

**Regional Dynamics of Inter-ethnic Conflicts in the Horn of Africa: An
Analysis of the Afar-Somali Conflict in Ethiopia and Djibouti**

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**Regional Dynamics of Inter-ethnic Conflicts in the Horn of Africa: An Analysis of
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Abstract

Though it remains one of the most economically deprived sub-regions in the world, the Sub-Saharan Africa score highest on the number of countries involved in violent ethnic conflicts around the world. Due to the legacy of colonialism, several ethnic groups that claim homogeneity are today straddling across international boundaries between neighbouring states. And hence, ethnic conflicts in those states definitely have a spillover effect across the borders as trans-boundary alliances among states and kin groups are inevitable. Meanwhile, changes in the political order of the region have a significant influence over the escalation and intensification of conflicts between societies straddle along national borders. Thus, implementations of unilateral resolution attempts by single states are usually falling far short of success. This case study proves the above described hypotheses in such a way that dynamics in regional political orders have been contributing for the escalation of the long-lasting conflicts between the Afar and Somali people whose homeland straddles the borders of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somaliland. Besides, findings of the study also indicate that all unilateral resolution efforts undertaken by individual states of Ethiopia and Djibouti where both ethnicities commonly inhabiting have been fruitless since the time of colonial rules. Indeed, this study further emphasis and analyse the impact of national politico-economic factors (in Ethiopia and Djibouti) that aggravate the tension and further sophisticate map of the conflict.

Acronyms and Glossary

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>AANA</i> | <i>Afar Association in North America</i> |
| <i>ALF</i> | <i>Afar Liberation Front</i> |
| <i>ALSEC</i> | <i>Afar Language Studies and Enrichment Centre</i> |
| <i>AMISOM</i> | <i>African Union Mission in Somalia</i> |
| <i>ANRDF</i> | <i>Afar National Revolutionary Democratic Front</i> |
| <i>ANRS</i> | <i>Afar National Regional State</i> |
| <i>ANLF</i> | <i>Afar National Liberation Front</i> |
| <i>APDO</i> | <i>Afar People's Democratic Organization</i> |
| <i>ARBAO</i> | <i>Afar Region Border Affairs Office</i> |
| <i>ARD</i> | <i>Republican Alliance for Development</i> |
| <i>AROD</i> | <i>Action for Review of Order in Djibouti</i> |
| <i>AU</i> | <i>African Union</i> |
| <i>AVA</i> | <i>Awash Valley Authority</i> |
| <i>Awraja</i> | <i>Province</i> |
| <i>Balambaras</i> | <i>Commander of an Amba or fortress</i> |
| <i>Belata</i> | <i>An official who acted as the counselor to the princes</i> |
| <i>Bitwodod</i> | <i>Literarily 'beloved', title given for a senior Imperial Court figure</i> |
| <i>CEWARN</i> | <i>Conflict Early Warning and Response Unit</i> |
| <i>CFS</i> | <i>French Somali Coast</i> |
| <i>CIA</i> | <i>Central Intelligence Agency</i> |
| <i>CJTF-HOA</i> | <i>Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa</i> |
| <i>Dejazmach (Dej.)</i> | <i>A military title meaning Commander or general of the Gate</i> |
| <i>DFID</i> | <i>Department for International Development</i> |
| <i>DFLD</i> | <i>Democratic Front for the Liberation of Djibouti</i> |
| <i>DIEST</i> | <i>Defence for the Socio-Economic Interest of the Territory</i> |
| <i>EHRCO</i> | <i>Ethiopian Human Rights Council</i> |
| <i>ELF</i> | <i>Eritrean Liberation Front</i> |
| <i>EPLF/ Shabiya</i> | <i>Eritrean People's Liberation Front</i> |
| <i>EPRDF</i> | <i>Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front</i> |
| <i>ESDL</i> | <i>Ethiopian Somali Democratic League</i> |
| <i>FDRE</i> | <i>Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia</i> |
| <i>Fitawrari</i> | <i>Commander of the Vanguard</i> |
| <i>FLCS</i> | <i>Liberation Front of the Somali Coast</i> |
| <i>FRPD</i> | <i>Patriotic Resistance Front of Djibouti</i> |
| <i>FRUD</i> | <i>Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy</i> |
| <i>FTAI</i> | <i>French Territory of Afar and Issa</i> |
| <i>Grazmach</i> | <i>Commander of the Left Wing</i> |
| <i>GTZ</i> | <i>German Development Co-operation</i> |
| <i>HoF</i> | <i>House of Federation</i> |
| <i>IGAD</i> | <i>Intergovernmental Authority for Development</i> |
| <i>IGLF</i> | <i>Issa-Gurgura Liberation Front</i> |
| <i>IOG</i> | <i>Ismail Omar Guelleh</i> |
| <i>JPC</i> | <i>Joint Peace Committee</i> |
| <i>KADU</i> | <i>Kenya African Democratic Union</i> |
| <i>KANU</i> | <i>Kenya African National Congress</i> |
| <i>LDDH</i> | <i>Djiboutian League of Human Rights</i> |
| <i>LPAI</i> | <i>African Popular League for the Independence</i> |
| <i>Lij</i> | <i>Literally 'child', title given from birth to sons of members of the</i> |
| <i>Lt.</i> | <i>Lieutenant</i> |
| <i>MoFA</i> | <i>Ministry of Federal Affairs</i> |
| <i>MPL</i> | <i>Popular Liberation Movement</i> |
| <i>MRD/DSU</i> | <i>Movement for Democratic Renewal/ Democratic Renewal and Development</i> |

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| <i>NATO</i> | <i>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</i> |
| <i>NEP</i> | <i>Nura Era Plantation</i> |
| <i>NFK/NFD</i> | <i>Northern Frontier (District) of Kenya</i> |
| <i>NGO</i> | <i>Non-Governmental Organization</i> |
| <i>NPPPP</i> | <i>Northern Province Peoples Progressive Party</i> |
| <i>NTPCO</i> | <i>Nemalehfan-Tendaho Project Coordination Office</i> |
| <i>OAU</i> | <i>Organisation of African Unity</i> |
| <i>OLA</i> | <i>Oromo Liberation Army</i> |
| <i>OLF</i> | <i>Oromo Liberation Front</i> |
| <i>OLM</i> | <i>Ogaden Liberation Movement</i> |
| <i>ONLF</i> | <i>Ogaden National Liberation Front</i> |
| <i>OPDO</i> | <i>Oromo People Democratic Organization</i> |
| <i>PCDP</i> | <i>Pastoral Communities Development Project</i> |
| <i>PDD</i> | <i>Djibouti Party for Development</i> |
| <i>PFDJ</i> | <i>People's Front for Democracy and Justice</i> |
| <i>PMAC/Derg</i> | <i>Provisional Military Advisory Council</i> |
| <i>PMP</i> | <i>People's Movement Party</i> |
| <i>PPD</i> | <i>Djiboutian People's Party</i> |
| <i>PRD</i> | <i>Movement of Democratic Resurgence</i> |
| <i>PSA</i> | <i>Public Settlement Authority</i> |
| <i>Qegnazmach</i> | <i>Commander of the Right wing</i> |
| <i>Ras</i> | <i>Literally 'head', title equivalent to Duke given to the Prince</i> |
| <i>RASDO</i> | <i>Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization</i> |
| <i>RPP</i> | <i>People's Rally for Progress</i> |
| <i>RRC</i> | <i>Relief and Rehabilitation Commission</i> |
| <i>SHSI</i> | <i>Social and Human Science Institute</i> |
| <i>SNL</i> | <i>Somali National League</i> |
| <i>SYC</i> | <i>Somali Youth Club</i> |
| <i>SYL</i> | <i>Somali Youth League</i> |
| <i>TADO</i> | <i>Tigray-Afar Democratic Organization</i> |
| <i>TFAI</i> | <i>French Territory of the Afars and the Issas</i> |
| <i>TFG</i> | <i>Transitional Federal Government</i> |
| <i>TPLF</i> | <i>Tigray People's Liberation Front</i> |
| <i>TPSC</i> | <i>Tendaho Plantation Share Company</i> |
| <i>Tsehafti Tezaz</i> | <i>Literally 'Scribe by Command' title given to Imperial Minister of the Pen</i> |
| <i>UAD</i> | <i>Union for Democratic Change over Djibouti</i> |
| <i>UDJ</i> | <i>Union for Democracy and Justice</i> |
| <i>UFWS</i> | <i>United Front of Western Somalia</i> |
| <i>Ugaas</i> | <i>The clan-heads of the Issa/Somali</i> |
| <i>Ugugumo</i> | <i>Afar Rebellions</i> |
| <i>UIC</i> | <i>United Islamic Council</i> |
| <i>UN</i> | <i>United Nations</i> |
| <i>UNI</i> | <i>National Union for Independence</i> |
| <i>UNOSOM/UNITAF</i> | <i>United Nations Operations in Somalia/Unified Task Force</i> |
| <i>UPM</i> | <i>Union for the Presidential Majority</i> |
| <i>UPR</i> | <i>Union of Reform Partisans</i> |
| <i>UR</i> | <i>Union Republican</i> |
| <i>US</i> | <i>United States</i> |
| <i>USAID</i> | <i>United States Agency for International Development</i> |
| <i>USD</i> | <i>Somali Democratic Union</i> |
| <i>USSR</i> | <i>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</i> |
| <i>Wereda</i> | <i>District</i> |
| <i>W/o</i> | <i>Weyzero equivalent to Mrs</i> |
| <i>WPE</i> | <i>Workers' Party of Ethiopia</i> |
| <i>WSLF</i> | <i>Western Somali Liberation Front</i> |

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Chapter One

1 Introduction

1.1 Sources and Research Methodology

1.1.1 Aim and Scope of the Research

In the post-cold war era, the polarized ideologies that had fiercely divided the world have gradually lost its spot in the global political scene for rampant ethnic conflicts that become the new global reality. Just follow the end of severe cold proxy wars across the world; armed ethnic conflicts have caused ruthless human misery and massive environmental destructions particularly in countries where colonial boundary lines galvanized the tension among various ethnic groups. The cases in Africa where countries inherit a colonial administrative border division along ethnic lines seemingly left the continent with never-ending violent conflict. Even at the time when the west proclaim ‘the end of history’ and the east are scurrying to baptize liberalism, Africans are yet get tied up with the assignments given them in mid 1880s at the Berlin conference of ‘scramble for Africa’. This is particularly true of the most socio-economically deprived, poorest, highly militarised and conflict-ridden region of the Horn of Africa.

In the Horn, one can observe all sorts of conflict situations as if the region were a conflict menu. The region witnessed several conflicts ranging from secessionist movement that led to the birth of new state to intra-sub-clan armed confrontation, which derived a nation to failed state. In addition to the global war against terrorism, violent pastoral disputes, highland-lowland confrontations, state vs. ethnic group clashes, civil wars, and inter-ethnic rivalry are all current features of conflicts in the Horn region. Despite variances in the nature and magnitude of conflicts, the main focus of this research is on conflicts among ethnic groups.

The overall aim of this study is to develop an effective understanding of inter-ethnic conflicts in the Horn of Africa and gaining better understanding of regional dynamics of conflicts among ethnic groups straddled along artificial boundaries in the Horn region. The research centred on issues related to conflicts between two pastoral groups in the

Horn of Africa, in which the long-standing conflict between Afar and Issa/Somali¹ is a case in point. The Afar people have a distinct cultural and linguistic identity of their own and inhabit a well-defined territory in the Horn of Africa; an area commonly referred to as the Afar Triangle which is divided between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti. Vast majority Afars are transhumant pastoralists and inhabiting some of the most arid and hot (The Afar depression is considered one of the hottest places on earth) environment described usually as inhospitable. The Issa/Somalis are categorized as a faction of the Dir clan of Somali people and are one of the populous neighbours of the Afar, occupying the more arid parts of north-eastern Ethiopia. As Issa/Somalis predominantly inhabit the urban parts of Republic of Djibouti and north-western portion of Somaliland, they were actively involved in the trade network that connects the southern part of the Gulf of Tağura and the northern parts of the Somali Coast from the Gulf of Aden to the hinterlands of eastern Ethiopia.

The relationship between the two predominantly pastoral groups, the Afar and Issa/Somali, inhabiting at least three states in the African Horn, has been branded as an everlasting animosity. Both groups dwell in adjacent areas of north-eastern part of Ethiopia and jointly constitute the ‘mini Republic’ of Djibouti. In the past, the conflict between the two groups was mainly over water, pasture, access routes, cultural values and tradition; a purely pastoralist and socio-cultural traditional confrontation. However, nowadays it turned to modern political disputes competing over territorial expansion as well as politico-economic hegemony.

Indeed, a build-up-all-round and sustainable development program in the region are a major remedy for most intractable disputes escalating these days in Africa. However, the absence of durable peace and stability in addition to the possibility of negative external interventions could be a barrier for stepping on the initial stages of development project executions in the region. As Shinn and Ofcansky (2004: 210-11) argued “the Horn desperately needs an extended period of peace so that economic development can proceed unimpeded.” Therefore, to break this vicious circle of conflict, the root cause of

¹ The Debine-Wei'ma/Afars and Issa/Somalis are the major tribes that share common border in both Ethiopia and Djibouti and have a long history of relationship. However, the Issa's border that's always in a move enables them to come within reach of various tribes of Afars apart from Debine-Wei'ma. In addition, today's conflict involves various factions of the Afar and Somali people in the Horn region overtly or covertly. Hence, in the title of this research, the conflict is identified as of an Afar and Somali.

confrontation should be scrutinized thoroughly and reach to a common understanding. Thus, oversimplification of the cause of the conflict between Afar and Issa/Somali as merely competition over grass and water would lead nowhere but to severe ethnic conflicts that demand for superfluous resources including many lives. Similarly portraying the internal political discontent among nearly half the population of Djibouti as foreign-backed invasion force would further suffocate the atmosphere of political grievance that may explode at any time in the near future. To acknowledge the source of the contentions is not sufficient by itself unless suitable resolution mechanisms are designed and executed accordingly.

The overall aim of the research is therefore, to conduct an in depth looking to the genesis of the Afar–Issa/Somali conflict whilst describing the background of the study area and the people, reviewing trends of this conflict in relation with regional political dynamics, and critically identifying the role of internal aggravating factors within host states towards the escalation of this conflict. Furthermore, examining efforts persuaded by third parties to resolve the conflict between the two groups in both Ethiopia and Djibouti and finally offering policy implications regarding the resolution are also included within the general aim of the study. The geographic scope of the study focuses on the Republic of Djibouti, co-inhabited by both Afar and Issa/Somali and areas which lie on the border between the Afar and Somali regions of Federal Republic of Ethiopia. The study covers the postcolonial period, which means after the arrival of the French in Djibouti in 1862 and the post 1935 Italian Occupation of Ethiopia.

1.1.2 Purpose Statement

Despite narrating similar myths about genealogical links with south Arabia as well as ancestral connections to Prophet Mohammed, alike pattern of population movements and settlements, centuries-old neighbourhood by sharing common pastoral values, ecology, the faith of Islam, colonial legacy and a common history of marginalization, the relationships between the Afar and the Issa/Somali have been characterized by a century old animosity, which is still demonstrated through raids and counter-raids. Though both societies join their hand for common causes at various occasions in history, they could not escape from natural phenomenon that create conflict in which cultural values, scarcity

of water and pasture as well as competing over access to trade route were the main factors intensifying the dispute.

In the past, existing traditional conflict resolution mechanisms were adequate enough to deal with such disputes. However, since the arrival of colonial powers in the area, the age-old traditional conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali has already transformed to a severe phase and magnitude. As a result of armed conflicts between Afar and Issa/Somali over the past century in both Ethiopia and Djibouti, thousands of people have lost their lives. Pastoral livelihood systems are disrupting frequently, the most powerful engine of development - youths of both communities - are tied up and exhaust all their energy in conflict grounds. In addition, the conflict greatly altered spatial settlement distribution of ethnic groups. Today no single Afar inhabits the city of Zayla, home for the south-eastern Afar until their final departure in the first half of 19th century. One could hardly find Afars in Harar-Chercher plateau which they had inhabited as recent as the last years of the Derg era in the late 1980s. Rettberg (2007:5) states that during the last 50 years, Issas have pushed Afars about 180km westwards from their original grazing areas around Erer and Dire Dawa. In a similar trend, the Dir clan of Somali Issas have moved from the southern portion of today's Awdal region and the northern part of Berbera in Somaliland and pushed Afars northward from north-western Somaliland and later from the southern tip of the present day Djibouti. Currently Ali Sabieh, 95 km from the city of Djibouti, is entirely inhabited by Issa/Somalis and the western region of Dikhil, nestled along the eastern part of Lake Abbe, is gradually becoming a home for both ethnic groups.

The conflict between the Afar and Issa-Somali is also having a grave impact on implementation of development works in conflict-prone areas mainly inhabited by both pastoral groups. Execution of major projects like irrigation, road, schools, health centres and water hole constructions are hampered by frequent violent armed conflicts. Maintaining sustainable stability along the road that connects the hinterland of Ethiopia with the harbours in the coasts of either Eritrea or Djibouti still remains uncertain. Road transportations are usually in danger of blockade due to outbreak of fighting along the road that traverses the Afar region of Ethiopia where Issa/Somalis established settlements. Despite working towards closer cooperation among the two marginalized pastoral and the poorest of the poor in the Horn, elites are also manipulating ethnic

identity to achieve their own political aim while sowing the seeds of aggressive nationalism and animosity that in turn could level the battleground for the next generations of the Afar and Issa/Somali societies. Tadesse and Yonas (2007:6) explain the severity of deteriorating relations among the two societies in such a way that “the conflict is perpetuating itself to the level what conflict analysts’ call ‘psychosocial dispositions’ i.e. becoming intractable, based on deep hatred and blood feuds. Hostility between the two groups has deepened to the extent that they cannot live together in one place. For instance, no Issa lives in Gewane; only Afar and non-Afar highlanders live in the town. Conversely, no Afar lives in the three truck-stop towns: Adaytu, Unduffo and Gedmaytu, only Issa and non-Issa highlanders live in those towns. When travelling by car, members of both groups become very anxious (fearing revenge) while passing towns controlled by the other group”.

As both pastoral groups straddle in different states in the Horn region, the eruption of conflict in a specific place could simply spillover to other states where they reside and thus attract intervention from various states in the sub-region and across too. Intervention of Afars and Somalis inhabiting adjacent states in the Horn regions, political power struggle among the two ethnic groups that constituted the Republic of Djibouti as well as trans-border alliance between kith and kin across the frontier, further complicated geographical dynamics of the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict. Hence, armed confrontation between the two pastoral ethnic groups has significant implications for relations among the states in the Horn region.

The land occupied by both the Afar and Issa/Somali in the Horn is one of the most important and strategic areas for building peace and development in the region. Furthermore, the coastal line of the Red Sea inhabited by these societies is a bridge between Africa and the Middle East, as well as a gateway to the oil fields of the Persia Gulf. On these backgrounds, the Horn invites various forms of intervention from the Arabs, westerns, Israelis and governments in the region. The Arabs, as regional financial powers, desire to exert dominant influence in the strategic areas of the Horn of Africa. Westerners, especially the U.S., have fundamental interests in the Horn as a whole and particularly the land inhabited by the Afars and Issa/ Somalis for reasons such as stability and security of the petroleum producing countries on the Arabian Peninsula, the security

of the tanker routes, and protection of the Israeli state. Similarly Israel, because of its intractable problem with the Arabs, has strategic interest in the Red Sea and islands of Eritrea inhabited particularly by the Afar. Moreover, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack against the United States is likely to raise the strategic value of the Horn of Africa to the level of the Cold War Period, this time due to the global fight against 'terrorism'.

In general, recognizing the geo-strategic significance of the area, regional dynamics of the conflict as well as its adverse impact on socio-economic and political transformations in the region, the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali seems worth not to be ignored and/or undervalued. Decades have passed since the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms become worthless in the context of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. Moreover, unilateral resolution efforts persuaded by host states have successively proven to fail. Lack of a comprehensive analysis and mapping of the conflict could be listed among factors that contributed for the malfunctioning of traditional as well as modern resolution mechanisms upon the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. Successive governments of Ethiopia and Djibouti have failed to notice the anatomy of this conflict and are willing to stick to the misconception regarding poverty, grass and water as prime cause of conflict as well as an insurgency from external forces respectively. Indeed, in the current phase of the conflict these factors are simplistic ones. Yet, the issue is far more complicated.

Earlier travellers' notes (Burton, R 1894, Harris 1844, Isenberg et al. 1968) and field reports (Piguet 2001, Abraham 2002) concerning the traditional conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali mainly emphasize cultural and environmental factors. Academic works that touched upon the ethnic variables in Djibouti (Daniel 1974, Rahel 1970, Thompson and Adolf 1968) accentuate the internal political power struggle within the Republic. Some studies (Markakis 2002, Tadesse and Yonas 2007, Medhane 2004 and Herrie 2008) attempted to highlight alliances of ethnic groups across the border and have a slight touch on the influence of external political events upon this conflict. To my knowledge, so far there has been no single academic study that calls attention to the substantial role of regional political dynamics on the escalation of the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali. Investigating major regional aggravating factors in relation to the failed history of unilateral resolution efforts have got little or no attention.

Generally, all studies on the subject of Afar-Issa/Somali conflict overlooked the regional perspective and put emphasize on a separate study either in Ethiopia or Djibouti. Thus, the purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of regional political order upon this age-old conflict. Analyzing major political events in the region since the arrival of colonial power in Ethiopia and Djibouti in relation with trends and phases of the conflict is the main point of the study. Reviewing past and present positive interventions to draw a lesson along with a touch upon major aggravating factors and highlighting policy recommendations for its resolution is also among the major purposes of this study.

1.1.3 Objective of the Research

This study is an attempt to analyze major events in the politics of the region that trigger an escalation of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict to the level it reaches today. In the mean time the study identifies to the fullest extent possible the sources of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict both in Ethiopia and Djibouti and presents it in brief historical context for understanding trends over the past century and a half with an emphasis on regional political dynamics. And last but not least examining unilateral conflict resolution efforts undertaken by host states and assessing potential interventions for the resolution of this conflict is also the most important objective for the study. In broad terms, this study is designed to examine the transformation of an age-old traditional conflict between the pastoralist groups of Afar and Issa/Somali into deadliest ethnic conflict that escalated due to dynamic regional political orders. More specifically, it gives an overall background of physical and economical settings as well as socio-political organizations of the Afar and Issa/Somali people.

In this sense, the study briefly assesses cultural and economic factors of the conflict and historical territorial boundaries of both communities and gradual movements along their adjacent areas in Ethiopia and in the Republic of Djibouti. The study further reviews various phases of the conflict by highlighting major regional political orders encountered in the postcolonial era. It also critically evaluates intervention efforts and their outcomes. The role of internal factors within host states in the escalation of the conflict is also examined in this study. Finally, the study discusses central issues, and pinpoints the future prospect of the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict in the perspective of bringing sustainable

peace and development in the host states and guarantee regional security in the Horn of Africa as well.

1.1.4 Research Questions and Hypothesis

The age-old Afar and Issa/Somali conflict has already turned from traditional pastoral confrontation over resources towards a modern ethno-territorial confrontation as well as aggressive politico-economic power competition among both ethnic groups and other regional and global stakeholders. Hence, traditional resolution instruments and efforts by individual states have brought no concrete solution but have rather led to an intensification of the conflict. The research questions addressed in this study are: What are the root causes of this age-old conflict? Why has the trans-border ethnic conflict between Afar and Issa/Somali escalated in tune with regional political dynamics while various unilateral resolution interventions have been taken within host states? What are other major catalysts that accelerate and prolong the conflict?

The study puts forward the following thesis.

1. Regional political dynamics are likely to trigger an escalation of trans-border ethnic conflicts.
2. Host state's unilateral conflict resolution interventions in trans-border ethnic conflicts are less likely to be successful.

Dependent Variable

- Trans-border ethnic conflicts

Independent Variables

- Regional political dynamics

Detailed independent variables to be examined are: arrival of colonial powers, the birth of new states, régime changes, interstate disputes and the fight against terrorism.

- Unilateral conflict resolution interventions

Detailed independent variables to be examined in this section are: states' interventions in conflict resolution efforts and the outcomes both in Ethiopia and Djibouti at various régimes and role of international and regional organizations.

1.1.5 Research Design and Methodology

1.1.5.1 Research Design

The fact that the study seeks to explain the complex aspects of Afar and Issa/Somali conflict from the perspective of regional political dynamics and to investigate how this armed conflict relates with identity (ethnicity and culture), resource competition, territorial and power politics as well as review of conflict theories and concepts means that the approach will have to be analytical. Then again, it is a necessity to consider the characteristics of both the Afar and the Issa/Somali pastoralist groups. In this case, socio-cultural and politico-economic characteristics of both societies are studied. Such an approach is basically descriptive. The study therefore uses both analytical and descriptive research designs.

1.1.5.2 Data collection Instruments

The study is based on both secondary and primary data. The data were collected at various times and locations during field trips as well as deskwork sessions.

A. Fieldwork

Interview guides targeted at different groups for the field research were prepared. Despite listing questions, they were rather intended to be comprehensive guidelines from which relevant questions could be selected for each interview. Accordingly, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were held with over sixty key informants in the Afar and Somali Regional States, Republic of Djibouti and other cities like Addis Ababa. Given the rapidity of change in this area, it should be noted that this research involved three visits to the Afar region of Ethiopia and one field trip to the Somali regional states. The first visit to the Afar region was in February 2007 followed by the second visit to the western part of the region on March 2007. The third trip was from 25 October 2007 to 25 November 2007. Field research to the Shinelle zone of the Somali region was held in May 2008. A visit to areas within the Republic of Djibouti took place in August 2008. In addition detail field trips to Afar areas bordering Tigray, Amhara and Oromia were held

on October 2006. Since then successive interviews and informant discussions were conducted with individuals, government officials at different levels, members of armed groups, NGOs, expertise of the Horn, academicians, non-Afar/Somali individuals who were living and had lived in regions where there were conflicts and other stakeholders in Addis Ababa, Nazareth, Dire Dawa and Djibouti. Electronic mail and telephone interviews were also conducted. (See appendix II)

B. Deskwork

Review of documentary and archival sources was conducted in libraries of Addis Ababa and Hamburg University. An in-depth reading and analysis of the theories relevant to ethnic conflict, conflict resolution, Horn of Africa as well as about the Afar and Issa/Somali people were carried out. Furthermore, exchange of letters between various bodies of governments regarding the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict was surveyed from the documentation centre of Afar Border Affairs Bureau.

1.2 Significance of the Research

This is a study of one of the most complex, little known and misread problem of the Horn region. The Afar and Issa/Somali conflict is nowadays demanding the life of thousands of youths from both communities; the occurrence of the conflict is also boosting promptly. Mapping the conflict indicates the involvement of neighbouring states in the Horn of Africa. In addition it's learnt that regional and global political issues have an influence on this conflict. Yet, the historic cause, aggravating factors, external interventions and the impact of internal politics in the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict are still obscure. Due to various factors mainly political, there is a lack of detailed research regarding the complex issues evolving around it. Accordingly, pastoralists in these conflict-ridden areas particularly in Ethiopia encounter extraordinary problems due to lack of security as well as difficulties to implement development endeavours effectively. Similarly, the 'No War-No Peace' situation in Djibouti remains as a time bomb, a source of instability not only for the Afar and Somali people but also to all stakeholders in the Horn Region. Thus, this

study will substantially add to the current state of knowledge about issues and events related to the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict as well as its future trends, including the role of different parties involved directly or indirectly in the conflict. Accordingly, it could serve as a valuable source of information for international communities, regional and sub-regional organizations and governments in the region to enable them to advance the resolution of the conflict and implementation of strategies around peace building in the African Horn. Academic specialists, university students and researchers as well as stakeholders in the region could also benefit from the findings of this research. It might also serve as a stepping stone for further theoretical and empirical studies of ethnic conflicts in the Horn.

1.3 Limitations and Problem Encountered

As many researchers in such political studies found, especially in the Horn region, I encountered the problem to get the willingness of informants to respond openly. Hence, most of my informants prefer to remain anonymous. Apart from that, it was extremely difficult to crosscheck information received from some Somali respondents in the truck-stop hamlets, as there are no oral traditions or written documents that could confirm their claims. Though I presented the purpose and academic nature of the research very clearly, it was impossible to survey the military and intelligence reports of the incumbent governments of Ethiopia and Djibouti concerning the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict. Thus, as number of causalities claimed by both groups couldn't get confirmation from official sources, no specific figures are indicated in this study except those supported by official documents from various governmental institutions both in Ethiopia and Djibouti.

1.4 Structure of the Study

The study is organized into seven chapters, a bibliography and appendixes in the following manner. First a brief introduction on sources and research methodology of the study is provided. Chapter two presents review of the related literature dealing with concepts of conflict, ethnicity, ethnic group, ethnic conflict and theories of ethnic conflict

resolution. In chapter three, physical settings, geo-political strategic significance of the research area as well as socio-economic and political features of the Afar and Issa/Somali are described thoroughly along with a brief background of the conflict. Various phases of the conflict since the arrival of colonial powers in both Ethiopia and the Republic of Djibouti are examined in chapter four. Chapter five then outlines efforts undertaken by successive governments of Ethiopia as well as Republic of Djibouti in order to resolve this conflict. In addition, brief survey for other third parties' involvement in resolving this conflict has also been conducted. The role of internal factors within host states in the escalation of the conflict is analyzed in chapter six followed by some concluding remarks of the study in chapter seven. In this chapter, some suggestions for future researches are also highlighted. The study concludes with a bibliography and appendixes.

Chapter Two

2 Theoretical Frameworks and Empirical Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As Harvey Glickman quoted in Ross et al. (1999:214) suggested “a clear understanding of one’s theoretical framework is needed in intervention work because the theoretical perspective that is used to interpret events in the conflict often becomes absorbed into the participants’ interpretation of the unfolding events.” Hence some theoretical and conceptual backgrounds of the study are highlighted in this chapter. Alternate conceptual definitions and etymologies of terminologies like conflict; ethnic and ethnicity are discussed below. Moreover, theoretical fundamentals on how one’s ethnic identity or sentiment could be defined are examined together with some conceptual explanations of ethnic factor in violent conflicts. In addition, the concept of territoriality in relation with ethnic conflicts is assessed and finally this section of the study thoroughly reviews concepts of conflict resolution in general and ethnic conflict resolutions in particular in order to understand alternative mechanisms for conflict settlement.

2.2 Theoretical Definitions of Conflict

To start with the etymology of the term conflict, the Latin word *com* means ‘together’ and *fligere* means ‘to strike’. Accordingly, the term conflict is a ‘derivation from the Latin *Confligere*, to strike together, to clash’. These clashes may have various features ranges from “intrapersonal, interpersonal to inter-organizational and inter-group” (Kurt Singer 1949b in Fink1968: 434). To mean that conflict may arise between nations, institutions, between various groups, among family members and even within oneself. Accordingly Mack and Snyder (1957:212-13 quoted in Fink1968: 431) concluded that “conflict is for the most part a rubber concept, being stretched and moulded for the purpose at hand.” Hence, academicians argued for and against in conceptualizing a general theory of conflict. As elaborated by Fink some argued in favor of a comprehensive theory on conflict knowledge in such a way that as a result of the contribution of many fields a general theory on conflict is emerging. On the other hand

justifications against general theory on conflict knowledge argued that “no existing social science discipline, by itself, contains sufficient intellectual resources to achieve an adequate theory of international conflict [...] crucial aspects of each particular kind of conflict are inevitably overlooked by theories of greater generality [...] true knowledge is of particular.” (Kurt Singer 1949 in Fink 1968: 414)

Indeed as conflicts are usually arisen as a result of differences in dynamic socio-cultural, politico-economical and physiological needs, analyzing individual conflict case-by-case instead of deriving an abstract theory of conflict seems applicable for understanding and framing the genesis and potential resolution of each conflicts effectively. Though these two concepts are yet debatable, there is a general consensus that differences simply are not source of conflict unless those different groups compete over a certain scarce resource. Thus conflict may usually erupt when one party demands something or accuses the other for taking it/them. Scherrer (1988:119) argued that conflict can be defined in various ways that ranges from “the biological view point of Darwin’s approach in conceptualization of organic evolution as the biological theory of human aggression and conflict to socio-psychological approach of Smith’s view of social conflict as a clash of interests between different groups within that structure of a society.” Moreover, in the Power-politics School of thought, attainment of power is the basic objective of the state that led to conflict. Because politics involves, who gets what, when and how. Thus actors scramble for the maximization of their vested interests while focusing on limited resources [that] results tension between actors. (Wallenstein 1988: 119)

There are various definitions of the concept conflict. For instance, Samarasinghe et al. (1999:2) define conflict as perceived incompatibility of [humans] goals or aspirations. Conflict is an inherent part of human existence. According to (Lewis Coser 1957, 197) quoted in Tidwell (1998: 33), functionalities defined conflict as “the clash of values and interests, the tension between what is and what some groups feel ought to be.” And Tidwell (1998:33) further quoted Bercovitch (1984:6) for the Situationists definition of conflict as a “situation which generates incompatible goals or values among different parties” while communication interactionist Folger et al (1993:4) quoted in (ibid: 34) define conflict as “the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible

goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals.” Conflict is as old as human kind and as argued by Hintjens and Kiwuwa (2006:93) “conflicts do not only bring destruction, they also shape new opportunities [and] reduced social inequality.” Samarasinghe et al. (1999: 2) further argued that “[conflict] is a normal, even healthy dynamic. A certain amount of conflict can be constructive, inspiring creativity in thought, communication, and action. Even violent revolutionary conflict, viewed from the longer perspective of history, may be a force for progress. The American War of Independence and the Civil War, India’s fight for independence from the British, and the struggle of the South African blacks against apartheid fall into this category.” (Brinkerhoff et al. 1988:88) quoted in Tarekegn (2006:3) in their part affirmed the two sides of conflict by stating as “conflict has both cohesive and destructive effect in social organization in that it creates social cohesion among group members when they engage in conflict against alien groups. On the contrary, however, conflict would have adverse effect on social cohesion particularly when it erupts within group members.” In fact as cited in Samarasinghe et al. (1999:2) collective conflict is generally associated with distinct groups self-identified as such with separate interests, values and aspirations. Violence is normally understood as the use of physical force so as to cause injury or death [due to] vengeance killings, or a communal riot. Samarasinghe et al. (ibid: 9) further identifies the direct human and indirect socio-economic impacts as well as opportunity costs forgone due to violent conflicts. Accordingly “death by violence, famine or disease, stress and distress, migration and environmental destruction are direct human miseries that result from conflict. Erosion or degradation of social networks such as schools, clinics and family, destabilization of economic networks like marketing, destruction of infrastructure and loss of human capital that includes skills and knowledge are categorized as indirect Socio-economic impacts of conflict. Besides crops not grown, goods not traded, skills not learned and development not improved are some of opportunity costs of violent conflicts.” Despite a great number of victims, there are also some who benefit in every conflict. Indeed, many leaders (e.g. “warlords”) may stand to lose more from peace than continued conflict. Generally, all the above explanations on conflict reflect the fact that it is a normal social process, which is manifested in the course of human interaction particularly in a bid for scarce resources, status or power.

2.3 Concepts and Definitions of Ethnic Group, Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict

The term *ethnic* is derived from the Greek *ethnos*, which means stock, multitude, crowd and nation. Many claim that the Greek word in turn derives from the Sanskrit *sabbah*, community. Today it means primarily *people* (Bolaffi et al 2003:94). Thus *ethnic group* can be defined as a group of people who believe sharing one language, particular attachments to kinship, trace common ancestry, having collective memory and history, racial similarity, cultural symbols, common religion, outward physical characteristics, ‘collective proper name, an association with a specific homeland and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population.’² Weber quoted in Stone / Dennis (2003:32) defines ethnic groups as ‘human groups (other than kinship groups), which cherish a belief in their common origins [...] that it provides a basis for the creation of a community.’ Scherrer (1999:57-8) refers *Ethnicity* as a term used to describe a variety of forms of mobilization which ultimately relate to the autonomous existence of specifically ethnic forms of socialization.[...] states, transnational companies, liberation movements, migrants’ organizations, political parties, pressure groups, strategic groups, military leaders and populists all seek to make political capital out of ‘ethnic identity’. Ethnicity is mostly negatively charged in political discourse, having connotations such as ‘primitive’, ‘backward’, or ‘irrational’. According to Markakis (1996:300) ethnic identities are social constructs defined by the historical conditions in which they emerge. Bolaffi and his associates (2003: 94) suggested that “what we are witnessing today are not the atavistic remnants of an earlier age bound to disappear with modernization, but fairly recent creations shaped by social change.”

Overall, ethnicity implies the existence of an ‘us’ and a ‘them’, and therefore the concept of ‘other’ [that in turn evolve an ethnic Sentiment.] As cited in (Stone/Dennis 2003:32) “ethnic sentiment is an expression of who I am? How I identify myself, to what group of people I belonged.” Generally, there are three main schools of thought on the questions of how ethnic identity is formed and why it persists: the Primordialist, the instrumentalist, and the constructivist. Väyrynen (1999:128) refers Primordialism

² The last three features for a group sharing the same ethnicity are listed in (Smith1999:21 in Sotiropoulou 2002:2) Smith refers to six main attributes to define an *ethnie*.

(essentialism) view of an ethnic groups as “givens [rather than chosen in which one cannot simply decide to join].” Ray et al.(2006: 13) further explained view of earlier primordialists (such as Geertz, Isaacs, Naroll, Gordon, Mitchell, Epstein, and Furnivall) considered ethnicity to be a biologically given phenomenon organized around objective markers such as common cultural attributes. Väyrynen (1999:128) added more names of primordialist scholars such as Edward Shils, Clifford Geertz, Anthony Smith, Walker Connor and Donald Harowitz all of them share that ethnic identity and/or ethnicity is historically rooted, deeply embedded in people’s culture, reinforced by collective myths and memories, social institutions and practices, perpetuated inter generationally by early socialization and therefore likely to persist overtime. Harowitz argues people are born into an ethnic group in which they will die. There is antithesis to this primordial theory of ethnicity that ranges from the liberalists’ view to Marxists’ ideology. Esman (2004:38) on his part elaborates justifications of both ideological views regarding the primordial theory. He states “the two leading social philosophies of that era (twentieth century), liberal individualism and Marxism for different reasons rejected ethnicity as a legitimate basis for social organization. To liberals, the individual is the sole legitimate unit of value in human society and presumed social autonomy of the individual is suspect. And Marxists regarded economic class as the sole objective cleavage in the capitalist phase of socio-economic development. Thus, ethnic solidarity was either a surrogate for underlying class divisions, or more likely an expression of ‘false consciousness’ provoked and perpetuated by the capitalist ruling class in order to split and weaken the proletariat by dividing it into mutually hostile ethnic groups. Capitalist assumes ethnicity to evaporate through modernization while Marxists belief ethnicity ‘to be replaced by ‘real’ and ‘objective’ class consciousness:” Nevertheless, as argued by many scholars like Markakis (1996:299) “damned by nationalists as divisive ('tribalism') and by intellectuals as regressive ('primordial'), ethnicity not only survived but also grew stronger as the post-colonial state grew weaker. The fading of nationalism, the failure of development, the decline of the state, and the resulting general insecurity enhanced the political potential of ethnicity, as people sought support in traditional networks of solidarity and forms of identity.”

The other school of thought, Instrumentalism (Voluntarism) considered ethnic identity as “rational choice of an individual to belong him/herself in any group” (Seyoum Y.1997: 25-26). As cited in (Väyrynen 1999:128), the instrumentalists’ view of rational choice that in its extreme form reduces ethnic identification to cost-benefit-oriented economic choices. Ray and his associates (2006: 13) argued that “Instrumentalist’s (some versions of which are referred to as circumstantialists or ethnoskeptics) regard ethnicity either as a surrogate for more basic social forces such as class or colonial domination or as a fraud perpetrated by persons with self-serving objectives to exploit mass publics in pursuit of their political/economic ambitions. [Thus] ethnicity is mainly a myth propagated and exploited by ambitious and unscrupulous political entrepreneurs to build political followings for themselves and help them to attain and secure political power:” Likewise, Crocker (1999:4) correlates ethnicity as “Machiavellian tendencies and tactics of political leaders.” Overall, according to the instrumentalists view ethnicity is a product of elite manipulation in which leaders mobilize their followers in ethnic lines.

Group identity is not a static concept: As argued by (Samarasinghe et al.1999: 18) “it is dynamic; there are situations where group identity changes over time. This could happen particularly in situation of conflict when population segments feel the need to assert-or even create-their own identity and to politicize it to protect their special interests.” Paul R. Brass (1991) quoted in Ray et al. (2006:12) further concluded that ‘politicized ethnicity is thus the creation “of elites, who draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent in order to protect their well-being or existence or to gain political and economic advantage for their groups as well as for themselves.”

The third school of thought, that’s also the basic concept share in the course of this study, is constructivism or situationalism, which opposes both the primordial and instrumental approaches. As written in Ray et al. (2006: 12) “constructivists categorically reject the notion that ethnic identity is either a natural/given phenomenon or that it is simply a tool that is invoked and manipulated by ethnic entrepreneurs for individual or collective political ends. Rather ethnic identities are enduring social constructions. They are products of human actions and choices.” Ray et al. (2006: 12) further quoted Max Weber, one of the earlier writers who stressed the social construction of ethnic identity,

viewed ethnic groups as “human groups whose belief in a common ancestry, in spite of its origins being mostly fictions, is so strong that it leads to the creation of a community.” Austvoll (2006:4) further argued that “an individual can have a particular ethnic identity because other members of the category recognize and treat that individual as if s/he has that particular ethnic identity.” As such, ethnic identity is “socially constructed that can also be fragmented and destroyed eventually rather than natural phenomena” (Kasfir 1979: 370). Ray and his associates (2006: 11) further quoted Rex who categorized three things important for group creation that are “emotional satisfaction or warmth that one receives from belonging to a group; a shared belief in common origin and history of the group, however mythical or fictive, that helps to set up the boundaries of the group; and the felling among group members that the social relations, within which they live, [are] ‘sacred’ and [include] not merely the living but [also] the dead.” In the handbook of FPD (2003:3) ethnic groups are often compared with an inverted refrigerator. “The refrigerator generates inward coldness, but creates outward warmth. Ethnic groups create inward warmth for their members but also outward coldness, in order to be able to do so.”

Generally, it’s logical to accept that ethnicity by itself cannot be a source of conflict but can be used as a tool to mobilize a certain group of entity constructed through courses of socio-political changes. Thus, ethnic identity itself might vary through time in tune with social characteristics of humans’s dynamic interaction among themselves. However, societies will continue to divide themselves in line with the dichotomy of ‘us’ and ‘them’ that lead to physical antagonism. As Kona (2003:2) expressed the peril of hostility along ethnic lines by stating that “young children are trained from the very early stages of life to identify, hate and target presumed traditional enemies of their ethnic groups.[...] The children grow with mind-sets of enemies and throughout life train to destroy the enemy.” Tidwell (1998:174) stated “metaphorically, it is as if people are permeated by a spider’s web, or connected by countless invisible webs that link one another’s past and present, and which influence the course of their behaviour.” While framing how collective myths and guilt become persuasive in Bosnia ethnic cleansing Block (1993) in (Oberschall 2007:18) quoted an interview of paramilitaries in Bosnia saying that “ ‘[t]hey’ act in unison; children grow into adults; women give birth to future warriors; even old people stab you from behind; ‘they’ will never change.” As Kaplan (1994 in Oberschall

2007:11) suggested stereotyping the others group particularly absorbed in childhood is dangerous as it lead to hatred. Ancient hatred assumes that ethnic identities and group membership are primordial, sharply distinct, resilient to change, salient across all institutions and activities, and present high risk for repeated destructive conflicts. Even though, there are scholars who argue that ethnicity has nothing to do with conflicts between groups who confront over politico-economic factors, the menace of ethnic conflicts are reportedly boosted. Saideman (2001:4) quoted the speech of Russian Foreign Minister (New York Times Sep.29, 1993), “the threat of ethnic violence today is no less serious than the threat of nuclear war was yesterday.” In his first speech at the UN, as quoted by Wiberd et al. (1999:57-58), President Bill Clinton has affirmed that regional ethnic conflict to be one of the three most important sources of international instability. Moreover as cited in (O'Flynn 2006:3) “in two-thirds of all contemporary conflicts the ethnic factor (ethnicity) is a dominant or influential component. Despite statistics are always open to dispute, all the available evidence supports the view that ethnic conflict is one of the most serious and pervasive political problems that we face today.” As further argued by Wiberd et al. (1999:57-58), “ethnicity is mostly negatively charged in political discourse, having connotations such as ‘primitive’, ‘backward’, or ‘irrational’. [...] On the contrary, the importance of the ethnic dimension and its politicization has increased-influencing issues of status and categorization in violent conflicts as well as processes of civilian disputes, social demarcation and exclusion.” Young M. (2004:6-7) on his part asserted that “political ethnicity commonly known as ‘tribalism’, became visible [in Africa] in the 1950s. It was negatively viewed in two ways: firstly, as antithesis to progress, an artifact of traditionality in the African countryside which modernizers wanted to contain at the social margins, and secondly as a divisive and fissiparous force which posed great danger to the consolidation of new states. The First three independence decades of single-party authoritarianism drove ethnicity into the shadows. The widespread though uneven democratization surge of the 1990s revealed that ethnicity was alive and well. Ethnicity thus proved neither an expression of backwardness easily swept aside, nor a mortal threat to the political order.” Even if one could argue against the primordial view of ancient hatred as a source of ethnic conflict, the actual rapidly increasing of ethnicity based violent conflicts itself

indicates that fear and hate propaganda among various ethnic groups intensify the crisis further. Oberschall (2007:12) magnified the role of fear as a source of conflict. He argues “security dilemma (also referred to as the spiral of insecurity) holds that [...] what derives the conflict is not hatred, but mistrust and fear.” Esman (2004:71-73) has identified three main conditions that precipitate conflict among ethnic groups. Those are “[c]ommunity [h]onour /[d]ignity, tangible threats to the vital interests of an ethnic community by another ethnic group and fresh opportunities to gain advantages or redress grievances to upset an unsatisfactory status quo that had previously been considered impervious to change.” More specifically Ray et al. (2006:19) cited that “large-scale ethnic identity formation and politicization is promoted when various ethnic groups are forced to compete with each other for scarce resources and rewards.” Training manual of FPD (2003:15) stipulated that “competition and fight over scarce resources, or what are perceived as scarce resources, are very often the starting positions in the conflicts between different ethnic groups. ‘Winner-takes-it-all’ competitive approaches transform these conflicts in long-term deadly fights ended from time to time by short periods of dominance that leave one party with the desire for revenge, or periods of compromise that really do not satisfy parties, and are used by both sides to prepare for the next fight.” Furthermore, the economic root of conflicts like poverty, unemployment, corruption etc, might also lead to physiological factors in which a onetime privileged group may oppose to give up the benefits of domination. Therefore, as Oberschall (2007:15) explained confrontation may be initiated by the group who feel strong and confident of winning against the “threat to its favored position and way of life.” Apart from the economic grievance’s role in ethnic rivalry, cultural differences can also led to confrontation if those differences are ‘politicized and exploited for particular interests’. As Wiberg et al. (1999:166-7) stipulated the threat evolved on cultural values particularly of collective memories which are “a kind of living history book, giving a record of past traumatic experiences.” Spencer and Wollman (200:98 in Sotiropoulou 2004:10) added “common memories about the past that reflects all kinds of events, including disputes, past injustice and traumas, violence and victimization, wars, and mass violence may fuel conflicts. And if ethnicity is politicized it will offer ‘fertile ground for the nationalistic ideologies to

disintegrate the state and lead its people to conflict. Ethnicity thus became the meat for the nationalist meal.”

According to Horowitz (1985) quoted in Dutceac (2004:24) violent confrontations between groups of people that share the same state but not the same ethnic identity are generally designate as Ethnic conflict. In fact ethnic conflicts could also impact international relations of states. Because the conflict in one state could “threatens to spill over into interstate relations” (Ryan 1995). Moreover if ethnic groups are straddle in different national states due to historical courses, then internal conflict irruprts in one state would automatically spread over to cause ethnic tensions to rise in neighboring states. Therefore, as Suhrke and Noble (1977:3) argued “ethnic conflicts have peculiar characteristics that place them in the area where domestic and international politics interact. [Because] in many multiethnic states considerations of how a given foreign policy will and should affect the domestic ethnic balance continuously and decisively influences foreign policy formulation.” In this case Ryan (1995:32) suggested as “ethnic groups may be seen as [...] a Trojan horse serving the interests of outside powers.” Soeters (2005:4) described the international dimensions ethnic rivalry and concluded that “in the current globalizing world nothing remains internal.” Suhrke et al. (1977:213) in their part classified the level of complexity of an ethnic conflict related to factors such as the number of outside parties involved, amount of support, direct response to the conflict and influence on interstate cooperation. Thus ethnic conflicts can be categorized as “complex conflict expansion, simple conflict expansion, complex conflict containment, and simple conflict containment.” Suhrke and his associates (ibid: 226) have further classified the type of interventions in ethnic conflicts as instrumental and affective approaches. An instrumental intervention is involvement of the third party due to the “strategic significance of the territory or political alliances of the main protagonists” while the later is caused when “cross-boundary ethnic ties form the basis for outside involvement in the internal conflict.”

In regards to external involvement, Esman (2004:101-102) classified external influence on ethnic conflicts due to Irredenta³, Diaspora and Strategic Intervention in

³ Irredenta- Itallian word [irredento] means ‘unredeemed’ referring originally to the nineteenth century territories inhabited by Italian speakers, but ruled mostly by foreign states. It became the sacred duty of the

which the latter is motivated (not by ethnic solidarity like others) but solely by *realpolitik*, by cold-blooded calculations of national self-interest. (For example Israeli arms and financial and advisors support to south Sudan or Kurdish of Iraq) The meaning of land conceived by the people who live within the territory has also a power to invoke conflicts among different ethnic groups. As ethnicity is mostly links with territoriality, ethnic conflicts are somehow connected with territoriality as well. Platteau (1996:31) explained about Evolutionary Theory of Land Rights (ETLR) in which “rapid population growth, increased commercialisation of agriculture [or livestock export market in pastoral areas] plus regionalism [results] increasing land scarcity and growing land values [that in turn would lead to] strategic move to claim more lands or to protect customary access.” Thus territoriality may be taken as a factor of conflict. Territories are often seen as manifestations of violence, exclusion and power. At the same time, however, territoriality has also traditionally been seen as a solution for the problems of war and violence and its role is essential to the positive values of security and identity. As stated in (Forsberg 1999:91), “territory normally becomes a symbol for social kinship and an inalienable part of the common ethnic identity. In the case of ethnonational groups, the attachment to the territory is linked with a perception of a possessive relationship between people and space.” Ronnquist (1999:148) affirmed Forsberg’s thesis on people and space relation in such a way that “the territory in question is imagined as a historic ‘homeland’ as a rightful inheritance from past generations. This may be far from a very ‘true’ or ‘realistic’ recollection of the group’s past experiences and could perhaps best be described as a half-remembered but never forgotten history.” Similarly the ethnonationalist Irredentas are also major causes of inter-state and intra-state conflicts (ibid: 149). All in all as Kratochwil et al (1985) quoted in (Forsberg 1995:27) cited “territorial disputes tend to be more long standing than other kinds of disputes.” In fact, ethnic conflicts demand a careful analysis of phases of conflict development in relation to the extent of politicisation of identity in order to bring a lasting resolution.

unifying Italian state to ‘redeem’, that is to reunite them with the homeland by diplomatic and if need be, by popular uprisings and military means. (Esman 2004:101-102)

2.4 Key Theories and Concepts of Ethnic Conflict Resolution

Sophisticated social-cultural, politico-economical problems that causes conflict among distinctive groups should somehow be prevented, mitigated, managed and resolved using various mechanisms of conflict settlements so as to create a long-lasting peace and harmony among societies through transforming the hostile attitude and achieving a respectful coexistence. Tidwell (1998:14) listed Kenneth Boulding, Anatol Rapoport, Herbert Kelman, Quincy Wright and others joined forces in the mid 1950s in an attempt to examine the sources of conflict. In 1957 the Journal of Conflict Resolution (JCR) was first published. Conflict Resolution is a comprehensive concept that evolves various elements. Mohamed R. (1994: 50-52) wrote that “depending on the level, intensity, complexity, and importance of the conflict, strategies to deal with it include crises prevention or avoidance, crises management, control and containment, and conflict resolution. Crises prevention or avoidance is dealing with conflict either by freezing it or by creating larger political or security structures to prevent its escalation and the outbreak of serious hostilities. Crises management (consists of political, economic sanctions and / or military measures to arrest the escalation of a serious conflict and stop hostilities with a view to stabilizing the conflict at the pre-crisis level. Control and containment of conflicts that are major, threatening, but tolerable represent serious, ongoing conflicts. Conflict resolution is not a process to eliminate conflict but to vastly moderate its intensity and impact, eliminating the negative and reducing conflict to a subconscious force that continues to motivate people but does not dominate their outward attitudes and intergroup relationship.” Overall, as argued by Heradsteveit (1974:84-5) in (Ryan 1995:100-1) “once there is obtained conflict management there is also obtained some elements of conflict resolution.”

Conflict resolution by itself might not be enough as conflict born in specific time and place could be resolved but it may re-emerge, cultivate, and flourish and later it can ‘rot and die or it can be embedded within other conflicts’ through time. Hence, (Gibbons 2005:24) asserts conflict transformation is a vital task to be dealt with. It is removing the structures and attitudes that are causing or exacerbating violent expression conflicts and attempts to ‘transform’ the way in which they are dealt with. In reality what is needed is a

mixture of approaches, which alleviate or resolve existing conflicts and prevent and transform potential conflicts.

The first specialist in conflict resolution Galtung (1985) quoted in (Ryan 1995:51) argues that conflict resolution involves three distinct, but interrelated strategies. Peace-keeping, peace-building and peace-making. Peace-keeping (peace servicing) is practical implementation of peaceful social change through interposition of military and /or police forces between [conflicting parties]. Peace-making directed at reconciling political and strategical attitudes through mediation, negotiation, arbitration or conciliation [and Adjudication] . Peace-building strategy includes socio-economic activity addressing the problem of the target group [to rub out] negative attitudes and [reconstruction of] socio-economic structures. Mohamed R. (1994:58) stipulated “a genuine peace process must not concentrate on claims and counter claims only. It must go beyond that point and be prepared to deal with the real and perceived issues of conflict, issues that divide people and prevent them from working together to create political conditions for peaceful coexistence. Thus he suggests three complementary and simultaneous paths which are dealing directly with the real causes of conflict, not only with its symptoms, changing people’s mutual perceptions of the adversary by explaining the other’s grievances and legitimizing his basic demands and envisioning and gradually building integrative relationships that separate interest from values, emphasizing interests and recognizing values while promoting cooperation and fostering peace.”

