members were given opportunities to upgrade their education standard, and today almost all of them have become the university graduates and diploma holders. The raising of their education standard also raised Sidaama nationalism even within the SPDO, the reason which led to the removal of the SPDO chairmen almost twice a year (until 2003) without finishing their term of office, because they were asking for the Sidaama regional status. In 2003, the SPDO and other TPLF-created People's Democratic Organisations (PDOs) in the SNNPR were merged into one regional organisation of the EPRDF called Southern Ethiopia Peoples Democratic Front (SEPDF). Hence, the one controlling power in Sidaamaland today is the SEPDF.

6A1.ii.c. The SLF

From 1992 to 1999, the SLM had no place in Sidaamaland. Its leadership was forced to seek refuge in other countries and began reorganising themselves on how to continue the struggle for the Sidaama people. They found a possible ally in the OLF and worked with them until 1998. The frustration of the SLM's objectives by the SPDO-EPRDF contributed to the disagreements within the SLM leadership. The SLM leader and his supporters preferred to lay down arms, negotiate entry with the EPRDF, and continue the struggle through constitutional means, calling for a regional status for the Sidaamas (until the end of 2005) and democratic governance. Other SLM officials and supporters wanted to continue the struggle through armed means and diplomacy. They formed the Sidaama Liberation Front (the SLF) in 1999, arguing that the achievement of the Sidaama struggle for self-determination, democracy and political equality can only come through a combined struggle: sustained armed and diplomatic struggle. For the SLF, the Abyssinians could not be trusted and would not allow the realisation of the Sidaama aspiration for self-determination, democracy and political equality. The SLF saw the Ethiopian state as a colonial power and the Sidaamas as a

colonised people.[10] The leaders of the SLF were/are all graduates of tertiary institutions (diploma and degrees [BA, MA] holders in different fields). The researcher's interaction with some members of the leadership indicates that if the Sidaamas get a regional status of their own and a genuine democracy is allowed to function in the country, the Front is likely to abandon the armed struggle.

6A1.ii.d. The SNLO

The founders of the Sidaama National Liberation Organisation (SNLO) belong to the educated Sidaamas (with BA, MA and post-graduate degrees) and younger generation, living in exile. The SNLO came into existence in late 2002, after the atrocity committed by the government against the Sidaama peaceful protestors on 24 May 2002, the event which has been commemorated by the Sidaamas in diaspora, and also clandestinely (or rather informally) in Sidaamaland. Its supporters are mostly in diaspora. Its goal involves three elements: democratising the Sidaama struggle to create a sovereign democratic society, the total independence of the Sidaama from the "Abyssinian colonial bondage", and "demystify[ing] the leadership of the struggle".[11] These goals are to be achieved by every means possible (armed struggle, alliance with other movements of the oppressed groups with similar goals for self-determination, diplomatic means). During informal conversations with some of the SNLO founder members, the following points have come up repeatedly: they accuse the SLF and SLM leadership of being ineffective and composed of people belonging to one *ga're*,[12] and of not having embraced unambiguously the vision of total self-determination (independence) for the Sidaamas; they accuse the SLM leadership of being a family affaire (with conflict of personal interest) and not wanting the Sidaama independence from the Abyssinian "colonisers". They also want the older generation to handover the leadership of the "Sidaama national struggle for liberation" to the

[10]More information on the SLF, its goals, policies, perceptions, see http://www.sidamaliberation-front.org /resolution.htm (accessed in 2005)

[11]Barasa Daye, "Declaration of the establishment of the Sidama National Liberation Organization (SNLO)," available at http://www.sidamanational-liberation.org/press.htm#english; cited on 4 March 2005.

[12]Both the SLM and SLF respond to this accusation of the leadership belonging to one *ga're* by saying that they are unable to find a willing person from other *ga're* with similar position like theirs (i.e., not too radical) to take up their place. In any case, unless it is addressed now, this accusation can be a serious source of internal conflict.

more dynamic younger generation. The SNLO regards the leaders of the SLM and SLF as the "Amharised" and "Abyssinianisers," and one of its main missions is to free the Sidaama freedom struggle from such "Amharised" elements. Hence, the central issue was based on rejecting anything Abyssinian, and the return to the past Sidaama sovereignty, and leadership power. Because the rural people have had a high respect towards the SLM leaders who are in diaspora (until September 2005), one of the SNLO's objectives is to demystify them. In his first speech, the chairman of the SNLO began by saying:

> "The Birth of [the] Sidama National Liberation struggle is the result of [...]over a century [agony] of the Sidama nation that suffered from brutal Abyssinian colonialism and [a] more than one year study on the Sidama National struggle against this colonization and colonial administration. The view stated below is the view of most of the Sidama critical scholars, who are determined to investigate not only ... how Abyssinian colonialism alternate[s] its faces to perpetuate Abyssinian fundamentalism, by demonising [the] quest for freedom as [the] evil of tribalism, but also how [the] Sidama National aspiration for freedom was hijacked by those who served Abyssinian fundamentalism or opposed each other on how to serve various Abyssinian political groups" (ibid).

Somewhere in the speech he emphasised how the Sidaama prophets foretold the Sidaamas in distress under the "Abyssinian yoke" a better situation arriving that would ease their burden:

> "... For [the] Sidama nation that period was one of sever[e] stress. In the face of dissatisfaction with [the] existing world, they looked forward to the better one [the] imminent arrival [of which] was articulated by local prophets.
>
> The prophets claimed that the Amhara domination would end soon. They announced that the oppressive rulers would soon leave the Sidamaland, abandoning what they had collected from the Sidama. They urged their followers to stop paying anything to the Abyssinians whose stations were to disappear. They said that the spirit of their ancestors would liberate their people from the Amhara trap, if they persisted in their loyalty to ancestors. After this prophecy, Italy occupied Ethiopia, authenticating the realization of the prophecy. As far as the prophecy was concerned, [the] Italian occupation of Abyssinia [was] liberating the Sidama from Amhara colonial bondage. According to the information, I collected, while conducting research on [the] socio-political history of the Sidama, the Sidama nation enjoyed more freedom during the Italian occupation" (Barasa, 2003).

The SNLO is young and has only a few followers with little organisation in Sidaamaland. The SLM and SLF regard it as not even worth mentioning. However, it is indicative of the direction to which the prolonged social conflict in Sidaamaland will lead. If the Ethiopian politics lead genuinely to a participatory democracy and good governance, and grants the Sidaamas the right for internal self-determination, the voice and aspiration of the SNLO will most probably die or remain insignificant to the general Sidaama population. But if the Ethiopian political system does not change or at least honour the rule of law, respond to the Sidaama grievances in a proper and democratic manner, it will make the voice of the SNLO credible in the ears of many Sidaamas, and the general

aspiration from internal self-determination to the external one will become more likely. The emergence of the SLF is due to the state's failure to honour its constitution by refusing to grant the Sidaama its constitutional right for internal self-determination, blocking democratic participation of the people, the government's urban policy (see pp. 221-223 below), and persecuting and illegally imprisoning important members of the opposition parties and critics. The recent change of mind of the SLM leadership (e.g., the temporary abandoning of the Sidaama quest for self-determination) is more likely to bring a favourable attention towards the SLF and SNLO. The immediate trigger for the emergence of the SNLO is the violent repression of the peacefully protesting Sidaamas on 24 May 2002. If a similar trend of repression, human rights abuse, and failure to address the Sidaama aspiration through peaceful means or dialogue, economic underdevelopment and bad governance persists, the more likely outcome will be the convergence of the three Sidaama political opposition movements (maybe save the SLM leadership) towards finding a common action, which may be violent and for external self-determination. This will also ultimately lead to founding a common armed movement with other southern armed political organisations like the OLF, the ONLF, and other opposition groups of the south-west. This logical conclusion has already begun to become a reality in the press statement of the AFD on 22 May 2006 (see p. 118 above).

Having described who the Sidaama political parties are, now it is time to see the unpeaceful relations existing among them. Between the SPDO, the Sidaama opposition groups, and the individuals who try to present the grievances of their people and also criticise those in power, the power relation is asymmetric. The first enjoys full government support because it is the ruling party's (the EPRDF'S) representative in Sidaamaland. It implements the policies of the government and enjoys access to the government resources (good salary, housing, transport facilities, power, and security). The people identify the SPDO with the government and despise it as the instrument of government oppression. The government deals with the Sidaama opposition movements through the SPDO. The SLF and SNLO remain outlawed parties, so they operate more in diaspora. Between the opposition parties, there is no dialogue, but segregation. Each one accuses the other, and so far conflicts among them exist only at the level of the leadership.

Until 2003, the SPDO did not give the SLM opportunity to function freely, despite the latter

being a legal opposition party in Sidaamaland. The SPDO considered its Sidaama critics (both independent as well as the sympathisers of the opposition parties) in the zone as members of the SLM or SLF. The SPDO feared that they would lose power to SLM, and seemed to be always defensive, and persecuted the SLM members that posed serious challenges to their rule. It blamed the Sidaama opposition parties and its sympathisers for every problem. According to the information the researcher acquired through interactions with some rural members of the SLM, they received direct threats and harassments especially when elections came. Since 2003, there has been some relaxation towards the SLM, and the SLM has appeared to be functioning freely, and reorganising itself. Since 2003, the SPDO has been brought into the newly organised EPRDF's regional coalition party called the SEPDF. Despite opposition and criticism against the SLM by some educated elements (both in Sidaamaland and in diaspora), until September 2005,[13] the SLM has enjoyed the support of the majority of the rural population. From the aspect of material resource, the SLM has operated without external resources, but with the contribution of the members both locally and from its diaspora supporters.

From the researchers' observation and informal interactions with different individuals in the countryside, and despite its critics among the educated elite, the SLM appeared to be the rural Sidaama people's favourite party. In the SLM, the Sidaamas (specially the rural ones) saw an alternative leadership through which they could present their grievances and aspirations. The SLM was more a rural-based organisation with most of the rural population as its supporters, and claimed to articulate the people's feelings and political aspirations. Even when the top leadership was (until May 2005) still outside the country, it was a legally accepted Sidaama opposition party that had opted to disown armed struggle and use the existing legal structure for addressing its issues. But since the return of its leader to Sidaamaland, the SLM support (specially among the educated group) seems to be dwindling. The leader has been accused of making alliance with the EPRDF and enjoying the latter's support and favours. The leader's recent compromising approach towards the Sidaama quest for self-determination serves as the main reason for the apparent disappointment among the SLM

[13]The supporters hoped that the incumbent leadership could hand over power to a new elected one, which the former did not want. This factor brought the decline of support for the SLM among the educated and even the rural population since September 2006.

members and supporters many of whom seem to have abandoned it. Another issue, which is less fundamental but still important mainly for the educated class, involves the leader's apparent refusal to organise a handover of his leadership position to a new, more dynamic and elected leadership. These issues have led to double accusations: of it now becoming another instrument of the government to suppress the Sidaama quest for autonomy, and of political opportunism of the leader. All in all, the critics of SLM have long presented two issues: first, they have said that its leadership have kept the educated people at a distance and been undemocratic in decision-making; secondly, the SNLO members and some individuals have accused the top SLM leadership of not wanting to leave its leadership position and of listening more to the opinion of at least one of its family members. At heart, the accusations boil down to the view that the SLM leadership has become a one man affair.

6A1.iii. The Sidaama Administration vs the SNNPR

As regards the unpeaceful relations between the Sidaama zone and the regional state, this is more between the ruling elites of the SNNPR and the Sidaama zone. They all belong to the EPRDF, and there exist more chances of negotiation concerning the intra-SNNPR issues. The bargaining power is, however, dependent on who is more in line with the federal government's policy. Where an issue is related to the central government's policy (e.g., urban development policy), the SNNPR seems to have more power. In certain cases, the Sidaama zonal issues echo the people's wish, e.g., the idea of the Sidaama regional status and development budget. There is also conflict about who controls the regional state. By the end of 2005, the unpeaceful relations between the Sidaama zone and the SNNPR ruling elites, have appeared to be at the threshold of the 'polarisation stage' of conflict escalation. In July 2005, the Sidaama zonal council, in accordance with Art 47:2 of the constitution the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, has unanimously agreed and made a written demand to the SNNP regional state for the Sidaamas to form their own regional status. The outcome will determine the future direction of the conflicts. It may also end the escalating conflict between the Sidaama and Wolaita people.

6A2. Secondary Dimension of the Unpeaceful Relations

The conflict actors at this level are the urban Sidaamas (without civil organisation but their concerns are expressed through the SPDO, SLM, SLF and SNLO),[14] the urban non-Sidaamas (the threatened, disaffected and self-interested with no clear leadership or organisation), the artisan Sidaamas (represented by the educated class but without clear leadership) and the non-artisan Sidaamas (the traditional leadership). The horizontal unpeaceful relations involve the Sidaama versus the non-Sidaama (inter-communal conflict), and the ritually excluded Sidaama clans versus those claiming ritual purity (intra-Sidaama conflict). Violent conflict actions among these secondary level actors have been rare. However, the nature of the unpeaceful relations among these secondary level actors is such that, if the relations of the primary dimension actors are not managed constructively and in time, it can move into the primary position of concern, and can lead into intractable and violent intercommunal conflicts. There is numerical asymmetry: the Sidaamas are a numerical majority (90% of the overall population in Sidaamaland) and the non-Sidaamas are the minority.

6A2.i. The Sidaamas vs the Non-Sidaamas in Sidaamaland

The unpeaceful relation between the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas (mainly in Awaasa [the zonal and regional capital]) is moving from the 'discussion stage' to the 'polarisation stage'.[15] Occasionally, there have been some violent acts against each other in Awaasa through gang activity. These gangs from both sides can spoil the chance of cooperation in transforming the unpeaceful relations among the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas. The new government urban policy and the status of Awaasa as both zonal and regional capital, and also bad governance by the SPDO, have caused the relatively harmonious relations and cooperation among the two communities to be

[14]All these political organisations, although they have different goals, are united in the issue of Awaasa and Sidaama political identity.

[15]During the field research, the researcher approached a non-Sidaama young man at Awaasa, enquiring for a particular restaurant which was in the vicinity where that young person was living. A person living close to it gave me the name of the restaurant, and I was to meet him there to collect some books I needed from him. The young man suspected that I was a Sidaama and refused to tell me the whereabouts of the restaurant. This is indicative of the escalating level of unpeaceful relations among the two communities.

negatively affected. The unpeaceful relations among the two communities at the moment remain symmetric, but the interests of the primary actors in conflict (both the regional and the federal governments) determine their future position or state of relation.

There is a high level of conflict awareness in Sidaamaland as the questionnaire data reveal. The author uses S for Sidaama, ~S for non-Sidaama, SU~S for those from Sidaama and non-Sidaama mixed parents, and ~E for expatriates or non-Ethiopians. Question 2 of the Questionnaire (see Appendix), asks whether there exist unpeaceful relations among the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas in the Sidaama zone. All of the respondents to the questionnaire fall into the category of the educated class. Among the S respondents to the questionnaire (76 in total), 63 said 'Yes', 11 'No', and 2 'I don't know'; among the ~S (49 in total [mostly urban dwellers] 34 said 'Yes', 8 'No', and 7 'I don't know'. Among the SU~S and ~E 6 respondents (14 in total) 6 said 'Yes', 4 'No', 3 'I don't know', and 1 abstained. As the conflict awareness chart shows, according to the respondents to the questionnaire, the awareness level of the unpeaceful relations between the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas in the Sidaama zone is, therefore, high (S 83% [i.e., 63/76 in percent), ~S 69% [i.e., 34/49 in percent], SU~S+~E 43% [i.e., 6/14 in percent]). However, all the interviewees in the countryside (mostly the non-educated groups) see no conflict between them and the non-Sidaamas in Sidaamaland. The typical answer they gave was "no, we have no problem with each other; we live peacefully together." From the reactions of the people during the interviews; the advice I was given by friends and relatives at different places to watch out for such and such a person as well as to be careful not to say anything that implicates the government; the general fear of the government by the people; and informal interactions: these attest that the rural Sidaamas (about 98% of the Sidaama population) see conflict existing between them and the government. The implication of the rural people stating that they have no conflicts with the non-Sidaamas is that the Sidaama and non-Sidaama unpeaceful relations are mainly urban middle class and elite-based. The absence of awareness of conflict in the rural area also reflects that the number of the non-Sidaamas living in rural areas is small, dispersed and non-threatening. Moreover, the non-Sidaamas in the countryside are generally integrated into the Sidaama tradition, but also the Sidaama cultural worldview that is based on *halaale* and the fear of God (see chapter 2A3) has contributed to such cohabitation. The smaller number of SU~S respondents indicate that the level of intermarriage among the Sidaamas and the

non-Sidaamas is low. A very few non-Ethiopian citizens (almost all of them are missionaries) live in the zone and only two of them responded to the questionnaire.

Who are the groups in conflict in Sidaamaland? All the non-Sidaamas do not seem to have problems with each other. Within Sidaamaland, they are the minorities and share a common fear of being left out and dominated by the Sidaamas. Hence, the unpeaceful relation is between the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas. While the non-Sidaamas in general could sympathise with each other without necessarily taking active roles in the unpeaceful relations, some national groups are at the forefront in the conflict. In this regard, according to the questionnaire responses, Wolaita ethnic group is mentioned 78 times (the S mentioned it 52 times, the ~S 23 times, and the SU~S 3 times), Kambaata 24 (15 times by the S, 9 times by ~S, and none by the SU~S), Amhara 21 (20 times by S and once by the SU~S), Tigre 20 (10 times by the S, 8 times by the ~S, and twice by the SU~S). The population of Tigre origin in Sidaamaland is negligible. The mention of Tigre can only be attributed to its control of the political power at the centre. The attitude here is not so much the 'winner-gets-all' but the 'winner-gets-more'.

6A2.ii. The Artisan Sidaama versus the Non-artisan Sidaama (Wolawa)

The non-artisan Sidaamas call themselves *wolawa* (i.e., ritually pure). Culturally, they despise the artisan Sidaamas on the ground of their profession (e.g., pottery, carpentry, metalwork, tannery). The unpeaceful relations among these contenders are at the 'discussion stage' of conflict escalation. The awareness of the unpeaceful relations is high, but without violent conflict action. On the cultural level, the issue has not changed. The traditional authorities of both communities have not sat to discuss the prospects of removing the taboos that prevent the artisan groups from fully participating in ritual activities and also intermarriage. The educated group from the artisan Sidaamas has raised the issue, but for the immediate solution the real power remains with the traditional authorities. Neither the state nor any external third party can help. From the political aspect, the problem is solved; all the Sidaama political organisations prohibit such exclusive practices and stand for all the Sidaamas. The educated Sidaamas also generally discredit the traditional quasi-caste system. Christianity also prohibits distinction among persons. But the traditional ritually exclusive attitude

among the non-literate older generation is still present. Unless some unscrupulous individuals from the two parties manipulate the issue for a political purpose, and unless some zealous and impatient individuals take harmful actions as a way of conflict expression, the future of this quasi-caste cultural system is short. The traditional mechanism of handling conflicts and religion prevent the conflicts from becoming violent. There exist plenty of avenues for the transformation of the conflicts. Apart from the issue of ritual exclusion (which prohibits full participation in traditional rituals and also intermarriages), there exists much cooperation and common vision among both groups of Sidaamas.

6.A.3. Tertiary Dimension of the Unpeaceful Relations

Actors in conflict at this level include the Sidaamas and the Oromo neighbours (Guji and Arusi). The unpeaceful relations at this tertiary level involve the Sidaama versus its neighbouring groups (traditional conflicts) and the intra-Sidaama elite. Among these tertiary dimension actors, the unpeaceful relations are resolvable so long as the ruling groups (the ruling elite) do not use the historical fault-lines for a wider self-serving political agenda. In the case of the traditional conflicts between the Sidaamas and their Oromo neighbours, although still some squabble from time to time emerges between the Sidaama and Arusi in the north, the drawing of the boundary lines by the Federal government has limited, if not ended, the prospect of conflict escalation. Moreover, the traditional mechanisms and methodologies within the two communities can help the total transformation of their relationship. The two communities are in dialogue and cooperate with each other. The intra-Sidaama elite conflict has been the work of some officials and at the moment this conflict has no support from the people, including most of the Sidaama elite. If those officials in power avoid *ga're* politics or nepotism and approach opposition groups on the basis of their ideological differences, *ga're*-based unpeaceful relations will not emerge. There is also latent conflict: the gender issue. The Sidaama women are still on the secondary position, dominated by men.

6.B. CAPACITY-BUILDERS IN THE UNPEACEFUL RELATIONS

What Wehr calls 'third party' in conflict (see p. 71 above) is termed here as capacity builders. Stakeholders and allies/sympathisers directly or indirectly enhance the capacity of the contenders in conflict in Sidaamaland. These capacity-builders include those who are interested in the implementation of liberal economic policies (e.g., IFI, donor governments, and the Ethiopia government), the neighbouring armed opposition groups and their sympathisers, and those interested in conflict transformation. The IFI and donor governments exercise a powerful influence on the Ethiopian government, because they make available needed economic resources to the government on condition that the government implements their economic reform programmes. There exists some level of asymmetric power relation between the donor agencies/governments and Ethiopian government. The latter desperately needs aid for economic development, territorial integrity, and also for the regime's security. The armed opposition groups from the conquered nations/ethnies (e.g., OLF, ONLF) are natural allies and sympathisers to the SLF, for they all aspire to political autonomy/independence from the Ethiopian centre.[16] They give at least moral (and even some financial and military) support to the SLF, with the potential of forming a common alliance front. The Ethiopian Centre (the government) possesses more resources than the armed opposition groups; hence, the power relation between them remains asymmetric. However weak they are, the armed groups remain as a factor of protraction of conflicts and nationalisms in the country; they affect negatively the country's economic development.

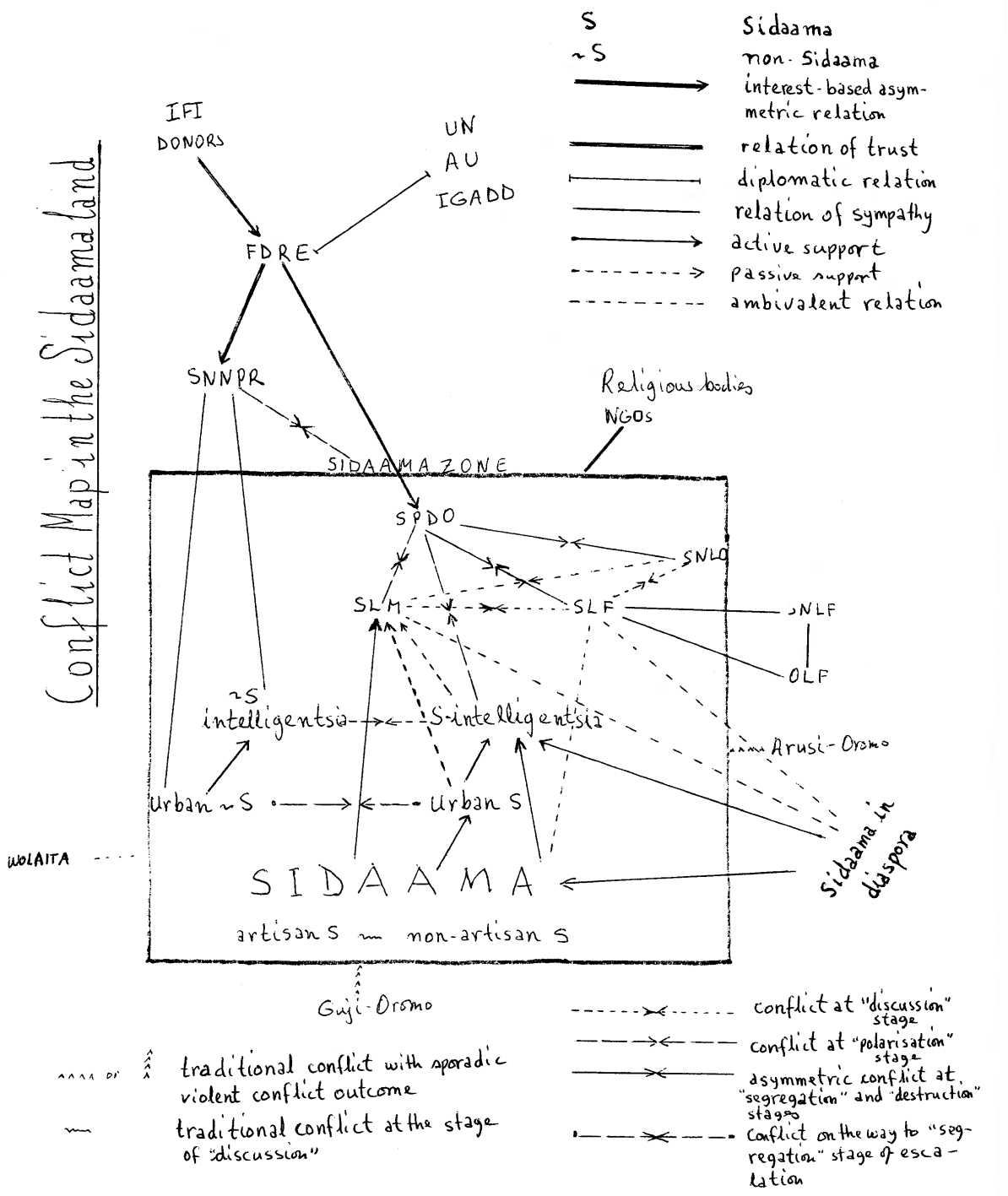
There exist potential capacity-builders either for conflict escalation or de-escalation in Ethiopia. Eritrea supports the armed opposition groups (including the SLF) in Ethiopia as a way of weakening the Ethiopian government. At the moment, Somalia is sorting out its mess, and its relevance to the Ethiopia's conflict outcomes is dependent on its future position vis-a-vis the Ethiopian state. Historically, Ethio-Somali relations have been unpeaceful, and the insurgent and rebel movements (including the SLM [1978-1985]) in Ogaden, Bale and Sidamo have enjoyed direct support from Somalia from 1963 to 1985 (Markakis, 1987: 176-181; 225-234). Kenya has been a

[16]For information on these armed opposition groups, see their website: http://www.oromoliberationfront.org; http://www.onlf.org; and http://www.sidamaliberation-front.org.

friendly state to Ethiopia, and as long as this friendly relation between the two countries continues, Kenya offers no potential support for the armed opposition groups, although the OLF have enjoyed the Kenyan Borana sympathy and refuge. Ethio-Sudan relations have been unstable, but with a new peace agreement between the Khartoum government and the Southern Sudanese, the Ethio-Sudanese relation can become stable; but it remains a potential capacity builder either for the government or the opposition armed groups like the OLF. Egypt's position to the Ethiopian state remains ambivalent, and is dictated mainly by economic interest (e.g., the Nile River conflict). The Arab states in general have had less friendly relations with Ethiopia mainly because of the religious factor but also the economic one (concerning the relationships between Ethiopia and Arab nations as well as Somalia, see Bereket,1980). These countries remain potential capacity builders in the conflict escalation or de-escalation in Ethiopia.

There also exist national, regional, continental and global bodies interested in the conflict transformation in Ethiopia. These include the IGAD, AU, UN, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), NGOs (the Human Rights Organisations, national/local developmental organisations), religious bodies in Ethiopia, and if they are empowered the traditional authorities (in the case of handling local conflicts). The constitution of the country also offers an avenue (structural capacity) for conflict transformation. In the Sidaama zone, traditional authorities and religious leadership offer capacity for conflict transformation. Although still in its infancy and in need of financial support, there exists also a local developmental NGO, "Vision Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation (VISDO)", that can become a powerful agent in providing avenues of dialogue and promoting reconciliation among different groups in Sidaamaland. The conflict-map on the next page gives a general overview.

After having introduced the conflict parties in the three dimensional conflicts in Sidaamaland, we now move to present what the parties raise as their concerns, i.e., the issues that have been underlying the conflicts. The following chapter tackles them in the order of the three dimensions of conflicts as presented in this chapter.


Conflict Map in the Sidaama land
S Sidaama
~S non-Sidaama
interest-based asymmetric relation
relation of trust
diplomatic relation
relation of sympathy
active support
passive support
ambivalent relation
IFI DONORS
UN
AU
IGADD
FDRE
SNNPR
Religious bodies NGOs
SIDAAMA ZONE
SPDO
SNLO
SLM
SLF
NLF
OLF
~S intelligentsia
S-intelligentsia
Arusi-Oromo
Urban ~S
Urban S
WOLAITA
SIDAAMA
artisans ~ non-artisans
Sidaama in diaspora
Guji-Oromo
traditional conflict with sporadic violent conflict outcome
traditional conflict at the stage of "discussion"
conflict at "discussion" stage
conflict at "polarisation" stage
asymmetric conflict at "segregation" and "destruction" stages
conflict on the way to "segregation" stage of escalation

7. ISSUES GIVING RISE TO CURRENT CONFLICTS

7.A. ISSUES AND THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE CONTENDERS

This section is concerned with presenting only the views of the contenders in the primary, secondary and tertiary dimensions of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. Although references to capacity-builders will be made at appropriate places, their views and roles will be presented in section B and next chapter. What are the current issues of disagreement among the conflict actors? What are the underlying motivations (concerns, goals, hopes and fears) of the actors? By relying on the field research data, this section tries to address these questions. At the end, this will be pictured by a table following the onion analogy.

Among the respondents to the questionnaire, 61% are Sidaamas (S), 32% non-Sidaamas (~S), and 7% those born from Sidaama and non-Sidaama mixed parents (SU~S) and two expatriates. The different figures of the respondents relate to the different size of the population composition in Sidaamaland. If one follows the 1994-PHC (pp. 9, 44) population figure in Sidaamaland, the S account for about 90% (1,842,314) and the ~S for about 10% (202, 072). The total population figure in Sidaamaland is 2,044,836. With regard to the questionnaire responses, statistically, the ratio of the ~S respondents is higher than that of the S (e.g., the ratio of the ~S respondents to the total ~S population in Sidaamaland is 1:4,123; the ratio of the S respondents to the total S population in Sidaamaland is about 1:24,240). The ~S respondents to the questionnaire are mostly from the urban areas; the S and SU~S respondents are both from urban and rural areas. All the respondents are from the literate class.

The questions (e.g., Q1, Q2, ... [Q stands for 'question']) that are cited in this thesis come from the questionnaire (see Appendix). The factors that the parties in conflict mention are arranged in the order of the most repeatedly mentioned element to the least mentioned one. These indicate the issues and perspectives each party in the unpeaceful relations maintains. To understand how these are organised, see chapter 1D5.

7.A.1. Primary Dimension of the Unpeaceful Relations

7A1.i. The Sidaama vs the Government

The elders, the educated group and the Sidaama political organisations articulate what the grievances and requests of the Sidaama people are. The questionnaire data come from the literate class, while the interview data mostly from the non-literate (e.g., elders). The issues that feature in this sub-section (in order of importance to the Sidaama) are: political aspiration for self-determination, the quality of governance, the control of the regional capital Awaasa, question of rights and political-economic issues including the question of land. The underlying factors to all these are: (i) the Sidaama desire to preserve their identity and territorial integrity, and to guarantee their socio-political equality and economic development; (ii) and their perception that these are under threat. The causes of conflicts here are, therefore, the real or perceived threats to the developmental aspects of 'being' and 'having' (see 3B1) of the Sidaama people. The government thinks that it has provided what is better for the country and the Sidaama development. The following sections explore the evidence from the survey on these points in detail.

All of the above mentioned factors are interrelated and reinforce each other and shape the perceptions of the people. Those factors are parent codes (general categories) that the researcher has arranged just for the sake of systematising and determining the category of quest or grievance that stands out as explained in 1D5. All the parent codes are mentioned 748 times in total by the Sidaamas in the questionnaire responses.

7A1.i.a. Self-determination issue

The first factor the Sidaamas mention is their quest for their own regional status (internal self-government). Statistically, it is mentioned 156 times (20.8%) out of the total 748, and comes as the highest mentioned issue of all categories. Q5 in the questionnaire asks specifically what the causes of unpeaceful relations between the Sidaamas and the government are. In the responses to the question, the issue of regional status stands out: "the Sidaama quest for *killil* which the government

refuses to grant"; "forcing the Sidaamas to mix with peoples who have no historical ties with them"; "forced integration of the Sidaamas into the SNNPR for no justifiable reason"; "the government's interest in destroying the identity of the Sidaama people". Q7i seeks suggestions from the respondents that will bring peace in Sidaamaland. Here the idea of 'granting the Sidaamas their right to self-determination' comes second to 'good governance' (mentioned 79 times). To the question (Q3iv), "*What are the Sidaamas saying (What are their complaints or grievances)?*" the Sidaama respondents say: "They want no imposition from without [i.e., non-interference in the Sidaama affairs]"; "anything relating to the future of the Sidaamas as a people should be determined by the Sidaamas, (it is also constitutional)"; "they complain that they do not have a say even in their own issues"; "we want regional status, because we want to develop our language and culture, and because we have fulfilled legal requirements"; "they want to have their own regional state)"; "we want to self-administer our own area"; "we know our needs better than the national government, so we want the government to leave us free to decide what is necessary for us"; "they are unhappy with the organizational structure of the south, for it is not conducive to development". To the same question, the non-Sidaamas also mostly mention the Sidaama quest for its own regional status by saying: "they want to administer their own affairs"; "they want their own regional state"; "they hold that they should have either an autonomous region or the president of the SNNPR must be a Sidaama".

According to the interview data in the Sidaama rural areas and informal interactions, tax reduction, having the Sidaama leadership within their territory, their ability to use their language in the courts and in other public areas, and free expression of their culture within their zone: these are raised as key issues. Although with some reservation, they generally give credit to the EPRDF government for the mentioned issues. Apart from the tax issue, the rest concern the Sidaama identity, and the quest for self-governance is mainly in the interest of protecting its identity (territory, language and culture being its identity markers) and political equality. The following citations highlight the rural Sidaama perspectives (the translation is mine):

> "Between the Haile-Selassie and the *Derg* regimes, the latter — although in later times it became hard — was better for us. Between the *Derg* and the EPRDF, the latter is the better one. The suffering we experience is less now compared to that of the *Derg* regime. We do not pay the plethora of taxes now" (R6 - a local anointed [religious-political] leader of one clan).

> "the EPRDF has given us a chance to govern ourselves, to speak our language within our territory,

> and to present our case in our language without translators in the courts. Our children are the ones administering our zone; our language that had never been allowed for broadcasting through radio in the past is now being used for broadcasting through radio in our zone; our children are being educated in our own language; our culture is respected" (R4 - an anointed leader with his clan council of elders).
>
> "We still have oppression.... Liberation and peace can only come: when the Sidaama governs the Sidaama in truth; the honest and able individuals are respected; when the people are able to choose their leaders freely; when the Sidaama has its own regional state and freely decides on its own affairs; and when the Sidaama has its own police force" (R9).[1]

The educated and urban Sidaamas are still very close to their rural relatives and population, and these appear to be well informed about issues and debates that take place within the educated group. Moreover, some elders in the countryside are the parents of those educated and non-educated individuals who were killed during the *derg* period. Some others are grieving parents of those who have been forced to run away from the country. The children and relatives of still some other parents have suffered imprisonment and impoverishment. Hence, the Sidaama political conscience is not limited to the educated and political elites alone, but to the people as a whole. In the late 1950s and during the 1960s, the educated Sidaamas were not the Sidaama-nationalists in the strict sense. They were generally trying to gain equal opportunities within the imperial government, while the elders and the rural population remained highly resistant to any attempt at assimilation, never regarding themselves as Ethiopians. The 1941-2 organised armed resistance against the return of the Haile-Selassie rule and almost all individual rebels of the pre-*derg* era: these were the works of rural Sidaamas without any formal education. The immediate precursors of the SLM in the sense of Sidaama nationalism were the elders in rural areas after the coming of the missionaries as explained in chapter 5B3. The creation of the SLM in the late 1970s was the coming together of the interests of the educated and the non-educated Sidaamas. It is, therefore, very difficult to dissociate the educated Sidaama nationalism from the non-educated Sidaamas. In fact, zonal leaders experience more pressure from the non-educated Sidaamas for the full recognition of the Sidaama identity and self-governance than one could expect. This is attested in their *qexaala* (traditional public dance through which the people express their view and positions) in which they have used offensive language to those they consider as tools of the government. This can partly explain why the government has a very close eye on and control over the rural Sidaamas.

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[1]R9 is a Sidaama oral historian a respected elder who is now in his early 80s.

When the EPRDF came to power, it operated from the principle of class struggle; hence, wherever it met resistance, it interpreted such opposition in terms of 'class interests' and suppressed the resistance. Whether this was for the interest of the country, a genuine ideological stand, or for the regime security, the TPLF/EPRDF approached the local sceptics and educated people (who had relatively their own means of income) as sort of a bourgeois class, and the SLM as a movement of the traditional local feudal aristocracy (Vaughan, 2003: 191). From this conceptual approach, the TPLF/EPRDF government presented the opposition groups as struggling for their own class interests at the expense of the Sidaama people. It thus created the ...PDOs throughout the country, through which it controlled and excluded in every area a class that constituted local businessmen, intelligentsia, and community leaders, who are non-EPRDF members (Vaughan, 2004a). In Sidaamaland, the TPLF/EPRDF created the SPDO from some EPRDF's enthusiastic supporters (who found chances of getting jobs and climbing the social ladder). The EPRDF considered the SPDO as the real representative organisation of the Sidaama people, and through the SPDO, it tried to control and suppress those it regarded as the local bourgeoisie (ibid). The original SPDO members were almost wholly composed of those with primary and secondary education and also primary school teachers in the countryside (who had one year's training after finishing secondary school).[2] An insider critic of the TPLF/EPRDF leadership (R35), who was a member of the central committee of the TPLF, informed me that the central leadership of the EPRDF knew very well that the south-western peoples were its natural allies. However, in the organisation, its main concern was based on getting the 'yes' individuals who would receive orders and directives from above without resistance or questioning. Basically, the PDOs were organised from such individuals and were considered as loyal affiliates of the EPRDF. R35 also noted that the leadership also suffered (and still suffers) from "paternalistic" attitudes, and saw itself as the one that knew better the needs of the people than the people themselves.

In an Amharic novel, "Oromay", which is written reflecting the mid-1970s situation in Ethiopia, an official comments in one of his casual discussions with his entourage:

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[2]Later on, as the EPRDF was accused of being a party the majority of whose members are less educated, the government created the Ethiopian Civil Service College (began functioning in 1995) for civil servants (its own party members) and tried to upgrade their education levels and competence in civil service.

> "We should not apprehend, imprison or interrogate the people without sufficient evidence. Nothing terrorises people more than this. We must be very careful. When there exist many individuals who say 'my rights are violated, my freedom is blocked,' our works (programs) will not be implemented. We will not find any cooperation" (Bealu Girma, 1975: 118).[3]

This situation seems to be at work in the Sidaama zone, and has deepened nationalist sentiments. From observation, casual discussion and interviews throughout the zone, and also from the researcher's own experience of intimidation, the people do experience threats and tight control of the government. A general unhappiness and mistrust towards the government and its officials exist. It also indicates that the government itself mistrusts the people. The people are directly and indirectly affected: some of them have suffered unjustified and prolonged imprisonment that left them in poverty. Many of the Sidaama educated class have suffered persecution, imprisonment, and impoverishment mainly because of their refusal to join the government party, questioning some of the government policies, or belonging to the opposition parties. Some have left their zone; some others have migrated to the US through Diversity Visa lottery; still others left the country as refugees. They have become a diaspora community, and are unsympathetic to the government. In fact, the SLF and SNLO are formed by some 'educated individuals' of those disaffected Sidaamas now in diaspora. The economic consequence is also serious for the zone which is becoming bankrupt of the qualified and experienced members of the educated class. In informal interactions with parents at different places in countryside, I used to emphasise the importance of educating their children. There was always someone commenting: "What is the use of educating our children since they are being imprisoned without committing crimes, and others are without jobs?"

In 1991, the Sidaamas were granted a regional status by the charter of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), but it was suppressed a year later. The suppression of their regional status, the persecution and dispersal of many of the Sidaama educated children and notable rural individuals, and the killing of the Sidaamas by the government security forces (e.g., on 24 May 2002) seem to have raised higher the level of unity among the Sidaamas throughout the zone in their nationalist sentiments and in the demand for regional status. The general dissatisfaction and mistrust intensify the feeling of still being dominated and oppressed. R16 (now in his 80s), who lives in a mountainous area and very far away from urban areas (more than four hours' walk from the nearest

[3]The translation of the quotation is mine.

town [no road for vehicles] and more than 150 kms away from Awaasa zonal capital), says the following after having spoken about the past regimes:

> "... This government, too, deceives us. Whatever it has in mind, it is keeping quiet at the moment because of the resistance from the people; we are still waiting to see what it is up to. It has removed from leadership our well qualified and mature children. It has put in power those who do not like work and are without other means of survival; they are 'killing us'[4]" (R16).

R16 is speaking from his recent contextual experience at Arooreessa district. I was told that the top officials in the district administration office were dedicated and close to the people, but were removed from the leadership and imprisoned after the May 2002 protest. They were accused of having incited the people against the government. Another elder says: "The Sidaamas can only be reconciled with the government if the government compensates the Sidaama for 'this blood'[5] and gives the Sidaama full liberty" (R9).

Most of the educated Sidaamas and the Sidaama political parties (the SLM [save the recent 2006 change in the position of its leadership], SLF, SPDO) are united in the quest for 'nationhood' status (i.e., forming their own regional state within Ethiopia). The Sidaama quest for self-governance is not the product of the post-1991 constitutional structure; it goes back to the late 1970s. According to the information from R32 (who was a chairman of the urban development and planning committee in 2002) and R34 (one of the educated class who was deeply involved in the organisation of the educated Sidaamas), the educated Sidaamas and the SPDO argue that the Sidaamas fulfil all the criteria for nationhood: well defined culture, clear geographical territory, common psychological make up and history, distinct language, internal economic bond (agro-pastoralist community producing *enset*, export coffee, cereal crops, beans, vegetables, fruits and rearing domestic animals [cattle, sheep, goats]) and with better infrastructure (e.g., educational institutions, health centres, roads). To this, they also add that the Sidaama population figure is higher than 4 million and is better organised. With these arguments they object to being relegated to the status of 'nationality' (as distinct from 'nation').

Right from the suppression of their regional status in 1992, the Sidaamas have continuously

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[4]The metaphorical meaning of the term 'shitai noonke' (killing us) in the Sidaama language is 'causing us enormous pain'.

[5]'this blood' refers to the Sidaamas who were massacred by the security forces on 24 May 2002 while they were on a peaceful march.

insisted that they should be given back their regional status, and consider the merging illegitimate. According to R32 and the data from informal interactions, the Sidaamas have compared themselves to the Tigray, the Gambella and the Harar peoples, each of whom are given nationhood status. In comparison to the latter two, they note that each district of the Sidaama zone has more population than the population of Gambella or Harar. In comparison to the Tigrean region, they argue that Sidaamaland has a larger population than the former,[6] with more economic resources, and more infrastructures. These arguments have come up repeatedly during my informal interactions, and also are clearly stated by R32.

R32 also highlighted that the peaceful march of May 2002 was an event that showed that the quest for regional status was not just the interest of the political elites. The march was not organised by the Sidaama political parties, but rather the coming together of the elders, the students, the business group and other Sidaamas both from rural and urban areas at the government's decision to handover the administration of Awaasa capital to the regional authority. Although no visible active participation of the excluded educated class (e.g., the graduates from the higher tertiary institutions) was seen, most likely they had given some input in the mobilisation. According to the informal interactions I have had with some educated individuals, they supported the quest and position of the marchers. They also hinted that some had given inputs in the discussions of the elders for the march. The decision of the government over Awaasa became a trigger that mobilised the people to march. According to some individuals and the Sidaama opposition political parties, behind the quest for regional status lies the perception of being 'dominated and exploited,' being 'prevented from achieving political freedom and equality,' being hindered from achieving economic development because of the following: continuous interference in Sidaama internal affairs, budgetary discrimination and exploitation of their resources, and the exclusion from leadership and persecution of the qualified and able Sidaamas. There is also the fear of losing its cultural identity and language, and of being dominated by others within their own territory. Such information comes from the informal interactions I have had with the people at different areas in the zone.

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[6]According to the 1994 census, the population figure of the Sidaama zone is 2,044,836, which is lower than that of the Tigray region which is 3,136,267 (The 1994-PHCE, 1999: 8, 9). The Sidaamas contest the census figure and estimate the total zonal figure to be higher than 4m.