Meanwhile, prior to engage in any conflict resolution processes, one should clearly identify root or systemic causes of the conflict, aggravating or accelerating factors, conflict prolonging (or sustaining) factors as well as conflict triggers. In other words grasping the root cause of a conflict would not be sufficient condition for settlement efforts unless underlying characteristics of proximate causes; positive and negative intervening factors are assessed thoroughly. Ray and his associates (2006: 91) also cited that “theoretically, conflicts may be resolved in one of three ways. First, disputants may resolve a conflict violently. The inevitable consequence of doing so-war-may ultimately settles the dispute when one side secures a victory. Second, and diametrically opposite to the first, disputants may decide to settle their differences through peaceful bargaining and negotiation on their own imitative [However] in the case of ethnic conflicts, which are

usually regarded as a zero-sum game by the adversaries, the disputing parties usually fail to implement them. The third way is resolution through the involvement of third party emphasis on international parties through peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace building.” In explaining the last option further Mwaûra and Schmeidl (2002:48) stipulated that “external interventions can be from major powers, regional and sub regional bodies, neighbouring and host states. The later are expected to be the main agency for CPMR [conflict preventing, managing, or resolving] but on occasion host states may fuel conflict, deliberately or through some unintended effect of other actions or circumstances. It may also lose the capacity to prevent and manage conflicts and thus allow those prepared to use violent means to gain the ascendancy. However, ideally it should play a role in community level conflict by being an even-handed mediator, even when it seeks to impose a solution administratively on both parties.” Esman (2004:97) added “government (state) as a neutral mediator-government often pose as benevolent referees between contending ethnic communities, intervening where necessary to settle incipient conflicts and to maintain harmony.” Nonetheless, as claimed by Mwaûra and Schmeidl (2002:48) “the state may often play a partisan role, which may not prevent violence and which makes sustainable resolution more difficult. Taking into account the centrality of the state’s role, in theory (if not always in practice) the prospects for preventing, managing, or resolving conflicts will depend as much as any other factor on the extent and manner of state involvement.” In fact handling the multi-ethnic groups in peace and mutual respect is the responsibility of the state than any other stakeholder. Mbaku et al (2001:6) stipulated that “when political institutions adequately harmonize the interests of diverse groups, diversity contributes positively to political stability and to economic growth and development. On the other hand, failure of institutions to deal adequately with diverse interests results in political instability, civil strife, and economic stagnation.” To bring this peaceful coexistence of multi ethnic people, apart from undertaking equitable and just socio-economic development and political accommodation, states shall also be able to use the traditional and/or hybrid dispute resolution mechanisms at times of crisis. As societies have their own system of social control, customary laws usually have an effective role in settling conflicts before the consequences destroy their social fabrics.

Rothchild (1997:99-108) identified three major means for resolving conflicts. Those are coercive, non-coercive and mixed incentive strategies. “The non-coercive approach is providing disputants with rewards for altering their perceptions and thereby acting in a cooperative manner. And as conflicts gain in intensity can no longer be resolved by non-coercive means, and then the coercive way may become necessary for the intermediary or coalition of intermediaries to attempt to force movement toward a decision by using some force of coercive incentive (a threat or punishment). Sometimes the individual conflict scenario may require mixed incentive strategies that are a mix of positive incentives and selective pressures.” Patchen (1987:182) quoted in (Rothchild 1997:107) further argued that using various carrots and sticks is vital to succeed in resolution efforts. “A strategy that begins with firmness-including the threat or use of coercion-in the early stages of a dispute and then switches to conciliation appears generally to be effective in securing cooperation from an opponent.” In the particular sense of resolving ethnic based conflict, Mohamed R. (1994:60) affirmed that “ethnic conflict is primarily a value-related conflict that has socio-cultural as well as political and economic causes” and hence he quoted Donald “it is intractable, partly because it is highly conducive to zero-sum outcomes-I win, you lose. It has high symbolic content [that] is not amendable to the manipulation of material benefits that so often constitutes the stuff of modern policymaking.” Ryan (1995:23) stated that literature on ethnic conflict has identified three models to deal with ethnic conflicts [while one group hegimonically control the engine of the state]. Those are consociational, control and shared homeland model. These key approaches for the management of ethnic conflict are listed by Esman (2004:172) as integrative, domination and power-sharing systems respectively. Apart from ‘integration, domination and democratised condominium’ Wolff (2003:227) has added another factor for settling ethno-territorial conflict that is secession/irredenta. For ethnic conflicts resulted from economic root economic growth is generally regarded as conflict decelerators ‘since it increases the size of the pie that can be shared.’ However, as claimed by Samarasinghe et al (1999:6) this is not always the case. “Economic growth may well destabilize, establishes structures and institutions and generate intense competition; breakdown traditional cultural norms and relationships destabilize society and create conditions for conflict.”

To back to the major concept of this study that is conflict resolution, Le Vine (1997:63) asserted that “the success or failure of [conflict resolution] initiatives will depend, critically, upon such things as the capacity (the ability to bring to bear or mobilize resources appropriate to the effort) of the intervener(s), the willingness and ability of the affected parties to respond, the timing of the attempt(s), and (in the context of the ontogeny model) the phase or stage at which the conflict is located when the intervention is attempted. It also depends, critically, on who intervenes or tries to do so.” Wolff (2003:223) has emphasized more on the interveners ability by arguing as “the overall success of the settlement process depends upon the flexibility, determination and skill of those involved to design an institutional framework that fits the variety of contextual circumstances of their particular conflict situation so as to provide for opportunities to resolve differences by peaceful and democratic means.” In explaining about alternative dispute resolution, John W. Burton (1993) affirmed that “if disputes cannot be arbitrated or mediated, then they must be adjudicated. All situations can be managed by reference to legal norms or by some form of negotiation⁴.” There is also an argument that separation of rivalry ethnic groups may become the only option for settlement of violent conflicts between societies within a state. Oberschall (2007:11) stipulates the primordial view of ancient hatred as “pessimistic about ethnic conflict management and about establishing lasting peace. Only separation will ensure lasting ethnic peace. Mixing or remixing (after ethnic cleansing) the ethnic groups in the same territory invites renewed violent conflict.” Moreover, for ethnic conflicts especially when the antagonistic parties straddle across national boundaries, settlement endeavor that involves regional states is vital. As argued by Tranca (2008:3) “two ethnic conflicts that despite having a high potential for regional diffusion, escalation signifies the transition to a new stage of the conflict, more intense or violent diffusion and contagion describe the

⁴ As cited in (Pruitt / Carnevale 1993:2 in Tidwell 1998:20), *Negotiation* can be defined as “a discussion between two or more parties with the apparent aim of resolving divergence of interest and thus escaping social conflict.” *Mediation* defines in (Folberg / Taylor 1984:7 in Tidwell 1998:21) as “the process by which the participants, together with the assistance of a neutral person or persons, systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives, and reach consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs.” (Goldberg et al. (1992) in Tidwell 1998:22) further described *Arbitration* as often “voluntary, final and binding [...] does nothing to address the underlying relationship between the parties. In this way it does nothing actually to resolve the conflict as such. It may resolve the outstanding issues between the [parties], but feelings of ill will and the like are left underdressed. And *adjudication* is an effort to resolve disputes and conflicts between parties through courts.”

same phenomenon, a spillover process by which conflicts in one country directly affect neighbouring countries, provide inspiration and guidance, both strategic and tactical.” Therefore, as Hansen, 1987:4 quoted in (Ryan 1995:23) argued “it would be futile [...] to attempt to work out lasting mechanisms for conflict resolution without taking external factors into consideration.”

Chapter Three

3 Backgrounds of the Study Area, the People and the Conflict

3.1 Introduction

The geographical term Horn of Africa, which was first used in the 1900s by the French geographer Fernand Maurette in reporting the *Mission Scientifique du Bourg de Bozas*, is alternative or sometimes parallel designation for Northeast Africa. Horn of Africa is the easternmost projection of the African continent that situated in front of the Arabian Sea along the southern side of the Gulf of Aden. Several writers have attempted to explain the strategic importance of the region in different ways. As cited in (Shinn et al. 2004: 210-11), the Horn takes its name from the point of Somalia that juts into the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean...[it] links Africa to the Middle East through a combination of its Judeo-Christian and Islamic legacies. Herbert Lewis (1966:1-2) highlighted the coastal borders of the Horn in such a way that “[the Horn] borders on the vital sea-lanes of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, with the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf region beyond.” In the preface of his book, *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa*, Berket (1980) further stressed this strategic neighbourhood by stating that “the Horn and the Gulf are two sides of the same strategic coin.”

Indeed, the sea that separates Africa and Asia enhanced the geo-strategic value of the region. Authors have also written the ‘uniqueness’ of the Red Sea from diverse views. For instance, Abir (1974:119) wrote, “[y]et long before the Suez Canal was completed in 1869 the Red Sea had been an exceedingly important avenue of trade and communications between the Far East, the Middle East and Europe.” As Mangone demonstrates in the preface of Lapidoth-Eschelbacher 1982: IX) “[n]o body of water has greater historical interest than the Red Sea”, and as Druzek (2001:1) describes physical features of the Sea having a surface area of some 438,000 km², about 2000 kms long with maximum width of 360km and an average depth of 490 meters but depths over 2,300 meter in central area is bordered by eight countries: Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen. Towards its north, Red Sea is extended by the man-made Suez Canal to provide navigation between the Indian Ocean and the

Mediterranean Sea. Moreover, in the northeast the Red Sea flows into the Gulf of Aqaba⁵ through the contentious Strait of Tiran⁶, and it extends southward through the narrow Bab al-Mandeb⁷ that bordered by the Gulf of Aden in the Republic of Yemen and the Gulf of Tağura in the Republic of Djibouti.

The Horn of Africa provides a perfect instance of a conflict-ridden area. In fact it has also appeared as a hotbed for superpower rivalry. Said S. Samatar (1979:37) affirmed that “as a magnet to iron filings, so is the Horn of Africa to world powers: inexorably, empires are drawn to its sandy shores only to be driven out by other empires”. In consequence, as Samatar continues, “the first known imperial agents to impinge on the history of the Horn were the ancient Egyptians who gave the region its classic name, the Land of Punt” sometimes God’s Land. The Egyptians were followed by the Greco-Romans whose ships plied the Red Sea coast from the first to seventh centuries. Then from seventh century onwards Arabs particularly the Omanis and other inhabitants of South Arabia, succeeded by the Persians, had a major impact on the history of interrelation among the Horn and regions across the sea. As indicated in Lapidoth-Eschelbacher (1982:15) the Arab conquest in the 7th century A.D. cut off the communications between Europe and the Indian Ocean. Later, the 16th century brought important changes in the Red Sea, for the Turks conquered Egypt in 1517. A short glance at the medieval history of the region can clearly show that the Ottoman Turkish had dominated the trade line in the coastal areas of the Horn and became the major actors in the region until the Portuguese took over the power. As Abir (1974:120) illustrated “the

⁵ Gulf of Aqaba is a large gulf of the Red Sea, which is 150km long and has a maximum width of 260km and a maximum depth of 1,850m. The Gulf which is an integral part of the Great Rift Valley that runs from East Africa is bordered by Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. Cities that share coastlines in the Gulf of Aqaba include Taba in Egypt, Eilat in Israel, Aqaba in Jordan, and Haql in Saudi Arabia.

⁶ Strait of Tiran is the narrow sea passages, about 13 km (8 miles) wide, between the Sinai and Arabian peninsulas which separate the Gulf of Aqaba from the Red Sea. As this strategically significant Strait is the only passage to access Jordan's sole seaport of Aqaba and Israel's only Indian Ocean seaport of Eilat, it was a catalyst to the 1956 Suez Crisis and the Six-Day War in 1967 as Egypt blockade the Straits to Israeli ships and ships bound for Israel.

⁷ The Strait of Bab-al-Mandeb (B.M) is the narrowest part of the passage with a distance of about 20 miles (30km) that extends between Ras Bab-al-Mandeb on the Asian shore and Ras Siyan on the African coast; it is divided by Perim Island. As cited in (Dubois 2003b:203) “In Arab tradition it is reported that in ancient times Asia and Africa were joined together, until they were split at B.M.” Due to the dangers like earthquake and volcanic eruptions attending its navigation, geographers primarily used the name ‘the Gate of Tears or ‘the Gate of the Wailing Yard.’

trade route of the Red Sea received in the second half of the [sixteenth] century, even surpassing its volume of the past.” By this time, as written by Samatar.S (1979:37), “the Red Sea littoral was already controlled by the new Muslim world power-the Ottoman [...] Ottoman attempted to expel Portuguese from the Indian Ocean but failed. Later on by the third quarter of the century [...] a balance emerged by which the Portuguese retained their control of the Indian Ocean whereas the Ottomans were left as the master of the Red Sea. The Ottomans who held various parts of the [Red Sea] coast for eleven centuries, until they were in turn shoved aside by modern European empires in the 19th century.”

Since eighteenth century, Europeans consciousness for the strategic significance of the region has reemerged. As stated by Amare (1989) “French–British rivalry in the eighteenth century and the Egypt ruler, Khedive Mhammed Ali’s ambition to control the Red Sea in early nineteenth century were all signs of awareness for the strategic importance of the Red Sea.” The opening of the Suez Canal made it even more important since the Red Sea became a vital line of communication, which connected Europe and the East. Its strategic importance grew immensely not only as a result of the opening of the Suez Canal, but as Abir (1980:119) stipulates the discovery of enormous oil resources in the Persian Gulf region has also played a role in enhancing the economic value of the region as a transit hub. Lewis Herbert (1966:1-2) on his part argued that “the opening of the canal in 1867 enhanced and internationalized the strategic and commercial value of the lands bordering the Red Sea, and thus increased the possibilities of external intervention in the affairs of the region.”

Without delving much into past history, it will suffice to say that Great Britain, France and Italy found themselves fiercely competing to gain a foothold along shores in the Horn of Africa. The British interest was stimulated by strategic concerns for the route to India. After British occupied Aden in 1839, interest in the opposite shore increased and Britain had taken the Somali coast opposite Aden under its protection in 1884. Then the British Somaliland came into being. The French presence in the region dates back from 1862 when the French government acquired the port of Obock by agreement with local

chieftains⁸. The Italian government had taken over the port of Assab in 1882 then stretched its possession to Massawa in 1885. Italians further moved on to the plateau and occupied the whole region down to the valley of Mareb in 1890 and called the occupied territories ‘*Colnia Eritrea*’. In the spring of 1889, Italy achieved its aim of bringing Obbia and Migertein under its protection and Italian Somaliland came into being. The Russian colonist as well set sail from Odessa in December 1888 and was set down at Sagallo on the Bay of Tağura in what is now the Republic of Djibouti. Unfortunate for the Russian Cossack leader Nikoli Ivanovich, the French who had already declared a protectorate over the area bombarded the Russian’s settlements prior to the Russian dream of “new Moscow” become realized⁹.

Despite all these growing competition among European powers to extend control over Africa, at least for some time in the past, Africa was beyond the range of American concerns. However the situation changed rapidly at the turn of the nineteenth century. Accordingly, President Theodore Roosevelt sent a mission to the Horn in 1903. Even though, the main aim of the Skinner mission was to look for trade opportunities in the region, it could be seen as an introductory chapter for the diplomatic relation between the US and the Horn region. Since the second half of the twenties century not only the major powers, U.S and USSR but western countries like France and Italy as far as China in the

⁸ Touval (1963:38) wrote detail historical facts about the French arrival to today’s Djibouti by stating as “Early indication of French interest in the area dates back to the 1830s and 1840s, when several French scientific expeditions visited the Red Sea and its coasts. One of them, led by C.E.X. Rochet d’Hericourt, visited the kingdom of Shoa in 1839 and 1840. [...] the same man sent on a second mission in 1842 and 1843, signed on behalf of France a ‘political and commercial Treaty’ with Sahle-Selassie, the King of Shoa. [Later on] in 1858, Heneri Lambert, French consular agent at Aden, entered into negotiations with Ibrahiom Abu-Beker, [...] regarding the cession of a port on that little body of water. [Even after the death of Heneri], the relation he had established with Abu-Beker ultimately proved useful. Comte Stanislas Russel, heading another French mission in 1858, [...] Capitan (later Admiral) Fleuriot de Langle took a force to Tağura in 1859, looked into Lambert’s death, brought the culprits to justice, and restored French prestige in the area. Then he reopened negotiations with Abu-Beker and other Danakil chieftains regarding the cession of a port in the Gulf of Tağura. These negotiations were successful and the chiefs delegated one of the members of Abu-Beker family [Dini Ahmed Abubakar] to go to Paris, where a treaty was ceremoniously signed on March 11, 1862 [later] the French flag was hoisted at Obock, and France officially took possession of the [area what is today Northern Djibouti] called the Territoire d’Obock.”

⁹ As written in (Pankhurst, R. 2003: 370) “Ashinov Nikolai Ivanovich, supported by the Russian Navy Minister, I.A shestakov who was interested in founding a coaling station on the Red Sea for naval operations in the Far East, aimed to found the “New Moscow” colony in the present day Djibouti. Accordingly, in January 1889, Ashnirov sailed with 200 men to the Bay of Tağura, where Sultan Mohammed Lo’oyta and Imam Mohammed Ali were ready to give him land and established himself at Sagalo. However, the French attacked his camp and forcibly expelled him from Africa.”

far east and immediate neighbours like Kenya, Sudan along with the littoral states of the Red Sea such as Egypt, Yemen, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states in the entire, as demonstrated by Amare (1989:78), “wish to ensure that the Red Sea will not be controlled by parties hostile to them and that there is a permanent safe passage through the straits of the Bab-el-Mandeb.”

During the cold war era, the US together with its competitor, the Soviet Union, become a major arbiter of the Horn politics. Mordechai Abir traced superpowers’ involvement in the Horn region as of the 1956 Suez fiasco. Abir (1974:124-5) has argued that “as the Suez Canal closed and its narrow straits controlled by NATO members, the Mediterranean is considered a fatal trap for the Soviet surface navy. [Hence] in 1957 Soviet signed economic and military agreement with Yemen [...] dredging a deep water port at Hodeida, on the west coast of the Red Sea. [Moreover], in 1962 the Soviet Union, unable to gain a foothold in Ethiopia, signed military and technical aid agreements with the Somali Republic. Similarly, US influence in the Horn region rising since the second half of twentieth century.” As Samatar S.(1979:122) stated “[i]mmediately after the WWII, Ethiopia made a series of military, political, and diplomatic arrangements with the U.S. (1979:77) In 1953, after Eritrea became federated with Ethiopia, the United States signed a 25-year economic and military aid agreement with Ethiopia to secure the use of the base [Kagnew¹⁰] until 1977.” Abir (1974:122) in his part added that “Kagnew’s importance to the American communications, space and other defence programmes gradually grew during the 1950s and 1960s.” Consequent to the U.S. role on the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia and Italy trusteeship of Italian Somaliland as a

¹⁰ As written by Tesfatsion (1986:23) “A multi-million dollar complex, Kagnew [established in 1943] was among the most crucial of the US National Security Agency (NSA) bases in the world. Kagenw is named after the name of an Ethiopian battalion that was sent to fight in Korea that was also the nom de guerre of Ras Mekonnen, Haile Selassie’s father. In 1971 Kagnew became the terminal of a communications network stretching from the Philippines through the Indian Ocean. [Kagnew] primarily served US military and intelligence objectives in the region. It was used to promote the ‘Command and control’ of the American ballistic missiles in the Indian Ocean. It also served in the conduct of what are known as ‘cryptologic activities’. These included operations of jamming and of telecasting coded information.[...] Using the high powered electronic devises at Kagnew, the US could monitor the middle east and even south Africa, the Soviet Union, and south-east Asia. It also served the interest of some US allies in the region, notably Israel.” As affirmed by (Abir 1974:122-3), “US interest regarding on overseas military bases and commitments was undergoing a change as the outcome of tremendous progress in the development of satellite communication with submarines.” Thus as cited in (Tsfatsion 1986:23) “after Diego Garcia on the Indian Ocean was leased by US from Britain, the last Americans left Kagnew station on 29 April 1977.”

reward for her membership in NATO, Eritrean liberation as well as pan-Somali movements “turned to the Socialist bloc for succor” (Samatar S. 1979:77). Accordingly, the founders of Eritrean independence struggle espoused a Marxist-Leninist ideology. Likewise, Somalis invited Soviets to build up naval bases at Berbera, Kismayu and Mogadishu. As indicated by Amare (1989:78) in Berbera, the Soviets built and maintained a large naval facility, a combat airport, a missile storage complex and other Camelot projects designed to support their large fleet in the Indian Ocean.

The 1974 Ethiopian revolution overturned the entire political order in the region. According to Samatar S. (1979:78) the new scenario “provided the necessary opportunity [to Soviets] to replace U.S. influence there without losing its position in Somalia.” Besides “as a challenge to the Pax Americana African Horn, the then Cuban president Fidel Castro proposed a confederation of Red Sea “Marxist and progressive” states (Ethiopia, Somalia, an independent Eritrea and the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen). [T]his scheme would equally serve the purpose of creating a PAX SOVIETICA in the region” (Samatar S.1979: 78-9). Nevertheless, war between the two “progressive” states becomes inevitable that in turn led to a shift of power in the regional order. Soviets abandoned Somalia and shift their extensive support to Ethiopia. While the Americans moved to naval bases at Berbera, Kismayu and Mogadisho, on the other hand naval bases in the Dahalak Archipelago and the Airbase in Asmara became Soviets’ strategic military bases in the Horn.

Apart from the world super powers, other states got involved in the Horn politics for various interests. For instance Chinese foreign policy that emphasized on national interest than political ideology derives China to turn to the Horn equipped with its resource diplomacy. According to Bard (1988:1) “primary interest of Israel in African Horn rested on the more tangible grounds of Realpolitik. Just as Africa was the scene of a battle of influence among the superpowers, so too has it been a battlefield between Israel and the Arabs”. Israelis’ strategic interest in the Horn area centered mainly on access to “naval base, monitoring center and accumulating nuclear wastes especially on Dahlak and Fatma Islands” (Samatar S. 1979:82). Preventing any possible blockade of the strait of Bab-el – Mandeb by Arab League member Red Sea riparian states is also prime strategic concern for Israel. As stated in (ibid: 85) “the oil-rich Gulf States like Saudi, Kuwait and Qatar

have played a role in the political scene of the Horn through their dollar diplomacy. Egypt has historic interests in the Horn of Africa, first because Ethiopia is the major source of the life-giving Nile and second because Egypt guards the northern gate of the Red Sea.” “Kenya’s interest in the Horn of Africa was related to the Ogaden problem, which was similar, if not identical, to the Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya” (ibid: 88).

Map 1. Horn of Africa



Generally, the Horn geopolitical position between the continents of Africa and Asia along with coastlines in Indian Ocean and the Red Sea enhanced its significance. In addition to economic lifeline security and ideological rivalry, global alliances in the fight against terrorism further boost the strategic value of the Horn today. Djibouti hosting the French military base and the American’s Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), in addition to Ethiopian and Eritrea’s influence over Islamic government of Sudan, political developments in very strategic but fragile Somalia and world economic powers’ competition for the region’s potential oil and mineral reserve in sum turned strategic importance of the Horn from ancient trade ties to the era of ‘global trade and terror’.

3.2 The Research Area

In a geopolitical sense, the Horn Proper includes the Republic of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. It is sometimes extended to include the northeastern Kenya as well. Three decades ago, as explained by Samatar S. (1979:37), “as unhappy heirs of colonialism, these countries are now driven with bloodshed, due largely to what they have inherited: a welter of artificial boundaries and political divisions which bear no relation to the natural ethnic or geographic units of the region.” There is yet tension of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Unsettled border issues and territorial claims between Djibouti and Eritrea is still potential explosive dispute in the region. Somali’s political crisis is a major threat to regional stability as well as global peace and security. Sudan’s internal turmoil and bloodshed further threaten future geo-political restructuring in the region. The conception of internal conflict within a state is becoming worthless as meddling in the affair of other state have become typical political gambling in which Horn governments are becoming masters of the game.

As many ethnic groups in Africa straddle along the then colonial and today’s national borders, inter-ethnic dispute in a single state usually have regional spill-over effect. In addition, dynamic regional political orders have also an influence on trans-border ethnic conflicts. Accordingly, the main focus of this study, the conflict between Afar and Issa/Somali people has also regional dimension features. Dynamic Political orders and actors from Eritrea in the north to Somalia in the south have an influence in the conflict in one way or another. Prior to analyzing the regional dynamics of this conflict, it’s better to review the physical settings and geo-strategic importance of specific research areas hosting the Afar and Issa/Somali people both in Ethiopia and Republic of Djibouti. In Ethiopia, adjacent areas within the regional states of Afar and Somali are the case under study while the mini republic of Djibouti in which both the Afar and Somali predominantly co-exist is the second study area where one could witness both pastoral resource competition and non-pastoral politico-economic power rivalry between the two societies.

3.2.1 Physical Setting

3.2.1.1 The Afar and Somali Regions in Ethiopia

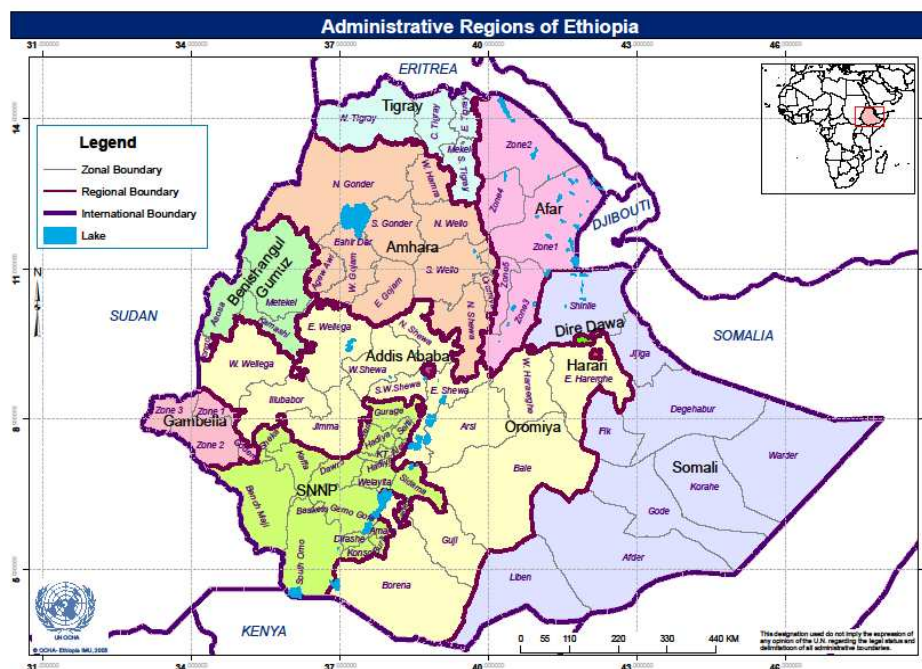
Under the current federal administrative structure of Ethiopia there are nine ethnolinguistically divided regional states and two chartered cities. The Afar and Somali regions are among these nine member states within the Ethiopian federation. The Afar National Regional State, which is a homeland of Afar people with a new capital named Samara is located in northeast of Ethiopia. Similarly the Somali National Regional State with a capital in Jijiga is located in the eastern-most part of Ethiopia. The Ethiopia's Somali region covers an area of 279,252 km² and divided in nine Zonal administrations and 47 Weredas while the Afar region, covering an area of 108,860 km² is comprised of five Zones and 32 Weredas.

The Afar region is bordering four regional states in Ethiopia, which are Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Somali and further sharing international boundary with Djibouti and Eritrea. Similarly, the Somali region of Ethiopia borders Djibouti, Somali, Kenya and Ethiopian regions of Oromia, Afar and the chartered city of Dire Dawa as well. According to the current map of federal Ethiopia, Afar and Somali regions have a common border stretching from the Middle Awash all the way towards the border of Djibouti. Meanwhile the northwest point of the Somali region and home of the Issa/Somali, Shinelle Zone, is bordering two zonal administrations in the Afar region. Zone one (Aawi Rasu) in the north and zone three (Gabi Rasu) in the south. Abraham (2002:1) explains Shinille zone as “one of the nine Zones of the Ethiopian Somali region and borders Djibouti and Somaliland in the north and east respectively; Jijiga zone in the southeast, and Oromiya and Afar regions in the south and west respectively.[...]Gurgura, Gedabursi and Hawiya clan groups are also the agropastoral residents in the zone.” Shinelle, which is named for its largest town, Shinelle, has six weredas out of which five towns are located along the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway line. (See appendix I)

Based on the 2007 Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), total population of Afar and Somali regional states are 1,411,092 and 4,439,147 respectively. The urban community in Afar region accounts 13.4% or 188,723 of the population while the urban inhabitants in Somali region number 621,210 or 14% of the

total population that consisting of 2,468,784 men and 1,970,363 women; while there are 786,338 men and 624,754 women in the Afar region. Based on figures from the Central Statistical Agency in 2005, Shinelle, home of the Issa/Somalis in Ethiopia has an estimated total population of 452,112, of whom 237,067 were males and 215,045 were females; 79,574 or 17.6% of its population are urban dwellers.

Map 2. Administrative Regions of Ethiopia



Source: OCHA- Ethiopia IMU, 2005

3.2.1.2 The Republic of Djibouti

Djibouti is a tiny state in the Horn of Africa covering a land area of 23,200 km². It borders with Eritrea in the north, Ethiopia in the west and south and Somalia (self-proclaimed state of Somaliland) in the southeast. On the shore of Red Sea, a coastline of approximately 370 kms ‘ranging from Ras Doumeria to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean lies to the east of the republic. Once called by Europeans “the valley of hell”, Djibouti is a land of permanent intense heat and drought’ (Schraeder 1993b). Djibouti contains two indigenous ethno-linguistic groups, the Afar and the Somali. Somalis call the terrain *guban* (burnt land) Gamst 2005:179) while Afars claim the word Djibouti

derived from an Afar word *gabouti* (a plate woven of doum-palm fibers and braised on a small pedestal (Thompson et al. 1968:8)¹¹. In 1892, France moved from Afar dominated Obock to the city of Djibouti where Afars, Somalis, and Arabs co-exist. On 20 May 1896 France united different territories as *Côte Française des Somalis et dependences*, meaning French Somaliland. In 1967, French renamed it as *Territoire Française des Afars et des Issas* (TFAI), meaning French Territory of the Afars and the Issas.

Djibouti is sectioned administratively into five regions and one city. Afars predominately inhabit in regions of Tağura, Obock and Dikhil while Somalis dwell in Ali Sabieh and the newly born Arta region. There are eleven districts in Djibouti¹². As confirmed by Gamst (2005:182) region of Afar is covering ca. 87% of the territory of the state. The whole political life of Djibouti revolves with these two major ethnic groups. Indeed small minority of Yemenites are the social fabric of Djibouti. The country as described by Marks (1974:100) is “commonly referred to by the name of its capital and only major city, Djibouti. Djibouti City is known locally as Ville de Djibouti, itself already contains two-thirds of the territory’s population.” According to data from the US Department of State, the population size of Djibouti for the year 2009 is estimated to be 516,055 out of which Somalis (mainly Issa, Gadebursi, Issaq and other stock) constitute over half of total size while Afars cover the remaining portion with small number of Arab communities.

¹¹ According to (Al-Shami/Al-Shami 1997:389) when a Frenchman asked an Afar fisherman who was cooking food in the shore about the name of the local name of the country by pointing to the land, then the Afar guy thought that the French man was asking him about what is the name of the pot he was using for cooking. Therefore he replied its Gabouti which means a pot. Bollee (2003:211) also confirms this discourse as ‘The origin of the name is not certain, but it is probably derived from an Afar word meaning ‘pot’.

¹² The eleven districts of Djibouti are: Alaili Dadda, Ali Sabieh, As Eylā, Balha, Dikhil, Djibouti, Dorra, Obock, Randa, Tadjoura and Yoboki.

Map 3. Administrative Districts of Djibouti



Source: CIA Fact book

3.2.2 Geo-Political Significance

3.2.2.1 The Afar and Somali Regions in Ethiopia

Historically the land inhabited by the Afar and Somali people has been the main trading route that connects the Abyssinian hinterland to the Red Sea ports of Zayla, Berbera, Tadjoura, Obock and Beylul. Commercial caravans including slaves were traverse the Somali and Afar lands in their way to the Arabian market. In addition to economic values, Ethiopian history records these regions as both an iron fence and open gates for external aggressions. As reviewed by Bahru (1991:51) “from Zeila, an Egyptian force in the guise of a scientific expedition, led by Muhammad Rauf Pasha, penetrated the south-east Ethiopian interior and occupied Harar on 11 October 1875. Concurrently, Werner Munzinger, the architect of Egyptian expansionism, led a force from Tağura, on the coast, in the direction of Shawa. His expedition came to grief on the sandy plains of Awsa, and Munzinger himself was killed in an ambush laid by the Afar.” Moreover, the

Italian colonialists invasion of Ethiopia through the Somali Ogaden region are some cases to be cited for explaining burly fence vs. unbolt gate dichotomy.

The Afar and Somali regions still remain as a throat through which transactions to and from the center and ports of Asseb, Djibouti and Berbera flows. About ten stations in Addis-Djibouti railway line are situated in Shenelle Zone of Somali region. Around 75% of vital road that link Addis Ababa to the harbours of Asseb and Djibouti run via the Afarland. Likewise the most utilized river in Ethiopia, Awash [Afar. We'ayot] that regularly flooded over 1200km runs through the Afar region of Ethiopia. Apart from availability of renowned archeological sites and significant geothermal power sources, the Afar and Somali regions have potential mineral resource deposit. Furthermore, the porous borders particularly to Somalia facilitate widespread smuggling of illicit goods including firearms in the region. These porous borders along the Somali and Afar region are yet remain as a potential threat to Ethiopia's stability because of serious speculation for the infiltration of Eritrean backed anti-EPRDF rebel groups as well as the Shababs of Mogadishu.

3.2.2.2 The Republic of Djibouti

As a political entity Djibouti came into being 115 years ago, when Napoleon III signed a "treaty of friendship" with local Afar tribesmen (Morgan 1978:47). Since its birth Djibouti has a strategic importance as marine gateway for Ethiopia. In the ninetieth century, the Frenchman intended to make Obock, on the Gulf of Tağura, the Shoan entrepot¹³. Apart from French's commercial interest in the early days of colony, Djibouti geopolitical importance to the French boost up particularly after the opening of Suez Canal. As Lewis H. (1966:51) affirmed the geo-strategic value of Djibouti " [it locates] at the Indian Ocean entrance to the Red Sea, opposite the British-held port of Aden, and

¹³ As discussed by Touval (1963: 39), "For nearly twenty years [since 1862] Obock lay forgotten by France.[...] a campaign waged by the author and traveler Denis de Rivoyre for the establishment of French enterprises and a supply depot at Obock met with general apathy and was not encouraged by the government. The 1880s, however, saw a general revival of French interest in colonial affairs. In 1881, de Rivoyre's efforts were rewarded with partial success. The French established two companies, which proceeded with the construction of installations at Obock-the 'Compagnie Franco-Ethiopienne' and the 'Societe Francaise d'Obock.' At the same time Obock became the base for French commercial enterprise in Abyssinia."

thus controls to the Bab-el-Mandeb, without which control over the canal itself is incomplete.”

The U.S. was also using Djibouti’s air and sea space as a controlling site to monitor all naval traffics in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean with particular focus on the Soviet’s naval activities. Yet after the collapse of the socialist camp, US rising demand to secure its share of African oil and the campaign against terrorism, derive her to establish a military base, Camp Lemonier, in Djibouti that serves as a headquarter of US-led East Africa Anti-Terrorism Task Force. Moreover, Djibouti’s intervention in the Somalia politics as a major mediator has further boosted her political role as a ‘stabilizing force’ in the region. Indeed, until the post-9/11 so-called ‘war against terrorism’, Djibouti’s strategic significance was little known beyond being a base for the largest French overseas military. Considering this fact, McGregor (2009:3-4) declared that “Few nations in the world are as strategically important but as little known as Djibouti, a small desert nation of half a million people in the heart of the Horn of Africa.”

Djibouti serves as an umbilical cord that connects Abyssinia to the sea. In fact Djibouti retains its historical value by playing the major role as sea outlet to the land locked Ethiopia. The newly constructed natural deep-water port at Doraleh as well as the planned ‘bridge of the Horn’ at the strait of Bab-el-Mendeb that would connect the continents of Asia and Africa, could possibly boost up the geopolitical significance of the tiny but one of “member of IGAD, a seven-member regional organization, one of the fifty-six members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, one of the five sub-Saharan member countries of the Arab League, and one of the fifty members of the Organization Internationale de la Francophonie” (Rotberg 2005:49). As affirmed by the USAID report, Djibouti is home to the only warehouse not based in the United States that prepositions American food aid for Africa and Asia, and reduces delivery times by 75 percent¹⁴.

The Republic of Djibouti, like its neighbours in the region, had entertained competition of the Russian, French, US as well as its giant neighbours of Ethiopia and Somalia to maintain a steadfast foothold. All these competitions and scramble of the Horn led to artificial borders where a homogenous ethnic groups are subjected to inhabit

¹⁴ http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/countries/djibouti/index.html

the territories of two or more adjacent states. Each colonial powers acquired far through deception and lure the territories they coveted in the region, without paying due attention to the people who occupied the land. The natives were under no single state and had no central authority but lived in traditional administrative system within their respective tribe and clan enclaves. When the colonial powers decided to draw boundaries along their respective possessions, the helpless indigenous inhabitants found themselves under new and different masters. The newly born nation-states naturally inherited these artificial borders, which were first designed to suit the interest of the colonial powers in flagrant violation of human rights. One can find the Hedareb, particularly of the Beni-Amer people and the Beja inhabiting the lowlands of Eritrea and their kith and kin across the adjacent national border of Sudan. The same is true for the Anuaa and Nuer as well as Berta and Gumuz people who straddle the border between the Sudan and Eritrea. In the same vein, the Saho-speaking people and the two Tigreans straddle between Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as the Oromos in Ethiopia and Kenya have similar cases in point. Some ethnic groups in the Horn region could be even found straddling borders of over two states. The colonial geopolitical architect imposed on the Somali people who believe to descend from a common ancestral father, for instance, forced them to be divided among Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and the Republic of Djibouti. In the same manner, the Afar people who have distinct cultural and linguistic identity of their own are forced to be partitioned among Ethiopian, Djibouti and yet in another part formed as a result of land-mines spread by Italian colony – Eritrea.

3.3 Socio-economic and Political Settings of the People

As Clement Adibe (1995:102) argues “understanding the nature of the society and the cause(s) of the conflict is a sine qua non for finding a solution.” With no brief look at the socio-economical and political variables among the conflicting groups, it might be less easy to analyze the multifaceted conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali. Hence, the next two subsequent subsections describe the socio-economic and political features of the two pastoral societies besides brief etymological explanations.

3.3.1 The Afar

3.3.1.1 Etymology of Afar

Different neighbours of Afars have various names given to the Afars. Adal, Adali, Oda'ali, Teltal and Dankali are names given by the Amhara, Oromo, Somali, Tigray and Arabs. The Amhara, Oromo and Somali respectively borrowed the names Adal, Adali and Oda'ali, which sounds the same as the ancestor of the dynasty and the son of Hadal Mahis¹⁵, Ado'ali (Afar: white Ali) (Yasin 2008: 41). As cited in Burton, R (1894: 9) Johnston relate the name Adal with the name of a place more correctly derives it from Adule, a city which, as proved by the monument bears its name, existed in the days of Ptolemy Euergetes (B.C. 247-222), had its own dynasty, and boasted of a conqueror who overcome the Troglodytes, Sabzeans, Homerites and C., and pushed his conquests as far as the frontier of Egypt. Wagner (2003:71) on the other hand narrowed the geographic area and argued that “Adal first appeared in historical record at the end of the 13th century [when] the Walasma ruler of Ifat, after his victory over the Mahzumi dynasty of Sawa, conquered in 1288 together with some other smaller Muslim principalities, that of Adal too.” Wagner (Ibid: 72) further asserted that “In modern Ethiopia the term Adal refers to the Ethiopian part of Awsa, and in Amharic Adalo is used for the inhabitants of that region.”

Similarly, due to historic commercial contacts between Arabian sailors and the Dankali clan located around Baylul in today's Eritrea, who ruled the Kingdom of Dankali (15th–17th century), Arabs gave the name Danakil to all Afar across the Red Sea Coast. As Lewis M. affirmed (1955:155) the name “Danakil’ first occurs in the 13th century

¹⁵ According to interview conducted with Mr. Awol Uttica, Hadal Mahis (Gibdo), in Afar traditional genealogical discourse, is the ancestor of several Afar tribes. In the Afar mythology Hadal Mahis's maternal uncle (some says maternal grandfather), Dengahaya Kemi who was the chief of the Ankala tribe has killed the father of Hadal Mahis, Kittoba le Omar himself believed to be an Ankala or Arab from Yemen (son of Omar, son of Yussuf al Yemeni) who was Quran teacher of children of the Ankala chief and once he made pregnanet one of the chief's daughters. When the son grew enough and asked where his father is, his mother told him to ask his uncle (or grandfather). Then his uncle (or grandfather) told him to ask the sword by pointing on the sword on the wall. Later on Hadal Mahis who understood the story about the death of his father seek to revenge his uncle (or grandfather) and got fire out of wood in which people were stunned. He climbed up on the tree and people gathered around asked him to come down so that they offered him a white and red carpet to step on it. He stood on the red carpet. There are some mythical argumentations in which the controversial Assahimera and Adohimera (red and white) dichotomy among the Afar is came from.

writings of the Arab geographer, Ibn Said.” According to Isenberg and his associates (1968:27-28), “Danakil is the Arabic mode of calling the whole by a part.” Teltal, however, is a derogatory name used by Tigrigna highlanders that derived from the Tigrigna word ‘Menteltal’, meaning hanging-down (of breast) in order to describe women of the lowland Afar as uncivilized because they did not cover their bodies from the waist up (being bare-breasted). Despite all the names, the Afar invariably call themselves ‘Afar’, which has no meaning in the Afar language¹⁶.

3.3.1.2 Mobility and Settlement Patterns of the Afar

Lewis Herbert (1966:38) who studied historical linguistic in dealing with twenty-four languages, has indicated that “the homeland of the Eastern-Cushitic-speaking peoples must have been in southern Ethiopia-northern Kenya.” In particular case, Lewis H (ibid) argued that “the age-grade organization among the Afar and some Somali may represent an inheritance from their earlier residence in southern Ethiopia.” Berhane (2003:31-42) on his part confirmed the movement of today’s eastern Cushitic peoples from the south to the north by stating as “comparative linguistic data also indicate that the Afar and Saho must have moved out of the south-west first, followed by the Somali, with the Galla expanding still more recently.” Berhane strengthen Afars’ earliest influx to northward than of the Somalis. He states as “Afar and Saho are so closely related that we are justified in assuming that they represent just one independent movement, with the split into two languages occurring after they were resident in the north-east [...] Afar and Saho have evidently been in there are along enough to have diverged into two closely related but distinct different languages. Among the Somali, however, the process of differentiation has not had time to go so far.” (Ibid)

¹⁶ As cited in (Yasin 2008:41), Rainmondo Franchetti relates the word ‘Afar’ to the mythical Ophir the 11th, in the order of son of Joktan, son of Shem, son of Noah. Whereas the Afar rather believe themselves to be in the line of the generation of Kush, son of Ham, son of Noah, who were among ‘the first Kushites to move from their original home and settle in the Danakil Depression’ (Murdock 1959: 319). Moreover, many argued that the biblical land of Ophir, the land rich in Gold is located in India or South Arabia rather than being that of the Afarland in the African Horn. Didier Morin designates the name Afar as having a possible but forgotten link with the Omani group called Afar or Ifar. AL-Shami argued that the name Afar might be drawn from the South Yemenis Ma’fara sub-clan of the Hamedta tribe who were the traditional rulers of Ardel Huria territory in the east of Bab-el-Mandeb across the Afar coasts on the Red Sea.

Afar oral tradition supports the south-north mobility in such a way that today's Afars belong to two distinct stocks-Sugeeti (those who stayed) and Yemeeti (early arrivals). As written by Gemaluddin (1998:28) "a good numbers of tribes who belonged to [Sugeeti] stock are no more in existence. In the past, they are believed to have constituted the majority of the Afar tribes, but with march of time they came dwindling in number and are now on the very verge of extinction." Gemaluddin further justified arguments explained above by Lewis H and Berhane in such a way that "the Afar language (Afaraf) is believed to have originally been theirs [the Sugeeti], but it has been adopted by the Yemeeti stock of tribes who arrived at irregular intervals of time and became Afar." Some Afar tribes belong to the Yemeeti stock claim that they arrived in today's Afar land from Arabia across the Red Sea descended from an Arab tribe of Quraish (tribe of the Prophet Mohammed) as claimed by majority of Moslem peoples in Africa. Indeed, the 'newly' arrived Afars had mingled with other Afar tribes of Cushitic origin (Sugeetei stock). Gemaluddin added "there are also some who are said to have come from the Oromos and the Somalis." From the Afar oral tradition, the clan known as Adeninto is believed to migrate from Aden, the southern city of Yemen. Similarly the Dahimelas [Bedoytamela] and Welwelu originated from Somali, Ferantu from Egypt and Berhitos are said to come from the Oromo.

Despite the route and period of their movement, today's Afar people inhabit the triangular-shaped territory that straddles in three states of Horn Africa namely Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti. The Afarland in the form of triangle stretches from the northern most fringes of the Boori peninsula to the vicinity of the Abyssinian highland plateau in the west. The eastern border of the Triangle extends from the city of Djibouti in the south following the railway line from Erer to Awash town. And both the west-east borderlines meet at Namale Fan (Mt. Fantale in the Awash park of Ethiopia), which is 140 miles Northeast of Addis Ababa. The north-south Afar coastal line along the Red Sea shores is over 800 miles long.) As cited in Gemaluddin (1998), "in approximation, Ethiopia comprises 65% of the Afar triangle, Eritrea 20% and Djibouti 15%." Afars are estimated to be slightly over 2 million in the three states they dwelled in the African Horn¹⁷.

¹⁷ Demographic statements have to be treated with caution in the case Afar context as transhumance pastoralists like Afar.

3.3.1.3 Socio- economic settings of the Afar People

The Afar people, who believe their genealogy in the line of the generation of Kush, son of Ham, son of Noah, inhabit some of the most arid and hostile environment of the Horn of Africa with low erratic rainfall and high temperature. The Afar is a pastoral society that survived for centuries by adapting and perfecting a lifestyle of nomadic pastoralism, more or less constantly moves with its livestock from one grazing area and water point to another depending on the availability of the resources. Nomadism is taken as a means of coping up with the dry and fragile environment. May/June is the driest season of the year, *Hagay*. It is said to be unsuitable for browsing since bushes dry up. The main rainy season, *Karma*, which accounts for above 60% of the annual total rainfall are from mid-July to mid-September. This is followed by slight rainy showers in late October or early November called *Dadaa*. It's the best grazing season also known as *Kayra* that occurs from September to November. *Gilal* is less severe dry season with relatively cool temperatures (November to March). Occasional rainfalls of *Dadaa* may interrupt *Gilal*. Another minor rainy season is *Sugum* and appears during March and April. The *Sugum* accounts for 20% of the total rain fall. Hence, Afar pastoralists are follow transhumance from one grazing area and watering points to another depending on the availability of resources. The Afar pastoralists usually make temporary settlement points, although they will never abandon the original or base encampment. The Afar pastoralists have good communication traditions, which they call *Dagu* that enable men patrolling scouts (*Gibba*) for mapping out places of seasonal movements to access resources as well as to take timely interaction between temporarily separated families.

Bondestam (1974:426) argued that the Afar are not nomads, but most of them stay near the river during the dry September-May season, and move only once a year to more distant areas. They are, therefore, heavily dependent on grazing close to the river. Kloos (1982:27) on his part explained two basic migration patterns prevailed in Afarland: relatively short movements between dry-season villages on the floodplains and wet-season pastures on the higher plains outside the riverine lands, and more extensive movements between dry-season villages and more distant arid areas and highland pastures.

Afar is believed to be regarded as an egalitarian society where class and status categorization seem to be non-existent within its clan system¹⁸. As written in (ACA-UK.2009: 2), “There is no distinctive class system in the Afar society as in the caste system in India, feudal estate systems of medieval Europe or the social class system, which has developed in industrial societies such as modern Britain. It is a naturally classless society because it shares both power and social stratifications together.” The social organizations of the Afar are responsible, among other things, for the allocation of human and animal resources to the various natural resource endowment areas. Accordingly, the Afar lands are divided into number of tribal territories (Dinto) demarcated by boundaries (Dikka), which follows natural features such as rivers, hills and rocks. However, Afar social institutions have maintained uniformity, whatever the distance between and among different Afar groups might be. Kinship is the basis of social organizations among the Afar pastoral nomads. The social relation of Afar pastoralist is based on genealogical reckoning, tracing ancestors through the father or mother’s line of descent or both. The kinship relationships of tribe, clan, sub-clan, lineage and family must be recognized and accounted for in every decision and issue that concerns resources shared by more than one groups among the Afars. Tribe is largest kinship group recognized by its members. There are over 150 tribes within the Afar and each tribe is independent and considers its leader to be of equal importance with other clan leaders, regardless of the size of the tribe. The clans (Kedo) that make up a tribe are the most political and social unit in terms of cooperation and belonging. Members of a clan recognize a common ancestor. The next nucleus is family (Dalla).

The Afar society is also divided according to a system of age groups associated with cluster of rights, duties privileges and status. Fiema is a formally organized group of men or women whose ‘recruitment’ is based on their age or / and the localities they come

¹⁸ There is a mythical agreement (as mentioned in footnote no.18) that the Afar society has a social class division in which the red people (Assahimera) are nobles while the white people (Adohimera) are commoners. However, the renowned sultanates of Rhaita and Gobad are categorized as white. As cited in (Pastner 1978:11) “in some cases the terms appear to apply to the descendants of different apical ancestors and in others to status differences within a descent group. This distinction may ultimately have an ecological basis in that the ‘whites’ traditionally predominated in the saline coastal areas while the ‘reds’ were more numerous in the reddish-soil deserts of the hinterland.” As Chedeville (1966:13) quoted in Assefa (1995:13) argued “the distinction might have arisen from historical migrations and intermingling of people from the sea coast (white) and the interior (red).” Meanwhile Muzinger (1865:212) argued that “it is difficult to say where these names [White men and Red men] came from, as all the people are black.”

from. Mostly it is the responsibility of the young people to take out animals for grazing. The rest remain near water sources caring for small stocks. The leader of the group (Fiema-aba) is responsible for coordinating the duties of the fiema such as prevention of conflict, executing fines and sanctions implementing elders' council decision etc.

Among Afars women undertake domestic duties such as managing food rationing, fetching water and firewood and too many other chores. Isenberg et al. (1968:27-28) explained women's role in Afar pastoral livelihood particularly during travels and reaches to a conclusion as "the [Afar] women seem to be industrious." (Even if the last decision on where and when to move, is decided by men, women are also responsible and actively participate in the process of moving and locating humans and also animal herds and their makeshift house, "Ari" into a new settlement area. They pack all household and other movable items and load them on a camels or donkey's back. In situations where only big animals move young men will be responsible for the travel and women and young children both boys and girls, stay behind and look after small stocks (e.g., goats and sheep). Generally, movements from one to the other place need a co-coordinated work and hence the Afar pastoralists perform this task in a collective manner.) Even though there are agro-pastoralist Afars along the narrow strip of the middle and lower Awash valley, the most important income generating activity for Afar is animal husbandry. Mainly, rearing of cattle, camel, sheep and goats for the daily subsistence need of milk and milk products, meat and hide is dominant. In general, livestock is pastoralists' capital. In fact fishing economy is being an alternative means of livelihood for the coastal communities.

3.3.1.4 Traditional Political Structure of the Afar

The Afar people have had an independent traditional political system, which possessed clearly defined geographic boundaries. The traditional authorities like 'Amoyetas, Därädärs, Redanätus, Momins and Makabantus are the highest political authorities representing individual tribes and/or numerous tribal confederacies. As cited in historical sources UKA listed some of the ancient kingdoms represented in Doba'a near to the Awsa, kingdom of Dulum, the kingdom of Dankali in Baylul, the kingdom of Ankala in Bayte Rahaito and the kingdom of Harak Bodoyta in Khor Angar. Even though these

ancient kingdoms have been gradually declined, the age-old traditional political structure exists yet in the Afar territory. The well recorded Sultanates of Rahaita, Tağura, Awasa, Bidu, Gobaad as well as that of Dawe are yet functional along with various the tribal confederacy Councils like Awoo kee Aala, Debenek Wé 'ima etc.

These traditional political authorities administered their society through their traditional customary law. As Gemaluddin (1998:35) claimed, “be it in the five sultanates or in the numerous tribal chieftaincies, the Afars are administered by customary laws known as MADA which are processed through litigation or law-suit known as MABLO¹⁹.”

The law court is called HARA the jury is called MAKAABAN. Although different regions of the Afar triangle have MADAs of their own; they differ only in minor aspects. The well-known madas are Burili mada (Burili's code of laws), Buddito barih mada (Buddito's son's code of law) and the Debnak- Wé 'ima mada (Debnak – Wé 'ima's code of law). Even though, the Afars straddle in different political borders as a result of the scramble for Africa and adhere by the law of their respective countries, yet traditional authorities have a significant influence even superior than the national rules and regulations.

3.3.2 Issa/Somali

3.3.2.1 Etymology of Somali and Issa

Most of the written literatures on Somali offer diverse meaning for the etymology of Somali. Professor I.M.Lewis, (1955:12) a renowned scholar on anthropological and ethnological studies among the Somali people, argued that “In classical times the Somali were known as “Berbers,” a designation survives in the name of the town of Berbera. Various attempts have been made to establish the origin of the word “Somali” been suggested that it is a combination of so (go) and mal (milk) refers to pastoral economy.” Saadia Touval (1963:10) also supports the ‘go-milk’ translation by referring to the words in such a way that “wandering stranger would hear upon his arrival in a Somali

¹⁹ It is a general council of clan leaders and elders within a tribe. It is the highest decision maker with regard to major changes in social organization, resources, re-allocation, and arrangements of self-defense and peacekeeping. The council is called and chaired by the chief of the tribe (Makaban).

encampment when his host sent one of the women or children to fetch some milk.” Abukar (2006) has pointed out another meaning in old Somali, “‘SO’ meant meat-now replaced by the modern word HILIB. Among speakers of MAI dialect, however, SO was still very much in use and was the only word for meat. The suffix MAAL means ‘to live on’ or ‘to make gain from’. Hence SO’MAAL literally means ‘one who lives on meat’-in other words a pastoralist.”

On the other hand, Burton in Lewis M. (1955:12), quoted the suggestion of Kamus in which ‘Samal’ whose nickname given to a tribal chieftain who had thrust out [in Arabic samala] his brother [‘s eye]. Touval (1963:10) brought another version of the etymology of the name Somali as the name is derived from “soumahe”, an Abyssinian word for “heathen”. Wright in Lewis M. (1955:18) confirmed “Soumahe” (heathens) bestowed upon the Somali after the campaigns of Ahmed Gran in the 16th century. However, Lewis M. (1955:12) asserted that “the name ‘Somali’ first appears in an Ethiopic hymn celebrating the victories of the Abyssinian Negus Yeshaq (1414-29) against the state of Ifat (which later become the State of Adal).” Wright in Lewis M. (1955:18) suggests the 1945 Military Report derives “Somali” “from Soma bin Tersoma Nagashi, who was governor of the country from Zeilah to Hafun.” Nevertheless as cited in Touval (1963:10) Somalis’ own view is that the name derives from the name of one of their ancestors. [Who was a rich trader] was nicknamed “Zumal”, which in Arabic means “the wealthy.” According to similar Somali mythical sources, the name Issa is designated for one branch of Somali, which derives from sheik Iise Mahammad who as cited in (Lewis M. 1955) “was buried at Mayd (Somaliland).”

3.3.2.2 Mobility and Settlement Patterns of the Issa/Somali

Similar to the Afars’ north-south mobility thesis, there are some mythical claims that Somalis are descendants of immigrant Arabs remains. In reviewing literatures concerning the genealogy of Somali-speaking people, Kusow (1995:84) demonstrates that traditional ethnologists, such as Enrico Cerulli and I.M. Lewis have postulated well-organized and rather elaborate the north-south migration routes and trends based on an otherwise highly mythical but ideologically enduring northern Somali oral tradition. This tradition claims that a long time ago, one Shiekh Jabarti and later another Sheikh Isaq, came to northern

Somalia and each married one of two Dir women. [Thus] ethnic composition of the current Somali population is believed to be -one nation half Arab, half Dir. By about the 10th or the 11th century, it is suggested, the descendants of Shiekh Jabarti and 200 years later those of Isaq started their migration and expansion from the shores of the Gulf of Aden to the plains of northern Kenya.

However, many studies argued for Somali's south-northward mobility in a time a bit later than the Afars movement. As indicated by Sheik-Abdi (1978:700) "historical linguistics Harold Fleming and Herbert Lewis proposes that the Somalis and Oromo, among other people of the Horn, are racially, culturally and linguistically related, having originated in present-day Bale Province in Ethiopia." As further confirmed by Touval (1963:10) Somali arrived in the Horn of Africa during the Middle-Ages and therefore are relative new comers. This justifies Asfaw's linguistic argumentation of Afar and Saho must have moved out of the south-west first, followed by the Somali, with the Galla expanding still more recently. Lewis M. (1980:22) argued that "about the tenth century some areas of southern Somaliland was still occupied by the (Bantu) Zanj, while the land in the centre and the north was occupied first by various Oromo tribes and then by the Somali. [Among others] the Dir Somali, universally regarded as the oldest Somali stock, were already in possession of much of the northern coastal strip and exerting pressure on the Oromo to their south." Lewis H. (1966:27) strengthen further the Somalis' south-north mobility as the similar manner of the Afars' mobility by stating that "the Galla occupied most of the Horn of Africa until the Somali, beginning about the tenth century, swept south and south-west from the shores of the Gulf of Aden driving the Galla before them." He concluded that "both the Galla and the Somali originated in southern Ethiopia that the Somali expanded to the east and north much earlier than the Galla." Lewis M. (1980: 23) has also attempted to indicate the routes of the migration in such a way that "[Somalis'] gradual and by no means co-ordinated movements towards the south followed two main routes: they descended from the north down the Valley of the Shebelle and its tributaries, or along the line of coastal wells on the Indian Ocean littoral."

Another theory put forward by Touval (1963:10) is that the Somalis are actually Semiticized Gallas. Burton (1984:71) also supports the above thesis and stated that the

“origin of the Somal is a matter of modern history. ‘Barbarah’ (Berberah), according to the Kamus is ‘a well known town in El Maghrib, and a race located between El Zanj-Zanzibar and the Negrotic coast and El Habash are descended from the Himyar chiefs Sanhaj (Sinhagia) and Sumamah and they arrived at the epoch of the conquest of Africa by the king Afrikus. [...] Progenitors of the Somal are nothing but a slice of the great Gala nation Islamized and Semiticized by repeated immigrations from Arabic intermixture of culture.” Lewis M. (1980:22) further supported the above mentioned theory and stated that “the Galla left an indelible impression upon the Somali in more ways than one. Negroid and Galla physical and cultural features are noticeable among the Sab faction of Somali society. The Sab tribal-family of the Digil and Rahanwein, until recently still Galla-speaking, arose from the intermixture of south-driving Somali with the rearguard of the Galla occupying most of the lower reaches of the Juba.” Similarly, Youssouf (2001) stipulates atomization, a process that in turn desomalise many Somali clans. According to Youssouf, Somalization intrinsically linked to the growth of Islam,

The main focus of this study, the Issa factions of Somalis as asserted by Morin (2007b: 218) “are not mentioned in such classical sources as the Futuh al Habesh (chronicle of Ahmed Gagn) hence their original homeland is still questionable.” The ‘Ise trace descent Patrilineally from their eponymous ancestor, ‘Ise Mahammad, whose grave lies close to that of Sayh Isaq at Mait in Erigavo District of northern Somaliland (Lewis M. 1961:71). According to Morin (2007b: 218) “Shiek Ise was the brother of Sheik Isaaq.” This is consistent with ‘Ise traditions of a general movement of the clan from the east of northern Somaliland towards their present habitat in the west. This westwards expansion which involved moving into land earlier held by Galla groups seems to have been occasioned by the expansion of the Isaq and Darod communities in the east. Lewis M. (1980:71) scrutinized the pattern of movement among various clans of Somali in such a way that “as the Darod and Isaq grew in numbers and territory; the Dir [believed to be the oldest Somali stock] vacated the north-eastern region of Somaliland, striking off westwards and to the south. In the west, the powerful ‘Ise and Gadabursi clans pushed gradually, and not without many set-backs, into what is today Harar Province of Ethiopia and the Jibuti Republic, leaving the graves of their ancestors several hundred miles behind them in the Erigavo District. To anticipate for a moment; it seems that by the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these movements by the Dir, Darod, and Isaq, had proceeded to the point where the two last groups of clans had taken over much of northern Somaliland and the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Thus, probably by the close of the seventeenth century, the clans of northern Somaliland had assumed approximately their present distribution, although the gradual drift of population from the north still continued.”

The Issa as explained by Morin (2007b: 218) are a major Northern Somali group living in Ethiopia mainly along the railway from Mulla to Djibouti, in the southeastern part of the Republic of Djibouti and in northwestern Somaliland. As the present day location of Issa in Djibouti indicated by Schraeder (1991) they inhabit the southern one-third of the country below the Gulf of Tağura and east of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway. Out of a total 15 Million Somali people inhabiting three states in the Horn of Africa, Issa constituted around one million²⁰.

3.3.2.3 Socio-economic settings of Issa/Somali

Ethnically and culturally the Somali belong to the Hamitic group (or as they are often called ‘Cushitic’). The Afar, the Beja, the Bilen, the Oromo, the Saho, and Somali are among the Cushitic-speaking people that predominantly inhabiting the Horn region. I M Lewis (1980: 4), explained the geographical border of the Somali in such a way that “their immediate neighbours to the north are the pastoral ‘Afar with whom they share Jibuti and who extend into Eritrea and Ethiopia. To the west, in Ethiopia, the Somali are bounded by the cultivating and pastoral Oromo; and in the south by the Boran Galla of Kenya.” Lewis H. (1966:35-6) in his part described the mythical claim of Somalis origin in his book, *Origin of Galla*, stated as “the Muslim Somali place high value on descent from Muhammad and his family, or at least from Arabs. Many Somali clan-families and clans, therefore, claim descent from immigrant Arab sheikhs or saints who married indigenous Somali women²¹ [...] leave unanswered where the indigenous Somali had

²⁰ The source for the population statistical data is CIA Fact book but demographic statements have to be treated with caution in the Issa/Somali context as great portion of the society practice transhumance pastoralists plus apart from accuracy no census was undertaken since more than two decades.

²¹ Abdalla, O (1995a:118) narrates legendary story similar to the Afar’s Hadal Mahis ,climbing up the tree. A certain man named Daarood was expelled from Arabia. Seeking refuge, he arrived at the Somali coast.

come from.” Similarly, Lewis M. (1955:19) presented the condensed genealogy of the Somali nation by putting the Qurayshtic lineage of the prophet Mohammed at the top of the ancestry tree from which Agil the father of Hill²² descended. The two sons of Hill, Sab and Somale are believed to be the main branches of Somali. The Sab and Samal speak the same language with distinct dialect. Abdurahman M. in Lilius (2001:229) confirmed that “the agro-pastoral Sab speak the *may tiri* Somali dialect while the pastoral nomad Samale speak the *maxzz tiri* dialect of the Somali language.”

According to Lewis M. (1980:9) there is considerable divergence in the social status too. “The Samaale are largely nomadic [...] warlike people living in small, temporary hamlets [...] smaller social units and more self-sufficient than those of the Sab. The Sab, mainly Digil, Rahanwein and Tunni are cultivators, living mainly in the south, between the Juba and Webi Shebeli. They are descendents of formerly nomadic tribes, the first Somalis to migrate into that area and conquer the country from its previous Negroid and Galla inhabitants. The social organization of the *Sab* is much more hierarchical and formal than that of the Samaale.” The *Sab* are considered as “less warlike, less individualistic, more cooperative and more biddable’ than their Samaale brethren. Sab are socially outcasted” (ibid: 4). As described in detail in (ibid: 18) “outcastes Sab designate three main groups: the Tumal, the Yibir, and the Midgan. The Tumal are blacksmiths making spears, arrows, horse bits, and other such articles. The Yibir are leather workers and the Midgan are hunters. All these groups have a reputation for witchcraft and magic. There is no mixing or intermarriage between the sab and the patron tribes and traditionally sab individuals and families are attached to specific Somali patrons (abbans) upon whom they are economically dependent, especially for bride wealth and blood-compensation.” The Samale clan-families comprise the Dir, Isaq,

He dug a well near a large tree. Then one day, he was discovered by Dir’s daughter, Doombiro, who was tending her flock somewhere in the vicinity. He watered her animals at ‘his’ well. Noticing that the stock had been watered more than the usual times, Dir one day decided to follow his daughter and discover for himself where the water for the animals was coming from. Seeing that there was a third person in the vicinity, Daarood quickly closed the well with a large stone and climbed up the tree. Dir and his followers sought Daarood’s aid after unsuccessful attempts to reopen the well. Daarood refused to come down until ‘the chieftain promis[ed] him his daughter in marriage’ and allowed him to descend on his own shoulders. From this marriage the Daarood clan family is said to have descended.

²² As cited in (Abdalla O. 1995a:117) “The mythical Hill (father of Sab and Samaale), to whom the Somalis trace thier genealogical origin, [is belived by most Somalis as he] descend from the Qurayshitic lineage of Prophet Muhammad.”

Hawiye, and Darod. According to the oral traditions Sons of the Dir are Medhaweni (eldest), Madobe, (Issa), Mendelug, (Gadabursi), Ahmed (Issaq), Doombiro (the daughter of Dir later married to Darrod)²³. The second son and as cited by Lewis I M. (1980:71) “the largest autonomous group representative of the Dir family are the Esa of British and French Somaliland.”

There is very few written about Issa/Somalias. As affirmed by Lewis M. (1961: 69) “the ‘Ise Somali of French Somaliland, Harar Province of Ethiopia, and the north-western regions of the new Somali Republic, despite their proximity to the modern town of Jibuti are amongst the most conservative of the northern Somali and probably the most dedicated to their traditional nomadic life. Although foreign explorers have often traversed their country and although they have long been under foreign administration they still remain one of the least well-documented northern Somali group.” Schraeder (1991) wrote about the Issa as “The Issas maintain an especially egalitarian form of social organization based on clan membership in which all ‘men’ are considered equal and each has the right to voice his opinion concerning the affairs of his clan. As such, decisions are arrived at through consensus.” Thus alike the Afar, the Issa/Somali has clan-based social hierarchical structure in which an individual fundamentally categorize her/his identity. As affirmed by Abdurahman M. (2001:228) “identifying oneself with his tribe automatically entitles an individual to certain rights and requires from him fulfillment of a set of obligations.” Lewis M. (1961:79) explained the social fabric of the Somali in general that is indistinguishable for the Issa too as “the building block of Somali society is the diyya-paying group. This unit is the fighting unit of males, who receive and pay blood-wealth in common.” Lewis (ibid: 229) continues as “the decision-making process is basically consultative, and all male members of the lineage have the right to participate and discuss matters of the tribe in a general assembly called shir A court composed of forty-four members representative of all sections of the clan. This body is known as the Rer Gendi [...] which is both a judicial court of appeal and a ritual congregation, is summoned only in times of national emergency or crisis.”

²³ From the data gathered during the interview of fifteen Issa clan chiefs at Melak Jebdu, 7 km from Dire Dawa.

There are various ways of clan divisions among the Issa people that ranges from blood ties to geographical patterns. Alike Afars' Red and White mythical division, Issas too have divisions of White (Issa 'Adde) and Black (Issa Madobe) from geographical viewpoint. As cited in Lewis M. (1961:25) the Esa living to the north and seawards of the line of hills running from Jibuti to Harar are known as the "White," while those to the west of this line are the "Black."²⁴ Morin (2007b: 218) in his part classified the traditional geographical division of nomadic Issa into four: 1) Ğahmagarato ('those ignoring the direction of the prayer', 'those never at peace') or Issa madow ('Black Issa. '), raiding the Afar pastoralists beyond the Wadi Obno towards the right bank of the Awaš river;(2) Baniin ğoog ('those living in Rhigozum somalense'), grazing east of the Holhol-Djibouti railway portion in winter, and towards Saaweer in Somaliland and further in summer, where they were also known as I. ad ('White I.') or Nin ad ('White man') ; (3) As ğoog ('those of the red lands') to the south-west of the latter, grazing during the summer between Ayšaa'a and Derre Dawa. (4) Qoton ğoog, to the south of Ali Sabieh, [94km] southeast of the capital whose herds passed the summer around Haddagaala.

Apart from the geographical divisions cited above, Adam (1992:16) mentioned about Issa's decision "to transcend the concept of kinship based solely on 'blood'. All six clans came to constitute the Issa clan family through this legal instrument." According to Lewis M. (1961:73-4) 'Ise is said to have had three sons: Eleye (also known as Abgal²⁵), Ali (also known as Walaldon and Holleqade), and Holle (also known as Furlabe). These 'primary line-ages', three Ise (saddehda 'Ise) are 'Ise by birth (dalad) and the second

²⁴ I M Lewis (1961:75) elaborated the black-white categorization as follows: "The 'Black 'Ise' are those who live and move with their stock mainly in the west towards the 'Afar and in Ethiopia: the 'White 'Ise' lie to the east towards the Gadabursi and pasture their livestock along the coastal Guban (footnoted as literally burnt land, from gub, to burn) plains. Apart from the white sandy terrain in the coast, the fact that since water is widespread and plentiful on the coast, they [white] wash their cloths more frequently.[while] the black 'Ise ,on the other hand [...] move in country where water is less widely distributed are said to wash less frequently. [...] the black 'Ise are said to possess more cattle and camels than the White 'Ise' whose chief wealth is in sheep and goats [...] some lineages are divided between the two geographical areas and groups may change their patterns of movement over the years and according to the distribution of rain and pasture through the seasons. However, the Black 'Ise' usually comprise the following-the Wardiq; [some factions of Muse Eleye; Horrone as a whole; some segments of Furlabe and Walaldon). The White 'Ise' usually include some of the Furlabe, part of Muse 'Eleye and of Mamassan [...] and some Walaldon."

²⁵ Schraeder wrote in the introduction part of his book (1991), "The Abgal clan family, which accounts for three-quarters of all Issas in the Horn of Africa and two-thirds of those living in Djibouti, includes the following four sub-clans: Yonis-Moussa, Saad-Moussa, Mamassan and Ourweiné."

group, known as the ‘three followers’ (saddehda so’ra) are ‘Ise by adoption (daqad) consists of the Horrone [Isaq origin], Urweyne [Afar descendants], and Wardik²⁶. The loose association of Ali, Holle, and Horrone called Dalol.²⁷ [This association] relates largely to numerical and fighting strength. The ‘Eleye are the most numerous of the ‘Ise fractions and to offset their power the Walaldon, Holle and Horrone have combined. The Wardiq who stand-alone and belong neither to the Dalol or Abgal division are said to be the smallest numerically [...] they traditionally supply the clan-heads of the ‘Ise [Ugaas]. Thus though they are weak in fighting power, they are strong in ritual. Morin (2007b: 219) points out another classification [of Issas] and he puts on equal terms 12 sub-clans [among which] the 44 ‘great electors’ of the *Ugaas* are elected.²⁸ “Heterogeneity of the tribe through the aggregation of non-Somalis such as the ‘Harla’ and their adoption like ‘Horroone’ included in the lineage of Sheik Ise’s elder son.”²⁹ (Ibid)

Lewis M. (1961:73-4) affirmed that “despite the division[s] all the ‘Ise have a strong sense of clan identity in relation to outsiders.” Sheik-Abdi (1978:701) indicates the social hierarchy of the Issa society. “The family unit, or qois [...] these family units, which may all be related by blood via paternal descent, constitute the next building block of tribal

²⁶ “‘Ise Somali majority trace descent from Sheik Fiqi ‘Umar, whose genealogy goes back to first Caliph Abu Bakar as-Saddiq and are accordingly sometimes known as the Rer Abu Bakar Saddiq or Rer Fiqi ‘Umar. Aw Barhadle is said to be a messenger of Islam and the ancestor of the Wardiiq. Other ‘Ise again state that the Wardiq are of Isaq descent, indeed of the Habar Tol Ja’lo, and derive from captives taken in war by the early ancestors of the ‘Ise.” (Lewis, I. 1961)

²⁷ According to Schraeder (1991), “The Dalol clan family, which accounts for only one-fourth of all Issas are roughly one-third of those living in Djibouti, is similarly divided among four sub-clans: the Fourlaba, Horoneh, Walaldon and Wardick.” However, Lewis remains the Wardick neutral of this grouping. Schraeder further affirmed that (1993) “although very few in number, the Wardick derive their prestige from the fact that the ‘Ugas’, or spiritual leader of the entire Issa ethnic group, is chosen from this clan family.” The Ugaas also called Robli, a rainmaker. Morin (2007b:218) supported the rainmaker theory and elaborated as “The charismatic rain-maker ugaas is chosen among different sub clans of the Wardiiq (Waqtisiile, Reer Golowwaaq Rumawaq and Wahtisil.” However, Lewis, M. (1961:81), argued as [Though some travelers describe Ugas as Roble (rainy) to say he’s role as a rain maker] “rather he is regarded as a ritual leader to some extent charged with the duty of securing through his prayers and those of the Gendi the general physical and moral property of his people.”

²⁸ The two sub calns within the six Issa house are from Eleye (Mamassan and Sied Mussa (Harala); from Hawlekadai (Agewweynei and Mekahil); from Hole (Amhadele and Saibi), from Werdik (wektishille and Rumawak) from Hurone (Geil welal and Haber welal) and from Uroweinie (Feki and Abdelle).

²⁹ There are many cases within the Somali in which ethnic identities were constructed. As cited by Youssouf (2001) “In *"Abyssinia" Campaigns*, a book written in Arabic Salahadin, it repeatedly question agreements between the Somalis and Harla, Somalis and Akishe. These are segments of Somali today when they were not in the sixteenth century.”

society, the rer. A number of rers (rero) residing within the same general area (or even scattered and interspersed among other rers constitute a *qolo* or *qabiil*, or clan. When all the *qabiils* claiming descent from a common eponymous ancestor are taken together, the result is a tribe, which may have thousands of members.” As mentioned in Lewis M. (1961:76) “unlike their neighbours the ‘Afar and Galla, the ‘Ise do not have age-grades.” Alike their pastoral neighbours, however, Issa pastoralists inhabit arid and semi arid areas of the region in which the environment is fragile, harsh and inhospitable. Even though water points and rangeland areas are controlled through tribal ownership among Somalis, no other Somali tribe could be excluded to use either the wells or grazing areas. As stated by Lewis M. (1961: 75) “pasturage is regarded as a gift of God to man in general, or rather to Somalis, and is not considered to belong to specific groups. Generally, people and stock are most deployed after the rains when the grazing is fresh and green; while in the dry seasons they are forced to concentrate nearer the wells and make do with what grazing can be found in their proximity.” In the particular case of the Issa/Somalis Lewis M. (ibid) confirmed that “Ise insist most strongly, perhaps more strongly than other northern Somali that the land which they occupy is far for the purpose of grazing open to the livestock of all ‘Ise without respect to their lineage affiliation.” In describing the seasonal mobility of the Issa/Somali tribes, Lewis M.(1994:90) indicated that “the centers of population are the home wells to which in *Haga* [dry season July-August] and *Dhair* [November-December] tribes retire from the far grazing, and from which in *Jilal* [January-February], they move out to the new pasture after the *Gu* [April-May] rains. In the dry season tribes are concentrated round the home wells, which are often shared among friendly tribes.”

Apart from the pastoral livelihood, Somalis are actively involved in trade. As confirmed by Lewis M. (1994:128-9) “most travelers who have recorded their impressions of Somali character have noted the acute commercial sense of the Somali, [...] Somali certainly seek to profit from financial transactions and would endorse the view that money talks, that wealth is power, and as such is highly desirable. And Somali are very much alive to the exploitable resources of another.” These business-oriented attitude among the Somali in general and that of the Issa in particular can be traced centuries back as the area they inhabited were the main route for trade transaction along

the coasts and hinterlands of the Horn region. As stipulated by Coats (1984:175) “the Issa came to occupy, at least by the mid-19th century and perhaps centuries earlier, a structural niche in the chain of communication and transportation that linked the general region of the Horn to overseas markets. [...] Issa have occupied the steppes and environs of the Zeyla corridor for centuries.” Coats (Ibid: 180) added that “the route via Biakkaboba and Gildessa then to Harar, covering a distance of 250 kilometers, could be crossed in 15 days by commercial traffic and 5 by foot messengers. By the 19th century they effectively controlled the corridor and participated in its commercial traffic.”

Among all activities, the well-known Abban trade was the major source of income to the Issa/Somali since centuries back. As Lewis M. (1994:114-5) suggested “the segmentary nature of Somali society with its many lineages often at war, and with no central authority to which common appeal could be made, had its repercussions in the organization of the caravan trade. To reach the coast in safety a caravan had to have protection on its journey among many different and often hostile clans. The leader of the caravan of laden burden camels entered into a relationship of protection with those amongst whom he passed on his way to the coast. A patron was selected for his probity, status, and above all in a society where force is all important, for the strength of his lineage. The position of protector is called the abban (may derive from the word ab or aabbe, father) is given gifts in return for his services. Having agreed to act in this capacity, the patron is responsible for the security of the caravan under his protection, for its good and for the lives of those with it.” Harris (1844:40-1) confirmed the role of Aban in the Patron-protégé relationship in the 19th century trade activity in the region. As he stated “no form of government regulates the commerce; and, in the absence of imposts, barter is conducted solely through the medium of a native broker styled Aban, who, receiving a regulated per-centage upon purchases and sales, is bound, at the risk of his own life, to protect his constituent from injury or outrage.” Harris (ibid: 175-9) further added, “[w]estern imperialism of the 19th and early 20th centuries was to create the opportunity, however ephemeral, for numerous intermediary groups to operate on the fringes of world capitalism. The construction of the railroad and the operation of the line, which reached Dira-Daoua near Harar in 1903 presented new challenges to the intermediary role of the Issa. As the railroad moved forward to full operation, Djibouti

supplanted Zeyla as outlet for the export of the plateau and the intermediate role of the Issa was transformed toward more marginalized functions within the evolving rail-based export and import economy of the Horn.” The rupturing of the relationship (between Zayla and Issa) as the Djibouti railroad was extended, reaching Harar in 1903, spelled economic collapse for the ancient port. This collapse provoked fundamental changes in the Issa way of life. Even these days Issas are utilizing opportunities out of strategic geographical position they hold that led them to be master of illicit trade along the Ethio-Djibouti and Ethio-Somaliland borders.

3.3.2.4 Traditional Political Structure of Issa/Somali

As Kusow (1995:83) mentioned, there have been regional sultanates, Imams, Malaqs, between the 16th and the 18th centuries, but the Somali people never came under the control of a single political authority until 1960. Indeed, as Kusow (ibid: 10) asserted further “for the majority of northern Somali clans, the position of the Sultan, though often hereditary, is hardly more than an honorific title dignifying a man whose effective power is often no greater, and sometimes less, than that of other clan leaders.” A Somali Scholar, Youssouf (2001) further affirmed Kusow’s conclusion by stating as “even in the vocabulary, the Somalis have no common concept designed for the supreme authority of the cultural clan. We have identified nine different names: Sultan, Garad, Ugas, Malaq, Boqor, Baqow, Webber, Imam, Isim etc the absence of an institution above clan remains the foundation of social organization among Somalis.”

Lewis M (1980: 10) justified the absence of all inclusive single political authority among the Somalis in such a way that “Somali political allegiances are determined by descent in the male line; and, whatever their precise historical content, it is their lineage genealogies which direct the lines of political alliance and division. [...] Somalis sometimes compare the functions of their genealogies to a person’s address in Europe. [...] These genealogies define the basic political and legal status of the individual in Somali society at large and assign him a specific place in the social system.” Most writers on the history of Somali supported the above mentioned conclusions. For instance, Novati (2007: 224) declared as “No Somali state or unitary nation existed before colonialism.” (Abdurahman M. (2001: 227) stated “Somali constituted a cultural

and territorial nation before the colonial intrusion. Political nationhood, in the sense of having an overall central political authority, however, was the product of a nationalist endeavor, and was achieved only after European rule. Indeed, [the Somali country] had remained segmented into small tribal states in the rural territories and Muslim city-states dispersed throughout the coast.” As explained by Jacquin-Berdal (2002:150) kinship associations and Islamic law (the qanoon), [...] bond the society’s various strands together. Patrilineally traced blood ties (tol) constituted the key element of the Somali segmentary lineage system, but kinship relations and obligations were also dictated by marriage ties (Ibid) as well as by an unwritten code of practice heer (Somali sp.: xeer) which as Tosco (2007:9) refers it is the Somali customary law, the basis of social relationships, which is seen as independent from religion and politics. Adam (1992:16) also confirmed the specific case of the Issa people in which like all other Somali tribes, Issa “were ruled by their customary law, heer and a council – gudi.” Iye (1991) quoted in (Sheik-Abdi 1978:700), “The elders of the Issa (virtually a clan family) confronted civil wars, famine, banditry, destruction of trade and chaos by establishing a traditional constitution (Xeer Cisse) incorporating power-sharing principles which bound together six clans-three related by blood kinship and three ‘outside’ clans.”³⁰ As claimed by Jacquin-Berdal (2002:150) “this traditional delicate balance was undermined by the introduction of trade and commerce in the nineteenth century and by the imposition of colonial rule. Patrilinearity then assumed the predominant and unbridled role that has now become associated with the centrifugal forces of clanism. Clanism would therefore appear to be a relatively recent phenomenon and, to a certain extent, a deviation from the traditional kinship system.” Indeed, the Somalia case could be a living witness for drastic erosion of traditional social fabrics that led clan system to be a fundamental base for intra-ethnic conflicts and bloodsheds.

³⁰ According to the oral tradition, (from Issa elders) some centuries back Issa forefathers migrated from Zayla and gathered on the top of *Sitti* Mountain in today’s Aisha Wereda, a place called Las Harad. Having both parents alive and to have a son are basic conditions for an Issa elder to be elected as a representative of the twelve Issa sub-clans. Thus forty-four elders held twelve months long conferences on Mount Sitti in which the twelve Issa sub-clans were responsible to provide food for the elders in each month by turn. Finally the elders came out of 362 unwritten legal codes called as *hera*. There is mythical story believed to be happened at the Mount Sitti conference that is one day cloud hanging over the representatives of one Issa sub-clan, over the Wardik. All participants agreed that Wardiks are elected even by God. Since then the Issa/Somali leader, Ugaas is being chosen from the Wardik sub-clan.

3.4 Shared Norms and Values between the Afar and Issa/Somali Pastoralists

It would not be troublesome for a layman to figure out number of common features among the Afar and Issa/Somali people. As stated by Touval (1963: 22) “There are similarities between some Issa and Danakil [Afar] clans.” Apart from being an old neighbourhood, the Afar and Issa/Somali have many cultural features in common. While describing the socio-economic and political settings of both societies in the previous subsection, it is well indicated that both ethnic groups are tribal-based egalitarian societies with similar hierarchy of society (see figure 1) who are entirely adherents of the faith of Islam and share similar pattern of population movements, settlements as well as myths of genealogical connections in one way or another to the quriash tribe of the Prophet Mohammed. Afar and Issa/Somali further share common pastoral values, traditional institutions, customary laws, ecological characteristics, colonial experiences, and a common historical legacy of isolation, victimization and underdevelopment. Braukamper (2007) stipulated even similarity in their house construction. As a matter of fact, Lewis M. (1961:79) has also correlated the pastoral seasonal movements with that of their house construction by stating as “Peoples in the arid lowlands of the Ogaden and the Afar Triangle are largely camel nomads who need to be very mobile. Their dwellings have to be transportable and therefore constructed and dismantled quickly.”

The autonomous authority the clan chiefs had over their constituents was also another similar feature what the Afar and Somali society shared. As cited in Drysdale (1966:13) “Gastaldi’s sixteenth century neither map of North Eastern Africa, together with the texts of Francesco Alvares’ travels, testify to the independent status of the Somali and Dankali littoral and hinterland at that period in history; nor is there subsequent historical evidence that the Danakil and Somali coasts have ever formed ‘part and parcel’ of Ethiopia.”

The Afar and Issa/Somali shared similar population movement patterns too. Abir (1980: 75) stipulated that “it is most likely that for an extended period they inhabited the area to the south and southeast of the Ethiopian Rift Valley lakes and that the Somali and Dankali migrated with their herds from south to north rather than from north to south. This migration was probably triggered off by population growth and the insufficiency of

grazing land and, finally, mounting pressure of Galla tribes, who had begun their two-pronged expansion, it seems, in the fifteenth century.” Even in regards to the mythical north-south migration, both groups claim to be descendents of the south Arabian influx as well as descendant of the Quriash of Mecca.

Indeed there are some who claims that Issa is the son of Hadal Mahis.³¹ Similar to the claim by some Afar tribes like Daheimela and Welwelu who trace their origin from the Darod branch of Somali, Issa clans like Urweyne, Horone, Harla, Walaldon and Wardik are also cited by oral traditions of the Afar and in some cases within the Issa themselves to be from Afar origin. Moreover, Afar elders claims that there are substantial number of Issas adopted within Afar clans for different reasons. For instance, Lewis M. (1955:160) stated that “the Ad Saleh, inhabiting the islands of Abbaguba and Baca in the bay of Hawakil, are recent Somali Mijertein immigrants (about a hundred years). They were formerly bound to the Mijertein of Somaliland but have severed that connection and allied themselves with Damoheita of Buri.” Isenberg and his associates have also indicated the historical relationship between some Afar tribes and that of Issa/Soamli. According to (Isenberg et al.1968: 41) “The We’ema Danakil maintain about 100 Somal bow-men, who have been taken from various Somal tribes, and are now naturalized among them: they still preserve, however, their Somal tongue, and marry among themselves, without intermixing with the Danakils. The Danakils regard shooting as unlawful and therefore employ the Somals in it. They seem to carry on bloody wars sometimes among themselves.”

According to elders from both societies Weima/Afars used to have agreement with Issa/Somalis not to fight each other but to share what they got by looting other Somali or Afar clans. Moreover, according to the Afar’s oral tradition, Issa/Somalis were used to offer girls to Weimas. Thus there is a local discourse that the Fekirtho and Awedo among the Weima/Afars have blood relations with the Issa. Furthermore, the Fidihihi clan of Afar [in Sidha Bura] has an afbeha that is a very close friendly relation with some Issa

³¹ There is a mythical story about the death of Hadal Mahis in which he told before his death that among his three sons, one wouldn’t get his inheritance. Then after the death of the father, one elder told them to bring one of their father’s left ribs. The two sons denied while the third one, the Issa has agreed to bring. Then the elder told them that the Issa is the one that your father has told about not getting any from his wealth. Then Issa took only one camel and left his homeland. In fact, Afars have strong believe that Issa was not among the three sons of Hadal Mahis.(Ado Ali, Samol lako’ li and Moday)

clans. Haysemale Afars inhabit around Awash-7 and Awash-40 areas, according to elders' confirmation, have some Issa/Somali clans live under their protection. On the other hand around Haysemale Comma, a mountain near to Djibouti territory, the oral tradition affirmed that there are Afars of Able who went to Issa long ago and became Issa/Able and during Afar and Issa/Somali conflict the Able/Issas fight the Afars along siding Issas.

There were also alliances between Issa/Somali and southeastern Afar Debné confederation who occupied the western and northern territories of the city of Zeila since the first decade of the second half of the 17th century to protect the city of the Oromo invasion from the plateau of Harrar and from Somali nomads incursions from southern coast after the decline of the original southern Afars, few of them are living now in Awsa, particularly in Afambo Woreda. As affirmed by Harris (1844) and Isenberg et al. (1968) “the Issa were the Debné allies first against the Oromo and after against the Modayto of Awsa sultanate.” They were also working for the Debné as goat-keepers. The songs of Horra of Debné women further confirm this alliance. The title of this song is ‘Da’ar bôr nârré’ (Daqar Boor naarre) means ‘We are migrating to the plateaus.’³² Morin affirmed the claim that Debné/Afars had an alliance with Issa/Somali against the Afar of Awsa. As cited in Morin (2007c: 90) “oral tradition explains that Hummad b. Lo’oyta wanted to use the French to extend the influence of the Debné over Awsa itself-a project already followed by his father. Due to a conflict with the Asahyammara of Ba’adu in 1886 he helped Daggazmach Mekonen Welde Mikael in a raid against Ba’adu. Hummad was also said to have encouraged the Issa in their attacks against Awsa.” Isenberg et al. (1968:44-5) further confirmed the above stated claim by stating as “in their wars, the Debenik We’emas always make common cause with the Issa Somalis against the Mudaitus, in which event the Issa Somalis amount to one third of their number.” They [Issa] are on pretty good terms with the Debenik We’emas (Ibid: 38). As added by Dubois (2005b:816) at times, alliances between the Afar from Goba’ad and the Issa devoted against the powerful sultanate of Awsa were also secured. Al-Shami / Al-Shami (1997:

³² To cite one translated verse from the Horra: “We became the cousins of the Issa; we became the nephew (by the mother side) of the Oromo”. It refers that between the cousins (Issas) there is no war but between nephews and their uncles (Oromos) war is possible. (From the interview conducted with Aramis Humad, a Historian from Djibouti)

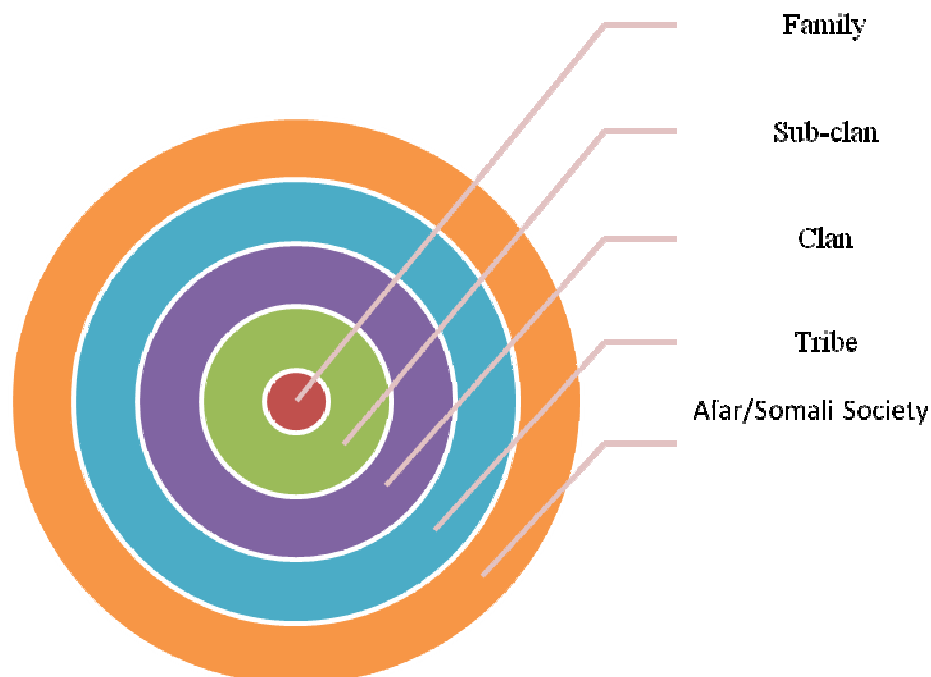
455) wrote as “in June 1867 Sultan Mohammed Hanfare invaded Issa/Somali and Debné/Afar tribes.” Thus according to some Afars, Issa/Somali occupied pacifically the arid regions abandoned by the Afars.³³ However, there is also a local discourse among the Issa/Somalis that they pushed the Afars from Zayla as a result of successive wars.

Apart from alliance during wars, Issa/Somali have similar cultural values sometimes close to the Afar’s than other Somali clans. For example the well-known Afar’s rugby game called *Afar Koasso* is also a famous cultural game among the Issa/Somalis. As cited in Lewis M. (1961:76-8) “a game which [‘Ise] share with some sections of the Gadabursi but which is not as far as I am aware found elsewhere in northern Somaliland. This is a form of touch rugby called *go’onso* played with a ball [...] approximately equal numbers [of teams]. Alike rule of the game in the Afar Koasso injuries sustained in the game which is as lively as rugby do not entitle the injured person to claim damages.” Furthermore, Lewis M. (1955:25) suggests that “the warriors of both tribes (Esa and Gadabursi) are distinguished from those of other Somali by the characteristic vertical scars they bear on the cheeks or forehead; in addition to the normal Somali weapons, they have strong and dangerous slings.” Similarly the Afars also have a culture of making vertical scars on their cheeks and carry strong knife called *Gille*. Indeed, it needs detail anthropological study to clarify local discourses about the ancestral link with the Afar and Issa/Somali people. Despite all the above mentioned shared values, norms and strategic alliances they had, today the relation between the two pastoral groups deteriorating gradually and reached to a level of severe hostility among each other.³⁴

³³ According to data gathered during the interview with an Afar historian, Aramis Humad Soule.

³⁴ According to an interview with an Afar elder, Ibrahim Said Mohammed, the level of hostility developed through centuries old neighbourhood between the Afar and Issa/Somali could be easily explained by an incident happened before some decades long in which an Issa man named Ali Medeba from Reer Gulleni sub-clan had died of smallpox and he confessed not to bury his body but else to lay it in the Erer river in order to poison the water used by Afars. According to the local discourse, many Afar lost their lives due to smallpox contamination.

Figure 1. Social Hierarchy of Afar and Issa /Somali societies



Source: Modified the original made by IPS 1999

3.5 Review of the Genesis of the Conflict

As suggested by (Stone 2003:1) “many of the current conflicts can only be fully understood against a background of the historical roots of present day relationships and identities.” Accordingly, brief historical review of the conflict is crucial to analyze the role of regional political dynamics on the escalation of the long-standing conflict between the Issa/Somalis and the Afars. In looking into historic circumstances that led to the current situation, Zeila would become the centre of attention. As cited in Lewis M. (1980:21) “Zeila [which] first appears in the record of the Arab geographers at the end of the ninth century when it is mentioned by Al-Ya ‘qubi, is one of the northern coastal towns that located in today’s Somaliland, 37 kms south-east of Djibouti. [16 km from city of Djibouti to Loyada, frontier post and 21 km from there to Zeila] Zeila was originally the centre of the Muslim emirate of Adal, part of the state of Ifat, which lay in the plateau

region of eastern Shoa.³⁵ From the time at which the port enters Islamic history, it had apparently a mixed Arab, Somali and Danakil ('Afar) population. In the course of time, no one knows exactly when, these three separate elements to some extent fused to form a distinctive Zeila culture and Zeila dialect which was a blend of Arabic, Somali and 'Afar. No doubt other minor ethnic elements were also represented; Persians and Indians seem to have settled in the port at an early period, but the main elements in the Zeila culture were Arab, Somali and 'Afar." Isenberg et al. (1968: 2-3) described in detail about the late 1930s travelers experience in Zeila, it stated as "they landed at Zeilah on the 1st of April 1839. This is a decayed town, containing only eight stone houses and about one hundred straw huts, together occupied by about 800 inhabitants, the greater part of whom are Somals, with some Danakils and Arabs." Al-Shami / Al-Shami (1997: 594) further affirmed that "in the 18th and beginning of 19th century, Zayla was dominantly inhabited by Afars. There were many Afar businessmen; particularly fishing business was entirely dominated by Afars. Somalis who were seen in the town of Zayla were small in number." In fact the above assertion is shared by other writers too. For instance, Touval (1963:45) affirmed that "at the time when Britain acquired it [Zayla], the Somalis occupied only its fringes." Later these Somalis moved deeper into the territory, and their numbers were augmented by new arrivals from the Italian and Ethiopian territories in the north. After the 19th century 8th decades whilst Egyptian withdrew from Zayla. Al-Shamis (1997:594) have claimed that "except few fishermen, Issa/Somalis held all other businesses." Even during the arrival of the British in Zayla in 1885, they have signed treaty with the Gadabursi who inhabited south and southwestern portion on Zayla.³⁶ There are historians argued as Issa/Somalis have controlled Afars territory along Zayla as the Afars abandon the area between 19th-20th centuries due to harsh climatic situation. However, travelers have confirmed that feuds between the Afar and Issa people were existed during their trip in 1830s. As Burton (1984: 68) stated his personal witness "during my short stay at Zayla six or seven murders were committed close to the walls:

³⁵ Awdal is one of the six regions in Somaliland. Its capital is Borama Awdal (also spelled Adal or Adel) takes its name from of the ancient empire the Adal Sultanate whose power rose in the 16th Century.

³⁶ As cited in (Muktar 2003:113) Ugas of Gadabursi, Ilmi Roble Warfa (1835-1934) was one of the Gadabursi elders who signed the treaty with the British at Zayla in 1884. Ilmi's authority was recognized in a coronation ceremony in Zayla in 1917

the Abban brought news, a few hours before our departure, that two Isas had been slaughtered by the Habor Awal. The Isa and Danakil also have a blood feud, which causes perpetual loss of life. But a short time ago six men of these two tribes were travelling together, when suddenly the last but one received from the hindermost a deadly spear thrust in the back.” Gradually in late 19th century Afars has lost their presence in Zayla and moved upward to Djibouti.

As cited in (Spencer 1979:25), “ninety years ago the Djibouti territory was predominantly Afar. It was only in recent years that Somalis have flooded into the territory and succeeded in transforming what had been a largely Afar city into Somali one. Even today the larger part of the Djibouti state is Afar territory and it is abundantly clear that the Afars have not the slightest disposition to accept Somali domination.” In accordance to the interview held with Djiboutian historian, Aramis Houmed, today’s Djibouti and Arta up to Dikhil were the original home of Afar tribes known today in the name of Ayroyta (Koutoubla, Arkalto, Mafa, etc). They are living now in the region of the southern delta of the lower Awash and in the middle valley. The ancient presence of the Arkalto is known in the region by the great tombs named after them: Arkalto kubuura (the tombs of Arkalto). Since early 20th century the point of contention transformed from Zeila to the present Republic of Djibouti. Overall, the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali has its root in historical movement of people, culture as well as economic factors. Meanwhile, it seems that the conflict was manageable in the local clan elders’ level through their traditional resolution mechanisms.

3.5.1 Population Mobility in Shaping the Conflict

As Afars arrived in southeastern and eastern part of the Horn of Africa earlier than the Somalis during both groups successive and extended movement from south to north, they might come to blows over territorial control as one moved to replace the other unless welcomed by the early arrivals. Though this argument demands detail research on historical movements of the Afar and Issa/Somali along the Horn region, the medieval period successive wars between the Adal sultanate and Abyssinian highlanders, the defeat of Ahmed Gragh, and Oromos movement are among the major factors that weaken the

Afars and gave a chance for the Issa/Somalis to control vast areas. Medhane (2004:9-11) argued as follows:

The Somali-Afar conflict at least dates back to the population movements and the Muslim-Christian (lowland-highland) conflict during the medieval period .As early as the 14th century the Afar was being pushed by Somalis who were pressured by military campaign of Christian state in the lowlands because of their geographic proximity to the highlands. The defeat of Gragn [Ahmed] forces and revenge by Christian rulers of Ethiopia must have led to a large-scale population displacement and of the Afar in particular who were living in and around the Muslim sultanates of Ifat, Adal or Harar. The prime victims, the Afars weakened by repeated attacks from the Christian state became more vulnerable to Somali repeated attacks and expulsion. Furthermore, the Oromo mass movement has led to the incursion of Issa/Somali clans and Oromo groups into the fertile Harar plateau and the displacement of some Afar clans and their concentration in the narrow strips of the Awash River and arid areas of Allaideghi plains. (Emphasis added)

Abir (1980) also claimed that “the Oromos massive attacks against the Afar was a factor that led them to be weaken and unable to resist Issa/Somalis pressure.” Abir (ibid: 136) further stated some cultural values and practices that could trigger the massive Oromo raids against the Afar in such a way that “according to the Gaala ritual, members of the second class of the gada could not be initiated into the next class unless they killed a warrior (or a dangerous animal) and fought an enemy, which had not been previously attacked. Even the pastoralist forces of Adal and its excellent cavalry, surprised by the attackers, their mobility and viciousness, were unable to stop them.” Abir (ibid: 75) also mentioned, “at the beginning of the sixteenth century the Somali tribes, only nominally Muslim, had already replaced the semitised cultivators in the area between the coast and Harar and begun to exert pressure on the Amirate of Harar, its smaller satellites and the southern Afar.” It was not only the Oromos, but aother pastoral groups were also pushed and/pushed by against each other during the mass movements of people. Morin (2007b: 90) wrote that “during the last century there has been a steady movement to the north-west while the Issa took over the grazing lands of other Afar and Somali (Isaaq, Samarroon) groups.” Lewis M. has clearly pointed out the influence of the mass movement of Issa over the territorial displacement of neighboring pastoralists. Lewis M (1961:71) wrote as “in addition, to the expulsion of Galla groups and also probably the incorporation of some into the ‘Ise clan, the westward thrust of the ‘Ise impelled the

‘Afar to move northwards into what are today the territories of French Somaliland and Eritrea. It has been claimed that as recently as one hundred and fifty years ago the ‘Afar were still close to Zeila which Jibouti is now well within the ‘Ise orbit.’”

Consequently at the end of 18th century Afars became neighbors of Somalis in the south and south east of Zeila, with Oromos in Harar plateau and to the highland Amharas in western escarpments and bordered Tigraeans and Sahos along chains of mountains and coasts in the north. As Isenberg and Krapf (1968:11) clearly mapped out the Afars territorial borders, which the travelers have observed during their trip to the area in 1830s, “numerous other tribes of Dankali spread over this portion of Africa till they come in contact with the Somauli to the south and south-east of Zeilah, and the Galla toward Hurrur, the kingdom of Shoa to the south-west and west, and again the Galla on the west, north-west, and north.” Abir (1980:75) further confirmed “the Dankali, who had arrived, it seems in the southeastern part of the Horn even earlier than the Somali, were gradually pushed northwards out of the Chercher-Harar region into the inhospitable deserts of the Ethiopian-Eritrean coast beyond the Awash, although they persistently clung to the slopes of the Harari plateau. Consequently they became the neighbours of the Saho pastoralists, who inhabited the coastal plains north of the bay of Zula and the salt depressions at the foot of the Tigrean plateau.” Therefore, reviewing the recent 18th and 19th century history could indicate that the border along the Somalis is highly fluid in relative to the other neighbors. Medhane (2004:14-15) stipulated the logic behind the move of the border along the Afar and Somali border by describing the concept of land among both societies. “The concept of land is very clear in the Afar. With the Issa it is not. The Issa-Somali believes that the right over land or water points is based on occupation at any point in time. With the Issa, one can have the right say to waterhole as long as he present in the area. If due to mobility or for some reason any group leaves an area temporarily and the Issa happen to be there, they easily claim the right to occupy it.”

3.5.2 Culture’s Role in the Conflict

Culture and conflict are inextricably linked. A culture that encouraged a group to be brave and warrior from early childhood has a vital influence for the relation that society

would have with its neighbours. As affirmed by Yohannes et al. (2005:35) “some cultural beliefs and traditions can further fuel [...] conflicts and contribute to a culture of mistrust between different ethnic groups. Apparently both the Somali and Afar have a custom of promoting heroism through songs, wearing ornaments and offering respect and high status for those who kill their ‘enemy’.” Youssouf (2001) make a comparative analysis of some customs of Somalis at present from that of the early 19th century and he found out that ‘the situation described in 1854 by Richard Burton in his famous book “The first footsteps in Horn of Africa,” is the same faced by Somalis today: lack of central authority, dominance of the clan logic, the practices of looting, conquests of new areas of pasture, water points are phenomena that mark the history of Somalis.’ Indeed, Abdalla O. (1995a: 109) added that “looting other people’s camels is not an illegal act for the Somali pastoralist. On the contrary, he [Somali man] regards the seizing of another’s camel(s) as a source of honor and pride (although Islam forbids it).” Isenberg et al. (1968:37-8) further affirmed the particular case of Issa/Somalis in such a way that “they [Issa] are malicious-that they steal and murder. Sometimes two or three of them go on a robbing expedition, and providing themselves with victuals for several months, secret themselves in ambush along the road, and lurk for travelers who may happen to separate themselves from the caravan, to assail and kill them.” I.M Lewis (1961:25) who studies the social structure of the Issa since 1950s concluded as “the Esa, among the richest camel-owners in the Protectorate [British Somaliland], are pastoral nomads and probably the most warlike and unsubdued of all Somali.”

On the other part earlier travelers and adventurers claimed the Afar to be war like people like that of the Somalis. For example Munzinger, Werner (1865:221) who later lost his life by the Afar’s rifle³⁷ concluded as “in the whole of barbarous Africa there is

³⁷ As written by Detlef and Smidt (2007:1070-1073) “Munzinger, Werner was a Swiss born on 21 April 1932 in Olten and died on 15 November 1875, at the Uddümma Lake, Awsa sultanate. He was a Swiss Orientalist, ethnographer and Egyptian governor. He married two wives. (Bilin woman, Näffa and an Oromo woman, Trungo) He was acting British (1864), French vice-consul at Massawa (1865) served at the Napier expedition within the intelligence department. He received the Most Honorable Order of the Bath III. In September 1869 he became the victim of an attempt on his life on his way from Kärän to Massawa, a group of local dignitaries having decided to reduce foreign influence and to eliminate Munzinger as its most prominent agent. He was nearly killed by three bullets, and it took him several months to recover. Later on, Munzinger become governor of Massawa Governorate and bey. He planned the integration of the salt plains (Afar Depression) into his Governorate. In October 1875 Munzinger was ordered by Ediw Ismal bš to lead a military-cum-settlers expedition to the kingdom of Šäwa via the then still independent sultanate

not a race more barbarous than the Afars.” As Thesiger (1998) described, Afar warrior “wear a colored loincloth, a comb or feather in his hair or decorate his knife and rifle with brass or silver until he has killed at least twice; he is then entitled to slit his ears. Ten killings are celebrated by the wearing of an iron bracelet. On their return from a raid, men who have not killed are subjected to the scorn of their womenfolk; their cloths are soiled and cow-dung is rubbed in their hair. On them falls the duty of providing animals for the feast.” Similarly as stated by Lewis M. (1961:76-77) “Ise warriors also wear bracelets signifying their success in war especially against their enemies. Youth does not shave his pubic hair until he has made a successful killing. Then a bronze bracelet called *maldaye* is worn on the left wrist. The warrior with two murders to his credit wears another bracelet called ‘*ag* on the upper arm. When a man has killed ten people the ‘*ag* armlet is opened and thrown away and the *maldaye* transferred to the right wrist, all other armulets and bracelets being discarded at the same time. Such a warrior with ten killings to boast of is called *mirre*. Apart from wearing ornaments the notorious practice of penis mutilation is also reported to occur within both communities.” Lewis M (ibid: 25) further cited that “the Esa have an outstanding reputation for fighting and are said to seek trophies of their valour by the emasculation of the slain.” Furthermore, Burton (1984:10) added that the “Isa attacked the first division [of caravan], carried off the wives and female slaves, whom they sold for ten dollars a head, and savagely mutilated upwards of 100 wretched boys.” On the other hand, despite Afars argument against the claim, scholars also write about the Afar’s custom of emasculation. Among those Munzinger, W. (1865:221) wrote as “the Afars, like the Gallas, mutilate those they kill, and wear the trophy.” Gebru (1991:35) in his part affirmed the *calim* in such a way that “the Afar, for whom male genitalia were prized as a trophy in war and a license to manhood.” Nevertheless, according to early travellers like Isenberg et al. (1968:76) denounce the claim as “taking off genitals is highly uncertain as an Afar custom, apart from Doka

of Áwsa, which was to be integrated into the Egyptian sphere of influence. He was accompanied by Egyptian officers and soldiers, his intelligence officer Haggemmacher and several settlers, by his first wife and by [emperor] Menilk’s ambassador to Egypt, ras Brru Wäldä Giyorgis. However, the Áwsa sultan, pretending friendship, led them into an ambush with the help of Húmmad b. Looyta; Afar warriors annihilated almost the whole party during a night attack in 14 to 15 November. Afar oral tradition remembers this event as important; the battle-site is called Fursé (‘place of Persians’ = i.e. [Muslim] foreigners; Morin 2006:97).”

people. Anyway, it is said to be an evidence of victory, but rejected by many tribes, as Debne, Gal eela, Adali, and generally Debnek and Wee'ima.”

Apart from wearing customary ornaments and heroism symbols in traditional conflicts like that of the Afar and Issa/Somali poetic songs and traditional proverbs also have major role in the conflict. As Kona (2003:7) stipulates the case of Somali pastoralists in Kenya, “poetic songs are composed in their praise thereby making their families proud and enhancing the entrenchment of warriorship. In particular, the role of traditional songs played by women in order to encourage the men to fight [are significant factors].” Yohannes et al. (2005:25) puts forward the gender dimensions of conflict “yet women also have a role in supporting the culture of heroism through proverbs, songs and ceremonies that encourage men to kill their enemy. The wife of a killer is also granted respect and is given a special status within the community.” In the work of Bliese Loren (1982/3) who studied traditional Afar songs there are lots of poetic songs called tirtira - war shouts. Likewise, Lewis M. (1961:77) affirms that many ‘Ise poems and songs take as their theme the successful murder of enemies, especially of the ‘Afar. He cited a typical song collected at Lugaye on the coast to the east of Zeila and composed by Ibrahim Beqsi, known as ‘Ise gerar, in which Issas celebrating the murder of an ‘Afar tribesman Ba’an ‘Ise. In fact the above sentence written by Lewis does not only indicate the role of poetic songs in the conflict but also the cultural factor of the conflict even before the Afars departure from Zeila. Thus, after observing this long-running conflict between the two societies, Lewis M. (1961) concluded as “indeed it is probably legitimate to speak of an almost constant state of enmity between the ‘Ise and the ‘Afar.”

3.5.3 Economic Causes of the Conflict

Apart from the role of culture and pattern of mobility, economic elements have also ignited the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali. Both societies have similar livelihood of transhumance pastoralism, evading unfavourable climatic condition and follow a seasonal migratory pattern that has long been recognized as an effective way for searching pasture and water. Thus, competition over increasingly scarce resources in a hostile environment has been a common source of conflict. Issa/Somalis have greater

ambition to reach on the basin of the Awash River either by pushing the Afars away or concluding a communal use agreement. As Youssouf (2004) described, the area inhabited by Issa/Somalis “from Gouban to Danakil Depression, and from Zeila to Dire Dawa, the region is characterized by a rugged volcanic terrain, lined low rainfall and a dry basement.’ thus he concluded the Issas are always ‘in a quest for permanent space, especially to the rich valleys of the Awash, transhumance areas of the Afar ethnic group.” And still today as suggested by Lewis M (1961:71) the “‘Ise pressure towards the northwest continues, one line of expansion being towards the Awash River.” According to Youssouf (2004) the Issas may be afraid but cannot find limits on their movement. Kaplan (1978:523) in his part described the resource cause of the conflict in Djibouti as “both people are traditionally nomadic, their enmity was born of fierce competition for scarce pastures and water holes amid Djibouti’s barren landscape.” Indeed the westward movement of Issa/Somali is not merely searching pasture and water but they seem to consider raiding as a tool to accumulate wealth.