The issue of internal self-determination has been one of the SLM's key goals. It began its struggle in 1978 with emphasis on self-governing status, equal political participation, and protection of the Sidaama identity:

> "The goals of the Sidaama people [in its organised struggle in the late 1970s and the 1980s] were the removal of all types of oppression that had been imposed on them by the ruling class, the respect of their basic rights of which the ruling class deprived them, and the creation of a system in which they and other Ethiopian peoples would live together in equality.
>
> The main and principal goal of the SLM is to ensure: that the Sidaama national group governs its own territory through its own democratically elected leaders; that it is represented in the federal government, at national level, by its own democratically elected representatives; and that its language and culture are respected" (Woldamanuel Dubale, 2004: 14).[7] [translation is mine]

The inclusion of the Sidaamas with the SNNPR ultimately created a division within the SLM leadership. One side wanted to continue pursuing the objective through constitutional means. The other group argued that within the situation of oppressive and authoritarian government, the only way to achieve the goal would be by combining diplomacy and armed struggle, hence the formation of the SLF in 1999. While the objective of the SLM — apart from the post-2005 position of its leadership because of the government's punishing approach — was (and is) clear (i.e., internal self-determination), the SLF left it vague and simply stated as 'self-determination', i.e., not clear whether internal or external self-determination. In its mission statement, it says:

> "Sidama Liberation Front (SLF) is the Sidama people's political organisation, devoted to enhancing the Sidama's struggle for equality, democracy and self determination. Its aim is to intensify the struggle, so as to enable the nation to restore completely its lost political, economic, social and cultural freedom and identity."[8]

The SNLO (founded in late 2002, after the Awaasa massacre in May 2002) has this same message of the SLF in its "mission statement". However, it states clearly its goal as external self-determination, as the speech of the chairman at the inauguration of the organisation reveals:

> "first of all[,] to decolonise the Sidama nation from Abyssinian colonial yoke. Secondly[,] to democratise the struggle itself, with [the] intention of establishing [a] democratic sidamaland sovereign state in the horn of Africa. Thirdly, to demystify the leadership of the struggle. The leaders of SNLO must be the first among the equals who will be elected by the merit of their contribution to the

[7]Woldamanuel Dubale is the chairman of the SLM.

[8]<http://www.sidamaliberation-front.org/our_mission.htm> cited on 4 March 2005.

struggle."[9]

How has the government responded to the Sidaama quest for self-governance? Since there existed no avenue of dialogue directly with the government, until July 2005, both the regional and federal governments had never raised the Sidaama quest for regional status as an issue causing conflict. The leadership had ignored any conflict existing between the people and the government, but argued that it was just a work of some individuals and bad governance.[10]

During the election of 15 May 2005, the EPRDF could not even win five seats (some of which were claimed to be fraudulent by opposition groups) out of nineteen in Sidaama zone. The SLM was said to have won at least eleven seats, the rest going to another opposition party (Coalition for Unity and Democracy [CUD]). However, the EPRDF simply claimed itself the winner in many areas; and in the parts where it could not deny its defeat, it called for re-election (except in Awaasa which it could not manipulate easily because of the presence of international observers and the CUD's ability to exert its pressure) and then claimed itself the winner. It took eighteen seats through its fraudulent results, leaving one for CUD. The SLM that had won more seats was not even given a single seat. The SLM, being not a coalition member of any big cross-national parties, could not make its voice heard both nationally and internationally, which was advantageous to the EPRDF.

Amidst the confusion of the May 15th election results in general throughout the country, the Sidaamas took advantage and managed to place a written demand, in accordance with Article 47 (nos. 2 and 3) of the Ethiopian constitution, for their own regional status in July 2005. Under the demand and pressure of the people, the Sidaama zonal council unanimously voted and signed the document requesting for the regional status and handed it to the SNNPR state. The whole event was also recorded in video cassette as evidence.

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[9]"Declaration of the establishment of the Sidama National Liberation Organization (SNLO)," available at http://www.sidamanational-liberation.org/press.htm#english; cited on 4 March 2005.

[10]In an interview with Sub-Saharan Informer (SSI), the Prime Minister of Ethiopia said: "...from time to time we have flare-ups conflicts that have an ethnic theme attached to them. I do not consider them as ethnic conflicts. They are conflicts carried out by [a] few individuals who try to give them an ethnic color. Nevertheless, these are serious problems that we need to address seriously. ... They need to be addressed and we'll continue to address them in a manner, which is consistent with our constitution and improving governance at all levels. Many of these problems are related to governance problems" (Interview Part I, 26 July 2002; available at http://www.waltainfo.com/Conflict /Interview/2002/July/interview_2.htm; accessed April 2004).

Since July 2005, the government could not ignore the Sidaama quest for its own regional status. In order to have the Sidaamas abandon their quest, it has used different techniques ranging from the Prime Minister meeting the Sidaama elders and educated class to explain the importance of remaining within the SNPPR, promising to give abundant economic aid (e.g., a substantial development budget, building infrastructure), giving symbolic power to the Sidaamas to control Awaasa and other urban centres in Sidaamaland (thus contradicting its own urban policy which gives decision-making and administrative power to urban dwellers alone), appointing Sidaama members of the EPRDF to significant positions in the SNNPR including the office of the regional president, raising the number of districts in Sidaama zone to nineteen, changing the regional university name to 'Awasa University', to using punitive measures (e.g., illegally imprisoning and torturing,[11] and threatening those working in public sectors with loss of their employment).

As all these failed to change the minds of the Sidaama people, in the second week of April 2006, through its Sidaama agents, the government had the new zonal council (the members of which are all illegitimate) sign and declare on the government media that the Sidaama people have dropped their demand for regional status. It then populated the zone with military forces including the Premier's loyalist elite force called '*Agaz Tor'*. This is indicative that the people are not with the decision. The act of forced signing and declaring that the Sidaamas have abandoned their quest does not follow the constitutional procedure (provided in Art 47, no. 3b and 3c) which requires the holding of a referendum throughout the zone, within the period of one year from the day of the written demand, and decide according to the voice of the majority vote. In other words, constitutionally, it is not the zonal council but the people that decides its future. Moreover, even for the zonal council to act on behalf of the Sidaama, it must at least be its legitimate representative. In the eyes of the Sidaamas, the members of the council are not their elected representatives; the EPRDF is not their elected political party to rule in Sidaamaland; hence, the Sidaama quest for *killil* remains unchanged.

Since July 2005, the argument the government presents against the Sidaama political aspiration follows the line that "it is better for you to remain within the SNNPR", for "regional status

[11]See Amnesty International, "Ethiopia: Fear of torture/possible prisoners of conscience," Press Release (31 march 2006). Available at http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR250082006?open&of=ENG-ETH; accessed on 12 April 2006.

will be beneficial neither for you nor for the EPRDF" (R33, R37). First, as this is explained to the researcher, the EPRDF fears that allowing the Sidaama to have its own regional status would precipitate nationalisms within the SNNPR. The Sidaamas have been the main factor that has kept the region's forty-five or so national/ethnic groups held together. By controlling the Sidaama, the largest identity group in the region, the government is able to control the rest in the region. The business class and political elites of south-western identity groups have vested economic interest in Awaasa which provides them with better resources, facilities and living standard (see pp. 214, 216-217 below). If Sidaamaland becomes a *killil* (region) of its own, those political elites may demand *killil* status for their own people, and consequently, the EPRDF may fail to control the south-west.

Secondly, as the May 2005 election revealed, in Guraghe, Hadiyya, Kambaata areas, the EPRDF lost to the cross-national parties (e.g., the Coalition for Unity and Democracy [CUD], the United Ethiopia Democratic Front [UEDF]). The EPRDF knew that the Sidaamas disliked the CUD mainly because the latter opposed the principle of national self-determination. The UEDF did not involve itself in Sidaamaland during the election. When the author enquired (on 27 November 2006) why the UEDF stayed away from competing in Sidaamaland, the leader of the UEDF, Dr Beyene Petros, said that the SLM had been a member organisation of the UEDF until the election. But as the election approached, the SLM decided to withdraw and go alone. There was not sufficient time for the UEDF and the SLM to discuss about and resolve any disagreement or difference that might have occurred between them. Hence, the UEDF left Sidaamaland for the SLM to compete the election, wishing the SLM a victory. According to some SLM members, the SLM left the UEDF because it did not think that the UEDF supported the Sidaama aspiration for a regional status.

Under the SLM, whose leadership has refused to create alliance with other cross-national opposition parties, the EPRDF found Sidaamaland to be in its favour, for it could easily manipulate votes, can bulldoze the SLM during election periods, rig elections, and easily claim itself a winner in Sidaama zone as it did after May 2005 election. Alone, the SLM is weak and cannot make its voice heard both nationally and internationally, for it is branded an ethnic party. This has a particular advantage for the EPRDF. Among 45 officially recognised identity groups within the SNNPR, the Sidaama population is the biggest one. Consequently, the Sidaamas hold more seats in the regional state council (57 seats out of 348). Of 547 seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives within the

Federal Government, the SNNPR occupies 123 seats. Of these 123 seats, 19 seats go to the Sidaama zone.[12] Within the SNNPR, this is a very significant number. To separate the Sidaamas from the SNNPR would then mean the reduction of the EPRDF's power over the region; for the number of the regional seats gained by the opposition parties would be higher, and the EPRDF could not form a regional government of its own and would be forced to form a coalition government.

The *derg* regime saw the idea of self-determination as a way of destroying Ethiopian unity; hence it was an unwelcome quest. The EPRDF adopted the principle of self-governance in order to end the problem of the national question in Ethiopia. Hence the CPDRE clearly provided the right for self-determination that the Sidaama people raised.[13] Within this principle, the 1991 charter of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) allowed the Sidaamas together with the Gedeo and Burgi peoples to become a *killil* (autonomous regional state), and the three groups were in agreement with the arrangement. But in 1992, the EPRDF government abolished the Sidaama-Gedeo-Burji *killil* and four other south-western *killiloch* (regional states) by merging them into one *killil*, the SNNPR. The government said that it was done with the agreement of the peoples of those regions. According to the Sidaamas (the data from informal interactions), the government merged them without their consent. R32 stated that there was no referendum to allow people to choose freely whether they wanted to form one *killil* with other southwestern nations, and also determine how they wanted to be organised and represented. The aspect of being merged without their will was also mentioned by the Sidaama respondents to Q4. The 24 May 2002 march of the Sidaamas (the majority of which were from rural areas) was also to ask why their regional status was suppressed and why the regional government refuses their quest for it (R34).[14]

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[12]This information is gathered from http://www.electionsethiopia.org/Index.html; accessed on 11 April 2006.

[13]"Every Nation, Nationalities and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession." (CFDRE, 1995, Art. 39:1); "Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history" (Art. 39, 2); "Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to a full measure of self-government which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in state and Federal governments" (Art. 39: 3). Art. 47:2,3 presents similar point for a regional status.

[14]The following information comes from R37: when the president of the SNNPR Abate Kisho (a Sidaama) was removed from his office and imprisoned in 2001, the Sidaamas felt it was time to make their quest heard. They

The official reason the government gives for the amalgamation of south-western regions, zones and the EPRDF's peripheral parties (PDOs) into one is "for the sake of budgetary efficiency" (Vaughan, 2003: 249, 250), and to enhance fast development by bringing the resources under the control of one region (R32). The Federal government distributes money for annual budget to the *killiloch* on the basis of the population size, level of infrastructure, income generating ability, and level of economic development. Critics perceive it as a way of facilitating a more political-economic centralised control over the population and its resources (Woldamanuel, 2004: 16). R32 presents two factors for the amalgamation of the Sidaamas with others. First, the decision of the south-western opposition groups to form a united coalition organisation prompted the abrupt change of the EPRDF's policy and principle of identity-based federal structure in southwest Ethiopia. The EPRDF feared that, as a united southern group, the opposition would gain more sympathy than itself from the south-western population. Secondly, the Sidaama's bold stand and challenging attitude at the federal parliament created more fear in the EPRDF's central leadership; hence by amalgamating the Sidaama it hoped to weaken the Sidaama challenge (R32). Within the south-western peoples, the Sidaama people (according to R32) were found to be more independent-minded, more politicized, well organised and united, a populous and homogeneous group with one language, culture, clear political aspiration and goals to achieve. This view was also expressed by R33, R34, R36, and many other individuals with whom I had informal interactions in terms of the Sidaama being more 'vocal' and politically and economically 'more advanced' than the rest of the zones in the region. Even when the EPRDF created the SPDO, the leaders of the SPDO were not the 'yes' men as much as the

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had perceived Abate as a person who was blocking their quest for the regional status. They asked the zonal council for a long time to write and submit their quest for the status of *killil*. The members of the council kept on promising to do so, but because of the fear of losing their positions and benefits, they did nothing. The removal of Abate became an opportunity to push their quest ahead. As the zonal council failed, according to R37, the elders wrote a letter by themselves to the SNNPR council, requesting that the Sidaamas should have their own regional status. The regional council refused to respond to it, and the march was (although triggered by the decision over Awaasa) to ask why the regional council refused to respond to their request. Some of the placards the marchers held read: "Our right – which was approved by the charter – to be a self-governing region has to be respected"; "Our quest is not for sectionalism but for peace and prosperity". The peaceful march was suppressed by the federal security forces, killing and seriously wounding many people (see EHRCO, "Serious Human Rights Violations in Awassa and Its Environs," Special Report No. 51 (June 4, 2002);available at <http://www.ehrco.net/reports/special_report51.html>. On the next day of the event, the Regional Police Commission alleged that the people were "organized unlawfully and many of them armed tried to disrupt the peace and security of the people by taking to the streets" (WIC, "15 Killed 25 Wounded In Demonstrations In Awassa," available at <http://www.waltainfo.com/Archive/archive.htm>; accessed on 19 Oct 2004).

EPRDF leadership would want. Although, during the pre-1995 period, the SPDO was severe towards other Sidaama opposition groups and happy to keep them away from any political participation in the zone (and also it was in line with the policy of the EPRDF leadership to exclude the local opposition [Vaughan, 2003: 192, 195-6]), with regard to the Sidaama aspiration for the status of nationhood, it was (and still is) united with the rest of the Sidaama. R32 noted that as the Sidaama nationalism deepened, the talk of SLM vs SPDO became progressively attenuated. Since 2000, the zonal leadership and the educated class were emphasising more and more the idea of putting aside the politics so as to work together for the development of the Sidaama. However, the SPDO could not bring the SLM and those non-affiliated individuals to the EPRDF, to participate in political leadership in the zone; because the politics and structure of the EPRDF would not allow it (R32).

The constitution provides procedures for a group that seeks to acquire a nationhood status: the group from a particular *killil* — with a vote of three-quarters of its council members in favour — presents a written request to the *killil* council to have its own nation status; the *killil* council organises a referendum within the period of one year in the zone that made the demand; and when the majority of the zone supports the quest in the referendum, the regional council hands over its power to the people in accordance with their quest; and this new state (*killil*) becomes a member of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (CFDRE, 1995, Art. 47,3). For three reasons, the Sidaama request has not been brought to the regional government in accordance with the constitutional procedure. First, the EPRDF leadership is not in favour of it, hence it allies with the regional government in the actions that are intended to prevent the quest (R34, R32; cf., Vaughan, 2003: 250). Secondly, as the Sidaama respondents to the questionnaire and informal interactions indicate (emphasised by R32, R33, R34, and R36) the regional authorities have vested economic interest in the Sidaama zone. Awaasa offers better infrastructures (e.g., educational institutions from primary to tertiary levels [both private and public], good health care, clean water, some industries, telephone, good transport) and economic development than other towns and zones in the region. The elites from all the zones working in the regional office in Awaasa do not like to move to other places (R32). Thirdly, intimidation and untimely removal of the Sidaama zonal leadership and change in the zonal council: every time the zonal authority raises the issue — often on the basis of its grievances

in regional budget allocation and the feeling of being hindered from developing Sidaamaland — the individuals who speak out are removed from the zonal council in the guise of 'performance assessment' that takes place every six months (R32).[15] The government also blames them as individuals who incite people against it, the 'ring-leaders', as the regional president called them after the Awaasa massacre on 24 May 2002.[16] In this manner, the Sidaama zonal council have been affected nine or ten times due to the changes in the council members. This fluidity has prevented the Sidaamas from presenting the issue of their demand in accordance with the constitutional procedure. Some respondents to the questionnaire mentioned such administrative fluidity as a source of conflict and hindrance to economic development, which the author placed under the issue of 'Governance'. In the end, only those who keep their heads down and the self-interested Sidaama individuals are left in the zonal leadership and regional council. Those who represent the Sidaama in the federal government are also taken from such individuals. According to R32 and R37, as the zonal council members failed to put the people's quest in writing and present an official letter asking for the status of *killil*, the Sidaama people themselves, through the Sidaama elders, presented their quest in writing to the regional authority to which the latter has given no response.

The amalgamation, the human rights violations as these can be gathered from documents of both national and international human rights organisations (e.g., Ethiopian Human Rights Council, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch) and bad governance: these have intensified the Sidaama fear of being dominated and exploited by others and losing its identity, thus deepening the Sidaama nationalist sentiments. Will this change? R32 argues that "the eleven years' persistent quest for *killil* status is finally suppressed with blood. Even if all the rest changes for the better, and Sidaamaland

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[15]In one of its press release, the SNLO also highlights the issue of budget as a consequence of the amalgamation of the Sidaama into the SNNPR: "The Sidama lost its budget allocation; while the Sidama feeds the empire with [a] shovel, the Sidama is provided with [a] spoon. That was even from the [p]romised Aid budgets and from [a] promised loan. The Sidama share from the [national] treasury is very minimal, less than five percent, for the last ten years. Possible posts and employment opportunities in government offices are also blocked for the Sidamas. The Sidama is made prone to diseases and famine after the establishment of SNNPRS. Those Sidama nationalists who resented and opposed TPLF's action suffered from both physical and mental tortures" ("The merger of PDOs in South, will worsen already volatile political conditions," Press Release (September 2003); available at <http://www.sidamanational-liberation.org/press.htm#english>; accessed on 4 March 2005.

[16]In the responses the president of the SNNP regional state gave to the interview carried out by the European Union in July 2003, one finds the reflection of the government line of arguing (see the excerpts *The Daily Monitor* (20 - 21 July 2002), p. 3.

experiences a boom in economic development, Awaasa will never be peaceful unless it becomes the regional capital of Sidaama." The underlying suggestion of R32 (and also of R30, R31, R34, R36, R37) is that without granting the Sidaama a status of *killil*, there will not be positive peace and stability in the region.

7A1.i.b. Governance issue

The second issue of importance that the Sidaama respondents mention concerns *governance*. In total, the elements relating to this factor are mentioned 131 [17.5%) times out of the total of 748 of all the factors. In the responses to Q5 by the Sidaamas, the idea of bad governance comes after that of the quest for regional status. In the responses of the non-Sidaamas to the same question, it comes as the main problem causing conflicts between the government and the Sidaamas. Issues pertaining to governance include policy-making ("policies must be decided by the people," "the government must explain to the people its new policies"), democracy (call for participation and fair representation, "want democratic governance"), non-interference ("the development organizations of the zone should not be closed or interfered with"), accountability (e.g., the government should stop appointing and supporting incompetent and corrupt officials [Q3vi2a and b, cf., Q7i]; the abuse of human rights of the citizens by corrupt officials must be stopped [Q3vi2b, Q5]; the officials who were responsible for the death of innocent people in the vicinity of Awaasa [on 24 May 2002] must be brought to justice [Q7i]), and budget allocation ("unfair budget allocation in the region" [Q4, Q5]. The data (including that of the observation) also show that the Sidaamas regard the local government officials as incompetent, self-interested, and corrupt in the assignment of job allocation (e.g., nepotism, i.e., favouring one's clan or sub-clan relations and friends). They are also frustrated by lack of the rule of law, abuse of power, and bribery in the zonal courts. In the responses to Q7i (which asks what the possible suggestion they give for bringing peace in Sidaamaland), the governance factor is the highest mentioned element by all the Sidaama and non-Sidaama respondents. In fact, the issue of governance is the most repeatedly mentioned grievance the non-Sidaamas raise in the questionnaire response. They accuse the government of entertaining corrupt and inefficient officials, persecuting and imprisoning the able individuals who refuse to join the government party, and making unilateral

policies. Most of the local officials seem to be entirely the representatives of the government, and the people feel that they are not represented.[17]

The rural Sidaamas appreciate the fact that they now have the constitutional right to use their language as their main language within Sidaamaland, express their culture more freely than before, have education and more health facilities, and tax reduction as compared to that of the *derg* time. Although in recent times they experience fear of losing such a freedom to use their language and culture, they generally feel more secure in maintaining their identity than they used to be during the previous regimes. In fact, R10 expressed with enthusiasm: "During this government everything is good. Only that we lack sufficient development funds. We have a better result from our crops. The fall of the coffee market and low price for our crops (have affected us)."

After the interview some individuals approached me and said to me with a low voice not to believe all that the respondent said. "There are things that we are not happy with in this government... He is a member of the SPDO and a chairman of the *qebele* (a local administrative unit under district)." The difference of opinion between the government beneficiaries (by being the party-affiliates) and others is evident. However, when it comes to the government-people relation, preparing and implementing policies, the rural people see no difference between this and the former governments. They still feel terrorised, experience the imposition of the policies made from above without their participation, authoritarianism, corruption of the officials, and now lack of free and fair election. In my informal interactions with them, they lament that their children (referring to the educated groups) have been imprisoned and persecuted without committing crimes. They hold a

[17]In the Sidaama responses to Q4 that asks the causes of conflict between the Sidaamas and the regional state, the followings are mentioned: "lack of good governance" and "the corruption of government officials." Similarly, the non-Sidaamas view the causes as "the weakness of the government to examine its officials and cadres for more than ten years," " the government's way of distributing political power (able people are not given a chance)," and "the administrative policy of the government" or "appointments of ineffective people to power." To Q5, the Sidaamas say: "promoting false-representation of the Sidaama people in the federal government"; "lack of proportional representation of the Sidaama people in the national government"; "forced implementation of new policies without allowing dialogue and explanation"; "officials' corruption, incompetence, and little experience"; "the government's brutal measure against peaceful Sidaama protestors in reaction to the government's decision on Awaasa status". The non-Sidaamas' view: "the government's failure to fulfil its promises"; "the government's failure to follow up the implementation of its policies"; "the abuse of power by the Sidaama officials"; "the government's failure to respect the constitutional rights of the Sidaamas by interfering in the Sidaamas internal affairs"; "the corrupt government officials in search of their own personal interests"; "unfair budget distribution"; "having many ethnic groups in one region, leading to competition for power-control".

strong antipathy towards and anger with the government since the massacre of the Sidaamas in May 2002 by the security forces. They do not trust the government.

A 2003-4 survey of the state of governance in about 30 countries in Africa by the United Nations' Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), registers Ethiopia as one of the lowest. "The survey undertaken to examine how people in 28 African countries perceive the state of governance in their countries, showed Ethiopia to have consistently performed far below the sample average in all the indices measuring good governance. Accordingly, it is classified lowest along with Chad and Swaziland."[18] "It is put at about 36% as opposed to the sample average of about 53%. The report says on its blurb that 'some countries score consistently better than the sample average, some consistently worse.' Accordingly, Ethiopia belongs to the latter" (ibid.) The good governance survey involved examining the areas of political system and the participation, the rule of law and respect for human rights, freedom of expression and participation/association (e.g., free functioning of media and civil organisations). A lot has been published by human rights organisations (e.g., EHRCO, the US-based Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and others) showing the human rights abuses in Ethiopia, and the reports can be found on their websites.

During the three days symposium on "Federalism, Conflict and Peace Building" in Addis Ababa, in early May 2003, hosted by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and the German development agency GTZ, Dr. Getachew Aseffa, who investigated killings and ethnic conflicts in southern Ethiopia on behalf of the Ministry of Federal Affairs, noted that "poor training, a lack of awareness by police and security forces, and a lack of supervision often meant abuses were perpetrated in the regions of Ethiopia."[19] He added "that local authorities were 'blatantly engaged in different types of suppression'" (ibid.). Within the same conference, the Ethiopian president, Girma Wolde-Giorgis, stated that the conflict in Ethiopia is the consequence of lack "of democracy and widespread poverty." He added that "Ethiopia is a beginner in the exercise of democracy.... We are a federal democracy coming out of age-old aristocratic and autocratic regimes.... Unfortunately we inherited

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[18]Zerihun Taddesse, "Ethiopia scores "consistently worse" than average in good governance in Africa," *Ethiopian Reporter* (13 Oct 2004); available at <http://www.ethiopianreporter.com/displayenglish.php?id=1479>; accessed on 20 Oct 2000; Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) *Striving for Good Governance in Africa: Synopsis of the African Governance Report 2005*; available at <http://www.uneca.org/agr/>; accessed on 19 Oct 2004.

[19]Available at <http://www.angelfire.com/bc/snrs/somalizone.html>; accessed in 2003.

no institutions, civil society or organisations with adequate experience in democratic governance.... By all standards of measurement we are beginners on the long road to mature, accountable, transparent, sensitive and responsive political order" (ibid.). The government leadership also recognises the problem in terms of bad governance, yet its effort to correct this does not seem to bear fruit. Still the government is not able to bring in the well qualified but non-party affiliates to participate in administration.

7A1.i.c. The Awaasa issue

Awaasa is the capital of both the Sidaama zone and the SNNPR. It is located in Sidaamaland (275 kms [168 miles] south of Addis Ababa) at 1685 m (5527 ft) above sea level, covering a total area of 4000 hectares. According to the 1994-5 census, its population is 74,228 and inhabited by both Christians (the majority) and Muslims. To the north of Awaasa is found lake Awaasa (62 kms [38 miles] wide, 16 kms [9.792 miles] long, 21 ms [69 ft] deep) and adds beauty to the capital.[20] Awaasa has economic and aesthetic significance. Awaasa attracts tourists. It is on the asphalt road that stretches from the Ethio-Kenya border town, Moyale, to Addis Ababa. It has some educational institutions (a university, Teachers training college, private colleges, and several private and government primary and secondary schools, some industries, and other institutions). It is found in the zone that produces quality export coffee.

> "Since Awassa is one of the most beautiful cities in Ethiopia, exploring the city has become [an] enjoyable experience for both foreign and domestic tourists. The city has also become an ideal transit spot for tourists who travel between Addis Ababa-Moyale, Moyale-Awassa-Arba-Minch-Jinka and Awassa- Wolayta Sodo-Jimma- Mizan Teferi roads. Being one of the forerunning cities for industrialization, there are textile, ceramics, sisal, edible oil and tobacco processing and cement products factories on the outskirts of the city" (ibid).

According to the questionnaire responses by the Sidaamas, it comes as the third important element in the conflict, and is mentioned 107 (14.3%) times out of the 748. Even in the responses to Q5 (which specifically enquires the sources of unpeaceful relations between the Sidaamas and the

[20]The information is taken from WIC; available at <http://www.waltainfo.com/Regional_States/SNNPR/Awassa_The_Capital_City.htm>; accessed in Apr 2004.

government) by the Sidaamas, the issue of Awaasa comes as the third most mentioned factor after quests for regional status and good governance.

Awaasa serves as a factor of conflict for several reasons: first, the issue mostly raised by the Sidaamas (as will be seen later) pertains to the fear of being controlled and dominated by the non-Sidaamas within their own territory. Political power in Ethiopia is intimately tied to controlling economic resources. Controlling Awaasa, therefore, has a political-economic significance for the Sidaamas. Secondly, for the Sidaamas the Awaasa issue is fundamentally an issue of territorial integrity, and the current land tenure system appears to highlight a latent and potentially violent conflict. As the research data reveals, at this moment, the Sidaamas are not talking about land as being a cause of conflict within Sidaamaland, because they still believe that the land is theirs. There have not been officially organised settlements of non-Sidaama people from other areas in Sidaamaland. The only issues that comes close to this is the territorial demarcation between the Sidaama and Wolaita (see map 3, p. 122 above), where the Sidaamas feel that part of their land is given to the Wolaitas. This has resulted in violent conflict and bloodshed; the government is keeping soldiers at the border to prevent it, and is maintaining a negative peace. This is indicative of how the land issue in Sidaamaland remains a highly potent factor of violent conflict outcome, if the Sidaama people perceive that the land is not under their control and that the government can remove them at will.

The government sees land (a vital economic resource) as its property and can make free decisions as it sees fit; but the Sidaamas see the land as theirs. The factor of the conquest is operating at the background; and the Sidaamas see themselves as hosting others on their land. They want to have control over their land and on how to administer it and its resources rather than the government imposing its will on them. The government's urban development policy (as will be highlighted below) will affect individual landowners living around urban areas. The government would force them to leave their land for the benefit of urban development. The Sidaamas do not see the government's claim to have the ownership of land as legitimate. As long as the government is not implementing its right to evict the Sidaamas from their plots or bring and settle other non-Sidaama people, the Sidaamas keep quiet and ignore the government's claim. One argument given against nationalisation of land pertains to land insecurity: "Lacking the security that comes with land ownership, farmers will

not invest in improving fertility, or plant trees, or build terraces to stop soil erosion" (Ayenew, 2004).[21] The Sidaamas always plant trees on their plots and try to take care of their plots as much as possible. If the argument of the consequences of land insecurity is correct, the Sidaama farmers' behaviour indicates that they consider their land to be their inheritance right and not the government's.

In the responses to Q3vi1b which asks the respondent's position with regards to the non-Sidaama quests, many Sidaama respondents express their disagreement with the former's "opposition to the administration of Awaasa by the Sidaamas." To the Qvi2a — *What are the points on which you agree with the Sidaamas?* — they responded that: "Awaasa should be the Sidaama administrative town and be administered by the Sidaamas"; "Awaasa should not be the regional capital, for the Sidaamas have not supported it"; Awaasa is "part of the Sidaama territory" (Qvi2a) and "Sidaama history" (Qvi2b); "their refusal to accept the 70% control of the Awaasa by the SNNPR". In Q5 that asks the causes of conflicts between the government and the Sidaama people, the responses can be summarised in the following: the government forcing the Sidaama administration to move from Awaasa and making Awaasa a chartered town. Vaughan sees the government's choice of Awaasa as the regional capital and the choosing of a Sidaama as the regional president since the creation of the SNNPR until 2001 as a way of controlling or keeping in check the support for the SLM within the Sidaama population (Vaughan, 2003: 192). However, as it is mentioned above (see pp. 208-209), the reason goes beyond the mere interest of controlling the SLM. The SPDO did prevent the SLM from functioning freely, not so much for the ideological interest but mainly for the fear of losing the economic advantages its members enjoyed. Nevertheless, the SPDO itself was opposed to the idea of moving the Sidaama zonal capital from Awaasa and making it a chartered town, although most of the members of the party feared to express it openly.

Both the regional and the federal governments want Awaasa to be the regional capital and a chartered city,[22] even if geographically, being situated at the far east end of the region, Awaasa offers

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[21]Available at http://www.worldpress.org/Africa/1839.cfm; accessed on 7 June 2006.

[22]"Police said 15 people were killed and 25 others wounded yesterday during clashes between security forces and demonstrators in Awassa demanding the repeal of a proclamation that would give the Regional State Capital the status of a chartered city" (WIF, "15 Killed 25 Wounded in Demonstrations in Awassa," available at <http://www.waltainfo.com/Archive/archive.htm>; accessed on 19 Oct 2004).

no benefit to many zones that are far away from the Sidaama zone (e.g., Kaffa, Sheka, Debub Omo), and people from those zones have to travel about three days to arrive at Awaasa. According to the information I got from informal interactions, the zones like Kaffa had presented their complaints on this geographical inconvenience for them, but their complaints have not been considered. R32 (whose views agree with information from informal interactions) argued that the choice of Awaasa is based on the economic interests of the ruling SNNPR political elite, middle class group, and business people. Even those who come from the furthest part want Awaasa to remain a regional capital because Awaasa offered them more advantages: better infrastructures (e.g., educational institutions [primary, secondary, tertiary institutions, vocational institutions], clean water, communication facilities, good housing, health institutions), convenience, and job opportunities [e.g., in office works, industries, teaching]. Many have brought their families to Awaasa and their children are in schools. The elites, therefore, prefer Awaasa to any other places in the region. Hence, from this line, the issue of Awaasa seems to be mostly the issues of elites who live there. For the TPLF/EPRDF, the Sidaamas (being more organised and politicised), posed more challenge than any other groups. Vaughan (2003: 192 [footnote # 187]) indicated that for the TPLF/EPRDF government the choice of Awaasa (and of a Sidaama as a regional president until 2001) was mainly for the purpose of controlling the SLM and the Sidaamas. R32 argued that the merging of the Sidaamas was mainly to break the political strength and challenge of the Sidaamas. Besides similar arguments, R34 and the SLM leadership see the underlying economic interest of the TPLF leadership operating.

> "Awaasa (and its environs) is one of the principal areas that the *Woyane* [the TPLF] has in its politics of controlling the country's economy. Its choice of Awaasa is not without a reason. The Awaasa town is within the Sidaama region, and has a very conducive environment for development" (Woldamanuel, 2004: 16).

As it will be shown below, the respondents to the questionnaire also perceive it in terms of economic interest of the ruling elite.

To understand the conflict over Awaasa, looking at its historical background seems important. The name Awaasa is the Amharicised form of Hawaasa (= wide) in the Sidaama language (R28, R31). Before Awaasa was built, it had a huge forest around which the Sidaamas built their *tukul* and a place for their animals. It was a pastoral area for the Sidaamas, and also served to keep watch over the movements of the Arusi, their traditional enemy. The Arusis and the Sidaamas fought over that area

and a lot of blood was shed. Reflecting this, I was told in one of my informal interactions of elders having said at one moment in the 1990s that 'Adaare' was kept with their blood, and that they would again defend it with their blood.[23] By 1928, Norwegian missionaries built a guest house for themselves and their visitors in the forest. Two private owned hotels were built just for tourists to lake Awaasa between 1958 and 1959. In 1961, the provincial governor, *Ras* Mengesha Seyum, whose seat was in Yirgalem (another town in Sidaamaland) laid a foundation stone for the future town – Awaasa. This area was known by the Sidaamas as 'Adaare'.

Soon after its foundation, the then Awaasa district governor, Zerfu, built a police station there and set up his office, making Awaasa his seat. In the process, he evicted the Sidaamas living there, and their houses were bulldozed. The Sidaamas remember this in one of their lyrics:

Adaare lalu caale	The cattle shade, Adaare;
Zarfu assi Adabaawe	Zarfu made you *adabaawe* (a public square),
Adabaawe assenna Hogummo Adaare	I cried and cried, yet lost Adaare,
Raare raare.	For he made it *adabaawe*.

A more vigorous eviction of the Sidaamas from the area took place during the period of 1961 and 1962 when the area was made available for a huge Ethio-Yugoslavia commercial farming project. Several individuals who resisted the eviction were killed as a warning to other Sidaamas in case they resisted, and others were beaten badly and removed. Bulldozing their homesteads was a main method of eviction. Eight years later (in 1968) General Isayas Gebre-Selassie moved his provincial seat from Yirgalem to Awaasa .[24] R28 noted that a personality like Andargachew Messaye took land in the area by force and sold a quarter of it to other settlers, and on the rest he settled his people from Shewa and those of the Empress Menen's relatives from Wollo. Casual workers looking for jobs moved in large number especially in peanut, sisal, and sunflower plantations. As the capital expanded, the eviction of the Sidaamas continued (R28, R31); and this process is still taking place today. This eviction factor explains partly the Sidaama resistance against the new government's urban policy (see pp. 221-223 below), since Sidaamaland is overpopulated and lacks free space.

In 1974/5 with the land reform programme of the *derg*, the Awaasa town (almost entirely

[23]I have no idea whether this information was based on the fact that was said by the elders or just a fabrication of the informers.

[24]All the details concerning the beginning of Awaasa are taken from Betana, 1991, pp. 29-30, and also R28.

occupied by the non-Sidaamas) and the surroundings (almost entirely occupied by the Sidaamas) were put under Awaasa city council which targeted the Sidaamas. Supported by the highland Sidaamas, the Sidaamas of the area tried to take back their land by force. The problem was solved when the then provincial administrator talked to them and assured them that they would get their share of Awaasa. But nothing changed. The Sidaamas were unable to have plots to settle themselves in the capital, nor to involve themselves in the modern economic sector. An unofficial campaign was carried out to silence the Sidaama advocates through detentions and extra judiciary executions. For instance, Mattewos Korsisa, was one of the victims of such a campaign. He was an outspoken Sidaama and struggled for the equal rights of the Sidaamas. A non-Sidaama woman who was working for Mattewos was mysteriously murdered; Mattewos was accused of the murder, and without a proper trial he was killed. Other Sidaama individuals were forced into exile.[25]

Most of the urban centres in Sidaamaland were occupied almost entirely by the non-Sidaamas. In the past (and still it is generally the case), those who controlled towns controlled politics. Generally, the economic policies which were to be implemented in rural areas were in the interest of the urban centres. There was something of Robert Bates' "urban-bias" theory in those policies, although there may be different reasons for it (Bates, 1981: 119-133). According to the information from informal interactions and also key interviewees, the Sidaamas (during pre-1991 period) were directly and indirectly prevented from settling in urban areas and involvement in business sectors, which were left solely for the non-Sidaamas (R28, R30, R31). This explains why there are only about 2% of the Sidaamas living in urban areas today.

> "The Sidaamas do not live in towns, but in rural areas. ...the past ruling classes have directly and indirectly prevented the Sidaama people from settling in urban areas in the Sidaama region. Since only the members of the ruling class of the past regimes and those from other areas (who came for business or other reasons) were allowed to settle in the towns, and the schools were found only in the towns, chances for the (Sidaama) people to educate their children were very limited. Because they (the Sidaamas) were systematically prevented from settling in towns, they did not involve themselves in commerce/business. But those who came from other areas and live in Awaasa were involved in different business activities and owned primary coffee processing plants and other small scale industries (Woldamanuel, 2004: 16).

In Ethiopia, urban-rural divides have been very pronounced, although the present government is trying to remove such a divide. The urban-rural relation was like that of first-second class citizens.

[25]The information in this paragraph comes from R28 (see also Betana, 1997: 11-15; 1998: 10-12).

The fact that the Sidaamas had been excluded from political participation, prevented from settling in urban centres and business/commercial activities, and always dominated by the urbanites and ruled by the children of the settlers until 1991, urban centres (and especially Awaasa) have a political significance. Not to have a role in urban areas in their zone symbolises a political-economic domination and exploitation. According to the information I have gathered from informal interaction, the government wanted to send the educated Sidaamas to the hinterland with its policy of rural development. Although the aim looks genuine, the Sidaama context does not seem conducive to its implementation. The Sidaamas are only now trying to come and participate in urban life through their educated individuals, and moving them from such places as Awaasa is received with opposition.

Although at the moment the Sidaama zonal administration still remains in Awaasa because of the Sidaama opposition, its future is unclear. Awaasa has been administered by the regional government, but the May 2005 election result (especially the government's desire to induce the Sidaamas to change their quest for their own *killil* status) seems to have allowed at the moment the Sidaamas to administer it. The issue of the attempt to move the Sidaama administration from Awaasa has intended or unintentional consequences. R31, R32, R34, and many other individuals with whom I have had informal interaction, have explained to me that the government being the major employer in the region, the removal of the zonal offices entails the removal of the educated Sidaamas who work in the government offices in various sectors. It affects those Sidaamas who are now able to build their houses in Awaasa and cater for the education of their children and relatives in good educational institutions that are currently found only in the capital. Moreover, the Sidaamas fear that the regional urban council will mostly favour the non-Sidaama settlers coming from other zones and regions in the country, and would forcibly remove the Sidaama peasants who own land around the capital. Hence, there is a fierce opposition to any government policies that would reduce the Sidaama presence in Awaasa. They argue that the Sidaamas should be able to administer fully their territory without socio-cultural and economic enclaves. There are political, economic and psychological factors in the opposition. The following is from the SLM leadership [translation is mine]:

> "The Sidaamas got the chance to enter Awaasa because Awaasa was (and is) their zonal capital and also because the *Woyane* wanted to weaken the urban business community in the name of the Sidaama and to give power to the *Woyane* beneficiaries (puppets). Those mature and patriotic Sidaama individuals who joined the *Woyane*-organised group, made efforts to draw many young Sidaamas to settle in Awaasa. After some years, the influx of the Sidaama into Awaasa displeased the *Woyane*.

> Because the Sidaamas entered the town in high numbers and also involved themselves in the business sector, the *Woyane* thought that they were challenging its business. It planned to prevent that from happening. Accordingly, it decided to remove the Sidaama zonal administration out of Awaasa" (Woldamanuel, 2004: 16)

Awaasa has a particular significance for the Sidaamas. It has a history of the Sidaama blood even before it was founded. After its foundation, several Sidaamas lost their lives on account of the town, and many who resisted evictions were publicly beaten and humiliated; and most of those who suffered abuse and eviction and their children are still alive and keep the memory fresh. 24 May 2002 was another event that cost the lives of about 50 Sidaamas and serious injuries for many more. Awaasa has a religious significance, too, for the Haweela Sidaamas have a sacrificial place close to the lake at every *fichèe* (the Sidaama New Year), and that place has recently been sold by the regional authority to a developer. Many Sidaamas who live close to the lake depend on fishing. Any privatising or centralising policy over the lake threatens those Sidaamas who rely on fishing. There has been a continuous move by the regional authority to remove anything with the Sidaama symbol or name with the intention of making the city free from any ethnic significance. A multi-purpose centre, which has been known as *Sidama Bahil Adarash* (the Sidaama Cultural Centre),[26] has been under intensive pressure by the regional authority to remove the name Sidaama. Hence, these are the dynamics that contribute to making the Awaasa issue a significant factor of conflicts in Sidaamaland, not only between the Sidaamas and government, but also between the Sidaamas and non-Sidaama inhabitants of the zone. R32's statement suggest how Awaasa has become an important factor of the unpeaceful relations: "Even if all the rest changes for the better, and Sidaamaland experiences a boom in economic development, Awaasa will never be peaceful unless it becomes the regional capital of Sidaama." (R32).

The government policy on urban development is a dynamic that escalates the unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. The policy states that the regional capitals and economically significant towns (which are labelled as grade one, grade two) must function independently of any political interference and be run by municipal administrations. Each city or town should have its own council elected from the urban dwellers and find ways to develop itself. The regional and federal

[26]The centre was built during the *derg* period and cost about 10 million Birr (about 2 million US Dollars during that time). Some Sidaama individuals informed me that the entire money for the building was financed by the Sidaamas, and each Sidaama household paid a particular amount of money.

government's role is simply to offer technical support (R32). The government gives several reasons for its urban policy: "to adjust the organizational structure of the towns for good governance," "to help to dispense finance according to the towns' standard, thereby avoiding any complaint against double standard."[27] This policy has become a contested issue in Sidaamaland since most important urban centres are being overwhelmingly populated by the non-Sidaamas, the Sidaamas feel that they will have a very little influence and benefit in the urban centres in Sidaamaland. With regard to Awaasa being administered by the regional centre, they argue that all other zones and regions have their own administrative towns and that it is the Sidaama right to have Awaasa as their administration centre as well as the capital to be administered by them. As it was also stated in one of the placards the Sidaamas carried during the May 2002 march, the Sidaamas say that they would agree with the EPRDF policy concerning the regional capital being administered by the regional authority so long as the Sidaamas are given back their regional status that is recognized by the charter of the TGE (R32, R37).[28] The government considered the march unlawful, and the security forces suppressed it by violent means and bloodshed.[29]

In reaction to the Sidaama position, the government argues that the policy concerning Awaasa is the same for every other regional capital (one-size-fits-all policy), and aimed at developing them. It blames individuals as causes of the problems and as responsible for the death of the people.[30] There is also another fundamental conflict underlying the Awaasa debate between the government and the

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[27]The quotations are attributed to the State Minister of Federal Affairs, Berhanu Tamrat, in the "Study To Help Grade Towns To Be Completed," *Walta Information Centre* (WIC) [30 May 2002]; available at <http://www.waltainfo. com/Archive/archive.htm>; accessed on 19 Oct 2004. WIC is the government's media.

[28]See the Special Report 51 of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, 4 June 2002; available at <http://www.ehrco. net/reports/special_report51.html>; accessed in August 2003.

[29]Walta Information Centre (WIC), "15 Killed 25 Wounded In Demonstrations In Awassa," (25 May 2002): available at <http://www.waltainfo.com/Archive/archive.htm>; accessed on 19 Oct 2004. WIC is the government media. The number of the people killed was much more than that of the government report.