In similar situation, Afar youths go raiding to restock their clan’s livestock population. Cattle raids are reported to be carried out by both the Afar and Issa/Somali since their recorded disputes in Zeila to the present day. Yohannes et al. (2005:7) argued that cattle rustling are also an important cause of violent conflict since “access to material and social assets such as livestock is central to pastoral society, for instance, to be able to pay dowry for getting married. In most of these communities, possession of livestock is the main way of socio-economic advancement, without which a young man cannot become independent.” About the conflict in Dikhil region of Djibouti, Kitevu (2007:2) argued as the conflicts [between the Afar and Issa] were “fuelled by the raid and theft of livestock-particularly camels, and competition over access, ownership and distribution of natural resources mostly water and pasture. Tree cutting and charcoal burning and trade were other problems that the local administration was dealing with in resolving conflicts in the region.” Furthermore, getting access to markets for livestock and illicit goods could be regarded as another economic factor that causes the conflict. As cited in Yohannes et al. (2005:7) there is also increasing evidence of the commercialization of cattle raiding, which now involves local administrations, unemployed individuals and even the police. Conflict can occur when rustled livestock is traded on and the original owners of the

livestock regard the transaction as illegitimate. As indicated in François Piguet (2001:3), “Issa have also an ambition to control the area across Awash till they approach to markets in the highland. In the centre of Afar Region, Issa people have already crossed the Awash River west of Adaytu and Afar are ready to fight them along River Talalak. All over the area, Issa movements westwards are significant.” Having establishments along the Addis-Asseb main road is also a major target to get easy access for the illicit trade in which Issa/Somalis are mastering it at the time. In addition, the early integration of Issa/Somalis in the commercial life of the Djiboutiville led a massive influx of Somalis into the capital.

Box.1 Zayla

Zayla was a great port in which caravan trade to and from the Ethiopian inland plateau were passing through. Many travelers confirmed that Arabs, Somalis and Afars were a onetime masters of the trade within the ancient city of Zayla that has five gates namely the Bab al-Sahil, the Bab al-Jadd, Bab al-Ashurbara, Bab abd al-Kadir and Bab al-Saghir which locates upon the sea in the north, in the southern part, eastward of the city and the western wall respectively. The walls were constructed by the ruler of the port, Garad Lado to protect the city from the raids of Somali nomads. According to local traditions, Arabs, the Yemenites, built the ancient site of Zayla. One of the most important patron saints that spread Islam among the Somali in the first half of the 15th century was Shaykh Ibrahim Abu Zarbeyn from Hadramawt. He has started his mission in Berbera and continued in Zayla. Zarbeyn travelled to Harar about A.D 1430 converted many to Islam later on he returned to Zayla where he died and buried. His tomb, near Ashurbara gate, is highly venerated by the Somalis as well as Afars. Abu Zarbeyn is yet remembered in Yemen for the introduction of Khat. Abu Zarbeyn means in Arabic language ‘the father of Zarbeyn’. Zarbeyn was the nickname of his son Shaykh Mohamed Zarbeyn whose sanctuary is in the east of Tadjourah. This shows the particular relations between the two ancient cities: Tadjourah and Zayla as confirmed by Afar oral traditions. Zayla was headquarters for the renowned sultanate of Adal that emerged around the 9th century and stretched its influence in the 13th century in most of the Islamic territories of the Horn. After the decline of the Adal state, Zayla retained its commercial position as the main outlet for the ancient caravan routes from the hinterlands of Abyssinia. Due to the power competition between the Otomans and Portuguese along the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, in July, 1516 the Portuguese expedition commanded by Lopez Suarvez Alberguiera unsuccessfully attempted to attack Jedda and on its return trip burnt Zayla. Later on when the Turks were compelled to retire from southern Arabia, it became subject to the prince of Sana’a who gave it in perpetuity to the family of a Sana’ani merchant. Beginning in 1630, after the kingdom of Yemen falling into decay, Zayla and apparently to some extent Berbera also passed under the authority of the Sherif of Mocha thus both ports were thus nominally incorporated in the Ottoman Empire. Between 1821 to 1841 Zayla came under the rule of Mohammed Ali Pasha of Egypt. In 1848 Zayla was taken from its Arab ruler Sayyid Mohammed Al-Baari, representative of the Ottoman Pasha of Western Arabia and farmed out to Shermaarke [meaning one who sees no harm] Ali Salih (1790-1861) who is descent from Ishak al-Hazrami, a Haber Younis and Aber Gerhajis sub-sub clan by the Turkish governor of Mocha and Hodaydah. Thus Shermaarke is recorded in history of Zayla as the man who for the first time brought Zayla under the rule of Somalis by forcing Al-Baari family. Shermaarke went to Bombay in May 1825 and received from Captain Bagnold, the then British resident at Mocha, a

testimonial and a reward (an Honorary Dress), for defending the lives of English Seamen, Captain William Lingard, chief officer of the small merchant brig *Mary Anne* sailed from Mauritius and was attacked by the natives at the port of Berbera, on 10th of April 1825. Though the young Shermaarke, the Abban (protector) of the ship, was being severely wounded he had succeeded to preserve the lives of the British sailors. Indeed, his two infant grandsons [his eldest son Mohammed's kids] were murdered by the Issa some decades later. In July 1885, Shermaarke was deposed by the Turkish pasha of Hodaydah, due to his failure "to keep some road open or, according to others, for assisting to plunder a caravan belonging to the Danakil [Afar] tribe". Aboubaker Ibrahim Chehem (1815-1885) a wealthy and powerful Afar merchant from Hasoba clan was once replaced Shermaarke as being pasha (governor) of the city of Zayla from 1855 to 1857 and he was actively engaged in the slave trade. Once his rival Shermaarke accused him for embezzlement of customs money and he was imprisoned by pasha of Hudayda for eight months and later freed by the help of the French consul in Aden, Henri Lambert. The French called him "emir de Zayla" while not recognized by the British. In return Aboubaker facilitated for French to deal with local Afar chieftains to hold control over the territory extending along the coast from the Bay of Ras Ali, locally known as Raissali, to Goubet-el-Kharab, on the northern shore of the Gulf of Tadjourah. Hence he stood as a loyal ally for the "Etablissement d'Obock" in 1862. After the decline of French's interest in the territory, Aboubaker became an Egyptian ally since 1867 to 1875. One year later he died after having been detained by the British consul of Zayla for some days. Indeed, His eleven sons and their descent formed the "Obakarto lineage". His second son Mohammad received title of Naggadras meaning „chief of merchants“, the other son Obakar was the father of Iyasu's first wife, Fatuma who gave birth to a son named Menelik (III) Iyasu. Another son Bourhan born from a Somali mother was the father of Ali Aref, the first native president of TFAI. After the decline of Aboubaker's power in Zayla, number of Gedebursi/Somalis immigrated to Zayla and spread Somalis' culture while Afars influence in the city declined and lost eventually except in some posts of town administration and coastal area trade. According to an interview with Djiboutian historian, Aramis Humad, the coast up to Berbera and hinterland were inhabited by the Southern Afars (numerous families clans like Ma'andita, Dahimela, Integeri and so) After the northward migrations of Ma'andita and Dahimela between the 13th and 15th century and decline of Integeri and other tribes together with the expansion of Oromo in the 16th century, Afars lost their presence in coastal areas. The Debne confederation in turn migrated in the hinterland of Zayla from the north of the Gulf of Tadjourah (Mabla mountains region) and defended the city from the Somali incursion and Oromo expansion. The hinterland of Zayla and today's Issa's territory in Djibouti were occupied by these Debne and Ayroyta confederations up to the end of 18th century. It is why in the early of the 18th century, the Sultan Mohamed Dini of Tadjourah presented himself as King of Adal and of Zayla in the letter of protection addressed in December 27, 1708 to the French naval expedition commanded by M. de la Merveille. In addition, in their prayers, Afars of the Gulf of Tadjourah asked for the safety of their ships and for the safe news from Berbera and Aden. Zayla was not included because they considered it as their port. The Issa occupied this territory after the Afar abandoned it and migrated in the plateaus of Harrar and the Awash Valleys. Actually there are a confederation in the middle Awash Valley whose name is "Sidiha Dela'ta" (Dela'ta is the Afar pronunciation of term Zela'ta; meaning "The three tribes of Zayla". These are clans of Harkamela, Ayrolasso and Haysamale. Nowadays Zeila is under Somaliland, Awdal administrative region with its capital Boorama. Awdal region, the home of ancient city population-the Reer Seyla-who are an independent community from other Somali clanship, is created in the early 1980s to revive the name of one of the oldest Islamic sultanates in the Horn of Africa, the Adal Sultanate. Nevertheless, the Salal district has curved out from the Awdal region and become a home for Issa/Somali people. Hence, unlike his predecessors, the 19th Ugaas, Mustefa Mohammed Ibrahim, (10th grade student at Dire Dawa and great grandson of Wayes Roble who was Ugaas for 28 years) enthroned on March 1st 2010 in Zayla while all others

have been crowned in a historic site of Sitti Hill in Shinele Zone between Aysha and Dire Dawa towns in Ethiopia.

3.6 Concluding Summary

Although both Afar and Issa/Somali people have various similarities in their politico-economic and socio-cultural features, ethnic identities constructed through time has driven them to nurture and amplify the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ syndrome. These constructed identity of being an Afar or Somali further considered by members of both groups as a biological identity inherited through blood to which members are ready to scarify their lives in fighting the ‘enemy’ of their ethnic group. Consequently, armed confrontation between the Afar and Issa/Somali people in Ethiopia and Djibouti lead loss of lives, damage on pastoral assets and values, hinder development endeavours in bordering areas, ignite hatred of people, eroded age-old relationship among various clans of both the Afar and Issa/Somali people. Indeed, as argued by Duryea and Potts (1993:388) quoted in (Tidwell 1998:109) “without a good sense of history, no conflict can be understood in a way meaningful for resolution.” Thus reviewing historical development of inter-ethnic relationships among the Afar and Issa/Somali prior to analyzing the ontogeny of the conflict has indicated that successive south–northward mobility of both Cushitic peoples considered as historical underpinning of centuries-old bloody conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali people. Besides, aggressive competition over scarce pastoral resource including access routes for the 19th Century’s Abban traders and some cultural values are factors added in the genesis of the conflict.

Nowadays this conflict has reached its most intense stage in which the deadliest rivalry between both pastoral groups who consider ultimate enemy of each other has claimed thousands of civilian lives. The conflict, according to historical sources, was commenced at Zayla and at present enable Issa/Somalis gained a foothold along the Dire Dawa-Djibouti railway, Addis-Asseb/Djibouti road and in some areas along the Awash River basin in Ethiopia that is claimed as an ultimate target of Issa/Somalis. Similarly in the Republic of Djibouti, Issa/Somalis have achieved to immigrate from the northern part of British Somaliland to the south and southwestern portion of the Republic inhabiting regions of Ali Sabih and Dikhil and eventually control the whole fabric of government

system. In every area they reached Issa/Somalis put marks like name of the clan, martyrs of the raid, picture of camel and cattle on stones, big trees and sometimes flags (Usually the flag of Somalia) that has nothing to do with pastoralists struggle for survival. However, the cause of the conflict in both Ethiopia and Djibouti is yet claimed as a mere pastoral confrontation for water and pasture as usual. But as argued by Medhane (2004:25) now it is no more grazing land or water. The ground has changed. As some say it has become ground plus two. In fact to understand the anatomy of this conflict, through analysis on the regionalization of the conflict is vital and is conducted in the coming chapter.

Chapter Four

4 Regional Political Dynamics and Phases of the Conflict

4.1 Introduction

Despite the root factors such as historical population movements, cultural values and aggressive economic resource competitions that causes conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali, changes in regional political order have an escalation impact of conflict as well. The arrivals of French and Italian colonial powers in the Horn as well as the creation of new states in the region (Somalia, Djibouti and Eritrea) during the postcolonial era have notably affected the intensity and escalation of the conflict. Furthermore, the collapse of Barre's and Mengestu's régimes, successive interstate disputes between Ethiopia and Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as Eritrea against Djibouti together with the anti-terrorism campaign in the African Horn are among the major regional political orders that have influenced and transformed the age-old traditional disputes between the Afar and Issa/Somali into veritable ethnoterritorial as well as hostile politico-economic power rivalry. Host governments (of Ethiopia and the Republic of Djibouti) consider the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali as either a mere internal dispute between two pastoral groups over grass and water or as an act of foreign intruders respectively. Oversimplifying the conflict by using either a simple 'grass and water' logic or portraying the internal dispute as a 'foreign act' led stakeholders to overlook major characteristic of the conflict, which is the regional dimension. As Yohannes et la (2005:35) asserted "local conflicts also easily take on cross-border dimensions, both internally, in terms of the administrative borders of districts and sub-districts, and externally, in terms of national borders." Predominantly, for conflicts among geographically straddled ethnic groups of the Afar and Issa/Somali, a thorough analysis of changes in regional political orders in relation to phases of the conflict shall be a major task to grasp the anatomy of this conflict. And hence, this chapter thoroughly discusses trends of the conflict in relation with major regional political dynamics in the African Horn.

4.2 The Arrival of Italian and French Colonists in Ethiopia and Djibouti

4.2.1 Italian Occupation of Ethiopia and Its Impact on the Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict

In 1935, Italy launched the ‘second Italo-Abyssinian war’ against Ethiopia from Italian Somaliland in the south. Even before the colonial march to Ethiopia, Italians used Somalis to incite border skirmish by provoking Ethiopian authorities along the border. As Touval (1963:72) stated “during the Fascist era, in an attempt to undermine Ethiopian authority in the Ogaden, the Italians encouraged some of their border tribes [Somalis] to penetrate into Ethiopian territory, and to resist Ethiopian assertions of authority. This Italian policy subsequently led to the famous Wal-Wal incident³⁸ and to the invasion of Ethiopia in 1935.”

The Italian invasion force commanded by General Rodolfo Graziani that penetrated from southeastern frontier had effectively manipulated the discontent between the centre and the peripheral Somali people and was able to cajole the heart of Somalis. During the invasion, Touval (ibid) further stipulated that “the Italian policy of inciting the Somalis against the Ethiopians reached a climax. A Somali army was recruited by the Italians and employed in the Ethiopian campaign. In addition to some 6,000 troops incorporated directly into this army, many thousands of irregular fighters (*dubats*), armed and trained by the Italians, participated in the campaign.” Indeed, there were some Somalis dissatisfied with the Italian rule and hence siding with the Ethiopian patriots. Leader of the anti-colonial Somali patriots, Dejazmach Omar Samatar, the governor of Ogaden, was among the few Ethiopian nationalist Somalis who struggled against the Italian colonial rule. As Marcus (1995:74) wrote “in early 1934, Addis Abeba sent more modern material to the Ogaden, some of which was given to a band of Somali led by Omar Samatar, a freedom fighter whom the Italians considered a ‘traitor and vulgar assassin’. However, the disgruntlement of majority Somalis against Ethiopian centre derived them to be a tool for Italian colonial march against Ethiopia.” Marcus continued “the Somalis do not seem to have been divided into pro-and anti-Ethiopian camps. Even those serving with the Ethiopian forces were imbued with hostility toward the Christian Ethiopians.” Thus, it’s a very simple logic to understand why the Somalis benefited more as they sided with the

³⁸ On 5 December 1934, Italy clashed with Ethiopia at Wal-Wal on the border of Italian Somaliland.

colonial power while the Afars who supported the centre lost much during the five years occupation period.

Overall, the colonial incursion of fascist Italians in the southeastern border of Ethiopia has brought a new phase and affected the escalation of the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict either in direct or indirect way. The colonial power had crushed the Afar's power both economically and militarily. On the other hand, they paved ground for the flourishing of a pan-Somali nationalistic sentiment and further leaning the balance of militarily and economic power using diverse strategies.

4.2.1.1 The Seed of Pan-Somalism

Italy first showed interest in Somalia as early as 1876 whilst a well known Italian revolutionary and politician, Cesare Correnti, organized an expedition under the 'Societa Geografica Italiana'. Later on, 'Societa di Esplorazioni Commerciali in Africa' and 'Club Africano' that renamed as 'Societa Africana D'Italia' were created in 1879. Italy gained control of various parts of present-day Somalia in the 1880s through concluding different treaties with the local chieftains. In late 1888, Sultan Yusuf Ali Kenadid, due to power struggle over the Majeerteen Sultanate of Boqor Osman as well as ambition to get Italian support in his dispute with the Sultan of Zanzibar, entered into a treaty with the Italians, making his Sultanate of Hobyo an Italian protectorate. After a year Boqor Osman himself signed a similar agreement followed by Mohamoud Ali Shire, Sultan of the Warsangali. Hence, Italy gained another access (other than the one in Eritrea) for the strategically important Suez Canal, the Gulf of Aden and to the Ethiopian centre of course. And in April 5, 1908 there was a basic law enacted by the Italian Parliament to unite all parts of southern Somalia into an area called "*Somalia Italiana*". This was great experience of unity among the Somalis under Italian rule. In June 1936, after the end of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War, Italian Somaliland became part of Africa Orientale Italiana. In the second half of 1940, Italian troops invaded British Somaliland and later in 1941 they controlled French Somaliland. The Italians also occupied Kenyan areas bordering the Jubaland. As Mukhtar (2003:131) stated "the Italian grand design of the pan-Somali nationalism '*La Grande Somalia*' seemed in the making." Italians withdrew parts of the French and British Somaliland after their defeat around 1942. Furthermore, Italian

Somaliland also fell under British administration until 1949, in which the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, further fuelling the issue of Greater Somalia. Finally Italian Somalia became a United Nations Trust Territory under Italian administration. This administration lasted ten years, from 1950 to 1960 in which the Pan Somali nationalism movement reached its climax that later led to the creation of Somalia Republic with greater ambition of incorporating the Irredenta in Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia.

This Somali irredentism politics has brought significant effect on the escalation of the Afar and Somali conflict both in Ethiopia and Djibouti. In some aspects, the pan-Somali movements attempted to incorporate non-Somali ethnic groups inhabiting in the so-called Somali irredentas into the 'Greater Somalia' ambitious project. And those ethnic groups like that of Afar who could not buy the Somali's big brother theory, indeed faced serious of antagonism from sympathizers of pan-Somalism.

4.2.1.2 Cracking Afars' Spine

The position held by the Afar and Somali during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia evidently demonstrated the rationale for tilting the balance of power between the two pastoral groups. As discussed above Italians recruited Somali fighters, trained and equipped them with modern weapons while Afars lost what they had. Markakis (2002:447) described the scenario "the Issa fought for the Italians and received arms and training in return as well as a lucrative market for their animals. They used the arms against the Afar to gain access into the Allideghi plain for their enlarged herds. In turn, the Afar joined Ethiopia, the losing side and supposed retaliation by the Italians." Since their arrival, Italian colonial forces tried to approach some Afar elders in order to assure their cooperation with the colonial power in the march to penetrate Ethiopian hinterland. However, their ambition to incorporate Afar in their colonial expansion project has vanished briskly as the Afars rejected the offer. Italians could not get it easy to sell their 'pro-Islam' policy to the Afars who are entirely followers of Islam. As affirmed by Herrie (2008:34-35) Italians solicited Afar clan leaders "to recruit all Afar youth to serve the invader force as soldiers [as well as] ordered all Afar clans to contribute male camels for the purpose of transport." The Afar clan leaders refused to fulfill these requests. According to Interviewees, there were number of fighting conducted between Italian

colonial power and Afars in various directions. Battles spread from the north of Hurso River that traverse Dire Dawa town up to Awash border of Geblelu then to its west up to Awash River in Adaytu. A distinguished activist for the cause of anti-fascism and anti-colonialism, Sylvia Pankhurst, has enthusiastically supported the anti-Italian colonial rule in Ethiopia by publishing *The New Times and Ethiopia News* since 1936. She (1959:329) asserted the Afars stand during the invasion of colonial forces in such a way that “Dankali tribesmen are going very far away into the densest forests. The Italian treatment has roused them. They have sworn to shelter and help all Ethiopians. Thousands of the brave Ethiopians who have been troubling Asbe Tafari and other towns have taken shelter with these Dankalis.” For instance, the Dawe Afar leader Mohammed Bodaya was taken as prisoner to Rome for his support for the Siemen Šawa patriots led by Ras Abebe Aregay.³⁹ Apart from hosting the people of Ras Abebe Aregay, Mohammed Bodaya had facilitated for the patriots trafficking firearms via the Afar Red Sea coasts.

In fact Afars had paid a heavy price for the position they held during the Italian colonial march of mid 1930s. They were forced to provide pastoral products to colonial masters; their pastoral movements were also restricted and further Italians forced Afar tribes to disarm. Consequently as stressed by Herrie (2008:34-35) “the Italians cruelly massacred and bombarded the Afar villages and livestock in the areas called *Foqo-Afe, Bodeli, Dahawu, Ado-ela, Eqeroli, Hamoysa, Manda-ela*’.” As written by Pankhurst S. (1959:332) “the Italians sent some soldiers to the Ba Abdo [Ba’adu] in the Dankali country. They asked the Asali Miro tribes for their produce but the tribesmen refused and later some of the Italians were killed.” She (ibid: 347) continued and pointed out that “on September 7, the Italians sent 31,000 soldiers to the Danakil people to ‘civilize’ them, and incidentally collect from them all such ‘dangerous’ weapons as rifles, spears and so forth, which are needed for the chase, and also for protection from wild animals in many parts of the country. This military expedition had also the object of imposing upon the people a heavy tax, and moreover to kidnap the children and force them to acquire the

³⁹ Bodaya Mohammed (1885-1955) got on authority over the Afar of Dawe at the age of fifteen in 1900. He stayed in power for fifty-five years and died at the age of seventy. During the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1935-1941) Italians accused him for supporting the Ethiopian patriots and while he was asked by Mussolini about the case, Bodaya Mohammed told that ‘if any guest travel through my territory need help, no one will never be denied assistance from him.’ Since then Italians [reportedly the first to say was Mussolini] named him the ‘white truth’ in Afar *data numma*.

Italian language and the Roman Catholic faith. On January 1 another expedition was dispatched, this time of 50,000 men, supported by aeroplanes.” The leader of Ba’adu, Hamedu Mumin and chief of the Debnes, Wererai had shot down two Italian fighter planes over Ayellu and Assebot Mountains respectively. Italians have retaliated by executing 82 Afar prominent elders at a place between Hurrso and Erer River in accordance with the list provided by Ugaas Hassen Hersi of Issa and Ugaas Buh of Gurgura Somalis. The list given by the Somali Ugaases deliberately included prominent Afar clan chiefs and renowned war strategists.⁴⁰ The Somalis name this place as *kebridiyash*, the elderly burial ground in Somali language. Issa who developed strong confidence on their Italian backers, advanced deep into the Afarland and invaded Afar villages like Asbuli and Ayroli and headed to Mero with little resistance from the Afars who have been weakened by the Italians.

Afar clan chieftains including Qegnazmach Tahiro Hamedu, Qegnazmach Ali Kheire, and Grazmach Hassen Abdellah have submitted an appeal on 17/12/1969 to Prime Minister Tsehafi-Tezaz Aklilu Habte-Wold, Bitwoded Zewde Gebre Heywot, Minister of Interior and Deg.Wekeneh Welde Amanuel General Governor of Harar. The appeal had elucidated how Italians weaken the Afar whilst strengthen Issa/Somali’s militarily and economic power. The letter states ‘When Italy invaded our country, we Adals [Afars] were living south of the Erer River, specifically in Hukfeli and Hurso in the north Merihan, Fa’o and up to Geblel [...] however, as we (the Afar people) resisted the Italian colonial administration and even killed their leader at war, they retaliated by conducting a massive attack even by conducting indiscriminate air bombardments. As a result we lost over 300 prominent war leaders and clan chiefs. [...] Italians took all our weapons and equipped Issas [who supported Italian rule] who gradually pushed us away from our ancestral lands.

⁴⁰ As written by Herrie (2008:34-35), “[A]cting on information given by the Issa Somali to the Italians, they killed many Adohimara and Asahimara clan leaders in a bid to subdue the Afars. For instance, in Gewane, the Italian soldiers, in the name of reconciliation forcefully gathered Afar men, women and children and then they killed the following prominent Afar clan leaders from Mahesara and Galela clans in the compound of the current Gewane High school. These clan leaders’ tombs are still in the same school compound: Hafa, Balie and Unda Momin Humed who were Mahesara clan leaders and Ingifu, Galela clan leader. At this spot, the Italians scared the gathered people to laugh and dance at the death of the clan leaders.”

4.2.1.3 Beef-up Somalis' Military Power

Italian colonialists did not only break the spine of Afars but in parallel they built the military muscle of Issa/Somali through trainings and logistic supports that actually twisted the power balance between the two pastoral societies. During the Italians invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, the colonial army in the eastern Ethiopia front had composed of mainly Somali fighters who were recruited from the Italian Somaliland, which was under the Italian control for over half a century. Thus, ethnic Somali components of the colonial army played an enormous role for the support the Italians had received from Ethiopian Somalis including the Issa tribe who were employed as soldiers, guides and interpreters.

There were thousands of Issas in the regular troops as well as irregular fighters (dubats). As confirmed by Pankhurst S. (1959:320) “the Italians took 14,000 Somali soldiers into Ethiopia. [...] Among those, quite portions [were] of Issa.” The Italian’s achievement in building the muscle of Issa/Somali did not stop in their time of occupation. However, as cited in (Herrie 2008:34-35) , when Italians were defeated and left the country, “they handed over all military equipment to their (Issa-Somali) soldiers and it was there after that the Issa-Somalis managed to entirely defeat the Afars and intensified the occupation of the [...] Afar lands.” Marcus (1995:8) further strengthen the fact that the Issa/Somali’s power has been strengthened by the colonial army even at the last phase of the Italians withdrawal from Horn region by stating as “Italian-led Somali troops dispersed with their weapons when the British defeated the Italians in major battles in World War II. Being restored to a trusteeship role, Italy rearmed local leaders and elders.” Similarly, Tadesse M. (2006:15) quoted in (ibid: 4-35) reinforces the account given above as follows. “It was the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 that significantly changed the nature of Issa-Afar conflict.” The Italian invasion and occupation of Ethiopia from 1935-41 did not only facilitate Issa encroachment on traditional Afar lands, it also drastically altered the military balance of power and destroyed whatever traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution was left between the two groups. Moreover, as one group holds superior military and economic power against the other, the probability for reaching on successful resolution seems faded. “The Italian war enabled the Issa to acquire modern weapons, logistics and military organization that they used it to gain

access in the Allaideghie plains.”(Ibid) Overall, Issa/Somalis were able to push Afars away from their traditional homelands and control valuable grazing areas and water points in which the Issa/Somali’s Ugaas, Hassen Hersi praise their accomplishment by this poem.

Deera Caano dhayah Kumaanan Cabin We have never drunk fresh milk in Deera
Asbuli Adhii Kumaanan Egiin We have never kept our goats in Asbuli
Edille Caano Maydhanaanah Kumaananu Cabin We have never got milk in Edili
Mahadi Talyaaniya Hagaadhawaanu Sinaanay Gratitude to Italy to make us all equal

Several letter exchanges within the Harar Governorate General Administration office indicated that in post withdrawal of Italy, successive killings and lootings had been continued for long. For instance a letter written on 21/2/1946 from Kereyu, Adal and Issa Wereda in the capital of Afdem addressed to Harar Governorate General in Chercher 11/2/1946 stated that ‘Issa/Somalis campaigned against the Weima clan of Adals and they killed one while looted around 300 cattle.’ A letter written on 1/7/1948 Ref. no 7/14734 from Interior Minister Security Director addressed to Belata Ayle Gebre, Harar Governorate General also described that ‘Issas have crossed Awsa Awraja and killed five Afar women at a place called Essoda.’ In general, the colonial power’s biased policy that offered relatively better military trainings and equipment to Somalis in addition to a go-ahead they gave to Somalis for raiding their non-Somali neighbours escalated the existed rivalry between the Afar and Somali.

4.2.1.4 Enhancement of Somalis’ Economy

Apart from intoxicating Somalis with ‘*La Grande Somalia*’, Italians used economy as a tool to hold the heart of Somalis. The colonial power boosted the Issa/Somalis economic strength in various ways. As indicated above, pastoral assets of the Afar were confiscated by colonials. Massive plunders in which Somalis could accumulate wealth were allowed with no limitations from the Italian colonial rulers. Furthermore, the Italians had facilitated lucrative markets for the livestock of Somali pastoralists by allowing them to supply for the colonial stations in different localities. Italian colonial powers did not only allow Somalis to plunder against Afar pastorals but also let them to raid other

neighbouring ethnic groups and accumulate wealth. As a Somali writer Mukhtar (2003:131) confirmed, “Italians further allowed Somalis to avenge against Ethiopian highlanders.” Sylvia Pankhurst gave an explanatory definition for the word ‘avenge’ that Mukhtar has mentioned earlier. According to Pankhurst S. (1959:325), “in Harar and Diredawa the Banda (Somali Askaries from the Italian Somaliland Colony) are allowed to loot any Ethiopian’s property and abuse Christian women.” She (ibid: 319) further wrote her witness for the Italians divide and rule policy, “as I saw an old man sitting in his house [...] two white soldiers and five Somalis entered and asked the Ethiopian for his money. He replied that he was only a poor man and had only three thalers, which he offered them. They fired three bullets at once and he lay dead.” Here the emphasis should not be to remind us the past wounds but to highlight how the colonial forces beefed-up Somali’s economy even by giving green light for massive raids against their non-Somali neighbours. There are number of archival documents which support these claims. For instance, according to the letter written on 19/4/1950 with Ref.no.4/1038 from deputy chief of 22nd Major Army, Yerga Do’af addressed to chief of 10th Infantry brigade stated the incident happened on 15/3/1950 ‘around 10km the eastward of Afdem, in which Issa bandits robbed the property of a certain businessman, Mr. Bezuneh.’

As affirmed by Pankhurst S. Italian colonial power offered gifts not only to those Issa/Somalis under their administration but also attempted to attract Issa chiefs under French (Djibouti) and British Somaliland by giving them various material gifts as well as money that in turn contributed for enhancing the economic capital of Somalis. According to her (1959:332), “Italians are busy everywhere with their propaganda. They are trying to bribe some Akils (chiefs) of the Issa Somali tribesmen who are under French and British influence; they have many well-paid spies everywhere. They are busy also on the British frontier, and because there is very good grazing and water in the Ethiopian territory occupied by the Italians, the Somali tribesmen under French and British influence are forced to go over to that side to find sustenance for their animals.” Lewis M. (1980:108) has also confirmed Pankhurst’s claim as “several prominent religious leaders across the border had now been won to the Italian cause by generous gifts. Irregular Somali groups, who could be disclaimed conveniently as bandits, were also recruited and provided with arms to stir up trouble in the area.”

In General, Issa/Somalis took advantage of biased colonial policy of Italians in all sub-sectors like political, economical, and militarily. Generally, since the arrival of Italian power, Issa/Somalis build their economy through unlimited raids they used to conduct against neighboring ethnic groups including the Afars, direct gifts from the colonial power, selling pastoral products to colonial masters and even through conducting plunder over the trade caravan along the road. Similar to Italian colonialists influence over the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict, French has also affected the escalation of the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali in various ways, mainly through creation and nurturing of an 'us' versus 'them' syndrome and balancing the two ethnic groups by favoring one against the other at different times.

4.2.2 The French Colonial Administration and Its Effect on Politicization of Ethnic Identity

4.2.2.1 The Franco-Somali Treaty

Prior to the arrival of French in today's Djibouti territory, Afar fishermen and South Arabian merchants frequently visited and later settled on the Red Sea coastal areas across the Bab-el-Mendab whence the interior portion of the region were dominated by the traditional Afar sultanates [of Rahayta, Tağura, Goba'ad] that still exist to this day. As discussed in the previous chapter, the French whose contact with the Horn dates back to 1830s, made an initial negotiation and deal with the Afar chieftains in Obock, Tağura and Goba'ad in order to possess pieces of land, which later became colonial territories of French after concluding the last treaty with the Issa/Somali chiefs who granted the southern edge of the territory, which Afars had already lost possession at the time. The March 26, 1885 treaty, which was the first to be signed between the French colonial power and the Issa chiefs at Ambado has confirmed the transfer of the territory located between the Bay of Ambado (10km to the west of the capital) and Ras Djibouti'. This treaty could be regarded as the first initiative taken by the French colonialists that incorporated the two ethnic groups in one territory which eventually led them to tie up with aggressive competition over controlling the territory's politico-economic power. Since the conclusion of this Franco-Somali agreement, the French colonial rulers

prolonged their presence in the territory by using various check and balance strategies against the two ethnic groups.

4.2.2.2 Baptized the Territory and Relocate the Capital

After acquiring Obock in 1862, French expanded its possession and reached to establish ‘Territory of Obock and Protectorate of Tağura’ in 1884. Subsequent to the 1885 treaty signed with Issa/Somalis, France initially made a number of treaties with Afar chiefs which indeed enabled her to control 3/4th of the territories, however, has chosen to misleadingly rename the territory as ‘French Somaliland’ in 1888. The French Colonial rulers might sway to adopt the naming style of the neighboring British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, and Abyssinian Somaliland that led Somalis to consider the whole Djibouti is also a Somali country. As indicated in Morin (2005:640) the name of “Cote francaise des Somalis” itself is said to have been proposed by hağği Diideh [Mahad-Ase clan of Gedebursi. He was Prosperous merchant of Zayla who built the first Mosque in Djibouti Ğami ar-Rahma in 1891] to the French administration in imitation of British Somaliland. Howbeit, as commented by Said Y. (1978) French Somaliland “was a misnomer because most of the territory acquired by the French was under Afar sovereignty.”

Indeed, in most cases of colonial history, colonial rulers preferred to deal with the latecomers and minorities in order to smooth the path that would reach them to the ultimate objective envisaged. Regardless of the French plan to establish themselves physically in the Afar’s area; traditional leaders reacted aggressively by refusing French’s claim for ownership. Mohamed Kadamy (1996:512) who is the leader of the opposition group, FRUD has argued that “the initial name ‘Colony of Obock’ was supposed to reflect the conditions of the 1862 treaty signed with the Afar Sultan of Raheita, which established the French presence. France claimed it had bought the territory of Obock, but this claim was contested by Sultan Dini Mohamed Bourhan, who objected that ‘the property rights to the territory had not been ceded, because this is strictly impossible under Afar common law. Only use can be the subject of a transaction; property rights can never change ownership. Even the Sultan cannot change this.’” Hence, the French-Afar relation has been driven severely and characterized by rejection and retaliation in which

Sultans of Goba' ad, Tağura and Rahaieta were exiled to Madagascar.⁴¹ Lewis M. (1955) supports the above mentioned claim against French and stated that “the French policy was to negate the existence of the Afars-also called Danakils at the time-who were viewed as an obstacle to further colonial penetration. The second name chosen, ‘French Somali Coast’, reflected this negation.” Furthermore, an online journal of Ugut-Toosi (2009c:22) wrote as “While the CFS is predominantly inhabited by the Afars and 85% of the country belongs to this ethnic group, France continued for sixty years to keep the name that likely caused serious consequence. Hassan Gouled, following independence, and Ismail Omar Guelleh now exploit the confusion introduced by name and Somali immigration facilitated by the French administration between 1888 and 1977.”

French did not only change the name of the territory with Somali flavor but also transformed the capital of the colony from Afar dominated north to today’s capital Djiboutiville. The main reason for the French decision to change of the capital of the colony is told as the strategic location of the new capital. Bollee (2003:211) wrote that “a suitable location was discovered across the Gulf of Tağura; there the French built a new city, which they named Djibouti. After the establishment of the port a wave of Arab, Greek, Indian, and Armenian traders established themselves in the city. Trade flourished at the new port and in 1892 the French moved the seat of government from Afar dominated Obock to the city of Djibouti where Afars, Somalis, and Arabs co-exist. Daoud (2000) also supported the claim by stating as “Lagarde decided to move the capital to Djibouti from Obock once called Hayou. This decision was motivated by the need for an easier and safer access to the Ethiopian hinterland, among other concerns like its strategic location at the crossroads of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The newly prosperous and metropolitan port city of Djibouti becomes a home for different nationalities. Moreover, frequent migration especially ethnic Somali tribes of Gadaboursi,

⁴¹ Afar sultans imprisoned by French colonial rulers and deported to Madagascar are the following: Wizir Houmed Mohamed Mandayou arrested in July 1928 and after five years of imprisonment in Madagascar he came back in Tağura in 1933. Sultan Laoyta Houmed together with his brother and his assistant Ali Houmed dit Hajji Ali from Gobaad were arrested in March 1930 and they were deported to five years of internment in Madagascar in May 13th 1931. Sultan Laoyta Houmed died in prison in July 9, 1931 while the other two came back in Djibouti in 1937. Chief of Namm’Ad’ali confederation, Houmed Mohamed, arrested in 1943, condemned to five years of internment in Madagascar. He came back in Tadjourah. In addition to this chief, many other chieftains of various Afar clans had also be deported and imprisoned in Madagascar. (Information received from Aramis Humad, an Afar historian and whose father [Houmed Mohamed-Soulé Aramis] was among those Afar chieftains deported to Madagascar.)

Issa as well as Darod transformed the geographical tiny Djibouti to demographical giant city that holds more than half of the territories population.”⁴² Despite the reason put forwarded by the French and supported by writers like Bollee and Daoud, change of the capital significantly altered the power balance between the Afar and Somali until the present day. As Said Y. (1978) made the comparison between the two major ethnic groups that constitute the territory, “the Issa were more exposed to French rule and more of them were attracted to the life of the new port city. As a result of Issa immigration to Djibouti from surrounding areas, the Issa population of the colony increased and the Issa became more urbanized than the Afars.” Consequently, the gap of inequality in political as well as socio-economical spheres of the Afar and Issa/Somali people contributed its share to carry the conflict in to other stage ahead.

4.2.2.3 Shift of Alliance along Ethno-Regional Lines

The natives in the French colony, majority Afars and late settler Issas who live in the interior part used to lead their nomadic life style with little interference of colonial rule in their internal affairs. Nonetheless, the French successive governors named by the French cabinet were the sole decision makers on the Administration of the colony. Neither the Afars nor Issa/Somalis had a say in the affair of their homeland for over half-a-century colonial rule of the French. However, post-Second World War, France revised the politico-administrative system in her African colonies. Accordingly, the law proclaimed on 5 November 1945, opened the first chapter that enabled indigenous people of *CFS* to have a role (at least in principle) in the government of the colony. In 1946, France extended citizenship to all natives of the territory and soon after established a Representative Council with twenty members in which half seat was given for the native electorates to share it together with the Arabs and migrant Somalis. French’s initiative to participate locals was not empty incepted. As Kassim and Searing (1980:212) argued “two developments were of particular importance for the emergence of political consciousness in Djibouti. One was the emergence of Nasser’s revolution in Egypt, which broadcasts its nationalist, anti-imperialist message to all its neighbors. The second

⁴² In 1899 the population size of the city of Djibouti were 10,000 inhabitants and in 2006 Djibouti counts approximately 500,000 inhabitants, which is about three fourths of the population of the country.

was the Algerian war for independence, which sent shocks throughout the entire French colonial empire [...] Hence French, have decided to allow controllable participation of natives in the political life of the colony.” Even though the French new system of involving natives in the territory’s political life seems a step forward, the consequences of this ethnically politicized approach has resulted grave tragedy than its merit. As Morgan (1978:48) wrote “this system perhaps reminiscent of that introduced by the French to Lebanon, established a communal voting system, and encouraged the two dominant indigenous groups to view themselves not only as culturally and economically distinct, but as politically separate entities with fundamentally different if not irreconcilable interests.”

Meanwhile, as majority of Afars inhabited the interior portion of the territory and isolated from the modern political life, they had little consideration about the ethnic based quota system, which French had introduced. Whereas, Issas who had some political orientation from British Somaliland instantly reacted on the concept and practice of the ethnic based formula. Though the formula forced them to share their quota with immigrant Somali tribes, Issas guaranteed a good number of seats far better than that of the Afar’s share. Issas who had a better political orientation due to their interaction with the cross border kin under Italian and British Somaliland, their politicians were able to mobilize the society in order to demand a separate quota for seats by rejecting the general quota for Somalis.⁴³ Consequently in 1950, Issas have secured their share in the Representative Council electorate apart from other Somali immigrants while the Afar’s share remained as it was and had equivalent quota with the immigrant Arabs. In addition to traditional Afar’s reluctance for change, the 1950s amendments on the quota system further widen the existed imbalance on the politico-economic dominancy of Somalis over the native Afars. Moreover, the unattainable election criteria, which demanded natives to be government or commercial employees, educated personnel, property owners or chiefs to be eligible to elect hampered particularly Afar participation in the affair of their country. Afar elite, Abdallah Mohammed Kamil, was among the very few Afar elites

⁴³ “Issa firmly condemned the election of Gadaboursi man, Djima Ali, and an Arab Ali Coubèch, for the Council of Republic and Union of Assembly respectively. Issas made an assassination attempt against both electorates.” (Thompson/Adolf 1968:63-64)

who joined Representative Council in 1949 being selected by the French Governor as he was representative of labor association.

As indicated in (Thompson/Adolf 1968: 42-4), on June 1956, France has initiated the loi-cadre (blue-print) that made some amendments on the administrative system that lasted for six years. Representative Council was renamed as Territories Assembly where member's size grows from 25 to 32. Government council of eight members has established from which the vice president of the colony is selected. The election criteria have also amended and made any native over 21 years eligible to elect. Though the size of electoral was found to have increased from 5208 in 1951 to 11,000 in 1956, Somalis domination and Afars isolation in the political scene remained unchanged. Meanwhile, the progressive Issas who competed with their Somali kinsmen that migrated from the British Somaliland found better opportunities to engage themselves in modern political climate of the colony. While the two Issa sub-clan factions of Muhammad Harbi's Furlaba/Dalol and Hassan Guled's Mamassan/Abgal competed each other and formed modern political organizations of Union Republican (UR) and Défense des Interêts Economiques et Sociaux du Territoire (DIEST) respectively, Afar politicians were grouping themselves in either of the two Issa parties particularly in the later.⁴⁴

France's tilting the power balance against the majority Afars continued till the 1958 referendum in which Issa voted for the independence of the territory while Afars voted for continued association with France. Since then France seemed to shift its position of alliance and designed a policy that would bring the Afars in the scene. France continued its calculated pro-Afar policy in a way that guaranteed its presence in the region. On 21st October 1958 French dissolved Somali dominated territorial assembly and reestablished an assembly with 32 electorates' proportioned to all territories in which for the first time native Afars got an equal seat with that of Somalis. As the fact confirmed by Drysdal (1966:14) "the political structure prior to 1963 gave more seats in the Territorial Assembly to Somalis than to the Danakil." However, as clearly cited in (Schraeder 1991), "in early in the 1960s, the French administration shifted its weight from the Somali to the Danakil side of the equation. In preparation for the elections of 1963, the French

⁴⁴ Among those Thompson and Adolf (1968:74) cited Ahmed Dini, "a young Afar nurse at the Peltier Hospital in Djibouti at the time of his first election to the Territorial Assembly in 1957 were supporter of Guled's DIEST alike a prominent Afar politician Mohammed Kamil who was an old ally of Guled."

redistricted the territory in such a way as to reduce Somali influence by increasing the Danakil representation in the legislature.” Consequently, the situation allowed the Afars to dominate the political life of the territory prior to its independence. Nevertheless, as argued by Said Y. (1978:35) “the favoritism shown to the Afar [from 1967 to just before independence] only increased the resentment of the Issa and their commitment to Somali nationalism.”

Historically, shades of ethnic differences and competition for grazing have led to conflicts, often greatly exacerbated by French colonial policies. While in the past, disputes over grazing were the main reasons of conflict, more recently; clashes have been over political control. Changing of the name of the territory in 1967 further triggered the competition between the two ethnicities. The first name has given a distorted message to all and manipulated by Somalis as if the name ‘*French Somaliland*’ could automatically grant the possession of the entire territory by Somalis. French, however, changed the name again not only as a response to the Afar’s discontent but also in order to trim down Somali’s sentiment to the politics of irredentism. As described by Said Y. (ibid), “Afars welcomed the inclusion of their name while Somalis regarded the name change as French’s systematic division of ethnicities.” The 1967 controversial name change of the territory from French Somaliland to the French Territory of the Afars and Issas underscored French colonial policies of trying to rule by emphasizing exploitation of ethnic divisions. According to the Somalis version, the French chose the dominant Issa name in the new TFAI to further try ‘to fragment the Somalis, loosen Somali identity and exploit clan differences.’ Despite all these claim and counter claims that aggravated the already simmering rivalry between the two major ethnic groups, the French further made shift of alliance on the eve of independence of the country, which led the relation between both parties to deteriorate further. This time Issa/Somalis became their good allies. Hence, French offered the power of the territory to Issa/Somali through referendums that also became source of resentment and fuelling the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict.

4.2.2.4 The Two Referendums: Fuelling Ethnic Discontent

Prior to granting independence of the territory, Djibouti had held two referendums on 28th September 1958 and 19th March 1967. The 1958, Algerian rebellion against the French colonial rule that enabled General de Gaulle returned to power brought the birth of the Fifth Republic that gave choice to the French colonies either to vote for total independence in which case France would cut off all aid and assistances or continue association with France as an overseas territory. Accordingly, colonial rulers in the territory became hectic for preparations of the referendum that held on 28th September 1958. The Somali who were business oriented, integrated to the colonial rule in Djibouti and highly influenced by the late 1950s Somali nationalism had voted for independence while Afars preferred to stay under French. These decisions of each group are regarded in different political interpretations that in fact made the ethnic contradiction to persist for long. Majority of Issas and other immigrant ethnic Somalis voted for independence of the territory by assuming that the territory would thereafter be part and parcel of the Greater Somalia. On the other hand, Afars who fear Somali's domination in the independent state or possible future annexation by neighboring Ethiopia and Somalia, voted for the continuation of France presence. As a result, French has commenced to incorporate the neglected majority Afars in the political scene of the territory.

This referendum could be seen as a historical turning point where the previously underprivileged Afars were favored by the French colonial ruler and at the same time created resentment with the Somali side. Meanwhile, Afars who even had split within themselves further exacerbate the Issa's discontent and made a rift among the Afar and Issa/Somalis. The situation continued till mid 1960s. In the mid 1960s political life of the colony was uptight due to the split among Afar politicians, aggressive nationalism sentiment of Djibouti youths as well as Somalis hostility and resentment against the Afar-dominancy. Subsequently, anti-Aref forces jointly formed a committee in order to organize a public protest against Aref's government on the 25th August 1966, the date when General de Gaulle was expected to have a 'restful stopover' in Djibouti in his way to an official visit in Addis. Nevertheless, on the arrival of De Gaule, the protest intended to get rid of Aref was hijacked by violent Issa nationalists, youths of Djibouti and migrant Somalis laborers who demanded for immediate independence. Thompson and Adolf (1968: 87) wrote as "De Gaule was greeted by street demonstrators brandishing banners,

which read “*Vive l’ Independence Totale*”. The demonstrators upset De Gaule, who was trying to use his role as the leader who granted independence to Algeria to pose as the liberator and ally of the third world.” Four demonstrators were killed in clashes with the police and military. As cited by Drysdale (1966:10) “he [De Gaule] offered to reshuffle the ‘*Conseil de gouvernement*’ to improve its ethnic balance. The political turmoil led Ali Aref, the Vice President of the Conseil, to resign on 17 October 1966.” As cited in (Thompson and Adolf 1968: 88) “He left for Paris and Rene Tirant, the governor, was also abruptly removed and replaced by Louis Saget. Thereafter, on 2nd September 1966, Gaulle announced an immediate referendum to be held prior July 1967 to determine the wish of the majority of the territory population. Aggressive ambition of neighboring Ethiopia and Somalia to annex the colony, made the disintegrated Afar politicians to secure a vote in favor of French presence.” Because as majority of Afars in the colony were yet isolated from sedentary life and demographic imbalance relative to Somalis (due to heavy influx of people from neighboring Somalia as well as Afars’ low birth rate⁴⁵) led Afar politicians to be afraid of the new wave of pan-Somali nationalism. Therefore, independence of the territory would mean, for the Afar either being swallowed by Ethiopia or dominated by Somalis. Kaplan (1978:523) explained the situation, as “Djibouti is as helpless as a goat that two lions are waiting to pounce on.” Thus, Afar politicians in the territory agreed to postpone the case of independence for sometime in the future. On the other hand, Somalis ambitiously waited for independence of the territory that according to them would incorporate with the Greater Somalia. These variances in the wish of the two competitive ethnicities reached its peak as the date for the referendum approached. As cited in (Kassim and Searing 1980:216) “in the referendum held on 19 March 1967, majority of the electorate (about 60 present) voted for continuation of French presence.” According to official balloting results, in Somali dominated circumscriptions like Ali-Sabieh and Djibouti, a great majority of electorate opted for independence whereas in Obock and Tağura, where Afars constituted the entire population, with the exception of handful negative vote majority declared preference for

⁴⁵ Thompson and Adolf (1968:26) analyzed how prolonged separations of couples and timing of marriage in the Afar influenced the falling of birth rates.

continued association with France.⁴⁶ Overall, as concluded by Kassim /Searing (Ibid: 215), “the political system, which was established after 1967 referendum, consecrated the alliance of the French with the Afars and made ethnicity the key to territory’s politics.”

4.3 The Birth of New States

4.3.1 The Creation of the Somali Republic in 1960: A New Regional Arena for Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict

Despite the difficulties encountered in integrating north and south, the most important political issue in the post-independence Somalia politics was the vision to incorporate regions in the Horn of Africa where ethnic Somali inhabit. The constitution of the Republic as well as the national flag by itself contributed much in creating and strengthening the pan-Somali nationalism in the Horn. As history repeats itself, the Sheiks in the Union of the Islamic Courts were in a hurry to declare their wish to see the birth of ‘Great Somalia’ even before they control areas within 100kms radius from Mogadusho.⁴⁷ The pan-Somali nationalism was hot and a major catalyst for the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict both in Ethiopia and Djibouti. The pan-nationalists regarded Issas inhabited in both countries as Somali sub-clan with whom the ‘Greater Somali’ dreams had vivid hope. Firstly, the Issa under the French colonial rule was expected to dominate the Afar politically and incorporate Djibouti to the motherland, ‘Greater Somalia’, and Secondly, Issas dwelled in Northeastern Ethiopia were also expected to expand the

⁴⁶ As written in (Thompson/Adolf 1968:95-96), “During the 1967 referendum out of the total registered voters, the majority about 22,004 were Afars while Issas and other Somalis constituted 14,698 and the remaining 1,408 and 923 were Arab voters and Europeans respectively. Then in the referendum held on 19 March 1967 ethnic identity among voters clearly followed ethnic lines. In districts where the Somalis predominantly inhabited, the number of negative votes is higher. For instance In Djibouti and Ali Sabih where Somalis outnumber the Afars, it showed around 6862 and 4645 negative votes while the affirmative votes were limited to 2798 and 93 respectively in the two districts. On the other hand, in Afar inhabited districts like Dikhil, Tadjourah and Obock only a handful of negative vote were cast in each circumscription.”

⁴⁷ On November 17, 2006, the Sheik spoke to Shabelle Radio about the formation of a ‘Greater Somalia’, uniting the Somali people scattered across the Horn of Africa. He stated, ‘We will leave no stone unturned to integrate our Somali brothers in Kenya and Ethiopia and restore their freedom to live with their ancestors in Somalia.’ (The San Diego Union-Tribune, 18 November 2006)

would-be western part of ‘Greater Somalia’.⁴⁸ Hence, the Republic of Somalia had a heavy influence on the Afar-Issa/Somali relation both in its pre and post independence period.

4.3.1.1 Eve of Independence: Heyday of Somali Nationalism

An Ogadeni pan-Somali nationalist, Sayyīd Muhammad `Abd Allāh al-Hasan, commonly known as ‘Mad Mullah’ took the initiative to organize an anti-colonial movement (Dervish) and fought the Italian, British and Ethiopian forces for over twenty years until his death on 21 December 1920. Later on as Mukhtar (2003:20) clearly explains the history of modern pan-Somali nationalism, “in the late 1920s, [Abdulkadir] Sakhawuddin (the grandson of Sheikh Uways al Barawi, who was venerated by the pan-Islamic and anti colonial Uwaysiyya brotherhood) started organizing jama’a brotherhoods to teach his people about Islam and then mobilize them to resist the Italian colonial occupation. [...] he believed in the role of youth in promoting better social values. He aimed at founding a young political cadre such as the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire and the Young Arabs in the Arab World. Meanwhile, in 1935 the Jam’iyat ‘Atiyyat al-Rahman (Gift of God Society), a social club in the British Protectorate of Somaliland, was formed.” Eventually this club gave birth to the major pan Somali nationalist organizations that significantly influenced not only the conflict between the Afar and Somali but also the regional politics as well. Mukhtar (2003: 4) wrote the profile of these organizations as follows:

the social club formed in British Protectorate of Somaliland in 1935 leads to the formation of the Somali National League (SNL) [that by turn leads to the formation of] Somali Youth Club (SYC), founded by Abdulkadir Sakhawuddin in Mogadisho on 15 May 1943. In early 1943, Sakhawuddin recruited 12 highly motivated disciples to lead the Somali people in the whole Horn of Africa and challenge the ‘colonial powers’ of Britain, Italy, France, and Ethiopia. In August 1946, he died in Jigjiga, during one of his campaigns to create new SYC branches and spread SYC ideology throughout the country. [...] Sakhawuddin’s ideas did not die with him, and indeed they thrived. On 11 May 1947, only a few months after Sakhawuddin’s death, the SYC was transformed into a progressive nationalist party, the Somali Youth League. Thus, his dreams were realized. SYL began to open offices not only

⁴⁸ As per the pan –Somalism perspective, the Ogaden region in Ethiopia that stretched further to the Awash River was considered as the western irredenta of the Greater Somali and hence, the Somali government supplied arms and other aid to the western Somali liberation Front (WSLF).

in the two British-run Somalilands but also in Ethiopia's Ogaden and in the NFD of Kenya. Besides the Italian and British colonial power further amplify the conception of pan Somalinism. In 1946, the British foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, proposed to the allied Council of Foreign Ministers a plan to place the Somali-inhabited territories. On 12 October 1954 (National Flag Day), the Territorial Council adopts a national flag, a blue rectangle with a five-pointed white star in the middle for the five Somalis under different colonial administrations: the Trust Territory of Somalia, the British Protectorate of Somalia, French Somaliland, the Ogaden, and the North Frontier District in Kenya (NFD).

In fact the idea of greater Somali spread to Somali territories in Ethiopia as well as in the French Territory of Afar and Issas hastily. There was an organized club referred as 'Club Arabe and Club Somali et Dankali' since 1930s in the French Territory of Afar and Issas. The club, as claimed by Mohamed K. (1996: 514), "had fractioned along ethnic lines and soon split into the Afar and the Somali Clubs in 1952. The Somalis [led by Mohammed Harbi] were influenced by the Somali Youth League based in Mogadishu, which called for Somali independence and unity." This call did not stop by ethnic Somalis solely. As stated in (Gada 1988:172) "after the news of the establishment of SYL in 1943, Oromos, Harares and Somalis in Hararge were motivated by the idea and organized clandestinely in order to liberate their people from Ethiopian colony." Overall, hearts of the Somalis in Ethiopia and Djibouti were entirely captured by the Somalinism concept that had deeply inculcated in their mind and led their relation with neighbors to be more harsh and cynical. Accordingly, Afars who remembered the scenarios well during the colonial era of Italy in Ethiopia as well as the ethnic complexity magnified particularly since the arrival of the French colonial power in Djibouti, were suspicions for the pan-Somali nationalist movements in the Horn region.

4.3.1.2 The Post-Independence Somalia and Irredentism

The Independence of Somalia has a major Influence on the escalation of the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali both in Ethiopia as well as Djibouti. The Somali Republic that established in 1960 as a result of union of the British and Italian Somalilands, has aspired the idea referred as 'Somaalinnimo or Somali community' [Gebru 1991:141] among the Somalis in the Horn region. As claimed by Sheik-Abdi (1978) in spite of internal problems to integrate the different (ex-colonial)

administrations, the post independence Somali political scene was dominated by the vision to incorporate the Somali-inhabited regions in the Horn. This Pan-Somali sentiment, expressed in the concept of 'Greater Somalia', was focused on eastern Ethiopia (the so-called Ogaden region, nowadays renamed Somali Regional State), Djibouti and north-eastern Kenya. These territories were acquired by the different colonial powers through conquest and treaties in the late 19th and early 20th century.' The newly established government at Mogadisho has expressed its sincere ambition to realize the 'Greater Somalia' through the constitution and the flag of the Republic. Lewis M. (1963a: 151) wrote that on President Nkrumah's suggestion, the constitution was drafted to include provisions for the eventual amalgamation of the other Somali territories. Article VI (para.4) states as:

The Somali Republic shall promote, by legal and peaceful means, the union of Somali territories and encourage solidarity among the peoples of the world, and in particular among African and Islamic peoples.

Moreover, as written in (Sheik-Abdi 1978:703) "The preamble to the constitution of the Republic of Somalia approved in 1961 included that all ethnic Somalis, no matter where they resided, were citizens of the Republic. Besides, as clearly cited in the *Historical Dictionary of Somalia* written by Mukhtar (2003:14-15), the five-pointed star on the national flag designed by Mohamed Awale Liban [Majeerteen/Somali] (c.1919-2001) also represents the lost Somali territories. And the poem to the Somali flag recited on midnight, 25 June 1960, 'Kaana siib kanna saar,'-'Hoist this [the Somali flag] and lower that' (the British Union Jack) is written by a Famous [Isaaq]/Somali poet, Abdillahi Suldaan Mohamed 'Tima'adde' (1920-1973).

These three points [Djibouti, Ogaden and NFK] of the five-pointed star on the Somali flag as described by Woodward (2003:26) "became the main targets of Somali foreign policy from 1960, which was seen from Mogadishu less as 'foreign' policy than the policy of completing the independence of Greater Somalia." Lewis M. quoted the then Somali Republic Prime Minister, Dr Abdirashid Ali Shirmarke's writing in 1960 that reads as follows:

Our misfortune is that our neighboring countries, with whom, like the rest of Africa, we seek to promote constructive and harmonious relations, are not our neighbors. Our neighbors are our Somali kinsmen whose citizenship has been falsified by indiscriminate boundary 'arrangements'. They have to move across artificial frontiers to their pasturelands. They occupy the same terrain and pursue the same pastoral economy as ourselves. We speak the same language. We share the same creed, the same culture and the same traditions. How can we regard our brothers as foreigners? (Lewis M. 1963a: 151)

The Somali Republic authorities were not alone in their strife to advocate for the realization of Greater Somalia. They got hands from 'African friends' and 'Muslim brothers'. As cited by Lewis M. (1963a: 154) "In October 1961, the Somali President, Adan Abdulla, went on a state visit to Ghana, the first African State south of the Sahara to establish diplomatic relations with the Republic. At the end of his stay he and President Nkrumah issued a joint communiqué, in which they expressed the view that 'outstanding frontier problems inherited from colonial regimes' could be solved by federation: They also recognized, however, the imperative need to restore the ethnic, cultural, and economic links arbitrarily destroyed by colonization." Furthermore, Mukhtar (2003) added some more sympathizers by stating as "The Six World Muslim Congress meets in Mogadishu in December 1964 supported independence for Somali territories in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti." Greater Somaliland dreamers claim some portion of Ethiopian regions of the South, Oromia, Harar, Dire Dawa and Afar stretched to Awash River. They considered all the mentioned territories within Ethiopia as the lost territories of the 'western parts of Great Somalia.' Spencer (1979:25) quoted Declaration of Abdullahi Hassan Mohammed, Secretary General and Military Commander of the Western Somali Liberation Front, from New York Times, September 25, 1977 publications, he declared as 'the Awash, that's where we are going to stop'. As a matter of fact, Issas never hesitated to buy the dream of Mogadisho. As indicated on the Minutes of a meeting held on 11/7/1960 at Harar 'on 8/7/1960 Police officer Lt. Ambay traveled to Gewane together with thirty other polices and Issas opened fire on the caravan in an area 18 kms before reaching to Gewane and killed the Lt. and injured five polices including one female police. Issas nowadays attempted all means to accomplish the propaganda of Somalia Republic that claim Somali land stretched up to Awash river.' The Minutes continues to report the perception of Mogadishu as 'in the long run the government of Somalia would

assume to defeat what they call the Amharas so assigned Issa/Somali to control the area stretched to Awash River in advance. They are trying to convince the Oromos but could not repeat their success over the Adals. Hence they decided to wipe away the Adals by force. Overall, the creation of a republic called Somalia by itself gave a morale initiation to Somalis in Ethiopia as well. In the case of Issa/Somali, clan leaders used to mobilize the people by asking why they couldn't achieve to get liberty [from Ethiopia] while Somali brothers in Haregesa and Mogadishu got their own.' ⁴⁹

In fact, the independence of Somalia was not only a morale and political support but also military assistances were also flown from Mogadisho. Confidential letters exchanged between various Ethiopian governmental institutions clearly cited names and number of Issa tribesmen who traversed to British Somaliland, received and distributed armaments⁵⁰ and financial assistance⁵¹ that enabled Issa/Somalis to attack not only Afar pastoralists but also central government security forces. According to a confidential letter sent by Colonel Mekonen Tadesse, Vice Chief of crime investigation department in Harar Governate General Police Bureau, on 18/1/1971 ref. no 41/63 addressed to Fit. Meharene Menda, Vice Governor of Harar Governate General, 'Issa clans particularly of Werdik, Horone, Reer Guleni, Harela, Waledon and Reer Mussa those settled along the Afdem

⁴⁹ A letter sent by Kassay Mekuria Aisha Wereda Governor on 21/7/1960 ref.no 2/8/7279 addressed to Qegnasmach Sahlu Gebre Heywot, Governor of Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja stated that Issa clan chiefs including Ugaas Hassen Hersi has gathered at Fo'a Wereda in a place called Dad Gerene and in spite of their recent blunder in Aydora and Asbuli, they decided to rebel against the government. According to the information we got, Issa chieftains particularly Derbene Farah, Harala clan chief has told to the gathering that the Somalis in Mogadishu (Italian Somaliland) and Hargeisa (British Somaliland) have liberated themselves and we have to follow their steps.

⁵⁰ A letter sent by Qegnasmach Asfaw Haile Mariam, Governor of Dire Dawa, Issa and Gurgura Awraja 26/7/1960 ref.no 1/11188/3/14 addressed to Dej. Kefle Ergetu, General Governor of Harar describes the testimony given by an Issa Furleba clan member on 17/7/1960. Accordingly, 150 boxes of bombs and bullets are transported to Ethiopian territory from Abdulkadier station in the border town. Another confidential letter written to the Harar police chief on August 2/1960 confirmed that Issa tribesmen namely Esuri Sullen, Mohammed Abdi, Ali Beralie and Ali Jama went to Hargesa to receive assistance from Somalia and distributed about 150 boxes of bullets and bombs to the Issa herders.

⁵¹ A letter sent by Balambaras Meharene Menda, Governor of Jijiga Awraja on 31/10/1960 Ref.no 1/205/967/18 addressed to Harar Governorate General stated about 'the Somalia government meddling in the affair of his majesty's country and cited some examples such as propaganda undertaken by the Somalia government national television. In addition financial assistance has been collected and distributed to the Issa through their channel in Djibouti by the help of Mohamud Harbi who infiltrated Mauser and Alpin .In one programme for contributing money in the name of Issa people, we received data that shows Somalis in Aden have contributed 8000 east Africa shilling (EAS), in Berbera 4000, Hargeisa 5000 and in Bura'a 2000EAS.

area have cut telephone lines and organized themselves to create obstacles in the railway. After they received modern weaponry from Mogadishu, they even speculate to assassinate Colonel Getu Tekle, Police chief of Chercher, Adal and Garaguracha Awraja.’ There were similar claims raised by Kenya. As stated in (Spencer 1979:24) asserted that the “claims of Greater Somaliland yet extend to the northeastern province of Kenya, which the Somalis finally conquered less than 50 years ago after massacring the Galla inhabitants, confiscating their cattle and forcing the survivors to accept the formal status of serfs.”

Box 2. NFD

The Northern Frontier (District) of Kenya is a predominantly Somali inhabited district in northern Kenya. The pan-Somali nationalist movement that reached its climax on the eve of the birth of Somalia Republic had declared NFD as one of the lost territories of mother Somalia and thus include it in the five pointed star of the Republic’s flag to refer as one of the irredentist of ‘Greater Somali’. Thus, in the post-independence Somalia, the Somali Government in Mogadishu assisted Somali politicians in NFD (primarily in Garisa, Mandera, Isiolo, and Wajir) for secession from Kenya and union with the newly born Republic of Somalia. As stipulated by Lewis M. (1963a:156) “in the Republic there were widespread demonstrations in support of the Kenya secessionists. And in March the Prime Minister made a strongly anti-imperialist speech, attacking Ethiopia and France, and warning the British Government that it would be held responsible if the ‘mistakes’ of the past were added to and the inhabitants of the N.F.D. were refused the right ‘to freely decide their own destiny.” Later Kenyan politicians went to Somali to deal about their territorial demand. As stated in (Mukhtar 2003: 171) “Representatives of major Kenyan political parties, Jomo Kenatta, chairman of the Kenya African National Congress (KANU); Odinga Oginga, KANU deputy; and Roland Ngala, chairman of the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), visit Somalia to negotiate the status of the NFD. In 1962 June 18 delegates lead by Jama Abdullahi Ghalib, president of the Assemlea Nazionale leads a parliamentary delegation to the United Kingdom to discuss the status of the Somali-dominated Northeast Province of Kenya [...] before Kenyan independence. Consequently, as Mukhtar (ibid) continued, “British sent commission of enquiry. Members of the commission appointed by the Colonial Secretary Reginald Maudling included G.C.M. Onyiuke, a Nigerian lawyer, and Maj.Gen. M.P.Bogert who at last found that the Somali population favoured secession with the aim of ultimately joining the Somali Republic. [However due to] the more persuasive voice of Jomo Kenyatta, this report was ignored [...] soon after in 12 March 1963 Somalia breaks off diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom in response to the findings of the British Commission of Inquiry, which notes that 62 percent of the population of the NFD of Kenya favours unification with Somalia but concludes that the status of the NFD cannot be determined until Kenya is independent.” Since then the discontented government in Mogadishu further enhanced its comprehensive assistance to secessionist movements like Northern Province Peoples Progressive Party (NPPPP). Eventually, the separatists launched sporadic military attacks against the Kenyan defense forces. Though the Somalis’ claim for NFD is yet on air, the claim seems being entertained in low profile than case of the Ogadeni of Ethiopia.

Similarly, pan-Somali movements increasingly became major factors in determining the political future of the territory of Afar and Issa. Mohamed K. (1996:514) affirmed this thesis as “after Somalia became independent in 1960, its government undertook to mobilize the Somalis in Djibouti in the struggle for Greater Somalia, and exercised control over all Somali movements in the French colony, which the nationalists called the Somali Coast. The misnomer of the territory led many Somali nationalists to advocate that the coast is a lost territory of mother Somalia. Somali elites supported this claim.” For example, the Somali author Mukhtar (2003:75) argued as “historically Djibouti was part of greater Somalia and inhabited by mainly Issa, Afar, and a small minority of Yemenites.” Indeed, the Mogadisho government attempted to incorporate all tribal groups to woo the heart of Somali brothers in the ‘lost territories.’ As Mukhtar (ibid: 194) wrote “The Prime Minister; a Dhulbahante, the foreign minister, an Issaq; and other important cabinet members of the new state established in Mogadishu, the Somali Republic, were from northern clans, also including the Gadabursi, Warsangeli, and Issa.” This strategy of Mogadisho was not fruitless. Issas straddles across borders of the Horn region have never hesitated to show their passion for pan-Somali nationalism. Prominent Issa politicians even went as far as mobilizing the entire Somali community to stand tight with the struggle to incorporate Djibouti into a ‘Greater Somalia’. For example, as cited in (Kassim and Searing 1980: 76) “Harbi hoped that Djibouti would unite with Somalia, so that the three territories would be one. [...] However, the French, unlike the British, interfered, expelling Harbi not only from the Chamber of Deputies but also from Djibouti itself.”

The pan-Somali sympathizers continued their resentment against the French rule. Particularly the Front de Liberation de la Cote Somalie (FLCS) founded by Mahamoud Harbi in 1960 begun armed activities within the territory in mid 1960s. The government in Mogadishu provided extensive political, military and financial support to FLCS. For that reason, OAU Liberation Committee meets with the FLCS in Mogadishu and acknowledged their demand for immediate independence of French Somaliland and

release of all political detainees. Mogadishu further attempted to establish a collaborative chain between the struggles of FLCS with that of Eritrean secessionist.⁵²

Box 3. Harbi /FLSC

As written in (Kassim and Searing 1980:209) Mohamud Farah Harbi (1920-1961) was “one of the founders of the Club de la Jeunesse Somali et Dankali (Dankali and Somali Youth Club) in 1946, which evolved in 1947 into the political party Union Democratique Somalienne (Somali Democratic Union, USD). He was also the first native of the Cote Francaise des Somalis to be elected to the French National Assembly, which he accomplished in 1956.” As indicated in the Journal of Ugut-Toosi (2009:7) “Mahmud Harbi grew up in Ali-Sabieh but has not emerged in this city. In fact, Mahmud Harbi was born in Ethiopia. Many of our leaders, Hassan Gouled to Ismail Omar Guelleh, share this characteristic. This precision allows us to recall that migration is recorded in our history.” In any case, Harbi has played a significant role in the political life of the territory particularly in the heyday of pan-Somalism. The French did not like his mass mobilization for liberation of the territory and ambition to incorporate it with ‘Mother Somalia’, thus, the colonial rule in TFAL, as cited in the Journal of Ugut-Toosi (2009b) “sentenced Harbi in absentia to 25 years of banishment, thus [in 1959] he moved to Mogadishu where he plans to organize a fight for independence of the CFS.” On 30 August 1959, Harbi’s group of Issa factions together with other Somalis participated in the pan-Somalia conference held at Mogadishu”. This conference with the aim of establishing a Pan-Somali League and was led by the SYL as confirmed by Mukhtar (2003:160-1) “unanimously elected [Harbi] to head the movement from a base in Cairo, with Egyptian support.” Soon after, as affirmed by Thompson /Adolf (1968:79) “local Somalis and Arab youths supported by Mogadishu established Party du Mouvement Populaire (P.M.P) on 1960. Later on, in June 1963, a most radical liberation front of the Somali coast (F.L.C.S) organized and operated for complete independence of the territory, which had its head quarter in Mogadishu.” Nevertheless, Harbi has died in October 1961 and many believe that the French hand definitely involved in the assassination. For example, a Somali author, Mukhtar (2003:160-1) stated that “[Harbi] died in the explosion of a specially commissioned small Air Egypt aircraft en route from Geneva to Cairo. Some believe the French Security planted the explosive device.” On the other side, the Afar’s speculative view regarding the Issa’s sub-sub clan power competition as culprit for the assassination of Harbi. For example, the journal of Ugut-Toosi (2009:8) that wrote as “Indeed Somali’s clan based political games might have an effect in his death. Hassan Gouled, the most virulent of them saw him [Harbi] as an anti-French “Furlaba”.

⁵² As cited in Abir (1980:142) [ELF’s Struggle in 1970s] was co-operating by then with the FLCS having received the secret blessing of the Somali military regime, which secretly hoped that ELF’s success would advance the Somali Republic’s territorial ambitions.

In addition, Mogadishu had often infiltrated a well-trained and equipped Issa/Somali troops to Ethiopia via Djibouti.⁵³ Thus, Afar pastoralists were facing a modern army without uniform. The government in Mogadishu continued its support until they concluded an agreement with the French and another Somali faction of LPAI leaders.

On the other hand, Ethiopia's support to the Afars further intensified the political tension in the territory. As confirmed by Kassim/Searing (1980:210) "the Ethiopian state, which has taken the role of their [Afar] guardian in the past, [has protected them against the threat of Somali expansion." On 18 March 1967, both Ethiopia and Somalia deploy troops on the borders of French Somaliland in the days immediately preceding the referendum. From 18 to 21 March, French authorities closed the borders, suspend air and train traffic, and shut down the port. The Washington post notes that 'on election eve, Djibouti resembles a fortress before a siege.' Indeed, the Greater Somalia dream spread out of Mogadishu has also inculcated in the mind of elites who by turn manipulated the people to the extent that offering the partition of the already tiny territory and incorporate the Somali areas to motherland, Mogadisho. A Somali writer Said Y (1978:39) has declared as "the desire of dispersed Somalis for unification may come closer and could herald the end of a perpetual, costly and dangerous conflict between Somalis and Afars." Otherwise, as warning given by Said Y. (ibid:37), "if the Afar and Somalis continue to be uncompromising in their competition for political power and economic resources, and in the event of continuous out breaking of violence and internal chaos and anarchy, partition may not be farfetched. [Then] partition could be a better solution than an incessant civil war, which would bring in regional and global involvements. If the maintenance of peace proves impossible and Afars want to go their way, then Somalis would most likely want to go their own way too." Unfortunately, after over a decade of Said's anticipation, the motherland Somalia herself failed and broke into pieces. However, Afars claim that Issa/Somalis may seek to unite with Issas currently governed by the secessionist Somaliland Republic, thereby realizing what has been referred to as the 'Esayi Dream' as refers by Schraeder. (1993a: 220)

⁵³ A letter written by Zemed Seleshi, Secretary of Meiso Wereda Administration on 11/4/1973 ref.no.1/70/67/62 addressed to Chercher, Adal and Garagrach Awraja states that 'we also heard that Issas have more troops well trained and equipped via Somalis in Djibouti.'

4.3.2 Independence of the Republic of Djibouti and Inter-Ethnic Tension

Subsequent to intense political and diplomatic activities, the independence of Djibouti seemed inevitable. French pressured by regional and international organizations commenced to prepare a ground for decolonization of the territory. TFAI's two neighbors similarly made great effort to realize their ambition of incorporating the territory. In the mean time, the relation between the two major ethnic groups in the territory got very uptight until both Ethiopia and Somalia stopped their claim. Ethiopia that refers Djibouti as 'one of the lost provinces of the empire', accepted the independence through serious of negotiations. Likewise Somalia supported the independence of the territory. As cited by Berket (1980:112), the Somali government stated that "it would recognize Djibouti as a sovereign state, and that the historic claim that Djibouti was a 'lost territory' would not prevent this. The logic behind the Somali assertion was that once the Issa Somali formed a majority of the population (the Somali claim they comprise as much as 80 percent of the population in the capital and a slight majority outside), there would be no need for military confrontation: the demographic weapon was sufficient." Other stakeholders in fear of Arabization of the region further supported the independence of the territory and made efforts to persuade the two neighbors. Abir (1980:171) wrote the general threat the western power could have at the time as "If Somalia was also to annex the TFAI the Red Sea would become an 'Arab lake' with its southern entrance controlled by a Muslim state." Consequently, even the Afars who used to support for French's presence, became an advocate for independence. For example, as stated in Al-Shami/ Al-Shami (1997:398-9), "Ali Aref who is known for the pro-French presence policy, had established a clandestine relation with Egypt [who held a position of Djibouti's amalgamation with Somalia] and convinced Cairo to support for independence of Djibouti and to consider the Afar factor in the territory, a stand followed by Saudi Arabia and later by Somalia."

Despite all these odds, the flag⁵⁴ has been officially hoisted on 27 June 1977. As Neir (1990:70) indicate the scenario "one point of the five-pointed Pan-Somali star has been

⁵⁴ Schraeder (1991:75) wrote as "While the blue and the green are for the major population groups, the Afars and Issas, with the triangle indicating the unity between them in their struggle for independence as indicated by the red star, Djibouti's president explained the blue as a symbol of the sea and sky, green for the earth, and white for peace'. Afars are

broken off and taken root in Djibouti.” Indeed, the extremist Issa/Somali factions that opposed the idea of ‘demographic weapon is sufficient’ gradually weakened their power and Gulleh who showed no desire to involve the territory in the Darood-Hawiya dichotomy of the political life of Somalia Republic took power. However, Gulleh’s administration could not spare the mini Republic on Djibouti from another set of political strife, Afar-Issa dichotomy. Since its birth, the Republic is considered as personal fiefdom of Issa/Somalis who claimed that the independence is the result of Somali strugglers. In fact, Afar argue it as a distorted misconception.⁵⁵ Howbeit, over three decades of independence of the Republic rivalry, antagonism, domination of one against the other, inequitable share of resource, civil war, poverty, nepotism and rampant corruption are yet never interrupted scenarios in the economic, social and political life of the Republic.

4.3.2.1 The Issa/Somali’s Never-Ending Rule since Independence

Since the June 27, 1977 birth of Djibouti, the Mamassans uncle and nephew, Gulleh and Gulleh ruled the Republic over three decades. This by turn intensified the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict both in magnitude and frequency. The Djibouti opposition journal published online from France, Uguta-Toosi (2009), describe the ethnic biased monopoly of power within the Republic by stating as “in legal terms, the Republic of Djibouti is intended as a democratic society but, to borrow a phrase well known, the Democrats were absent. Democracy without democrats: that is the reality we live.” The journal continues explaining about Issa/Somalis historical dominancy in the territory. “Thanks to the

said to favour green as representative of their Muslim heritage, while the Issas are said to favour blue as it is the primary colour of the Somali flag.” (The Somali flag also contains a star, one point of which is representative of Djibouti as one part of the still divided Somali nation).

⁵⁵ According to the article on Uguta-Toosi journal (2009a:2-4) “the usual saying ‘the Afar have not fought for the independence of Djibouti and only Somalis wanted it’ is nothing but a misconception. From 1958-1975, the Somalis ambition for independence of Djibouti was with two stages. First, encourage the departure of France. Then attach the independent entity in the Republic of Somalia. Somalis work - not propaganda - to make Djibouti a member of the Greater Somalia. The Afar rejects this perspective. In such a scenario, they are a nightmare worse than the French colonization. “

railroad passing through their territory and the capital built in the islands of Djibouti, their integration into the colonial administrative system has been early. Indigenous Issas of CFS were absorbed between 1900 and 1950. Other Issa came to Ethiopia or Somaliland.” (Ibid)

The new comers have enjoyed privileged access to strategic positions in the political and economic sectors of the Republic. The civil service, as criticized by Mehler (2005:9) gradually, the government payroll is ‘homogenized’; not only Issa but also the small Mamassan bloc. In the early stage of independence there were some Afars in the cabinet who later got off from the train that has been driven entirely by Issas. Successive Afar Prime Ministers, Abdualla Kamil and Ahmed Dini resigned in the same year. Due to the 15 December 1977 grenade tossed into a popular restaurant in Djibouti, the Issa/Somali government intimidated Afar civilians that created controversy within the cabinet. As stated by Said Y. (1978:37) “Less than six months of independence, Prime Minister Ahmed Dini and four other ministers resigned on December 18, 1977, leaving only two Afars in the cabinet.” Ahmed Dini as quoted in Mohamed K. (1996:513) refers the situation ‘a tribal *coup d’etat*’. The Afars quest for exercising factual power in politico-economic structure of the country seemed to fall on deaf ears. As stipulated by Kassim and Searing (1980:223), “the Afar have demanded equal representation in the cabinet and in the army, [...] the failure of Afar politicians to obtain an acceptable settlement has led some Afars to begin to take the initiative through armed action. The first sign of this activity was the kidnapping of the French civil servant, M. Boucaud, in May 1978 but sporadic incidents have continued up to the present.” Despite solving the discontent in just and civilized manner, the Issa/Somali government of Djibouti has taken action that derived the situation to worse. In October 1981 the government banned the Parti Populaire Djibouti (PPD) of Ahmed Dini and amended the constitution that declared Djibouti is one party state. Thus LPAI that later [reduced to its Issa component as refers by Mohamed K. (1996: 513)] and renamed as RPP in 1979 became the sole legal political party in the Republic. Makinda (1992:54-55) wrote his critic as “one of Djibouti’s fundamental weakness is the centralization of political power and decision-making. Over the years, Gouled has garnered enormous political power, both as Head of State and as President of

the RPP, although he allows the ruling political party virtually no role in the day-to-day business of the state.”

In fact, Gouled has governed the territory as his personal fiefdom, with a few of his Issa cronies controlling the judiciary, the police, the civil service, the army and the economy. The massive influx of Somalis from neighboring countries further widens the façade proportionality and in turn intensified the confrontation between the Afar and Somalis.⁵⁶ Corruption in the government is rampant, and the French government has become disenchanted with Gouled. Afars continued to show their opposition in various ways. Among others the clandestine organizations DFLD⁵⁷ has engaged in armed struggle with the backing of Ethiopia. As written by Kassim/Searing (1980:223) “[DFLD’s] armed struggle lasted for about eight years till the Ethiopian government restricted any military operation from its territory as per the agreement reached with the Issa-dominated government of Djibouti. Two major attacks on military bases in north and western part of the country and an assassination attempt on the then national security commander and the incumbent president Isamil Omar Guellhe were conducted.” Nepotism, tribalism and ethnic based repression became the main indicators of Gouled’s reign. In April 1987 Gouled, the sole presidential candidate was re-elected. The tension between the Afar and Issa/Somali enhanced drastically.

As described by Makinda (1992:56) “in February 1988, when Gouled toured the interior of the country, the Okal [elders] of Yoboki, a close relative of the Prime Minister, complained that the Afar were under-represented in the civil service and the army.” In April 1989, Afars, protesting against alleged discriminatory government policies, clashed with security forces at Tadjoura, about 50 kilometers north-east of Djibouti city. The government did not stop there. As the Afar’s resentment have been alarmingly raised, the simultaneous actions taken by the government also got harsh. As cited in Woodward (2003:112) “in January 1991, the government claimed that there had been an abortive coup, following which they detained more than 60 Afars, including Ali Aref, Chief

⁵⁶ When the war [during the 1977 Ethio-Somalia war] turned against the Somalis the Gouled government welcomed thousands of fleeing Issa from Ethiopia and hastened their naturalization as citizens of Djibouti. (Kassim /Searing 1980:222) Thus as described in (Makinda 1992:59) influx of Somali refugees [...] continues to create political tensions, not only between the Gadabursi and the Issaq, but also by boosting the number of Somalis *vis-à-vis* Afars.

⁵⁷ MPL and UNI formed *Front Démocratique pour Libération de Djibouti (DFLD)*

Minister of the territory before independence in 1977. The authorities claimed that Aref was the financial backer of the rebels.” At the end of 1980s Djibouti has entered a new era of marginalization and suppression of the discontent group, the majority Afars. Hundreds of Afars were arrested and tortured in early 1990s. Schraeder (1993a: 211) stated that “as documented in its first major report related to Djibouti, Amnesty International concluded in July 1991 that various methods of torture were being employed by the security forces against a variety of opposition figures.” As the situation remains tense, government declared that the single legal party, RPP has won all 65 seats in the Chamber of Deputies on the 18th December 1992 election.

Subsequently, on 5 September 1996, 80 year-old elderly president of the Republic since independence, Hassan Gouled Aptidon has announced that he would remain in power until 1999. It was really a bad news for the Afars who shoulder over two decade’s domination, marginalization and massive military attacks and humiliation by the government army during Gulled’s rule of Djibouti with an iron fist. Nevertheless, Issa/Somalis remind Gulled’s era as a golden years that brought independence to the country as well as a foundation period for Issa’s long live domination. From the Gulled’s view he created a nation with ‘universal’ attitude. As cited in Makinda (1992:55) Gulled has described his people as ‘African at heart, Arabist in culture, and Universalist in thought.’ However, continues Makinda it is expected that elders from the Issa clan will nominate Gouled’s successor from a slate of Issa candidates-a potentially dangerous way of sustaining democracy in a society, which is acutely sensitive to ethnic tensions.

Later, on April 1999 Gulled extended his power to “his chief of staff, head of security and key advisor for over 20 years, Ismail Omar Gullhe⁵⁸ who further secured the continuation of Issa-Mamassan wield disproportionate politico-economic influence” (Said Y1978: 37). Duale (2006) further affirmed the blame against the Issa/Somali government of Djibouti in such a way that “Balance between the Issa (Somali) and Afar, the two dominant ethnic groups in Djibouti, was tipped over in favor of the Issa, by the

⁵⁸ As cited in (Duale 2006) “Guelleh [...] was born in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia. He migrated to Djibouti in the late sixties before finishing his high school and later joined the Djibouti police forces as a junior non-commissioned officer. He trained first by Somalia’s infamous National Security Service and later by the French Secret Service. In the aftermath of Djibouti’s independence, Guelleh worked in his uncle’s office until he was appointed head of Djibouti’s notorious secret police and chief of cabinet for president Abtidon.”

Mamaasan dynasty. The Afars were relegated to a second-class status, ever since. Oppression and exclusion of Afars continued with the Guelleh rule in more sophisticated but comprehensive way.” A ‘partisan posture-state apparatus’, as expressed by Esman (2004:96) has become the instrument of the new government. Guelleh’s stick reaches to students and trade unions. Beurden (2000) described the harassment as follows, “both political parties and unions have often been the target of repression. Students protesting about inadequate scholarships in December 1998 were fired on by armed police. The government created its own unions and even forced some trade union-leaders to resign and go into exile. Djibouti has almost no human rights organizations. Although there are some human rights activists, their work has been seriously frustrated by the security forces.”

According to the constitution, the 2005 presidential election in which the sole candidate, Guelleh, was re-elected has to be his second but final term. Nevertheless, there are some indicators that Guelleh is yet ready for a third mandate. He assigned a new Constitutional Court president from his own sub clan, Ahmed Ibrahim Abdi. There is an argument that his action is a motive to enable him to be a candidate for a third presidential mandate in 2011 by making amendment on the constitution.⁵⁹ Duale (2006) declared that Guelleh rules Djibouti as a private fiefdom. In an article written on 08 September 2009 by a name, ‘Mohamed’ who claim for Spending two years and half of research in Djibouti stated that “about Djibouti's politics brought me the conclusion that the President of the Republic of Djibouti, Mr. Ismail O. Guelleh is wowing his wife as his next successor.”

4.3.2.2 The 1991-1994 Civil War and Its Aftermath

Prunier (1994) quoted in Mohamed K. (1996:518) wrote that “in a study published in 1986, the Foundation for National Defense Studies commented on the risks of an uprising in Djibouti: The hostility between Afars and Issa is one of the most serious factors leading to instability in the Republic of Djibouti. This factor is reinforced by the

⁵⁹The Indian Ocean Newsletter in its 28 November 2009 issue reported that “Gullehe is ready for a third mandate and assigned a new president for the constitutional court. He replaced Mohamed Warsama Ragueh, an Issa/Odhergob by Ahmed Ibrahim Abdi an Issa/Mamassan and former ambassador to France and was a Minister too.”

overwhelming domination wielded by the Issas since independence and their virtual monopoly in the higher levels of the administration and the government even though the Afars inhabit most of the country and were more numerous for a long time.” However, on the contrary to this fact, Gouled expressed his wish in an interview quoted in Osman S. (1982:49) stated that “politically our image as a country of peace and conciliation will make Djibouti the Hong Kong of the Middle East and Africa.” Unfortunately and unlike his wish the country ended up with human misery in a bloody civil war.

Box 4. FRUD

The Afar's resentment against the Issa/Somali dominated government of Djibouti reached its peak and changes in the political order of the Horn region led in the late 1980s led the rivalry to shift into bloody civil war. The Afar rebel group-FRUD opened a massive military operation against the government in Djibouti in which the Front aimed to control quarter of the Republic's territories. As the armed-FRUD leader Mohamed K. (1996:515-6) wrote about the profile of the FRUD since its inception in late 1970s. According to him "In May 1979 [MPL] joined another faction named Union Nationale pour L'Independence to Form the Front Democratique de la Liberation de Djibouti (FDLD), whose purpose was to fight for 'a real improvement in the lot of the popular masses and against any form of discrimination, favouritism or nepotism'. The FDLD carried out several attacks against government troops, and the regime responded by mounting operations against the civilian population thus digging a deeper divide between the Issa dominated government and the Afar community. At its congress in 1982, [...] the FDLD changed its strategy deciding that a large number of its members could go back to the capital and other towns. However, [...] one part of the FDLD and some of its leaders, including its president, Mohamed Adoyta, continued their political activities underground. [As the repression against the Afars intensified] From June 1991 onwards, more and more young people from Arhiba, Tadjourah, Dikhil, Yoboki and Obock joined the guerrilla army. The unity of the movement was forged in the bush, and FRUD [Front pour le Restouration de l'unite et la Democratie] was created in August 1991 at Bahlo in northern Djibouti near the Ethiopian frontier. It was the product of the fusion of three political movements: the Front Populaire pour le Restauration du Loi et de l'Eqalite (FRDE), the Front de la Resistance Patriotique de Djibouti (FRPD), and the Action pour la Revision de l'Ordre a Djibouti (AROD)[organized in Addis Ababa and led by Mohammed Adoyta] . In fact, all three had been created by the FDLD to mobilize people in various social sectors." Thus as written in (Schraeder 1993a: 212) one could conclude as "FRUD is the historical continuation of the MPL and FDLD movements that later grew to a force of about 3,000." The late Ahmed Dini was the first head of FRUD that have a significant place in the Afar-Issa/Somali historical conflict in which the intensive armed struggle enabled Afars to panic the Somali dominated government as the front gained control 3/4th of the Republics territory and as confirmed by Woodward (2003:112) "[they] came as close as the town of Arta-45 km south of the capital."

The disgruntled Afars decided to raise their weapon and fight against the Somali government of Djibouti. Thus various opposition political organizations formed a joint

front, FRUD, in August 1991 and conducted a massive military attack that could be regarded as the peak of the traditional long lasting conflict between the Afar and Somali. The concealed discontent in the Republic exploded and the ethnic tension in Djibouti became visible out for outsider for the first time after the independence of the country. As described by Schraeder (1993a: 215) “[FRUD was] signaling the end of Djibouti’s special status as the ‘eye of the hurricane’ in the Horn of Africa.” The FRUD leader Mohamed Kadamy (1996:516) expressed the escalation of political tension in Djibouti as follows:

The regime raised the political tension in January 1991, by accusing the Afars of plotting against the state, and imprisoned prominent personalities, cadres and members of the FDL. Repression furnished hundreds of people with added reasons for joining the guerrilla groups forming in the north and southwest of the country. From June 1991 onwards, more and more young people from Arhiba, Tadjourah, Dikhil, Yoboki and Obock joined the guerrilla army. The unity of the movement was forged in the bush, and FRUD was created in August 1991 at Bahlo in northern Djibouti near the Ethiopian frontier. It was the Product of the fusion of three political movements: the Front Populaire pour le Restauration du Loi et de l’Eqalite (FRDE) [led by the late Mohamed Aramis Mohamed], the Front de la Resistance Patriotique de Djibouti (FRPD) [led by Ali Makkij], and the Action pour la Revision de l’Ordre a Djibouti (AROD) [led by Dr. Abate Ebo Adou].

Government troops attacked the Afar guerrilla army at Alayli Dada in June 1991 that was two months before organizing the guerrilla fighters under the umbrella front named FRUD. According to Mohamed K. (1996:516) “FRUD established a military force in the north and southwest regions where Afars live, and initially intended to exert political pressure whilst avoiding bloodshed. Nevertheless, hostilities soon commenced. On 10 October 1991, government forces launched an offensive at Ab’a in the southwest. Two days later, FRUD counterattacked in the north of Djibouti.” Even though, FRUD and government accused each other for igniting the armed conflict, the vital point was that discontent among a dominant ethnicity and a marginalized one could boil up and transform the political discontent in the country in which the government’s reaction further triggered the rivalry. As Makinda (1992:57) shed light on further developments in Djibouti, “the government responded by deploying more than 399 troops from the Issa-dominated Force nationale de securite (FNS). The brutality of the FNS forced about one third of Obock’s 10,000 inhabitants to flee to other areas, including Ethiopia.” Soon after,

FRUD started a massive military attack against the government soldiers in Assa-Gueyla in the north of Tağura district in the night of 11 November 1991. In this fight FRUD lost the life of its military chief, Mohamed Aramis Mohamed. The second fight took place in 12 November by an ambush at Ibna-Raddi (Randa). Consequently, on 18 December, 1991 government forces occurred early in the morning on the local inhabitants of Arhiba, an afar dominated district of the capital and ‘fired indiscriminately’⁶⁰ that resulted 59 deaths, more than 300 wounded and 7 Missing ‘without counting the victims who died in the hospital or those who have not been identified because their bodies were abducted by government forces to wipe out all traces of evidence. As stated by Schraeder (1993a: 215), according to eyewitness reports, noted an Amnesty International report of the incident, “one Afar member of the security forces was apparently executed himself after he refused to fire on fleeing civilians.” After the Arhiba massacre a number of cabinet members and parliamentarians have resigned because of Gouled’s ‘war logic’ that derived them to become a de facto opposition in parliament.⁶¹ And the fighting continued mainly in the northern part of the Republic, in the regions of Tağura and Obock. Mohamed K. (1996:516) confirmed that “in July 1993, the FRUD information bulletin, Aysseno explained: Political ostracism, the increase in inequality, and the slide towards a military and police state which have characterized the fifteen years of Gouled’s ‘reign of calm’, bear witness to the fact that rebellion was in the end the only means of conquering the redoubt of democracy.”

Indeed, FRUD had achieved to control about three-fourth of the Republic within a few months of fighting. FRUD leaders claimed the success as the result of the “enlargement and strength of the organization” (Mohamed K.1996: 516). However, Makinda (1992:57) on the other hand opposed FRUD’s arguments in such a way that “it was hard to verify the movement’s strength in relation to its successes. FRUD has a nine-

⁶⁰ CIDCM report on Afar chronology (January 10, 2007)

⁶¹ On 23 December 1991 seventeen Afar deputies, protesting the killings and mistreatment of nomads by the army near Tadjoura, resigned from the chamber of Deputies and demanded talks between the government t and the FRUD on 31 December another 14 Afar deputies resigned from RPP. Makinda (1992:57) described the situation as ‘because of Gouled’s ‘war logic’, [Afar deputies] have become a de facto opposition in parliament.’

member executive council, of which Adayta is president, and a 37-member central committee. One of its biggest problems has been a lack of even rudimentary communications equipment. The only way the mobile units operating to the west of Obock could send messages to the reinforcements waiting in the north was by camel.” In fact, FRUD’s weakness in modern network communication technology was inevitable. However, the front also succeeds to mobilize its great asset which was the collaboration of Afars in the Horn against Issa dominated regime in Djibouti. The Issa/Somali dominated government in Djibouti is believed by majority Afars as the main sponsor for the Issa’s intrusion in the Afar region of Ethiopia. And hence, political, logistical morale support was flooded to the opposition front from every directions of the Afar-land. Afar youths including females were joining the front. In view of that, President Gulled rejected any negotiation with FRUD but instead he manipulated the resignation of Afar cabinet members and parliamentarians and mobilized all Somali across the Horn region to defend the Afars’ threat. This action chosen by Gulled was another factor that polarized the discontent between the two ethnic groups. Schraeder (1993a: 214) cited that the Gulled government has instead recruited “trained guerrilla fighters among the Issa populations residing in Ethiopia and Somalia, as well as some former Isaak fighters from the SNM.”

Furthermore, Mohamed K. (1996:517) added that “[Gulled’s regime] declared a general mobilization, called up all the Issa men, sent out a call to Somalis outside Djibouti⁶² [to confront the danger of the Afar menace], and internationalized the conflict. [...] At this point, the government started to recruit in Somalia and Ethiopia under the pretext of Somali solidarity, but also by offering material advantages and the acquisition of Djibouti nationality. As a result the number of Djibouti Army ‘had grown to over 100,000 men.’ As Bollee (2003:482) postulated “since the population [of Djibouti] is only 650,000, all these soldiers could not have been Djiboutians. There was a good number of Somali and even Oromo mercenaries among them. Article 13 of law 200 voted by the national assembly on 24 October 1991 provides for automatic acquisition of

⁶² As affirmed by Prunier 1994 quoted in (Mohamed K.1996) “Numerous mercenaries have been recruited: Issa from Somaliland, survivors from the United Somali Front adventure in 1991, Ethiopian Issas from the Dire Dawa, Hawiye Abgal (clansmen from the south) ‘provided’ by ‘president’ Ali Mahdi who appreciates the support given by the Djibouti government to his cause, and even Digil or Wa Gosha adventurers who had at some point been made prisoners in the war of Somaliland.”

Djibouti nationality by any foreigner recruited into the army or the security force.” Guled further declared a state of emergency and as cited in (Schraeder 1993a), “invoked a Franco-Djiboutian defense treaty signed in 1977 that provided for French aid in the event that Djibouti was threatened with ‘external aggression.’” For the Issa/Somali government of Djibouti FRUD, as cited in (Makinda 1992:56), “is group of Ethiopian mercenaries.” Despite French’s pre-knowledge about the FRUD⁶³, in February 1992 they shifted their stand and sent troops in order to block FRUD fighters to seize the town of Dikhil.⁶⁴ It’s argued that the net result of FRUD’s southern march could have been the downfall of the Gouled regime. Apart from French’s direct Military assistance, the Issa/Somali dominated government of Guled had also got support from all regional powers including neighbouring Ethiopia and Eritrea, Somaliland except Yemen.⁶⁵ In addition financial supports were flown from French and Gulf states as well. Abdurahman, S. (2007: 49) wrote that “as a result, on 16 February 1993 the government army

⁶³ FRUD requested French military restraint, as well as humanitarian aid and possible mediation between the two sides of the conflict. (Schraeder 1993a:212)

⁶⁴ As quoted in (Fitzgerald1978:25) “In July 1977, French Foreign Minister Guirangaud stated that French forces in Djibouti would only intervene in the Republic’s affairs to provide defence against an external threat.” Even during the early period of the civil war in 1991 French initially has held that position. As indicated by Schraeder (1993a:214) “In the early stages of the FRUD offensive, French officials strongly tied to the Parti Socialist, such as Ministre Deleque des Affaires Etrangeres Alain Vivien, emphasized that French military forces would not become involved in what was perceived in Paris as an internal conflict between the Gouled government and the Afar opposition regime.” However When the FRUD moved swiftly and controlled around 3/4th of the Republic in 1991, France changed its stand and assisted an entirely Somali dominated government's army. FRUD fighters yet remember French role in defending the town of Dikhil. As cited in (Beurden 2000), “[French Claimed] that the attack was carried out by men in Ethiopian army uniforms, the government.” Prunier (1994) in Mohamed K. (1996:518) further explained that “largely due to the position taken by Pierre Joxe, French minister of defence at the time, France refused to intervene directly. Nevertheless it contributed in weakening the guerrillas in several ways. It used all its influence to stop any humanitarian aid reaching civilians under the protection of the FRUD who were already suffering from an economic and medical blockade mounted by the government of Djibouti and reinforced by Eritrea and Ethiopia. The suffering of civilians was a crucial factor in persuading the opposition to accept the separation of the warring parties by French troops in February 1992. The army of Djibouti profited from this respite to acquire new arms and increase its strength fivefold. The deputy commander of the French military contingent at Djibouti, Colonel Gandoli, helped the army of Djibouti with information about FRUD’s positions and assisted in planning operations.”

⁶⁵ Schraeder (1993a:213-4) confirmed the role of neighbouring states in squashing FRUD in such a way that “Ethiopia and Eritrea opposed FRUD’s development due to their own ‘Afar syndrome’. The secessionist Somaliland Republic is similarly opposed to the FRUD due to a desire to maintain a working relationship with the Gouled regime. [Only] Yemen has allowed the FRUD to establish an office in the capital, Sanaa, Yemeni leaders do not favour a military solution, and instead have offered to serve as neutral mediators between the FRUD and the Gouled regime.[Yemen has also refused] to apply the blockade on food supplies to civilians in Djibouti, which others accepted.”

recaptured and redeployed its force in the southern part of the Republic from where they withdrew a year ago.” On 5 July 1993 FRUD army withdrew from their strong military base at Assa-Gueyla in the north of Tadjoura district and retreated to the northern part of the Republic that bordered Eritrea. Majority of FRUD fighters including thousands of civilian Afars fled to Ethiopia and Eritrea to avoid harassment by the Issa army. The State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1994 reported that there were new reports, especially in the first quarter of the year, that government security forces abused detainees, especially Afars in the northern region and in Djiboutiville, and those suspected of links to FRUD. There were also credible reports of government forces being involved in the rape of at least 12 women and girls in Mabla and Oueima regions in March. On at least two occasions the government razed squatter settlements built on public lands by Afars, and others from Somalia and Ethiopia, displaced by the civil conflict. The reaction taken by the Issa/Somali dominated government of Djibouti further exacerbates the long lasting rivalry between the two groups. Afars were arrested and executed for avenging their support for the FRUD. Police moved to demolish Afar inhabited localities (Day region 55 km north of Tağura and Afar neighborhood of Arhiba in Djiboutiville) that led to riots in which several Afars were killed. Later on in December 1994 one faction of the FRUD agreed to a truce. However the other faction led by Ahmed Dini announced their continuation for armed struggle and denounces the leaders of the other factions of FRUD headed by Ali Mohamed Daoud and Ougoureh Kifle Ahmed for engaging in peace negotiations with the government. Though the first civil war ended, there is no guarantee for avoiding the second, as the country remains a ‘No War-No Peace’ zone.

4.3.2.4 The Tiny Republic: Successor of Mogadishu in Building Issa/Somalis’ Muscle in Ethiopia

Following overthrow of President Siad Barre, as agreeably described by Adibe (1995:24) “in no time, [...] Somalia was transformed from a land of punt to a land of misery and death.” Since then the tiny Republic of Djibouti has shoulder huge responsibility of

coordinating and organizing not only the case of Issa but of all Somalis.⁶⁶ In fact, after the collapse of Barre's regime in Somalia, Djibouti holds the responsibility of lending a hand to Issa expansionists in the region. As illustrated by Hamad (2008) “in 1984 all Issa employees and officials in Djibouti contributed to a special fund used to finance the conquest of the West”. Apart from offering military trainings⁶⁷, arms and medical support for Issa fighters⁶⁸, it's reported that Djiboutian military commanders participated at times in the so-called pastoral confrontation over grass and water. According to Afar regional officials confirmation⁶⁹, Djiboutian military personnel identity cards had been handed over to the federal government of Ethiopia by Afar regional administrators, which were found in the battlefield during the March 2002 Gala'lu armed conflict. As extra confirmation, AANA's press release on 2006 stated that “the Afars have captured several Issa fighters (with Djibouti identification) and handed them over to the federal government of Ethiopia.” Thus, as mentioned in (Tadesse and Yonas 2007:5) “Ethiopian Afars blame the Djibouti government for providing arms and training to the Issa to displace them from their land. They also show resentment against the Ethiopian government for letting them be victims of the Issa.”

Indeed, the TPLF led Ethiopian government supported Issa/Somali government in crashing Afars opposition fighters, the FRUD. Among many speculations, one reason is believed to be Djibouti's diplomatic pressure over the landlocked Ethiopia. As described by Al-Shami/ Al-Shami (1997:405) “for any problem arise between the Ethiopian government and about 200,000 Issa/Somalis live in eastern periphery of the country, Djiboutian government involves itself directly that shifts the issue to the level of two states matter. Issa dominated government of Djibouti shows their serious concern for the

⁶⁶ As written in (Samatar A.2004:12) “The new party [Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL) led by the late Dr. Abdul Majid Hussein] had little time or resources to prepare for the 1995 national and regional elections [in Ethiopia]. It sent a delegation to the Djibouti Republic to solicit financial support from Somali Ethiopians and other Somalis. The group was well received and raised over \$30 000 and several vehicles.”

⁶⁷ In addition, Afar government officials in the Republic of Djibouti who prefer to remain anonymous confirmed that those Issa/Somalis from Ethiopia who have never been in Djibouti got a military training opportunities particularly in the Gulf States.

⁶⁸ Issas who are injured by the conflict with the Afars in Ethiopia usually get medical care in Dikhil hospital and in Djibouti General Peltier Hospital (Hamad 2008)

⁶⁹ As indicated in the speech of the vice president of the Afar region, Mohammed Tahiro in 2007.

safety and protection of Issa/Somali inhabit in Ethiopia to extent that his Excellency Hassen Goulde's government assisted those Issas in conflicts over pasture and water." In fact, the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict within the Ethiopian deserts definitely would have repercussions for the domestic political setting in Djibouti. Thus, Djibouti is always alert for her trans-border interventions. According to most interviewees, the hidden policies of the Issa dominated government of Djibouti further turn out an overspill effect in the relation of the Afar and Issa/Somali across the Ethiopian border. By way of supporting Gulled's government during the civil war, many Somalis in the Horn region have been imported to Djibouti from which majority of them resettled in Ethiopia that in turn facilitated a trouble-free expansion of Issa's border which always is in a move to westward. As reported in AANA's press release on 2006 "the Djibouti government has ordered Issa government soldiers to go on leave with pay to fight the Afars in Ethiopia." Tadesse and Yonas (2007:4) further affirmed that at the end of the war, "About 8000 Ethiopian Issa-Somalis were demobilized from the Djiboutian army." There are also accusations against the Issa/Somali dominated government of Djibouti for having a hidden plan to encourage births of new hamlets along the Addis-Assab/Djibouti road.

Thus, nowadays, Issa/Somalis are able to establish about four truck-stop villages along the Addis-Assab/Djibouti main road in which the last built Ambuli has been demolished by the order of the federal government in 2009. Mean while Djibouti lends her hand again for the displaced people. Ahmed R. (2009) affirmed that "undemocratic threats are hanging over the Issa tribe in Ethiopia. The people inhabited Aboule village has been treated cruelly inhuman manner and they went to Djibouti as a refuge." Some of the Somali interviewees around the demolished hamlet of Ambuli stated that they used to receive aid ranging from flour distribution to finance from the government of Djibouti.

Box 5. Ambuli

Ambuli, which means home to large birds in Afar language was a very recent settlement of Issa/Somalis located about 15 kms from Gewane town. Even though marathon of joint peace committee meetings undertaken in post-Derg era prohibited any new constructions and expansion of the already established hamlets of Adaytu, Unduffo and Gedmaytu, Issa/Somalis rather used earlier settlements along the road as a springboard to set their foot on another. Since its establishment, Ambuli has been demolished thrice. According to informants, in one occasion the former administrator of Shinele Zone, Adem gave a hint that Ambuli was supposed to be established in order to settle demobilized ex-soldiers of Djibouti Republic. Due to the appeal of the ANRS or as suggested by others for fear of infiltration of Eritrean backed Somali insurgents, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi addressed federal as well as regional officials from the Afar and Somali regional states on January 2008 and urged them to find a lasting solution for the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict within three months time. He criticized Afars' historical right argument that demands the restoration of the 1940s border with Somalis at Erer River near Dire Dawa as well as condemned Somalis' view towards referendum as a lasting solution for any land on which "their goats may graze for couple of days". He further gave order for Somali federal and regional government officials to demolish the recent settlement of Ambuli. Accordingly, in mid of February Somali authorities (including Mohamud Drier and Jama) who had taken the responsibility for the mission at Ambuli have reported that they could not reach to consensus with the Somali settlers as for their evacuation from Ambuli. Soon after, on 28 February 2008 federal army took the responsibility to demolish this illegal settlement in which the entire village of Ambuli set on fire With the exception of a small mosque.

A former police chief of Chercher, Adal and Garagurach Awaraja, Colonel Getu Tekle further affirmed that the invisible but strong hand of Djibouti is not a new scenario but strengthened after the breakup of Somalia. Issa/Somalis outlaws who killed Afars, Oromos and/or security forces used to cross to Djibouti. Moreover, to build their economy, Issa/Somalis particularly those inhabited north of Meiso town used to engage in illicit trade by selling livestock, coffee, flours, khat, sugar skin and hides of various wild animals to the market in Djibouti. Djibouti is yet the main station for illicit traders.

Nowadays Issa/Somalis, straddling the boundary between Ethiopia and Djibouti have managed to connect Gadamaitu and Undufo (hamlets in Ethiopia), respectively, to Asale and Alisabieh towns of Djibouti. Despite the internationally recognized border of Galafi between the states of Ethiopia and Djibouti, Issa/Somali in both sides are able to move people, and goods freely without checks. In general the tiny Republic of Djibouti seems to inherit the responsibility of Mogadishu for the realization of Esayi dream if not Greater Somalia dream. After the broke-down of Somalia 'the pan-Issa dream led by Djibouti takes the stage.' (Mukhtar 2003:5)

Box 6. Unduffo

Unduffo, one of the recently established Issa/Somali settlements along the Addis-Assab/Djibouti main road is appeared in the mid-1990s. During the Derg era, Unduffo that in Afar language literally means ‘narrow thigh’ implying a ‘gorge’ was a food aid storage station for neighbourhoods like Gewane. However, the Derg had demolished the station together with other posts like Harsis, Welanso and Samara by fearing that those sites could provide an environment conducive to the establishment of a safe haven for insurgents. The large grazing area surrounding Unduffo was potential site for keeping livestock of Afar pastoralists from Haramella, Bedul, Areboba and Modaitu tribes. In mid-1990s, the EPRDF re-established Unduffo for storing and distributing consumable goods to the military stationed in the vicinity, which in turn attracts massive migration of Issa/Somalis from neighbouring Shinele zone in the Somali region of Ethiopia. Indeed, as claimed by local people, Unduffo is a very strategic site where one could have an access to view movements up to the borders of Somaliland and Djibouti. Nowadays, Unduffo is entirely inhabited by Issa/Somalis and further claimed by the Somalis as it is a kebele of the Afdem [Dahab] Wereda within Shinele Zone whilst the Afars yet recognized it as kebele under Gewane Wereda. Furthermore, Issa/Somalis claimed that their ancestral forefathers founded Unduffo some generations ago. They renamed Unduffo as Unduhfo to mean saliva in Somali language. However their claim has never been accepted either by the Afars or neutral ethnic groups dwelling in Unduffo. Besides, constructions majorly commenced since 1999 to 2001 in the hamlet themselves bears witness to its recent birth.