[30]See for example what the Information Minister said to INRI: "In some parts of the country there has been abuse by local administrators, and the government - at both a federal and regional level - has taken corrective measures," he stated. "Those who have committed such crimes have been taken to court and the government has taken full responsibility in bringing the perpetrators to justice." He further told that the situation was now improving and the Prime Minister Melese Zenawi had pledged to tackle human rights abuses ("ETHIOPIA: Over 1,000 'Unlawful Killings' Last Year, US says," *IRIN news Africa* [10 Apr 2003]; available at <http://www.ethiopiadaily.com/p/0d /6d5779c0e46a.html? id=1306c39>; accessed on 15 June 2003).

Sidaamas. Both of them operate from opposed positions. The government acts from the position that land belongs to the state and the people are tenants; and that the government can take decisions concerning land as it sees necessary. The Sidaama people, on the other hand, understand that Sidaamaland is theirs and not the state's. Hence, the Awaasa argument is partly territorial. The people argue that they cannot be removed from their own ancestral land. In general, the issue of Awaasa for the Sidaamas has political, economic, and cultural significance. For regional elites, the middle-class group and businessmen, it is mainly economic, and political power is the means for enhancing the economic interest. The central government's leadership may have its own reasons and interests.

7A1.i.d. Rights Issue

Taken individually, the rights issue occupies the fourth place of importance in the conflicts according to the questionnaire responses, and is mentioned 99/748 (13.2%). It pertains basically to constitutional rights and/or human rights; hence it touches almost all the factors that contribute to the unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. The universal human rights are enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution. Art. 39 of the CFDRE grants "unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession." And the Sidaamas consider their quest for *killil* as their constitutional right (cf., Art 47:2). When this right was not enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution, the Sidaamas sought to achieve self-determination through armed struggle; but since 1991, they are trying to achieve it through the constitutional means, although the SLF has given up relying on it in 1999 and has taken up the armed struggle again. Apart from the call to respect their right for self-determination, they raise the following points too as their rights: administering the resources and urban centres in their region without undue interference, not to be imprisoned when they have committed no crime, to have a fair trial, freedom of expression, and equal treatment (e.g., in budget allocation and use of their resources and opportunities, and the application of the law). These are expressed both through the questionnaire responses (Q3vi1b, Q3vi2a, Q5, and Q7i), during interviews and informal interactions. Basically, the rights issue indicates the absence of the rule of law in Sidaamaland.

7A1.i.e. Political and economic issues

From the responses to the questionnaire, and when taken separately, the economic argument as causing conflict comes in the fifth place (58/748 [7.8%]) after the rights issue; the political (54/748 [7.2%] in the sixth place; and political-economic (48/784 [6.4%]) in the seventh place. Some mentioned it explicitly as political, others as economic, still others as both economic-political, and some left it vague. When all these are joined together, it takes the first position, coming above the quest for self-determination. This indicates that the political and economic factors play a major role in the vertical unpeaceful relations. The government wants to have control over the people and economic resources as the latter are intimately linked to Ethiopian politics throughout its history. According to the Sidaama responses to Q5 that enquire about the causes of conflicts between the Sidaama and the government, the political and economic factors together come at the third place after the issues of regional status and governance, pushing the issue of Awaasa to the fourth place. Nevertheless, the struggle to control Awaasa is intimately related to the political and economic factors. Some of their responses to Q5 are as follows: the leaders want to divide the Sidaamas for their own interests;[31] the ruling group wants indirect domination over Awaasa to control its resources; unfair budget allocation; the government wants to control cash crops (e.g., coffee) and other Sidaama resources; the government supports the individuals that harm the Sidaama interests; the government unfairly imprisons the Sidaama notables and intellectuals without trial. The Sidaamas view the conflicts in the zone as belonging to the power struggle and control of resource. They perceive the government's refusal to grant the Sidaamas autonomy, choice of particular individuals to stay in power, and the suppression of the challenging individuals, as wanting to dominate the Sidaamas and exploit the cash-crops (e.g., coffee) and other resources in the zone, and also to maintain the interests of the ruling group. Coffee is the main earner of foreign currency for Ethiopia, and more than 30%

[31]This alludes to the problem that appeared between a Sidaama artisan clan and the rest of the Sidaama clans, leading to the creation of the Sidaama-Haadiichcho People's Democratic Organisation. Educated individuals with whom I had private conversation state that a TPLF official, who was assigned as a consultant to the SNNPR, was behind the problem. According to their perception, he might have reasoned that if the Haadoo sub-national group got its own zonal status, the Sidaamas would be divided into two zones and then they could not demand a regional status because their population would become smaller.

of quality export coffee comes from Sidaamaland.[32] This political-economic argument is also the central point that the Sidaama political organisations (the SLM, SLF, SNLO) present. Although the researcher was not able to have a direct version from the government officials concerning the causes of vertical unpeaceful relations, the data from observations back the political-economic factors (e.g., centralisation of power and control of economic resources such as land and its cash crops).

7A1.i.f. Culture Issue

Cultural factors (35/748 [4.7%]) involve language, education and identity issues. It is the least mentioned factor in the questionnaire responses as a source of unpeaceful relations. However, its mention by some Sidaama respondents indicates that it is becoming a factor of deepening conflicts. Culture (from linguistic and educational aspects) has begun to be an issue for the Sidaamas since the introduction of the urban policy in 2001. In other words, if the policy is implemented as it is, the graded urban centres will only be accountable to the regional authority and not to the Sidaama zonal authority. Because the municipal council members in every graded town will be dominated by the non-Sidaamas, the Sidaamas fear that their interest will not be guarded. The administrative position of the Sidaama language in such urban centres will cease. The regional language being Amharic and the urban centres being dominated by the non-Sidaamas, the Sidaamas fear that it will affect the integrity of their territory, language and culture. They see language, culture and territory as fundamental markers of their national identity. The culture issue (except the language) is the least mentioned as a source of the vertical conflict because the threat to the Sidaama cultural practices is so far minimal. Apart from the announcement of the new urban policy, the government has not openly interfered with the Sidaama expression of its culture. But the language issue with its political dimension makes the cultural identity factor a contributing source of conflicts. The urban centres have better infrastructure and the vast majority of the Sidaamas are rural. Most of them do not know or speak Amharic. Hence, they fear and resent the prospect of Amharic being the language of the urban centres in Sidaamaland. The political organisations, many elders from the rural population and

[32]See SCFCU, "Sidamo Coffee," <http://www.sidacoop.com/coffeeiproduction.htm>, cited on 2003.

many educated individuals perceive the urban policy as a way of destroying their national identity and as an effort of the government to block their call for their own regional status. It is also to be noted that the Sidaamas take a great pride in their culture (e.g., cultural political and organisational systems, cultural values and principles), and this may explain why Aadland states that "the Sidama people are very active in strengthening everything that is Sidama" (Aadland, 2002: 35).

7A1.ii.. The Sidaama Administration vs Opposition Groups and Critics

During the colonial period, the colonials made use of local strongmen, who could use state resources and patronage to exercise power over their people — e.g., the British system of native administration (Duffield, 1998: 77). Similarly, when the TPLF/EPRDF government came to power, it needed its political/ideological allies that it would trust, the 'yes' groups as R35 (an insider of the TPLF/EPRDF officials) termed it. The government, therefore, created and empowered ...Peoples Democratic Organisations (...PDOs) and guaranteed them economic, social and political benefits. It also made available to them to use freely the state institutions (judiciary, police, army, and other security agents) to protect them and also implement the socio-economic policies of the government. In Sidaamaland it was the SPDO. In return for the benefits and security it gets, the SPDO was expected to show its unreserved loyalty to the ruling party.[33] A loss of any political position to the SLM (which had generally enjoyed until September 2005 the full support of the rural population) during elections was tantamount to the loss of the economic and political benefits of the SPDO officials. Moreover they would lose political immunity for the crimes they might have committed while in power. Hence, the line that separated the SPDO from the government was indistinguishable (cf., R35, R36). The SPDO was overwhelmingly composed of and supported by those individuals who gained economic and political benefits. The SPDO held an asymmetric position vis-à-vis the opposition groups. Since the SLF and the still insignificant SNLO operated outside the country, the SLM, a legally operating

[33]Between 1991and 2004, about ten zonal chairmen have been elected in the Sidaama zone, yet according to the Constitution of the SNNPR state (Art. 70, 2), the duration of a zonal council and executive body is for five years. The government argues that the continuous appointment and removal of the zonal chairmen of the Sidaama zone have been because of incompetence and corruption. For observers and the critics, the main reason has been the failure of the removed chairmen to show total loyalty to the centre, but also mainly the raising of the Sidaama quest for *killil* (R32).

organisation, used to be the only real threat to the SPDO. R36 informed me that the SPDO regarded the SLF and SNLO as terrorist groups.

The conflicts that have existed between the SPDO and other Sidaama political parties and non-affiliated groups (local intelligentsia and the people) have fundamentally been the conflicts between the government and the Sidaama people. The transformation of all the ...PDOs in the SNNPR into one single regional EPRDF party in 2003 means that Sidaamaland is now ruled by the regional EPRDF party members. R37 laments that among the zonal council members in Sidaamaland, he can only see one person who tries to defend the Sidaama interest; the rest are afraid of losing power and are therefore quiet. Since the zonal administration vs the opposition parties and most of the Sidaama people is the conflict between the government and the people, the issues raised in the conflict are the same as those that are expressed above. The opposition forces raise the Sidaama quest for self-determination, good governance (e.g., rule of law, accountability to the people, fair distribution of public goods) democratic political participation, free and fair election, and participation of the people in policies that affect them. Since the defunct SPDO and the incumbent zonal party officials have been chosen and fully supported by the government, and serve as the implementers of the government directives, the Sidaamas (the opposition groups, the local intelligentsia, and all non-EPRDF Sidaamas) regard them as mere instruments of the government and the non-representatives of the Sidaama people. So the ruling group lacks legitimacy. This is reflected in R9's statement:

> "Those who are in position now do only what the 'top people' [the central leadership of the country] tell them; they are instruments. We are saddened because they are persecuting those well educated sons by saying that they do not obey the government's directives or belong to the SLM. What the Sidaama elects, they remove; they put only those who are theirs."

Although the situation of the educated Sidaamas who do not fall in the category of the 'yes' men is still oppressive and exclusive, since the abolition of the SPDO, the SLM has began functioning freely. The election of May 2005 was hoped to takes place in a free and fair atmosphere, which would serve as a de-escalating factor to the zone's protracted unpeaceful relations. It became a very disappointing outcome for the Sidaama people, because the Sidaamas were not able to elect individuals whom they judged would represent them both in the regional and federal governments. In addition, the SLM leadership changed its position against the will of the party's supporters. The hope for a meaningful democratic participation and genuine representation of the people has turned into disappointment.

From an informal interaction I had with one SPDO official in 2002 and the arguments I gathered from the zonal and regional Sidaama officials on the radio, they argued that there was full democracy in Sidaamaland, and the problems occurred only because of some anti-democratic forces and individuals who incited people with lies. As regards the Sidaama quest for self-determination, the officials had never publicly raised it. According to the information from several individuals (who participated in the zonal council as polit-bureau members and zonal chairmen [R33, R36]) and others knowledgeable individuals (R32, R34, R37), those who had raised the issue were removed from the council through the biannual performance assessments, accused of inefficiency and corruption. Hence, during the period of 1993-2003, about nine zonal chairmen have been removed without finishing their terms of office. The government itself opposes the Sidaama quest for a regional status. Recalling an event just after the internal split of the TPLF in 2001, R34 says:

> A delegation of ministers from the Prime Minister's office was sent to Awaasa after the removal and imprisonment of Abate Kisho [the president of the SNNPR who was a Sidaama] with the allegation that he participated in the alleged coup-plot in 2001. The delegation came to gather support from the SPDO central committee and the polit-bureau of the Sidaama zone. After having carried out the performance assessment and removed all those it felt were ineffective, the delegation asked what the stand of the newly constituted body of the central committee and polit-bureau was. They responded that, in accordance to the EPRDF's guideline that guarantees a people to form its own regional status, their stand was for the Sidaama to have its own *killil*. The delegation told them to remove such a request arguing that it was not a timely issue. It further warned any member (in the newly constituted body) who would entertain such a question to reconsider his position seriously (R34).

7A1.iii. The Sidaama Administration vs the SNNPR

Three main issues are at the centre of the unpeaceful relations between the Sidaama zone and the SNNPR, namely the budget allocation, the status of Awaasa, and the Sidaama quest for its own regional status. Until 2003, the conflict existed between the SPDO and the regional government, since the former continuously raised the three mentioned issues. Since the SPDO was abolished and replaced with the regional EPRDF party, the conflict has become the Sidaama versus the regional authority. As the central government leadership itself objects to the Sidaama separate regional status and the Sidaama position over Awaasa, and the government is a party-government, again the unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland remains Sidaama vs the government.

Since the Sidaama quest for self-determination and the Awaasa issue have already been

discussed in detail, they do not need repetition. The Sidaama zonal administration wants to keep Awaasa as its zonal administration centre and to have control over Awaasa as well as over its resources. The elite of the regional government are opposed to the Sidaama quests for its own regional status and also to the Sidaama administration of Awaasa. The SNNPR political elites and other non-Sidaama middle class and business group interests seem to influence both the regional and federal governments' avoidance of considering the Sidaama quest for self-determination. The regional political elite want Awaasa to remain the capital of the region. The argument the regional authority presents is that since the Sidaama zone is part of the region and Awaasa is the regional capital, the latter should be administered by the regional government. It also sees the issue as being an issue for some people alone who are not happy with the government policy and arrangement. The policy over the regional capitals is the same in every region in Ethiopia and so those individuals have to accept it. Moreover, the Sidaamas are given about 30% of representation in the administration of the capital, including the mayor of the city, and that should be a good bargain. When asked about the conflict over Awaasa in an interview with IRIN in July 2002, the then SNNPR's president, Haile-Mariam Dessalegn, said the following:

> "After the incidence, we began investigating it and now those ringleaders of this issue are under scrutiny by the regional attorney — that is the ringleaders who provoked this issue."[34]
>
> "I think in the coming August we have a regional council meeting and the proclamation will be finalised then. This gives us confidence that people agree with the situation. It is similar to Mekele [the Tigray regional capital] and to Bahar Dar [the Amhara regional capital] – there is not much difference to that. Except that there is a provision that the surrounding people, the Sidama people, should get their benefits from the town because the town is surrounded by this nationality. ...the town mayor will be of this nationality as well as 30 percent of the seats of the council of the town" (ibid.)

The Sidaamas argue that the Awaasa issue is not similar to Mekele or Bahr Dar where these capitals are administered by their own respective people in their own territory. It will be similar when the Sidaamas are given their own regional status as the Tigreans and Amharas (R31, R32, R33, R34, R37).

The economic aspect of the conflict may be a more fundamental one. The Sidaamas, the regional and federal governments are all interested in controlling economic resources in Sidaamaland.

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[34]WIC, "Ethiopia: Interview with President of Southern Nations Region (SNNPR)," [Addis Ababa, 19 July 2002 (IRIN)]; available at <http://waltainfo.com/Archive/archive.htm>; "SNNPR Chief Speaks on Recent Clashes between Police and Protestors," *The Daily Monitor* (Saturday-Sunday, 20-21 July 2002), p. 3.

The immediate complaint of the Sidaama zonal authority involves capital budget distribution. The Sidaamas have always complained that they have been hindered from economic development because they have been merged with economically backward zones. Although the zone makes a substantial contribution in raising revenue for the governments, it receives little development fund (R34, R32). They feel exploited and prevented from making progress. Because of this, the pre-2006 zonal administration has emphasised the separate regional status for the Sidaamas.

The federal government allocates a certain amount of budget (recurrent and capital budget) to the region. According to R32, most of this annual budget has been for recurrent budget and comes from the government treasury.[35] The remaining fund (capital budget) has been for development and comes from loans. The loan money does not often come in time from the donors, posing difficulties for the economic development of the region. From the budget, the regional government takes what it needs for its projects and expenses. From the remainder, about 60% is distributed to the zones and special districts in accordance with their population size. In the Sidaama zone this goes only for recurrent budget (e.g., for salaries). The remaining (about 40%) is distributed to them on the basis of economical backwardness, building infrastructures (e.g., road, water, electricity, sanitation, schools), and income-raising ability. R32 explains that except some amount for the latter, in the former two cases, the Sidaama zone gets nothing, because it is judged to be a relatively advanced and with more infrastructures. The regional government is trying to balance the economic development status in the region.[36] The competition to get these meagre economic resources is one of the sources of unpeaceful relations in the SNNPR. From 1994 to 2001, the Irish Aid helped the development projects (building infrastructures) in Sidaamaland. Since 2001, the development aid is channelled through the government, which is more concerned to help the areas that are affected by droughts and with fewer resources. Since Sidaamaland is considered to be economically resourceful, it receives less attention concerning the development aid from the government (Atrie, 2002: 24). The feeder

[35]In 2003, according to the *Ethiopian Reporter* (a newspaper), the budget given for regional development activities was about 1.4b Eth Birr, but that which was given for administrative purpose was 4.7b (see <http://www.ethiopianreporter.com/displayamharic.php?id=968>; poste on 21 March 2004 in Amharic version.

[36]This is also the federal government's principle, and reflects Article 16 of the "Transitional Period Charter of Ethiopia," *Negarit Gazetta* (22 July 1991). The article states, "It [the Transitional Government] shall give special consideration to hitherto neglected and forgotten areas."

roads which were built during the former regime have been neglected and have now deteriorated to an unimaginable level. The government has concentrated only on main national roads and not on the feeder roads which are vital for economic development and the Sidaama people 98% of whom are rural. Because of this economic neglect and the feeling of being unfairly treated, the Sidaamas are calling more and more for their regional status and the management of their own resources.

The contribution of the economic factor to the deepening unpeaceful relations is made even touchier by the progressive hardship the people experience due to drought in Sidaamaland. This is not mentioned by the interviewees and respondents to the questionnaire as a contributing factor to conflicts in Sidaamaland. The rural Sidaamas attribute the problem to natural cause (e.g., climatic change). Except the deliberate famine caused by the imperial government in the early 1940s (see p. 141 above), until 1995 the Sidaama people have never suffered a widespread severe drought in their lives,[37] or at least there is no mention of it in their oral history. For the first time in their history (especially since 2001), the Sidaamas (at least in six districts of the Sidaama zone) have relied on food aid from international agencies and organisations (e.g., World Food Programme); malnourished children have been shown on TVs. The Sidaamas who depended on coffee produce have suffered the most due to the fall of coffee price in the international market. Before the market price fall, as they had earned a good price for their coffee produce, they had abandoned planting *enset* (from which comes the Sidaama staple food) in favour of coffee plantations. In addition, the Sidaamaland has been experiencing a high population rise. This means that the land is overused and too small to cater for all. There is a need for industrialisation and urbanisation to free the land for modernised agricultural development.

As it stands at the moment, the frustration arising from the drought factor is, at least indirectly, contributing to conflict escalation, because of the Sidaama perception: that the TPLF government favours more the Tigray region; that they receive unfair distribution of budget; and that the government has been blocking their developmental activities by unduly interfering with and preventing their local NGOs from functioning freely, and the international NGOs from coming and working in Sidaamaland. Moreover, in the situation where the government is seen as meddling in the

[37]Some Sidaamas in western lowland of the Sidaama zone suffered severe drought in 1985.

Sidaama internal issues by appointing individuals that are not elected by the people, refusing to grant their quest for self-governance, and abusing human rights, it becomes a scapegoat even for the drought problem. This is again a reflection of how the political and economic issues are intimately tied and serve as principal contributors to conflict escalation in Sidaamaland.

At the federal government level, the Sidaama people feel that more attention has been given to northern parts of Ethiopia. Certainly much has been done to the regions in northern Ethiopia compared to the SNNPR and some other regions, for the northern areas have been continuously affected by drought. Yosef states that the regions that are at the political power periphery (e.g., the SNNPR, Gambella, Benshangul-Gumuz, Somali, Afar) receive less economic development aid and unfair distribution of national economic resources and opportunities in comparison to other regions of Ethiopia.[38] Even media opportunity on the national TV has not been given them until this moment (May 2006), while the Amhara, Tigray, and Oromia regions get places allotted them everyday. The political leaders of the neglected regions have presented their grievances at different moments but their concerns have not caught the ears of the political Centre (Yosef, 2004). The zones in the SNNPR compete to get the meagre yearly budget and this has been causing tension among the groups. The resource distribution imbalance is a major contributor to the violent conflict outcomes and nationalisms that exist within the politically peripheral and economically neglected regions.

7.A.2. Secondary Dimension of the Unpeaceful Relations

Conflicts in this dimension are mostly dependent on those of the previous dimension. If the latter are resolved, the former can easily be managed. The Sidaama vs non-Sidaama conflicts (7A2.i) in this secondary dimension are mainly a spill-over of the primary one. But if they are prolonged, they will have their own separate status and move to the primary dimension, because they move to what the Sidaama regard as *ola* (see p. 41 above), thus becoming intractable. *Ola* mobilises the whole Sidaama community. The intra-Sidaama cultural unpeaceful relation between the artisans and non-artisans (7A2.ii) has the potential to deepen if the elite in power manipulate it for their political ends.

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[38]Yosef B., "Who Speaks for the Neglected Regions?" Opinion, in *Addis Fortune* (10 Oct 2004); available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200410120871.html> posted on 12 October 2004; accessed on 18 Oct 2004.

7A2.i. The Sidaamas vs non-Sidaamas in Sidaamaland

Fundamentally, the emerging problem between the urban Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas come from fear of being dominated and excluded and lack of avenues of dialogue. Both the questionnaire data and the interview show that they have plenty in common which can bring understanding and cooperation among them if sufficient social infrastructure to facilitate intercommunication is built. According to the answers to Q3iii, Q3vi1a, Q3vi1b, Q3vi2a and Q3vi2b, bad governance and the abuse of people's socio-political and economic rights serve as the main causes of conflicts, leading to attitude changes and emphasis on identity issues.

7A2.i.a. Governance issue

The governance factor takes the first place of importance for the non-Sidaamas (mentioned 87/386 [22.5%]) as a source of unpeaceful relations. They express bad governance in terms of corruption, Sidaama favouritism, and lack of the rule of law. Generally, the non-Sidaama respondents hold that "administrative power in the zone should be given to the educated regardless of their ethnic background." This point is also backed by some Sidaama respondents who say that appointments to political offices must be "on the basis of ability and not party-loyalty or belonging to a particular ethnic group." This indicates that, in the eyes of the people in Sidaamaland, the administrators in the Sidaama zone are chosen on the basis of their loyalty to the party and not on merit. The non-Sidaamas in the zone want equal treatment in distributing job opportunities and in the courts of justice, and the allocation of plots in Awaasa.

Most of the questions the non-Sidaamas raise concerning governance are also raised and supported by many Sidaama respondents. In the Q3vi2b (*"What are the points on which you disagree with the Sidaamas? Why?"*), the following Sidaama response captures the feeling: "sectionalism of the corrupt ruling group who abuse the rights of all the citizens," or "incompetent officials who are just corrupt and untrustworthy."

7A2.i.b. Political (67/386 [17.3%]), economic (36/386 [9.3%]), and political-economic (28/386 [7.2

%]) issues

Joined together, these factors stand out as primary causes of conflicts in the zone. 'Ethnic politics,' struggle for controlling power among the groups in the SNNP region, the demand for equal power-share and employment opportunity in Awaasa, struggle to protect economic interests, and conflict over farming and grazing land: these elements are repeatedly mentioned by both the non-Sidaama and Sidaama respondents to the questionnaire as underlying inter-communal unpeaceful relations in the Sidaama zone. These factors are also related in many ways to the governance issue.

7A2.i.c. The question of 'rights'

Although this factor comes on the fourth place (mentioned 49/386 [12.7%) as a source of unpeaceful relations, being a factor that touches all socio-cultural and economic areas, it is a significant element in conflict escalation. The non-Sidaamas complain that they are deprived of their rights of employment, of working and living in the Sidaama zone (particularly in Awaasa) because of the Sidaama ethnocentrism, and of their "equal rights to work and live using their energy, knowledge and money." They "want their rights as Ethiopians to live anywhere to be respected."[39] Other elements they mention are: "unfair legal practice in court;" "want equal rights in all in the Sidaama zone since they belong to the same regional state;" "want to share the Sidaama zone equally;" "forcefully removing individuals from their homes in towns in the Sidaama zone is illegal;" "the rights of equal participation for the inhabitants of the region must be respected;" "distributing building plots in Awaasa for the Sidaamas alone is unfair;" "every able person should have right to hold administrative offices;" "our rights to elect and be elected must be respected;" "so long as the government has not granted the Sidaamas a regional status, they should respect the equal rights of others in all." According to the questionnaire data, some Sidaamas reject the idea of 'sharing everything' together,

[39]The constitution of SNNPR states: "Any resident of this State or any person lawfully in this State has the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence, as well as to leave the region at any time he wishes to (Art. 33); "Ethiopians from other States enjoy equal rights, with the local inhabitants of the Region, to jobs, to liberty of movement and to possession and ownership of property within this region" (Art. 34: 1); "Any Ethiopian who speaks the working language of the Region, zone or the special wereda has the right to be elected to serve in governmental and social activities of the State, the zone or special wereda" (Art. 34:2).

for they say that some areas must remain under the Sidaama control (e.g., political administration of their zone). Many Sidaama respondents do agree that "so long as the non-Sidaamas belong to (and/or born in) the Sidaama zone, they should have equal rights with the Sidaamas to elect and to be elected, live and work."

A few non-Sidaama individuals have mentioned that the Sidaamas want to secede: to the question "What are the points you disagree with the Sidaamas? Why?" one responded saying that he disagrees with "the Sidaamas' quest for secession (for they have no valid reasons and it requires international communities' consent)." To Q3vi1b, some Sidaamas responded by saying that they object to the hearsay or false propaganda by some non-Sidaamas that the Sidaamas want secession. In his informal interactions, the researcher has come across some non-Sidaama individuals who also think that the Sidaamas want to secede. None of the Sidaama respondents to the questionnaire and no interviewee throughout the zone has mentioned the idea of secession or independent Sidaama state. Neither has the researcher come across such an idea in his travel throughout the zone during the research. Perhaps the idea of Sidaamas wanting secession comes from the fear of some individuals that it may happen in the future if the Sidaamas are granted the status of autonomy. During the armed struggle of the Sidaamas (e.g., between 1978 and 1991), the *derg* government also used the argument that the Sidaamas wanted to secede and join Somalia.

7A2.i.d. Awaasa (23/386 [6%]) and self-determination (22/386 [5.7 %]) issues

The non-Sidaamas prefer Awaasa to be administered by the regional authority and also support the government's urban policy according to which urban centres are to be administered solely by their municipal authorities. They perceive that both the regional administration of Awaasa and the urban policy gives them more security from the threat of Sidaama domination. It is also from this perspective that their discomfort in the Sidaama quest for self-determination has to be understood. The central issue is not so much the opposition to the Sidaamas' quest for their own regional status and administering urban centres, but rather the fear of being dominated and excluded. The questionnaire respondents' primary emphasis on the governance and political factor indicate this concern. Some may have even contemplated the prospect of being removed from Sidaamaland as

one Sidaama mentioned in his response to Q3vi1b by saying that he objects to the non-Sidaama's "false propaganda that the Sidaamas want to chase them away from Awaasa." R32 says that among the non-Sidaamas, "one cannot find any person who openly opposes" the Sidaama quest for its own *killil*:

> "Those who oppose are not really doing so because they hate the Sidaamas — although this does not mean that there exists none of such people — but because of fear (that they maybe chased away).' This [fear] comes because there had been experience in the neighbouring area.... In the Oromo area,...you find many people who were chased away from their homes... Because of this experience in their neighbouring area, there may have been fear in them [the non Sidaamas in the Sidaama zone]. I do not think that they object to the benefits the Sidaamas would get from their own territory, except the fear that they might be chased away (from the area). But the fear they have is real. Because of the lack of avenues (or structures) to dialogue and express their fear, they object that the Sidaamas should have their own *Killil*. ...in the early days (1991), when the Sidaama was granted a nationhood status, there was a lot of excitement and the young people and those without political leadership experience behaved in a really threatening manner, as the non-Sidaamas behaved towards the Sidaamas in the past. This past wound accounts for the Sidaama behaviour towards them....If there is an open forum, I do not think (any side) rejects the other. If it is said that all must be treated fairly, I do not see any other reason that they object."

The response of R9 summarises the rural Sidaama views:

> "The problem of Awaasa is created by those in government, and is not an issue that has been between the Sidaamas and others. There is no place (avenue) to address this issue. The ruling (group) has treated [the people] unfairly."

The SLM leadership emphasises that it would not object to the non-Sidaamas fully participating in urban administration, but the injustice and deliberate efforts that have been made to prevent the Sidaamas from living in urban areas and involving in business activities has disadvantaged the Sidaamas and created imbalance. This imbalance must first be addressed before the implementation of the policy. As it is, the policy simply disadvantages the Sidaamas (R30; Woldamanuel, 2004: 16).[40] The position of the SLF leadership is also similar (R31).

7A2.i.e. Cultural Issue

The majority of the non-Sidaamas want the education language in primary schools in Sidaamaland to be Amharic (Ethiopia's and the SNNPR's official language) rather than the Sidaama language; they

[40]See also the Message of Woldamanuel, the leader of the SLM, to the organisation's general conference on 19 January 2005. The message capitalises on this urban policy aspect.

feel dominated by the Sidaamas. They want unity without ethnic and regional distinction. Since Sidaamaland has more primary and secondary educational institutions, it employs many non-Sidaama education professionals. The non-Sidaama primary school teachers are unhappy with the policy that the primary education in the zone should be in the Sidaama language. This is mainly because they do not know the language, and consequently they feel disadvantaged. This also necessitates their preference to live and teach in urban areas where Amharic is spoken by all the urbanites. In the like manner, other non-Sidaama professionals, who do not speak the Sidaama language, in non-education sectors find their job opportunity narrowed in the zone, and many of them prefer that the Sidaamas go and work in rural areas while they work in urban areas. For the Sidaamas this has a political connotation because of the traditional urban/rural divide and the urban control of the decision-making power over the rural. The Sidaamas perceive such groups of the non-Sidaamas as opponents of the Sidaama cultural expression and use of its language in the zone; they suspect the non-Sidaamas of "wanting to keep on dominating us and controlling our resources" in the name of unity. They insist that those who want live and engage in business activities in Sidaamaland are free to do so; but if they want employment in the zone among the Sidaamas they should know the Sidaama language. This is echoed in the position of the SLM's leadership:

> "…if the (Sidaama) people elect an Ethiopian (from other areas in the country)—who has integrated (him/herself) with the people and is able to communicate or interact through the local language—to political leadership, he/she must not be prevented on the basis of his/her ethnic background. If, on the other hand, one who does not know the language, way of life and culture of the people and says 'I want to administer the Sidaama people' through an interpreter, that will not be acceptable. If one cannot communicate directly with the people one will not have a chance of being chosen. While there exist local individuals who speak the language of the people, who understand the wish of the people, and possess comparable or greater skill (compared to those coming from outside the zone), to bring in and appoint individuals from other areas has no place in democracy. However, except in political administration, no person should be prevented from working or being employed anywhere in Ethiopia in the field of his/her profession" (Woldamanuel, 2004: 32).

The desire for the non-Sidaamas to educate their children in Amharic is also based on the benefit it brings for their children, for it is the official language of Ethiopia. It is also the means of trans-ethnic/national and trans-cultural means of communication among Ethiopians. The use of the Sidaama language for primary education is by no means a united position among the educated Sidaamas. This may explain why this factor is the least mentioned one by the questionnaire respondents. According to the interactions the researcher has had with different Sidaama educated

individuals, there are those Sidaamas who are in favour of it; there are others who oppose it, and there are some others who see it as not a significant issues to worry about and show less interest whether primary education is in the Sidaama language or in Amharic. However, the majority of the rural Sidaamas and Sidaama political organisations do emphasise it as an important issue. Apart from the different positions among the educated group on the use of the Sidaama language for primary education, all the Sidaamas are united with the use of the Sidaama culture in Sidaamaland and the Sidaama language as its principal means of communication within the zone.

The Sidaamas do resent the non-Sidaamas' resistance to their quest for the Sidaama regional status. They also complain of not having equal rights with other regions, zones and special districts in matters of administering one's own territory: they argue that in Tigray and Amhara areas their respective people administer their own territories and affairs, and that the Sidaamas should also be allowed to have control over their own territory. They would allow Awaasa to be administered by the regional authority only when the Sidaamas are granted the *killil* status; otherwise, they object to any suggestion of moving its zonal administration centre to any other towns in the zone.

To the question (Q3vi1b) — "*What are the points on which you disagree with the non-Sidamas? Why?*" — the following represent the Sidaama responses: "their opposition to the Sidaama's quest for *killil* (regional status), negating the Sidaama constitutional right; it violates Art. 39 of the constitution of the FDRE."[41] Yet, according to the questionnaire data, only some non-Sidaama respondents have mentioned their opposition to the Sidaama quest for a regional status. Those who opposed it reason that the Sidaamas may seek to secede in the future. The views of some other non-Sidaama respondents reflect no opposition as the following statement (taken from one of their responses) shows: that they agree with "the Sidaamas' quest for administering their own affairs since it is their constitutional right." A response to Q3iv — "they want the Sidaamas alone to govern (administer) their own area and people and decide on their resources"— reflects the underlying general fear of the non-Sidaama groups that they may be discriminated against politically and economically. The data indicate the lack of dialogue or structured debate among the two communities. Several reasons account for this: there is neither structural provision nor civil

[41]Art. 14 of the constitution of SNNPR state the same point of Art. 39 of the CFDRE, i.e., granting right for self-determination up to secession.

organisation that coordinates and brings the two communities to discuss together (at least the researcher has not seen any forum organised for discussion); people avoid talking about politics, for they view politics negatively and regard it as an issue that leads to violence; and the churches and mosques where all the groups come and pray together, prohibit political issues, for they perceive it as a divisive element. The government also wants religious institutions to deal solely with religious affairs. A lack of infrastructure for dialogue among conflict parties allows misperceptions. In this situation opinions of a few individuals from one party can create conflicting impressions or perceptions in the other, thus becoming an element of conflict.

The rural Sidaama view about the non-Sidaamas who live in Sidaamaland reflects the rural people's experience and is summarised in what R9 says:

> "There is no conflict between the Sidaamas and other ethnic/national groups. They live together with each other sharing joys and sorrows, and under one *jirte* [a local system of supporting each other during important events (e.g., building houses, marriage, moments of calamity, funeral)]. If a mistreatment of one exists, the case is brought to the elders or clan (authority), and the problem is resolved; and all thus live in harmony."

Towards the minority non-Sidaama groups, the SLM position is as follows:

> "When our organisation says that the Sidaama people must govern itself through free election, it also open-handedly welcomes the non-Sidaamas by birth who have come to live in the Sidaama territory (because of work, business and other varied reasons), and who also together with the Sidaama struggle to regain their democratic rights of which they have been deprived. The *Woyane*—spreading its propaganda through its (self-serving puppets) by saying 'so and so, because they come from other areas, cannot be employed in government works'—has alienated many (who were born, educated and achieved higher status [in the Sidaama area]) against their will from the people that educated and brought them up. To remove this situation, the only choice we have is to struggle together hand in hand" (Woldamanuel, 2004: 32).

The SLF's position towards the non-Sidaamas:

> "The Front co-operates with the oppressed people and their political organisations that struggle for similar objectives. It respects the human rights of all people including the minority groups in Sidama."[42]

Since the merging of south-western nations into one regional state without sufficient and consented infrastructures of participation and mediation, the tolerant cohabitation of the Sidaama and non-Sidaama communities has begun to face obstacles. The fact that the SNNPR centre (Awaasa) is found in the Sidaama zone, the use of the Sidaama language for primary level education and as the

[42]<http://www.sidamaliberation-front.org/resolution.htm> cited on 4 March 2005.

zonal language, and the Sidaama zonal administration wanting to have control over the capital: these have stimulated fear and are giving rise to misperceptions of each other. It is to be noted that the majority of the workers in the Sidaama zone (e.g., teachers, nurses, secretaries, workers in the factories) are the non-Sidaamas. Businessmen/women are overwhelmingly the non-Sidaamas. Overall, the competition for power, fear of losing control over vital economic resources and the need for survival (cultural, economic and political) among the groups in the zone serve as the causes of unpeaceful relations that is slowly moving towards the polarised stage of conflict escalation. Among the non-Sidaamas the *Wolaitas* take the forefront in the conflict. The Sidaama-Wolaita relationship is currently at the threshold of 'segregation' in the stages of conflict escalation.

7A2.ii. The Artisans vs Wolawa

The Sidaamas have divided themselves into the category of ritually pure (the *wolawa*) and impure. To the latter belong two artisan Sidaama sub-nationals (Haadoo [potters and carpenters], and Awaado [smiths and tanners]). The *wolawa* Sidaamas (i.e., all the non-artisans) have maintained the exclusion of artisan Sidaamas from intermarriage and ritual activities (Betana, 1991: 131). To justify their exclusion the *wolawas* accuse them of having transgressed some food laws, and have created stereotypes. The artisans have suffered a psychological effect from this structural injustice (quasi-caste system)[43] that has excluded them from full integration and participation in the Sidaama social life. They have deeply resented this socio-psychological domination of the *wolawa* and want their human dignity and equality in all things to be respected.[44] The elder generations of the so called *wolawa* hold such separation with religious duty and believe in the myths of ritual purity. They are intolerant of intermarriages between *wolawa* and the non-*wolawa*. Because it is a very sensitive issue the elders would not like to talk about it, and the researcher could not interview them in this matter.

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[43]Unlike the caste system of the Indian type, the Sidaama system is limited to ritual purity alone and in the prohibition of intermarriage on the basis of the ritual purity code. There is no economic exploitation (i.e., reducing them to servile status); the non-*wolawa* individuals can own their own lands, sell their products, and participate in the communal decision-making.

[44]Concerning the relationship between *wolawa* and the non-*wolawa* Sidaamas, see Haileyesus Seba (2003: 221-239).

However, from informal interactions with individuals and also knowing the culture allows the researcher to present a view about this issue. Most educated Sidaamas and the younger generation of the *wolawa* pay less attention to the cultural myth of ritual purity. In my informal interactions, they regard it as backward, and also feel a sense of shame to talk about it. They emphasise free intermarriage on the basis of love and consent among those interested. The educated group of the artisan groups have raised the issue and shown resentments towards this. In general political and professional life, no distinction exists. The overt manifestation of the conflict is indicated in the creation of a political party called the "Sidaama-Haadiichcho People's Democratic Organisation" (SHPDO), but there has not been physical violence.

Unless manipulated by some unscrupulous self-serving political elite, this *wolawa* versus artisan unpeaceful relation has no future after the passing away of the older generations. First, the exclusion does not involve physical abuse, economic exploitation or rejection of the artisans as non-Sidaama. Secondly, the political organisations like the SLM, SLF, and SNLO are totally opposed to such distinction. Thirdly, even if there are a few individuals who still entertain the quasi-caste system, most educated Sidaamas with whom I have had informal discussion regard this cultural system as shameful. There is more force towards conflict transformation among the two Sidaama groups than that which escalates.

7.A.3. Tertiary Dimension of the Unpeaceful Relations

7A3.i. Traditional Conflict: Sidaama vs Neighbouring Groups

The Unpeaceful relation between the Sidaama and Oromo groups is traditional, while the conflict between the Sidaama and Wolaita is strictly speaking a post-2000 one. The latter began in Awaasa. According to many scholars, the origin of conflicts between the Oromo groups (Arusi and Jemjem) may go back to the 16th century Oromo expansion. According to them, the Oromos were blocked by the Sidaamas from passing through Sidaamaland, forcing them to pass through the Bale area in the 1520s (Levine, 2000: 79; Budge, II, 1929: 341; Bahrey, 1993: 44; Pankhurst, 1997: 324-421). Henceforth they became historic enemies. This author sees the origin in the territorial expansion of

the Sidaamas as the population of the Sidaamas has continued to grow steadily since the 16th century, periodically causing bloodshed. This conflict over farming and grazing land has developed into individual-honour killing (a means of gaining a social status within one's community) of each other and retaliatory acts. The two communities (Sidaama and Oromo), however, have managed to keep the problem from getting out of hand through their own cultural mechanisms and methodologies. The territorial demarcation by the incumbent government under the federal structure has ended the conflict between the two communities, although clashes and killings still take place from time to time in the northern side of Sidaamaland. Such killings can have a serious consequence in the relationship between the two communities, if some self interested or inexperienced politicians from both communities react in an escalatory manner and override the responsibility of the cultural authorities of the two communities. In short, the traditional conflict between the Sidaamas and their Oromo (Guji and Arusi) neighbours is mainly based on territory, vengeance and self-worth or honour, but it is already dying and is nowadays a rare event.

The implementation of the policy of resettlement (cf., p. 116 above) has recently (2002) caused bloodshed between the two peaceful neighbours (Wolaita and Sidaama). The settlement of a group of Wolaitas at the western side of the River Bilate area, which the Sidaamas consider as their land, has resulted in the territorial conflict. The researcher is not able to get the Wolaita version of the claim, i.e., whether the decision of resettling the Wolaitas is based on their belief that the resettlement area is within their own territory. Nevertheless, many people have died in this conflict. Currently the area is very tense; the government has placed soldiers to prevent bloodshed. Generally, territorial conflicts tend to become a non-negotiable issue. From the Sidaama perspective, they argue that since the appointment of a Wolaita as the president of the SNNPR, their territorial integrity (at both the Bilate and Awaasa areas) has been tampered with.[45] This attitude is reflected in the Sidaama response to Q3vi1b: since the *killil* president became other than the Sidaama (a Wolaita), the non Sidaamas take advantage to declare Awaasa a non-Sidaama area. Echoes are also found in the non-Sidaama responses to Q4 which asks the causes of conflicts between the Sidaama zone and others: "the false propaganda the Sidaama cadres make (that the Sidaamas are made to be ruled by

[45]From 1991 to 2001, the SNNPR president has been a Sidaama.

Wolaitas);" "the Sidaamas' refusal to be ruled by a Wolaita;" "the Sidaamas' refusal to be ruled by others." This may also be tied to the competition of the SNNPR groups for controlling the regional state. The urban Sidaama-Wolaita animosity is recent and mainly in Awaasa; it is not a traditional conflict but can be regarded as partly arising from the competition to control the regional state. Sidaama-Wolaita conflict is political-economic and territorial in nature.

7A3.ii. Intra-Sidaama Unpeaceful Relations

7A3.ii.a. Intra-Sidaama elite conflicts

Some elites have been involved in nepotism by distributing positions and jobs to their own relatives and on the basis of *ga're* politics. This has caused intra-Sidaama elite conflicts (only political elites, not the people) which, if not addressed properly right at its early stage, could develop into a very dangerous fratricidal conflict.[46] Moreover, this nepotistic approach has affected not only the Sidaamas, but also the non-Sidaamas. The complaint of the non-Sidaamas of not being equally treated in the matters of distributing plots in Awaasa and employment in Sidaamaland partly owes its source to this nepotism. In the name of 'the Sidaama people', some officials have benefited themselves, their families and some of their *ga're* individuals. Concerning the distribution of plots in Awaasa, the corrupt officials have insisted on the 'Sidaama first' attitude and distributed plots mainly to themselves and their own family members, and then sold them back to other able individuals. Hence, both the Sidaamas as well as the non-Sidaamas have been victims of those corrupt SPDO officials. This partly (if not mainly) accounts for the development of the non-Sidaama perception that the Sidaamas are ethnocentric. To Q3vi2b (*"What are the points on which you disagree with the Sidaamas? Why?"*), some Sidaama respondents indicated to this nepotism. One responded by saying that he objects to the "internal *ga're*-based discrimination, for it affects the unity and development of the Sidaama zone." This summarises the feelings of the respondents to the questionnaire. Since 2002, this conflict has died, and one can only hope that it will not reappear.

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[46]"... a conflict started by the elites ends up becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy engulfing the entire ethnic group" (Hezkias, 1993: 23).

7A3.ii.b. Gender issue

There exists a third aspect of intra-Sidaama unpeaceful relations: the gender issue. The Sidaamas are culturally patrilineal and political power and inheritance rights belong only to men. A very negligible number of women have achieved tertiary level of education thus far (2005). There has not been a feminist movement or any movement standing for the equal rights of the Sidaama women. As the number of educated Sidaama women is slowly growing, they will certainly raise the issue. At the moment, the conflict remains latent; a violent reaction from men can happen if women raise the issue of equal treatment and campaign for the full respect of their human dignity and equal rights.

7A3.ii.c. Other general internal conflict issues

For the rural Sidaamas the causes of their internal conflicts are different from the nepotism of a group of the zonal government officials. Those interviewed individuals and groups in the rural areas mention conflicts among individuals and families within the Sidaama community arising from one or more of the following factors: land and boundary disputes, disputes over grazing rights, disagreements in matters of opinion, adultery or other forms of tampering with one's wife [R2, R9], cases of physical or verbal abuse, refusal to pay one's debt, breaking trust [R4, R10], transgression of one's property, bewitching, theft [R5 and R6], abducting girls for marriage [R13]. Such are the internal issues with which the elders in local courts deal. The several local court sessions that the researcher has attended confirm the above causes. Most of them are land and property disputes.

7.B. CAPACITY-BUILDERS IN CONFLICT

There is not much to say here since these parties are not directly involved in the conflicts in Sidaamaland. The significant capacity builders are the IFI and donor governments that are specifically interested in the implementation of liberal economic policies in Ethiopia. They are significant because, in the context where the state is fragile and under threat by armed opposition groups, they offer highly needed economic resources and military support which help to maintain territorial

integrity, regime security and economic development.[47] The negative side of the support of these capacity builders concerns the aspect that they pay less attention to the negative effects their more stringent economic policies bring and their paying lip-service to the issue of human rights abuses and absence of the rule of law. In order to receive the inflow of the needed resources, the Ethiopian government is under pressure to implement the type of policies that the donor governments and agencies prefer, and this partly contributes to the government's authoritarianism in making and implementing unilateral policies, its violent behaviour towards any resistance, and continuous human rights abuses. In other words, the government has received more attention from the donor agencies and governments than the people have. The Human Rights Watch's "World Report 2003" indicates that international communities themselves show an insufficient degree of involvement in putting diplomatic pressure on the Ethiopian government to respect the rule of law and refrain from its human rights abuses.[48] The silence of the international donor governments and agencies can be partly attributed to the lack of an alternative political party and leadership that all the peoples of Ethiopia recognise as representing them; hence, the fear of instability. It is also argued that the NGOs themselves are strangled by the control of the Ethiopian and the donor governments (Kassahun, 2002: 125-129). Human rights abuse worsens unpeaceful relations. The party with more resources, support and economic interest is less likely to listen to the grievances of the people and resolve the problems through peaceful and constructive means. The existence of the armed opposition movements in the country is a sign of such a failure to find a solution through peaceful means.

Although there may not be any material or financial support, the SLF receives from the OLF and SNLF a moral support. In the long run, if the real issues of grievances are not addressed and a

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[47]With regard to military support: "From 1995-2000, the U.S. provided some $1,835,000 in International Military and Education Training (IMET) deliveries to Ethiopia. Some 115 Ethiopian military officers were trained under the IMET program from 1991-2001. Approximately 4,000 Ethiopian soldiers have participated in IMET since 1950" (Keith Harmon Snow, "STATE Terror Against Indigenous Peoples in Ethiopia– Another Secret War for Oil?" available at <http://www.ww3report.com/ethiopia.html>; accessed on 18 March 2005.

[48]"Ethiopia," *Human Rights Watch* Vol. 15, No. 2A (January 2003). Available at <http://www.hrw.org/reports /2003/ethiopia0103/>; accessed on 18 March 2005. "Ethiopia is considered an essential partner of the U.S. in its "war on terrorism" and Washington has generally been unwilling to apply meaningful pressure on the Ethiopian government over its human rights record" (HRW, "Ethiopia," in *World Report 2005* (January 2005); available at <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/01/13/ethiop9833.htm>; accessed on 18 March 2005.

genuine democratic participation or accommodation of the peoples in Ethiopia is not achieved, these southern armed fronts are more likely to join a common front and the conflict may not end. The type of Ethiopia's relations with its neighbouring countries (e.g., Kenya, Somalia, Eritrea, Arab countries) also determines the future strength of the armed fronts to pose a real challenge to the Ethiopian government. In whatever case, the worst scenario of the failure to resolve the vertical unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland will be the emergence of violent horizontal unpeaceful relations as the Sidaama nationalism deepens, and the quest for internal self-determination moves to external self-determination. The more people are forced into exile, the more nationalist sentiments grow and these will in the long ran become capacity builders for the opposition groups (both armed and unarmed). Many more of the Sidaama intelligentsia have been leaving the country as refugees and are slowly becoming a substantial diaspora community. The leaders of the Sidaama armed organisations live outside the country.

SUMMARY

Are conflicts in Sidaamaland resolvable/transformable? Are the issues raised negotiable? Are there elements that the government and the Sidaama share in common? Can the EPRDF resolve the governance problems by abandoning its local obedient subordinates in favour of those who have genuine local support, those whom the people themselves choose to be their representatives? Answers to these questions will be addressed in the concluding chapter. Here the author summarises only what has been raised in the chapter. The onion analogy or three concentric circles (according to which the inner part represents 'needs', the middle 'interests' and the outer 'positions') is relevant here to recapture what has been said. For the sake of convenience the author uses the following table format.

Contenders	Positions	Interests	Needs
Sidaama (through the SLM, educated group, elders)	demand that their constitutional right for the *killil* status must be respected; opposed to urban policy; want to choose their own representatives freely; opposed to the merging of the Sidaama with the SNNPR; disagree with the criteria for budget allocation; want Awaasa to remain under the Sidaama administration; want independent investigation and compensation for the killing of the Sidaamas by the security forces on 24 May 2002; call for the release of the political prisoners	respect for human rights; equal democratic participation; freedom to organise themselves; control over the economic resources; territorial integrity	equal socio-cultural and political status; fear of being dominated and ruled by others in their own areas; recognition of their socio-political identity; fear of losing their territorial integrity and culture; need to control their economic resources (e.g., land) for their developmental needs
SLF/SNLO	Self-determination/secession	political and economic freedom/autonomy; territorial integrity	liberation from "Abyssinian" domination and exploitation
Government	necessity for efficiency to bring economic development; need to implement development policies; control the "local bourgeois class"; fight anti-democratic forces; remove corruption and bad governance; preventing those who incite the people and disrupt the order	political and economic control; easy access to resources; building local supporters; preventing opposition groups from winning elections and getting rural support	fear of losing political power (regime security); maybe fear of losing control over economic resources; fear of losing international donors' support; maintaining order and territorial integrity
Non-Sidaama (mainly urbanites)	equal rights for employment and at the courts of justice; language to be Amharic; urban centres to be managed by the elected urban members on the basis of merit; Awaasa to be administered by the region; Sidaama zonal administration centre to be in other towns; freedom of all citizens to live and work wherever they want; ethnic politics and rule to be abolished; unity; democratic governance	guaranteeing political and economic position; urban centres to be administered by municipal authority for creating better environment for investment and bringing development	fear of losing traditional advantage (e.g., business, employment, political power); fear of being dominated by the Sidaamas; economic and political security (e.g., access to equal share of political power and economic resources); fear of political and economic exclusion or of being left out
neighbouring groups	territorial integrity	land	land security

Artisan Sidaama	equality in all as humans; removal of traditional division; their economic contribution to be recognised and honoured; free intermarriage	the abolition of myths used to separate them from others; recognition of their equality by the traditional authorities; to see that the *wolawa* marry their women and men the *wolawa* women	recognising and respecting their equal human dignity; acknowledging their equality in all; appreciating and valuing their indispensable profession and contributions to the Sidaama well being
the *wolawa* who hold status quo position (mostly from older generations)	the tradition must be honoured; no intermarriage; no ritual equality	keep the tradition	keeping the social status
the educated, church authorities; the Sidaama political organisations	the equality of all must be respected; traditional myths against the artisan groups must be abolished; individuals must intermarry freely on the basis of love	free interaction as one equal people; removal of the social taboos	the unity of the Sidaama

Thus far, we have seen the nature of conflicts, their sources, and conflict parties. The following chapter presents conflict actions that have been undertaken by the parties and other factors of conflict dynamics in Sidaamaland.

8. CONFLICT ACTIONS AND DYNAMICS IN SIDAAMALAND

The internal dynamics of unpeaceful relations involve *conflict parties*, *conflict sources*, *conflict actions* and *attitudes* (see pp. 35-37, 71-79 above). Chapter 6 presented conflict parties, while chapter 7 provided conflict sources as presented by the peoples in Sidaamaland. This chapter deals with conflict actions and psychological factors (e.g., attitude, fear, frustration). The experience of unpeaceful relations leads to conscious conflict actions and affects the attitudes (positively or negatively) of the parties in the conflict. Directly or indirectly we have already mentioned some conflict actions in the previous chapter. Here we present them in an organised way. Every source of conflict and conflict action affects attitude which is an integral part of conflict dynamics. There are also actions (e.g., policies) that are intended for the good of the people, but which produce unintended secondary elements that contribute to conflict escalation. In this work, such actions are also considered as part of conflict dynamics, for they contribute to the maintenance of the unpeaceful relations. Conflict actions and psychological factors are determinant dynamics for the outcome of the unpeaceful relations (see pp. 73-79 above). So, what are the current conflict actions of the parties? Who are the leaders of conflict parties? Are the conflicts in an 'escalatory' or 'de-escalatory' phase? What are the factors of conflict dynamics that are maintaining conflicts in Sidaamaland? Section 8A concerns 'conflict actions' and addresses the first four questions, while section 8B addresses the last question.

8.A. CONFLICT ACTIONS

8.A.1. Conflict Actions in the Primary Dimension

From the Sidaama side, the organisers in conflict action have been the opposition leaders (the members and leadership of the SLM, the SLF and the SNLO), the excluded educated elites and elders. Their current standing objective is to have the status of self determination and freedom for democratic self-governance within Sidaamaland. This Sidaama quest is a 'national question,' which began in the late 1970s, for which much Sidaama blood has been shed. In principle, the EPRDF set

up a federal structure to address such a problem; yet, in the Sidaama case, it remains unaddressed to this moment (2006); the call has been intensified; the Sidaama nationalism has deepened further (see for more pp. 200-211 above). Whether granting the Sidaamas a *killil* status will end the PSC in Sidaamaland, it is another question to consider in the concluding chapter. But at the moment (2006), the Sidaama quest for the regional status stands out as a (if not 'the') prominent contextual factor that continues to deepen unpeaceful relations, for in it, the Sidaamas see their territorial security, and a major step achieved in their struggle for freedom and equality in the country. This makes addressing the Sidaama political aspiration appear to be the first significant step towards conflict transformation in Sidaamaland.

Since 1993 the SLM, educated elites and the elders have tried to express the Sidaama grievances through legal means, and organised people for peaceful demonstrations including the 24 May 2002 non-violent march of thousands of the Sidaamas. The SLF is involved in armed struggle. The SNLO has been involved in conscientising people about their situation more for the objective of the Sidaama external self-determination. Moreover, some attribute the assassination of an SPDO official in June 2002 to the work of the SNLO. All of the Sidaama opposition political organisations and individuals are also involved in making petitions to international organisations (e.g., Amnesty International, the UN) and lobbying government officials in the UK, regarding the Sidaama situation and human rights abuses. The latter action has at least helped towards having political prisoners released.

The true measure of the political capacity of a state in handling its problems is said to be reflected in its ability to exercise power without force (Ayoob, 1996: 49; Jackman, 1993). This political capacity appears lacking in Ethiopia. The actions of the government involve torture and indefinite imprisonment of those it suspects of having been behind demonstrations or resistance, intimidation (e.g., threatening to imprison, or keeping on bail for indefinite periods to prevent prominent individuals from involving themselves in politics), sacking individuals from government employment (accusing them of inciting people, being ineffective or overriding the directives and policies of the government), and suppression with violent means such as killing (EHRCO, report #

51, 2002).[1] The government acts through its regional and zonal administrations and police force. The objective of the government is to remove threats to its power in Sidaamaland and the SNNPR, to be able to implement its own economic policies and control economic resources in Sidaamaland, and also maintain order.[2] The regional elites also have economic interests in keeping the Sidaama part of the SNNPR (see p. 217 above). With regard to the Sidaama quest for self-determination, the ex-SPDO chairmen have continuously tried to present it to the regional council as well as to the officials of the federal government; the government have removed them from their position in the guise of inefficiency, or even through warning zonal officials not to raise such an issue (R32, R34, R36). Although most of the elites of the Sidaama zonal administration stand for the idea of the Sidaama regional state, they too are interested, mainly for economic reasons, in blocking the Sidaama opposition groups from gaining access to political power. The power relation between the government and the people is asymmetric. The government and its officials control more economic and coercive resources, although the people if organised into non-violent action can remove the asymmetric relations (cf., Curle, 1971; Francis, 2002). However, the Ethiopian government has mechanisms to prevent the people from getting organised or mobilised.

The Sidaama zone police (of Sidaama nationality) have been removed from Awaasa after the 24 May 2002 massacre of the non-violent Sidaama protestors. Today, Awaasa is under the control of the Federal Police and according to the interviews in the rural areas, the Sidaama people are not happy about it. The main reason the government gives is that the Sidaama policemen are lenient towards the people (hence, ineffective in maintaining order), and are also sympathisers of the SLF:

> "Many policemen of Sidama origin are said to have been sacked on the grounds that they have supported the Sidama Liberation Front. A report from Awassa says that many Sidama-born policemen were taken to Blate training camp under the cover of renewal where some are undergoing punishment while others were sacked. They were sacked mainly for being lenient when Sidama people put up

[1]Amnesty International, "Ethiopia: Fear of torture/Police use of excessive force," (13 June 2002); available at http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR250132002?open&of=ENG-ETH; accessed on March 2005; see also HRW, "Ethiopia's Educated Suffer Government Repression," *Human Rights News* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 24 January 2003); available at http://www.hrw.org/press/2003/01/ethiopia012403.htm.

[2]"It is also true that most regimes in the Third World — especially authoritarian ones, but not excluding such democratic governments as that of India under Indira Gandhi— attempt to portray threats to their regimes as threats to the state" (Ayoob, 1996: 44).

opposition to the government last year."[3]

With regard to the unpeaceful relations between the zonal and the regional administrations, until 2001, actions involved simply discussion. The regional president was a Sidaama and he was (according to R32, R34 and R37) a blocking factor of the Sidaama quest for regional status. The Sidaama zonal administration used to boycott any discussion concerning the administration of Awaasa. Since those individuals were systematically weeded out, today almost all of those in the office have been quiet implementers of the government policies. During the 1993-June 2005 period, since the zonal council was unable to present the Sidaama request for self-determination in a written form, the Sidaama elders handed in their request for the *killil* status on their own to the regional council (R37). The latter never responded (which was also a form of conflict action), because the legal procedure — i.e., a written request by the zonal council in accordance with Article 47:3 of the federal constitution— was not followed.[4] As presented above (pp. 204-206), in July 2005, under the sustained pressure of the people, the zonal council followed the constitutional procedure and presented a written request to the SNNPR for regional status for Sidaamas, which the central leadership has prevented through illegal procedure.

As R35 noted, there is not much distinction between the zonal and regional administration and the federal government, since those in power are dominated by the 'yes men' to the central leadership. In the area of making decisions and implementing them, in the zonal administration the Sidaama people see the government, for the former does very little without the latter's knowledge; they regard the local government officials as the instruments of the central government. Although there exists negative peace, the level of the Sidaama political consciousness and nationalism is deeper now. Since the federal police killed about 50 persons and seriously injured many more to suppress the peaceful march around Awaasa in 2002, there has not been any open protest. But the Sidaama silence does not appear to be a positive silence. The anger and frustration are there and observable, and it may not be a surprise if they attract attention to the idea of external self-determination which the SLF sees

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[3]"Sidamo nationals in the police sacked *Weekly Press Digest*, X, 6 [6 Feb 2003]; *Seife Nebelbal* [31 January 2003]).

[4]In quite recent time (July 2005), the Sidaama zonal council, under the sustained pressure of the people, has finally made a written request to the SNNPR council, and is now waiting for the response.

as its alternative option, and which the SNLO (although it has a negligible number of followers at the moment) has already taken it up as its principal goal since its creation in 2003.

8.A.2. Conflict Actions in the Secondary Dimension

In the growing unpeaceful relations or animosity between the Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas, there is no organised group action, except the Sidaama-Wolaita violent clash (with loss of lives) over territory in 2002. The negative peace is being maintained there by the presence of the security forces. If the latter are removed, the violent conflict between the two communities will be automatic. Within the Sidaamaland, however, the fear between the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas is being expressed indirectly and misperceptions of each other are growing in urban areas, particularly in Awaasa. There are general complaints from both sides, but not yet fully articulated and debated in an organised manner. There is no avenue provided for debate and dialogue in the zone. For the non-Sidaamas, some from the middle class group are involved in lobbying the regional authorities. The two communities (apart from the segregation stage of conflict escalation between the Sidaama and Wolaita) are still at the 'discussion stage' (cf., p. 75 above). It is, however, very difficult to term the conflict as 'ethnic', for as it was presented in the previous chapter (see pp. 233-240 above), the problem is not that one group is acting with the desire to exclude totally the other group. The primary dimension of the conflict (especially the Sidaama anger at the government and frustration of its quest) is greatly contributing to this growing horizontal animosity. The goal of the Sidaamas is still the same: to have a full political control over their territory and their territorial integrity, but not to chase away others. Generally speaking, the non-Sidaama educated elites (the middle class in general) in Sidaamaland prefer Sidaamaland to remain part of the SNNPR, and blame the communal-based federal structure as disruptive of Ethiopian unity and creating what they call 'ethnocentrism' or 'narrow nationalism'. From time to time there have been in Awaasa violent acts from gangs of both communities, which can escalate the situation. There is no avenue for direct communication and negotiation as groups.

Between the artisan Sidaamas and the *wolawa* there is no destructive action at the moment. At one moment, it was said that some individuals from the Haadoo *ga're* tried to become more

aggressive even in a violent manner which triggered similar reaction from the *wolawa* but through the elders it was prevented from getting out of hand. Generally, it is now calm; but so long as the traditional attitude and quasi-caste cultural system is unchanged, the unpeaceful relations persist. The good news is that the younger generations, the Sidaama political organisations and most of the educated Sidaamas recognise it as a system that is wrong and should be abolished. Attitude towards the artisan groups is progressively developing to a positive direction except among the older generations.

8.A.3. Conflict Actions in the Tertiary Dimension

Concerning intra political elite nepotism, there was unanimous strong criticism against such practices during the first Sidaama educated group's meeting in 2001. The educated Sidaamas' effort to organise themselves as a civil organisation was prevented through indirect actions by the political leaders in the region and zone for fear of it becoming political. This was mainly because they brought in the issue of the Sidaama constitutional rights to have its own regional status (R32). According to some informers, the then regional president, who was a Sidaama, was not in favour of it (R32, R34, R37). The political situation in Sidaamaland since 2001 has not been conducive to it, and many of the core members of the educated group have been dispersed (some as refugees, some others as migrants, and some others dispersed within the country). As for the rural population, the cultural mechanisms and methodologies are so far functioning and maintaining harmony. The traditional conflict between the Sidaamas and the Oromo groups is almost disappearing; the drawing of the clear boundaries (recognised and agreed by the two communities) by the federal government has ended the quarrel over grazing and farming land. To end the periodic squabbles in the northern Sidaama-Arusi frontier still needs the drawing of a clear boundary line. The gender issue still remains a dormant factor within Sidaamaland. When it becomes overt, its outcome may manifest a violent backlash; it is also possible that it may not be violent if handled responsibly and the rule of law governs.

8.B. CONFLICT DYNAMICS

Having provided conflict actions that have been undertaken in response to the three dimensional conflicts in Sidaamaland, this section presents the remaining factors that contribute towards maintaining and/or escalating conflicts. Such issues pertain to psychological nature (e.g., attitude [prejudice, stereotypes], fear, perception). At the background of these factors lie contextual or situational factors of an environmental, political and economic nature. Here, we term both psychological and situational factors 'conflict dynamics', i.e., contributing factors to conflict maintenance and/or escalation. The counter part of 'conflict dynamics' is 'peace dynamics' (contributing factors to conflict de-escalation and transformation) which will be the subject of the next chapter. Chapter 3C4 of this work discussed the idea of 'change' or 'becoming' in social relations (e.g., continuous movements from peaceful to unpeaceful 'state of being' and vice-versa). Such changes are conditioned by conflict dynamics. Such dynamics exist in Sidaamaland/Ethiopia, and are to be presented now.

8.B.1. Factors of Psychological Nature

This section highlights the attitudes (stereotypes, perceptions) and fear factors that sustain and intensify animosities or antipathy among the conflict parties. Unlike the rural non-Sidaama minorities, the urban non-Sidaamas are not integrated into Sidaama culture and life. The non-Sidaama minorities in Sidaamaland have complained that they have been excluded from political-economic participation by what they call the 'ethnic politics' of the government and the 'ethnocentrism' of the Sidaamas. The level of their participation and representation in the local government is almost non-existent, and they resent this factor. In their responses to the questionnaire, they have mentioned that job opportunities have not been shared equitably and are always in the favour of the Sidaamas. These have led to the development of antagonistic attitudes, fear and change in perception of each other.

First, attitudes: the researcher classifies the field research data pertaining to attitude into three categories: perception of others, cosmopolitan feelings, and self-criticism. From the perception category, many non-Sidaamas regard the Sidaamas as ethnocentric and stereotype them as 'narrow-

minded'. This perception has been developed in the 1990s, and the main reason may be attributed to the continuous demand of the Sidaamas for 'self-determination'. The nepotistic behaviour of some of the SPDO officials in the past has given grounds for the non-Sidaamas to fear about the future of their place if the Sidaamas are granted their own regional status. Lack of proper avenues for dialogue is creating inter-communal misperceptions. The Sidaamas resent being termed as 'narrow-minded' or 'ethnocentric'. They interpret the non-Sidaamas' perception of them as 'ethnocentric' and 'narrow-minded' from their historical context as some clearly state in the questionnaire response: "they [the northerner groups] want to control and dominate us again as in the past." In fact, this 'fear' factor is one of the main reasons for the Sidaama quest for its own regional status.

Another aspect of perception involves the attitude of degrading each other as the answers to Q3vi2b (*What are the points on which you disagree with the Sidaamas?*) reveal. There is conflicting information in this regard. Some non-Sidaamas say: "the Sidaamas look down upon others"; "the Sidaamas must renounce the sense of superiority and act more like equals to other people"; the Sidaamas are "vengeful towards those who oppressed them in the past"; and so on. Some other non-Sidaamas say: "some feel that they are better than or superior to the Sidaamas." Still others say that both groups show "contempt and disrespect for each other." In the like manner, the data pertaining to perception from Sidaama respondents to the questionnaire offer conflicting information. Some Sidaamas feel that others look down upon them, while some others think that the Sidaamas feel superior to others. Here are what the Sidaamas say about the non-Sidaamas: "they are opposed to the appointment of the Sidaamas in the urban areas, for they consider the Sidaamas as rural migrants and do not want to be administered by the Sidaamas"; the non-Sidaamas "consider the Sidaamas naive and backward just because they [the non-Sidaamas] want to control power and the resources of the Sidaama"; "they hate the Sidaamas, but like their land and resources"; "they hate being administered or ruled by the Sidaamas"; "they feel that the Sidaamas cannot rule"; and "they regard the Sidaamas as 'narrow-minded'". The responses of some other Sidaamas are summarised into the following ones: "the Sidaamas are vengeful and feel superior" to others; the non-Sidaamas are "jealous because the Sidaamas have achieved more development in their zone". Where there exists no avenues for mediation and dialogue, such perceptions of each other escalates conflicts.

Many other elements pertaining to 'attitude' come from moderate non-Sidaama respondents,

and the emphasis is on living together harmoniously, cooperating with, respecting and loving each other as Ethiopians. This attitude, the author terms as 'cosmopolitan.' The same attitude is also found in the data from the Sidaama respondents who say: "prejudices, negative attitudes towards others and negative cultural values must be abolished"; "every Ethiopian must have equal rights for education, employment, electing and being elected based on merit"; "avoid vengeful attitudes, and live together cooperating with each other"; the two groups "must live reconciled and together, freely intermarrying and loving each other". Some Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas hold that there exists "no fundamental conflict among the two communities, except that a few self-interested individuals create problems."[5] Moreover, they see the problems in the zone as the outcome of "continuous political and administrative fluidity" (i.e., inconsistency). This is a case where, for example, in the Sidaama zone – during the period of 1991-2004 – there have been more than ten zonal administrators or presidents. This is expressed by one in the following terms: "no problem of peace (among the groups) in the Sidaama zone except political instability."

The third category of perception comes from the Sidaamas alone and the data relate to self-criticism, i.e., the Sidaamas criticising their fellow Sidaamas. According to the answers to Q3vi2b, they reject: "the 'all for Sidaama' attitude, for ...every capable and qualified individual must be allowed to compete equally for jobs and offices; the Sidaamas alone cannot bring development; ... for participation of all is necessary for unity, development, and security;" "the Sidaama superiority feeling and vengeful attitude, because all human beings are equal by nature"; "the attitude that we stop loving others just because of disagreements, for loving each other must not be limited just to the good times but also times of trial"; "the attitude that only the Sidaamas administer"; and "regarding the non-Sidaamas as enemies just because they are not Sidaamas even if these have lived here for more than two generations". The cosmopolitan attitude and self-criticism are positive elements that open windows for conflict transformation if the rule of law is respected and other avenues for dialogue are provided.

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[5]The idea of officials causing problems among ethnic groups in the SNNPR because of their own self-interests is noted in the local independent media (see "Government officials exacerbating ethnic conflicts" *Press Digest* Vol. X, No. 20 (15 May 2003).

Secondly, the Sidaama perception of those in power: the Sidaamas complain against the government's policy on the distribution of economic resources. The government policy holds that more resources should be allocated to areas that are economically backward to help them catch up with those that are considered as advanced. To bring a balanced economic development in the country is partly seen as a way of avoiding conflicts and also integrating the peoples. In principle, the distributive policy aims at producing more or less equitable development.

The same policy was used within the SNNPR too, but it led to the Sidaama feeling that the government, because of its economic interests, prevents them from achieving development in their zone. As the SNNPR implemented the policy, some areas like Sidaamaland were held back, because they were considered to be better off areas, and more attention was given to the areas that were considered to be backward, lacking developmental infrastructures. This balancing effort would also mean that the development activities in those better off zones required controlling to allow others zones to catch up. The Irish Aid operated in Sidaamaland under the Sidaama Development Programme (SDP) to help bring economic development in the zone. As the mandate of the Irish Aid in Sidaamaland was coming to its end, a local NGO, Sidaama Development Corporation (SDC) appeared to create its own means of self-sufficiency to continue from where the Irish Aid stops. Perhaps because of the interest of allowing other zones to catch up, the government interfered with the SDC (despite it being an autonomous legally registered organisation), and replaced its administration with the local EPRDF appointees to control it. Initially with the help of the Irish Aid funds but later with its own other intrazonal and external sources of income, the SDC (manned by the Sidaamas) had shown a better organisation and ability to function, and was very effective in implementing its projects. The administrators of the SDC worked hard and were even able to raise funds both locally and internationally, but with their removal and handing over the organisation to the EPRDF's zonal administration, it was made to stagnate. People are feeling the pain of poverty, and poverty "is frequently the result of structural violence" (AI *et al*, 2004, chapter 1: 4). Moreover, Sidaamaland has been affected by drought, and its economic situation has deteriorated (see p. 231 above). More Sidaamas than ever before (save the early 1940s famine period) are suffering the consequences of this. Some Sidaamas blame the government for this situation. This partly explains why the Sidaama respondents to the questionnaire say that the government interferes with the

Sidaama internal affairs to hinder the Sidaama development. Within this background, the hardships caused by drought especially since 2001 (making the Sidaamas in several districts of Sidaamaland dependent on food donation) becomes a factor of conflict escalation.

Another perception factor that is in play in maintaining and escalating the unpeaceful relations involves the Tigrayan ruling elites. The Sidaamas see them as wanting to control the Sidaama resources and also allocating the lion's share to the Tigray region not only in terms of federal annual budget allocation but also through what is called the 'Rehabilitation fund' which has been separate from budgets.[6] This perception seems widespread throughout Ethiopia. Merera writes: "The suspicion regarding the siphoning off of resources to Tigray and the developmental activities there – new health facilities, roads, airports, factories, educational centres – fill the pages of the independent press and the opposition papers" (Merera, 2003: 174; Assefa Negash, 1996). The available data from 1993-2000 "on regional allocation from government-controlled sources clearly demonstrate the uneven distribution of national resources. ...the Tigray region's per capita share of the federal subsidy is consistently higher than Oromia, Amhara and SNNP regions, which constitute more than 80% of the country's population" (Merera, 2003: 175; for budget data see ibid., pp. 76-79). For instance, according to the regional government's budget for 1999/2000, the total capital expenditure for the Tigray region — with the population figure 3,694,000 — is 113,090,000 Eth Birr. The total capital expenditure for the SNNPR (with the population figure 12,515,000 and about twice the size of Tigray) is 210,920,000 (see table 6.6 in Merera 2003: 178). In other words, if this were to be allocated for each person, a Tigrean receives about 30.6 Eth Birr per annum while a person from the SNNPR receives about 16.8 Eth Birr. How much the people in Tigray benefited from this remains to be seen. The criteria for allocating budget are: population size, level of socio-economic development, regional income and expenditure, project and programme implementation capacity, area size and environmental protection (Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher, 1998: 50).

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[6]That Tigray is becoming an economically developed nation in Ethiopia and that more is going to Tigray is a widespread perception among the peoples (Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas alike) in Sidaamaland. It is not clear whether this perception has also considered the level of natural resources the Tigray region has, and whether the people of Tigray have benefited more than others from the budget. In the informal interactions with different individuals (some from those who worked in the public office) the researcher had, such a perception as 'Tigray favouritism' remains common. When respondents to the questionnaire say 'the Tigreans want to control our resources', it results from such a belief/perception.

Thirdly, the fear factor: fear of being dominated and excluded in socio-cultural, political and economic spheres serves as one of the key factors in current conflicts in Sidaamaland. Both the Sidaamas and the minority groups in Sidaamaland perceive each other as trying to dominate and exclude each other both politically and economically. The local elites, who control power in Sidaamaland, fear losing power to the opposition groups, and consequently losing the political status and economic benefits that they have been enjoying thus far.[7] Moreover, such a loss of power will also imply that the officials who may have committed crimes while in power will lose their immunity and be brought to court. So they try to remain faithful to the government directives and also make sure that no opposition wins elections in the zone. This involves using various possible methods, such as persecuting and harassing the opposition candidates and supporters, and rigging elections. Because of this fear, the government as well as the zonal administration have prevented the participation of the opposition groups in political and economic decision-making in Sidaamaland. The room given to the opposition parties under the EPRDF government in Sidaamaland has been very narrow, and opposition participation is non-existent. There are also no avenues for different identity groups to dialogue with each other and address their fears and grievances.

Fourthly, rumour: although not a psychological factor, rumour is intimately related to it. It is a form of conflict action that galvanises negative perceptions, reinforcing fear among the parties. During and after the Sidaama massacre of 24 May 2002, there was a rumour among the Sidaamas that the Wolaitas were overjoyed and celebrated the massacre. Such a rumour sours the relationships among the Sidaamas and Wolaitas. Historically, both communities have lived in harmony until recent times; but now unpeaceful relations are created due to the status of Awaasa, bad governance, and the territorial issue raised by the policy of resettlement (cf., pp. 215-217, 219-223, 242 above). The Sidaamas complain that the land in Bilate area on which the regional government settled some Wolaitas belongs to them.

The rumour since 2003 goes that the government has forbidden any international NGO to work in Sidaamaland. The top leadership is said to have argued that the Sidaama zone showed more

[7]This same idea of the local government officials being more for their economic benefit (e.g., paid job) by preventing any non-EPRDF candidate from winning elections is also noted in Pausewang's report paper 14 (2001) about the 2000-2001 elections in the SNNPR (see http://www.humanrights.uio.no/forskning/publ/wp/wp_ 2001_ 14.htm; accessed on 22 June 2006); see also Pausewang and Aalen, 2002: 205.

economic development between 1992 and 2002 and that it created difficulties in the smooth running of the government (referring to the quest for regional status). The economic change is attributed to the Irish Aid that helped development activities in the Sidaama zone until 2002. The argument that is attributed to the government, according to the rumour, holds that if the Sidaamas had caused such a challenge to the government with the economic development that has taken place within the period of ten years, they will bring more problems if more economic development is brought in. This rumour is circulated among the Sidaamas, reinforcing nationalist sentiments. The absence of the international NGOs in the Sidaama zone is now being interpreted as the deliberate work of the government to block the Sidaamas from achieving economic development and their legal right for regional status. If the story that alleges the government has obstructed international NGOs in Sidaamaland is true, perhaps it may be that the government wants to give an equal chance for other zones and districts in the SNNPR that have had no NGOs working among them to help them in bringing economic development. If not, one possible reason may be (as some individuals allege) a punishment for the Sidaama resistance to accept the government policies and their insistence on having their own regional status.

Such are the psychological factors which contribute greatly to maintaining and promoting conflicts. But these psychological conflict dynamics are also maintained and intensified by some socio-political and economic factors which serve in conflict escalation and protraction, and which we now present.

8.B.2. Factors of Socio-Political and Economic Nature

These factors have been directly and indirectly mentioned in the chapters above. Here only the significant factors (e.g., lack of democratic participation [centralisation and party-authoritarianism], ethnocracy, lack of legitimacy, involvement of the officials in business, policies from above, bad governance, absence of the rule of law) are highlighted. These should be able to respond to the following questions: is the nature of the state contested? How open and accessible is the state apparatus? How even is economic development and are there economic policies that have a negative impact? How effective is the governance? Is there human rights abuse?

First, centralisation and authoritarianism: Sir Arthur Lewis states that "the primary meaning of democracy is that all who are affected by a decision should have the chance to participate in making that decision, either directly or through chosen representatives" (Lewis, 1995: 64-65). Although *de jure* Ethiopia is a federal democracy, the Ethiopian state still remains an authoritarian party-state (Mehret, 2002: 130-146; Vaughan, 2004b: 6, 7-8, 19). Although much effort is being made to transform traditional Ethiopian political structures, still the Centre-Periphery structure and politics of exclusion continue to operate. The government claims that all identity groups are represented; that those holding offices are democratically elected. The opposition and the election observer's reports indicate the opposite (Pausewang *et al*, 2000; Vaughan, 2004b: 20). Being ruled by the non-elected party members (cf. Pausewang, 2001), the peoples of the SNNPR are still in the political periphery. The Ethiopian people have been unable to choose freely their own representatives and to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. In order to protect their economic-political interests, the local officials in every region engage themselves in human rights abuse and activities that hinder economic development. Thus far, there exists administrative decentralization in Ethiopia but not of the political sort (Mehret, ibid; Pausewang, 2002b: 97). "Despite a professed commitment to ethnic federalism and minority rights, Tigreans, via the TPLF, remain the dominant force in Ethiopian politics and members of other ethnic groups wield little power in practice" (HRW, 2003).[8]

Secondly, ethnocracy: the EPRDF is controlled by the TPLF. Since Ethiopia has functioned thus far as a party-state, the Ethiopian state is controlled by the TPLF, and the state institutions are used by the party elite to promote and maintain their socio-political, economic and intellectual hegemony in Ethiopia (Merera, 2003: 205, 207; Woldamanuel, 2004: 16). Ethnocracy defies the democratic values of political and juridical equality of all the peoples in a state. The Sidaamas understand this ethnocratic rule in terms of continuous domination by the northern people (Abyssinians), and they are opposed to such a rule. Moreover, many Ethiopians perceive that the TPLF favours the Tigray region when allocating the country's meagre resources (see also Merera, 2003: 208).

Thirdly, illegitimacy: legitimacy is related to good governance, for the latter helps produce

[8]Available at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/ethiopia0103/ethiopia0103-03.htm; accessed on 22 June 2006.

networks of social relations. Legitimised relationships are marked by a level of mutual trust and the absence of the reliance on the use of force to obtain cooperation or respect. "To the extent that governments reflect the values and satisfy the needs of those over whom they exercise authority, they will be legitimised" (IA, 1996: 7). Such characteristics are lacking in the relationship between the ruling elites and the people in Ethiopia. According to the late 2004 African peer review study, most often the Ethiopian government uses coercion, and is low quality governance. The Sidaamas, for example, regard their officials as instruments of the regional and federal governments, i.e., they do not see the latter as legitimate. The people feel threatened or insecure; and poverty is deepening. Unless a state provides "user-friendly security as perceived by its citizens", non-repressive governance, basic infrastructure and delivery of basic services, it will remain illegitimate, and produce conflicts (Green, in Adedeji, 1999: 34).

One of the marks of legitimacy of a government is the presence of freely elected representatives. In year 2000 regional and parliamentary elections in Ethiopia, and in the SNNPR in particular, against all odds at least one positive element was noted: that major opposition parities were allowed to participate for the first time in the national elections (Pausewang and Tronvoll, 2000). The 2001 local elections, however, revealed a backward step against the hope of democratisation (Pausewang, 2001; Pausewang *et al* 2002: 230-244). Through fraud, intimidation, and other mechanisms, the EPRDF claimed to have a landslide support (Vaughan, 2004b: 18-19); yet in the eyes of the Sidaama people, for example, the seemingly elected individuals where illegitimate.

In Sidaamaland, the ruling party had excluded any opposition figure from participating in the elections until the year 2000. All the candidates came from the then SPDO. Since the rural population, especially in highland districts, were the SLM supporters, they did not have chances to vote. The SPDO officials brought ballot boxes there just for symbolic reasons, to say that the elections took place smoothly and peacefully, and that they have won with a landslide. One policeman, who was left redundant after the May 2002 atrocity against the Sidaama peaceful protestors, told me:

> "We were sent to guard the ballot boxes in Arooreesa *woreda* and bring them back to be counted at the zone. Once the ballot boxes were collected after voting, on the way to the zone, we saw them [the SPDO members] filling the ballot papers in the boxes in the car behind. May God have mercy on me! We did nothing."

During the elections in 2000 and 2001, the head of the SLM was outside the country, in exile. As R33 and R36 (a former senior official in the Sidaama zone) the SLM leaders in the zone were even paid a good amount of money by the ruling party through the SPDO to do nothing, i.e., allow the SPDO win the election. Hence, the rural Sidaama population were left without credible leadership. They could not organise and elect new ones, since *de facto* the SLM was considered an enemy of the state. During the year 2000 election, according to R43, in Hula district of the Sidaamaland, ballot papers were given only to particularly chosen individuals. Apart from these, the majority of the people were not even told about the election and when it was going to take place. Even if they knew, they had no ballot papers; they were not registered. If Solberg (2002: 141-155) observed the political apathy among the Sidaamas during the May 2002 election, it was due to these factors and not due to lack of political consciousness (awareness) and educational backwardness (*pace* Solberg, 2002: 147-148). R37 and R43 informed the researcher that, in the 2001 election, in Arooreesa and Harbagona districts, the people stood up on the election day and demanded that they themselves put their votes in the ballot boxes without the intermediaries (which was apparently the SPDO customary practice). The SPDO members who came to guarantee the votes were overpowered, and were forced to give into the voters' demand. When the voting was over, they wanted to take the ballot boxes to the zone for counting, but the voters forced them to open the ballots there and count in front of them. The counting revealed that the local SLM candidates had about 90% of the votes and won. When the election results were announced by the zonal and regional administration, the EPRDF claimed that it had won the elections. Those who claimed to have been elected were illegitimate in the eyes of the Sidaamas. The Sidaama people did not take action against them because: i) through the SPDO and its security forces, the government prevented any organisation for political action (the 24 May 2002 killing of the protestors was a good example of this); ii) and if what R33, R36 and several other individuals said were true, the SLM leaders had become clandestine allies of the government because of the financial benefits they were getting from the government. The people lacked leadership to the benefit of the ruling party.

The May 2005 regional and parliamentary election did allow all registered opposition parties in the country. Through dubious means, the EPRDF claimed to have won the election. In Sidaamaland, for example, the ruling party had lost the election to the SLM candidates, but simply

claimed that it has won, giving not even one place for the SLM (see p. 204 above). Surprisingly, the SLM leadership also allied with the EPRDF, and appeared to act against the wishes of the people it has thus far claimed to represent. The people are incapable of choosing a new leadership, for the ruling party would not allow and recognise it (R33, R37). Generally, in the eyes of the Ethiopian people, the EPRDF government remains illegitimate.

Fourthly, the involvement of the officials and ruling party directly or indirectly in business: the EPRDF has accepted the policy of economic liberalism (e.g., SAPs) as a way to solve the problem of economic underdevelopment. The IFI's privatisation policy seems to have encouraged nepotism in Ethiopia as families or relatives and allies of the state officials are rumoured to have greatly benefited from competitive advantage.[9] Many of the lucrative companies belong to the ruling party. For example, companies that have enjoyed monopoly in importing and distributing vital grains and fertilisers for farmers or the rural population (e.g., *Wondo Cubania* in Sidaamaland) belong to the TPLF party. Many also allege the officials themselves to have been involved, if not directly, in business, and to have owned shares in different companies (Merera, 2003: 149, 174). Because this gives a competitive advantage to the ruling party, it affects the competitive capacity of other entrepreneurs (Berhanu Nega and Seid Nuru, 1999: 34-35). In this situation, lucrative resources of the country will be controlled by the companies, relatives and allies of the ruling elite, leaving the locals as merely subservient. Within the context of Ethiopia's historical burden, the dominated groups feel left-out of both socio-political and economic advantages. For the peoples at the economic and political periphery, this causes a considerable resentment towards the ruling group. A similar situation that Duffield (1998: 88-89) observes in Sudan concerning "privatisation" exists in Ethiopia. Privatisation — the aid conditionality through which donors hope to remove patrimonialism and state corruption — has become a powerful tool for purging and marginalising TPLF/EPRDF opponents [e.g., opposition parties and social activists, and local entrepreneurs who refuse to join the ruling

[9]The US government comments concerning the Ethiopian privatisation process: "The EPA Board of Directors is made up of government officials and cannot be considered neutral. The decision about what enterprises to schedule for privatization, or whether to remove an enterprise from the schedule, rests with people who have vested interests and manipulate the system to benefit themselves, friends and/or family" ("Creating Pitfalls to Privatization," [July 2002]); taken from http://usembassy.state.gov/ethiopia/wwwhepriv.html in August 2004.

party but at the same time threaten the government's economic interest in the areas where scarce and vital economic resources are found], and offering economic dominance or hegemony for the ruling party.

> "Control over peasant resources is also extended through the fertiliser business, securely in the hands of Rest, Gunna, Ambassel and the other party-owned rural development and agricultural input delivery systems. These are former parastatal companies now privatised into the hands of the governing parties in each region. The state agricultural extension service, already under the Derg greatly expanded to reach every corner of the rural areas with an effective control over the implementation of government policies, is in place to supplement it. Peasants are forced to receive fertiliser on credit, repayable after harvest. If harvests fail, be it because the rains failed or because the fertiliser was not suitable and adapted to local conditions, peasants are forced to pay nevertheless. To enforce payment they are put in prison until relatives somehow manage to get together the money and pay the fertiliser debts. Lenience is strictly refused, with the official argument that a wide misconception that government loans need not be repaid has to be discouraged" (Pausewang, 2001).

Fifth, Policies from above:

> "...My case is that certain kinds of states, driven by utopian plans and an authoritarian disregard for the values, desires, and objections of their subjects, are indeed a mortal threat to human well-being. Short of that draconian but all too common situation, we are left to weigh judiciously the benefits of certain state interventions against their costs" (J.C. Scott, 1998:7)

Making policies to address certain issues like poverty is important, but such policies must result from the participation of the people for whom the policies are made. Policies become factors of conflict escalation when they are constructed from above in one-size-fits-for-all manner and imposed on the people. Policies of such type in Ethiopia in the past (e.g., resettlement, villagisation, collectivisation) have contributed to the protraction of the unpeaceful relations. Some policies (e.g., of 'poverty alleviation' [resettlement, introduction of GM crops], and urban development) of the incumbent government of Ethiopia contribute to conflict escalation, particularly in the SNNPR. These policies have destroyed the people's local mechanisms of defence against drought. In principle they are meant to be applied on a voluntary basis, but in practice the people are forced to accept. Sometimes the people are promised many provisions and a better life, but when they accept they find themselves in a more abject situation than before. Moreover, resettlement creates conflicts between the local pastoralists and the resettled communities.

The desire for yield-enhancing technology (e.g., GM grains, chemical fertilizers) derives from interest in achieving food security in the country. Both the Ethiopian government and the WB see

it as a better way forward in economic development. What is ignored or not foreseen, however, are the consequences that the use of yield-enhancing technology may bring in the country with a highly erratic climate — e.g., indebtedness since peasants are meant to pay for the grains and fertilizers they receive on loan — (Devereux *et al*, 2003: 158-159). From the aspect of global economy, this policy captures the rural population into the global demand-supply economic structure, i.e., creating dependency on the global market economy. From the internal political aspect, the policy (whether intended or not) helps the Ethiopian government to control the rural population (about 85% of the country's population) for its political purpose. The rural people's independence from the government for their survival implies that they can be free to make a rational choice and support any party they want, thus giving ample chance for the opposition parties to have more support from the rural population to be able to challenge the ruling party. The Sidaamas, for example, have had such independence that has helped the SLM to have the support of the rural population. Some people think that the government uses the grain distribution monopoly to control and induce the rural population to political support, and this contributes to the escalation of conflicts between the ruling elites and opposition parties (Pausewang, 2001).