4.3.3 Emergence of the State of Eritrea in 1991: An Architect of Proxy Games

4.3.3.1 Eritrea’s role to intensify Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict in Ethiopia

Eritrea’s impact on the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict can be categorized in two major time periods. Those are the time period since her establishment to the divorce with TPLF (1991-1998) and the post Ethio-Eritrea war to present (1998-2009). In the first period, Eritrea’s role was simply flagging the Afars’ clout in the politico-economic scene of the Horn region. Birth of Eritrea by itself weakens the already fragile Afar’s resistance against any political and military attacks. In post 1991 Afars incorporated in Eritrea are tied up in growing new challenges that in turn strengthen the Issa/Somali expansion in Ethiopia as the weakness of one group is strength for the rival. A great portion of Afar youths who had suddenly obliged to swallow a new identity of being an Eritrean, are kept for years in the notorious military camp, Sawa, situated in western part of Eritrea bordering Sudan. Besides, financial means in which the Afars in Ethiopia could generate from business linked with the sea outlet has been closed since the overthrow of the Derg.

Eritrea's influence on the decline of the Afar power not only resulted from further straddle and marginalization of Afars within her territory but is also due to Eritrea's direct involvement in crushing the Afar resistance groups operating in the border areas with Ethiopia. According to letters exchanged between President Issaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on 16 and 25 August 1997⁷⁰, EPLF-TPLF had an abortive joint military campaign against the Ugugumo⁷¹ fighters in Beda area. The joint massive military attack in borderlands was stopped due to the end of EPLF-TPLF honeymoon.

Overall, Eritrea's existence as a new state in the region led to an increase in actors involved in Afar-Issa/Somali conflict that tilted the balance of power in favor of Issa/Somali by weakening the Afars politically, militarily and economically. Indeed, Issa/Somalis mass movements and settlement in the Afar land along the main Addis-Assab road have never been without the consent of the architects in Asmara who at the time regarded Ethiopia as a big kitchen of Eritrean intelligence units. In 1992, the Asmara government had opened a consulate office that as claimed by Dahilon (2001: 5), was "intended to monitor the situation from close by in Ayssaita, the then capital of the Afar region of Ethiopia."

In post Ethio-Eritrea border dispute, Asmara has chosen to play on both the Afar and Somali cards. Thus, Eritrea has established tactical alliance with Ethiopian government opposition groups among the Afar and Somali ethnic groups. Asmara becomes a host for armed organizations of Afars and Somalis who received military training and weapons from Eritrea. The target for Asmara is merely to incubate rebellion groups that could afford to infiltrate and conduct attacks as a way of weakening the Addis Ababa

⁷⁰ Extracts of letters exchanged between President Issaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in August 1997 were made public by the government of Eritrea in course of August 1998. These letters are also attached at appendix 3 to a book written by Tekeste/Tronvoll entitled 'Brothers at War' (2000:115-116)

⁷¹ Ugugumo, which means 'upraising' or 'revolution' in Afar language, is an Afar armed resistance group established in 1981 against the TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front) fighters' violent intrusions into northern Afar lands bordering Tigray. In the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali, Ugugumo fighters seems to play a role of equilibrist to balance the military power with Somalis by offering military training and provide arms for Afar youths in the conflict area.

government. While the Afar groups conducted irregular attacks and kidnappings⁷², the Somalis held responsible to infiltrate Eritrean military and intelligence men through the porous border all the way to Somalia. As stated in (Herrie 2008:36) many respondents from Ayssaita, Dawe and Gewane Weredas repeatedly mention the presence of Eritrean troops in the Issa/Somalis occupied areas adjacent to these Woredas. According to the information that the respondents have, Eritrean troops who train, plan and guide the Issa/Somali militants are reportedly stationed at places called Abida and Ambuli (near Gewane), Tereyna (near Dawe) and Obno, Galaqeto, and Garani (Ayssaita) woredas. These places are military training camps of Issa/Somalis and serve as resting basis for Ethiopian opposition groups coming from the Wede military training camp (near Assab) on their way to Ethiopia's interior. Herrie wrote a very important interview he conducted with three former ARDUF (Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union Front)-Ugugumo fighters who were in Wede military training camp near Assab. It reads as follows:

Wede is a place close to Assab and it is a military training camp for all the Ethiopian government opposition organizations. Among these groups the largest number is the Issa-Somalis in the name of ONLF (Ogaden National Liberation Front) fighting with the current Ethiopian government inside the Ogaden region (according to them south and north-eastern part of the current Afar regional state is inside Ogaden region) and UIC (United Islamic Council) fighting to unite all Somalis in the Horn of Africa. So, the Eritrean government provides military training (for 8 months), small arms, military uniforms, and financial support to each political organization. In addition to that, after they complete their military training, they go back to Ethiopia in order to start guerrilla fighting and those Eritrean soldiers who trained the batch enter Ethiopia with the group to provide political and military leadership. In addition to plan, organize and lead fighting of the opposition groups with the Ethiopian soldiers or any other groups i.e. Afar inside Ethiopia. For instance, the Afar and Issa-Somali fights in March 2004 occurred in a place called Ambuli (10km from Gewane town), the military engagement was conducted by the Issa-Somalis trained in Wede and their leaders were Eritrean soldiers who were training them in Wede. We have friends in the training camp and one day one of the Issa-Somalis leader lived in the training camp for a long time, told us about the Ambuli war held between Afar and the Issa-Somalis. Accordingly he told us

⁷² The Afar rebellion fighters of Ugugumo had kidnapped nine Italian tourists in the Danakil Depression in 1995. Then on the evening of 28 February 2007, five European tourists along with 13 Ethiopian aides were also kidnapped in Hamedi'ela about 977km northeast of the Addis Ababa by Ugugumo. The latter gave an international media coverage for Ugugumo as the kidnapping included Peter Rudge and Jonathan Ireland, First Secretary and Administration Support personnel in the British embassy in Addis, respectively together with Malcolm Smart and Laure Beaufils from DFID as well as Rosanna Moore, wife of Head of British Council in Addis Abeba.

exact information about the number of Afars killed, number and the type of weapons they took from Afar and how they defeated the Afars in Ambuli war. When we had all this information, we surrender without delay to the Afar Regional security office in Samara. (Herrie 37-38)

In general, the most complex Eritrean foreign policy is now able to accommodate both the Afar and Issa/Somali in its capital, Asmara, equipped and trained them for its cause but on the other side PDJF is putting more fuel on fire burning along the Afar and Issa/Somali border in northeastern Ethiopia.

4.3.3.2 Eritrea's meddling in Djibouti's Local Politics

It was after few months of entering to Asmara palace that EPLF-led Eritrea government meddled in Djibouti's internal affair. After concluding thirty years of war with successive Ethiopian governments, Eritrean naval boats did not switch their engine off. Rather the EPLF navy forces were actively involved in crushing the Afar oppositions who were on the verge of toppling the Issa/Somali government in Djibouti. The land and maritime boundary between southern Eritrea and northern Djibouti was used as a military base for FRUD combatants who mainly gathered weapons from Ethiopian army, run away through the border during the 1991 regime change in Ethiopia. The EPLF that could predict the essence of Afar's seizure of power in Djibouti sent its naval boats to block the coast bordering Djibouti in order to cut the supply route for the FRUD army. As Prunier (1994) in Mohamed K. (1996:519) stated "Eritrea and Ethiopia reinforced the economic and medical blockade the government of Djibouti imposed on Afar civilians. They deployed forces along the border with Djibouti (1500 Eritrean soldiers and 1500 Ethiopian soldiers), thus exerting considerable pressure to the rear of the rebels. Eritrean radiobroadcast commentaries against FRUD's struggle, stigmatizing it as a project to establish a 'Greater Afar' state. In its Arabic language programme (24 November 1991) reported in LA letter de l'Océan Indien (3 December 1991), it accused 'certain powers' of promoting 'the setting up of a greater Afar State.'"

Indeed, Eritrean secessionist has received sympathy from Somalis while they were in fronts. Melakou (1994:64) confirmed that "Somalia also played an important role for the Eritrean cause on the diplomatic front. [...] it also supplied the Eritreans with arms and

money.” supports to Eritrean fronts have been continued via Djibouti after its independence. As asserted by Melakou (ibid) “Although its [Djiboutian] official position on Eritrea was non-involvement, Eritrea fronts had offices in Djibouti and conducted political work among Eritreans there.” There alliance could be due to Somalia’s ambition of weakening Ethiopia, or the role of the Arab League, and also their common stand against the Afar factor. Nonetheless, it is unconvincing to assume that EPLF moved to lend a hand to Djibouti by remembering the old friendship rather the mere reason could definitely be the Afar cause. All in all the ‘Greater Afar syndrome’ used as a tool by the EPLF-led Eritrean government to subjugate the Afars and weaken them to resist the Issa/Somali played a role in one part by diffusing the tension during the Djiboutian civil war but on the other hand oppressed one ethnicity against the other that in turn lead to instability as the fate of the region. As in the case with other neighbors, Eritrean government has dissolved the marriage with the Djiboutian government in 1996. Though their relationship gradually declined, both the Issa/Somali and Tigrean hegemonic regimes in Djibouti and Asmara respectively kept their post-divorce relationship particularly in regard to the Afar cause. Apart from diplomatic tools, both governments had commenced to organize joint meetings along their border towns. The first regular meeting of the two sub-committees took place in Angaru, Djibouti, in 2006 and the second in Assab on 11 January 2008. According to the report⁷³, both governments reached to an agreement to collaborate their efforts ‘to control illegal trade, deforestation, hunting of wild animals and such related activities.’ Indeed, it is a paradox that the agreement between the two desertious borders was about forestation and protecting wild animals. Rather, many Afars claim that it was agreement for hunting Afar youths who use that route to escape from the brutal rule in Eritrea.

Nevertheless, the recent Doumera crisis has appeared to shift both countries’ foreign policy since the last two decades. Both regimes attempt to play proxy games in which the Afar card is vital for the game. In fact, Djibouti seems to oblige to approach Afars of Eritrea and Ethiopia the first time during the Issa/Somalis rule since independence of Djibouti. Djiboutian Minister of Defense, Ougoureh Kifleh, has contacted an Afar

⁷³ The 2nd regular meeting of the border sub-committees of the Eritrean Southern Red Sea region and the Djiboutian Abok and Tağura zones (news from Shabiat.com)

opposition group of Eritrea backed by Ethiopia. According to a meeting held between RASDO leadership and Ougoureh Kifleh in 2008 at Addis Ababa, Djibouti is ready to support Afars in their struggle to liberate their people from Tigrigna hegemonic rule in Asmara. In addition, the Indian Ocean Newsletter (N°12731 posted on 4/11/2009) reported that Djibouti has invited sons of the Awsean Sultan and offered a cooperation to diffuse Eritrean backed rebellion against Djibouti. According to the report, President Ismail Omar Guelleh and Hassan Said, chief of security, may have had discussions with the Hanfareh Ali Mirah, and they suggested recruiting Afars from Awsa, [...] trained and armed so that they could defend Djibouti against Eritrea and bring the FRUD Afar rebels in northern Djibouti to heel.

Indeed, Djibouti is facing with Eritrea, an architect of proxy games in the region. Since the eruption of border dispute in June 2008, it seems a renaissance for FRUD. Several reports show that the military movement of FRUD along the northern border with Eritrea is getting boosted. For instance, a report in the Indian Ocean Newsletter (N°1254-Paris, posted on 24/01/2009) stated “the Djibouti army is present throughout the North of the country to round-up Afar rebels on the Eritrea border.” According to another issue of the Indian Ocean Newsletter (N°1269 posted on 19/09/2009), General Fathi Ahmed Houssein the armed forces chief of staff, ordered Djibouti servicemen to prevent the Sultan of Rahaita (in the northern part of the country), Abdoukader Daoud and close members of his family (including women and children) from going near the Eritrean border. He is reproached [Eritrea] of providing moral support for Afar rebels in the armed faction of the FRUD. All in all Eritrea has become a significant factor in Djibouti politics through manipulating the Afar and Issa/Somali discontent. At the early age of its birth, EPLF rescued the lifespan of the Issa/Somali government in Djibouti together with its ex-allies TPLF and France. And now EPLF/PJDJ has become a nightmare to the government of Djibouti by offering support to the Afar rebel groups that indeed escalated the tension in Djibouti to the similar level as the early 1990s of the civil war period.

4.4 Régime Change in Ethiopia and Somalia

Subsequent to the collapse of the Soviet at the end of the Cold War, the situation in the Horn of Africa has changed dramatically. Ethiopia and Somalia, battlefields for superpower rivalry during the Cold War period, have had a farewell to the socialist régimes of Mengistu and Barre. These changes in the regional political order had a touch on the Afar and Issa/Somali conflicts both in Ethiopia and Djibouti. The dream of 'Greater Somalia' has turned into a nightmare that engulfed to Somalia's long-lasting bloodshed. Despite the broke out of disastrous fratricidal war, overthrowing Barre's government has crossed out one of the core actors in the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict. Although the Issa/Somali dominated government in Djibouti has replaced Somalia's role in assisting their kith and kin across the Ethiopian border, a broken Somalia could be seen as a de-escalation factor on the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. Similarly, the overthrow of the Derg government in Ethiopia has played a role in which Afars benefited from arms spread in the region due to the collapse of a huge Ethiopian army in which Afars used the armaments for their attack against the Issa Dominated government in Djibouti.

4.4.1 Downfall of Barre and Fading Away of the Vision of 'Greater Somalia'

After President Barre was ousted from Somalia, Issaq dominated former British Somaliland declared its independence from the 'Somali South'. In the northeast coast of Somalia, the Harti clan-federation has announced the foundation of a self-governing state called Puntland that would participate in any endeavor to re-establish a new central government. In any case, as illustrated by Mukhtar (2003:5) "pan-Somalism [became] a total failure." As a result, flows of assistance from Mogadishu to the Issa/Somali groups in Ethiopia have been abated. The well organized strategy of Mogadishu that enabled Somali irredentist movements to carry out successive attacks against their neighbours in the Horn started to decline as the tribal politics in Somalia has intensified. Particularly, in the aftermath of the fall of Barre, the pan-Somali sympathizer's dream became dim and Afars on the other hand relived from a grand threat expected to kick off from Mogadishu. Nevertheless, the succession of Djibouti with its new ambition of creating dominant Issa

society (Issay Dream) in the Horn region created a new regional political dynamics that influenced the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict in which Issas keep on to push Afars and control strategic territories. Howbeit, it is foreseeable that downfall of Barre generated a psychological strength with the Afars that might contribute for their decision to struggle for overthrowing of the Somali government in Djibouti too. For instance, infiltration of arms across borders of Somalia has reached its peak that in turn aggravated armed confrontations in the region. Particularly, the Issa/Somalis could get modern armaments through the porous borders with Somalia. As cited by Cliffe (2005:8) “the country’s [Somalia’s] strategic significance in the Cold War was recognized and led to a very well-equipped army. [...] It has experienced military coup, inter-state war, insurgencies, civil war and ‘institutionalized disorder’ and insecurity. [Thus] heavy weapons have been widely spread since colonial times and through these stages of violent conflict, supplied by cold war powers, neighboring governments and an active illegal market.” Due to these facts, simple pastoral conflicts in Ethiopia continued to be conducted by using modern armaments. Moreover, not only civilian pastorals or rebellions but also kin states could acquire illegal arms easily and utilize them for suppressing their internal political turmoil. For instance, the Somali dominated government in Djibouti as asserted by Beurden (2000) “[during the FRUD war] the [Djiboutian] government employed migratory guerrilla-fighters from Ethiopia, granting them Djiboutian nationality upon conscription, and providing them with light armaments bought on the black market in Somalia and Ethiopia.”

Apart from the shift from pan-Somalia to pan-Issa dream and access for weapons, the disintegration of the Barre régime has led many Somalis including Issa clan members to migrate to Ethiopia. Samatar A. (2004:6) announced that “many Somali Ethiopians who had moved to Somalia since the early 1960s returned to Ethiopia after May 1991. Some of these were senior military leaders and political entrepreneurs, steeped in sectarian elite games.” Though difficult to verify, one could give benefit of the doubt for the involvement of returnee military men during Issa/Somali’s successful march against the Afar and secured foothold on the main road since 1991. Generally, the downfall of Barre has multifaceted effects. On one side, the organized leadership orchestrated from Mogadishu for the territorial expansion of Somalis seemed to be deep-rooted. On the

other hand, Afars who reprieve from the threat of pan-Somalism took the opportunity to break remnants of the pan-Somali backers in the Republic of Djibouti even though didn't succeed.

4.4.2 Demise of the Derg and Peak of the Afar-Somali Conflict

The demise of the Derg government that has had a very strong ambition to secure Ethiopia's sea outlets⁷⁴ had influenced the phase of the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict both in Ethiopia and Djibouti. In Ethiopia, the Issa/Somalis traversed the buffer zone boundary that was decided by the Derg government and able to control strategic areas along the road (Addis-Asseb) on the morrow of Derg's withdrawal. The TPLF forces with little or no knowledge about the anatomy of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict has preached for the coexistence of the two ethnic groups, which in turn has tilted the balance. On the other hand Afar rebellions in Djibouti used this time of confusion in the region and opened a massive military attack against the Somali dominated government of Djibouti. Ethiopian soldiers who fled to Djibouti with their weapons were also effectively utilized by the Afar military activists.

Even though the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali in Djibouti has reached its peak during the early 1990s, regional powers have shifted the course of the conflict. TPLF-led new government in Ethiopia has let a free access and expansion of new Issa/Somalis settlements along the main road. In addition, they also contributed to twist the power balance in the Djiboutian civil war. Amare (1996:507) affirmed that scenario in such a way that "during 1991-92, Djibouti's relations with both Eritrea and Ethiopia were flawed with mutual suspicion and some hostility, because the 'Afar question' had become alive in all three countries, and developments in any one of the three countries had grave implications for policies in the two." Therefore, both Ethiopia and Eritrea which have large Afar populations within their borders, as cited by Prunier (1994) in Mohamed (1996:519) "were surprised by initial success of FRUD and panicked at the prospect of a reversal in the balance of power in Djibouti so much so, that their clumsy

⁷⁴ Bennett (1983:45) argued as "The Ethiopian government also favoured Afar pre-eminence in Djibouti for the unification of the Afar nationality in the 'triangle'-comprising Wollo, Tigray, Hararghe, Eritrea and Djibouti-was seen as an essential response to the Somali nationalism."

initial reactions appeared very hostile to the Afars. Ethiopia [that had a joint committee meeting of administrators of the frontier] called for French intervention against the FRUD, and went so far as to arrest leading figures of FRUD.”⁷⁵

The demise of the Derg regime has also noteworthy effect on the phase of the conflict within Ethiopian boundary. Firstly, the buffer zone imposed by the Derg that pressured the Somali’s expansion to pause momentarily has been unconditionally terminated. Secondly, TPLF force that had an ambition to liberate the small northern part of the country, province of Tigray, has unexpectedly become administrator of the entire country in which its political policy being implemented have brought several drawbacks in the co-existence of ethnicities in the country. Generally, the late 1980s chaos in the order of the world has spread its effect on the Horn states that in turn enabled ethnic groups with better military and economic power to move forward and control territories for which they claimed ownership. (Consider the Tigreans and Somalis expansion to the western border of their respective regions) Moreover, the incorporation of influential Somali elites within the new TPLF-led government helped them to advocate and convince the government as the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali is nothing more than pastoral competition for grass and water. To the contrary, Afar elites who speculated the TPLF-EPLF agenda regarding the Afar had refrained to approach the TPLF thus did not play considerable role within the new Ethiopian administration. Hence, all these factors contributed for tilting the balance against Afar and led to the mushrooming of new Somali hamlets along the main asphalt road that indeed changes the conflict to a more sophisticated stage.

⁷⁵ Four FRUD members, including Mohamed Kadamy and his wife, were arrested in Ethiopia and deported to Djibouti in September 1997.

Box 7. Adaytu

Unlike other post-Derg settlements along the main Addis-Asseb/Djibouti road, Adaytu was founded in 1970 as a road construction camp for the crew in which Afars settled there gradually. During the Imperial period, Adaytu was set up under the administration of Gewane and later in the era of the Derg its administration is restructured under Mille Wereda of the Assab autonomous region. The Derg also used Adaytu area as a military camping place so that consumer items were sold in a temporarily built stores run entirely by highlanders. When the Derg government ousted in 1991, Afars were the exclusive inhabitants of Adaytu that was Mille's vice Wereda with an Afar administrator, Ali Abdella. However, in May (1991 when the EPRDF controlled the locality), Afar pastoralists were away in search of dry season grazing area. In addition, all government servants including those Afars worked in the kebele administration fled the area fearing the consequences during régime change. Thus small number of Issa/Somali families freely moved to the town and settled permanently by using the vacuum. Accordingly, TPLF fighters who controlled the area first met with recently arrived Issa/Somalis and when the Afar transhumance pastoralists back to Adaytu after some months of their seasonal migration, the new rulers warned them to co-exist peacefully with the Issa/Somalis. As confirmed by local informants, due to the facilitation by ALF fighters in the area led by Ahmed Yasin Willis, Issa/Somalis were free to graze in Afar areas stretched up to Eli-weha. Later on, they renamed Adaytu as Adayto and started to claim that 'Adayto' is the land of their forefathers. A mass influx of Issa/Somali that moved from the vicinity of Dire Dawa and Erer (like Geblalu, Guhad, Meto, Aydora, Abno and surroundings) traversed areas they have controlled some decades ago (like Mend'ela, Lef'fale, Sendi, Bekermeli, Eyroli, Yangudi, Manda'ela, Heleni- adu, Manet, Gereni, Kilelu, Ad'ado, Kedefuo, Dehawi) and reached to Adaytu, Unduffo and Awash basin by crossing the main asphalt road in a way to Bure Mudaytu, Artuma, Telalak and Dawe, Afarlands bordering Amhara and Oromia regions. Therefore, Issa/Somalis moved about 200 kms from Erer River, the historical boundary during the Imperial era and claim Adaytu as kebele in Afdem Wereda of the Shenile Zone. On contrary, Afars, unlike the other Somali settlements in Unduffo and Gedamaytu yet included Adaytu within the official Mille Wereda administrative structure as the 18th kebele.

4.5 Interstate Disputes

4.5.1 The Shadow of the First and Second Ethio-Somalia Wars on the Afar Issa/Somali Conflict

The first war between Ethiopia and Somalia that held on 1963-4 and the second war conducted on 1977-8 has a long and heavy shadow on the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali. Both successive wars could be seen as the major turning point in which all ethnic Somalis in the Horn region have acknowledged Issa's campaign to the Afar lands with the melody of *Soomaaliweyn*, Pan-Somalism. As argued in (Farer 1977:1) "the major strategy applied by the Somalis prior to declaring war with Ethiopia in both early 1960 and late 1970s was to intensify and propagate its ideas among the Somali dissidents

across the border in the Horn regions.” They even reached to create “special Ministry of Somali Affairs, the top post always held by an Ogadeni.” (Mukhtar 2003:176)

In fact the Mogadishu government has considered the Ethio-Somali dispute as the other phase of the Adal-Abyssinia conflict half-a-millennia back. Somalis claimed that the genesis of the Ethio-Somali dispute (Ogaden conflict) is the continuation of the 14th century armed confrontations between the Abyssinian expansionists and Muslim emirates along the peripheries. Indeed, Somalis were incorporated in the Adal emirate group led by Imam Ahmad ibn Ibrihim al-Ghazi that later defeated by Abyssinian force backed by Portuguese and later seized lands up to Zayla. In post scramble of Africa in mid 1980s, Somalis claimed that Ethiopia has also annexed Somali territory as its share together with European colonialists. Thus Somalis recognize both the first and second Ethio-Somali wars as unfinished anti colonial struggle with the ambition of regaining the lost territories of ‘Western Somalia’. As cited in Abdisalam M (2000:66) “Ogaden makes roughly two thirds of the territory, which Somalia recognizes as Western Somaliland.” For Somalia, however, Western Somaliland stretches from Awash Valley in the North West (just 150 miles from Addis Ababa) round the periphery of the Ethiopian highlands to the east until the Somali border and to Moyale in the west. Touching Kenya, Ethiopia and Somali borders, the Somali-Ethiopian border stretches to the north until it meets with Djibouti border.

Ethiopians, however, tending to claim the Somaliland not only Ogaden but also the area stretched up to Mogadishu was conceived as a ‘lost territory’ of the Abyssinian rulers.⁷⁶ As Woodward (2003:127) affirmed “for Ethiopia the Somali attack was an

⁷⁶ As cited in (Marcus 1995:183) “Menelik mentioned the ancient limits of Ethiopia and, propounded the extraordinary doctrine that the Somalis had been from time immemorial, until the Moslem invasion [in the sixteenth century], the cattle-keepers of the Ethiopians, who could not themselves live in the Low Countries. After the arrival of colonial power, Ethiopia moved to her eastern border and secures Somali areas.” Nevertheless, as indicated in (Woodward 2003:26) “In the Ogaden, the Ethiopians initially did little more than pursue their occasional quests for cattle.” Marcus (1995:137-8) further elaborated Woodward’s accusation as “On 8 June 1891 Captain H. G. C. Swayne, R. E., reached Hargeisa, where he found the population distraught because Makonnen [Ras Mekonen, the cousin of Emperor Menilik and father of Emperor Haile Selassie] had threatened to attack the town, and had already exacted tribute of cattle from some clans [...] in October 1891 the Ugase of Gadabursi and the Ugase of Ogaden arrived in Harar to present tribute. Then Makonnen’s forces had firm control of the Haud by mid-1892. In late 1895 Makonnen’s men, coming from Imi, had followed the left bank of the Wabi and the Ganane, and 700 strong, were encamped outside Lug. [...] since then Ethiopian had a loose administrative control over Somali territories. The region was annexed to Italian Somaliland in 1936.” Later on, as declared by a Somali writer, Sheik-Abdi (1978:703), “Under the term of the 1897 Anglo-Abyssinian treaty, British

ancient nightmare of being surrounded by hostile Muslims coming true, and a wave of nationalism was encouraged to confront the Muslim invaders.”⁷⁷ On the other hand, as affirmed by Hamad (2008) for the Somali “the enemy is the Christian Ethiopia which colonialism has generously donated the region of Ogaden; the Afar was in this context, a collateral victim.”

In fact, the Mogadishu government has attempted to approach factions of the old Adal emirates and Muslim Oromos in order to manipulate their territorial ambition and mobilize the Somalis, Afars, Oromos, and Hararis against the Ethiopian centre. In a letter sent by Zemed Seleshi, Secretary of Meiso Wereda Administration on 11/4/1973 ref.no.1/70/67/62 addressed to Chercher, Adal and Garagrach Awraja stated that ‘Issa/Somalis extended message to all Issa clans not to mention their clan name while chanting in wars and also contacted Hawiya / [Somali], Gurgura / [Somali], Ittu / [Oromo], Ala / [Oromo] and told them to join their hands as they all are Muslim [brothers] until their cattle drink the Awash River.’ Furthermore, Somalis gave new names for the Afars as ‘Somali Aiyka’, Oromos ‘Somali Abo’, Somalis in Ethiopia ‘Somali Wariya’ to refer as if these all ethnic groups are factions of a great Somali stock that dispersed in African Horn and at present speaks the Afar, Oromo and Somali languages respectively. Thereafter, as cited in (Berket 1980:110), “Wariya leaders claimed that the entire region east of the Awash River [home of Afars, Oromos, Hararis and Somalis] should be joined to Somalia.” Even though the propaganda never bought by the Afars who had a major role in the Adal emirates, some Oromos who were not part of the Adal emirate’s army had joined their hands with Mogadisho. Thus Somalis with some

surrendered the Somali-occupied territories of the Ogaden and the Haud, the latter being a loosely defined grazing area between Hargeisa and Harar, in 1948 and 1954, respectively. In 1960 both British and Italy got independence while the Ogaden, the NFK and Djibouti remains.”

⁷⁷ Jacob (1971:175-6) confirmed Somalis accusation by describing that “Israel’s relations with Ethiopia are in some respect unique in Africa. The main reason for the special relationship arises from the fact that both face a somewhat similar enemy; for Ethiopia it is Islam, manifested through the confrontation with Muslim Eritrea and Somalia; and for Israel, it is the Arabs. [...] The most important task of the Israelis was to train border patrol commandos, following ‘the unconvincing performance of Ethiopian troops in the border fighting with Somalia in 1965’. The training was undertaken by Israeli police, experienced in border warfare against Arab commandos [...] The obvious assumption is that, because the Israelis have had successful experience in coping with the Arabs, they are particularly qualified to help the Ethiopians against the Muslims.”

resentment for the Afar's rejection commenced the western march with the help of Oromos.

Box 8. Wariya Abbo

Among the various Wariya groups Mogadishu attempted to give birth, the Oromo wing of Wariya Abbo had a significant role in the first Ethio-Somali war of 1963/4. Hanolado rebellion as written by Gebru (1991:125) "The rebellion started near Afker in the district of El Kere under the leadership of a bandit named Kahin Abdi of the Rer Afghab. Kahin was well known for harboring Somali nationalist sentiment and was frequently placed under surveillance." Gebru (Ibid: 141) continues narrating how the rebellions were getting more sympathizers, "By the middle of 1964 they had successfully mobilized the pastoralists in the district when Sheikh Mohammed Abdi Nur Takani, another prominent defector, replaced Kahin Abdi. As in El Kere, it was bandits and disloyal officials who initiated the resistance in those two districts [Wabe and Delo]. In Wabe, the most distinguished deserter was Haji Isahaaq Mohammed Daddi of the Raiyitu, a senior intelligence officer in Bale and Neghele-Borana. In 1961 he was implicated in the murder of a rival, an Amhara settler, and fled to Mogadishu to avoid arrest [...] Unrest in Delo also grew perceptibly in scale following the desertion of several men, especially the village judge, Balambaras Wako Lugo, between September and October 1964.[...] the Boran and Gudji perhaps with the tacit encouragement of some local officers-unexpectedly and treacherously attacked their traditional enemy [(Somalis and Rayitu, who identified themselves more closely with their Somali coreligionists than with their kinsmen, the Boran and Gudji)] in October 1964. Perhaps a good half of the Somali fled in panic. [...] In Filtu, a border area in Delo, the "refugees" were confined to a kind of "protected hamlet" for constant supervision. Their appeals for a return to their homes were ignored. As their plight worsened under harassing officials; they slowly abandoned passive protest and drifted towards Mogadishu for arms and training. One such group of forty men, which included Grazmatch Cherri Gutu and his brother, Wako Gutu, left for Somalia three months after its arrival in Filtu. Following their return in early 1965 and under the leadership of Wako Gutu, these men played a critical role in organizing what came to be known as the Bale Rebellion." Between 1963 and 1970 the peasants of Bale, heavily supported by an external force but largely unnoticed by the outside world, took up arms against the Ethiopian state." Gebru (ibid: 125) listed some of the factors that resulted the Bale rebellion as [The uprising was set off by a potent combination of grievances stemming from maldistribution of political and administrative powers, land alienation, taxation, ethnic hostility, religious discrimination, and ecological imbalance]. Meanwhile, the Somali state concentrated on fuelling peasants' suppressed grievances by daily broadcasting inflammatory propaganda in Oromifa and Somali (ibid: 140). The role of the Somali state has still to be seen as a catalytic agent. It was important in that it disseminated propaganda highlighting the national oppression of the southern peoples of Ethiopia and in that it provided training, arms, provisions, and organizational skills for the rebels (ibid: 158). Indeed, it is yet a paradox how the larger Oromo ethnic group could accept the Somalis claim of Oromo being one Somali stock. As Gebru suggested (ibid: 126) "Somali irredentism was not compatible with Oromo ethnic pride." After a while Oromo elites started to realize this fallacy and as cited by Gada (1988: 176) "Gradually OLF established and in 1983/4 Somali Abbo replaced by OLF."

Thus the first Ethio-Somali conflict following the independence and unification of the former British and Italian colonies, known collectively as the Somali Republic, began in

1963 in an ethnic Oromo and Somali area, Elkere in Bale province, instigated by the Oromo founder of the United Liberation Forces of Oromia, Waqo Gutu. Gada (1988:185) stated that “rebel leaders like Waqo Gutu and Aliyu Chrey went to Somalia to a warm welcome and soon organized the Somali-Abo liberation front.” With the political and logistical support from the Somalia government the Ethiopian Somalis together with Oromo insurgents raged a revolt in Bale province for several years in 1960s. The skirmish grew steadily and eventually led to small-scale clashes between Somali and Ethiopia armed forces along the border in early 1964. As described by Kassim (1985:339) “a major conflict took place in 1964, when the two countries [Ethiopia and Somalia] resorted to using heavy weapons, tanks, and airplanes. In the mean time Afars were paying the price for their earlier rejection of a collaboration call from Mogadishu.” According to one Afar elder, the Somalis movement seemed to follow an approach of ‘if you don’t accept membership offer for the Wariya group by peace, then you will be chased out of the land by force’. On 23 July 1964 Somali fighters known as ‘*hanolaado*’⁷⁸ (including large number of Issas) suddenly launched a severe attack against Afar in Erer and Mullu (at Mefaydela, 14 km east of Gedamitu) and killed 418 Afar men looted about 25,000 livestock. The battle is known by Afars as ‘*mafayda la qeebi*’. Since then number of reports from Harar Governate General showed that Issa/Somalis have conducted several raids particularly in Afdem and Meiso Weredas that resulted huge damage on the Afars. Ethiopian Ministry of Interior has undertaken an investigation on the type of bullets used by Issa/Somalis against the Afars and found out that majorly used bullets were Egypt made and supposedly came out of Somalia government armories.⁷⁹ Though the first Ethio-Somali war declared to be ended in mid

⁷⁸ Somalia Hanolato means ‘long live Somalia’ is the name given for the rebel movement of early 1960s organized later as WSLF. Mukhtar describe Hanolato as “a guerrilla movement fighting for the liberation of the Ogaden.” (2003:61)

⁷⁹ A confidential letter sent by Fit. Mamo Seyum, Wello Governorate General on 13/10/1964 addressed to Minister of Interior stated that on the bullet there is a stamp read as Misser 57. [Misser is the Arabic official name of Egypt] Later on the Ministry of Interior has distributed the photo of one mostly used bullet to border provinces of Hal Hal, Wello, Bale, and Sidamo Governorate General.

1960s⁸⁰, the Somalia government did not give up its all rounded (economically, militarily and politically) support to Somalis in Ethiopia. In 1969, General Mohammed Siad Barre led a successful military coup in Mogadishu and soon he built up the national military. He further fostered Somali nationalism, as a means to overcome internal clan-divisions. When Ethiopia was in turmoil after the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie, President Barre took the opportunity to realize the long-standing ‘national dream’ of Somalis, which was to integrate the lost Somali territories.

Subsequently, the second Ethio-Somalia war erupted in 1977. Ethiopian government soldiers fought with Western Somali guerrillas, WSLF⁸¹ “aided by regular soldiers without uniform and since July 1977 joined by the regular Somali army” (Woodward 2003:127). Indeed, as of the first war of early 1960s, entire Somalis⁸² and Muslim Oromos in Bale Province supported the Mogadishu force “that secured the remarkable series of successes which brought into the walls of Harar by the end of the year” (Lewis

⁸⁰ Mukhtar (2003: 68) briefly described the process of the peace agreement as “After successive negotiation by OAU on 5 September 1969 Prime Minister Egal makes an official visit to Addis Ababa; the first by a Somali head of government. Somalia and Ethiopia agree to demilitarize the borders, to reopen the Mogadisho-Hargeisa road, and to establish commercial air and telecommunication links. Rebels began to surrender to the Ethiopian government at the end of 1969; Waqo Gutu, who had been the foremost of the insurgents, was surrounded with his command of barely 200 men in Arana by the Ethiopian army in February 1970 and surrendered. Pacification was complete by the next year. “

⁸¹ Mukhtar (2003: 261-2) wrote the profile of WSLF as follows: “Th[e] development [of Somalia Hanolato] led to the formation of the Nasr al-Lah (Power of God) movement, the predecessor of the WSLF, in the summer of 1961. [Then in 1966 it] changed its name to Harakat Tahrir Ogadenia (Ogaden Liberation Movement, OLM). In 1972, the OLM became al-Jabha al-Muttahidah li al-Sumal al –Gharbi (United Front of Western Somalia, UFWS) [...] It opened offices in Lagos, Algeria, Damascus, and Baghdad. To take advantage of the transitional period between the fall of Haile Selassie and the establishment of the military junta in Ethiopia, Somalia increased its support of the UFWS, which changed its name to Jabhat Tahrir al-Sumal al-Gharbi (Western Somali Liberation Front) in 1975. By 1976, the WSLF had resolved that ‘armed struggle is the only way to liberate Western Somalia’ and it mounted successful attacks on many Ethiopian outposts. [Somali government] supported the WSLF with more than 50,000 regular Somali troops. [...] By January 1978, the combined WSLF-Somali regular troops won control of 90 percent of the Ogaden, including the major historic cities of Harar, Jijiga, Dire Dawa, and Gode.”

⁸² To say entire Somali seems a bit generalization but the observation of Samatar A may confirm the general conclusion. Samatar (2004:17) stated as “an item in the SPDP’s programme states that the 1977 Somali-Ethiopian war was an illegitimate and irredentist Somali attack. I came across very few Somalis in the region who agreed with this claim. The public surmised that this was EPRDF propaganda and claimed that not a single Somali had joined the Mengistu army to fight the Western Somali Liberation Front and the Somali army. Furthermore, they pointed out that a similar item condemning the TPLF’s support for Eritrea’s war of liberation should be inserted into the TPLF party programme.”

M.1978: 21). Alike the 1960s, the Mogadishu government has invited Afars for the second time to join 'Muslim's struggle against Christian Ethiopia'. While Afars rejected the offer once again, their arc rivalry, Issa/Somalis has received military trainings in newly established military camps (*Harirat, Abdulkadier, and Boorama*) along Ethio-Somali borders. Consequently, when Somalia controlled areas stretched from Dire Dawa to the northeast lines, almost all military except few higher commanders were Issa/Somalis. As asserted by Medhane (2004:29-30) "in the early 1970s, the said Barre regime in Somalia trained a guerrilla (including separate Issa contingent) force for the invasion of Ethiopia." The situation was mainly aggravated in 1977 when Somalia invaded Ethiopia and the Issa, well armed and trained, once again pressed their advantage to push further in to Afar territory. According to interview with Colonel Gete Tekle, , an Issa named Aswei Zerdin, who got rank of colonel by Barre was a commander of an army with entirely Issa soldiers. Cliffe (2005:18) further asserted that "Issa groups received stores of armaments from the Barre regime, which were kept after the Ethiopian counter offensive. These weapons, provided originally as part of an inter-state hostility, have now found their way into local, inter-society conflicts."

The Afar people, by contrast, have not enjoyed such powerful patronage and are therefore fighting a losing battle. As learned from interview of Colonel Gete Tekle, 'the Issa/Somali also asked the Derg to equip them to defend their country but later travelled to Mogadishu and attacked Ethiopia with her own weapons.' Hence, as cited in (Herrie 2008:26), "the well built up invading force [of Issa/Somali] gained control over a large area in southern and eastern Ethiopia including the then Afar seasonal grazing areas in Afdem, Meiso, and near Mt. Ayelu." Accordingly, the Afars had to retreat back to the Awash River banks. Even after the defeat of Barre's army, some Issa/Somali retreated back and intermingled themselves within a civilian society. The Issa/Somali chief Ugaas Hassen Hersi negotiated with the Derg government to reintegrate the returnees to the extent that the Derg delegate them responsible for safeguarding the railway. For this reason, some of Mogadishu trained Issa/Somalis ironically enough received additional training by the Derg military trainers. In addition to weapons distributed for them, the

Derg also allocated revenue of 800 quintals of sugar⁸³ per month to cover operational cost of peace keeping task. Therefore, as cited by Herrie (2008:35) “the next season the Issa-Somalis [most of them remnants of Barre’s army] had driven out the Afars from Erer, Dahabu, Mulu, Eroli, Butiji, Afdem, and from so many other places, once and for all.”

On the other side, the Ethio-Somali war exacerbated the internal turmoil between the Afar and Issa/Somali in Djibouti, as the time was the early years of independence. During the war, there are large portion of Issa/Somalis crossed the border to Djibouti. Ofcansky (2005:166) asserted that “more and more Issa refugees mainly women and children have fled towards Djibouti.” Kassim and Searing (1980:222) further illustrated the perception of Issa/Somali during the 1977 Ethio-Somalia war by stating as “The Issa and the government-controlled press did not hide their sympathy for the Somali cause, although French influence kept the government from abandoning its ‘official’ neutrality. Issa and Somali volunteers left for the front in the Ogaden under the tolerant eye of the authorities. The Afar, for their part, felt more threatened than ever by ‘Somali imperialism’ and the threat that Djibouti would be incorporated into Somalia. Thus on the eve of independence, the TFAI’s major concern was revolved around new developments on the Ethio-Somalia crisis.” Until 1988 the tension between Ethiopia and Somalia continued unchanged. For Barre (referred by Kola (1983:2) as ‘a nationalist first, a Muslim second and a Marxist third’), “has spent nearly three-quarters of its budget on ‘security’, consuming more than half of Somalia’s export earnings” (Forberg / Terlinden 1999:15). Barre’s hand was open not only for Somalis or other Wariya Muslim groups but also to Eritrean separatists and any insurgent groups that might have a hope to weaken Ethiopia. On its part Ethiopia too backed Barre’s opponents even after the April 1988 peace treaty⁸⁴ signed between Ethiopia and Somalia. Woodward (2003:128) wrote as “there

⁸³ They bought the sugar with wholesale price between 90-100br and resell it in black market with 500-600br. According to the information from local source wants remain anonymous, ‘Ugaas used to get approx. 400,000 per month.’

⁸⁴ The support of each other’s insurgent groups continued until early 1988. As Woodward (2003:128) wrote “in March of that year, the major EPLF victory at Afabat in Eritrea led to Mengistu needing to deploy troops from his eastern to his northern regions, and to ensure security in the east a deal should be struck with the old enemy Siad Barre. The two governments agreed to end assistance to insurgents on each others territory, as well as exchanging prisoners of war from the 1977-78 conflict and facilitating the repatriation of refugees.”

were also reported attempts to promote clan rivalries and clashes, especially attacks on those clans, which Barre was increasingly reliant: the Dulbahante, the Mareehan and Ogden. [That] seriously undermined Pan-Somalism and in fact marked the beginning of political fragmentation in Somalia.” Overall both the first and second Ethio-Somali wars altered the balance between the Afar and Issa/Somali that led a Somali supremacy over the Afars of Ethiopia and Djibouti by intensifying the discontent and escalated the conflict.

4.5.2 Feature of the Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict at End of the Honeymoon between Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea

Since the secession of Eritrea, Ethiopia lost its ports and once again forced to be landlocked. The TPLF-led transitional government of Ethiopia however guaranteed the public for devising a favorable mechanism to get port service from Eritrea. It might be due to the power balance between TPLF and EPLF at the time, the devised mechanism seems too conducive for Eritrea but short of assuring sustainable sea outlet for Ethiopia. Klein has clearly summarized the lopsided relationship between TPLF-led Ethiopia and EPLF-made Eritrea as follows:

Shortly after independence Ethiopia made a show of goodwill and of acknowledgement of the sufferings inflicted by the Dergue, and assumed responsibility for the national debt. This gave Eritrea a clean balance sheet, and unique in Africa, a net debt burden. Practical assistance followed, with the donation of 140 million Birr by the National Bank of Ethiopia to create liquidity in Eritrea. A range of agreements followed on cross border trade, the joint use of the oil refinery at Massawa, and the use of Assab port for Ethiopian trade [...] since then Ethiopia almost entirely depended on the sea outlet via Eritrean ports of Massawa and Assab. (Klein 2002:26)

Then problem arose after dispute has erupted between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998. However, once again the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Melse Zenawi has tried to convince the public on the irrelevance of owning sea outlet by saying ‘Port service is a service like hotel service, like tourism service like any other service; you can buy it in the market. If you have the money, if we Ethiopians are rich, then we can buy this service from any provider.’⁸⁵ Thus Ethiopia with approximately 70 million people at the time opened her

⁸⁵ Awate’s Interview with Meles Zenawi on May 26, 2008

eyes wide towards Djibouti port service market, which's "role as Ethiopia's entrepot became crucial after the Eritreans cut Ethiopia off from access to the port of Assab" (Bollee 2003:482). Indeed, Djibouti was traditional Ethiopian gateway to the world's sea routes. As explained in (Drysdale: 1966 12) "French has succeeded to construct a railway line that stretched 'not to former French Equatorial Africa but to Addis Ababa'. The 486-mile *Chemin de fer franco-ethiopien* was completed in 1917. In 1966 [France] granted Ethiopia F 55,000,000 to extend the railroad to the rich granaries of Sidamo, 400 km south of Addis Ababa a province bordering on Kenya." However, during Ethio-Somalia war the Derg government has realized that port is not a service that could easily be accessed in the foreign market rather it's a matter of sovereignty and national security. As demonstrated by Fair (1988:94) "the total amount of Ethiopian goods loaded and off-loaded at the port fell by 80 percent from 283,000 tons in 1976 to 56,000 tons in 1978. [...] by the time the line was reopened, Ethiopia had started switching much of its import-export traffic by road to its own port of Assab." In post Ethio-Eritrea conflict, it seems that the Derg's conception towards port proved correct. Eritrean government has confiscated all Ethiopian shipments found at Massawa and Assab ports.

Howbeit, Ethiopia with little bargaining power has become dependent of the port service of the Republic of Djibouti. Indeed, it was like a miracle for Djiboutians as one of the country's leaders, Ahmed Dini remarked in 1976 (quoted in Lapidoth-Eschelbacher 1982: 80-81), "our case will be practically unique among newly-independent nations because we have no production whatsoever. Our economy is 100% artificial. We export nothing and we import everything." Hence, the Ethio-Eritrea war created a new relation among the two neighbors. As Bollee (2003:483) concluded "all in all, the relationship [Ethio-Djib] remains like that of an old marriage; not much love but considerable mutual dependence. Djibouti got huge amount for the service."⁸⁶ As

⁸⁶ Teferi Asfaw, deputy secretary-general of the Addis Ababa Chambers of Commerce and Sectoral Association gave some words on the future economic threat of Ethiopia's dependency with foreign ports by saying 'Ethiopia pays \$700 million annually in port fees to the tiny Red Sea state port of Djibouti. There is plan by Djibouti to charge Ethiopia an extra \$22.5 million a year in port tariffs. Ethiopia will pay Djibouti a total of \$722.5 million for port services annually. We consider this a huge burden and the government must seek an alternative.' [Ethiopia: Djibouti Port Fees Will Fuel Inflation http://www.javno.com/economy/ethiopia--djibouti-port-fees-will-fuel-inflation_214140]

claimed by most of Afar interviewees, for the government of Djibouti, which is a repressive regime against its Afar population as well as muscle builder of Issa/Somali expansionists in Ethiopian Afarlands, the huge sum of revenue from the port service could indirectly strengthen their dominating power and marginalization of the Afars. In addition, to boosted capacity to offer financial assistance to Issa/Somalis in Ethiopia, Djibouti's being the sole sea outlet for landlocked Ethiopia further enhanced their political influence over Addis Ababa in relation to protecting the interest of Ethiopian Issa/Somalis. According to the June 14, 2008 Press Release of Afar Forum "the TPLF regime is scarifying the Afar people to have a good relation with Djibouti's Issa government." Al-Shami / Al-Shami (1997: 405-6) further accused TPLF-led Ethiopian government for practicing the policy "no permanent friends in politics but only permanent interests" on the case of the Afar and Somali.

Apart from the port service interdependence, both countries have developed a symbiotic relationship in which they have decided to renovate the railway and reached an agreement to combat terrorist forces operating in the region.⁸⁷ Even though the Ethio-Eritrea conflict has tilted the balance against the Afars, there are some measures taken by Ethiopian government that tentatively shocked the Issa/Somali's spine, the illicit trade. There came some intelligence reports about Eritreans invisible hand through the Issa/Somalis illicit trade networks particularly in Gedmaytu town in which insatiability along the road that connects Ethiopian centre to the port in Djibouti is alarmingly increasing. Hence government has undertaken a surprise military campaign against the Issa/Somali contrabandists. Though not yet confirmed, Hamad cited that in the Gadmaytu campaign "two Eritrean military instructors were held prisoners among Issa smugglers." Nonetheless, few months later businesses went back to normal. Besides, the 'old marriage relation' between Ethiopia and Djibouti refreshed by various 'presidential investments.'⁸⁸

⁸⁷ In 1996 the two countries concluded an agreement to combat the Al-Ittehad al-Islam, a fundamentalist group operating from south-western Somalia. In 1997 they agreed to join their fight against smugglers and drugs trafficking. Djibouti handed over a number of Oromo refugees to the Ethiopian police. (Beurden 2000)

⁸⁸ President Ismael Omar Guelleh of Djibouti is set to invest in the agriculture sector after receiving a large tract of land estimated to be over 7,000 hectares in Bale, Oromia Regional State. The multi-million dollar investment would commence in the next few weeks. The plot is slated for a wheat farm. The president has

4.5.3 Eritro-Djibouti Border Dispute and Its influence on the Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict

In May 1991, immediately after the secession of Eritrea, EPLF guerillas commenced governorship in Asmara by joining their hand with the Issa/Somali dominated government in Djibouti to squash the Afar rebellion, FRUD that operates mainly along the Eritro-Djibouti border. The two countries have approximately 22 kilometers of maritime boundaries and 109 kilometers length of land frontier between Rahayta, the Southern Red Sea Region of Eritrea and District of Obock in northern Djibouti. Since then the Afar factor has become the umbilical cord that connects the régimes in Asmara and Djibouti. Nevertheless, the newborn Eritrea's territorial dispute over the island of Hanish with Yemen and the subsequent armed clash on 15-17 December 1995 in which the Arab League speculated Israel's backing to Eritrean troops, had sent a negative signal for the tactical relation of the states of Eritrea and Djibouti. Afterwards, as cited in Amare (1996:508) "Eritrean-Djibouti relations once again took a turn for the worse." In 1996, border confrontation arose as a result of Djibouti's strong protest over the 1995 map of Eritrea produced for the government by a Swiss institute that included 290 km² of triangular portion of northern Djibouti territory stretched between Ras Doumeira and Moulhoule (Dar-Elwa) to Eritrea. This tense and deteriorating relation between Eritrea and Djibouti governments gave a relief to Afars for short time. Until 1998 the FRUD army seems to get a free access on the border areas. Even though the government in Asmara dared not to assist Afar rebellions formally, they were not becoming an obstacle for Afar opposition's activities along the border area instead Eritrea went on pouring fuel on the fire. However, the situation changed soon again when the government in Asmara abandoned its unfinished business with Djibouti and turned its focus to the 1998 bloody border war with its giant neighbor, Ethiopia. Since then Eritrea and Djibouti have

also received 20 hectares of land around Sebeta to invest in the booming flower sector, on lease basis. The president also has received a free title deed for a plot [Babogaya Lake in Bishoftu (Debre Zeit) town, 45 kilometers South East of Addis Ababa] to construct a home. President Guelleh has built a 5-storey guest house that is worth 45 million birr in Dire Dawa city [his birth place], with 60 standardized rooms, which is expected to be functional in the near future.(Groum 2008)

commenced again to heal the past wounds which in turn narrow the opportunity for FRUD movement but not yet closed.

However, Djibouti's permission for harboring Ethiopia's military equipment during the war with Eritrea further worsens the Eritro-Djibouti relation before it heals. After Guelleh "inherited the crown" (Bollee 2003:482) from his uncle Aptidon, he showed readiness to normalize relation with Eritrea. However, Djibouti's ability to snatch the pie Eritrea had lost as being the major sea outlet for the landlocked Ethiopia with around 80 million populations may have an influence on its relation with Eritrea. In fact, the Afar cause that both régimes in Asmara and Djibouti consider as a common threat may force them to work agreeably at least in security matters. Following the intervention of Muammar al-Gaddafi in the Eritro-Djibouti dispute, relations between the two states has improved since March 2000. Furthermore, the two heads of states decided to set up a joint working committee with annual regular meetings to continue discussions on potential cooperation among themselves. Hence, in the year 2004 they signed a cooperation agreement providing to work together in economic, political and social sectors. President Guelleh had even refused to join in the Sana'a Forum tripartite all-round co-operation between Ethiopia, Sudan and Yemen established in 2004, one-time arch-foe of the régime in Asmara. Furthermore, in various occasions the government of Djibouti handed over a number of Afar refugees to Eritrea security. Djibouti further had allowed Eritrean soldiers to cross the border and dig trenches in order to chase out Eritrean deserters, which particularly referred to Afar youths. Generally, though the relation between the two states has deteriorated from time and again due to cocktail of factors, they kept intelligence and security relation in tight manner.

As discussed earlier they have held regular meetings of border sub-committees. After a while the regional political order has shifted again and the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict has reshaped with the new regional tune. From 10 to 13 June 2008, Eritrean and Djibouti army kept fighting along their border sides in which many soldiers have been killed from both sides and consequently, the geo-political strategic locations in northern Djibouti including the main land of Doumeira (Gabla Mountain), Islands of Doumeira and Kallida became under the control of Eritrean soldiers. After the Doumeira crisis, Eritrean government reportedly approached FRUD leaders in Paris. Accordingly, Asmara a home

away from home for rebel movements of the region is by now expecting to host new guests from Djibouti, FRUD leaders. Similarly, when the régime in Djibouti sense the threat from Asmara, they are also involved in proxy games by supporting Eritrea government oppositions through providing diplomatic and intelligence assistance. As mentioned earlier, just weeks after the Doumeira crisis, Djibouti's defense Minister, Ogoureh Kiffleh, has contacted RASDO officials in Addis. Eritrea's proxy games have already started to score points by escalating the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict in Djibouti. Medhane (2008:3-4) argued as "although Eritrea, pretty much like Ethiopia, was not sympathetic to Afar insurgency mainly due to a concern that it could politicize its own restive Afar population. [...] The government of Djibouti claimed that Eritrea was emboldening Djibouti's opposition and supplying the rebels with arms including landmines."

All in all, the dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti escalated the situation in Djibouti as Asmara lends her hand for the Afar rebellions. The impact does not stop by its influence in Djibouti only; rather Eritrea's strategy to destabilize Ethiopia also has an effect in the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict in Ethiopia due to infiltration of arms and trained militias of both groups across the border.

4.6 The Fight against 'Terrorism' in the Horn Region and Its Implication towards the Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict

The scenario in post-9/11 offered new opportunities to the Issa/Somali government of Djibouti. The war on terror is like 'a new lease on life' for the long lasting Issa dominancy in Djibouti. The strategic position of Djibouti yet again engrossed the attention of western powers. As Schermerhorn (2005:60) argued if "Djibouti did not exist, it would have to be created. Not only as a lifeline for Ethiopia but as a safety valve for the region and an insurance policy." Thus, Schermerhorn, former U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti, continued to argue as "the premiums we have paid to keep that policy in force have constituted a worthwhile investment." Indeed, Djibouti was arguing with French for increment of the military base rent income⁸⁹ and also was searching other alternatives to

⁸⁹ In February [2003], the French agreed to increase annual payments for the military base from \$20m to \$34m. (Bollee 2003:483)

support its economy. Apart from the port service, Djibouti also brings its geo-strategy comparative advantage in the service market. Bollee (2003:483) wrote as “the [French] military base costs about \$160m per annum, not all of which goes to Djibouti. There are about \$10m of scheduled local military spending and about \$25m in economic aid.” However, this is not sufficient, and the Djiboutian government has been dreaming for years of finding another wealthy patron. It courted Libya and the Arab League, Italy and Iraq, but did not succeed. Then came the global war against terrorism that according to Bollee (ibid) “has proved a bonanza for the mini-state on the Red Sea” by inviting potential customers including USA and Germany. Marchal (2005:282) described Djibouti’s ambition as follows: “it [Djibouti] quite effectively played the card of Japan and made sure to keep American and French interests alive.” Attilio (2004:630) in his part affirmed US interest in the region by stating as “in the Horn of Africa the United States is attempting to replace one set of shackles (anticommunism) with yet another (anti-Islamic fundamentalism).” Hence, as strongly argued by Schermerhorn (2005:49), after launching operations in Afghanistan in later 2001, “the United States solicited Djibouti as a host for American forces in [Camp Lemonier] and welcomed the country as a partner in the Global War on Terrorism.⁹⁰ In fact, this is not the first time that the United States has profited from Djibouti’s geographic relevance and accessibility; U.S. forces transited frequently under an informal understanding during the Gulf War [1991] and the UNOSOM/UNITAF peacekeeping exercise in Somalia [Operation Restore Hope for Somalia 1992].”