Until the late 1990s, there has been only one widespread famine catastrophe that the Sidaamas remember: the early 1940s' devastating famine that was caused by the imperial government's punitive act against the Sidaama resistance to its control (see p. 141 above). During the 1985 catastrophic drought in Ethiopia, a part of western lowland area of Sidaamaland was affected and some Sidaamas suffered the consequence (Andriollo, 1998: 233). The Sidaamas in most parts of the Sidaamaland have not even known that this happened. Today, however, many parts of the Sidaama zone have become dependent on international humanitarian food-aid, and almost all the Sidaamas are aware of the sufferings of their affected brothers and sisters. On the one hand, lack of sufficient land to cultivate (due to high population density) and drought has greatly contributed towards poverty (see p. 231 above). On the other hand, in the name of the 'poverty alleviation' policy, the Ethiopian government (with the support of the IFI and donor governments) has been able to remove local or natural grains (e.g., wheat and maize) and has replaced them with GM grains, the import licence and distribution of which have been controlled by the state-government (at least until 2005). After a decade of the policy implementation (from 1991-2001), the Sidaama peasants are now captured into

the global economy with regard to the GM wheat grain and chemical fertilizers. This policy is being implemented without first studying well whether the imported GM grain has better quality and yield than the local species in Sidaamaland which is generally fertile and does not need chemical fertilisers. For the first time, the Sidaamas now pay for the grains, and are forced to buy chemical fertilisers for their GM grain. In the past, they kept part of their local seeds for the crops of the following year, and used compost and animal manure as fertilisers. Unlike the local and natural grains, the GM grains are used only once and are not recyclable. The Sidaama people have lost more than they have gained with the implementation of the 'poverty alleviation' policy because of the erratic climate; many of them have also lost their coping mechanisms and independence from the government for their survival needs. This contributes to frustration and conflict. The following observation serves as an example.

During his six months' field-research in 2002 in Sidaamaland, the author witnessed the negative effect of dependency on the GM grain in Hagere-Selam district. During the months of May and June the people in the district prepared their fields for wheat, and waited for the GM wheat that the government provided, since they had no more their natural and local wheat. The grains were not available in time, and the people had no other supply. In any case, since there was climatic change, there was not sufficient rain in July; hence, the late arrival of the grain did not affect the production. The GM wheat that was distributed would not like the rain during its flowering time. In October when the grain flowered, it rained, and all the wheat the people grew in Hagere-Selam district was destroyed. Not even animals could feed upon the hay of the destroyed GM wheat, for the people claimed that their animals would get sick. The soil, too, did not produce grass for the animals because the chemical fertiliser that was prepared for the GM wheat kills weeds. The agro-pastoralist people of the Hagere-Selam district had lost all their energy and the little money they had. They were in debt. In a sense, the loss of their natural wheat meant partly the loss of not only their independence but also their ability to defend themselves during the hardship. The existence of a local plantation of false-banana (*enset*) from which the Sidaamas would normally get their local staple food, saved the consequent impact that the failure of the GM wheat would have caused. If it were not for the *enset*, the people of Hagere-Selam would have suffered a serious famine catastrophe.

Abolishing or removing local and natural grains in the name of 'poverty alleviation' effectively broke the autonomy of the rural people, especially in the northern parts of Ethiopia. The policy's

secondary effect (if the government did not originally intend it) brought the ruling elite an advantage: it served as a political tool for ensuring and protecting the EPRDF's power. Some observers noted that during the election period in 2000, the ruling EPRDF political parties would threaten people with not supplying them with grains and fertiliser if they failed to vote for the EPRDF. The government control of the distribution of the grains and fertilisers has enabled the ruling party to prevent opposition parties from having a political foundation within the rural population (cf., McCann, 2002: 71-73, 77, 80). During the election, those areas with independent survival means (e.g., *enset* in the SNNPR) experienced an unfree election, the opposition voters being prevented from participating in the election (e.g., the Sidaamas in most rural areas), and even the use of violence against the opposition in several parts (e.g., the Hadiyya, the Gedeo [Tronvoll, 2002; Pausewang, 2002a]).

Urban policy: this is already discussed in the previous chapter (see pp. 221-223, 225-226). The policy has different perceptions and effects in the SNNPR (and in Sidaamaland in particular) from those in the regions in northern Ethiopian. The one-size-fits-all approach is blind to the socio-political and historical contexts of the peoples and contributes to conflict escalation.

Sixth, bad governance and human rights abuse: in Sidaamaland, the recent (May 2005) election result has shown how people are unable to have individuals they chose to represent them. Where local and regional administrators are chosen on the basis of loyalty to the ruling party and not merit (Vaughan, 2004b: 19), and where issues concerning regime security take precedence over what is best for the country, bad governance is an unavoidable outcome. Many experienced and productive individuals and technocrats have been excluded from full participation in the country's political and economic decision-making and administration due to their difference in politics or personal convictions. The websites of the Amnesty International, HRW and EHRCO contain plenty of reports on the human rights abuses by the local officials and security forces in Ethiopia.[10]

One of the both economically and psychologically destructive activities has been indefinite imprisonment of critics (e.g., journalists, local intelligentsia, notable individuals), activists, and those

[10]See one recent press release from the Amnesty International, "Ethiopia: Fear of torture/possible prisoners of conscience," 31 March 2006. Available at http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR250082006?open&of=ENG-ETH; accessed on 12 April 2006.

who are suspected of supporting or belonging to an "anti-government" group. In Sidaamaland, a very negligible number of women have salaried jobs; most of them are educationally backward. The Sidaama women have always been housewives and a family entirely depends on the male householder (the husband). Imprisoning productive members of society for a prolonged time (some for two years, others even more) without trial for political reasons harms the survival of their families. In the absence of their breadwinners, the families use up any investment they have and in the end they are impoverished. A politically motivated accusation against individuals and their prolonged imprisonment punishes not only their families and dependants, but also their national/ethnic community, for it creates obstacles to economic development of the zone. Most of the well trained and experienced members of the Sidaama people have left Sidaamaland: many in exile as refugees, a good number migrating to the West, and some dispersed within the country working for private companies and NGOs. Some of the remainder have withdrawn themselves totally from any public activity, political or administrative, and are now involved more in self-employment or teaching to support their families. Bad governance as the source of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland is the most often mentioned factor (19.1 %) by all the respondents to the questionnaire.

Seventh, intra-regional and other external factors: although they may not be directly involved, the nature of Ethiopia's relations with neighbouring states and societies and other geopolitical interests can affect the direction of conflicts in Ethiopia. This can mainly be in capacity building for conflict parties.

Unpeaceful relations between Ethiopia and its immediate and distant neighbouring countries have significance for de-escalation, escalation, or stagnation of the unpeaceful relations in the country. Currently, Ethio-Eritrea relation remains unhealthy; Somalis resent incursions of Ethiopian troops into Somalia: the protest marches of the Somali people in Mogadishu-Somalia against having peacekeeping troops from Ethiopia (and also Kenya and Djibouti) in Somalia reflects the unpeaceful relations between the two countries.[11] With Kenya, there have been security clashes at border areas.

[11]See the news report of 17 March 2005 about the Somali people's opposition to the involvement of the troops from Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti: INRI, "SOMALIA: Opposition to IGAD's insistence on troop deployment continues"; available at http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=46153&SelectRegion=Horn_of_Africa&SelectCountry=SOMALIA; accessed on 22 March 2005.

The armed opposition fronts need support and if these countries are not at peace with Ethiopia, they can offer support to the fronts. At least they did offer direct or indirect support to the armed fronts in the past, and Kenya in particular has carried the burden of Ethiopian refugees for a long time now. The Oromo and Somali population of northern Kenya may have a natural tendency to sympathise with their neighbouring Oromo and Somali groups in Ethiopia during stressful moments. The OLF fights for the Oromo people, and the ONLF stands for the Ogaden people. The SLF has relations with these armed groups. If the positive changes do not appear in Ethiopian political and economic structures, the three groups, and maybe other opposition groups too, will one day grow to maturity and come together to work as a united front. At least there exists plenty of sympathy between themselves and in this sense they offer one another moral support in the struggle. The conflict in Sidaamaland affects the SNNPR and Oromia.

The international organisations (e.g., IGAD, AU, UN, EU), donor countries and their agencies (e.g., IFI) have supported and sustained the Ethiopian state for fear of instability. They have an interest in security, peace and development. They have institutional capacities and also material (save IGAD and AU) capacities to intervene and mediate for promoting peace. However, significant international organisations and governments have maintained the principle of non-interference in a sovereign country's internal affairs. Their lack of determined diplomatic pressure to prevent human rights abuse in Ethiopia is conspicuous. To avoid criticism from the concerned circles (e.g., human rights organisations and other NGO groups, media groups), they make a little non-committed move (e.g., send some delegates to visit the affected areas, set up some interviews with local officials, meet some government ministers, and call for or rather suggest an independent enquiry), and no follow up (at least until the end of 2005). Yet human rights abuse has continued and is contributing to the deepening of the unpeaceful relations. The government receives foreign economic and military support and enjoys asymmetric power relations with the people and armed fronts (see pp. 244-245 above).

Nevertheless, the more significant external factor that can contribute to the maintenance or even deepening of conflicts in Sidaamaland is the donor's interest in the structural adjustment policies, especially where these are imposed on the people without taking into account the local contexts. There is the absence of people's participation to make sense of the policies or to contextualise them

in accordance with their needs and aspirations. Little is done to help the people survive the shock caused by the economic policies of SAPs. All in all, factors that escalate the conflict are given more leeway than those that help in conflict transformation.

CONCLUSION

To recapitulate all that has been said in this chapter, we use the analogy of "pillars of conflict" (Jean and Hildegaard Goss-Mayr, 1990), which maintain unpeaceful relations. Conflict actions and dynamics serve as producers of change in social relations and human development (in transformative or regressive ways) [cf., pp. 73-79]. The transformative ones are developmental in the aspects of 'being' (by removing the fear of losing one's cultural identity and of social inequality) and 'having' (by guaranteeing economic well being at least through participatory actions and equitable distribution of economic resources to address developmental needs), and in relationships. The regressive ones are conflict escalators, which produce human and economic underdevelopment. Human security (i.e., 'freedom from fear' [of any violence, socio-cultural and political exclusion or inequality] and 'freedom from want' [e.g., economic, health, environmental and other threats to people's well-being]) is fundamental for peace, development and stability (AI *et al*, 2004, ch 1:5). The absence of this security serves as a major cause of Ethiopia's continuous instability, social fracture, refugees, brain-drain and underdevelopment. Sidaamaland epitomises this situation which is sustained by the following "pillars of conflict":

-bad governance
-repression (through coercive actions [killing, imprisoning, torturing] = human rights abuse)
-ethnocratic authoritarianism (authoritarian system controlled by the elite belonging to an ethnic group)
-antagonistic perceptions and attitudes among groups
-absence of functioning structures of participation and accommodation (democratic participation)
-absence of functioning avenues for dialogue and communication of needs and fears
- context-insensitive economic policies
- lack of free and fair elections (illegitimate representatives of the people)
-ambivalent international position (in its action to protect human rights abuse and promote the rule of law)

If these factors are removed and legitimacy of the government is restored, there exist more chances for conflict de-escalation and development in Sidaamaland and Ethiopia in general. It had been hoped in vain that the May 2005 election would be free from rigging. The event simply deepened the Sidaama call for its own regional status. This is seen by the Sidaamas as a major step forward in their struggle for freedom and equality in the country. The future of the conflicts in Sidaamaland now depends on how the government responds to its request, how it settles the Wolaita-Sidaama territorial issue, how it involves the alienated Sidaama opposition parties and educated class, and the quality of governance and rule of law. If these issues are met with constructively, then the chances are that the conflicts will attenuate.

One of the fundamental elements that will make a great contribution in transforming protracted social conflicts is the empowering and working with local cultural institutions. The Sidaamaland possesses a rich "social capital" and a favourable worldview. The next chapter highlights such provisions which help in conflict transformation.

9. PEACE DYNAMICS: THE SIDAAMA SOCIAL CAPITAL

9.A. INTRODUCTION

> "Conflicts warrant solutions and these can only be found if the causes are diagnosed in order to comprehend and master them and be able to establish a peaceful environment that is vital to sustainable development and prosperity" (Odunuga, 1999: 42).

The previous chapters have done just that: they provided the reader with systematised and detailed micro-level knowledge of the current unpeaceful relations and its roots in Sidaamaland. But at the same time the knowledge of the unpeaceful relations and their causes alone is not complete without the knowledge of peace dynamics (e.g., a group's social capital for peace [i.e., 'cultural'[1] mechanisms and methodologies] and other national and international provisions) with regard to conflict transformation. "Before a commitment is made to a given project or programme of work, whether by organisations or individuals, they should be sure they have the necessary local knowledge and connections..." (Francis, 2002: 132). Hence, this chapter is concerned with providing such a 'necessary local knowledge' (micro-level knowledge) to those interested in transforming the unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. Although this chapter offers a material for comparative studies in local mechanisms and methodologies in 'conflict management',[2] at this moment, it does not present a comparative study with other cultural studies in conflict management in Africa and beyond. In this work the phrase 'Sidaama mechanisms and methodologies' or 'Sidaama democracy' denotes to the Sidaama cultural or indigenous system which is generally practised by the rural Sidaamas.

Since transforming PSC requires collaboration or harmonisation between the micro and macro approaches, a comprehensive knowledge of the available international and national provisions (macro-

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[1]We refer the term 'cultural' to a local system in contrast to the official national system of a modern state. It is a local way which is "rooted in the shared knowledge and schemes created and used by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to social realities around them" (Lederach, 1995: 9).

[2]In this work, the term 'conflict management' is understood in a larger sense as opposed to the narrow meaning (i.e., keeping negative peace) to which Conflict Resolution literature ascribes. Conflict Management should be able to encompass all areas (e.g., conflict regulation, conflict transformation, conflict containment, conflict provention). All of these are aspects of Conflict Management.

level knowledge) is also important. Such a comprehensive presentation of the macro-knowledge is not possible in this limited work. The goal of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive conflict analysis in Sidaamaland, i.e., it is concerned with a micro-study. Hence, it offers very little study on international and national conflict management methodologies. However, it appears helpful here, in this introductory section, to mention just briefly what the international and national provisions involve before the presentation of the Sidaama social capital for peace.

Internationally, there exists plenty of academic literature on conflict management methodologies, among which we have Lederach's (1995) multi-level approach with the combination of Curle's (1971) and Diana Francis' (2002) bottom-up non-violent transformative actions and Azar's (1990, 1991) and also Burton's (1969) track II diplomacy for handling PSC. These methodologies provide some important and relevant issues that one needs to look into for working to transform protracted unpeaceful relations in Ethiopia and other affected parts of Africa. They are not studied in this thesis, and are left for future work. They are part of relevant international provisions for conflict transformation. There also exist other international structural and organisational provisions (e.g., IGAD, AU, UN, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA], New Partnership for Africa's Development [NEPAD], NGOs [the Human Rights Organisations, developmental organisations, and peace movements]), financial supports through IFI and bilateral aid, and international news agencies: all these can contribute towards conflict transformation in conflict-ridden societies, and therefore, can be among peace builders.[3] They too need to be studied in a future work to see at what level, how and to what degree they can contribute towards managing conflicts in a meaningful way in Ethiopia.

Nationally, Ethiopian state structures, its constitution, religious institutions, educational institutions, and national NGOs: these serve as national resources or provisions that can contribute towards conflict transformation in the country. Although they need a careful study on how they can help, here in this work, it suffices to mention them generally. Setting aside constitutional provisions pertaining to revenues and control of vital economic resources, which favours more the central

[3]They can also contribute towards conflict escalation in a non-democratic political system if they appear to be allies of an oppressive regime in the manner of capacity-building for the regime at the expense of people participation and good governance (e.g., rule of law, fair distribution of goods, accountability to the people [not only to the central authority and donor governments or agencies]).

government than the regional states (CFDRE, Articles 47-48; cf., Vaughan, 2004b: 5; Abate, 2004: 45-48), the constitution of the country provides, if respected, many opportunities for conflict regulation. If its laws are implemented, many of the grievances in Sidaamaland can be addressed through them. Ethiopia has modern state security structures and forces to protect its citizens and provide them with order and stability. If these provisions are properly used (i.e., for people security) and in cooperation and dialogue with other local and international provisions, they can function as stabilising factors in social relations.

Although some people may appear to give less value in practising religious principles, generally, Ethiopian society is a religious society, Christianity and Islam being the principal religions. Religious organisations (especially the Christian churches) carry out a lot of humanitarian activities, health care, education, spiritual welfare and other developmental activities, and are close to the people. If used in a right way, religion makes a great contribution towards conflict transformation (Sampson, 1997: 273-316), justice and development. Religious institutions enjoy trust and respect in Sidaamaland where three-quarters of the Sidaama are Christians.[4] If Ethiopia has not descended into intercommunal violence, it has been partly because of the religion uniting the people across communal ties. In an ideal situation where the government and international communities work in collaboration with religious institutions, the prospect for building peace and bringing development is great.

There are also local and national civil societies (e.g., NGOs, human rights groups, the press, and other associations). Although they lack resources and are less empowered by the government (Dessalegn, 2002: 103-119; Kassahun, 2002: 120-129; Shimelis, 2002: 186-201), they have a potential for promoting peace and development. They live close to the people and are founded on the knowledge of the needs of the people they serve. They can deliver goods well, mediate or create webs of relationships among communities in the transformation of conflicts and offer a good prospect for sustainable development.

Although still more is needed, Ethiopia has modern educational institutions, both state-funded

[4]Faith in God is common to both Christian and non-Christian religions (Islam and local) in Sidaamaland. All of them are monotheistic religions. Almost all the Christian Sidaamas go to Church services. The elders who follow the Sidaama religion continue practising their rituals, but this is less common among their younger and literate generations. At the moment, in Sidaamaland, religion has not been a factor of violent conflict expressions.

and private, which bring together children from all communities. These institutions are important to form children with the values of living together, tolerance and appreciating differences. The adults can also be helped through workshops/seminars, religious instructions, and civil institutions. Educational institutions have the capacity to foster dialogue and help in the creation of a stable multi-ethnic/national society that recognises and cherishes the equality of all its peoples (Amanuel Gebru, 2001). With this general introductory background in mind, it is time now to embark on the main subject of this chapter: the Sidaama social capital for conflict transformation.

9.B. LOCAL SOCIAL CAPITAL

There exist a few studies (anthropological, historical and sociological) on Sidaama. Some are not relevant to this chapter. Andriollo's (1989, 1990) anthropological studies deal with the Sidaama rituals, childbirth, childhood and adolescence, preparations of young ones for marriage, ornaments and hairdressings, marriage types and process, blessings, 'traditional'[5] songs/poetry/lullaby, children stories (fairytales) and *hibbo* (number of puzzles for children to train their minds) from Sidaama oral tradition. Although his works are very admirable and important records of the Sidaama culture and tradition, their interest differs from that of this chapter. The articles of Braukamper (1973, 1977) and Stanley (1967/1968) concern historical genesis of the Sidaama and how the Sidaamas are related to other surrounding groups. They have been used in chapter five above, but are irrelevant to this chapter.

A senior paper of Berhanu Zerfu (1983) gives a general and brief overview of the socio-cultural life of the Sidaama people in 38 pages. It presents the people (Sidaama), its location, origin, social stratification, economy, social order, religion, circumcision, dressing style, and funeral ceremony; kinship and marriage system; the family system and structure; and social changes effected by conquest, education and Christianity. Some elements (e.g., social order and kinship) will be of use in this chapter. The constitution or social order of the Sidaama serves a mechanism that has helped

[5]In the thesis, 'traditional' implies some practices, values, ideals, institutions, activities and attitudes that come from the past and are still — to some extent — in existence within a society or community.

in maintaining stability and peace among the Sidaamas. Berhanu (1983: 4) divides the Sidaama as "Wollabich" ("non caste members") and "Tallaticho" ("caste groups"). The issue about non-artisan groups (*wolawa* [Wollabich of Berhanu]) and artisan groups is discussed in pp. 240-241 above. The relationship between the two Sidaama groups cannot be taken as a pure caste case like in India, hence in this work it is used as a quasi-caste. For the Sidaamas, the issue is about purity code (a ritual issue) and not about considering the artisans as inferior human beings. The *wolawa* Sidaamas do consider the artisans as equal human beings but do not intermarry with them because they accuse them of having transgressed some ritual taboos in the immemorial past. Berhanu places "Tallaticho" (i.e., *xalata*) as the opposite of "Wollabich" (i.e., *wolawa*). This is not correct. *Xalata* can be both the artisan and non-artisan Sidaama. *Xalata* simply refers to individuals/families who live in a territory of not their *ga're* (a referent to a sub-national group whose common ancestor is located somewhere after twelve or thirteen generations). For the host *ga're*, they are *xalata*; hence, the members of the host *ga're* can intermarry with them (if they are from the acceptable social group), for they belong to a different *ga're*. This is because intra-*ga're* marriage is generally forbidden among most of the Sidaama groups.

In his article, Aadland (2002) assesses the Sidaama democracy. Democratic structures serve as mechanism of conflict management and building stability in a pluralistic society. Aadland critiques the Sidaama democracy, comparing it with modern (Western) democracy, and highlights it as defective by noting that women and artisan groups are excluded from participation in decision-making. It is correct that traditionally the artisan groups have not been given equal social status with the non-artisan Sidaamas (hence, excluded from full participation in communal rituals and intermarriage). However, unlike women, the artisans have fully participated in communal decision-making on local issues that affect the community (*pace* Aadland). Indirectly though (and not to be taken as an excuse for preventing women from the public arena), the women too have influenced (through their husbands) the decisions the elders have made on crucial matters (R19). The husbands also rely on the advice of their wives in their public issues and for their public image too.[6] There are Sidaama folktales that express the influential role of women in men's life, and the Sidaama men

[6]A Sidaama woman can promote or destroy the public image and status of her husband; she can make her point clear to her husband if necessary (Hamer, 1998b: 6).

acknowledge this even if they do not give them a position of public authority (cf., Betana, 1991: 142-144). Even when a woman (through her husband) solves a problem that men are unable to do, only her husband gets credit; he is the one acclaimed as wise. In this regard, R19 narrates one story of debate among two elders:

> One day a man was in conflict with a highly acknowledged advocate known for his oratorical skills and wisdom, who always won in court cases. This advocate told the man, "You are not going to stand with me in the court." The man asked "Why?" "You who do not know the end of the earth, the number of stars in heaven, and the food of God; you cannot stand in public and argue with me," responded the advocate. The people asked the man to give answers to those challenges, and the man asked them to give him an appointment for another day to deal with this issue. They told him to come the next day. The man went home and refused to eat food.[7] His wife asked, "why do you refuse to eat the meal?" He said, "I have faced today something that I had never faced before." "What is it?" she asked. He hesitated to tell her. As she insisted on asking about it, he told her what happened in public and why the lawyer forbade him from talking to/arguing with him. After this, she said, "This is very simple; just eat your food." "Do you think so?" he asked her. She said, "Yes; eat the food and I will tell you the answers tomorrow." Early in the morning, she asked him to "open the sealed *teff*[8] storage, fill one sac with *teff*, tie it well," and also take a *lande*[9] with him. As he did all that she told him, she said, "when you are facing the lawyer, take your stick, plant it in front of the judge, and say to the lawyer, 'This is the end of the earth. Beyond this, I know nothing. If you think that it is not the earth's end point, take the judge with you, go and measure the earth till its end, and then come back and tell me where the end of the earth is. As to God's food, it is thanksgiving [in gratitude]. Apart from this I have never seen God eating food. As regards the number of stars, take this sac of *teff*, pour it on the *lande*, and count it. If, after counting it, you find that the number of *teff* is lower than the number of the stars, then I will pay fines.'"

The Sidaama notables (wise men) in the past competed always with each other with regard to who is wiser than others. One's status or influence among his peers grew on one's ability to resolve difficult issues. In debates among competing personalities, one had to be able to give answers to riddles to prove one's ability to resolve difficult issues. The story of R19 may be read in this context and one can see how great a role a woman plays behind the curtain in building the image of her husband. Similarly, their influence in the decisions of the elders is not small.

Aadland also identifies the Sidaama concept of *halaale* (truth-justice) with *seera* (rules,

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[7]When a Sidaama elder faces a serious challenge or a difficult issue to solve, he refuses to eat food until he finds solutions to it. Indirectly, this is a way of asking his wife for help, but he pretends that he does not need her help. His wife gently insists and pushes him to reveal the reason for his refusal to eat until he confides it to her.

[8]*Teff* is a cereal crop from which is made Ethiopian national food (*injera*). Its grains are so tiny that some people say the size of one grain of wheat is more than 100 grains of *teff*.

[9]*Lande* is a processed hide dress that people used to wear in the past.

organisations, fines). These elements will be presented later on in the chapter as mechanisms and methods of conflict management in Sidaamaland. Aadland's misunderstanding or confusion of the two elements contributes towards his conclusion that the Sidaama tradition offers a difficult context for developing a genuine democracy (Aadland, 2002: 30, 42). The researcher holds the opposite view to that of Aadland, as will be seen later on.

Tolo's (1998) book involves an overview of the Sidaama socio-political and cultural life, the study of most part of the 20th century history of the Sidaama (focussed mainly on the Sidaama and their relation with the Ethiopian State until the 1974 revolution), the factors and process of Christianising the Sidaamas by protestant missionaries (both international and national), the hardship of the protestant Christians and missionaries in Sidaamaland (persecution by the local Orthodox Christians and the ruling class), and the impact of the protestant missions on the socio-political and cultural life of the Sidaama. Chapter five of this thesis has benefited from Tolo's study, and this chapter also will use selectively some relevant materials from it (e.g., cultural leadership, political system). In his book, both these elements are presented as general and passing remarks, hence they lack a detailed study. They are mechanisms that can contribute towards the transformation of horizontal conflicts in Sidaamaland.

Maccani's (1989) ethnographic study includes some historical genesis of the Sidaama from oral traditions (both from the elders of the Sidaama and of their southern neighbour, the Guji-Oromo people), genealogies, aspects of cultural institutions (e.g., marriage, religion [elements of faith, beliefs and rituals]), and the Sidaama traditional calendar. Only some aspects (e.g., the fear of God and *halaale*, and *gondooro* [covenant or pact after reconciliation]) are relevant to this chapter. Even then, those elements are treated only in a very brief manner.

A short article of Stanley (1966) presents a study on the political system of the Sidaama. He notes three types of institutions (the clan and local neighbourhood councils [*ollaa* councils], the priest-kingship [the offices of *moote and woma*], and the age-set organisation [*Luwa*] whose leader-priest is called *gadaanna*). These will be presented later on in the chapter. These institutions have their own councils of elders. Referring to them, Stanley writes: "[t]heir mutual relationship is such that to some extent they are complementary, but they are also competitive counterbalancing each other" (1966: 220). Stanley considers the *ollaa* the lowest unit of the Sidaama political organisation,

but in this work we relegate this political position to *qachcha*/*cinachcha* (a territorial group [averaging between 15 to 35 households (Hamer, 1970: 52)] which is like a village but has its own council of elders with an elected executive called *murrichcha*). According to Stanley, *ollaa* is composed of about 500 households; its council of elders performing judiciary, religious and administrative functions (Stanley, 1966: 220). With regard to the priest-king institution, most of the Sidaama *ga're* have *moote* (lord) and *woma* (in the Sidaama past, he was an overall political-religious leader of the Sidaama; but later he has become just a spiritual high priest of a *ga're*, not hereditary but elected on the basis of a favourable omen). Each *ga're* has its own *woma*. A *moote* of a *ga're* has a supreme council of elders. This council can also look into grievances that are brought against the *moote* himself and can judge against him if the grievances are proven to be based on truth. In the case of conflict between the *moote* and his council, the latter can call upon the *gadaanna*, the leader of his *Luwa*, who can even impose a fine (*seera*) on the *moote* (ibid: 222-223). The *Luwa* institution is the one that brings all the *ga're* members into one group beyond their family affiliations through a joint initiation or passage rite which is also called *luwa*. By bringing the age-set into one group, it "adds to the political coherence of the sub-tribe in so far as men from all clans become members of one *Luwa* which puts them under obligation of mutual help and cooperation throughout their life" (ibid: 223).

Betana's book (1991) deals with the pre-conquest and post-conquest Sidaama history from oral tradition and written documents, its cultural institutions (political organisation, marriage, religion, entertainment, funeral) and economic system. This book has been very helpful for chapter five and also this chapter will partly rely on the elements pertaining to cultural institutions, particularly the political institutions. Both Stanley and Betana provide information on the structural arrangements of the Sidaama socio-political and economic organisation which is useful for this chapter.

By far, it is the American anthropologist John Hamer who has written much on Sidaama people covering their historical, cultural, social, and economic life. The relevant works that relate to this chapter include his articles on the Sidaama gerontocracy, *halaale*, rational discourses and democratic participation in handling conflict cases and making policies, and Sidaama socio-political structure (Hamer, 1970, 1972, 1980, 1994, 1997, 1998a, 1998b) which serve as important Sidaama principles that help in managing conflicts.

Hamer's 1970 article deals with *Luwa*, the Sidaama generational class composed of five successive groups (*Fullaasa, Hirboora, Moggisa, Daraara,* and *Wawaasa* [one following the other after the completion of seven full years]), which accords status to age-set groups as pre-initiates (those before initiation), initiates (those who have undergone the passage rite [*luwa*] to be able to participate in public debates and conflict resolution with their parent generation), and elderhood (the seniors who have completed the first cycle [thirty five years] of their *Luwa* group). A person who completes two full cycle of his *Luwa* group, and is known for his mediating skills and wisdom, is accorded a prestigious status called *woma*, an ideal elder who becomes in himself a symbol of peace (Hamer, 1970: 67). A further explanation on the passage rite to elderhood is given in another article of Hamer (1997: 7-11). The elders are the protectors and promoters of *cosmopneumanthropic* harmony, which can only be brought through the presence of the Sidaama principle of behaviour, the *halaale*, which Hamer terms "the overarching moral code" and broadly defines as "the true way of life" (1998b: 5). It is the Sidaama code of human conduct in the whole *cosmopneumanthropic* relations. His article (Hamer, 1997) explains what *halaale* is, and shows its role in the day-to-day life of the people. *Halaale*, being a moral code, needs continuous reinterpretation and contextualisation by elders through debates and consensus (ibid:, 7; 1994: 107). Hamer shows in this (1994) article how the Sidaama elders constantly struggle to reinterpret *halaale* in different changing contexts.

> "Sidamo norms are enunciated in the moral code of *halalu*... The code refers most generally to the 'true way of life,' portrayed through symbols and ritual in everyday practice, enforced, and interpreted by the elders. Depending on context, however, *halalu* is used in admonishing greed, stressing the importance of honesty and fairness, mutuality as the basis of community, respect for elders, and generosity, especially in providing hospitality" (Hamer, 1998a: 145).

Settling disputes becomes difficult when the facts involved are difficult to verify. Through the study of the Sidaama case, Hamer (1972: 232-247) suggests that, in a society where force is not used to manage conflicts, "sanctification of certain techniques and roles" serve as a means of settling disputes (ibid: 232). He uses the definition of Rappaport (1971: 69) for 'sanctity': "...quality of unquestionable truthfulness imputed by the faithful to unverifiable propositions." Hamer takes as examples the authority of the council of elders at every level of the Sidaama socio-political structures, and the efficacy of their sanctions and restoration of the culprits to the community (through the process of reconciliation). Traditionally, when a case lacks evidence, the ritual elders call on God to

judge the guilty and a suspect takes oath in God's name, for the Sidaamas believe in the retribution of God in favour of *halaale*. It is believed that a guilty person (when he is not reconciled with God) will eventually face calamity as divine retribution. Today, however, the respect for the value of the sanctified authority and office of elders and the procedures has been negatively affected by the competing parallel Ethiopian judicial system. Especially, the self-interested devalue the local means (when a case is not in their favour) in favour of the state's judicial system where those who are financially able can (through lobbying, ability to argue better or paying bribes) win a case (cf., Hamer, 1998a: 143-144).

In his article of 1980, Hamer studies new and modern self-help associations among the Sidaamas and how they resolve conflicts of interests arising from these modern organisations. He notes that individuals who formed or joined these associations are purely motivated by profit maximisation, which affects the Sidaama cultural sense of balance between self-interest and community (Hamer, 1980: 92-93). His study reveals that despite the individuals' interest of profit maximisation, they also come with old (cultural) values or beliefs and expectations attached to cultural authority (e.g., judge-mediator role of elders), procedures in making policy and dispute resolution (ibid: 104-106). These values are also expected by the members of the associations from their committees (the new leadership different from the local one [i.e., the elders]). Hence, the role of the new authority involves not only maintaining and promoting *halaale*, judging the rights and the wrongs in handling disputes and sanctioning (ibid: 100), but also mediating conflicts among disputants to achieve a compromise.[10] Hamer shows how successfully the committees have managed difficult conflicts by creatively using and contextualising their cultural values expected from the leadership. He argues that new situations and norms do not build themselves on *tabula rasa*: "individuals do bring concepts of rightness and wrongness, as well as behavioral expectations, to social situations," although some form of 'situational adjustment' is required in a new context which brings its own indeterminate situations of conflict (ibid: 89). When the principle of subsidiarity is respected, empowered and supported (by the state-government), people are able to handle their own cases and use creatively their cultural values in formulating new normative values and behaviours. "[G]iven the

[10]In Sidaama tradition, "Individual elders will take disputants aside from the main group of discussants and cajole, encourage, and scold a person into being more compromising with his opponents" (Hamer, 1980: 91).

opportunity they [the people] will reinterpret old rules and standards to aid in controlling self-interest and the process of negotiating new, appropriate, value and behavioral regularities" (ibid: 90, 106-108).

Hamer (1994) shows how the Sidaama elders deal in maintaining moral order of *halaale* by trying to maintain balance between self-interest and communal obligation in the continuously changing circumstances and new contexts within their community. Comparing the Hausa cultural code or ways of life in West Africa with that of the Sidaama, he notes the value and emphasis the Sidaamas put in rational debate and achieving consensus in interpreting and applying *halaale* code (ibid: 126, 128).

> "Unlike the *halōli* [i.e., *halaale*] of the Sidāma, however, in which argument and debate are encouraged to determine specific applications, controversy and the possible occurrence of anger are discouraged in the interpretation of Hausa moral principles. Rather than being open to debate and sanction by councils of elders, the Hausa code is enforced indirectly through gossip and accusations of witchcraft. Nor are the moral principles, as among the Sidāma, believed similarly appropriate for all Hausa, but are considered more applicable to high-status men of wealth than to those of low status" (ibid: 129; cf., Barkow, 1974: 11-12).

'The Sidaama'[11] receives his self-worth or social status through the combination of wealth (which comes from following the way of *egenno* which embody the values of hardworking, planning, persistence and knowledge [Hamer, 1978: 48-49]) and authority (which comes from following the way of *halaale* in which is ingrained "the disciplined self-restraint and generous redistribution" of his wealth for the benefit of the community) [Hamer, 1994: 130; 134-142]. This is where, as Hamer notes, both the Sidaama and Hausa share similar perception: they consider that wealth when combined with greed (i.e., without generous redistribution) brings low esteem (ibid: 129). The traditional children and adult tales of the Sidaama aim at creating images of acceptable social behaviour and emphasise the dangers of avarice (ibid: 129-132). The children tales are intended to form the children with the Sidaama values in social behaviour; while adult tales are used during debates and discussions to "release the tension of partisan discussion and bring to the attention of all concerned transcending moral norms that have been lost in often acrimonious debates" (ibid: 131).

By taking the Sidaama case, in his 1998a article, Hamer challenges Habermas's (1984) contention that a democracy based on rational discourse can only be possible in a nation state and not

[11]In this chapter, 'the Sidaama' or 'the Sidaamas' connote those who practice their cultural way of life.

in pre-modern societies. He argues that

> "the non-Western world, in this case specifically the Sidama of Ethiopia, is not necessarily one in which persons rely primarily upon myth for interpretation and avoid the need for critical debate. The Sidama use rational discourse grounded in shared beliefs about the ideals of truth and sincerity in the everyday practice of settling disputes and policy issues. Only at the point where validity claims cannot be verified and consensus obtained is there a resort to myth" (Hamer, 1998a: 138).

The detailed records of how elders resolved several conflict cases in the article confirm the above statement of Hamer. The Sidaama elders use rational communication in all their consensual deliberations, either in resolving conflict or making policies (Hamer, 1998b: 9).

In the 1998b article, Hamer highlights a developed gerontocratic system like that of the Sidaama as a system that can even serve as an alternative model political system for his own country, the US. He says, "Paradoxical [*sic*], however, gerontocracies, like the Sidama in the Eastern Horn of Africa, with their emphasis on decentralised decision making and consensual rule, practice far more community participation and rational discourse than the people of nation-states" (Hamer, 1998b: 5). In this system, elders (those in retirement age in the US case) have more time for rational discourse to arrive at consensual decisions, guarantee a far better justice than one can find in a nation-state system. Those below the retirement age are given time to concentrate in production or wealth creation. Hamer sees in the Sidaama gerontocracy a system of balance, i.e., a system that allows wealth accumulation while preventing exploitation, and promotes social responsibility by way of encouraging generosity or wealth distribution. It is also a participatory system that does not prevent the young from participating in rational debates, but leaves the final decision to be taken by the elders, whose duty is to see the balance between the well being of the community and the individuals. His article (1972) shows how the elders themselves appear to be the symbol of peace and justice; their way of life is guided by *halaale*; and their role is to maintain and promote the way of *halaale*.

Hamer's (1980) article supports the purpose of the current author in presenting the Sidaama social capital. To handle conflicts effectively in a micro area requires the knowledge of the micro social capital. The macro provisions become more effective when it is in dialogue with those of the locals. New and meaningful norms and values in conflict transformation need to emerge from the constant interaction or dialogue between the micro and macro provisions, i.e., a dialogical process of inculturation or contextualisation are essential. Socio-economic policies too become more meaningful and effective when such a dialogue exists between the above (e.g., the national and

international) and below (i.e., the local). In this case, there will be less resistance from below and less use of force from above, but rather mutual trust and cooperation. The money that is spent on policing the implementation of policies can be used for more productive purposes and building internal capacities that protect and promote social and economic transformation. Such a relation, however, can only take place where the needs and interests of the people are in harmony (in balance) with the interests and needs of those in power. In a democratic society, people elect individuals to protect their interest. The ideal leadership aspires always to satisfy the needs of its people and promote positive peace or harmony in the society.

The works of the above mentioned authors will be quoted and used below in this chapter as supplementing documents. Unless where there exist elements with which the author disagrees, he will only make reference to them and use some citations from them. The field research information (i.e., interview source from different parts of Sidaamaland and observations in local court sessions) and the author's cultural insider knowledge (plus informal enquiries to clarify and develop it) serve as the primary source for it.

Although the above mentioned authors provided different aspects of the Sidaama mechanisms and methodologies of conflict management, no one has made a comprehensive and systematic presentation of them. This section attempts to fill this gap. The Sidaamas have practised them for several centuries in order to maintain *keere* (*cosmopneumanthropic* harmony) within their community, but also with their neighbouring groups who have cultural affinity with the Sidaama. This chapter is published in a reduced form in the *Journal of Conflict Research Society* (Kifle, 2003: 13-22), and since it is taken from this thesis, no direct or indirect quotation will be made.

The Sidaama cultural mechanisms and methods the author presents below, although most of them are still in use in rural areas, are being progressively undermined by other forces (e.g., education with western values, the expansion of non-Sidaama religions, different contexts and political systems). The Ethiopian state structure has imposed upon the Sidaama people a new modern set of systems and values which function in parallel with the cultural ones. With the state showing less attention to the local systems of its peoples, the future of the Sidaama mechanisms and methodologies of conflict management appears less promising. At the moment, however, where the people is not in direct conflict with the state interest and structures, within their community most of the rural Sidaamas still

follow their cultural methodologies and systems, for these offer a better chance of justice, fair hearing and reconciliation, with very little financial cost. They also offer a better avenue for full participation of the community members, save women, in a communal decision-making.[12] As it will be seen, the cultural methodologies are, in most cases, not contradictory but complementary to modern State structures.

What are the mechanisms and methodologies that have promoted harmony within the Sidaama community amidst adverse situations? The Sidaama worldview is enshrined in its values and beliefs (the expressions of their faith in the Spiritual Being). The following serve our particular interest regarding handling conflicts in the Sidaama tradition: socio-political and economic structures; *keere*; *halaale* (truth-justice) and the fear of God as the two sacred principles of the Sidaama behaviour that maintain harmony; the value of elderhood with which are associated impartiality, wisdom and the defence of *halaale*; complete subsidiarity in handling issues, leading to localization and individualization of a conflict; the *seera* (procedures, fines); achieving compromise and the ritual actions of reconciliation loaded with symbolic elements touching both the psychological and spiritual life of those involved; principles of *afatto* and *afibbeelo*; a network of kinship pacts through intermarriage; and women's intervention in the case of a deadly inter- and intra-*ga're* conflict. These serve as the Sidaama methods and mechanisms of managing conflicts, which we now consider. Several of them require separate detailed works of their own (i.e., each requires a chapter of its own); hence, in this chapter we will limit ourselves to presenting what is essential in understanding them with less details.

9.B.1. Socio-political and economic structures

> "Paradoxical [*sic*], however, gerontocracies, like the Sidama in the Eastern Horn of Africa, with their emphasis on decentralised decision making and consensual rule, practice far more community participation and rational discourse than the people of nation-states" (Hamer, 1998b: 5).

[12]When the author enquired whether the valued Sidaama tradition was disappearing, R18 and a group of elders with him responded with optimism that it will continue. They said that the fact of writing it down by their children would guarantee that their culture would not disappear and that the future generations would learn it.

The Sidaama *gosa* is an egalitarian, democratic, and gerontocratic society (Hamer, 1998b); with a clear definition of roles, checks and balances. "One of the most striking features of the tribal political system of Sidama is its tendency towards balance of the component forces" (Stanley, 1966: 225). Its socio-political and economic structural provision has allowed the Sidaamas to maintain *keere*. Participatory democracy with relevant structures is deeply ingrained in the Sidaama culture, and democracy is not a new phenomenon for the Sidaamas. Since the Sidaama cultural leadership possesses both political, juridical and religious power (Betana, 1991: 140; Stanley, 1966: 219-225), elders are at the same time judges, mediators, policy-makers, and administrators with the sole goal of maintaining *keere*. They operate within the decentralised political structure which is marked by the principle of subsidiarity. The structure is set as *cinachcha/qachcha, ollaa* and *ga're*, and cemented by a horizontal age-set organisation, *Luwa*, which moves individuals away from simple family-based loyalty to cooperative responsibility towards their *ga're* and *gosa* (R2, R9, R31, R43; cf., pp. 124-125 above; Tolo, 1998: 44-46; Betana, 1991: 99-104, 139-141; Hamer, 1970: 53-53; 1972: 134-137; Stanley, 1966: 220-221). *Cinachcha/qachcha* is the smallest administrative unit and any thing that concerns its own internal affairs (including economic issues and policies) and any thing that can be handled by itself is handled by its own council of elders without any interference from the *ollaa* or *gar'e*. Only issues that are beyond its jurisdiction go to the higher authority, the *ollaa*. Appeal cases and things that go beyond the *ollaa* jurisdiction are handled by the *ga're* councils gathered around the anointed personalities (R43). The council of the *moote* serves as the highest among the Sidaama political authorities which we now present.

9B1.i. The Leadership

There exist anointed leaders — all of whom are elders — with their council/senate of elders. *Cinachcha* and *ollaa* councils gather around the oldest members, while at the *ga're* level, the councils gather around the anointed leaders like *moote* or *ga're* (the leader handling mainly security issues, the political and economic well-being of the *ga're* as well as inter-*ga're* affairs representing his *ga're*) and *qaddo* (a generic term for mainly religious but also political figures such as *woma, gadaanna*, *qaarrichcha, and Gaadalla*) [R20]. All the anointed personalities have their own senate/council of

elders that determine what the anointed leaders should proclaim and how they should behave. Except in the case of war (the reserve for *moote* and *gadaanna*), their roles in internal socio-religious and juridical issues overlap. They all work to maintain harmony (R2, R4, R9, R13). Because it is an egalitarian society, unless there is an external threat, there exists very little interaction between the anointed leaders of different *ga're*. In this case, the Sidaama *gosa* can be considered as a confederal society. Each *ga're* manages its own internal political, religious and juridical affairs independently.