Overall, Djibouti is flourishing once again as the U.S. Central Command’s Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) based in its soil. CIA selected Djibouti for

⁹⁰ As explained by Bollee (2003:483), “US made the first contacts as early as 20 September [2001], and US deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense Mike Westphal arrived in Djibouti on 19 November 2001. Eager to send its Kriegsmarine into warm waters it has not seen since the last war, Germany [too] signed a Memorandum of Understanding in early January 2002 to take part in the ‘war on terrorism’. By the end of the month, German soldiers had landed in Djibouti. In October of the same year there were 700 US troops at Camp Lemonier, and the US Army decided to create a Combined Joint Task Force under Major General Frank Sattler.” The US ambassador in Djibouti, Schermerhorn (2005:50) has also announced that ‘reinvigorated bilateral relations were celebrated by U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld’s stop in Djibouti in late 2002 and a White House meeting between Guelleh and President Bush [On 20 January 2003], an event that resulted in promise of significant increases in U.S. aid. As highlighted in (Bollee 2003:483) “Undisclosed deal worth about \$30m a year.”

the installation of a Voice of America transmitter “designed to enlighten the Arab masses on the merits of democracy” (Bollee 2003:484). These new developments in relation to ‘war on terror’ seem an assurance for the Issa/Somali regime in Djibouti as untouchable. However, the FRUD leader, Mohamed Kadamy has warned that “in the Horn of Africa, the Western military presences are not always synonymous with stability.” The income Djibouti generated due to the new global order is a great advantage for the country however; uneven distribution of share of the pie might lead Djibouti to bloodshed again. As many other countries of the world, the Djiboutian government is using the terrorism concept to suppress the internal problem. Apart from accusing the opposition parties, there is a report that the government in Djibouti handed over some Afars of Eritrean origin to the Asmara government by accusing them for involvement with terrorist organizations.⁹¹ In addition, in the name of the ‘war on terror’ weapons from AK-47 to anti-aircraft guns are flowing to the Horn region from various locations that ranges from the United States to Puntland and even the AU peacekeepers are reportedly involved.

Generally, as cited by Rotberg (2005:3) “its [anti-terrorism] earnest efforts are appropriately directed as much winning local hearts and minds as to military counter terror operations. The winning of hearts and minds is about strengthening good governance through the region and about making friends for the United States through the projection of soft power and the intelligent exercise of diplomacy.” Otherwise Djibouti herself is facing a local turmoil with similar forms of terrorism.

⁹¹ Even though the information could not be verified with any other sources, The Reporter Newspaper issued on 10 May 2008 has published that ‘Djibouti, which is in the middle of a border dispute with Eritrea, handed over five days ago, an Eritrean suspected of Ethiopian railroad bombing near Dire Dawa and allegedly with links to Al Qaeda’s east Africa branch, a senior Djibouti security official told the media. The suspect, an Eritrean of Afar decent, was detained on January 3rd this year and is being held in Djiboutian capital. He was under investigation regarding phone calls he reportedly made on his UAE GSM cell phone to some of the bombers responsible for the attack on Ethiopia.’

Box 9. Arms Flow to Somalia

Alain Charret has identified the major actors involved and the routes for the flow of arms in Somalia. According to his findings (Charret 2006), "The weapons continue to flow into Somalia, a country that is nevertheless subject to an international embargo [since 1992] decreed by the United Nations. [...] Many of the weapons available on the market come from Yemen [official supplier for TFG] and anchored off on the coast of Puntland. The weapons are then collected in Bossaso where they take the direction of Mogadishu by road. There are several kinds of weapons, ranging from classic Kalashnikov AK-47, to different types of anti-aircraft guns. Eritrea [also] provides equipment to opponents, as well as Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya. Meanwhile, Ethiopia provides weapons to the TFG. Thus, for example, in late March, one of the ten tons of weapons that were sent to Ethiopia to Jowhar, by the way, included mortars and anti-tank grenades. [Even America' role is too high] recently reported that Porter Goss, director of the CIA, would have paid a brief visit to Somalia in February. A visit that was followed by the dispatch of American intelligence agents in Mogadishu. Their mission was to provide funds to certain warlords in the capital, in exchange for information about members of Al Qaeda in Somalia. For the moment, there is no indication that Washington has provided more than just money to those warlords. But in the current circumstances, it is highly probable that American money is used to buy arms. Washington would thus, at least indirectly, contributed to the violation of the embargo." Astonishingly enough, AU also exacerbates the situation. As cited in (Lederer 2008) "'elements' of the African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia [AMISOM has over 2,500 Ugandan and Burundian troops] and the country's transitional government were involved in illegal trafficking. [...] Somalia's breakaway northern regions of Puntland and Somaliland are other entry points for weapons." Alain Charret (2006) further extended the list of countries involved in trafficking arms to Somalia by stating as "No fewer than seven states are accused of having supplied arms to the Islamic Courts Union (Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Libya, Syria and Saudi Arabia). Syria and Iran have delivered arms to Somali Islamists to thank them for sending hundreds of their fighters in southern Lebanon to help Hezbollah in repelling the latest Israeli offensive. On the other hand, the report highlights the presence of two Iranian nationals in the region of Dhusamareeb. Tehran has been obtained, in exchange for the supply of arms, permission to conduct field surveys to verify the presence of uranium in the basement."

4.7 Concluding Summary

In reviewing trends of the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali in both Ethiopia and Djibouti, Issa/Somalis have achieved to derive their Afar neighbors away all the way from Zeila to Awash River banks in Ethiopia and towards northern portion of the Republic of Djibouti. These uninterrupted territorial control and incorporation of strategic geographic area as an entirely Somali inhabiting land seems to have no significant relation with grass and water logic unless one needs to over simplify the conflict for some reasons. Howbeit, through time, intensity of the conflict has changed alarmingly in which various interlinked factors contribute for the escalation of the conflict. Among various culprits, dynamic regional political orders in the Horn have influenced on the escalation and sophistication of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. For example, arrival of colonial powers mainly the Italians and French has left a legacy on the damage of the coexistence between both pastoral people and resulted today's antagonism among each other. The influence of French Colonial masters had commenced since the signing of treaties and agreements with the local chieftains that gradually led French to misnaming the territory, introducing ethnic based politics and tilting the balance in favor of one against the other. Hence the French sow the seed of ethnic rivalry instead of integration between the two ethnic groups in the country.

The Italians in their part had an impact on the escalation of the conflict in northeaster lowlands of Ethiopia. The colonial ambition for invading Ethiopia led Italians to use the Somali factor in their southern march. Italians provided financial, military and political support for the Issa/Somalis who claim Awash River as part of Greater Somalia. Consequently, the pan-Somalism sentiment has flourished and Issa/Somalis were able to control a significant portion of territories not only from Afars but also from neighboring Oromo pastoral and agro pastoralists.

The birth of new states in the Horn regions since 1960s was also another element that has an influence on the escalation of the conflict. Mainly the establishment of the Republic of Somalia brought irredentism agenda as the most prior objective of the newly created government in Mogadishu. Thus, next to the colonial meddling, the creation of

Somalia Republic is considered as the major shifting point in which the power balance between the Afar and Issa/Somali has been shifted against the Afars. Furthermore, independence of Djibouti assured the yet existing dominancy of Issa/Somalis in the Republic which led both ethnic groups to an ever ending politico-economic power competition that in turn led the country to bloody civil war. Another major political order in a very dynamic nature of the Horn politics was the establishment of a new state, Eritrea that becomes a major factor in the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict both in Ethiopia and Djibouti.

The end of the cold war that brought Régimes change in Horn region particularly those in Ethiopia and Somalia were a further significant alteration in the regional political order that have affected the course of the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali. As the Barre Régime in Somalia collapsed and soon after the overthrow of the Derg government of Ethiopia in early 1990s, the Afars in the region collaborated their forces and conducted a massive military attack against the Issa/Somali dominated government of Djibouti. In fact the new powers in Ethiopia and the newly born state of Eritrea lend their hand to the Issa/Somali government of Djibouti in order to squash Afar's rebellion movement. Even though the downfall of Barre and collapse of Somalia nailing down Somaalinnimo intoxication, the fractions of clannish concept particularly of Esayi dream led Djibouti to substitute the late Somalia Republic and carried on its direct and more comprehensive assistance to their kith and kin in Ethiopia that in turn enhanced the ethnic rivalry to the highest level in which killing each other has become the everyday business among both societies.

Interstate wars in the Horn region have also played remarkable role on the escalation of the Afar and Issa/Somali Conflict. For example, the first and second Ethio-Somali war enabled Issas to get huge assistance from Mogadishu while the Ethiopian government supported Afars. Moreover, these wars enabled successive Ethiopian governments particularly the Imperial and the Derg to view the regional characteristics of this conflict commonly portrayed as a pure pastoral confrontation. The Ethio-Eritrean war of 1998 further influenced the course of the conflict in such a way that Ethiopia with the largest population size in the region becomes landlocked and almost entirely depends on the port of Djibouti for its import-export transactions. Therefore, the tiny Republic of Djibouti

becomes the sole artillery of Ethiopia that by turn enabled Djibouti to meddle in the affair of Issa/Somalis in Ethiopia. Accordingly, Afars accused EPRDF-led Ethiopian government for selling their cause in exchange of sea outlet. Paradoxically, the same régime blessed Eritrea to secede from Ethiopia without making any legal arrangement to secure Ethiopia's right at least to have a sea corridor in the Afar's port city of Asseb. The Eritro-Djibouti Border Dispute has also brought about new orders and actors in the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict. Eritrea is assisting both Afars and Issa/Somalis particularly in military training and armaments. Thus Eritrea is putting fuel on the fire. In case of Djibouti, Eritrean government lends its hands to the Afar oppositions, FRUD, that operates in the northern part of Djibouti bordering Eritrea. Thus this new scenario further contributed for the intensification and sophistication of the age-old conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali people.

The new world order, fight against 'terrorism', has altered the political dynamics of the Horn region in similar fashion as it was during the cold war era. And this time, Djibouti has become the base for the anti-terrorist forces which by turn build the Issa/Somali dominated regime's economic, military and political power that by turn intensified the already existing ethnic resentment and antagonism in the country. Overall, this hatred have left thousands dead, wounded and assets wasted. The ethnic armed confrontation both in Ethiopia and Djibouti seems far from over. It further destroyed whatever traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution were left between the two groups. The bilateral efforts to resolve this conflict by host governments at different regimes in time are discussed in the forthcoming chapter.

Chapter Five

5 Resolution Efforts and the Outcomes for the Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict

5.1 Introduction

The indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms among the Afar and Issa/Somali do no longer exist. Elders from both communities confirmed that in the old days whenever conflict erupts between them, no police or court was expected to be involved. Rather women from either side would be sent as a messenger to offer peace dialogue. As Ayalew (2001:179) discusses “women who are considered to be no cause for danger on account of the cultural beliefs associated with femininity. Females are believed to inflict no harm and are not, therefore, [...] regarded as targets of retaliatory attacks.” Apart from the role women played in the initial offer to dialogue; clans had also a vital role in the conflict settlement process. For instance in a conflict that erupts between the Debine and Harala clans of Afar and Somali, a neutral clan in that specific incident like Weima-Afar or Harala-Somali could play a role as envoy for peace negotiations. However, as the root causes, triggering factors as well as actors of the conflict altered gradually, the relevance of traditional system became of no value. The situation in which even kids and pregnant mothers are becoming target of armed conflicts could clearly show how the traditional values are being eroded.

Today, lack of trust between the two pastoral communities both in Ethiopia and Djibouti has resulted for the decline of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to an insignificant level. Host governments have involved successively but no sign of improvement has been seen either to mitigate the bloodshed or de-escalate the conflict. Peace agreements are becoming usual to be broken shortly after participants disperse from meeting halls. Hence it is very crucial to analyze the reasons behind the failure history of resolution efforts towards the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict both in Ethiopia and Djibouti. Thus, this chapter discusses the involvement of successive governments as well as other stakeholders in the long lasting conflict among the Afar and Issa/Somali of Ethiopia and Republic of Djibouti.

5.2 Interventions by Successive Governments of Ethiopia

Since the introduction of a new administrative structure in post-war Ethiopia (after the Italian occupation), various negotiations, high level meetings, peace deals as well as punitive measures have been conducted and implemented regarding the age-old conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali. Though all these complex processes are present day phenomenon, yet the conflict continues to intensify, the number and severity of casualties enhancing day in and day out. As a matter of fact, preventing violent conflicts before it erupts as well as mitigating the ongoing confrontations are major tasks for a government who claim to exercise good democratic governance like that of the incumbent government of Ethiopia. However, most of governments sponsored peace deals as argued by Ayalew (2001:181) was “nominal and short-lived at best.” Giving less attention to the root causes of conflicts as well as focusing solely on short-lived political interest further turns to be part of the quandary rather than a solution for ethnic conflicts. Likewise, successive government interventions in to the age-old Afar and Issa/Somali conflicts seem to fall woefully short. Apart from all, the incumbent government that claim to have better understanding on the country’s ethnic factors are yet stuck on a fire brigade work in which they run to put out the fire here and there. Tadesse and Yonas (2007: 6) showed a very dim light on the probability of success story regarding the current government’s resolution attempt by stating that “the Afar-Issa conflict in Ethiopia is causing much damage to both communities. The conflict between the two communities was left by previous regimes to pursue its own dynamic course and, sadly, the present government has done no better.”

5.2.1 Resolution Attempts during the Emperor’s Era

Various attempts were made to settle frequent eruption of armed conflict and livestock looting among the Afar and Issa/Somali ethnic groups that seriously affected the peace and stability of the Imperial government administrative units in which the two pastoral groups inhabited. Peace negotiations organized in the level of local administration up to the central government in Addis Ababa were held but to no avail. Actions that range from

trying to cajole the heart of the outlaws' up to undertaking punitive measure were tried. Beside the carrot and stick measures, administrative units were made to shift thrice but still unsuccessful in bringing lasting peace and stability. A thorough analysis of resolution efforts undertaken by successive governments in Ethiopia and Djibouti and examining the success as well as failure history of coercive, non-coercive and mixed incentive strategies being implemented could facilitate to identify key factors in order to resolve or at least mitigate grievances between the two ethnic groups.

5.2.1.1 Administrative Units Restructuring

After a brief Italian occupation (1936–1941), the Imperial government of Ethiopia has implemented new administrative divisions (1944) in which the Afar and Issa/Somali ethnic groups were incorporated under the Harar Governorate General in Chercher Awraja, Kereyu, Adal and Issa Wereda in the capital of Afdem. According to a letter written on 6/2/1946 Ref.no.1317/6 from Lt. Colonel Abebe Degefu, Governor of Kereyu, Adal and Issa Wereda addressed to the Minister of Interior in Addis Ababa and to Harar Governorate General stated that 'in order to mitigate the frequent conflict between Adal and Issa people, the following provisional solution is given from our office. [From now on] Issas are restricted from crossing *Bulga, Aydora, Erer, Fa'o* while Adals are prohibited to traverse from *Ayroli, Asbuli, Biya'ad, Merihan* and *Andido*.' All informants further confirmed that before half-a-century, the border towns between the Afar and Issa/Somali people were in the above mentioned areas, which indicates the Issa/Somali's moved around 150-180 kms from their historical border. Despite the decision taken by the administration of the Province, sporadic fighting has been continuing. The violent clashes among the two pastoral groups with destabilizing consequence gripped the attention of the central government. Thus the Ministry of Pen sent a letter to Dej. Bekele Weya, Governor of Chercher Awraja on 19/7/48 that urged 'the age-old Adal and Issa conflict could not brought to an end due to successive violations of the government decision on the boundary between the two people. Hence we [the emperor] would like to suggest for taking a strong position to enforce both groups to adhere to their boundary decided by the government.' Accordingly, Harar Governorate General wrote a letter on 28/7/1948 addressed to Dej. Bekele Weya, Governor of Chercher Awraja and Dej. Tasew

Ayele, Governor of Kereyu, Adal and Issa Wereda in which ‘the message from His Majesty’s Minister of Pen regarding the strong order for both Afar and Issa/Somali to respect the border decision strictly has to be reached to clan leaders from both communities [...] furthermore, you shall confirm them that violation of the decision of His Majesty would result strong punishment.’ Nevertheless, raids and counter raids across the decided boundary persisted. Attacks, livestock looting, appeals and counter accusations to the province administrators became usual trends of the area.

Later on, in 1955, Administrative division of Harar Governorate General restructured the area inhabited by the Afar and Issa/Somali in such a way that a new Wereda referred as Adal and Issa Wereda with a capital in Erer is created under the newly established Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja. The choosing of Erer as the capital of the new Wereda was not without reason. As indicated on the Minute of the meeting between Awraja and Wereda leadership held on 9/5/1955 and led by Lt. Colonel Debebe Haile Mariam, Governor of Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja, they have discussed about where to locate the capital for the newly established Awraja. Lt. Colonel Debebe suggested ‘Erer [50 km from Dire Dawa] due to its strategic location as Erer bordering the Issa [Somali] in Northeast, the Gurguras [Somali] in Southeast, the Ittulang, Webera, Ala, Nole [Oromos] in Southwest, and in its Northwest Erer borders the Adals.’ Hence Erer was chosen as a best location for an easy control of all the surrounding areas. But neither restructuring the administrative division nor relocating a strategic capital town, could have refrained the violent attacks undertaken by one ethnic group against the other. A letter written on 13/11/1960 Ref.no 2/284 from Gebre Kal Debessay, Adal and Issa Wereda police chief addressed to Harar Governorate General Police chief, Qegnasmach Sahelu Gebre Heywot stated that ‘the border limit at Erer River is constantly breached by the Issa nomads. Well equipped Issas crossed Erer River to the westward and reached to Asbuli and Ayroli then get in touch with Mero and latter they reached to Gota River where the distance between them and the Adals is not more than 15 km. [...] so prior to violent dispute erupts we are expecting your last order to take measure and push Issas back.’ Despite successive retaliatory attacks launched over the Issa/Somali expansionists, it was indeed unattainable to block their westward movement from Erer River towards the basin of the Awash Valley.

The administration again decided to shift the capital of the Wereda from Erer to ‘more’ strategic town, Dire Dawa where they could control the areas within the Wereda as claimed by the Awraja Governor. He said ‘Erer enabled us to control all nomadic surrounding areas too [...] but to enable us to restrict Issas not to traverse the border [Erer River] and to enable all other tribes to move freely without fear of a threat from Issas [...] and of course to get better telephone, water, railway and road transportation services we obliged to shift our capital to Dire Dawa.’⁹² In fact, the decision might seem primarily a focus on the well being of the administrators and their families for getting better infrastructural access in Dire Dawa rather than a strategic decision to block Issa/Somali’s intrusion to neighbouring Afarlands. All in all, boundary demarcation between the two pastoral groups was regarded by authorities of the Imperial era as the main solution to mitigate the violent clashes. The understanding of the conflict was as if it is a pure pastoralist’s confrontation over scarce resources like grass and water in the deserts. However, after the first Ethio-Somali war of 1963-64, the Imperial government seemed to understand Issa’s uninterrupted expansion somehow related with the Greater Somalia doctrine. Therefore, administration divisions restructuring and demarcation of border between the two groups that could control and restrict Issa’s movement received due concern of the center at Addis Ababa. According to a letter sent by Grazmach Tafesse Tebekei, Vice Minister of Interior, on 5/3/1964 Ref. no. 2/9572/270/59/86, addressed to Harar Governorate General stated that order has been given from his Ministry to the Institute of Geography ‘to study the physical geographic position of the Adal and Issa areas and demarcate a border between them.’ Even though there was no visible outcome from the work of the institute in this regard; understanding the multifaceted elements of the conflict as well as the influence of dynamics in the regional political orders by itself was a step forward in the resolution efforts to the least.

Generally, Issa/Somali’s territorial expansion that received all rounded assistance from the Somalia Republic could not be blocked in any border demarcation attempts undertaken by the Imperial government. Particularly, within the first decade of Somalia independence, atrocities committed against the Afars dwell in Harar Governorate General

⁹² A letter written on 10/6/1963 Ref. no. 15628/270/59/55 by Qegnazmach Demisse Tefera, Governor of Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja, addressed to Harar Governorate General Police chief, Colonel Moges Beyene described about the change of the capital from Erer to Dire Dawa.

have increased against all administrative restructuring and movement restrictions. As Somalia persistently claimed the Awash River as the western border of her lost territories, Awash became the centre point where Issa/Somali would like to stop their westward expansion. Among others the Ugaas of Issas has played a major role in inculcating the concept of ‘our last stop would be in Awash’ to his constituency. According to a confidential letter sent by Lt. Kebede Workalemahu, Secretary of Harar Governorate General police chief, on 22/6/1966 Ref. no 14/65/267 addressed to the Governorate General of Harar described that ‘Issa crossed their boundary and are currently positioned in a distance of only 20 km to reach Gewane and Afedem [...] when we [police force] told them to return back to their territory, they all responded that they got the permission from the Ugaas to go across the boundary and make use of the Awash River.’ The Ugaas used to propagate and mobilize all Issas to go up against the boundary demarcation by saying, ‘there should be no demarcation between people within Ethiopia.’⁹³ As a result, well trained and equipped Issa/Somalis launched attack not only against their pastoral neighbors but also on the security forces too. For instance, in the attack Issa launched on 12/5/1966 around Beki station, one Police has been killed and four injured, on 7/7/1966 attack in the same Beki station another Police has been killed. On 8/7/1966 they opened fire on Police vehicle around Hulbera area.⁹⁴ Issa/Somali continue their march to Awash and in late 1960s the armed dispute being conducted along the Awash basin. Several reports on Issa’s incursion were sent to Harar Governorate General. Reports since 1966 indicated that Issa/Somalis have crossed Erer and reached to Biyokeraba, later to Buteji as well went over the Adal’s residential kebele at Honfero and crossed Hamoisa and Mero and moved towards the Awash River.⁹⁵ Letter written on 3/12/1969, Ref. no.

⁹³ A letter written on 8/7/1966 Ref. no. 14/165/302 by Harar Governorate General Police chief addressed to the Governorate General urging due concern for the stability of the region due to the propaganda of the Ugaas.

⁹⁴ A letter written on 9/7/1966 Ref.no.4163/6/2/5 from Major Getu Tekle, police chief of the Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja to the General Governor of Harar and Police chief of the Governorate General describes about attacks in the security forces and recommended that their grazing territory boundary point should soon be back from Beki River to the previous location, which is to the east of Erer River.

⁹⁵ Data can be found from the archives of letter exchanges in Harar Governorate General. A letter written by Adal Issa Garaguracha Awraja on 19/7/1966 Ref. no. 1/1993/48/3 and another telegram sent by Colonel Mulugeta Belayneh, Police chief of the Harar Governorate General on 28/7/1966 Ref. no. 343/1/3 to Harar Governorate General. In addition, a letter sent by Dej. Neway Mariam Kidane, Governor of Adal, Issa and

1.757/1/72/26 from Fit. Meharene Menda, General Governor of Harar to Brg. General Gashawe Kebede the Governorate General Police chief affirmed that ‘we have received a telegram stating that Issas attacked Adals along the Awash River basin on 21/11/1969 and they killed six Adals and looted unknown number of livestock.’

Afar elders (Qegnazmach Tahiro Hamedu, Grazmach Hassen Abdellah, Qegnazmach Ali Kheire) who were wretched by the fruitless successive administrative unit restructuring process, submitted their appeal on 17/12/1969 addressed to Prime Minister Tsehafi-Tezaz Aklilu Habte-Wold, Bitwoded Zewde Gebre Heywot, Minister of Interior and Deg. Wekeneh Welde Amanuel General Governor of Harar. Excerpts from their long appeal letter read as follows:

The 1944 administration structure that incorporated both the Afar and Issa/Somali in one Awraja (Chercher Awraja; Kereyu, Adal and Issa Wereda) brought no solution. Rather it enables Issas to raid and launch successive attacks against us and the Garagurecha [Oromo] people. Geared by the Pan-Somali spirit, they [Somalis] wanted to control the areas up to Awash River meaning to seize areas in the north front from Merihan and Ayroli to Ba’adu and in the south from Hurso to Angelele. Accordingly, they killed over 15,000 Adals with successive well planned raids. They give Somali names for areas they control after chasing away the Adals. On July 1964, within one day, they killed 424 Adals. Hence we would like to inform that areas westward to Erer, Merihan, Fo’a and Gebel shall not be encompass within the Issas territory. [...] otherwise if you decide to incorporate our land together with the Issas in one Wereda, we assure you that the confrontation would soon reach to Bulga and Ankober. To prove that you better observe where the Issas were two years ago and where they reach now?

The government soon after responded for the Afar quest and they changed the formula of incorporating both groups in a single Awraja administration and in 1970 the Imperial government restructured the administrative unit for the third time since 1944. This time the Afar and Issa/Somalis divided in two different Awrajas, which had a clearly defined division of border areas. Afars pushed by the Issa/Somalis up to Meiso and Mulu were incorporated in Harar Governorate General, Chercher, Adal and Garaguracha Awraja with a capital in Asebe Teferi and Issas included with Dire Dawa, Issa and Gurgura Awraja with a capital in Dire Dawa. Indeed, the new administrative divisions which clearly define the Issa/Somali and Adal’s territory had not been welcomed by the

Garaguracha Awraja on 22/7/1966 Ref.no.1/1991/48/3 addressed to Mohammed Hussien, Governor of Erer Wereda.

Issa/Somalis. Consequently Issa/Somalis commence to show signal of rejection to the local administration. On 10/2/1970 the Harar Intelligence Service sent a letter with Ref. no. 2448/62 to Bitwoded Zewdie Gebre Heywot, Minister of Interior, which informed ‘the recent restructuring of administrative divisions within the Harar Governorate General, is not accepted by the Issa people. The reason is that Issas have wiped the Adals away from the historical territory and grazing lands from Erer River to Meiso and yet they have a goal to control areas up to Awash River. Consequently, we got information that Issas are organizing themselves to launch severe attack over the railway and the bridge [...] hence all necessary concern should be taken in advance.’

Therefore, the new administration division could not succeed to stop hostilities and raids rather sustained the atrocities in more escalated manner. The sole divergence that was seen after the implementation of the new administrative restructuring was that all appeals and letter exchanges became between two Awrajas instead of a single Awraja as in the previous administrative division. As a result, a letter written on 11/4/1970 Ref.no.1/443/31/4 by Seyfe Sahelu, Secretary General of Chercher, Adal and Garaguracha Awraja to Alfraid shafi, Governor of Dire Dawa, Issa and Gurgura Awraja described that ‘since July 1969 Issas traversed westward of their Awraja border and have attacked Adals in Angelele, Bilina and Kurtumi. Their ambition is to control Adals and Garaguracha territory. The land they invaded till now could easily demonstrate their expansionist plan. They derived out [other tribes] in the west, south and north [and] they created a territory inhabited only by Issas. [...] now their move to the southwest is blocked by the Middle Awash Valley Authority’s development schemes in the Amibera and Gewane so they turn to north and try to control Awash River by attacking Adals in Awsa Awraja of the Wello Governorate General and Jara Awraja of the Shoa Governorate General.’ The reason given by Issa/Somalis for their constant attack and control of neighborhood’s territory was that they claim as ‘we are dying for grazing and water shortage in our territory so we need to move and traverse Adals and Oromos land for the sake of our survival.’ However, in early 1970s, Issa clan chiefs commenced to argue that the land they controlled from Adals is their own ancestral land. During interviews, numbers of Issa/Somalis have claimed similar theory of ‘we were here in the land some years ago.’ However, archival documents indicate that this reason is a new

logic that the Issas never mentioned in earlier negotiations and meetings. In a letter written on 17/11/1970 by Issa chiefs (Fit. Dehur Betel, Graz Semeri Gelie, Ato Derbene Farah and other five Issa chiefs) addressed to Balambaras Seyefe Sahelu, Governor of Erer Wereda and to Major Tekeste Mengestu, Vice Chief of Police in Dire Dawa, Issa and Gurgura Awraja stated as:

In accordance to your order we [Issa Chiefs] make an effort to pull Issas back to their territory [according to the border decision]. On 13/11/1970 on 7 o'clock in the morning we traveled towards north and 8 km before reaching Afdem at the place called Elalo, we met Reer Mussa clans [of Issa/Somali] and told them the order [back to your territory] however they replied that they have no pasture left in their land so unless rain comes we won't return back [...] then we crossed Kerbero River and received similar response. Then we gathered all Issas in Mahmadi, Afaso, Gigelu, Kaho, Daba and those around Mulu River and we told them to respect government decision on the border demarcation so that better if they back to their territory soon. But the people replied unless rain comes we couldn't go back to our birth land which has no pasture currently. In all places we visited like Harta Weha, Mero, Mahmadi, Bolo Keraba, and Siselu, we got similar responses.

While discussing their [Issa chiefs'] field report with the Awraja Governor, one of Issa chiefs, Balambaras Semeri Gielle, told that 'frankly speaking the land is ours, not of the Adals.' Overall, through time the long lasting conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali has shifted from culture instigated traditional dispute to access for pasture and in early 1970 the quest of Issa/Somali exposed and reached to claim that 'the land is ours.'⁹⁶ On the other hand, the local administrations never renounce the border demarcation restructuring even in the last couple of years before the demise of the Imperial Government. According to the Minutes of the meeting held on 25/11/1972 led by Colonel Desta Gameda with forty Issa/Somali elders, the grazing border between the Afar and Issa pastoralists is decided to be at Mero River. According to Afar elders being interviewed this decision is 'a shift on the stand of the Imperial government in which they legitimize our land stretched from the previous border point, Erer River, up to Mero River which we lost through severe attack from the Somalis as an Issa/Somali land.

⁹⁶ A letter written on 24/11/1969 Ref. no. 1/173/4819 from Seifu Sahlu, Secretary of Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja to Harar Governorate General has described about the Issas claim of their territory controlled by Afars. Seifu disproved the Iss's claim and further affirmed that 'rather it's well known that Issas crossed over 130km deep into Adals area. As for the accusation of the Adals, let alone penetrating to Issas area, they even retreated over 150 kms from their ancestral land.'

Indeed, ignoring the past and starting negotiations from the status quo is the common approach utilized by successive governments and that in turn could give confidence for a powerful party in such a way that invading new areas would bring no consequence as new negotiations are focusing on the position they hold at the specific time rather than retrieving the status quo ante.

5.2.1.2 Peace Negotiations

The Imperial government has also undertaken successive peace negotiations between the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. A number of negotiations were conducted since late 1940s, after reinstating the Imperial government in the post-Italian occupation of Ethiopia, up until early 1970s, during the eve of the emperor's regime came to an end. However, almost all negotiation attempts could not possibly bring fruit as peace deals were regularly violated. Moreover, lack of clan leaders wholeheartedly endeavor to play their role as a bridge for peace was also a major obstacle in the peace negotiations. For the clan leaders, even to ask the people to handover criminals, would automatically lead them to lose the trust from their respective people. Hence, the negotiation went on and off with no significant influence on the resolution of the conflict. The administration of Harar Governorate General used to request the leaders of each groups about their opinion to bring the conflict to an end. The Issa/Somali chiefs claimed that they refrain to stop the people from intrusion to neighboring territories. The Ugaas himself declared to government officials that 'no Issa accepted his request to handover criminals and return looted livestock and hence he has nothing to do except waiting the government decision.'⁹⁷ Afar clan chiefs on their part appealed to the government 'to enforce a mechanism in which both ethnic groups could identify and respect each other's boundary.'⁹⁸

⁹⁷ The information is available in a minute of the meeting held on 18/6/1950 at Dire Dawa led by Dejj. Bekele Meya with Issa leaders including Ugaas Hassen Hersi, Balambaras Mohammed Abdullahi, Derar Alello, Waisa Ibra.

⁹⁸ Afar clan chiefs in Afdem submitted their proposal for resolution of the conflict with the Issa/Somalis in 1951 as a response for the quest by the Governor General of Harar, Qegnazmach Tekle Haymanot. They explain the boundary with the Issas and claim territories along the railway from Hurso station up to Afdem and claimed lands stretched from Hurso to Bekre Melli, Melkaber, Sengoti, Re'ayeto, Merihan, Fa'o, Gern Leba, Ayroli and Beker Meli.

On 10/9/1960 bilateral discussion was held between the Awraja administration and Issa chiefs. The participants include Dej. Kefle Ergetu, Governor General of Harar, Qegnasmach Sahelu Gebre Heywot, Governor of Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja and Colonel Tessema Azeneh, Governor of Dire Dawa Awraja. And among the Issa leaders Ugaas Hassen Hersi, Fit. Dehur Bethel, Ali Hersi, Bala Nure Siareg and other chiefs were participated. According to the Minutes of the meeting, advice and forewarnings has given to the Issa chiefs. Dej. Kefle remind their [Issa's] promise before the Majesty for not to destabilize the peace deal and he said 'but you break your promise and crossed beyond the boundary [Erer] and attacked Adals, Ittus and Weberas. Further you [Issas] failed to pay the penalty we decided on you [...] you even killed security police and soldiers [...] you placed stones on the rail way tracks [...] government couldn't tolerate all these crimes. We request you to handover those criminals urgently.'

In similar fashion, the Harar Governorate General initiated a peace dialogue between the Afar and Issa/Somali on 10/11/1960. Accordingly, the Governor, Dej. Kefle Yergetu, and Sahelu Gebre Heywot, Governor of Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja, gathered and addressed Issa/Somali and Afar clan leaders. The Governor has criticized Issa chiefs for not accomplishing their task of averting their people continues intrusion to the Afars territory and encountered huge loss both in human and livestock. He further warned as 'since 1944 [the birth of new administrative divisions] government restrict itself to take retaliatory measures only for the sake of civilians within the Issa territory.' Balambaras Semere Gille (Issa clan chief), on his part claimed that 'Issas are not people who could respect our advice and critics.' As a matter of fact, it's not credible to assume that a clan based society like Issa/Somali to break the chieftains' order. Rather the reason seems an attempt by Issa chiefs to accuse the public at large to avoid accountability for the decision they all have participated. Therefore, in the meeting, Dej. Kefle rather stressed on the weakness of the clan chiefs themselves by accusing the Issa clan chiefs who 'are settled in Dire Dawa and grasp futile information from Hargissa and Mogadishu.' Dej. Hassen [the Ugaas] in his turn asked an apology for the wrong doings and pleaded the administrators to allow them to cross Erer to save livestock from dying due to lack of pasture and water. His plea was however rejected. The Governor had reminded him that

‘he had pleaded in similar way in 1958 and government allowed but you [Issas] looted livestock of the Adals in your way back.’ Then Ugaas Hassen brought logic, which is ‘Issa chiefs do not believe that there is boundary limitation among Ethiopians so the government should permit us to utilize water and pasture across Erer.’ The Governor has condemned the Ugaas suggestion and stressed in telling Issa/Somalis that ‘the area west of Erer is Afars land.’ At last, they reached to a decision in such a way that the Adal should let free Issas they capture during wars and Issas should leave the Adals territory and back to their land. All agreed to sign but after a while Ugaas Hassen hesitated to sign. He asked to have more time to enable him discuss the issue with other clan leaders who were not in the meeting. In addition, he claimed that as our people (Issa) are uneducated we need at least two months to make all the people understand the decision and convince our illiterate people. Brg. General Belte Abebe had pressure the Ugaas by saying ‘the reconciliation agreement should be signed soon before end of June before the rainy season starts and another round of conflict erupt.’

Meanwhile, Dej. Alimirah [Sultan of Awsa-Afar] declared that a new wave of Issa’s intrusion is being undertaken for the third time while they seated for the meeting. He claimed as we [Afars] can’t restrict our people to defend themselves while the Issas attack them on their door steps. Then, after a long compromise, they all agreed and signed the peace deal on 27/6/1961. Decision has been reached that a party who breached this agreement will be held liable for any damage and will pay a penalty of 50,000 br to government. All parties agreed and signed the peace agreement that became operational since 30/10/1960. Unfortunately, it took not over two weeks for the agreement to be breached. On 16/11/1960 one of the Weima [Afar] clan leaders, Balambaras Ali Kheiri write an appeal to Governor of Beki Vice Wereda stating that ‘we Adals are paying tribute and live by respecting the law of the country. However, Issas move to eliminate us and control all our territory [...] we appeal to the government to take decisive action to stop forthcoming violent scenario.’ From the negotiation effort undertaken on 10/11/1960, one could understand that Somalis were not ready to compromise. First the Issa/Somali clan leaders argued as ‘the people [Issa people] never accept the order of the elders’ that’s infact illogical justification for a highly clan based classified society like that of Issa/Somali. After a while Issa/Somali clan chiefs argued as ‘land is for all’,

however, Issa/Somalis never allow an ‘outsider’ to enter to a territory where they claim the ownership. Finally, Issa negotiators came up with an idea of ‘we have no means to gain water and pasture thus we need to traverse other territory for survival issue’ in which they could attract humanitarian sympathy from the government. Then again these chains of accusation, counter-accusation and argumentation continue while Somalis occupy new areas one after another. It is better to review the next peace negotiations to clearly analyze the above mentioned endless chain of argumentations.

Another round of peace negotiation kicked off on 5/12/1960 by Dej. Kefele Yergetu. According to the Minute of the meeting, Dej. Kefele suggested that ‘Adal people who pay tribute to the government usually appeal about their attack [by the Issa] so we should consider their case seriously.’ He further continued and argued as ‘Police chief of the Awraja [Adal, Issa and Garaguracha] traveled all the way to Aydora and proved that enough pasture is available [in the Issa’s territory]. Previously when Semerie Gele [Issa Chief] claimed as the land doesn’t belong to the Adals, Ugaas opposed him but on the meeting with Fit. Aemro Selassie in 30/11/1960 Ugaas himself claimed that he never believed that the land belongs to the Adals [...] but its well known that since for a long time in the past the land belongs to the ancestors of Adals.’ Then, Ugaas tried to correct his words by declaring that ‘we believe that land belongs to government not for Adals [...] we never ask Adals any favor but when we face problem we appeal to our government [...] in our view, ownership could be proved when one hold certificate given by the government. So where is the certificate of the Adals for the possession of the land? Do they have one?’ Dej. Kefele gave warning to the Issa chiefs and said ‘either for Issas or Adals the certificate is the consent of the government. Then without any consensus the meeting came to an end.

The situation worsened during the first Ethio-Somali war. According to data collected from Afar elders, the attacks of Issa/Somali have been intensified during the Ethio-Somali war. Afars attempted to face their traditional rivalries by singing war chants and dances while a well-trained Issa/Somali killed many Afars by the modern weapon they armed. Afar leaders started to understand that they are no more confronting with the old Issa pastoralist rather with well-trained and equipped Somali. Thus, Afars in various Governate General in Ethiopia as well as those in the French territory organized their

forces and prepared to launch a massive attack against the Issa/Somalis.⁹⁹ The Governor General of Wello, Fit. Mamo Seyum sent a confidential letter on 26/11/1964 to Dej. Kefele Ergetu, Minister of Interior, described the gist of his discussion with Governor of Awsa Wereda and Vice Chief of Adal's [Yayyo Hamedu] on 19/11/1964 about Adal's preparation for war. The grievance further grew out of an added brutal incident at a place called Werenso located between Mille and Eli-Wuha. Alimirah and Yayoo Hamedu were traveling to Addis Ababa and when they reached Werenso they saw human bodies [Afar] of those fiercely killed by Issa/Somalis including pregnant woman. Alimirah who used to consider Issa/Somalis as Muslim brothers withdrew his reservation against fighting with Issa and declare that 'this is the work of devil' implicitly supporting any retaliatory measures against the Issa. Then Hamedu Yayyo called Issa/Somali elders by telling them that he's going to give them aid. Accordingly, around sixty prominent Issa/Somali chiefs were invited to the Afar area where Hamedu Yayyo ordered the killing of all while they were in a truck around Eli Weha.

The much awaited peace negotiation during the Imperial era was conducted between 23 to 31/5/1966 at Addis Ababa.¹⁰⁰ While the meeting was undertaking similar situation like that of the 1960 negotiation has happened. On 27/5/1966 telegram sent from the Police chief of Awsa Awraja, Major Berge Negassi that explains on the opening day of the negotiation in Addis, Issa launched an attack and killed 20 Adals, looted 700 cattle, 900 camels and over 7000 goats in Awsa Awraja. Fit. Yayyo Hamedu claimed that 'the parties gathered here to reconcile are not the right actors. There will come no result by

⁹⁹ When Fit. Mamo Seyum asked Yayyo Hamedu the reason for the Adals preparation for war Yayyo replied as 'we Adals are peaceful people thus we wanted to stop the long lasting conflict with the Issas and reconcile with them. Hence, we invited number of Issa elders to a country where they have never been. We even took them to Bati and bought for them cloths, we sacrifice cattle to their honour. However, after a while on Aug 1964 they attacked on the Rekbak Dermeilla and Ablek Haysemale clan of Adals who live in Harar Governorate General and killed 221 at Mullu. Similarly in Wello Governorate General they attacked Aloma clan and killed three, they killed another three from the Kutubla and two from the Ge'ela, they further killed four from Hoorkelto, and two men were killed from Abusamera clans. Above all as we couldn't get any response from the government, Adals in the Governorate General of Eritrea, Tigre, Wello, Shoa, Harar and those under French [FTAI] discussed and reached to a decision to conduct a massive retaliatory attack against the Issa in order to guarantee the security of our society.'

¹⁰⁰ The meeting was led by Dej. Berhane Meskel Welde Sellasie, Vice Minister of Interior, Brg. General Belete Abebe, Governor of Awsa Awraja, Colonel Tsegi Gezmu, Governor of Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja, Ato Mokonen Welde Micheal, security vice inspector and Afar chieftains including Dej. Alimirah, Fit. Yayyo Hamedu and twenty-six others. Dej. Ugaas Hassen Hersi, Qegnasmach Hassen Behdon and nine other Issa chief are also participated.

making deal with Issa chiefs dwelling in Addis and Ugaas Hassen's Co. in Dire Dawa. Therefore we have submitted to the reconciliation committee names of twenty-two Issa clan leaders with whom the Afar of Awsa, Ge'ela, Gewani, Mahisera, Erer Waima and Djibouti Debnes should negotiate and reconcile under the tree [traditional reconciliation mechanism].’ Beg. General Belete Abebe has criticized Fit. Yayyo's suggestion for launching an indigenous reconciliation mechanism. He argued that ‘going back to reconciliation under a shadow of trees is unacceptable in today's world as the world is getting improved we shouldn't go backward.’ Dej. Hassen Hersi on his turn argued that ‘after concluding the reconciliation and put signature on the deal, going back and adhere on our boundary could not bring peace. Rather as the government suggested we have to love each other, to marry each other, to live together in peace.’ Apart from the Issa/Somalis manipulative justifications that could confuse the government officials at different time, the mediators failure for reviewing previous efforts, identifying the major negotiators as well as failure to understand the value of hybrid indigenous mechanism further exasperate the conflict instead of bringing lasting solution.

Afars claimed that from 1963-1966 Issa have killed 944 Afars in Shoa, 590 in Harar and 1811 in Wello Governorate Generals. Similarly Issa claimed Afars have killed 117 Issas in one day in 1965 at Mero, at Beleri 396 Issas are also killed on 16/12/1965. Moreover, in the 1966 attack committed by Afar, 200 Issas are killed at Argahitu and 513 at F'ao Kebele. Later on, the reconciliation committee elected sixteen elders from both groups who took oath. On the last day of the meeting i.e., 31/5/1966 the Ugaas confirmed Issas acceptance of the reconciliation but he added that ‘Issas still believe that land belongs to God so we all have ownership right.’ According to this new ownership claim of the Ugaas, Issa/Somalis seem to invite a new actor, God. Unfortunate to the negotiators luck, the peace deal was breached before the ink got dry. According to the Minute of the meeting in the day of putting signature on 31/5/1966 telephone message reached to Brg. General Belete Abebe, Governor of Awsa Awraja, in which he has received a report about Issas attack against the Afars on 30/5/1966 and killed 12, looted 1250 cattle and weapons. Fit. Yayyo Hamedu urged that ‘for the last twenty-five years we used to appeal for the government but starting from today we will never let our country to Issas.’ Despite the pick of the Afar's gripe, at the end of the year 1970

Issa/Somalis crossed the Mero River border and reached to Afdem that is almost 147km deep intrusion from Mero.¹⁰¹ Indeed, apart from administrative restructuring and peace negotiations, the Imperial government also attempted to use military force to bring lasting resolution for the Afar-Issa/Somali age-old conflict.

5.2.1.3 The Carrot-plus-Stick Approach

Since the early 1950s, local administration officials were demanding a disciplinary action to be taken against the party that regularly traversed a boundary and took the first step to break successive peace deals. As it is indicated on the confidential letter sent from Chercher Awraja on 8/9/1951 with Ref. no. 320/16 addressed to Ras Abebe Aregay, Interior Minister, the Awraja solicited for disciplinary measures against the Issa intruders who caused a massive damage on peace and stability of the region. The Awraja reached to a decision to deploy soldiers including tank force in the conflicting areas.¹⁰² Even the Issa/Somalis of British Somaliland used to cross the border in order to join their kith and kin across the Ethiopian border in raiding against Afars in which government soldiers reacted aggressively. For example in an incident that happened in the first week of February 1956 in which Issa/Somalis have attacked Afars in Erer area in Afdem Wereda, government soldiers took a punitive military action against the Issa/Somalis that even caused diplomatic uproar by the British government and media. Letters have been exchanged between the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, Aklilu Habtewelde and the British Ambassador at Addis Abeba.¹⁰³ Moreover, the economist on 21/7/1956 publication

¹⁰¹ A letter written on 22/12/1970 Ref. no.1/485/849/48 sent by Vice Governor of Dire Dawa, Issa and Gurgura Awraja addressed to Fit. Meharene Menda Hareg, informed him about the conflict erupted on 20/6/1970 and the breach of the peace agreement by Issa. Furthermore, the letter indicated the message from Colonel Getu Tekle, Police chief of Chercher, Adal and Garaguracha Awraja about Issas incursion deep crossing the tentative grazing boundary demarcate for the Afar and Issas at Mero and reached to Afdem. (From Mero to Gigelo is 36 km and from Gigelo to Af'as is 11km, Af'as to Buteji is 65km and from Buteji to Afdem is 35km, totally about 147km.

¹⁰² The minute of a meeting between Awraja and Wereda leadership held on 9/5/1955 and led by Lt. Colonel Debebe Haile Mariam, Governor of Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja indicates that 600 soldiers were deployed at Aydora to control the instability caused often by Issas. And the discussants agreed to retain half of the soldiers along with four tanks until the situation in the area getting better.

¹⁰³ British Ambassador has sent letter on 20th July 1956 with Ref. no.130/1038/4 to Alilu Habtewelde, Minister for Foreign Affairs complaining about the action of Ethiopian armed forces against British protected Issa/Somalis tribesmen and her Majesty's government would like to reassure the right to claim

‘Ethiopians troops recently killed a large number of Esa tribesmen, and although the massacre took place deep inside Ethiopia territory, beyond the bounds of the Haud and the reserved area, some of the people killed were British-protected Somalis.’

Indeed, the coercive measures taken by the central government ease the tension temporarily. However, after some years of relative stability, raids and counter raids are intensified since early 1960s. Accordingly, the Harar Governorate General reached a consensus on the necessity of using force to settle down the tension spread over the Awraja. In the meeting held on 11/7/1960 Dej. Kefle Yergetu, Governor General of Harar, talked about the relative stability of the Awraja for the last four years and reported about recent attacks launched by Issas against neighboring Adal and Oromo. According to the Minutes of this meeting the Governor said that ‘In last January 1957, Issas launched attack against the Adal and security forces and the higher court at Afdem decided on them to pay a total of 341,000 br as penalty for the damaged they have caused but they pay not more than 25,000 br yet. Furthermore, Issa elders deliberately corporate with the outlaws [...] the Ugaas gathered the people and told them to fight with the government security forces.’ This speech of the Governor indicates that some coercive actions seemed to bring fruit while due to lack of serious follow ups and mishandling of the case rather aggravated the conflict. The government fire brigade showed up again, put the fire out and went without reviewing what was happened yesterday. Therefore, this conflict is became sophisticated from time to time while the government was stuck with its task of fire brigade rescue service.

Issa/Somalis clearly understood the government weakness and thus abused the system by systematically pushing the government to circulate with the orbit the Somalis have created. They even changed the name of places they occupied in order to bring it as a

compensation on behalf of their relatives. On the hand, the Ethiopian Minister for Foreign Affairs has replied to the British embassy in a letter sent on 27/7/1956 Ref. no 663/IA/48 addressed to John Killick, Charge de Affair, her Britannica Majesty’s embassy stated as ‘regarding a police action which occurred near Errer during the first week in February, there is absolutely no evidence that the British protected nomadic Issa had penetrated so far in to the territory of Ethiopia beyond the grazing area and were consequently involved in the incident.[it] took place approximately 200 kms from the frontier.[According to the] contents of the ministry of interior’s report prepared shortly after the incident, the Issas had conducted a raid on the Adal and had stolen a large number of that tribes cattle. A small police detachment from Afdem proceeded to investigate the reports of the thefts and in the course of their investigations members of the Issa tribe opened fire upon police officers and two police constables were wounded. [Hence we believe that there was] no unnecessary force was employed.

justification for convincing government officials who have no background history of the case. Apart from arguing as ‘this is where our ancestors used to live’; re-naming of the occupied territories could also be used as a new source of evidence for the coming generation in order to strengthen their claim of ownership. When their elders or clan chiefs and sheiks died, the funeral place would automatically be named after the deceased.

According to Dej. Kefle Yergetu ‘Issa’s arrogance is a result of lack of disciplinary action from the government.’ Thus, he urged for punitive measure to be taken against the outlaws. Issa chiefs, on the other hand went far to threat government officials particularly during the independence of Somali Republic. For instance, in a meeting held on 18/7/1960 an Issa chief, Fit. Dehur Betel explained the situation he faced in his trip to Ambuli together with the Governor of the Adal and Issa Wereda, Ato Seife Sahlu, in which he warned government officials by saying that ‘Issas could definitely attack government forces if we [Issa chiefs] were not in the place together.’ Ugaas Hassen further confirmed as ‘in that incident [while government delegates visted Issa areas] Issas were ready to open attack on the military camp at Ambuli.’

Consequently, the government decided to mobilize a military force with a ‘special mission’ against the Issa. A confidential letter sent by Mehrete Ab Tedela, Sergeant from Campaign, Information and Training Department of the army on 22/7/1960 Ref. no. 19/20023/52 to Lt. Colonel Berhe Hadequ, Commander of the 12th Infantry Division-Special Mission to Issa camped at Erer, stated that ‘according to the order from Governor General of Harar, your army is ordered to mobilize its force for a mission to eliminate the rebellion [which raised due to the propaganda from Mogadishu].’ After undertaking this punitive measure, however, Issas continue to resent to the government. Meanwhile, Awraja leaderships have attempted to remind Issas the stick of the government and warned them to cooperate in bringing lasting peace in the Awraja. On the other hand, the Awraja administration attempted to solve the problem by giving ‘carrot’ as well. As it is indicated on the Minute of a meeting led by Qegnasmach Sahlu Gebre Heywot, Governor of Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja, held on 23/9/1960 Ugass Hassen argued that ‘the past three years relative peace, according to his believe, is achieved as a result of the

Governor's strategy to give much money to the most known forty-five Issa outlaws and their leaders from all clans rather than elders sincere effort as you mentioned.'

Military actions against the Issas were intensified during the first Ethio-Somali war in which Issas mobilized massively by supporting Mogadishu. At the end of 1964, the army got an order to get rid off Issa outlaws ranges from 1500 to 5000. The General Governor of Harar, Lt. Colonel Tamrat Yegezu asked a green light for his mission from Emperor Haile Selassie. The military force urged to be ready for the 'special mission to Issa' was not only the ground force but it also include the Air force. According to the confidential letter sent by General Governor of Harar, Lt. Colonel Tamrat Yegezu on 28/10/1964 with Ref.no.1/766/1/72/17 addressed to 3rd Infantry Battalion explained the information he received from Governor of Erer Wereda about Issas all rounded preparation to launch severe attack against the Assahimera Adals around Gewane area and he urged to make the Air force ready as requested by the telegram sent by Brg. General Abebe Kebede. As a number of reports have been reached to the government about the Issa/Somali military strength in both logistic and training wise particularly after the independence of Somalia , government did not only took serious military measures but also had an attitude to balance the muscle of the two conflicting parties.

Subsequent to the appeal of Adal chiefs from Harar Governorate General that put forward to His Majesty on 23/12/1964 described the damage Afars incurred due to blunder committed by well equipped Issa's, asked government support to defense themselves. Accordingly, the letter written on 27/1/1965 by Solomon Gebre Mariam, the Minister of Pen has informed Maj. General Debebe Haile Mariam, Commander of the Royal Bodyguard Force, about the order given by the Emperor, which is a permission to provide 100 guns for Afars through the Minister of Interior. Though the Emperor has rejected the planned massive military punitive measure against the Issa, he has chosen to 'balance' the Somalia Republic-backed Issas against the Afar pastoralists by granting them the pre-Italian period guns, 50 Dimotfor and 50 Mauzeer (local names). Furthermore, in his way to Kulubi (The feast of Saint Gabriel in a church near to Dire Dawa), the Emperor gave order to grant 5000 br to Adals as compensation for the loss

they incurred due to the Issas successive blunder.¹⁰⁴ Somalis consider the Emperors stand for opposing the execution of the planned major military punitive measure as ‘kind nature of the king’ but from the Afars view giving them ‘old weapons and small sum of money while turn a blind eye for their attack by a foreign backed well-trained Somali fighters is considered as not only as oversimplification of the conflict but also a deliberate act of check and balance against the Muslim peripheral groups.’

Nevertheless, using force against Issa/Somalis persisted long to the age of the Imperial régime. Number of Letters exchanges between the local administrations and authorities in the centre indicated the urgency need of military measure against the Issa/Somali who reportedly accused for attacking Adals, killing policemen, raid the Ittu and Kerreyu Oromos land by crossing the Awash Bridge.¹⁰⁵ Even though the attempt brought no valuable result in resolving the conflict, the Emperor’s rewards of money and ranks (the carrot) to the Issa chieftains continued until the downfall of the Imperial government. According to a letter written on 8/12/1972 Ref. no. 1/254/849/48 by Harar Governorate General addressed to Colonel Desta Gemedo, Governor of Dire Dawa, Issa and Gurgura Awraja, ‘with all the desire of His Majesty, two Issa clan chiefs, one was Ugaas Hassen, have been awarded agricultural tractors.’