The *Moote/Ga'ro*

The role of the *moote* is principally political leadership and maintaining peace, but he also handles some particular religious rituals (R6, R9, R15, R20, R22, R24, R43). Each of the larger Sidaama *ga're* has more than two *moote* among whom one is the overall leader. Since there exist many territorially defined sub-*ga're* within every Sidaama *ga're*, they are classified into more than two groups and each group (combining more than three sub-*ga're*) has its own *moote*. The divisions and creation of several *moote* within one *ga're* are made to ease the burden from the overall *moote* and his council (R4, R43), and for the sake of administrative efficacy and also because of the egalitarian nature of the Sidaama. Unless there are issues affecting the whole *ga're*, the overall *moote* deals with the issues of the group (constituting several sub-*ga're*) to which he belongs within the *ga're*. Although each *moote* within a *ga're* works autonomously, all of them work together with their overall *moote*, whose council is the supreme *ga're* council in secular/political issues. Before the 1893 conquest, the *moote* were elected; but after the conquest, the imperial government instituted an hereditary system (R9). Henceforth, the position of the *moote* passes from father to son. The only difference is that one who is to become *moote* is chosen from his brothers depending on his ability (e.g., eloquence in addressing issues, wisdom, and in the past even parapsychic power) [R24, R44]. There is not much interaction between the *moote* of different *ga're* unless there is a threat to a Sidaama *ga're* from outside and also inter-*ga're* conflicts. One point that needs emphasis is that the *moote* is just one among elders, except that he has a special role. He can be sanctioned by other elders; he can be removed by the council elders if he is found unfit (R43).

The *Qaddo*

In most of the Sidaama *ga're*, except the Holloo (see below), the *qaddo* consists of two leaders: the *woma* (high priest who carries out *kakkalo* (religious sacrifice offered to God) and *Gadaanna* (the *Luwa* leader) [R24].[13] The former's role is generally religious, while the latter's role includes a political aspect in the case of conflicts. The *woma* also moderates discussions in the gathering of the elders and mediates conflict cases to maintain harmony in the community. All the *qaddo* and their councils of elders in all the Sidaama *ga're* handle court cases and work to assure *keere* (harmony) [R2, R4, R9]. Without their involvement in the juridical issues or works of maintaining harmony, the *ga'ro/moote* alone cannot manage to handle all the issues (R2, R43). The playing of such roles by the *qaddo* removes the burden of waiting for those seeking justice. Unlike the modern court system, all the juridical roles of the anointed leaders are carried out with little financial cost for those seeking justice (Hamer, 1998a: 143-144).

The *gadaanna* has authority over and can only mobilise his own *Luwa* group (an age-set group that has ruled or rules for seven full years before taking up elderhood position). Even when the seven years end, the role of the *gadaanna* as peacemaker remains active in the case of internal sub-*ga're* conflicts or conflicts involving his sub-*ga're* with other sub-*ga're*. He exercises authority (until his death) over his own *Luwa*, and all those who have entered *luwa* under his leadership listen to him and obey him. He and members of his *Luwa* council are democratically elected during the beginning of their *Luwa*. Each sub-*ga're* has its own *gadaanna*; hence, the *gadaanna* has jurisdiction over his own sub-*ga're* and all those living in its territory (R1, R43).[14]

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[13]The Haweela *ga're* does not have *woma* as an anointed religious figure (R44). As Betana (1991: 145-147) explains, the term *woma* appears to have different values and positions in some Sidaama *ga're*. What is common to all (except in the Holloo *ga're*) is that an upright and respectable elder is chosen from the oldest members of a community (at least 70 years old) and made *woma* to be a symbol of peace and blessing. In the pre-conquest time, *woma* was the leader of the Sidaama with political authority. After the conquest, his authority was relegated to ritual function, and each *ga're* has its own *woma*.

[14]"The Gadan [*sic*] convenes the Songo for most important matters only. He presides over the meeting and his views have great bearing on the decisions. In view of a certain decline of the prestige of the Mote in more recent times the Gadan has become the rallying point of sub-tribal unity as against the centrifugal tendencies of the clans. Naturally, the influence of the Gadan is particularly evident among the members of his own Luwa. However, anybody from any other age-set can call on the Gadan to ask him for a settlement of a dispute. The Gadan can outlaw and impose a Serra on a person who does not abide by his decision. To remove the Serra the guilty party has to pay a fine

Particular to the Holloo (including its biggest *sub-ga're* — the Garbichcho)[15] *ga're* — as informed and explained by R2, R9, R15, R20 and R43 — there exist five anointed leaders belonging to the *qaddo*, which are named as *woma, gadaanna, gaanna, qaarrichcha,* and *gaadalla*. Except the *woma*, the rest represent particular *booso* (sub-*ga're*), and are inherited offices (save the *gaadalla*). The *woma* and *gaadalla* offices do not come by inheritance or election, but rather are dependent on divine communication through dream and astrological signs associated to them (R2, R43). They are divine blessings to the community. Apart from their specific functions, the difference between them is that whereas the *woma* can be from any of the Holloo sub-*ga're*, the *gaadalla* comes only from *Garbichcho*.

The *woma* of the Holloo is the High-priest, and so is the *gaanna*. Their roles overlap. The only difference is that the *woma* is divinely chosen while *the gaanna*, although inherited, is humanly chosen. For this reason, and even if each one of them has his own councils of elders, the Holloo *woma* and *gaanna* seem to work always together in all matters.[16] In religious matters, they hold a supreme office. Most probably the reasons for having the two playing the same role may be: first, to avoid a vacuum in case the *woma* is absent (e.g., dead) and the replacement is not yet provided. The Sidaamas believe that a society without a *woma* is like the bees without the queen (R2). Secondly, it may be a safeguard in the situation where the *woma* misbehaves or fails to fulfill his office. While the elders can force out the *gaanna*, they cannot remove the *woma*, for he is divinely chosen (R4, R43). Hence, the intimate relations between the two guarantee the smooth run and the holiness of the office.

Apart from the common roles of the anointed elders (e.g., presiding over rituals, handling juridical cases, and maintaining peace and harmony [Stanley, 1966: 225]), among the Holloo *ga're*,

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to the Gadan. He can stop any fighting that is going on and judge the issue involved" (Stanley, 1966: 223).

[15]The Holloo has ten sub-*ga're*, of which Garbichcho is the largest with its five sub-division. In fact many other Sidaama *ga're* people and the writers like Hamer and Stanley consider it as a "tribe" (the author prefers the term *ga're* [sub-national group] to 'tribe') in its own. But Garbichcho is known and considered a sub-*ga're* of Holloo by all the members of Holloo *ga're*. Henceforth this author uses Holloo alone without Holloo-Garbichcho division. Holloo is divided into two sections (Maikke and Reera) and Garbichcho is in Maikke section.

[16]This information was given to the author by the *woma* and a brother of the *gaanna* near Wonsho area in Lako district in August 1996. The author wanted to interview the *woma*, but he refused to accept any interview by saying that no information can be given out without the presence of the *gaanna*.

the *gaadalla* has a specific role that is now almost dead: in the past, without his offering libation and praying for God's blessings at the beginning of the rainy season, the Holloo people would not prepare their fields for sowing cereal crops. After the harvest, he closes it with another thanksgiving libation to God (R13). Although the *gaadalla* still performs his rituals on the yearly basis, because of the coming of Christianity and the *derg*'s policies of Peasant Associations and Villagization, his specific function today has a diminished value. However, he continues handling juridical and ritual cases.

The *qaddo* in Sidaama *gosa* are expected to display the embodiment of peace and harmony in their persons (cf., Hamer, 1970: 60), and any one who meets them can clearly observe this. Unlike other anointed leaders, the Holloo *woma* cannot be removed from his office even when he neglects his duty or abuses his office until another child is born with the charisma, for the people believe that his election does not come from human persons (R2, R4, R43).[17] It is like the election of Dalai Lama in the Tibetan Buddhist society. His office does not come from inheritance right (*pace* Betana, 1991: 146-147), although it is possible that in the past the office might have been from inheritance (Stanley, 1966: 224). Among some other Sidaama *ga're* like Alatta, the *woma* is selected on the basis of age (elderhood age) and a favourable omen (Stanley, 1966: 222).

The Holloo has nine sub-*ga're*, which are in turn divided as *reera* and *maike*. The *gaanna* and current *woma* are found in the former, and the *qaarrichcha* and *gaadalla* are found in the latter. The overall *moote* is also from the latter. The *qaarrichcha* and *gaadalla* are also like priests. While the *gaanna* and *woma* preside over the religious affairs of the Holloo *ga're* as a whole, the *qaarrichcha* and *gaadalla* preside over their sub-*ga're*, handling both religious and juridical issues. In religious affairs, the *gaanna* and *woma*, being the representatives of all the Holloo *ga're* as a whole, hold supremacy over all the *qaddo*. But in political/secular issues the *moote* is the head. In the situation where the *woma* misbehaves, if there is found a young divine elect to the *woma* office, the *moote* of the Holloo claims that (with the consent of his council of elders) he can demote the *woma* and hand over the office to the younger one (R4, R43).

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[17]It is in Holloo, Garbichcho (a Holloo branch), and Sawoola *ga're* "that the Woma has a great prestige.... [T]here is only one Woma for all the three areas and he has lost little of his ancient power and prestige. He remains the spiritual and ritual leader whilst the Mote enjoy much lower standing and have recently become central government administrators (Balabats)" (Stanley, 1966: 224). Stanley wrote this in 1966, and we are unable to verify when both the Holloo and Sawoola *ga're* had one common *woma*. What is known to us today is that each group has its own *woma*.

9B1.ii. Elderhood

> "*Cimeessa* [an elder] is for communion, a father of *halaale*; he is the one who offers a sacrifice to God" (R5).

In the Sidaama society, elderhood status cannot be achieved without undergoing the passage rite, *luwa* (Hamer, 1970; R1, R2, R4, R5; R39). Only after this initiation rite of two to three months that one can become an elder: "An elder is the one who has passed through *luwa,* sought advise [from the relevant authority] and circumcised" (R6). *Gadaanna*, who is the leader of an age-set group and bring the whole sub-*ga're* as one beyond their individual family tie and loyalty, comes from the *Luwa* institution. The status of elderhood cannot be acquired without undergoing the *Luwa* initiation. The *Luwa*, being a complex system, needs a chapter or even a book of its own. Hamer (1970, 1997) and Betana (1991: 149-162) give sufficient general information for those interested in it. The author postpones working on this Sidaama passage or initiation rite to a future study, and dwells more on the role of elderhood in this section.

Without becoming an elder, one cannot participate in the political, economic and religious leadership and deliberations in the Sidaama society. The elders assume leadership in the community creating, protecting and promoting harmony which comes through the maintenance of *halaale* (R1, R4; Tolo 1998: 48; Hamer, 1998b; 1998a: 179, 140). This follows the Sidaama cultural worldview in which elderhood is associated with closeness to the spiritual world, wisdom and ability (cleverness) in solving problems and integrity (R1, R2; Hotteesso, 1991: 163). Becoming *cimeessa* (an elder) implies mainly entering into, as well as living, a life of uprightness and impartiality; being rational (as opposed to being emotional [irrational]); and speaking, seeking, searching, defending and respecting only *halaale*. "Once Sidama are promoted to elderhood they remain collectively responsible until death for *halaalu* and the discourse leading to consensus" (Hamer, 1998a: 151). Elders are sanctified leaders and judges, and "sanctified mediators to whom the people are often devoted and whose assistance in settling disputes and performing rituals of harmony are frequently in demand," although "they are always subject to the controls of the collective will of the elders' councils" (Hamer, 1994: 133). Through the passage rite (undergoing training during *luwa* and getting circumcised at the end of the period of one's *Luwa*), one joins the political leadership and fully participates in policymaking

and deliberations (Hamer, 1970: 55-70; 1998a: 139, 151; Stanley, 1966: 223-224).

The passage to elderhood signifies the passage from "impetuous youth" to the "respected ideal of the just and circumspect elder" (Hamer, 1972: 238). It is a mark of difference, of walking on the path of *halaale* and impartiality. One gains one's authority in the community not because of one's economic affluence (although this is an important element in achieving status of respect in the community), family background or physical strength, but through having undergone the *Luwa* initiation period and becoming elder, being generous, wise and upright according to the values of the community. Most probably this is why Hamer regards the Sidaama socio-cultural organisation in terms of horizontal stratification (ibid). In Sidaama society, every human person (regardless of one's social and economic backgrounds) is, in principle, considered equal. According to interviewees (R4, R5, R6, R7), one who is accredited for his ability and wisdom in handling issues can be addressed as *cimeessa* – but only when he is handling a conflict case – even if he has not been initiated. His elderhood is limited to the moments of mediating conflicts (R6).

There exist three categories of *cimeeyye* (elders) who participate in making policies and mediating conflicts. For the sake of convenience, the author classifies them as the initiates (ritual elderhood), the anointed, and the *batuta*/*woma* (cf., Hamer, 1972: 233-234; 1998b: 6; R2, R4, R9, R43). Such a division does not imply that the latter two are non-initiated; all of them are initiated (have undergone the passage rights [*luwa* and circumcision]). The following paragraphs explain what these groups are.

The *initiates* (both juniors and seniors) comprise all those who (regardless of their ages) have undergone *luwa* that is concluded with circumcision. During the circumcision, some hair from the back of the initiate's neck is cut by a knife by his already initiated brother while uttering: "*qo'lu kulohe*" (let your back reveal you). The back of the neck symbolises hidden issues and agenda; by the utterance, the initiate is now expected to remain always alert to keep himself ritually pure – by avoiding touching, speaking, and eating things that are considered impure – and always to search for, stand for and speak the *halaale* alone (R1, R4, R5). He must now remain impartial when handling issues and conflicts, for impartiality is a trait of *halaale* and sign of a good judge-mediator. Every initiate (even if he may be as young as 20 years old), therefore, is officially allowed to participate fully in the elders' meetings. In the case of handling conflicts, every initiate can fully participate in

presenting and arguing cases and mediating (R4). The initiates comprise a junior and a senior class of elders. Those who have not completed the full cycle of *Luwa* (i.e., 35 years) since their initiation remain junior elders. They can participate in all but final decisions are taken by the seniors. Once they have completed the full cycle, they then join the senior class of elderhood (Hamer, 1970: 63). The elders' role involves political, judicial and ritual aspects (cf., Tolo, 1998: 44).

The *anointed* elders are those religious-political figures (the *moote* or *ga'ro* and the *qaddo*) with higher authority (*ga're* leadership) and special status in the community. Each of these figures has his own council of elders and cannot act outside the council (Hamer, 1980: 91). Such leaders "have no more authority than the community of elders and must conform to the decision making consensus of the latter" (Hamer, 1998a: 139). They perform communal ritual issues and handle juridical matters and conflicts affecting the *ga're* and sub-*ga're*. They also handle all appeal cases made to them by individuals who are dissatisfied with the verdicts passed upon them by their local assembly of elders at the *cinachcha* and *ollaa* levels (R4, R20, R22, R43).

The *batuuta*/*woma* denote a notable individual elder ("an ideal *čimessa* [elder]" [Hamer, 1970: 67]) who commands respect because of his ability in managing conflicts, his uprightness and age (at least 70 [Hamer (1972: 234) accords 'at least 65 years'], i.e., after having lived the second cycle of *Luwa*, each complete cycle being thirty-five years [Hamer, 1994: 128; 1997: 8]). Over a long period, these individuals have acquired reputations for their wisdom and ability in handling problems, oratorical eloquence and moral integrity. They are always wanted by the people to mediate and resolve a difficult dispute. Hamer writes of a *woma* as epitomising "the gerontocratic ideal of the wise old patriarch, who is always available to help in resolving difficult disputes" (Hamer, 1972: 239).

The anointed individuals (e.g., the *qaddo*) and those who are made *batuuta/woma* become symbols of peace in the community. They never curse, never involve themselves in acrimonious debates, are always soft spoken, take no part in any aggressive or warlike activity, and never marry divorced women, for "this would indirectly associate them with the strife of a broken marriage" (Hamer, 1972: 240). They are very much respected and loved.

What underlies all the three categories of the elders is the concern to maintain harmony by assuring positive peace by means of treating the root causes of a conflict, guaranteeing the rule of *halaale*, achieving compromise and reconciliation. They serve as representatives of the ancestors and

therefore play the role of guardians of morality and *cosmopneumanthropic* harmony.

9.B.2. Procedural Principles

9.B.2.i. Gathering of the Elders (songo) and Subsidiarity

Making policies and resolving disputes require *songo*. Every socio-political and economic organisation (*cinachcha*, *ollaa*, or supreme council on the *ga're* level) has its own *songo* or council of elders. The oldest of the elders and anointed leaders act as moderators. All the members of a community (save women and non-initiated youth) participate fully in its deliberations. The Sidaamas are very particular about appropriate jurisdiction and procedures (Hamer, 1998a: 141, 142). Issues and conflicts that affect *cinachcha* are to be solved by the elders of the *cinachcha*, who handle minor disputes arising from marital problems, quarrels over garden boundaries, complaints about the destruction of one's property by livestock of another, social and ethnic or racial slur and so on. They assure harmony in their community by bringing disputants or parties in conflict to a negotiated settlement where this is required. The *ollaa* council of elders deals with making policies concerning the *ollaa* and conflicts that affect more than one *cinachcha*. It also handles the cases of theft, land disputes, assault cases (insults, fights, cases of being bewitched), laying bridges, administration of communal lands (allocating land to the landless or needy, setting rules on communal grazing land), and communal rituals. The *ga're* councils gathered around the anointed elders handle the cases that affect more than one *ollaa*, the sub-*ga're* and *ga're*. They handle conflicts between different *ollaa* and *sub-ga're*, homicide cases, ritual arrangements for *fichée* (the Sidaama new year), *luwa* and adverse situations (e.g., plague, drought, war) [Hamer 1972: 234-237].

In *songo* and other public areas elders express no emotion (e.g., shouting, insulting or cursing), for emotions are considered irrational, weakness and sign of partiality. The elders are expected to embody peace at all times. During meetings one rather observes the intensity of reflection and paying attention to what another says. The discussion follows strict procedures, and is marked by expressions like *affini* (have you considered it?), *wonshitini* (have you agreed?), *mainaiya* (what response should be given?), *hakko xe'iwo* (something is missing), *ditaaltiwo* (not

balanced), and so on. The quorum is clear: for a meeting to begin, at least one member from every constitutive unit must be present (cf., Hamer, 1972: 235). According to R43, failure of a *cinachcha* to send at least one representative elder to attend the *ollaa* meetings for policy making and solving conflicts at the *ollaa* level incurs *seera* (fines). The same happens to an *ollaa* that fails to send at least one representative to a *ga're* assembly.

Where the *songo* does not involve an anointed leader, it sits around the oldest (moderator) and respectable elder. In a meeting, one cannot just begin speaking (presenting a case, challenging it or supporting it) without seeking permission by uttering the word '*affini*?', proceeding from a short reflective silence. Interruption while one is speaking is not allowed. A speaker is expected to be precise and succinct to save time. In the case where a speaker takes longer time, the moderator intervenes. Through this well-ordered discussion, in the case of handling conflicts, the elders aim at seeking *halaale*, building consensus, bring about a negotiated solution to a conflict, and restore, create, protect and defend harmony (Tolo, 1998: 48; Hamer, 1998a: 142).[18]

The notion of the *principle of subsidiarity* that the author uses here is one of the four foundational elements of Catholic social teaching, the three others being the dignity of the human person, the common good, and Solidarity. It was first introduced by Pope Pius XI in his 1931 encyclical letter "Quadragesimo Anno." The principle was formulated during the period when the world was being threatened by totalitarian state systems based on the doctrine of the individual's subordination to the collectivity. It emphasises the protection of the rights of a social group to handle its own issues freely by itself without state interference. The latter should come only when an issue is above the former's capacity. Hence, the principle maintains that what can be done or solved by 'x' (an individual or group) must be solved by 'x'. Decisions must be left at the lowest possible level, at the level closest to those affected by it. Even prior to Pius's encyclical, Pope Leo XIII himself insisted "on necessary limits to the state's intervention and on its instrumental character, inasmuch as the individual, the family and society are prior to the state, and inasmuch as the state exists in order to protect their rights and not stifle them."[19]

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[18]"The Sidama consider rational discourse in terms of creating harmony, correcting procedure, limits, and recently the issue of efficiency" (Hamer, 1998a: 139; cf., Hamer, 1972: 235).

[19]John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, no. 11.

The different level of *songo* in the Sidaama tradition highlights the *principle of subsidiarity* (decentralised authority) that pervades the socio-political and economic organisation of the Sidaama society. According to the Sidaama tradition, what can be solved by a *cinachcha* has to be solved by it alone unless an appeal is made by a dissatisfied person to the *ollaa* council or the *songo* of an anointed elder. Similarly, what can be handled by the *ollaa* council has to be handled by the *ollaa*. This is clearly manifested when, at the beginning of treating a case, every council examines the nature of the case to make sure under whose jurisdiction it falls. If, for example, the *ollaa* council finds that a case belongs to a *cinachcha* or *ga're* council, it sends the case to where it belongs. Otherwise, there will be a quarrel and sanctions for having violated the correct jurisdiction. When an issue concerns the whole Sidaama community, then the *moote* (a political leader) of each *ga're* represents his *ga're* in the meeting of all the *moote* of the Sidaama society.[20] Conflicts affecting more than one *ga're* are handled by the political leaders and their councils of the affected *ga're*. When a conflict among two groups occurs and the two groups fail to solve it, a third party (notable elders from different groups) intervenes.

The decentralized authority or subsidiarity facilitates solving every conflict at its root level, by the people of the same area, who experience and know it. In this way, every conflict is localized, individualized (i.e., dealt directly with the person/s responsible for a problem) and well managed, thus blocking it from expanding any further. Moreover, with the help of the principle of subsidiarity the anointed elders and their councils are released from the burden of having to deal with each and every conflict within the *ga're*. They have sufficient time to deal with weighty issues and the appeals some individuals make when they are not satisfied with the handling of their cases by their local elders.

Every conflict case that is brought forward to the elders by those who are involved has to be resolved. Even when the involved parties want to drop their case for whatever reason, the elders do not drop it. In the Sidaama worldview, an unresolved conflict, or the conflict that has not received proper hearing, treatment and reconciliation, will result in disrupting the community's harmony in the future. Bewitching and other clandestine harmful undertakings with a view to harming another person are believed to have resulted from such latent conflict, unresolved anger and jealousy (Hamer,

[20]The *Awaado ga're* does not have its own *moote* because (unlike other *ga're*) it has no territory of its own to control. The people from this *ga're* live dispersed in the territories of other Sidaama *ga're*.

1972: 237). Every person (male or female) has the right to be heard until justice is rendered. Every political unit has its own internal capacity to handle its own affairs.

It is to be noted here that, although women are not allowed to participate in *songo*, in a homicide case, no reconciliation takes place without the presence of the sisters (one from the killed, another from the killer) of the conflict parties. Among some Sidaama *ga're* only the sister of the victim is needed. Until agreements in reconciliation are reached by the two parties, the woman (or women) will not participate in the process, but is/are informed on the daily basis about the developments (R19). On the last day of reconciliation (i.e., the first time the two families are brought to see each other face to face since the homicide incidence) the woman/women come and stand (with the mediating elder and the maternal uncle of the victim) in the river, on the road, or at an area separating the two parties in conflict that stand back to back without facing each other to avoid seeing each other.[21] As they come backward slowly, the woman/women spray honey wine on the two while imploring God by saying "forgive what has been ignored and forgotten" (R10), and when their eyes are cleansed by the mediating elder which includes slaughtering a sacrificial lamb, the women/woman anoints the two sides and the mediating elders with butter. The two sides, then, begin to look at each other face to face. Ritual symbols at this moment vary from one *ga're* to another. Women play a crucial role in the ritual of *gondooro* (covenant of reconciliation). Once the covenant is enacted, a blood relation is created among the two families. For the Sidaamas, the *halaale* of a woman cannot be broken; hence, if one party of the *gondooro* acts contrary to the pact, it is believed that it will die (R19).[22]

When asked why women are not allowed to participate in *songo*, the general argument goes that if women participate in these often time consuming public debates and deliberations, no one will be looking after children and also no one will prepare meals for the elders. R19 adds that it is mainly for the honour and respect of women, for during these meetings men use several stories and jokes that

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[21]On the last day of the funeral of the victim, the relatives through the maternal uncle proclaim *qege* (a sanction that forbids the relatives of the victim from having any interaction with anyone of the killer family (which includes whole *boosaallo* [the relatives up to the fifth degree of affinity]). It is the proclamation of enmity and total separation. The proclamation of *qege* goes: Let the house know that it is 'x', the son of 'y' who killed 'z'. The family and *boosaallo* of 'x' has *qege*. From now on, you eat no food, drink no water from them. If you see anyone (a male), do not spare his life" (R13, R11, R4).

[22]Information for this paragraph comes from R9, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14, R19 and R27.

they would not normally use in front of women and children. Otherwise, elderly women (who unlike the young women even partake of food with elders) would have been allowed to participate. Elders appear not to feel comfortable if a woman is present at their gathering. If a woman is found at a *songo*, her case is treated first (almost always in her favour) before any other agenda is considered. It is also generally known that the Sidaama elders defend women: "It takes little deductive insight to associate elderhood with the protection of women" (Hamer, 1997: 8; cf., Hamer, 1998b: 6).

9.B.2.ii. The principles of afatto and afibbeelo[23]

These procedural principles are not written or indicated in the Kifle (2003) article. The terms *afatto* and *afibbeelo* come from a root word *afa* (to know). *Afatto* literally means "Do you 'see'?" ('see' signifying knowledge and not in its literal term). *Afibbeelo* is something 'not to be seen (or considered)'. Whenever a person in the Sidaama community has a problem with another, he is not expected to take the matter into his own hands or undertake any trivial action towards the other. If he does, he is fined. He has to bring the case to the people around — by saying *di-affinay ayidde?* (Do the people hear this?) or some variety of this — or directly to the community elders (by saying *Eweli toggo yii'ena/assi'ena di-affinai*? ("Do you see that X has said/done ...to me?"). This procedure is called *afatto*. And the elder/elders to whom the *afatto* is brought take it up and resolve the situation, reconciling the two parties involved in the conflict.

Afatto is a procedural principle used only in the case of conflict. It is about bringing a case to the relevant authority. According to this principle, every human person regardless his/her social background, regardless his/her ethnic or racial background, has a right to be heard; his/her grievance is to be heard, and to refuse to hear him/her is an offence to *halaale* and disrupts *keere*. *Afibbeelo* relates to a case that a person who makes appeal is not genuine and who has trespassed the *halaale*. It relates to something that is considered inhuman and totally against *halaale*, thus offensive to God and the guardians of morality (the ancestors). When one is said *afibbeelo assootto*, this means "you

[23]These principles were brought to my knowledge by Fr. Thomas Yunka, a Sidaama priest, during one of our informal interactions in July 2005. He has produced a small pastoral pamphlet for his parishioners under *afatto* and *afibbeelo*. Information on these is based on the information of Fr. Thomas and on the author's own knowledge as a cultural insider.

have done inhuman or (morally unacceptable) thing." Hence, a person with such an act does not have the right of appeal. This happens only when the community has known the case very well with concrete evidence. If, for example, X hires Y to work for him, and at the end he sends Y away without paying him his due, X has done a thing considered as *afibbeelo*. X has no right of appeal. He has offended *halaale*, and he has to amend his behaviour by making right the situation (e.g., paying all that is due to Y, and reconciling himself with Y and the community).

The right of *afatto* also reveals the Sidaama society as a highly democratic society, conscious of the equal human dignity of every human person, regardless of the person's social, economic, ethnic and racial background. Although artisans and women in the Sidaama society are relegated to an unequal social position, they are not considered as inferior human beings. For women, it is on the basis of the social role they are given in a patriarchal system. For the artisans it is on the basis of some cultural taboos (e.g., ritual purity laws). The artisans fully participate in public deliberations within the Sidaama community (*pace* Aadland, 2002: 29, 37, 42), except in intermarriages and ritual activities because of the Sidaama ritual law of purity. At least it is the only reason (whether the transgression of ritual taboos were real or fictional) that the *wolawa* Sidaama give to maintain the separation between them and the artisans. Women, although they indirectly (at home) influence greatly the decisions their husbands make in public, are not allowed to participate directly in public debates. They are expected to look after children, prepare meals, and maintain cleanliness in the house, while the initiates and other elders busy themselves in public issues. The Sidaama, being an androcentric society, accords more favour to man than woman, who is considered as weak needing man's protection and guidance.

Socio-Political and Economic Organisations	Leadership (Elders)	Functions of the Leadership
Gosa (nation) [territorial]	political leaders (all the *Moote* or *Ga'ro*) of the *ga're*	deal with security issues concerning the Sidaama *gosa* (e.g., external attacks against the Sidaama, inter-*ga're* conflicts)
Ga're (sub-nation) [territorial]	anointed elders or leaders (*Moote*/*Ga'ro* and *qaddo*) with their councils of elders	handle issues concerning the *ga're* (e.g., making policies), intra-*ga're* conflicts or conflicts involving more than one *ollaa* and sub-*ga're*, and appeal cases; perform rituals (sacrifices and burnt offerings)
Ollaa [territorial]	*ollaa* council of elders (initiates) gathered around a senior (in age) elder	make policies and decisions concerning the *ollaa*; handle conflicts involving more than one *cinachcha*; administer communal land; deal with appeal cases; handles the cases of theft, land disputes, assault cases, laying bridges, building houses, and communal rituals.
Cinachcha [territorial]	all the initiate elders of *cinachcha*	handle disputes arising from marital problems, quarrels over garden boundaries, complaints about the destruction of one's property by livestock of another, social and ethnic or racial slur; makes decisions that concern the *cinachcha*
Booso (clan) [kinship]	the elders of the sub-*ga're*	guarantee harmony and cooperation among the members of the sub-*ga're*; deal with conflicts and other socio-economic issues exclusively concerning the sub-*ga're*.

Summary Table: *The Sidaama Socio-Political and Economic Organisations, the Leadership and Functions*

9.B.3. Maintenance of *Keere* and Fundamental Moral Principles

9B3.i. Keere

In 3B2, we have discussed cosmological worldviews. The Sidaama worldview is holistic, i.e., *cosmopneumanthropic*, in which ancestors, human beings and nature are sacred. They are sacred because they are created by *Magano* (God) and belong to him. Any abuse of the human person as well as nature is perceived as offending God the *Kalaqa-Khaliqa* (Creator of all - the almighty) and the ancestors who are the custodians of morality.[24] Offending God brings disruption of the *cosmopneumanthropic* harmony which is known as *Keere*. As noted above (see pp. 41-42), *keere* consists in maintaining balance in human life by ordering one's activities according to *halaale* and fear of God. This aspect of maintaining balance underlies the whole socio-political and economic structures (Stanley, 1966: 225). The imbalance is perceived as bringing conflict and violence. The Sidaama views conflict as disruptive of harmony in the community, unavoidable, and at the same time manageable. Hence, a principal duty of the cultural authorities consists in maintaining *keere*, the *cosmopneumanthropic* harmony. Although some inconsistencies (aberrations) exist (e.g., the maintenance of quasi-caste and patriarchal systems [see pp. 240-241, 244]), generally, the Sidaamas believe in the equal dignity of every human person. They understand a person in relation to the place or (territory [nature]), community and the Creator (*Magano* [God]),[25] i.e., a person is a person-in-communion, hence both the individual and community are equally valued and given a sense of

[24]"Traditionally the Sidamas did not divide their existence into a political, a social and a religious category, because life as a whole was religious" (Tolo, 1998: 46). "...religious, social and political life were integral parts of their holistic world-view" (ibid.: 63).

[25]When a stranger comes, the first question is '*Hiitte gobba mannaat*?' (Of which place/country are you?) The second question follows, '*hiiko ayiddeeti?'* (Of which community?). One shows greater hospitality/generosity to a stranger (and also to the needy [e.g., poor, handicap, orphan, widow] and the weak), for it constitutes the way of *halaale*, the spirit or law of God. To abuse a stranger (the weak and the needy) is to offend God, for he/she belongs to God (created by God); hence, people say *'Magano waajj'* (fear God). Even abusing animals is seen as offending God: "Hitting animals forcefully and angrily is considered a sin" (Maccani, 1989: 127). When nature is abused, people say *'gafo ikkawohe'* (it will bring you deprivation). *'gafo'* is a sort of deprivation that results from what is considered an abuse (resulting from selfishness and greed) and offensive attitude (resulting from pride). These are seen as fundamentally arising from lack of 'fear of God'. Even when one wastes food because one has too much of it, the people say *'gafo ikkawohe.*' It is believed that such a wasteful person will suffer hunger in the future, as an act of divine retribution.

sacredness. Maintaining *keere* requires, therefore, the respect due to the person, community, and nature. Such respect implies the presence of *halaale* and the fear of God, which we now present.

9b3.ii. Moral Principles of the Sidaama Behaviour

Keere comes only when one's life is guided by the two constitutive principles (or even sources) of morality and behaviour of the TS: *halaale* and the fear of God (cf., Hamer, 1998a: 139, 147, 151). The two principles are constitutive of each other because one does not exist without the other, as the two sides of a coin. Because of their sacredness they command uncontested respect, marking the ways and behaviours of the Sidaama persons and community. The people hold and believe that any act against these principles brings retribution to the offender and his posterity, hence a saying: *Halaalu annasi di-hawao* (Truth does not forget to whom it belongs). For the Sidaamas, *halaale* is not mere truth-justice, which is its direct meaning within the context of human relations or interactions, but also ultimately it connotes God (Betana, 1991: 140). Hamar (1997: 5) says that *halaale* "is considered to have originated [from] the Creator."

The understanding of *halaale* defies simple categorisation. The Sidaamas personify and identify it with God when they say '*Halaalu Maganoho'* (*Halaale* is God). They also consider it as belonging to God when they swear 'Maganu Halaaleet' (By the *halaale* of God). *Halaale* also concerns human life, human relations; from this perspective, Hamer's consideration of it as the Sidaama 'moral code' and his definition of it as 'the true way of life' (Hamer, 1997: 5; 1998a: 145) make sense. It involves the truth of a matter (sincerity), and is about the correct procedure for discovering the reality (just approach), and about the way of handling what is discovered through a tortuous and careful communal search (fairness), tempered with realism, mercy and generosity towards the repentant culprit: all these are for the interest of bringing reconciliation in order to restore harmony. From the perspective of human relations, in simple terms, *halaale* embodies truth and justice. The understanding of 'truth' for the Sidaamas follows the line of a realist perspective as opposed to a relativist or constructionist one. Justice for them is acting according to the truth that

is discovered but in fairness, mercy, generosity and respect to the dignity of the human person.[26] They understand 'justice' in terms of restoration (restorative justice) as different from retribution (retributive justice) [cf., Hamer, 1997: 5-6]. The Sidaamas see fairness, mercy and generosity as integrally constitutive elements of 'justice', which is always directed towards reconciliation without which *keere* is impossible. In social relations, therefore, the term *halaale* is truth-justice and cannot be reduced to mere truth or justice (Maccani, 1989: 65). In wider context, it is more than truth-justice, and ultimately connotes 'the spirit of God', and even God Him/Herself.

The Sidaama believes that God's intervention in the human world is real. Acts that affect *keere* (e.g., lies, abuses, greed, selfishness, jealousy, hatred, pride) are, therefore, perceived as offending *halaale*.[27] Offending *halaale* means, for the Sidaama, offending God. Because *Halaale* embodies truth, fairness, mercy and generosity (i.e., truth-justice), it is in Hamer's term 'the true way of life' (which brings true sense of fulfilment and gives meaning to life) as opposed to a false way of life (which brings a false sense of fulfilment and gives false meaning to life). "God is the source and the custodian of truth and justice," i.e., *halaale* (Maccani, 1989: 65).

The importance of *halaale* (as truth) in daily activity can be expressed by taking a court case. When a case opens and a witness is brought foreword, one of the examining elders informs and admonishes witnesses: "We have called you here not to take sides, but to tell the truth" (to be sincere). After this, when an individual comes forward to give witness, the elder says, "Tell the truth for your own sake, for the sake of your children, and for the sake of *halaale*" (Hamer, 1998a: 139-140). In the cases that lack proof, rendering the making of conclusions difficult, the responsible protagonist assumes responsibility for whatever happens to him/her and his/her posterity. The accused will be called to swear by God or *halaale*: "If I lie, let *Magano* [God] be the judge" (Hamer, 1997: 6). Before taking oaths, the families of the accused are called forward to examine and warn

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[26]In one case in Hamer's article, in making the final decision after discovering the culprit, the elders "contended that his [the culprit's] penitence and poverty were more important than evenhanded justice" (Hamer, 1998a: 143).

[27]"...Thus the negation of mutuality, generosity, fairness and truth may be defined as telling lies, twisting the words of another for one's own benefit, not repaying debts, engaging in sexual relations with kin, seeking spirits in order to extort gifts from others, and pushing one's property boundaries so that they infringe those of neighbours" (Hamer, 1997: 5). Such acts are considered as false way of life, which brings division and disharmony, meaninglessness and false sense of fulfilment in life.

him/her. The relatives take their person aside and advise him/her not to take an oath but simply to tell the truth. If culpable, one confesses; if not, one goes ahead to take oaths, and the case is closed. The elder states to him by saying that *halaale* and *Magano* will follow him if he is not telling the truth (ibid.). Maccani writes:

> "One swears upon the true and just God: MAGANU HALALETI = for the truth and justice of God. God is against the false and against those who do injustice. One who swears the false invoking God, will be stricken by God: death, disease, for him, for his wife, for his children... God will withdraw from those who do bad things. God will free the oppressed in due time" (Maccani, 1989: 65; cf., Hamer, 1998a: 138 [footnote # 2])[28]

The highest value placed on *keere* and the principles of the Sidaama behaviour render the Sidaama culture a "peace culture."[29] Within the context of conflict transformation, therefore, promoting or capitalising on them and empowering the cultural authorities in mediating conflicts within Sidaamaland would help greatly to transform horizontal unpeaceful relations; it helps to transform the attitude that governs conflict as *gatoite* into conflict as *galteite* (see pp. 42-43 above).

9.B.4. *Seera*

> "The Sidama use rational discourse grounded in shared beliefs about the ideals of truth and sincerity in the everyday practice of settling disputes and policy issues. Only at the point where validity claims cannot be verified and consensus obtained is there a resort to myth" (appeal to supernatural intervention) [Hamer, 1998a: 138, cf. 151].

Seera contains three meanings: i) a self-help organisation (social, economic, or both) with commonly agreed rules, rights and duties; ii) rules and procedures of an organisation; and iii) fines for violating norms, agreements, procedures, and for failing to carry out one's duties. Here the author

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[28] "It is only when there is insufficient evidence to support rational discourse, and a consensus cannot be realized, that the elders leave the matter with Magano. Because the latter is the all powerful originator of *halalu*, and his surrogates have been unable to determine the applicability of the code to a specific individual(s) magano will see that justice is done. Disaster will overtake the recalcitrant who has lied to the elders, resulting in illness or death to himself and/or his immediate relatives and livestock" (Hamer, 1998a: 145).

[29] There are "...aspects of culture that serve to justify and legitimize direct peace and structural peace. If many and diverse aspects of that kind are found in a culture, we can refer to it as a 'peace culture'" (Galtung, 1990: 291; cf. 1996b: 75-92).

concentrates on the third meaning.

The elders apply measures to reinforce communal decisions. "Consensual pressure, ostracism, and the curse are a part of Sidamo sanctioning, but not physical force or the use of more than symbolic fines" (Hamer, 1998a: 151). The symbolic fine is less applicable in the case of property damage or spilling blood (R44). Where the property damage occurs, reparation must be made; the culprit and/or his family has to pay. If a case of bloodshed (killing), the case is different. When killing occurs, the lineage (*bosaallo*) of the victim proclaims not *seera* but *qege* (a measure expressing complete enmity) against the killer lineage (R4, R44).[30] *Seera* does not involve physical punishment. The use of physical force as a public punishment against grown-up offenders to maintain peace is not accepted among the Sidaamas, for it is perceived as affecting human dignity, and thus offending God. This explains why when an elder says, "*mullu noommona qaaffoot*" ("I am naked, do not pass"), no Sidaama ignores his words or disobeys him (R19). The authority of the elders does not come from the control and use of force but abiding with *halaale*.

In the Sidaama culture, strictly following procedures (also known as *seera*) is important. The stronger or the more powerful is never to use his power to harm and silence the weak or the younger. Where a weak person becomes abusive or a nuisance to a stronger, the latter brings *afatto* to the elders. This is the only accepted way to handle such a case. If the stronger uses his strength and harms the weak, the former is punished and made to pay two fines: one for not following a right procedure, and the second for harming or using physical force. Where physical injury is mild and not life-threatening, the one who has caused such harm (even if he is not the aggressor) is asked to bring a lamb for the victim to eat and get well. But if the damage is life threatening, he is made to bring not only a lamb but also a bull for the victim to be fed and get well. Until a victim is fully recovered, the case will not be treated. Once he is recovered, the elders now enquire how things came about. If they find that the victim himself is the aggressor, they ask him to pay a symbolic fine for the mediating elders (not repayment for the lamb or bull) for disrupting harmony. In the end, they close the case by reconciling the two individuals and their families, for (in the Sidaama worldview) an

[30]The proclamation of *qege* takes the following format: "The house [lineage] of 'X' is *qege*; do not see anyone of them. If you see one, spare him not [i.e., kill]. It is also *qege* for teeth, no one should share meal with anyone of them" (R9).

offence against an individual is an offence against his family too.[31]

The measures to normalise situations in the community can be placed in two categories. First, in a clear case where the truth or the culprit is known, appropriate fines are imposed, damages are paid and persons reconciled. Any fine that is imposed apart from the damage payment is just a token the culprit gives as a sign of remorse. One is also fined for breaking agreements, uttering racial slurs, violating trust, refusing to accept the verdict of the elders and so on. A public sanction of exclusion of a person from the community (ostracising) depends on one's will and decision: one either accepts one's fault as judged by the elders, shows remorse and is reconciled or refuses to show remorse and remains alone for the rest of one's life, having no one for any support (R4). In the latter case, one can return to the community by accepting the verdict and asking forgiveness, and paying fine (also called *seera*) for one's refusal. In the Sidaama tradition, there is no death penalty; and use of force is never a way of resolving conflict (Betana, 1991: 147-148; Hamer, 1972: 235-238).

Secondly, in the cases (e.g., theft, bewitching) where elders lack clear evidence, thus making it difficult to judge, the suspects are handed over to God to be judged. In this case the suspects are asked to take oaths in the name of God to prove their innocence. It is believed that whoever offends the *halaale* or tries to deceive God will, sooner or later, receive God's retribution. In the case of bewitching, the whole community curses in the name of God the person responsible. Taking oaths in public and being publicly cursed by the community terrify every Sidaama. A guilty person already becomes psychologically affected, partly because of the overwhelming fear of God's retribution (see also Hamer, 1972: 237-238). Before allowing the suspect to take oaths, the relatives of the individual are asked to persuade him/her not to take oaths, if he/she is culpable. If one still maintains one's innocence, then one will take oaths in public. The public cursing is directed to anyone who may be responsible for bewitching his neighbour, and therefore, sufficient time is given for the responsible one to come forward and confess before the cursing. Another related way of resolving an issue for which no witness is found is to ask, as a last resort, a suspect to take an oath in front of the *moote* (looking in the eyes of the *moote*), for it is expected that whoever falsely makes oath in this manner will die (Betana, 1991: 141-142).

[31]Information for this paragraph comes from R9, R14.

9.B.5. Compromise (negotiated settlement) and Reconciliation

The goal of a *songo* is to achieve a compromise and consensus where it is required, and in the case of a conflict, to bring reconciliation (i.e., to restore harmonious relationship) among the conflicting parties, which in turn contributes to maintaining *cosmopneumanthropic keere*. In certain cases, the Sidaamas know that one can never satisfy fully both parties and bring harmony; hence, they aim at creating a compromise and achieving a negotiated settlement. Their discursive activities and conflict settlement aim at bringing a win-win position in which neither of the disputants claims victory or loss. Being rational (for the Sidaama) means being able to achieve a compromise (being realistic), which leads to reconciliation at the closure of a conflict. The Sidaamas believe that harmony can only be restored when one is rational and reconciled. "The procedure is always one of cajoling, encouraging, and scolding in a process of seeking out consensus or getting recalcitrant disputants to accept a compromise that will help to reconcile a previously broken relationship" (Hamer, 1994: 133).

Where the offender apologises for his offence and pleads for a reduction in a fine imposed on him, the mediating elders bargain for him and ask the victim and his family to receive a lower fine by saying: "Please, be merciful for the sake of me, for the sake of truth, and for the sake of God" (R11, R27). This is what Hamer terms "consensual pressure" (Hamer, 1998a: 151).[32] And the victim replies, "...For the sake of God, for the sake of *halaale*, and for your (the elder's) sake, I have forgiven" (cf., Hamer, 1998a: 141). Then the offender thanks him, and both are brought to be reconciled. This cultural value of generosity which the elders promote among the disputants has also been found relevant and practised in a modern context. Hamar has observed in one trade dispute how a modern Sidaama leadership resolved the problem by applying the cultural values of generosity and compromise with a win-win result. He concluded, "[b]alancing self-interest with affiliative obligations to the association appears to be more difficult in the trade than in any of the other dispute categories. [...] These are matters in which people have been the least willing to accept co-operative principles. Nonetheless, the committeemen emphasize subordination of self-interest to affiliative obligation in recommending generosity and compromise" (Hamer, 1980: 104).

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[32]Somewhere else, Hamer considers this bargaining role of the elder on behalf of the offender as an important Sidaama value of generosity that is expected from authority to promote and practice (cf., Hamer, 1980: 100, 104).

Nothing can be compared to killing a person as the factor that automatically leads to serious enmity and war within the Sidaama community. Consequently, the fines for a homicide case are overwhelming, and the process of reconciliation is very tedious and can even take a year (when the killer and the killed do not belong to the same family or sub-*ga're*) [R9]. The mediating elders call for tolerance amidst the radical stand and retaliatory mood of the family of a victim against the family of the killer. For a homicide case, mediating elders come from a third party, not from any of the conflict sub-*ga're* or *ga're*. When the family of the victim accepts the petitions and call of the elders to reconcile them, and when the issue concerns paying a fine, the victim's family naturally demands a very high compensation. The mediating elders bargain for the family of the killer and try to present the best possible compromise, and plead with the victim's family to accept. Reconciliation in the case of homicide involves creating one blood family of the killer and the victim families through rituals. If the two families belong to different *ga're* or the intermarrying sub-*ga're*, during the process of reconciliation, the killer family gives one of their daughters for marriage to the family of the killed; with her, it gives the family of the victim a big pregnant cow and a plot of land sufficient to help bring up the children whom the girl bears to the family of the victim. Once rituals of reconciliation are completed and the two families are reconciled, they stand for and protect each other as one family, and will never intermarry again, for this is now considered an incestuous act. The same process takes place when either a Sidaama or a neighbouring Oromo group (Arusi or Guji) kills the other. The *moote* of the two groups work to bring reconciliation; once reconciled the two families make a *gondooro* (covenant) with each other, and consequently become like blood family, ending potentially dangerous violent conflict. *Gondooro* is made with friends, relatives, villages, or enemies after reconciliation, so that they no longer harm each other.[33] It is also made with animals (e.g., offering food for hyena, leopard) so as to keep harmony with them and avoid troubles (Maccani, 1989: 123).

9.B.6. Intermarriage

The emphasis on inter-*ga're* marriage (strict exogamy for most of the *ga're* except Alatta, Haweela,

[33]Information for this paragraph comes from R4, R9, 10, R11, R12, R13, R14, R27.

Haadoo, and Awaado *ga're* who practice both endogamy [intra-*ga're* marriage] and exogamy) cements the unity of all the Sidaama *ga're*, for it creates a network of kinship. Such intermarriage or the creation of a common blood tie serves as a defence against any bloodshed among the Sidaamas. Hence, the killing of a Sidaama by a Sidaama is prohibited and considered as spilling the blood of one's own brother (Betana, 1991: 148). If it happens, the fines are overwhelming: not just the killer, but the whole extended families up to the fourth or fifth degree of affinity (i.e., the families that have a common ancestor going back to fourth or fifth generation) are punished; where the killer alone cannot afford to pay, they all join in paying the fines (compensation) to the victim's family, his elder maternal uncle and his elder sister. Such huge fines serve as a warning to anyone who would ever think of killing a Sidaama. In the case where both the killer and the killed belong to the same family or sub-*ga're*, the conflict is resolved very fast but no fines; rituals are performed and a sacrificial lamb is offered to God to prevent the same situation from happening again. At least the killer is made to support the victim's immediate family.[34] Unless accidental, killing of a woman (whether she is a Sidaama or from any other *gosa*) is alien to the Sidaama culture. Even when a person goes to a perceived enemy *gosa* in order to retaliate for his killed relative he does not touch a woman, otherwise he is shamed within his community, and will have no honour.

The common blood principle also leads every Sidaama to the conviction that any killing of a Sidaama by a non-Sidaama is an act against his/her brother/sister. From such a feeling results responsibility towards one another, and unity and solidarity among the Sidaama people. Intermarriage among the Sidaamas has created a stable and pacific community. The cultural value of intermarriage, i.e., marriage as creating kinship among the families of the couple and/or marriage as being a pact not just among the couple but also among their families, serves as an essential element in building a harmonious society.

[34]Information for this paragraph comes from R9, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14, R27.

9.B.7. Measures Where Elders Fail to Carry Out Their Duties

9B6.i. Public Shaming

Who sanctions the sanctioner? When an elder fails to protect, promote and respect *halaale*, when he acts with partiality, he is publicly admonished, shamed and humbled by others (Hamer, 1998a: 151). Hamer records a case of a *Luwa* leader who erred in upholding *halaale*. Other elders publicly taunted him saying, "How can a *Gadane*, a man of peace, tell a falsehood? You are denying the custom of our fathers" (ibid: 145-6).

9B6.ii. Women Intervention

In a more severe case that would involve inter-*ga're* or inter sub-*ga're* war, women effectively intervene. According to the Sidaama worldview, no distinction exists between body and soul in the understanding of the person. The body is a person, hence sacred. The idea of being rendered naked is a shameful act, touching human dignity, hence an offence to God and *halaale*. Since the Sidaama society is androcentric, public decisions and juridical issues are handled by men alone. Women do not participate in deliberations. However, if a serious conflict between two *ga're* starts, women's intervention in public serves as a powerful averting mechanism that forces the involved groups into reconciliation. In public where elders are gathered, women make their intervention by untying their belts and placing them in front of the elders. This symbolic act implies that they are made naked and they are now naked. By doing so, they place a total shame and a high level of moral guilt upon the elders of the warring parties for condoning such violence among the kin groups, and opting for war rather than reconciliation. They reproach them for failing to carry out their duty of protecting *halaale*, and for failing to bring a negotiated settlement (R9). Such a failure on the elders' part indicates that they are not sincere in their duties as elders.

For a Sidaama woman to stand naked in public is simply unthinkable. It is simply sufficient for a woman to say "*hanfala muroomma*" (literally, 'I have cut my belt', meaning 'I am naked') in front of elders without necessarily untying her belt (R9). Such a symbolic act by women or a woman

is the last or final act in an extreme case (which happens rarely), and effectively stops the conflict. Where elders fail to fear God and promote *halaale*, someone else, the women in this case, act as a powerful corrective measure.

In the internal family context, a husband physically punishes his wife in the Sidaama culture. There are some rules that prohibit a man to beat a woman in certain situations (e.g., a woman with a baby [delivered or undelivered]), and if it happens, through the leadership of *qaro* (the eldest woman), village women take very drastic action against the man, unless he pays a heavy fine the *qaro* demands. If he refuses to pay, women humiliate him in public doing every sort of thing, and do not let him free until he pays what is demanded by *qaro* for the victim woman — his wife (R6).

CONCLUSION

Such are the Sidaama mechanisms and methodologies (local social capital) that have been effective in the Sidaama tradition and which can also offer a lot of help — if recognised, empowered and utilised in cooperation with state structures— in transforming today's developing horizontal unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. In a non-dialogical top-down political system, they would help little in transforming the vertical asymmetric unpeaceful relations. A prolonged dictatorial or authoritarian system would lead such a peace culture into a violent one as it contributes towards alienation of the people from their positive local cultural values.

There is interest in the UN in protecting peace cultures and in transforming violent cultures into peace cultures through education (UNESCO, 1996). The elements that have been discussed in this chapter reveal that the Sidaama culture is a peace culture. It has been under pressure by parallel modern state institutions which — rather than working together in dialogue, building upon and using what is locally available— compete and aspire to destroy them. The imposed Amharic culture (which relegated non-Amharic cultures as pagan, uncivilised and backward), Western value-based Christianity (particularly the radical branch of protestantism that condemns anything cultural [local] as superstitious or pagan), modern and Western value-based education and culture: these have contributed toward the alienation of the young Sidaamas from their own cultural values. Those factors functioned in opposition to the Sidaama culture rather than in dialogue and transformative

inculturation.

Although the Sidaama cultural values and institutions are still found in rural areas, they have lost some of the vigour as they had two decades ago. The *Luwa* institution is almost dead among the post-1974 generation, practised only by the non-Christian and non-educated youth who are the minority. With it also comes the death of the institution of elderhood, leaving the young and alienated (from their culture) educated class in leadership position. Such a slow death of the two institutions are due to the communist government that was interested with homogenisation through Amharic culture (Amharicisation) and modern education, and the fast spread of non-inculturating Protestant Christianity in Sidaamaland. In reality, those values of the Sidaama that have been presented above are not as such opposed to either Christianity or modernity. One could modify, integrate them and build upon them for the benefit of the society without looking at them as backward pagan and uncivilised elements. It is the hope of this author that this study can make a contribution to the desire of the UN to promote peace cultures; and also that the Ethiopian younger generations (both Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas) can learn to appreciate their cultures, learn something from their country's precious cultural values from which they can draw inspiration on the values of leadership and peace and upon which they can build a national peace culture in Ethiopia.

We noted that the goal of the Sidaama elders in mediating every conflict in the community is to bring reconciliation, without which maintaining *keere* or positive peace becomes difficult. The same objective is present in all local cultures in Ethiopia. For a long time, the Western CR methodology has concentrated on bargaining and compromising. Only in recent times scholars in CR are paying attention to the importance of reconciliation. Reconciliation is about mending the broken relations and restoring harmony and friendship among the estranged (Assefa, 1993a: 8-16; 1993b; 1999: 37-45; Lederach, 1997: 23-35). In the social-oriented societies like the Sidaamas, every conflict-managing process is aimed at reconciling and restoring the relationship (cf., K. Boulding, 1962: 310-313). Therefore, the transformation of today's conflicts in Sidaamaland (and in Ethiopia in general) would benefit much by involving the aspect of reconciliation which is ingrained in the Sidaama culture. Keeping *keere* in the community is regarded by the Sidaamas as being in harmony with *Magano* (God) and ancestors, which in turn implies harmony with nature. Hence, reconciliation for the Sidaamas is also the *cosmopneumanthropic* reconciliation. Since the goal of conflict

resolution among Ethiopian cultural communities has been reconciliation, the latter is the concept and language that all groups in Sidaamaland understand.

> "Reconciliation is a process as well as a goal. It is the way in which each society chooses to bring together the concepts of truth, mercy and justice in the aftermath of violence. ... the full and active participation of the people who have been affected by the violence is crucial to the process of reconciliation and the establishment of peace. It is because all situations of violence and war are unique, each with their own complexities, that the journey towards reconciliation and peace will also need to be unique – each with its own complexities" (Fisher *et al* 2000: 132-133).

Whatever is perceived as 'traditional' has often been regarded by the modernist as backward and a hindrance for the advancement of a society. As the Sidaama methodologies and worldview reveal, not all the traditional elements oppose modernity. In fact, for the Sidaamas, the only central principles or values of all behaviours and human relations are the respect for *halaale* and the fear of God. It is on this basis that the Sidaama leadership as well as modern self-help organisations can understand the importance of maintaining balance between self-interest and affiliative responsibility, without which maintaining *keere* becomes difficult (cf., Hamer, 1980: 90, 104-106). The Sidaama is not opposed to modernity, but only to things that diminish *halaale* and the fear of God.

The aspects of negotiation, mediation, making compromise: these values, which dominate Western conflict management, are not new to the Sidaamas. However, some things are peculiar to the Sidaamas: first, mediators work as a group and not individuals. Secondly, elders are judges-mediators. In the Western context, the roles of mediators and judges are separate; but for the Sidaamas one person holds both offices. Until the *halaale* is discovered, the elders remain impartial; but once it is discovered, they pass judgement in favour of the offended. Where the offender accepts the wrongness of his actions and shows remorse, the judges show generosity towards him by either simply giving a warning (dependent on a situation) or bargaining for a much more reduced fine. The goal here is not about punishment, but the acceptance of guilt by the offender and then reconciliation. Even in a case study of modern self-help associations in Sidaamaland (with new association leadership [not cultural elders]), Hamer (1980) finds the prevalence of this traditionally combined role of judge-mediator (the mixture of authority and altruism) in the leadership. Such a combined role is not seen by the members of the self-interest based associations as an old irrelevant principle. Hamer states "that the Sadama [*sic*] do not accept, as do Westerners, that the roles must invariably be separate" (1980: 100). He notes further that the leadership of a modern self-help association among the

Sidaamas acquires its legitimacy in 'mixing altruism with authority', i.e., in the local cultural style (ibid.). Thirdly, things do not end just at the discovery of the culprit and imposing *seera*; the process of reconciliation takes over. The same elders who moderated, heard the cases and mediated, also become reconcilers. For them, conflict is resolved only after having reconciled those involved in conflict. Indeed it is by making 'reconciliation' as the goal of conflict management methodologies that the discipline of 'Conflict Resolution' can receive its legitimacy. One can only say that a conflict is resolved when the parties in that particular conflict are reconciled. Otherwise, the conflict is not resolved but reduced to a sort of latency or avoided from further escalation or spill-over. Fourthly, conflict resolution is a communal responsibility; hence, it is undertaken in public, involving all the parties. What touches an individual touches his family and community; hence, decisions and negotiations involve the whole community. Fifthly, in maintaining the agreement and peace in the community, the Sidaamas never use physical violence or violent coercive methods. Lastly, the Sidaama elders do not receive a salary for their role. They regard maintaining the well being of their people as their duty. They do not relate their elderhood position to gaining power and economic status. Their image is not tarnished by lust for money, bribery and corruption; they pursue *halaale* with integrity. They offer a model leadership.

Although Western societies claim the principle of democracy as their own peculiar element, democratic participation, federal and confederal structures were deeply ingrained in the Sidaama tradition before they came in contact with Western modernity. The only difference is that they did not name their structures as 'democratic', 'federal', and 'confederal'. Nevertheless, the Sidaamas (and most of the southern nations in Ethiopia) have found and practised for centuries the value of democratic participation as the powerful structural means of conflict 'provention', conflict management, and order in their society. This indicates that if Ethiopian society is decentralised and guaranteed fair and democratic participation of its groups, a stable multi-ethnic/national society can be built. The practice of electing someone for an office is not new for the people, since they have practised it for centuries within their local communities. This challenges the position of some people which maintains that the people are not mature for democracy.

The Sidaamas and their Oromo neighbours respect the dignity of the human person, for they understand it as sacred and belonging to God. They also respect nature, for they regard it as God's

property and gift to human persons. For the Sidaamas, human relations are sacred, and must be guided by *halaale* and the fear of God. Such ordering of their lives results from their local holistic worldview. In a conflict resolution situation, the process of reconciling the divided is ritualised. The ritual symbols that the Sidaamas used during the reconciliation process (e.g., bringing in God, slaughtering a sacrificial lamb, spraying its blood towards heaven, on earth, and on the people as a sign of cleansing the tainted relations and bringing reconciliation, making the divided as families of brothers and sisters, and then eating the meal together) made reconciliation more felt, meaningful, and long lasting.

There exist some practices that are in conflict with modern values. The elders take more time in discussing to achieve consensus; and it is a highly participatory activity. Since it is their duty to guarantee *keere* in their communities and making policies, they spend more time in rational discourse. The educated generation (with modern values) find themselves very impatient to such lengthy procedures in achieving consensus. The so called modernised (the urbanites) and the educated Sidaamas would find some symbols that the Sidaamas use in the process of reconciliation irrational and meaningless. Some would find repulsive slaughtering animals during the process of reconciliation and spraying blood. In most homicide cases in the Sidaama tradition, the conclusion of the reconciliation process includes a family from the killer giving one of their daughters to the family of the victim for marriage: first, with the intention that this girl will bear at least a child in the place of their lost one; and secondly, to make the two families one blood family. This giving of a daughter as part of compensation goes against a modern value of free consent between the daughter given in the marriage and the bridegroom. Since most of the population in Sidaamaland is Christian, some Christian rituals and symbols can be used meaningfully to replace some of those traditional rituals and symbols that the educated find meaningless. The unequal position of man and woman, the quasi-caste relation (in the area of rituals and marriage) between the artisan and non-artisan Sidaamas: these also pose problems, and need to be addressed. In the situation of *ola* (see p. 41 above), the symbol the women use in bringing peace (see pp. 312-313 above) may be too traditional for the young educated generation; but it does indicate, however, that if women are organised and empowered, they could become a formidable force for peace.

The Sidaamas and their neighbouring Guji and Arusi groups generally share the same

worldview, rituals and symbols. Although they have used these mechanisms, there have been periodic killings among the Sidaamas and the Arusi communities. Nevertheless, the mechanisms have prevented all-out war. The problem is mainly based on the territorial factor. The working together of the government with the cultural authorities (elders) of the two communities in drawing clear boundaries in the southern and eastern parts of Sidaamaland and in stopping age old periodic conflicts have ended the problem for good, leaving the two Oromo sub-nationals and the Sidaamas with the spirit of neighbourhood. This reveals that the government can greatly complement the local conflict resolution mechanisms by working together with the cultural institutions, empowering cultural authorities of the communities to resolve their problems and make common agreements, and reinforcing those agreements.

10. TOWARDS CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: A PROGRAMMATIC CONCLUSION

10.A. GENERAL CONCLUSION

Transformation of protracted social conflict (PSC) requires the knowledge of macro- and micro-contexts of unpeaceful relations, an in-depth analysis of the current conflict, and knowledge of the local 'social capital'. With a view to making a contribution to transforming conflicts in Ethiopia, the thesis aimed at offering a context-based study (a micro-analysis), with the objectives of providing knowledge of the contexts in which current conflicts in Sidaamaland of Ethiopia have developed, the micro-analysis of the current conflicts in Sidaamaland, and knowledge of the Sidaama cultural worldview and 'social capital.' Apart from the limitations the thesis has due to lack of access to government sources,[1] all in all, the aim has now been achieved.

The existing literature on conflicts in the Horn of Africa provides macro-analysis of conflicts in the region, and reveals macro-factors of conflicts ranging from colonial roots, non-democratic and exclusivist political structures marked by Centre-Periphery relations, the struggle for controlling scarce resources, economic underdevelopment and poverty, bad governance, arms proliferation, political elites' economic interests (e.g., war economy, famine politics tied with what de Waal calls the "humanitarian international" that ignores the political root cause of famine [de Waal, 1997; Duffield, 1990; Edkins, 2000; Keen, 1998]), international patron-client relations, to imposed and less contextualised (culturally, environmentally and politically) development policies (e.g., SAPs). The study in Parts II and III of this thesis reveals how those macro-factors of the Horn are in fact prevalent in Ethiopia, and are equally contributing factors in conflict protraction in micro-area like

[1]Why do certain practices of the government remain incongruent with the views, values and aims it proclaims in public (e.g., participation, democracy, rule of law, freedom of speech and of association, development, free and fair election, legitimate representation, protection of people's political and cultural rights, and so on)? Is it with intentions to serve the good of the country? Is it the 'greed' factor (personal or group economic and power interest as opposed to national interest) on the side of the political elites in power? Do the local government officials act in the way they do because of pressure from above (government hierarchy), their self-interest, or both? Since the researcher was unable to get the direct views of the local and regional government officials, answers to these questions remain hypothetical or are an interpretation based on observations, persistence of the practices, and continuous human rights abuses, and incongruence between what actually happens on the ground and what is stated by the officials in the media.

Sidaamaland.

In Part I (see pp. 40, 67-68, 76-79 above), it is indicated that conflict is dynamic. Where a particular conflict is not well managed, the conflict deepens and protracts. It always involves some sort of violence; it takes different shape and intensity at different socio-political and economic context; it expands or spills over into wider area of human relations. This is the case of unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. If a conflict is well managed, it terminates or is transformed, but giving rise to another conflict; and this is a natural process in human development. Every period or stage of development in social relation provides its own sources of conflict (some from the past, others new), and require its own context-sensitive conflict management. Some of the unresolved past issues that were not among the primary factors of the unpeaceful relations in the past (e.g., language and culture issue in Sidaamaland), whether they were overt or latent conflicts, appear in a new socio-political context as significant sources of unpeaceful relations. In other words, when the primary sources are resolved (e.g., land issue in Sidaamaland was addressed by the *derg*), many of the secondary ones tend to become primary in the new socio-political and economic context. New previously unknown issues can also arise (e.g., the increased demands and surplus extraction by the state itself after the removal of landlords). In addition, some of the unresolved primary sources or issues of conflicts of the past (e.g., the Sidaama quest for autonomy and equal democratic participation in the country's politics during the *derg*) will always continue holding significance in the protraction of conflicts. Every untreated grievance, however it is buried or covered up, will always surge as a root factor of future unpeaceful relations in which the party of grievance finds justification for its struggle. Such untreated past grievances protract and deepen the conflict (see pp. 73-74 above). Through them new issues of conflicts receive their meaning. People tend to read their current problems through the window of the outcome of past conflicts. All in all, conflict is dynamic and requires dynamic and context-based approach in managing them at every stage of development in human relations.

What has been said in the above paragraph is confirmed in the historical study in Part II and in the analysis of the current conflicts in Sidaamaland. Providing education during the time of Haile-Selassie produced more awareness among the Sidaama educated elites about their people's socio-political and economic status in the country, which contributed to their demand for modern jobs, democracy and change in social relations. Through land reform, the *derg* regime removed the land

tenure system that served as the principal source of conflict in rural areas like Sidaamaland during the imperial regime. The reform reduced horizontal conflict (Sidaama vs "Amhara"), but gave way to the escalation of vertical conflict: the state took the place of landlords, laying its own demands on the people. The demand for democratic participation was not addressed. The call for internal self-determination emerged as a new demand and a significant factor of conflict escalation. The EPRDF regime has granted autonomy for nationalities; but now, the Sidaamas demand to have their own *killil* status and freedom from undue interference of the central government in the Sidaama internal affairs. What this reveals is that Conflict Management itself is as dynamic as conflict. This leads one to ask: if the Sidaamas receive their own *killil*, will it end the protracted vertical social conflict? If this demand is refused, will it make social relations better or mitigate the protracted conflicts? This will be presented in terms of possible scenarios later on. Vertical unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland give no clear sign of termination, and Azar sees this as a characteristic of PSC. Nevertheless, as explained above (see pp. 67-68, 76-79) each period in the history of social development of a society has to find relevant solutions (conflict actions) for its own unpeaceful relations (whether vertical or horizontal), so that the sources of its own conflicts do not regress or affect negatively the process of transformation in human development.

According to the study in this thesis, the *sources of conflict* (conflict issues) in Sidaamaland are predominantly political-economic and social in nature. In the primary dimension of the unpeaceful relations, these sources include: the memory of the lost independence at the conquest that has been maintained mainly by political domination and subjugation of the Sidaamas (which is also the case for many conquered national/ethnic groups in Ethiopia), prolonged authoritarian political structures, ethnocracy/chorocracy, bad governance, context-insensitive policies, territorial (land) issues, absence of the rule of law, human rights abuse, bilateral mistrust between the government and the people, and economic underdevelopment. These have contributed to the creation and intensification of Sidaama nationalism (and many other nationalisms in the country) and the call for self-determination. Together with the above mentioned factors, the spill-over of vertical conflicts to horizontal ones, the absence of clear termination (e.g., the efforts made by the successive Ethiopian regimes by removing principal causes of grievances gave rise to other issues of concern), and the continuous appearance of intense

conflict moments and cooling-off periods in Sidaamaland reflect the characteristics of Azar's PSC (see 3A and 5C). Hence, Azar's theory of PSC generally portrays the nature of vertical (not horizontal) conflicts in Sidaamaland.

Economic development in Sidaamaland has been downward. The people who have never experienced food shortage in the past (apart from the politically created famine in the early 1940s as punishment for their resistance towards the imperial rule [see p. 141 above] and an affected small part of Sidaama lowland area during the 1985 drought) are now — in several areas in Sidaamaland — dependent on international food aid. The threat to their 'survival need' (e.g., basic necessities) is higher. Indeed poverty that has been exacerbated by drought and land shortage due to high density of population is a worrying factor of conflict escalation (see pp. 231 and 267-268 above). Poverty is a threat to conflict escalation within the following contexts: first, the policy of urban development dispossesses many farmers from their fertile land, and settles other rich and middle class people mostly from outside Sidaamaland. This policy takes place without provision of economic security (e.g., targeted industrialisation and creating employment) for those being uprooted from their ancestral or inheritance land. Even for the few who are employed as watchmen or gardeners, the salary given is very little and requires other means of income to survive a month. Secondly, the Sidaamas (and many other groups in the country) regard the government as the government of the TPLF and perceive that it is favouring more the development of their region by allocating more share of the country's budget (see p. 259 above). Whether the people of Tigray have benefited more from this perceived more budget allocation remains to be seen; for in reality they are living a no better situation than other peoples of Ethiopia. Thirdly, the Sidaamas regard the local EPRDF officials as illegitimate representatives, self-interested and instruments of the government to oppress them and deny their grievances. They feel they have been prevented from having a say on their natural resources and are alienated from their constitutional and political rights. Their political aspiration for internal autonomy (a regional status) continues deepening. Fourthly, the Sidaama educated class (especially the excluded intelligentsia both within and outside Sidaamaland) and opposition political parties blame the government for the economic underdevelopment and hardship of the Sidaama people.

In short, the Sidaamas still complain that they do not find equal socio-political and economic

participation in the country; for them, their human development needs are not met. They maintain that they can only achieve peace and development when they have, first, their own *killil* status; and then allowed to elect freely individuals that they want to represent them (in local, national and federal governments), handle their own internal affairs without undue state intervention, make their own developmental policies, and are allowed to have full democratic participation.[2] It is within the above mentioned overall contexts that poverty in Sidaamaland can contribute towards conflict escalation. Outside the threat to territorial and land security, outside the fear of political-economic domination, and in a situation of fair economic resources distribution, poverty *per se* would not become a factor of conflict escalation, but rather it would be seen (at least by the majority) as a consequence of drought and not of the government.

Ethiopian politics has been intimately linked to controlling economic resources. The ruling class at all levels appears to be very concerned with guaranteeing its survival and easy and unquestioned access to economic resources. This has created a favourable environment for conflict escalation and protraction. The centralised authoritarian approach of the state-government appears to hinder the creation and well functioning of legitimate channels or infrastructures of dialogue and participation.

> "The absence of legitimised structures and policies, along with increasing inequalities of income and opportunity, serves as the primary source of conflict. Once basic assumptions about the traditional concepts of law and order as the common good are questioned, the right of the government to rule and to expect obedience is at the root of the conflict. The articulation of collective need for dignity and purpose cannot be suppressed any longer by elite control and threat" (Ho-Won Jeong, 2000: 34; cf., Burton, 1990).

Primary dimension of the unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland denotes vertical conflict (see p. 45 above), involving the Sidaamas versus the government (see the contenders [conflict parties] in pp. 175-187, 194 above). It is manifested in the Sidaama nationalism. The analysis of conflict in Part III indicates that the fear factor underlies the Sidaama nationalism and persistent call for self-determination. Their call for equal socio-cultural and political status within the country and recognition of their socio-political and cultural identity indicate the fear of being dominated and ruled by historical 'others'. Their deepening aspiration to control their resources for their developmental

[2]This is taken from the responses to the questionnaire (Q7 in particular), the interviews and informal interactions.

needs also indicates not only the currently deepening poverty among the Sidaama population, but also the perceived unfair distribution of national and federal budget, fear of losing parts of their land (vital economic resource) and territorial integrity. Natal soil and territory is not only an issue of economic need, but also one of the principal markers of the Sidaama identity (see p. 57 above). Although they have not raised the land issue as an important source of conflict during the research — mainly due to the fresh experience of the massacre of their people by security forces on 24 May 2002 and the anger and frustration resulting from it — land insecurity serves as an important element underlying the call for self-determination.

The Awaasa (regional capital) problem is intimately tied to the Sidaama fear of losing their territorial integrity and fear of being dominated politically within Sidaamaland. Whatever the country's constitution says about land, deep down, the Sidaamas do not recognise the government's landownership claim. When there has not been eviction of the Sidaamas from their land, and no other non-Sidaama people has been settled by force by the government in Sidaamaland, the Sidaamas have remained quiet and appeared supportive of the government policies on land. For them, Sidaamaland is theirs, not the government's. One may think, therefore, that land privatisation would be a solution to land issues in Sidaamaland. However, it should be noted that the Sidaama land tenure system is communitarian within which every individual is given a property right to keep his piece of land; male children have inheritance right (Stanley, 1966: 221). If the inheritance plot is not sufficient, the community allocates a piece of communal land to the needy. However, the land being a communal property, a Sidaama, would not be allowed to sell it,[3] although he could lease it or allow someone to use it freely. In any case, the territorial blood-letting conflict between the Sidaamas and Wolaitas (the groups that had no history of conflict among themselves before) and the urban development policy in Awaasa have revealed how serious the land issue can be. *Hence, from the Sidaama point of view, land and territorial security, protection of the Sidaama identity, freedom from political-economic domination, and economic development: these are fundamental needs that appear less*

[3]The researcher has been informed that in recent years, some individuals have sold parts of their plots of land for the sake of paying education expenses for their children, and some because of the desire to migrate to more productive areas. Nevertheless, the buyers have been the locals themselves and not other non-Sidaama peoples. Even if selling land indicates a sort of wind of slow change creeping into the Sidaama worldview, the fact of selling and buying itself defies the government ownership claim and indicates the Sidaama belief that they own the land.

negotiable (cf., Azar, 1990: 2, 7-10). These factors, therefore, need to be addressed in the process of transforming unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland. At the heart, the call for self-determination arises mainly from those elements and not from 'ethnic hatred' or intolerance towards other communities. Moreover, there seems to be no grain of trust for the government in the hearts of the Sidaamas; hence, whatever promises the government makes effects little change in the Sidaama position with regard to their political aspiration. If Sidaamaland appears quiet at the moment, it is simply because of the state suppression and waiting for an opportune moment, and not because the Sidaamas have changed their mind or have accepted the government directive. As Azar (1990: 14-15) notes, the peace that is maintained simply by winning war or coercion is not peace, but a factor of prolonging and deepening conflicts, and of expanding their horizons.

As indicated in the analysis (Part III), the ruling class too has its fears in maintaining the rule of law and allowing dialogue with the Sidaama people: fear of losing political power (regime security) and control over the people in the SNNPR (e.g., the rise of ethnonationalisms, demand for autonomy by many groups of the region) and the resulting instability, and maybe fear of losing control over economic resources (see pp. 205-207 and 247 above). These appear to be the fundamental needs of those in power. While the need for stability and economic interest of the ruling elites may be negotiated with the Sidaama people (if the government is interested to follow this route), their need for regime security does pose a serious challenge to a negotiated settlement and building positive peace. Such a need interferes with building a participatory democracy, the rule of law and good governance in the country; hence, it affects economic development and maintains conflicts. The need for regime security gives way to dictatorship, and often tends to clash with the need for people security. The successive Ethiopian rulers have failed thus far to resolve the challenge of reconciling the two needs; maybe they are irreconcilable outside the rule of law, good governance, and participatory democracy.

The government could negotiate in several areas with the Sidaamas: it could resolve the border issue without delay through collaborating with the concerned groups (e.g., the elders of the Sidaamas and Wolaitas living at the border areas). After all, these two communities had always lived in harmony until the unilateral border setting by those in power. In other words, since the Sidaama-Wolaita conflict is a recent issue (i.e., no historical roots that can make the conflict harder), if a

relevant approach is taken, it could be transformed fast. The government could allow a decentralised and participatory method of policy-making which would be equally sensitive to local needs and not just its own needs alone. Even if the local government officials are illegitimate, the government could allow the officials to be accountable to the people, and create structures of collaboration with the people. The government could give a fair budget allocation. These can greatly contribute towards conflict transformation. Within this context, the needs of the Sidaamas are not necessarily incompatible with the needs of the government (e.g., maintaining power by the current ruling Party).

Within Sidaamaland (at the level of the zone), the government can keep its power while providing the above mentioned elements. At the level of the region (SNNPR), however, reconciling the Sidaama needs and the regime-security need of the government requires much more efforts. First, both the regional and federal governments need to do a lot to build mutual trust between them and the Sidaama people. When the government keeps and promotes officials who lack positive image and relation with the people they claim to represent, it appears that the government's primary concern is loyalty to the ruling party at the expense of gaining respect and legitimacy from the people. It also galvanises the perception of the Sidaamas of not having equitable participation in the government institutions, for those participating Sidaama individuals are considered as simply the instruments of the chorocratic/ethnocratic government to dominate them. The government could change this image by embracing able and educated individuals who are constructively critical (which is in the end for the betterment or good image of the party), and who could combine their concern to the well being of the people they serve or represent with their loyalty to the party. Sidaamaland does not lack such individuals. These individuals could build a good image of the government through good governance (e.g., promoting the rule of law, delivering goods effectively and efficiently, showing openness and accountability to the people), and creating a genuine relation (i.e., non-politicised) with respectable community elders who could help greatly in building and promoting peace and understanding within their area of influence, and also in the effective and efficient implementation of relevant developmental programmes which elders normally support. Such officials are also well placed to listen to the fears and grievances of their people and negotiate with the people on behalf of the government. Being well connected with others from educated class, they could also draw many disillusioned intelligentsia towards participation in developmental activities.

Secondly, the Sidaamas express fear with regard to urban policy (pp. 221-223, 225-226). They fear that they will have little say in urban centres in Sidaamaland; that the security of their land will be compromised as the urban centres grow; that they will be dominated politically and economically in urban areas; and that their chance to share the opportunities and employment benefits the urban centres bring will be lesser than their non-Sidaama counterparts. If not addressed properly, this fear can become an obstacle to the integration of the peoples in Sidaamaland and beyond and contributes to conflict escalation. However, it can be transformed through negotiation between the Sidaamas, the non-Sidaamas, and the government. The negotiated settlement will become even more effective if those representing the groups are not hand-picked by those in power, but chosen by the communities as their legitimate representatives. Such an approach can help to transform positively the negative image the Sidaamas have towards the government: that it is an instrument of subjugation or oppression of the Sidaamas for the political-economic interests of the elites (who control power) and the urbanites who are mostly non-Sidaamas.

The urban policy dispossesses (forcibly) local Sidaama peasant farmers from their ancestral or inheritance land for the 'development of the city'. This land is given to the middle-class and those with means to invest, coming from everywhere in the country and even from outside the country. This is a logical outcome in the development of urban centres anywhere in the world. Urban development brings more opportunities for employments and other economic benefits. If, for example, the Sidaamas want Awaasa to develop and remain the regional capital, the dispossession of local people from the land is a consequence that they have to carry. Otherwise, the regional centre has to go somewhere else in the region, and then the Sidaamas will lose the economic benefits (e.g., the market and much of economic development activities that increase chances for employment) the centre offers and its geographical closeness to them. Other issues should also come into consideration: on the one hand, the Sidaamas should be able to recognize that other people from poor and underdeveloped zonal capitals and other urban centres with huge unemployment do naturally come to their regional capital city to share equally the advantages and opportunities the city offers. Moreover, if the SNNP regional centre is found outside the Sidaama zone, will the Sidaamas not go to the regional centre (incurring more financial expense) to seek employment and better life? Given the population rise in Sidaamaland, the Sidaamas too may need to go to different regional centres in

search of employment, better life or because of better job offer. They will expect the constitutional right of every Ethiopian to settle and live anywhere in the country, to be respected, and to receive plots of land to build their houses. The Sidaamas, therefore, need to consider these points and place them in a broader context. Their interests may well be maximised more by balancing the local with the regional and federal contexts. On the other hand, given the history that has disadvantaged the Sidaamas with regard to urban settlement, what needs to be looked at is the setting of negotiated and agreed structures of accommodation of all involved parties which can help to mitigate the Sidaama fear in the urban development activities.

Thirdly, for the policies that are made and implemented in Sidaamaland, the policy-makers and their advisors have a great significance. In the issues that concern Sidaamaland, do the advisors come from legitimate representatives of the communities in the zone? The Sidaamas (according to some Sidaama informants during informal interaction) see the non-Sidaama advisors and policy-makers with suspicion and as individuals with less understanding of the Sidaama situation, and whose policies favour more the non-Sidaama interests. For example, the urban development policy, as explained before (see pp. 218-223 above), takes no account of the contextual differences and needs of the regions and zones. The participation of legitimate representatives of the Sidaama zone may contribute towards making policies more attune to the local needs and sensibilities and may gain acceptance among the Sidaamas. Such an approach may also produce similar effects in other parts of Ethiopia and may open a speedy way of bringing development in the country with the potential of minimising conflicts.

Horizontal unpeaceful relations (inter-communal conflicts) in Sidaamaland have mainly emerged (save traditional and intra-Sidaama cultural conflicts) as a consequence of the vertical one. When two parties (primary parties) are in conflict, the conflict actions that take place between them affect the minorities (secondary parties to the conflict [see p. 71 above]) living in the same geographical area.[4] The outcome of the Sidaama–State (primary parties) conflicts touches the life and interests of the non-Sidaamas living in Sidaamaland. Hence, the fears of the non-Sidaamas involve: losing traditional advantages in the area of business, employment, and politics; being

[4]For conflict parties in Sidaamaland, see the conflict-map on p. 194.

dominated by the Sidaamas; and unequal share of political power and economic resources. Their fundamental needs are, therefore, political and economic security. If there exist proper avenues (social infrastructure) for dialogue between the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas, these needs can be negotiated. The current constitutions of the SNPPR and the country themselves provide legal provisions for regulating conflicts arising from such needs among the communities.

With regard to traditional sporadic violent conflicts between the Sidaamas and their neighbouring Oromo groups, the underlying source pertains to land security. Generally, the drawing of territorial boundaries on the basis of agreements between the two communities have thus far brought peace and a good neighbourly attitude. However, in the areas where the boundary has not been clearly defined (e.g., areas to the north of Sidaamaland), the traditional sporadic violence still continues. The boundary can be negotiated among the two communities if the regional governments work together with the local elders of the two communities as they did successfully with the areas to the east and south of Sidaamaland. The territorial boundary problem between the Sidaama and Wolaita is recent and remains unresolved. The problem remains by the fact that the boundary lines are drawn solely by the ruling elites. The government may need to work in collaboration with the local elders and inhabitants of the two communities to draw their territorial boundaries.

There exist also intra-Sidaama cultural unpeaceful relations between the artisan and the non-artisan Sidaamas. The latter has traditionally excluded the former from intermarriage and full participation in communal ritual activities (see pp. 240-241 above). The non-negotiable needs of the artisan Sidaamas involve the full recognition and respect of their equal human dignity and rights, and the acknowledgement and appreciation of their indispensable profession in and contributions to the Sidaama well being. The non-artisan Sidaamas have no justifiable claim to hangover in maintaining this quasi-caste system, which is already an embarrassing element for most of the educated Sidaamas. In any case, this system has value only among the non-educated elder generation. The younger educated Sidaamas and the Sidaama political parties have less sympathy for the quasi-caste system. They are very much concerned with maintaining the Sidaama unity and abolishing all that divide them. More than three-quarters of the Sidaamas are Christians. Since Christianity does not condone such a discriminatory social system, it also serves as a conflict mitigating factor. Through education, religion and time factors, the quasi-caste system in Sidaamaland is slowly diminishing and dying;

hence, it appears as a non-threatening element of conflict escalation. At one moment, there had been intra-elite conflicts brought by the local members of the ruling party. It came through the practice of nepotism among some officials. The Sidaama elders and most of the educated Sidaamas who were more concerned in maintaining the Sidaama unity condemned such a practice, and it appeared to be a less worrying factor. A more firm action is needed to eradicate it.

From the perspective of *conflict-action*, the Sidaamas have expressed themselves both in violent (e.g., armed liberation movement and fronts) and non-violent ways (seeking legal means, peaceful protest march). The government responded to both actions with violent suppression. The legal means have not been operative except maybe during the period of 1955-1974. The state-government's measure against the Sidaama grievances has contributed to the steady growth of the Sidaama nationalism. Some policies during the three regimes (Haile-Selassie [provision of modern education, modern law], the *derg* [distribution of land, equal education and health opportunities, equal treatment of the people], and the EPRDF [identity-sensitive constitutional and federal democratic structures, equal educational and health opportunities]) have resolved some of the grievances and principal conflict-producing factors of the time, but giving way to other new factors of conflicts as indicated above (see chapters 4, 5, and pp. 319-321). If placed on a comparative frame, there has been a progressive development towards a positive direction on the Sidaama socio-political position since the 1950s, although conflicts have continued — again highlighting the dynamic nature of conflict. As seen in Part II, from the conquest to 1935 and the 1940s, the Sidaama social and political position was the worst; during the Italian occupation (1935-1940) and from 1950 to 1974, somewhat better; during the *derg*, improved; and with the EPRDF, better than the *derg*. However, as chapters 7 and 8 reveal, the Sidaamas still find themselves in the underdog position in that they feel that they are prevented — by the government which favours centralised policy-making — from formulating their own developmental policies in response to their developmental needs. They partly blame the government for the current experience of poverty in Sidaamaland. They also feel victimised (culturally, politically and economically) by the centrally constructed 'one-size-fits-all' type policy of urban development

(see pp. 221-222 above).[5] Politically, they maintain that they are treated as unequals, i.e., they are prevented from having a fair and genuine representation, since they cannot elect their own representatives (the May 2005 election serves as a good example [see p. 204 above]).

Salih notes that "where land is more than an individual property, the struggle over land often takes the form of liberation struggles, insurgency and social movements" (Salih, 2001: 56). Land for the Sidaamas has a sacred value, and belongs to the community (see pp. 125-127 above). Territory (homeland or natal soil) is one of the principal marks of the Sidaama identity (see p. 57 above). The threat to it by state appropriation and use for private and state projects during the successive regimes has contributed its share to the Sidaama insurgency and ever deepening nationalism, calling for autonomy. Today, the urban development and resettlement policies sustain the Sidaama fear of losing territorial integrity, making the call for *killil* status a fundamental quest. The call for independence among some individuals is a new development which, if relevant ways of resolving grievances do not replace violent and repressive methods, can be an indication of the future direction of the conflict-expansion as the ethnonationalism deepens.

It should be noted, however, that — even if the Sidaama nationalism has continuously deepened — the policies that have removed certain conflict dynamics during the successive regimes (e.g., land distribution, education, national question [even if the Sidaamas feel that it is not fully addressed]) have moderated the Sidaama demand. Except for some elements like the SNLO (a post-1998 phenomenon), unlike the pre-1950s, generally the Sidaama people are not rejecting their unity with Ethiopia. Apart from the SLF and SNLO, generally the people are not basing their political aspiration on their pre-1893 independence; they are not asking for secession. This can only be attributed to those positive efforts made to integrate them as Ethiopian citizens and address some of their grievances by the successive regimes.

Placed on the diagram of the "existential process of human development" (see 3C4, pp. 76-79 above), from the time of the conquest, the *outcome* of conflicts and conflict actions in Sidaamaland is less conclusive. Certainly in some areas, it has moved in the positive direction (e.g., the old ethnocentric

[5]One needs to note that the government is partly under pressure from donor governments and agencies to implement liberal economic policies and show tangible results, which can partly explain its top-down approach.

approach of the "Amhara" (i.e., the political Amhara, not the ethnic one) was abolished; people even began intermarrying, and the sense of belonging as Ethiopians was somehow achieved). Horizontal relations developed in a positive direction (especially during the *derg* period). But on the level of nationalism, the conflict is deteriorating and, in fact, even destroying the neighbourhood attitude that has been developed in the horizontal relations until 1993. From this perspective, the vertical and horizontal relations have regressed. Since the conquest and bringing of the Sidaama into the modern Ethiopian political sphere (1893), there has not been a period (save the early period of the *derg* [1975-1978] and of the current government [1991-1993]) during which the Sidaama vs State unpeaceful relations have abated. This vertical conflict falls in Azar's PSC (see pp. 61-66, 164-166 above), the theory which offers insight to why conflicts in Sidaamaland — despite some positive changes during the second Haile-Selassie rule, the *derg* and EPRDF regimes — continue and do not attenuate. According to Azar (see pp. 62-64 above), conflicts protract because of non-integrated social and political systems which produce insecurity and distributive injustice, and inability/unwillingness to satisfy necessary requirements (e.g., freedom, security, identity, recognition and participation) for human (individual and social) development. These factors are all present in Sidaamaland/Ethiopia as the study in this thesis has shown. The denial of these needs causes social cleavages which, in a multi-ethnic/national society, often rotate around communal identity (IA, 1996, chapter 2: 11), e.g., the Sidaama nationalism.

The unpeaceful relations of the primary dimension in Sidaamaland (see 6A1 [pp. 175-187] and 7A1 [pp. 196-232]) take more responsibility for those of the secondary dimension (except in most cases the traditional and intra-Sidaama cultural conflicts [see pp. 241-242, 243-244 above]). As long as the former are not transformed or resolved, the latter will persist; they will gradually move through different stages of escalation (see p. 75 above) to violent conflict actions, which will in turn lead to protracted horizontal unpeaceful relations. *The principal challenge in transforming the PSC in Sidaamaland today is how to reconcile the need for regime security with the people's need for security*. Failure to find appropriate or consensual solution to this will deepen the vertical unpeaceful relation, and will even lead to the politics of secession. If the vertical conflict spills over the horizontal relations and when the latter arrives at the violent stage of conflict escalation, it will become more complicated to handle. The conflicts in the primary dimension are asymmetric.

Combining all the field research data (from questionnaire, interviews, informal interactions and observations) and taking into account the historical background, one can summarise the *sources of conflicts*, the main conflict issue as presented by the Sidaamas and *the outcomes* (conflict actions and changes) of the unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland through the analogy of "conflict tree" (see p. 79 above). Accordingly, the *roots* are: the legacy of an unintegrated or superficially integrated social base after the conquest, socio-political and cultural inequality, bad governance, the threat to cultural identity, economic insecurity and inequality, the chorocratic/ethnocratic authoritarian system, centralised policies, and land or territorial insecurity. Underlying these is the fear of being dominated socio-culturally, politically and economically. Currently, the quest for internal self-determination (regional status) serves as the *stem*, for it is the central key issue or demand of the Sidaamas today. In this political aspiration, they see their identity, economic and territorial security as well as a sense of achieving equal political status or fair political representation in the country's political power. The *branches* are: conflict actions (non violent actions [appeals, peaceful demonstrations], violent actions [armed movement, state repression through killing, imprisoning without trial, torture, intimidation, continuous removal of the Sidaama zonal chairmen, other human rights abuses]), unfree and unfair elections, frustration, attitudes/stereotypes/prejudices, and horizontal unpeaceful relations.

What are the prospects of the conflicts in Sidaamaland?

The key issue that the Sidaamas demand at the moment is self-governing regional status. The following elements are intimately associated to this demand: quality governance (including rule of law, fair distribution of federal, national and local resources), and democratic participation (including allowing the people to choose individuals that they want to represent and administer them). They see regional status as a guarantee to their territorial integrity and preservation of cultural and linguistic identity (to which they see their belonging to the SNNPR as a serious threat), and to avoiding political and economic domination or control by the non-Sidaamas within Sidaamaland (see pp. 197, 225-226 above). From what the Sidaamas argue in this work, it would appear that the PSC in Sidaamaland can be transformed if those demands are met. If implemented, the current Ethiopian constitutional provisions have the potential for regulating many, if not most, of the conflicts in

Sidaamaland. Other federal/national/local peace dynamics (see chapter 9) can greatly contribute towards the transformation of conflicts, and prevent the escalation of horizontal conflicts. However, since conflict is dynamic, new sources of conflicts are more likely to appear. The need for regime security and a failure to find a negotiated settlement on urban development policy (especially Awaasa status) may serve as obstacles in transforming current unpeaceful relations in Sidaamaland.

Currently the Sidaama-Wolaita relation is unpeaceful, and caused by three factors: territorial demarcation that the Sidaamas reject as the sole work of the then regional head of the state who was a Wolaita, the Awaasa issue, and regional power rivalry. These three issues need to be resolved: first, territorial conflict can be resolved if decisions are made on the basis of the agreement which involves not only the government but also the affected local people of the two communities. The Sidaamas and Wolaitas at the border area have lived for a long time peacefully and understanding each other; they had common understanding on how to use the border area. The regional government needs to work with the people and involve them in the territorial decision. This approach has worked effectively in the Sidaama-Guji territorial conflicts. Secondly, according to the research data (see p. 190 above), the Wolaitas in Awaasa take a front role in the conflict over Awaasa, or they appear to be the most vocal. In any case, the Wolaita grievance represents the grievance of other southern peoples. Since Awaasa is the regional centre, they would like to have equal share of the opportunities it offers. Much is said on this above (see pp. 327-328) and does not need repetition here. Negotiation and agreed structure of accommodation is necessary to handle the Awaasa case. Another option to manage Awaasa problem is to move the regional centre to another place in the SNNPR. However, it is likely that the same problem will appear between the host identity group and the rest. It will also encourage more the Sidaama aspiration and call for its own *killil* status, since the regional government's ability to control the Sidaama political activities will be reduced. Thirdly, so long as there are no freely elected officials in power in the SNNPR, and no freely agreed criteria of representation by the constituent groups of the region, the power struggle over who controls the region remains an obstacle in transforming conflicts between the non-Sidaamas (among whom Wolaitas appear to be the majority in Awaasa) and the Sidaamas.

In the creation, protraction and management of conflicts, cultural worldview and values have their

own contributions. It is important, therefore, to know local social capital both in its helpful and unhelpful aspects in conflict transformation. On the one hand, for example, the Sidaamas (and also many groups in southern Ethiopia) partly being egalitarian society value and understand more dialogue and negotiation than unilateral or top-down approach in handling their differences or conflicts (cf., chapter nine above). They understand and value more democratic and participatory way of dealing with issues than authoritarianism. A Sidaama elder draws his authority by being credible, i.e., guaranteeing *halaale*, defending the weak, and living according to the values the community expect; he is accountable to the community. Today, such credibility appears lacking from local political party leaders, because they rule with power (coercion) rather than authority; corruption and mismanagement are prevalent. There seems to be, therefore, a sort of culture clash in the way of doing things which contributes to conflict protraction in Sidaamaland and the SNNPR. On the other hand, certain traditional social relations (e.g., androcentrism, caste and quasi-caste systems in the SNNPR) maintain injustice; hence internal protracted unpeaceful relations.

The Sidaamas understand *halaale* (truth and fairness) as a fundamental element in any negotiated settlement, and this makes them open to any dialogue and negotiation. Their *cosmopneumanthropic* worldview (at least for the rural Sidaama) impinges on them the spirit of maintaining *keere*, which according to them can only exist in the presence of *halaale* and fear of God (see chapter nine above). Without these, they believe that they will lack divine blessing and protection.[6] Therefore, their worldview promotes the spirit of dialogue, moderation, cooperation and coexistence. Democratic participation, dialogue, value of authority, rule of law, rights and duties, mediated negotiation and reconciliation, value of living in harmony or cooperation: these elements are interior to the Sidaama culture (and most groups in southern Ethiopia), and are not models to be imported from outside. If interested, the government or anyone involved in managing conflicts (especially the horizontal ones) has only to tap from and build upon them in collaboration with the communities involved. They are powerful elements in 'conflict transformation' and 'conflict provention'. They are models of conflict management that can be found in different forms among identity groups in Ethiopia and outside Ethiopia, and also in a global arena. In relation to vertical

[6]Ethiopian society, being religious, values fear of God and fairness; hence these are cross-cultural values, and could be exploited for the benefit of building and maintaining horizontal peace.

conflicts, local social capital is helpful only in so far as the government wants to involve the people in the promotion of horizontal peace and cooperation among communal groups and in developmental activities.

Cultural values, methods and mechanisms in handling conflicts carry importance on three points: first, one can take a society as a body (a macro level), where the health of each constitutive part or organ of a body (a micro level) contributes to the health of the body as a whole. Internally divided society can be likened to a body with affected different organs. A micro area may have its own contextual problems which need an approach relevant to its context, like each of the affected parts of a body needs a treatment specific to it. Here, local values and authorities can have their contribution in treating such an area-based social problem. Secondly, one of the problems in a PSC includes political factions within a community or other intracommunal conflicts. Within the context of the SNNPR, cultural authorities, values and mechanisms are important elements in handling such conflicts, for they are still functional in rural areas where at least 90% of the region's population lives. Thirdly, in line with Lederach (1995), in a multiethnic/national setting and where a PSC exists, the knowledge of each group's cultural authorities, values, worldview and mechanisms in handling the conflict is essential, for it helps to build (through training and facilitation) by the involved groups an 'elicitive' or hybridised model that responds to their context. This involves the rural people and the so called modernised ones (urbanised and educated in Western education) who no longer rely on local models but for whom the modern Western models too do not seem to fulfil their needs (Lederach, 1995: 109-115). An inventory of local methods and mechanisms in managing conflict of the involved groups can be gained. In building a new common model, the groups can integrate all similar values, methodologies and mechanisms that are common to all of them, modify some others to suit their new context, put aside those elements that are unhelpful and add more elements that the groups see as helpful.

The PSC in Sidaamaland is not at equal level to that of Middle East or Sri Lanka where not only political parties (armed or non-armed) but also the communities they represent are involved in violent expressions, hatred and mistrust of each other. Their cultural authorities and mechanisms appear less functional. In the Sidaamaland case, although there exists animosity among the urban groups and their conflict is at the discussion stage of escalation, intercommunal conflicts have not

reached to the point of intercommunal hatred and violence. However, misperception and prejudices are growing due to bad governance and lack of avenues for open dialogue and sharing the fears and grievances of each other. The absence of avenues for dialogue need to be addressed, for the longer it delays the more the conflict escalates, leading to intercommunal hatred and violence.

The protracted vertical conflicts (e.g., in Sidaamaland, Oromia, Ogaden) greatly contribute towards intercommunal animosities. The transformation of a vertical conflict is highly dependent on the willingness of the primary parties to achieve a negotiated settlement. In the asymmetric conflict situation, the willingness of the one enjoying asymmetric power to end the conflict (not with military might or intimidation but through genuine negotiation, political accommodation, and good governance) creates a better environment for transforming it and preventing it from spilling over to horizontal level. Where a government holds asymmetric power and is less willing to resolve the situation in a more transformative way, it is necessary to promote grassroots peace movements which help to prevent intercommunal and intracommunal conflict escalation. Local social capital of the communities (e.g., cultural values, methodologies and authorities, local religious organisations and institutions, academics) and NGOs play essential role in these grassroots movements. When at the grass roots level communities are conscientised and mobilised, when they are united in values, vision and understanding their situation, they become a formidable force for change and will balance the existing power asymmetry (Curle, 1971; Lederach, 1995, 1997; Francis, 2002), thus forcing the asymmetric power holder into negotiation.

The focus of this thesis is what and why the current conflicts in Sidaamaland are, and what chances exist to transform them. Since the Sidaamas see internal self-determination as a principal solution to their problems, it is time now to consider its pros and cons in terms of the best and worst case scenarios. While considering these, the reader may keep in mind the fact that every stage in human development produces its own conflicts (some may have its roots in the past). When a state of conflict is transformed, the transformed state will have its own situational or contextual conflicts (see pp. 76-79; 319-320). In other words, even if Sidaamaland becomes a *killil*, new situational conflicts will emerge, requiring new solutions. For example, becoming a *killil* will not alter socio-economic migration in Ethiopia, and Sidaamaland will always have migrants from other regions in the country.

Other internal conflicts will also emerge, and all these will have to find their own solutions. Returning to the point, if the Sidaama quest for its own regional status is granted, what will be the consequences? Will the current vertical and horizontal conflicts be transformed? The following are the possible scenarios.

i) In the best case scenario:

a) horizontal conflicts will end, but this will depend on the type of structural arrangement and quality of governance. For sure, other peoples from outside Sidaamaland will not lay claim on Awaasa; hence, the fear of the Sidaamas of being politically and economically dominated and controlled by others within their own territory will end; their territorial security may also be guaranteed. If proper and contextually relevant structures are provided to guarantee fair participation or representation of the inhabitants of Sidaamaland in socio-political and economic spheres, horizontal conflicts will be transformed; if empowered and supported by the government, the cultural and religious authorities can also greatly contribute in mediating internal unpeaceful relations and building peace. From economic point of view, however, some people argue that the Sidaamas may be in a less advantaged position. For them, the Sidaamas may benefit economically more by remaining part of the SNNPR than staying separately. The SNNPR has more population, hence more consumers and also politically more voice at the federal level. During a challenging economic competition period in the country, a united SNNPR is more able to stand the challenge in the face of other more populated and able regions in the country, which the Sidaamas alone may not. Since the regional capital is within Sidaamaland, the Sidaama farmers may also have more favourable environment in marketing their produce. The educated may have more job opportunities, for they can be employed anywhere within the SNNPR, depending on their profession.

b) vertical conflicts will be transformed, enhancing the co-operation between the government and the Sidaamas. This can happen if the following factors are present: the rule of law, legitimate officials in the government (i.e., free and fair elections), people's participation in decision-making and policies that concern them, and fair distribution of economic resources. Even if these factors are not present, at least the sense of territorial security the Sidaamas get and Awaasa being in the hands of the Sidaama does help in controlling vertical conflict escalation at least for some years to come.

c) more political and economic stability: this is dependent on the rule of law, provision and well functioning of laws governing economic transactions, allowing people to demand accountability from its officials, allowing substantial amounts of money to be channelled directly to the people through its civil organisations. This also brings more possibility for economic development, and promotes healthy economic competition and collaboration among neighbouring groups.

d) transformation of identity-based (particularist) sentiment into the rights of every person (universalistic outlook): if the issues the Sidaamas fear are addressed, relevant structures of accommodation and dialogue are provided, and structures of conflict regulation function properly (e.g., the rule of law), using ethnic/national-identity card loses its value; and people are more likely to join interest-based associations. At least identity-based horizontal conflict will diminish.

Are there 'peace dynamics' which support in achieving the best case scenarios? The federal constitution of Ethiopia, if respected, provides grounds for macro and micro level collaboration and governance: it contains international human rights principles; it protects individual and group (e.g. minority) rights. However, the constitutional provision can only help to achieve the best case scenarios if the state-government guarantees the rule of law and fair distribution of economic resources. The local social capital is also another element of 'peace dynamics'. The Sidaama culture being a peace culture contributes towards maintaining and promoting peace. This cultural disposition can be helpful if the government recognises and empowers cultural authorities to handle their traditional peace-building activities in their local areas in collaboration with state structures. In other words, those cases within the ability of the cultural authorities need to be left to them to handle (principle of subsidiarity), while those cases beyond their jurisdiction and the appeal cases could be handled by the state system of justice (e.g., district, regional, and federal courts). Such a local-national system of collaboration strengthens the national conflict regulation structures and contributes towards building stability. It also saves money, time and energy. In order to guarantee justice to all, the government needs to create mechanisms to control certain elements of local customs (e.g., discrimination against women or lower class) which contravene the state law.

ii) In the worst case scenario:

a) the domino effect leading to the mushrooming of nationalisms in the SNNPR: it is very

likely that as a result of the Sidaamas being a separate *killil*, other identity groups in the SNNPR will call for equal treatment and demand their own *killil* status. The refusal to respond to this will lead to both vertical and horizontal unpeaceful relations among the south-western identity groups, hence instability.

b) exclusion of the non-Sidaama inhabitants in Sidaamaland from political participation and fair share of opportunities (political, economic, and cultural): this can happen if access to regional status brings malpractices, such as nepotism, corruption, vengeance (i.e., if the non-Sidaamas oppose the Sidaama language, culture and autonomous status), or ethnocentrism.

c) inter-*ga're* conflicts: this can happen if the elites in power practice clan-favouritism (which is possible in a non-democratic authoritarian system) and corruption. In the absence of a participatory democracy coupled with the absence of other external non-Sidaama competitors or challengers to power in Sidaamaland, clan politics (either one clan against the rest or a group of allied clans against the rest) can also happen. At the moment, the Sidaama opposition groups are already divided among themselves. If, at this moment of the presence of external challengers, they are not even able to negotiate, come together in a democratic manner, and concentrate their energy on the common objectives they claim to achieve for their people, it is less convincing that they will be able to unite their people in the absence of external challenges. Having one language, origin and religion has not saved Somalis in Somalia from killing each other on the basis of clans.

d) inter-political parties polarisation: although this is possible without even the involvement of the ruling party, the tactics of the incumbent regime (e.g., rigging elections, removing those the government sees as disobedient (or disloyal) to party-politics through the habitual means of 'performance assessment') to keep its loyal or obedient members in power at any cost contributes to polarisation between the ruling party and opposition parties in the country. The criterion of loyalty against ability also harms economic development and promotes chronic corruption.

e) the demand for independence: if the government continues abusing human rights, excludes opposition parties from participation; if there is poverty, no rule of law, no democratic participation, no fair distribution of economic resources, no accountability, undue government interference in the internal economic development activities, and centralised economic policy-making: these can militate against building a positive vertical relations, and may (in the long run) lead to more people

contemplating on and giving support to the idea of external self-determination that the SNLO takes as its objective. In other words, the PSC in Sidaamaland will simply deepen and not end.

What happens if the Sidaama aspiration for a *killil* status is not realised? The following are the possible scenarios.

i) In the best case scenario:

a) it may bring a united south-western people, removing the possibility of domino effect had the Sidaamaland become a *killil*. For the possibility of bringing unity in an already fractured multiethnic/national state, the presence of the following factors (not put in a hierarchical order) are crucial: first, the state possesses agreed structures of accommodation and meaningful participation of its communities in the region's political life (i.e., that all the peoples experience political equality and fair representation in power-share); secondly, opportunities and economic resources are fairly distributed, and economic interconnectedness is realised; thirdly, people have freedom to elect their own officials to represent them (e.g., free and fair election) in socio-cultural and political spheres; fourthly, people have freedom of access to information and demand accountability from their officials; fifthly, the drawing of clear internal geographical territorial lines between the constituent groups are based on the agreement of the peoples that are affected, i.e., the lines are not drawn solely by the elites and imposed on the people; sixthly, making and implementing policies must involve the people (at least the needs and fears of the people must be addressed through dialogue before top-down policy implementation, i.e., policies must be contextualised. This implies that the state possesses sufficient avenues and channels of information and dialogue between the people and the government on the one hand, and among its constituent peoples on the other; seventhly, in dialogue and policy-making, the representatives of the people are not hand-picked by those in power, but freely chosen and empowered by the people themselves to represent them; eighthly, there exists the rule of law and good governance. It also implies that the communities in the region have sufficient communicational infrastructure (e.g., easy transport, other information channels), and that they know about the needs and situation of each other beyond prejudice. The empowerment of cultural and religious authorities will also be an asset in building bridges among the peoples and promoting unity.

b) faster economic development in the region maybe possible. If the above factors are present in the region, contextualised policies in each area draws the people's support, first, because the representatives (both government officials and others) are chosen freely by this people to represent its needs and interests, and secondly, because the people themselves have discussed about the policies, made amendments where necessary and appropriated them. When policies are well contextualised, both local and international civil organisations participate and also encourage the people to implement them, and help in creating avenues for regional, national and international economic and political integration and collaboration. Cultural and religious authorities can also be helpful in mobilising their people for development and maintaining peace.

ii) In the worst case scenario:

a) the deepening of ethnonationalism in Sidaamaland as coercive means alone frustrates and angers the people: in the long run, it will lead more Sidaamas to aspire for independence. If the need for regime security interferes with the rule of law, survival needs and democratic functioning of the society, and if the factors mentioned above for the realisation of a harmonious cohabitation under one *killil* are not present or functional, the regime will remain illegitimate. In this case, stability will not be maintained by the willingness of the people to live together, but by coercion. Illegitimate authority rules by manipulations and use of force. With these come human rights abuses, torture, absence of the rule of law and suppression of the peoples' grievances. When a society is ruled by illegitimate officials for a long time, good governance and economic development are also hard to achieve. Economic deterioration (or poverty) in a conflict ridden area contributes directly towards conflict escalation. A meaningful dialogue between the people and the government may become hard to achieve.

b) horizontal unpeaceful relations escalate, leading to violence: since their legal quest is not handled in a legal manner (see pp. 204-205), the Sidaamas have not (and probably will not) abandon their aspiration for a regional status. Certainly, because of the government's asymmetric power and coercion, the unfavourable international environment for armed struggle and the geopolitical position of Sidaamaland, negative peace can be maintained. However, in a politicised milieu, the anger and frustration which result from suppression may lead to the horizontal conflict escalation, which will

be even more complicated than the vertical conflicts, affecting the country's development and stability. It will become *ola*, marked by the attitudes of conflict as *gatoite* (see 2A3, pp. 41-42). It is principally because of religion (Christianity) in which all the identity groups in Sidaamaland participate, and the Sidaama peace culture have prevented the escalation so far. But for how long this can continue remains to be seen.

The government has used different techniques to attenuate the Sidaama political aspiration to a *killil* status: promising economic aid and development, threats of violence, indefinite imprisonment and exclusion from employment of those who raise the idea of *killil*, imposition of non-elected officials, and populating the regional leadership with the hand-picked (by the central leadership) Sidaama individuals whom the government feels would control their Sidaama people. These officials have the state resources (financial and security forces) available to them whenever they want to use them. The government also hopes to have its urban development policy implemented in Sidaamaland through its Sidaama agents. The fact of appointing the Sidaama officials (who are not even legitimate) on the regional leadership without the presence of the factors mentioned above (i.a) is unlikely to transform the unpeaceful relations. These officials are not the representatives of the Sidaama but of the central government to implement centrally constructed policies. They are also self-interested, and many of them are corrupt.[7] Moreover, such a nomination may even cause more antipathy towards the Sidaamas by other groups because of the Sidaama officials in key offices including that of the leadership of the SNNPR state.

The government has not resolved the border issues between the Sidaamas and Wolaitas. According to the information the researcher has received (from informal interaction), the office of nationalities that has made a study on the border demarcation, the demarcation line of the Wolaita-Sidaama border infringes on the Sidaama territory. However, to this moment (December 2006) no action has been taken to resolve the problem on the basis of the recommendation of the study. The peace at the border is being maintained by the presence of the military. If the information about the

[7]For example, the researcher is informed about chronic corruption within the office of Awaasa city administration. Those who are assigned to distribute plots for buildings have found a lucrative business. They take illegally a number of plots of land for themselves and then sell them for an exorbitant amount of money. A legal request for a plot has less chance of success. Yet these distribution plots come from the evicted farmers with disproportionately low compensation. This corruption has affected both the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas.

study of the office of nationalities is correct, it is not clear why the government does not take action to help end the dispute before another bloodshed occurs. This remains an obstacle towards building harmony and spirit of neighbourhood between the two communities.

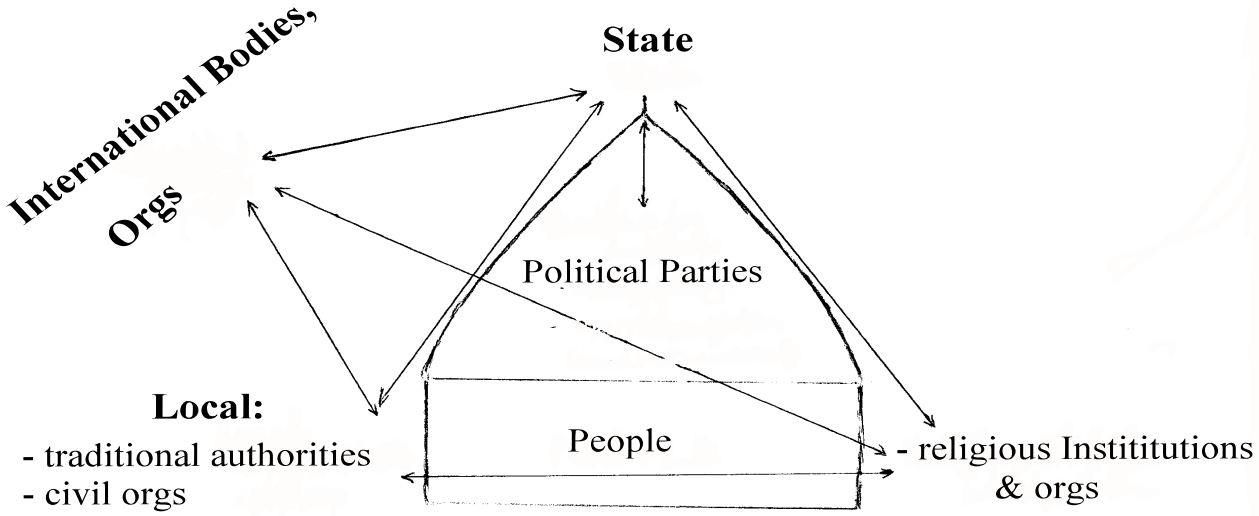
c) instability in the whole country, affecting the Horn of Africa: when the Sidaamas fail to address their grievances through legal means, and when their demands are suppressed, they will look for allies outside Sidaamaland who may be in the same situation. Already, the SLF has joined an opposition political party called 'Alliance for Freedom and Democracy' (AFD) which is composed of the OLF, ONLF, Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP), and Ethiopian Patriotic Front. The AFD came into being in May 2006 (see p. 118 above). If the AFD takes up an armed struggle, then the political-economic situation of the Horn of Africa will worsen.

All being said and done, transformation of a protracted social conflict takes more efforts and perhaps longer time than any other conflict. The PSC has a tendency to take a different shape at a different stage in history and in a different context: its demands expand; the older issues tend to give place to new issues; when one grievance is addressed, another appears, and so on. It is part of a process in human development. The most important or fundamental elements in the transformation of PSC in the SNNPR and in Ethiopia in general consist in providing functional structural avenues or bridges for dialogue, agreed functional structures of socio-political and economic participation, clearly defined and agreed rules of engagement which guarantee equitable share of power and opportunities for all the members of the region, and the development of grass roots peace movements (in which academics, religious and cultural authorities play essential roles). With regard to avenues for dialogue, there is a great need to provide and organise forums where groups (literate and non literate) come together and share their views, anxieties, perceptions and ways of handling their differences; and where relevant authorities in the area of conflict transformation can serve as facilitators, informers, and catalysts. Cultural, religious and educational institutions and NGOs need to be encouraged and empowered in the area of building bridges among peoples and facilitating ways for mutual understanding, cooperation in finding solutions and unity. They do contribute towards nation-building in the SNNPR. Together with the above mentioned structures and institutions, the rule of law and good governance are important and helpful elements in mitigating social conflicts; for they

help in promoting and protecting the rights of individuals and groups. In all these, both the federal and regional governments have greater responsibility. Barbara F. Walter (2004) sees two principal reasons why a farmer, a potential worker, and a shopkeeper choose to enlist or at least support rebel armies: the current situation of individual hardship or sever dissatisfaction and the absence of any non-violent means (e.g., avenues of dialogue or functional structural provision) to address the situation. These help to protract and deepen conflicts. Managing a PSC may need a holistic approach, an approach that involves interactions between the local, national and international players. This can be termed as Multilateral Interactive Approach (MIA). The multilateral interactions concern building and promoting socio-cultural, political and economic accommodation and integration.

10.B. MULTILATERAL INTERACTIONAL APPROACH FOR PSC TRANSFORMATION

In this section, the author presents an outline of a project (a programme) which will be developed later but not in this PhD thesis. Every conflict has its own history and peculiarity (at least in goals) even if in general it may be similar to some others. For this reason knowledge of historical and actual sources of unpeaceful relations in a particular area is necessary. It is equally important to know local and national 'social capitals' for enhancing efficient (in the sense of time) and effective (in the sense of quality and sustainability) transformation of protracted unpeaceful relations. Such a three-dimensional knowledge facilitates 'conflict transformation' (Lederach, 1995) and 'conflict *provention*' (Burton, 1990). It is widely recognised today that the causes of intra-national unpeaceful relations or protracted social conflicts are not just internal but also have an international dimension (Azar, 1990; Kaldor, 1999; Lederach, 1997). Hence, resolving protracted unpeaceful relations requires a multilateral (local-national-global) participation. A holistic framework for transforming PSCs that the writer proposes here uses the metaphorical image of strengthening a weak house, as shown on the next page. A divided society or a society that suffers from 'intractable' (Kriesberg, 1989: 5) unpeaceful relations or PSC (Azar, 1990) is a society like a weak house, requiring strengthening and reinforcement. Maintaining and strengthening it needs inputs from international, national and local dimensions. Such inputs are provisions for promoting peace, development and stability. On the



Multilateral Interaction in Building Stable Society

diagram, the double-sided arrows indicate multilateral interactions among the international, national and local actors.

What the author proposes for transforming protracted and complex (vertical and horizontal) social unpeaceful relations is a multilateral interactive approach (MIA) which involves different conflict management (CM) methodologies and authorities proper to each one of them. Azar's approach of transforming PSC puts more emphasis on the actors in Track II diplomacy. Curle (1971) and Francis (2002) put more emphasis on the grassroots level to be the driving force for change. Lederach's (1997) multi-level model approach distributes responsibilities to actors at all levels, and this is a very important one. Its whole process is geared towards building relations and trust among the parties in conflict. The multilateral interactive approach (MIA) comes to add an aspect that is very important for transforming PSCs but not emphasised well in Lederach's model: it is development. In the field research questionnaire, many respondents identified peace with development. Azar also sees development issues and building consensual political structures as being integrally constitutive elements in resolving PSC. MIA promotes the building of peace culture as well as sustained economic development as constitutive elements of PSC transformation. For this, multilateral global- national-local network is essential. MIA requires international aid (in all forms) not only for state-building, but also for society-building through multilateral engagement in finding simultaneously both political and economic solutions. It discourages channelling development aid solely through the government (e.g., government to government bilateral aid) with a view to avoiding entrenching conflict-producing regimes and reducing bureaucratic hurdles in making resource distribution efficient. In MIA, the global-national-local continues interacting through political-economic relations, guaranteeing and promoting infrastructures of peace and development. The infrastructures of peace are mechanisms of peace (e.g., institutions, ombudsmen, forum centres at every locality, elderhood institutions in every community that can produce human symbols of peace, and so on) which provide arenas for contacts, continuous dialogue, information, mediation and reconciliation. These infrastructures promote non-imposed political solutions, i.e., 'integrative solutions' that enhance relationships among individuals, communities, and the government (Follett, 1942: 32; Cheldelin *et al*, 2000: 11).

A serious conflict carries its own history of social relationships (Miall *et al*, 1999: 29;

Lederach, 1995: 8) and develops in depth (intensity) and width (spill-over). Conflict is unavoidable in human relations. Communities, therefore, possess traditions of mechanisms and methods in managing conflicts to keep harmony among their members and regulate violent intercommunal conflict outcomes. The construction of contextually relevant methods of building a stable multi-ethnic/national society and of resolving its (the conflict's) negative outcomes requires then dialogue between the past (history, tradition) the present (modern, cross-cultural and experiential) and the future (means of peace-maintenance). Taking account of and building upon the existing social-capital (local or cultural resources) of a conflict-ridden society in the process of creating harmonious coexistence and cooperation among identity groups is central to MIA. The term 'harmonious society' does not imply the absence of conflicts, but rather a society with a 'peace culture' (Galtung, 1990, 1996b) that provides contextually relevant infrastructures of peace which transform conflicts into sources of creativity and progress. How the local-national-international interactions work (as the analogical diagram of the weak house has presented) is briefly described below.

B.1. Society Level (the Local)

The local pillars of the house as shown in the analogical diagram of MIA include cultural authorities, religious authorities, and modern civil societies (e.g., private media organisations, NGOs, human rights groups, peace movements). They have their own proper mechanisms and methods in maintaining harmony. Where some of these mechanisms and methods infringe human rights, such elements need transformation through the dialogue the local has with the national and international players. In addition, social infrastructure (educational institutions, means of communication) serve as helpful national-local provisions. Hence, the local players and mechanisms are essential contributive assets in building peace and stability in a multi-national/ethnic society. Authorities and civil societies at this local level are closer to the people and know the situations and needs of their people. Working with them facilitates conflict transformation and human development.

Cultural mechanisms have in the past helped different communities to live relatively peacefully. A harmonious coexistence among the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas in rural areas of Sidaamaland serves as a good example. Although the government does not give them due

recognition, cultural authorities have continued functioning and maintained peace in the community (e.g., in Sidaamaland). The Sidaama worldview and values, and its methodologies as presented in chapter 9 are a local social asset that contributes towards building peace in Sidaamaland. Similar studies of cultures of identity groups in Ethiopia will be helpful in building peace in their own areas, for national peace and stability cannot be achieved without building peace and stability in its constitutive regions (a dialectical relation between micro-level and macro-level in peace-building). Such studies also help in discovering common elements among different cultures upon which Ethiopia can build its own internal capacity to promote positive peace and stability. Collaborating with cultural authorities, therefore, offers advantages in promoting peace and development.

Religion offers another opportunity for building peace. Most of the peoples in the Sidaamaland are Christians and share the same religious values. Religion can serve as a powerful legitimising force for building solidarity, unity and stability. Empowering and working together with religious authorities offers a positive atmosphere for the promotion of harmonious coexistence and cooperation among different groups. Both religious and cultural authorities can play a great role in maintaining peace, monitoring local officials' behaviours and mobilising people for developmental activities.

Press freedom (albeit limited) is also important for building cooperation and knowing the views of different groups in conflicts, for the private media as well as human rights groups can publicise the grievances of the people and present analytical views. The government media express the views from the government's point of view and protect government interest. Responsible use of private media can present the views of the people and defend the interest of the people. Hence the existence of the two side by side can help to gain a balanced information and promotion of peace (cf., Shimelis, 2002: 186-201). They are also essential for human development.

B.2. State level (the National)

The state and its institutions are essential for creating order, stability and harmony among identity groups in a multiethnic/national society. From the point of view of Multilateral Interactive Approach (MIA), apart from representing its society in the international arena, internally, the state-government

has a duty to guarantee the rule of law, build institutions (educational, health, communication), provide development infrastructures, create conducive atmosphere for cultivating private entrepreneurship and investment. Its relation or interaction with the local communities involves empowering and collaborating with local cultural and religious authorities in maintaining peace and carrying out effectively and efficiently developmental activities. Since cultural and religious authorities as well as the leadership of civil societies know the needs and situations of their people, the government can consult them and involve them in formulating its development policies. The state government needs to provide necessary structures of participation at all levels through which political parties are accommodated, policies and issues are debated, and the views of the political parties and the people are clearly communicated. Its relation with local NGOs and religious organisations takes the form of collaboration in formulating and implementing developmental policies and providing services. In the field of education and health care, it can help by providing what those organisations may not be able to get (e.g., HIV/AIDS drugs and needed medical facilities, the training of personnel, financial support, and so on).

B.3. International level

In the context of MIA, the international community, through its political and economic means, can play an essential role in the transformation of unpeaceful relations, on the one hand, by helping weak states to build necessary socio-economic infrastructures (i.e., internal capacity), and directly supporting and empowering civil societies; and on the other hand, by obliging aided governments to be accountable to their people, respect the rule of law, respect human rights, decentralise political power or democratise the system. The government should not be the only partner in building peace and working for development, but the people too. Direct aid to the local people prevents some oppressive and conflict creating regimes from using aid money for perpetuating their rule. There are situations where the ruling elites consciously disempowers, harasses and persecutes the middle-level actors and social activists because they find them a threat to their entrenched political-economic interest. In a 'war economy' situation (Keen, 1998) the government leadership prefers to prevent any possible representation of the people to peace forums, and persecutes the independent educated class,

forcing them into migration or silence. Such a situation creates difficulty for track II and III diplomacy. To open a better chance and space for track II and III, sustained pressure from track I diplomacy can be of a great help. The intervention of track I diplomacy supplements and enhances regional and local efforts in dismantling old structures that have produced and maintained conflicts, and replacing them with new participatory institutions (Malwal, 1992: 12).

Local religious organisations and civil societies play a great role in building peace, providing education, health care, advocacy, and undertaking other development activities both in urban and rural areas. They need direct and indirect international support and reinforcement to enable them to provide such services. Direct international aid to national parties (or coalition parties) is also essential for the development of mature democracy. It frees the leaders of such opposition parties from struggling for their own basic subsistence needs, and allows them to organise themselves and devote their time for constructive political and economic engagement. They can serve as checks and balances to the activities of the ruling party.

All being said, MIA's ability to transform protracted social conflicts is dependent on the willingness and commitment of the international and national actors. If international organisations, donor governments and aid agencies make relevant interventions based on the dialogue with both the local and national level actors, the possibility of the transformation of the PSC in Ethiopia and Africa in general is high. At this moment, in this thesis, MIA remains just an outline of a project that will be developed in future works.

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APPENDIX

FIELD RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a: a) Sidaama b) Non-Sidaama from _____ *gosa* or *bhereseb* c) a & b

1. How do you understand *gibbo* (conflict)?

2. Is there conflict (*gibbo*) among the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas in the Sidaama zone? –
   a) Yes b) No c) I do not know
3. If you answered 'Yes' to question (2) above,

   i. Who are the non-Sidaamas or to what *gosa* do they belong?

   ii. Are they those who work and live (or even born) in the Sidaama zone?
   a) Yes b) No c) a & b d) I do not know
   iii. What are they saying (What are their complaints or grievances or demands)?

   iv. What are the Sidaamas saying (What are their complaints or grievances or demands)?

   v. How do you know that there is conflict among the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas?
   a) I heard from friends b) I heard from local government officials c) I heard from others, e.g., _____ d) I experienced my self (e.g., _____) e) all of the above;

   or mention all the sources of your knowledge that there is conflict among the two groups.

   vi1a. If you have answered question 3iii above,
   What are the points on which you agree with the non-Sidaamas? Why?

   vi1b. What are the points on which you disagree with the non-Sidaamas? Why?

   vi2a. If you have answered question 3iv above,
   What are the points on which you agree with the Sidaamas? Why?

   vi2b. What are the points on which you disagree with the Sidaamas? Why?

4. If you think that there is conflict between the Sidaama zone and other zones in the SNNP *killil*, mention the issue/s causing the conflict (mention the claims of both sides).

5. If you think that there is conflict between the Sidaamas and the national government, mention

the issue/s causing conflict.

6. The following questions are for the Sidaamas only:

i. How do you feel about 'being' a Sidaama?

iv. What makes you feel that you are a Sidaama? (Or what are the characteristics which explain that one is a Sidaama and not any other group?)

v. Can other individuals from other groups become Sidaama?

If 'Yes': how?

If 'No': why?

7. The following questions are for both the Sidaamas and non-Sidaamas:

i. From your point of view, mention below the possible methods or ways, which can bring peace in the Sidaama zone.

ii. What do you understand by 'peace' ?

8. If you have any other points to raise or comment, please mention them under this question.

Your name (OPTIONAL):

AMHARIC VERSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

መልሶቹን በአማሪኛ ወይንም በእንግሊዜኛ መመለስ ይቻላል።

እኔ ሲዳማ፣ ሀ. ነኝ፣ ለ. አይደለሁም፣ ከ ብሔረሰብ ነኝ፣ ሐ. ከሁለቱም ነኝ።
1. መጣላትን እንዴት ትረዳለህ/ሽ? በሌላ አነጋገር መጣላት ማለት ምን ማለት ነው?

2. በሲዳማ ዞን፣ በሲዳማና ሲዳማ ባልሆኑት መሀከል ጥል አለ? ሀ. አዎን፣ ለ. የለም፣ ሐ. አላ ውቅም።

3. በሲዳማና ሲዳማ ባልሆኑት መሀከል ጥላቻ ወይንም ግጭት አለ የምትል/ዪ ከሆነ፣

ሀ. ሲዳማ ያልሆኑቱ ከየትኛው ብሔረሰብ ናቸው?
ለ. ሲዳማ ያልሆኑቱ በሲዳማ ዞን ተወልደው ያደጉ ወይንም የኖሩ ናቸውን?
ሀ. አዎን፣ ለ. አይደሉም፣ ግን በሲዳማ ውስጥ መኖር የምፈልጉ ናቸው፣ ሐ. «ሀ» እና «ለ» ፣ መ. አላውቅም።
ሐ. ሲዳማ ያልሆኑቱ ሰዎች ጥያቄ ምንድር ነው? በሌላ አነጋገር ለምንድነው ከሲዳማ ጋር የሚጣሉት?
መ. በሲዳማና ሲዳማ ባልሆኑት መሀከል ጥል መኖሩን የምታውቀው/ቂው እንዴት ነው?
ሀ. ከጓደኞች እሰማለሁ፣ ለ. ከዞኑ መንግሥት ባለሥልጣኖች፣ ሐ. ከሌላ፣ ለምሳሌ፡ መ. እኔ እራሴ ምስክር ነኝ፣ ሠ. ሁሉም መልስ ነው።
ሠ. ባለመግባባት ውስጥ ሲዳማ ያልሆኑ ሰዎች ከምያቀርቧቸው ነጥቦች የምትግባባቸው ምንድር ናቸው? ለምን?
የማትቀበላቸው/ያቸው ነጥቦችሳ? ለምን?
ረ. ባለመግባባት ውስጥ ሲዳማዎች ከምያቀርቧቸው ነጥቦች የምትግባባቸው ምንድር ናቸው? ለምን?
የማትቀበላቸው/ያቸው ነጥቦችሳ? ለምን?

4. በደቡብ ሕዝቦች ክልል ውስጥ በሲዳማ ዞንና በሌላ ዞኖች መሀከል ግጭት ወይንም መጣላት አለ ብለህ/ሽ የምታስብ/ቢ ከሆነ መንስኤው ወይም ምክንያቶቹ ምንድር ናቸው ብለህ/ሽ ትገምታለህ/ችያለሽ?

5. በሲዳማና በመንግሥት መሀከል ግጭት ወይንም መጣላት አለ ብለህ/ሽ የምታስብ/ቢ ከሆነ መንስኤው ወይም ምክንያቶቹ ምንድር ናቸው ብለህ ትገምታለህ/ችያለሽ?

6. የመሚከተሉትን ጥያቄዎች ሲዳማዎች ብቻ ይመልሷቸው።

ሀ. ሲዳማ በመሆንህ/ሽ ምን ይሰማሀል/ሻል?
ለ. ሲዳማ መሆንህን/ሽን ወይም ከሌላ ጐሣ አለመሆንህን/ሽን የምያሳውቁ ምልክቶች ወይም ምክንያቶች ምንድር ናቸው?
ሐ. ከሌላ ጐሣ የተወለዱ ግለሰቦች ሲዳማ መሆን ይችላሉን?
«አዎን» የምትል/ዪ ከሆነ፣ እንዴት?
«አይችሉም» የምትል/ዪ ከሆነ፣ ለምን?

ከዚህ በታች ያሉትን ጥያቄዎች ሁሉም ይመልስ።

7. በአንተ/ቺ አስተያየት በሲዳማ ዞን ውስጥ ሰላም የምያስመጡ መንገዶችን ጥቀስ/ሽ።

8. «ሰላም» በምለው ቃል ምን ትረዳለህ/ጂያለሽ? በሌላ አነጋገር የ«ሰላም» ትርጉም ምንድር ነው?

9. ሌላ ማንሣት ወይንም መጨመር የምትፈልጋቸው/ጊያቸው ነጥቦች ካሉ ከዚሁ በታች አስፍር/ሪ።

ስምህን/ሽን መጥቀስ <u>ከፈለግህ/ሽ</u> እዚሁ ጻፍ/ፊ፣

INTERVIEW THEMES

The following thematic interview points are used to gain information from the interviewees:

1. Sidaamas' attitude towards 'peace' and 'conflict'

2. Sidaama traditional ways of handling conflicts and keeping harmony

3. Any conflict within the Sidaamas and between the non-Sidaamas and them?

4. The Sidaamas' sense of the 'past' in relation to other groups:

    i. Their perception of others (government, communal groups)
    ii. Their grievances, their 'pride', their feelings

5. Their sense of being Sidaama entails what? (Identity markers, what makes them different from other groups)

6. Their view of the Sidaama politicians (approve, disprove, indifferent)

7. Their feelings of being part of Ethiopia; their wishes, quests, and so on

8. Sufficient time to observe what is happening in the zone; informally involve individuals (politicians and ordinary, the Sidaamas and the non-Sidaamas) in discussions at coffee or tea places or in pubs or other places of socialization.

Different approaches are used depending on the type and situation of the interviewees (e.g., in group interview, engaging the groups in discussion and also asking particular questions)...