5.2.2 The Derg and Its Conflict Settlement Perspective

The Derg régime, which entirely tied up with internal political turmoil as well as armed struggles that stretched from the north to the eastern border, could not deal much on the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. The government had a blanket perception of the past, ‘nothing good out of the feudal régime.’ Thus it took the Derg long to review archives and view broadly the nexus between local conflicts and dynamics in regional political orders. In late 1980s, the vanguard party - the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) -

¹⁰⁴ A letter written on 27/1/1965 by Solomon Gebre Mariam, the Minister of Pen addressed to Dej. Kefle Yergetu, Governor General of Harar explained about the Majesty’s decision to grant 5000 br to the Adals from the money collected on sale of the Ogadeni rebellion assets at auction.

¹⁰⁵ In 1/1/1971 letter sent by General Governor of Harar, Fit. Meharene Menda addressed to Maj. General Haile Baykedagn, Commander Chief of the 3rd Division of the Army and another letter sent on 3/4/1971 with Ref. no.2591/63 by Colonel Fesseha Gebre Micheal, Head of Public Security Department in Ministry of Interior addressed to the Shoa Governorate General and a minute of a meeting held on 28/2/1972 in Ministry of Interior at Addis Ababa.

established a nationalities reconciliation committee that included members from both Afar and Issa/Somali. However, the attempt remained far for solution alike its predecessor's. As Klein (2002:23) argued “[According to] Marxist influenced liberation theory, conflict was reduced to contradictions between classes, which could only be resolved through the elimination of class differences.”

Therefore, for the Socialist Derg, the conflict between the egalitarian pastoralists of Afar and Issa/Somali people is yet class struggle which is manipulated by remnants of the feudal system. Thus, the age-old raids and counter raids among both societies are considered as banditry, which instigated by the anti-revolutionary forces. Post the second Ethio-Somali war (1977-78), the abstract picture of the conception of ‘Greater Somalia’ packed inside the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict seemed to be viewed within the scope of the Derg. As a result, the Derg took the action of lining a boundary between the two ethnic groups that indeed has paused the fluid border between the Afar and Issa/Somali for some years.

5.2.2.1 Against the ‘Counter-Revolutionaries’

Though there was no peace negotiations conducted between Afar and Issa/Somali people during the Derg régime, consistent calls for action have never been stopped even after some months of seizing power. For instance, on 31/8/1974 Fit. Gessese Zeleley, Administrator of Chercher, Adal and Garaguracha Awraja sent a confidential letter to Harar Governorate General that described ‘the attack conducted by Issa against the Afars’ and requested ‘a pressure over the Issas to ensure a return of looted livestock and compensate Afars for the damage incurred on them.’ Another letter written on 15/10/1974 Ref no.1/82/23/25 by Gessese Zeleley to the Administration of Harar listed a number of killings and lootings conducted by the Issa and criticized the Administration of Dire Dawa Awraja for ‘being reluctant for taking serious measure against the outlaws.’ The Chercher, Adal and Garagurecha Awraja further reported fighting’s erupted between government security forces and the outlaws and alarmed the situation along the main asphalt road [Addis-Assab highway] as being in a serious threat from ‘the anti-

revolutionarily forces.’ Moreover, its reported that telephone lines were also cut off¹⁰⁶ and the Derg used to accuse the Issa/Somali banditry as well as among the Afar, followers of the Sultan of Awsa, Alimirah, were also categorized in the group of an anti-revolutionary hence received the heavy hand of the Derg. Finally, as the situation worsened and the magnitude and frequency of the armed confrontation between the Afar and Issa/Somali enhanced, intelligence reports started to show up on the desk of the chairman. Thus, the Derg took action that got criticized by some as ‘top-down’ approach with no consideration for pastoral way of life, however, it was the only solution ever taken by governments of Ethiopia that suspended the expansion of Somalis and mitigate the conflict.

5.2.2.2 The Buffer Zone: A Pause on the Border in Motion

In late 1970s and early 1980s, the Derg came to analyze the Somali case in broad view. According to the Minutes of the 21/3/1983 meeting led by Brg. General Merid Negussie, Chief Administrator of Harerge region, high level administration and military officials have discussed thoroughly the Issas’ raid against the Afars. He accused Issa for not only killing Afars but also for attacking the revolutionary army and comrades. Hence, he suggested that the already established ‘mobilization committee one and two’ should follow the situation in areas stretched from Afdem to Mille and from Bale to Issa area respectively. He described the objective of the committees mainly is to safeguard the security of the railway line (Addis-Djibouti) and the main Asphalt road (Addis-Assab). Brg. General Merid continued his speech by saying ‘for long years we misunderstood the conflict as traditional and cultural dispute but we should also be cautious and block the meddling of other parties. In addition government cannot also neglect and see when the life of the Afars is disrupted severely. They never got a lasting solution against all appeal they have submitted. It must be clear that Issas along the Afdem-Adytu line are

¹⁰⁶ A letter written on 24/7/1975 Ref no.1/1160/23/25 sent by Ato Solomon Tefera, Secretary Chercher, Adal and Garagurecha Awraja addressed to Administration of Harar describing the Issa’s attack over the Afars around Gewane town in the morning (11 o’clock) of the 18th July 1975. A letter sent by Lt. Sultan Sahle, Chief of Afdem Wereda Police on 14/10/1976 Ref no.1/22/63 Addressed to Chercher, Adal and Garagurecha Awraja Police department in Assebe Teferi described the incident they faced on 12/10/1976 in a place around 10 km from Beki in which ‘telephone wires are cut and we attempted to discuss with the Issa clan of Akti Murei who inhabit in that area but unfortunately when they see that we have small force they even derived to attack us.’

responsible for all these blunders, particularly the Harala and Reer Edelu sub-clans. Hence it is vital to bring their haughtiness down.’

Later on, the file of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict reached the chairman’s desk of the Derg, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. In fact, President Mengistu did not go through chains of negotiations and peace deal processes. Accordingly, he wrote the ‘final decision that the party [WPE] reached’ in finding an end for long lasting Afar-Issa/Somali rivalry to all concerned high level officials.¹⁰⁷ In this letter, Mengistu analyzed the root cause of the conflict as ‘a traditional and backward nomadic livelihood of both societies.’ However, he also affirmed the sophistication of the conflict as a result of the ‘intervention of various actors in addition to challenges caused by the previous feudal régime.’ The actors according to him include ‘anti-people forces, members of the administration, the party, the army as well as manipulation by the elites of both ethnic groups.’ Later on, the President issued an order in such a way that ‘for any incident happening among the Afar, the responsibility would lie on the Administration of Wello and for the Issa part, Hararge Administration would take the responsibility.’ Furthermore, ‘the eastern Command and the first Revolutionary Army are responsible to control the stability in the Afar and the Issa side respectively.’

Finally, he has ordered the establishment of a committee to study a long term solution for the conflict. Mengistu also issued a directive to implement a 20kms buffer zone on the boundary of the two ethnic groups. Accordingly, Afars were allowed to utilize grazing area up to 10kms from the east of Addis-Asseb main road, and the 20kms next to it was restricted area as a buffer zone. Hence the Issa/Somalis were allowed to utilize grazing area that stretched from 30km east of the asphalt road. As per the decision committees¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ A confidential letter written on 5/2/1987 Ref no.1/46/012/79 by the Secretary of WPE, Chairman of the Derg, Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Army Chief, Mengistu Haile Mariam, is addressed to Lt. General Tesfaye Gebre Kidan, Defence Minister, Maj. General Gebreyes Wolde-Hanna, member of the CC of the WPE and Head of the Political Administration of the Derg, Colonel Tesfaye Wolde Selassie, Security Minister, Lt. Colonel Endale Tessema, Minister of Interior, Maj. Kassaye Aragaw, Secretary of the WPE Committee for Hararge Region and Girma Neway, member of the CC of the WPE and First Secretary of the WPE Committee of Wello region.

¹⁰⁸ A letter sent by Zemedkun Lema, First Secretary of East Awash Wereda WPE on 12/3/87 Ref no.1/13/23/1/12/79 addressed to Chercher and Garaguracha Administration and WPE Committee, Asebe Teferi. The letter stated about the regional point marks work conducted by the five member committee of the East Awash Wereda Administration including Jemal Ali, Seid Husein, Getachew Mamo, Lt. Dbebe Weldegebriel and Shiferaw Alemayehu.

were established and regional point marks were allocated along the boundary and soon the 30km buffer zone decision commenced implementation. In fact, as the decision for the buffer zone implemented swiftly, the committee organized from various offices¹⁰⁹ had also submitted their study to the president who at that time had very short span in power. In general, the Derg had also shared the attitude of oversimplifying the conflict from its predecessor. Even though it was too late, the Derg has also understood the interventions of external actors apart from the usual counter-revolutionary feudal and bandits. The Derg did not adhere to any concepts or theories of conflict resolution efforts in which either the traditional and/or hybrid approaches were not taken but only the coercive measures that at least block centuries-old uninterrupted motion of the western border of Issa/Somalis. Reviewing the intervention approach during the EPRDF era could help analyze how all regimes failed to follow the attempt of the predecessor rather they all chose to start from square one. Almost all the regimes in Ethiopia did not have a long envisioned plan to take power in the country so that they did not have time to carefully study the countries problem and examine potential solutions before coming to power. Thus, policies that have been implemented have had significant impact on changing the track of the socio-political trend and fabric of the society.

5.2.3 The EPRDF's Approach for the Resolution of Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict

After the EPRDF took power in May 1991, Issa/Somali took one giant leap, which enabled them to step their foot on the main asphalt road. Issa/Somalis even caught the Afars off guard with their speed to breach the 'buffer zone' and knock on the Afar's doorsteps. Reports on the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict includes no words such as Erer,

¹⁰⁹ A letter written on 10/2/1987 Ref no. 1/333-11/13 by Prime Minister Captain FikreSelassie Wogderes addressed to Lt. Colonel Endale Tessema, Minister of Interior that remind the decision of the President to establish a committee to study a long term solution for the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. Further, the letter stated that the short term solution [20kms buffer zone] is going to be implemented soon and now government geared to deal on the middle term conflict resolution strategies and thus request an urgent study that will help to identify areas where government could provide industrial commodities, stores and distributing centers, human and livestock water holes, lower level administration institutions, security and police forces, mechanisms to control illicit trade. The study committee were organized from Ministry of Interior, Security, Trade, Water Resource Development Commission, Harerge and Wello party committees and Administration offices.

Mero, Mulu, Afdem etc rather the hamlets along the road like Adaytu, Gedmaytu, Unduffo and Ambuli became a 'regular menu items.' Throughout the transitional period (1991-1995), which referred as a grace period for the Issa/Somali's intrusion deep to the Afar land, Issa/Somalis strengthen their new settlements along the road. In some occasions Djibouti and Somalia flags were seen flown at these hamlets. Later on, the conflict transformed itself into another level of regional boundary dispute between the Afar and Somali national regional states. Involvement of the new actors further sophisticated and escalated the long lasting conflict.

As described in Herrie (2008:26) "the current conflict between Afar and the Issa-Somalis persists in a more violent and politicized way in the new federal era." Identifying geographical borders for the two regional states is the unfinished action but yet 'on course' for almost two decades rule of the EPRDF régime. Since the end of honeymoon between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1998, the two regions were tied up in marathon joint peace negotiations initiated by the federal government. Peace negotiations that have been conducted either at Addis Abeba, Awash, Adaytu, Gewane or Dire Dawa faced a dead end with bringing no value since its inception on the morrow of Eritrean intrusion to Badme. Apart from deploying federal army along the main road (particularly from Awash to Mille), EPRDF led federal government of Ethiopia still claim searching a lasting resolution for the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict.

5.2.3.1 The Joint Peace Committees: 'Play Football till Shabiya Goes'

Soon after the Eritrean soldiers entered Badme, along the border of Eritrea and Ethiopia's northern Tigray Region, a group of federal government delegation arrived to Afar region. According to the Afars, it's a usual phenomenon of all régimes in which governments approach the public only when they face some political quandary. Indeed, since holding power in early 1991, the federal government did show no effort to deal on the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict except the 'try to live together' suggestions and warnings regarding the safety of the main road. However, post the Eritrean armed forces penetration deep to the northern border, the case of the Afar and Issa/Somali got the opportunity to be registered on 'To-do list' of the federal government. The federal delegates from the Prime Minister office promised to take action to bring the conflict to an end but after defeating

Shabiya (EPLF). As cited by Medhane (2004:41) “in need of Afar support for the [Ethio-Eritrea] war, the government pledge to solve the border became issue with the Issa after repulsing the Eritrea war of aggression.” Since then successive peace negotiations were undertaken. Later on, the federal government initiated and organized a joint peace committee (JPC) that include government officials in the federal, regional, zonal and Wereda level in both Afar and Somali regional states. As described by Herrie (2008:28) “sufficient budget resources were allocated to JPC [head office at Awash] to allow them to perform their jobs properly and efficiently.”

In fact, the JPC had held meetings in Addis Ababa, Awash and Dire Dawa towns. The first and the second conferences were held in Awash and Dire Dawa towns between 31/10/98-4/11/98 and on 14/12/98 respectively. The Awash conference was entirely devoted to the aggression of the Eritrean government and enlightened both societies to join their hand with the government in the struggle for sovereignty of the country. According to the Afar and Somali regions joint peace committee task implementation report presented at the Dire Dawa conference, the two conflicting parties were requested ‘to delay their quest for boundary demarcation until Shabiya’s defeat is realized and urged to keep peace and stability that could sustain at least until the government achieved its main goal [to push Eritrean forces back from Badme].’ The conference further decided that any criminal offence that would undertake in post Awash conference (i.e., 31/10/98-4/11/98) should go before ‘the court of law rather than negotiate in the traditional elder’s gatherings.’

On 30/01/99 the JPC held another round of meeting at Awash 7 kilo led by Bitew Belay, Commissioner of Regional Affairs in the Prime Minister's office. According to the Minute of this meeting, the major task of the JPC since its inception seemed to facilitate the return of looted livestock. The committee started to discuss about return of property and handing over of criminals since its second conference held at Dire Dawa.¹¹⁰ The negotiator representing the Somali region, Ambassador Mohammad Drier, Minister of Transport and Communication at the time, argued that ‘due to work load they couldn’t

¹¹⁰ According to the Afar and Somali regions joint peace committee task implementation report presented at the Dire Dawa conference held on 14/12/98, within a month period that extends from the time of the Awash conference to the Dire Dawa Afars returned 13 camels, 44 cattle, 75 sheep and goats, 1 weapon to Issa and in the Somali side 88 cattle and 5 weapons have been returned to the Afars. Similarly, the 30/01/99 JPC meeting the main topic was about returning of looted weapons and livestock.

achieve their task to facilitate the return of looted properties as well as payment of blood money (guma) and promised to accomplish their task in the future.’ Another representative from Somali region presented ‘lack of logistic particularly vehicle as an obstacle to deal the issue in those hamlets along the road which are too far from Shinelli zone.’ On the Afars side, the president of the region, Ismail Ali Siro, has criticized Afar officials under his leadership for ‘their neglect to work energetically with the JPC rather they spend the time by chewing khat.’

Ambassador Mohamud further announced that ‘along the border in Zone three of Afar region, Issa/Somali and Afars are started to pray in the same mosque.’ This report of the Somali representative stimulated the federal representative, Bitew Belay and he suggested a solution ‘to establish music, dancing and other game clubs and the committee will offer a cow [not camel] to the winner.’ Accordingly, sport shoes and shirts were bought for the Afar and Issa/Somali kids and invited representative of both societies for lunch ceremony held at Gedmaytu in which ‘all reached to consensus that they are one people who live in one country peacefully and have one common enemy, the Shabiya.’ The work of the committee, accordingly, praised to proceed further with appreciation for the work ‘done’ and jointly condemned Shabiya’s aggression.

In the meeting at Awash 7 Kilo held on 23/3/1999 Captain Berhane Abrha, representative from the defense force at Awash Arba reported that ‘football matches between the two communities are going well and he further announced that the Afar and Issa/Somali people around Mateka [30 kilometers south of Gewane] are starting to gather grass [materials for house construction].’ Thus, he stated that ‘hostility between both societies is an artificial, which is caused by the previous regimes.’ Similarly, Abdul Jibril, Vice President of Somali Region, supported Captain Berhane’s observation and affirmed that ‘there is a huge change in the relation between two ethnic groups since JPC commenced its work.’ He added ‘today Afars are able to reach in the market at Beki and Issas are able to travel up to Afambo in the north and they even open shops in Gewane town.’ However, according to Afar informants, while the JPC members are flattering themselves in the meeting halls, raids and counter raids were yet persist. In accordance to the ‘Play Football till Shabiya Goes’ approach, Bitew came up with the new idea. He congratulates the ‘success story’ of Football matches, which, according to him are bridge

that could narrow the gap but he recommended a new project that would inter-link both societies. That was ‘to establish marriage relationships among the two hostile groups.’ As Major Negash Halefom, representative of the defense force, cited during the JPC conference held on 23/3/1999 at Awash 7 kilo, ‘there’s an improvement with the side of the Issa/Somalis who did not like to participate in meetings.’ In fact, as historical archives indicated, Issa/Somalis have never rejected ‘negotiation’ meetings that discuss about football matches, marriage proposals and the like except the so-called boundary demarcation.

Similar JPC meetings, with contradictory reports on the work ‘done’, were continuously conducted until the defeat of Eritrea. For instance, according to the Minute of the JPC meeting held on 29/05/99 at Awash 7 kilo, the Somali representative, Abdul Jibril has reported that ‘there was no contact made with committee members representing the Afar region since the previous meeting on 23/3/1999.’ Ismail in his part had complained against the administration of zone three [Afar region] and accused them for ‘aggravating the conflict by infiltrating Afar fighters who came from Zone five.’ With no evaluation on the outcome of successive meetings, the meeting closed by reaching on a ‘consensuses’ regarding the weakness of the JPC. After three months, JPC held a meeting again on 12/06/99 at Awash 7 kilo in which Captain Berhane reported that some JPC members representing the Somali region like Aden Khelil are cooperating with the criminals who looted and killed Afars. In addition, he accused Major Negash for releasing Issa/Somali criminals from jail.¹¹¹ Bitew, who led the JPC meetings since its inception and often came up with new ideas like football matches and marriage interlinks, further correlated the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict with criminal acts and gave a comparative analysis between crime ranges in Kenya and South Africa with that of Ethiopia. He further recommended ‘distribution of cereals for the people settled in Gedmaytu, Unduffo and Adaytu’ in addition to his suggestion ‘to dig water, construct schools and health centers in those contesting areas where the Afar and Somali region claim ownership.’ According to Afar informants who were member of the JPC, ‘the federal government

¹¹¹ According to the Minute of the JPC meeting held on 12/06/99 at Awash 7 killo, Major Negash Halefom has released the following six Issa/Somali criminals from Jail in Gedamaytu. Aden Ali Muse and Ali Wasi Eliye (Harala), Issa Omar and Derar Awsye [Ourweiné], Mussa Ahmed and Daba’ie / Ibrahim Gille (Fourlaba)

seemed to have no objective to play its role as mediator rather they needed our support in fearing of Shabiya to use the card of the dissatisfied Afar.’

In the meeting held on 22/01/2000 at Awash 7 kilo Bitew announced ‘the improvement of the situation due to the strength of JPC.’ After six months, in another meeting held on 14/07/00 at Awash 7 kilo, it was reported on contrary to the previous argument that ‘the situation is getting worse due to the weakness of the JPC.’ An Afar representative, Qegnasmach Tahiro Hamedu, claimed against JPC during its meeting held on 30/09/00 at Awash 7 Kilo by saying that ‘how could we approach and talk about peace with our people whilst their sons are dying daily and the murders never appeared either before the court of the law or to the customary elder’s council?’ Captain Berhane further concluded that ‘the JPC was supposed to be exemplary for resolving similar conflicts among ethnic groups within the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. However, JPC is yet in its embryonic stage. We accomplished almost nothing since our birth.’

In the morrow of Ethiopia’s victory against Eritrea, the federal government representative in the JPC brought the usual contradictory report from what is mentioned above. In the meeting held between 22/11/00 to 24/11/00 at Awash 7 kilo, Bitew declared that ‘unlike the previous conferences conducted in Dire Dawa and Awash while our country was under Shabiya’s invasion, today thanks to the great sacrifice paid by our hero defense force, we are holding our conference with the spirit of victory.’ He further congratulated the work ‘done’ by the JPC. Representative of the Somali region, Ambassador Mohammud Drier in his part supported Bitew and evaluated the last two years work of JPC as a success. He even mentioned that ‘there were some individuals who criticized the task of JPC as if it is unattainable to reconcile two pastoral groups who confront as a result of competition over pasture and water. However, JPC proved that societies could reconcile and live together by sharing resources.’ Another representative from Somali region declared ‘almost 90% of the task is accomplished and hoped that the remaining 10% would eliminate soon with the usual support of the federal government that attempted a lot to reconcile the two groups unlike the previous regimes that exacerbate the situation.’

However, the ‘success’ that has been eulogized by the federal and Somali region counterparts seemed invisible for the Afar representative. According to the Minute of the

meeting, an Afar elder has suggested ‘to continue from where the JPC stopped.’ According to his claim ‘success should be measured by answering questions like what was the promise the federal government gave before two years.’ And he gave the answer himself, ‘you promised to demarcate the border between us and the Issa. What happened to that promise? How’s the trend of the conflict after all these meetings? And then how shall we proceed?’ Finally, the conference wind up after passing a decision that stated as ‘any murderer has to appear before court of law within fifteen days and property looted should have be returned within fifteen days.’ JPC further identified areas where returned properties could be handed over as well assigned facilitators. Then the meeting was concluded by a music concert performed by the Afar region Police music band. In the Minutes of this meeting it is written that many Somali representative gave money as a gift to the Afar music band members. It seems the victory the government scored against the war with Eritrea interchangeably used by some members as JPC’s achievement too. Though the JPC had significant contribution by mobilizing the Afar and Issa/Somali people in the war with Eritrean, from the concept of conflict resolution, nothing has been achieved. Some confused the task of JPC that in principle was resolving the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali, with that of the Ethiopian defense forces task, which is defending the country’s sovereignty from the Shabiya invasion at least as claimed by the government. Hence, if the so-called success of JPC is measured in accordance to its own task, then let alone bringing solution for the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict, JPC’s brain child, the football matches could not last long.

Particularly after the end of the war with Eritrea, no meetings were conducted and no representative from the federal government showed up there. Here it may indicate that the major criteria for conflict resolution which is willingness of the intervening party seemed to be absent. The main negotiator, delegates of the federal government have just closed the file and went back home after Ethiopia scored victory against Eritrea. An Afar elder raised the broken promise of the federal government while another representative from the centre gathered them on 16/06/01 at Awash 7 kilo. According to the Minute of the meeting, the elder told to Zerai Asgedom, head of the office of EPRDF at Addis Ababa, that ‘after achieving your goal, you [federal government] neglect our appeal and forgot what you promised us before. We know that you come here today because of the

blockade of the road.’ [The main Asphalt road was blocked for 24 hrs due to conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali] Zerai replied that ‘the case [the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict] is now directed to the House of Federation and assure you that they will shortly start operation.’¹¹² However, the conflict escalates further. Reports indicated lootings, killings as well as raping of girls.¹¹³

On 21/6/02 another round of meeting was conducted at Awash 7 kilo in which no federal government representative participated and the Somali region representative, Abdul Jibril, argued as ‘there is no one who could meddle and reconcile us so it would have been better to compromise and reconcile by ourselves.’¹¹⁴ However, the meeting ended up by assigning a committee ‘to identify a place where they could jointly pray for rain.’ (There was shortage of rainfall all over the country at that time) Yet again the conflict caught the attention of the federal government when its interest is touched. Vaughan/ Tronvoll (2003:19) described the central government priority as “recent conflicts between the Afar and Somali Issa, which disrupted traffic along the main Djibouti road in the Gewane area in April-May 2002, have elicited the attention of the Ministry [of Federal Affairs], with the Minister issuing stern statements regarding the severity of consequences of any escalation of the conflict.” On February 2003 the two regional governments held a meeting at Addis Abeba. The meeting was initiated by the federal government. Finally, the two regional states reached to a decision to set up the JPC in a new structure that could operate actively to bring lasting peace among the two people. Accordingly, the new committee was established on 14/2/2003. However, as written in the Minutes of the 19/05/03 new JPC meeting that held in Awash, reported the

¹¹² Indeed in March 2001, TPLF was split and among others the organizer of the JPC, Bitew Belay has been sent to prison.

¹¹³ The minute of meeting held on 04/07/01 at Awash 7 killo in which around 500 individuals representing the Afar and Somali region as well as Defense force but no representative from the federal government were participated. They discussed issues like killings, lootings, and the problem of criminals usually traversed to Djibouti as well as the case of rape of little kids by the Issa particularly in zone 5 of Afar region.

¹¹⁴ In the Minutes of a Zone three and Meiso Wereda JPC members meeting held on 17/11/03 at Awash the Somali region Border Affair Office Bureau Head, Asweye Argobi accused the Derg and the Imperial Government for deploying soldiers between the Afar and Issa/Somali people in order to apart them rather than strengthen relation of the two people. Hence, these could indicate that Somalis have resentment for any intervention that could end up on restricting their westward movement.

continuation of killings. Since February to May 2003 sixteen Afars and three Issa/Somalis have been killed.

The JPC that usually indulge in self-congratulations took an action once more to evaluate the obstacles for its activities. According to the Minutes of the meeting held on 17/11/03 in Awash, Zone 3 and Meiso Wereda JPC members decided by vote that ‘elites and political leaders of both regions are responsible for lagging the resolution efforts.’ The JPC members continued their eventual gatherings with no reform in the institution, objectives as well as membership. However, the Meeting held on 03-04/12/03 at Adaytu [one of the contested towns along the Addis-Asseb road] as claimed by JPC brought change not only in the place of gathering but also in membership criteria. According to the Minute of this meeting both regions consider the concept of ‘gender mainstreaming.’ Thus W/o (Mrs) La’eka Ibrahim and W/o Fozia Hassen were included as the JPC members representing Afar and Somali regions respectively. However, in the same Minute, representative of Meiso Wereda, Ahmed Buh Roble reported that ‘within a year period 13,825 cattle, 892 sheep and goats, 4819 camels were looted and 49 men were killed in his Wereda.’ After thirteen years of EPRDF leadership and after six years of establishing the JPC, the participants of the Adaytu peace conference, according to the Minute of the meeting, concluded the conference by ‘reaching a consensus for studying the root cause of the conflict, the reason for people killing each other and identifying the beneficiaries in this conflict.’ It's a little naive to expect fruit from the merry-go-round game played by JPC that urged to study the root cause of the conflict after wasting time, energy and scarce resource of that poor country with the fruitless chain of meetings, expenses for allowances, football matches and music fanfares but to no avail. In early 2004, the JPC conducted few meetings and wind up its mission. Though the fighting between the Afar and Issa/Somali continued yet,¹¹⁵ JPC that seemed to follow an approach of ‘Play Football till Shabiya Goes’ accomplished its target and return all files at its sealed office in Awash 7 Kilo.

¹¹⁵ In the Minutes of the meeting held on 23/01/04 at Awash 7 Kilo, representative of the Defense force at Awash Arba, Captain Mokonen Ebiyu has announced that ‘the main road is in great danger. Outlaws especially from the Somali region are becoming threat for the peaceful flow of traffic along the Addis-Asseb road.’

5.2.3.2 The Dichotomy between Historical and Constitutional Rights

Indeed, the EPRDF government has already designed a mechanism to resolve regional boundary disputes through legal and peaceful means. Sub-Article 1 and 2 of Article 48 of the constitution state as follows:

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

2. The House of Federation shall, within a period of two years, render a final decision on a dispute submitted to it pursuant to sub-Article 1 of this Article.

Though this sub-article does not define specific period for the disputant states to reach on an agreement, the liquidation of the two regions JPC was sufficient indicator for both regions incapability to reach on an agreement. Since 2004, no peace negotiation has taken place. Hence, according to sub-article 2 of Article 48 of the constitution, the House of Federation (HoF) takes over the task. The first move the HoF took is to request the two regions to submit their claim supported with evidences. Therefore, the Afar regional State has submitted five volumes of about nine-hundred pages compiled document that include, maps, letter exchanges, Minutes of meetings and peace agreement documents. The Afar Region Border Affairs Office has gathered and submitted these documents to HoF and MoFA in 2005 that was a year after the dissolution of JPC. On the other hand, the Somali Regional State has not yet [January 2010] submitted the requested evidences to HoF. Though the Somali region did not submit supportive historical documents, they persistently proposed the ‘remedy’ used for resolving boundary dispute they had with the Oromo regional State, which is holding a referendum. In fact, the mechanism used to settle the Oromo-Somali boundary dispute has received strong criticism from scholars who argued as ‘fixed boundaries did not accommodate the mobility needs of pastoralists.’ The Somali Regional State demands to hold referendum in the four hamlets in which they established strong settlement pattern over the last two decades.

However, for the Afars who have absolutely wiped out from the hamlets due to successive attacks from the Issa/Somalis, accepting a proposed referendum meant a final farewell to the hamlets as there is no single Afar living in those hamlets at present. Hence, Afars have set conditionality before accepting the offer to hold a referendum. That is a demand for the federal government to return geographic settlement position of the two people to the status quo ante in early 1990s, since the EPRDF forces took control of the country and a parallel advancement of Issa/Somali towards the main road. An Afar elder in Gewane town described the situation in an analogy in which ‘when two people fight and one laying on top of the other, the first move the third party (mediator) has to take is to pull back the one laying over the other and separate the two parties before asking them why they are fighting.’ Likewise, Mahammad Tayro (2007), Vice President of the Afar region stated on the issue of conflict in the region ‘since there was no peace between us and the Issa, our request to the Federal Government was to establish a border between us and the Issa. Since the Issa were gaining ground, they had no real interest in this. Orally they stated that the boundary between them and Afar should be the Awash River.’ On the other hand, Issa/Somalis repeatedly claim that pasture, water and the country as a whole belong to God. Therefore, natural resources should be made available to each and every Ethiopian who is in need of using them. From the side of federal government legal response should be given to this conflict by considering that if the conflict could not be negotiated then the adjudication process should have been started earlier instead of letting the conflict reach to this level of sophistication. However, HoF seems yet unsuccessful to settle the dispute of the Afar and Issa/Somali by using its constitutional power stated in Sub-Article 6 of Article 62 of the constitution that stated as:

It shall strive to find solutions to disputes or misunderstandings that may arise between States.

Furthermore, HoF has also failed to meet the deadline set in accordance to Sub-Article 2 of Article 48 of the constitution which demands to ‘render a final decision within two years’ as HoF’s endeavor since 2005 has brought no result. Another legal dilemma concerning the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict is that the JPC has established a unique administrative structure under the federal system in Ethiopia. In 1998 JPC led by Bitew

Belay has decided to administer the contesting hamlets that situated along the main road (Unduffo, Adaytu and Gedmaytu) by a committee. Tadesse and Yonas (2007:12) affirmed that “until the final status of the three towns is determined (by delineating the border between the Afar and Somali Regional States), they will fall under a joint committee administration composed of the two regions.”

Thus, the two regions joint committee set up a kebele administrations, security and police force, and even established court in all the three towns in March 1998. There were a first instance court established at Gedmaytu and Unduffo and a higher court established at Adaytu. According to Informants, for any criminal act conducted between an Afar and Somali anywhere in the two regions, it became mandatory to bring the case to the courts in one of the three towns. Here the act of Bitew-led JPC seriously clashed with the constitution of the country. Firstly, there is no legal ground for two regions to establish joint courts. Secondly, according to Sub-Article 4 of Article 78 of the constitution that declare about the ‘Independence of the Judiciary’, taking all criminal acts carried out in any location within the territory of the two regional states to the joint courts established in the three towns, definitely took away the judiciary power of other courts that exist in a place where the criminal act has taken place.

Sub-Article 4 of Article 78 reads as follows:

Special or ad hoc courts which take judicial powers away from the regular courts or institutions legally empowered to exercise judicial functions and which do not follow legally prescribed procedures shall not be established.

On March 2003, the courts were dissolved according to the decision of the federal government. As a result, the two regions had shared the property and closed a joint bank account that the committee had in Mille and Awash 7 Killo towns.¹¹⁶

Bitew-led JPC also passed a decision that restricted any new constructions in the three towns until the final decision is reached. Order has also been issued to keep any signs that portray the hamlets as legally established administrative structure away from

¹¹⁶ According to the Minutes of a meeting held on 16/10/02 at Awash 7 Kilo Security Head of the Afar Region, Seyum has announced that the judges assigned by Afar region for the joint courts have already kicked off by Issa/Somalis and the court room in Gedmaytu has now become a pharmacy.

the contesting areas.¹¹⁷ However, new constructions have flourished and even new village has emerged. As confirmed by Tadesse and Yonas (2007:12) “by September 2006 no decision had been made as to the final status of the towns. Moreover, new houses have been constructed in the towns and, owing to complaints from the Afar Regional State [...] There is also a fourth town (Embule) [Ambuli] being created by the Issa.” The entire situation is tense, creating concern that these towns may become flash points in an eruption of violence between the two groups. The decision of restricting construction of houses again raised the issue of clash with the constitution. As stated in the constitution Article 32, Issa/Somalis argued that there should be no restriction for their movement in any direction they want within Ethiopian territory. Article 32 of the constitution stated freedom of movement as follows:

Any Ethiopian or foreign national lawfully in Ethiopia has, within the national territory, the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence, as well as the freedom to leave the country at any time he wishes to.

On the other side, Afars argued that they lost these areas due to massive illegal successive attacks by the Issa/Somalis. Therefore; according to them, prior to rushing to raise the issue of ‘rights’ of movement; one should also respect the ‘rights of life and security’ for others.¹¹⁸ Consequently, the administrative divisions of these hamlets become still vague. The Somali regional states include them in Meiso and Afdem Weredas while the Afar region administrative structure include them within zone 1 and zone 3. As indicated in the Minutes of the meeting held on 23/01/04 at Awash 7 Kilo Captain Berhane, representative of the defense force announced expansion of crimes along the road between Undufo and Gewane. Afar representatives led by Hamedu Ali argued that ‘as the administrative status of the area is yet indistinct, Afar region could not be held responsible.’ Indeed, the Somali National Regional State already got de facto recognition for incorporating the hamlets within its regional administration. When National census and elections are held, people who are living in these hamlets are considered as ‘people

¹¹⁷ Minutes of the Afar and Somali regions joint peace committee task implementation report presented at the second conference held on 14/12/98 at Dire Dawa.

¹¹⁸ Article 15 and 16 of the FDRE Constitution stated about every persons right to life and to protect against bodily harms.

who live in the Somali regional state, Shinelle Zone, Afdem and Meiso Weredas.’ Even the state media got to use the above mentioned phrase in describing the three hamlets.¹¹⁹

In fact, reconciling claim of the Afars which is based on historical rights and that of the Somali’s claim based in constitutional rights seems a bit complex that need a careful political decision. The delay of the final decision in turn worsens the intensification of the conflict. Actors who are directly involved in the conflict extends from youths of the two societies to clan and religious leaders and high level federal and regional government officials. According to the Minutes of a conference held on 04/12/03 in Gewane town member of JPC representing the Somali region, Khelil Gulled affirmed about the negative role played by JPC members. He further declared that as a religion leader, his preaching were a sort, which leads to ‘debauchery instead of peace.’

Similarly, in the Minutes of a meeting held on 28/03/02 at Awash 7 Kilo Abdu Jibril and Capitan Berhane representatives of Somali region and Defense force respectively, have accused regional government officials in organizing and leading the armed confrontation at Gela’alu. Names like Hassen Ali and kedigaitu (Zone three Administrator and Zonal Water Bureau Head respectively) were among those mentioned often by the accusers. The Minutes of a meeting held on 16/10/02 at Awash 7 Kilo, which was led by Meresa Reda representing MoFA, a Somali representative, Abdi Berkelay further argued that ‘for three and half months Afar regional State infiltrated Ugugumo fighters and campaigned against us. Government vehicles also participated. Particularly Hamedu Ali is responsible.’ Similarly, Afars accuse Somali personalities like Ambassador Mohammad Drier ‘for the role he played to expand Issa settlements by replacing Issas in camps left by road construction companies during his tenure as the federal ministry of Transport and Communication.’¹²⁰ In the Minutes of the second conference of JPC held on 14/12/98 at Dire Dawa Afar representatives claimed Somali regional government officials to be involved in the lootings and killings of Afars in

¹¹⁹ Walta Information Centre is government affiliated registered private information centre. The centre is named after TPLF martyr, Yohannes Gebremedhin (guerre de nom Walta, brother of the late Security Minister Kinfé Gebremedhin)

¹²⁰ Ambassador Mohammad Drier is an Issa, who hold ministerial position over a decade at the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. After concluding his term as being an Ethiopian Ambassador in Zimbabwe, he has assigned as a Minister in the Federal Ministry of Transport and Communication, Mining and Energy and currently he is incumbent Minister of Culture and Tourism.

various ways. In accordance to the Minutes of Zone three and Meiso Wereda JPC meeting held on 17/11/03 at Awash, Afar representatives accepted the accusation of supporting the armed confrontations to the extent that ‘high level government authorities have contributed money and coordinate the attack against the Issa/Somalis.’ Likewise, the Somali representatives announced that ‘high level regional government officials have joined fights against the Afars.’ In addition they declared that ‘members of the JPC themselves used to warn Somalis not to return assets looted from the Afars.’ Finally, they accused high level regional government officials who, according to the accusers, encouraged all these wrong doings. Reviewing the political situation in that specific time both in the Afar and Somali regions could indicate that JPC’s evaluation might be used as a tool for the usual clan politics in the Somali region while the Afars used it for power competition.¹²¹

Though the dilemma between historical and constitutional rights persisted, the JPC have decided to demolish new constructions (those constructed in post-1998 decision) as well as to destroy the newly born village, Ambuli.¹²² According to the Minutes of a meeting held on 16/10/02 at Awash 7 Kilo and led by Meresa Reda representative of MoFA, the joint administration of the contested hamlets have demolished around forty-seven houses in Gedmaytu and a number of illegal settlements in Unduffo. The newly born village of Ambuli was destroyed at all. The case in Adyitu had some controversy that Afars claimed ‘the task force did not demolish illegal settlements rather Afar houses are identified and destroyed.’ In any case, participants of the meeting that have no judiciary power have decided to sell assets of administrators who allowed new construction in post Dire Dawa conference (14/12/98) and compensate settlers whose houses are being demolished. In addition, warning has been given to the Issa/Somali

¹²¹ Somali region has fired some members of the committee including Durde Liben, Harun Riyaleh and other twelve representatives of Elliye, Walaldon and Hurone sub-clans of Issa/Somali Afars similarly gave a last warning to Administrator of Gewane, Yakud Hwino and head of the Wereda Justice and Security office, Bera Nuh. Besides, the region has fired Humedu Ali Deblo and Haysema Weldu from both governmental and party position after concluding an evaluation held in October 2003 at Addis Ababa Prime Minister Office.

¹²² Another meeting held on 16/06/01 at Awash 7 kilo in which decision has been reached to dismantle Ambuli within a month period under the responsibility of Somali region and all new constructions in Gedamaytu, Adaytu and Undufo towns should be demolished by the supervision of the joint administration committee within two months time.

representatives to restrict any new constructions as well as maintenances of houses in the hamlets until a final decision is made. As suggested by Vaughan and Tronvoll (2003:71) to get out from the dilemma of historical and constitutional rights, it is vital to reach “at a decision by other reasonable ways and means.” Finally, as JPC retired and left the task to HoF, the latter itself delegated the responsibility for resolving the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict to the office where the ‘highest executive powers of the Federal Government are vested’, which is the Prime Minister office.

5.2.3.3 ‘The Third Way’: ‘Live Together but Leave the Road’ Approach

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has summoned regional government officials from both Afar and Somali regions on 16/06/08 following three days armed confrontation in a place stretched from Mille to Adaytu towns. The conflict aroused after few months of the federal government action of destroying a reviving village of Ambuli and a military measure against the illicit trade chains in Gedmaytu Town. In the meeting at Addis Abeba, Meles has strongly accused regional leadership for ‘their direct involvement in the conflict.’ Nevertheless, Mohammed Awol (Seyum), Head of Security Bureau in Afar region, responded to Meles’s accusation by saying ‘if there is no solution to stop Issa/Somali’s attack against our people, do not be astonished to find us [regional government leaders] on the field [to mean the leaders themselves would participate in the future fights].’ The Somali president in turn requested that the Somali region should get a legal legitimacy for administering the Somali people inhabiting in the hamlets. Later on, Meles concluded the meeting by warning both regions to keep peace and stability particularly along the Addis-Djibouti road. Actually, ‘keep away from the road’ decision has already been issued by the federal government during the Dire Dawa meeting on 2003. Herrie (2008:44) confirmed that “none of the Afar or Issa-Somalis allowed distancing themselves more than 5km from the main asphalt road.” This seems a Derg-type buffer zone but not to distance the conflicting parties but only to keep both groups away from the main asphalt road. Even though, some conflict resolution theorists supports temporary separation as an element of resolution mechanism; most EPRDF

officials do believe that there is no need to make a buffer zone between peoples of Ethiopia.

Finally, Meles condemned Somali region representatives by saying ‘I personally have knowledge that the contesting areas belongs to Afar but we refrain to take action against Somalis for the sake of tolerance and encouraging possibilities for both people to live together in harmony.’ However, there are a number of criticisms for the federal government’s delay or long neglect to offer a final solution for this long lasting rivalry between the Afar and Issa/Somali people. Tadesse and Yonas (2007:9) wrote as:

The forceful occupation of the land of Afar by the Issa community is apparent; the federal government knows that now the sporadic fighting and retaliation have continued. Both federal and regional governments also know the flash points: Adaytu, Ambule, Gedamaytu, and Undufu, which were originally the Afar land, now being claimed by the Issa. No lasting solution has been provided so far [...] The question remains whether the federal government is unwilling or unable to settle the disputes.

During the meeting Meles addressed youth representatives from all regional states held on 7/02/09 at Addis Ababa he has been asked about his government failure to bring lasting solution for the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict. However, he has described achievements like bringing criminals before the court of law. Furthermore, he assured the participants ‘to bring this conflict to an end through developmental schemes in which the implementation of Awash River and Halidegi plain underground water developments could deescalate the conflict’ as he believes. Meles has also praised the achievement of the federal army in dismantling the illicit traders’ chain in Gedmaytu town, which according to him was ‘major trigger of the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict.’ (Gedmaytu illicit trade business has already revived back after some months of the Prime Minister’s speech)

The study¹²³ conducted by the MoFA and presented to Prime Minister Office entitled as ‘the third way’ to the Afar–Issa conflict proposed a ‘win-win’ approach that disclaimed Issa/Somali’s view of ‘all is our land wherever our goats reached’ and Afar’s view of ‘that was where our fathers used to live.’ Thus the study recommends a ‘give and take’’ approach through negotiations in which both people should live in harmony on the

¹²³ The ‘third way’ that Ethiopian government should follow in resolving the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali is presented by Ministry of Federal Affairs to the Office of Prime Minister on 2007.

opposite sides of the Awash River while clear administrative boundary of the two regions shall be demarcated as well. According to the study, EPRDF office at Addis Abeba held detailed discussion on the solution of the conflict and reached to a consensus that ‘there should be no people’s displacement from the contested towns rather peoples’ right to use water and pasture as well as to develop their language and culture by using their right to participate in the administration should be guaranteed.’

As for the safety of the main road, the study suggests “in the contested areas, five kms east from the main road should remain within Afar regional administration.” Another study conducted by the MoFA collaborating with GTZ recommends an execution of rapid infrastructural development in the contested towns in order “to enhance the settlers’ confidence on the government.” This study has also not yet paid any attention either to the regional political orders or host states’ internal politico-economic features that have a direct influence on the escalation and expansion of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. Rather, the study suggests renovating the failed JPC’s approach and suggests ‘organizing peace education, cultural exchange programs and sport games.’ Generally, EPRDF seems to pursue the last two decades approach that is diagnosing the symptoms rather than curing the problem. As claimed by Herrie (2008:48), “to be silent to the Issa-Somalis illegal war and land annexation is tantamount to recognize and a green light to continue conflict with the Afar.” However, Medhane (2004:42) seems to understand the hindrance and stated as “fully dependent on the port of Djibouti, Ethiopian leaders may not feel comfortable to take final decisions on the conflict between the Issa and the Afar [thus it seems government choose to] wait for what they consider as the right national and regional situation.” Even some interviewees went far to conspire as ‘the TPLF that used to claim the entire resourceful Afar areas up to the port city of Asseb might deliberately let immigrant Issa/Somalis to control Afar areas and weaken them to help TPLF get their homework done.’(Consider this case in relation to the 1976-TPLF Manifesto)

5.3 Interventions in Djibouti’s Ethnic Rivalry

As discussed in the previous chapters, ethnic disputes among the two major ethnic compositions of today’s Djibouti goes back for over a century, soon after the arrival of

the French colonial power. Though the conflict persists yet, resolution efforts have been attempted by successive powers that control the central government. However, the endeavors could not bring a sustainable peace, stability as well as a just and lasting reconciliation among the Afar and Issa/Somalis. This section deals with the resolution attempts made by successive governments since the French colonial rule to the incumbent régime of Guelleh.

5.3.1 French Colonial Administration's Cosmetic Resolution Attempts

As a legacy of any colonial rule, resolution efforts persuaded by the French were rather used as catalyst for the ethnic rivalry between the Afar and Issa/Somali people. French interest-oriented solutions were mainly focused on playing over number games more than any other elements. Over half-a-century rule of her colony, French brought an idea for participating natives in the political life of the territory in which French's number games have started. As cited in (Thompson/Adolf 1968:38-39) for the total twenty members of electorate in the first Representative Council of the 1946, "there was European section with ten members while the other section of ten members were reserved for natives from which six seats was assigned equally to the Afar, Somali and Arab while the remaining four seats were left for the French Governor to choose and appoint natives from the Chamber of Commerce, professional groups and trade unions."

Indeed, the new participatory approach enhanced political consciousness among the natives. Thus, sooner it brought discontent among the Issa/Somalis who criticized the formula in which immigrant Arabs and Somalis migrated from British Somaliland got equal seats with them. As a result, Thompson and Adolf (ibid: 43) wrote that "on 19 August 1950 French colonial rule has approved a law that increased tenure of Representative Council from four to five years and electorate number has also increased from twenty to twenty-five in which indigenous electorates have increased from ten to thirteen." In addition, different tribes of Somalis were allowed to send electorate particularly from Issa-Gadaboursi, Isahaq and Darrod Sub-groups. Nevertheless, the French number adjustments overlooked the case of the majority natives, the Afars. Somali, who got seats to the extent of sub-clans level, overpowered the Afars and became

dominant factors in the territory's politico-economic life. This biased and short lived solution of the French has led some Afar elites to raise and demand for equitable share of the pie in the country.

Consequently, the French came up with new strategy in reshuffling the numbers and enlarging the pie that might not necessarily be seen as a response for the Afar's quest but more of leveling the ground for the upcoming 1958 referendum. The late 1950s were uneasy time for the French colonial rule due to the flames of Pan-Somali nationalism infiltrating across the British and Italian Somaliland. Therefore, at the eve of the referendum, French colonial rulers have started gambling on number games again and this time the chance turned its face to the Afars. Thompson and Adolf (ibid: 73) summarized this episode in the territories history as follows:

On June 1956, France has initiated the loi-cadre (blue-print Representative Council was renamed as Territories Assembly where members' size grows from 25 to 32. After the 28th September 1958 referendum in which Somalis voted for independence while the Afars majority vote for French presence that coincides with French's interest to remain in the area. Hence, French has continued the execution her policy of favoring the Afars. On 21st October 1958, French dissolved Somali dominated territorial assembly and re-established an assembly with 32 electorates, thirteen seats assigned for Afar, eight for Issa, five to Issack Somalis, four to Europeans and one for Arabs. In the government council the number of Afar minister increased from two to three.

In a way, it seems logical that the majority both in number and territory, i.e., the Afars held half and the other half distributed to native, the then minority Issas, and immigrant Isahaq and Darrod/Somalis and Arabs. But for the Somalis and particularly the Issas who were dominated the political life since the introduction of Representative Council in 1946, French's measure was taken as not equitable distribution of power but as losing their previous 'rights'. Though, French's game that plays with the Afar card antagonized the Somalis who were a one time ally of the colonial rule, French has persisted on its new policy that gradually escalate hostility between the two native ethnicities. As proposed by senator Kamil 'with the support and perhaps at the instigation of the French government' and as speculated by Thompson and Adolf (1968:80), "rural Afar Deputies enhanced from 5 to 11, the electorate size in Djibouti [the capital where Somalis are highly populated attracted with the business activity mainly from BSL] decreased from eighteen

to fourteen and increased the number of rural Afar electorates in all Cercles. The Afar district of Obock became the 5th Cercle of the territory on 6 September 1963. In the November election, Afars secured 20 out of the 32 electorates in the Territories Assembly. In the government council that had eight members, Afars got the majority share of four ministerial positions.”

Similarly, in 1967 French invoked to correct the misnaming of the territory, which was one factor for the Afar’s discontent against the colonial rule. As written by Kassim and James Searing (1980: 216) “The new Afar-dominated assembly proposed the changing of the territory’s name from *Côte Française des Somalis* to *Territoire Française des Afars* that the French parliament debated and later renamed as *Territoire Française des Afars et des Issas (TFAI)* to keep the ethnic equilibrium.” According to Woodward (2003:111) the move taken by the French was “to emphasize its even-handedness.” In fact, French policy has brought equitable power sharing among the Afar and Somali. However, the initial mistake done by favoring the then minority Issa/Somalis portrayed the new policy as pro-Afar due to a decline of Issa’s share, which used to be superior in the previous divisions. In addition, the transition process was too hasty that focused only on French short term interest rather than the prospect relation between the two ethnic groups. As written in (Ibid: 100) “Vice presidents of the Government Council position, which was held by Issa/Somalis since French initiative to participate natives in the territory’s politics, had been transferred to the Afars.¹²⁴ Furthermore, on 5 April 1967 as introduction of new autonomous administration structure, a chamber of forty elected deputies were established in which twenty were Afars. In the government council five were Afars and Aref became the first president of the council.”

In 1960s, Somali’s dissatisfaction with the colonial rule has escalated and their relation with the Afars has deteriorated swiftly due to the ethnic based power competition introduced by their colonial master. Meanwhile, in mid 1960s, French were preparing herself for another referendum to be held on 19th March 1967. The French colonial administration has started to take measures that could definitely guarantee prolonging of French’s presence in the region. Accordingly, fearing the influx of Somalis across the

¹²⁴ The position was held by Mahamoud Harbi Farah (1957 - Dec 1958) and Hassan Gouled Aptidon (Dec. 1958 - April 1959). Then the first Afar to held the position was Ahmed Dini Ahmed (Apr 1959 - Jun 1960) followed by Ali Aref Bourhan (Jun 1960-1966) and another Afar, Abdullah Mohamed Kamil (1966-1967).

border that drastically altered the demographic pattern of the territory and spread the Somali nationalism; French blocked the border with British Somaliland. As asserted in (Marks 1974:100) “The city itself already contains two-thirds of the territory’s population, and in 1967 barbed wire fences studded with watchtowers and flare mines were erected in an attempt to control the constant influx of rural peoples drawn by the salaries which are still twice that of neighboring countries.” Moreover, French colonial rule has introduced strict voting regulation in which only individuals over 21 years and French citizen were eligible to vote. As affirmed by Lewis M. (1978:310) “Voters were required to have completed a minimum of three years residence in the territory. Somalis who were unable to produce document of residence permit, got deported to Somalia, Ethiopia and thousands of them concentrated in a camp installed near the border of Somalia. As many as 8000 Somalis are reported to have been expelled and thus prevented from participating in the referendum.” Kassim and Searing (1980:215) gave their statistical prove by stating that “out of a population of 125,000 there were 39,024 eligible voters; 22,004 Afar and 14,689 Somali of the Issa and Isaq sub-groups.” As further demonstrated by Morgan (1978:48) “consequent to demand for documentary proof, estimated 25% of all Issa in the territory were registered, as opposed to 46% of the Afar population.”

The French shift of alliance between the two major ethnic groups of the territory further sophisticated the antagonism among the groups. Then again French ‘corrective’ measures acted for their own best interest again enhanced the discontents. For instance, after the detention and deportation of thousands of Somalis, the French allowed Afars to emigrate in huge number from neighbouring Ethiopia (including today’s Eritrea) which by turn intensified the rivalry between the two ethnic groups. Somalis continued protests over the French for importation of Afars from Ethiopia whilst erected an electrified fence around Djibouti town in order to prevent Somali migration. As stated by Said Y. (1978:37) “since 1967 when Aref became president, he transferred 20,000 Afars to Djibouti, making the Harbor their work domain.” Though the number cited by a Somali writer, Said Y. seems exaggerated, it’s a well known fact that Aref imported Afars from neighbouring Ethiopia to counter balance the huge influx from the Somali side. He even

established districts within the capital like *Arhiba*, meaning welcome and *Engilla*, meaning ‘be united’ in Afar language.

As the tension between the two groups has been intensified and hatred has been sowed enough, the colonial rule brought another card on the table just on the eve of the territory’s independence. Since January 1977, French organized serious of meetings hosted in Tağura, Mogadishu and Paris. For the Afars that had enjoyed the political power for around two decades, change in the French policy was nothing but considered as the French betrayal of the Afar and for the Somalis it was an attempt to heal past wounds. For example, Said Y. (1978:36) argued as “the Tadjoura Meeting was an attempt to bridge the political and ethnic divisions between the Somalis and Afars. At the meeting some 500 leaders of both ethnic groups gathered at Tadjoura, a traditional Afar stronghold.” However, he continued “the roundtable meeting held in Paris on February 28, 1977 a decision was reached to hold an independence referendum on May 8, 1977 to coincide with a general election for an enlarged 65 member constituent assembly.” Here started another round of discontent, and this time it’s the turn of the Afars who accuse the colonial rule policy. Kassim and Searing (1980:217) wrote:

The progression of negotiations in 1976 and subsequent development led to the alienation of the Afar Community whom boycotted the key roundtable talks in Paris in March 1977 with the exception of Arefs’s UNI. The game French has played is that after getting the word from Mogadishu for their claim to incorporate the territory within their Greater Somalia project, French agreed to bring the Issa/Somalis back to power. Therefore, Afar politicians boycotted the Paris meeting by understanding that it has no value other than clearing a platform for the forthcoming Issa dominating rule. [The Afars speculation came true as] Mogadishu agreed on 7 January 1977 to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the state to be created in the TFAI after holding a referendum.

Soon after, the Paris roundtable meetings have been concluded by clearing the path for LPAI to be the heir of the colonial power. As clearly stipulated by Kassim and Searing (ibid: 217) “three key points of the party’s [LPAI] platform were taken over by the Paris conference. The first was the abolition of the five electoral districts and the adoption of a single list of candidates, a measure which favored the Issa, who obtained 33 of 65

seats.¹²⁵ The second was an agreement to recognize the voting rights of recent (Issa) immigrants to the colony. Finally, it was decided to create two executive positions, the presidency and the office of prime minister, which were to be held by members from each ethnic group in the territory.”

This deal according to Schraeder (1991:223) becomes “unwritten power-sharing agreement worked out prior to independence and maintained ever since.” Once again the French policy polarized the ethnic politics and intensified the tension between the two major ethnic groups in the territory. The new ethnic based formula implemented by the French on the eve of the independence of the territory leveled the platform for the Issa/Somali party, *Democratic Union of Gouled that renamed as League Populaire Africain Pour l'indépendance (LPAI)*, to become the dominant actor in the post-independence political life of Djibouti. Gouled’s Mammassan sub-clan later dominated the ruling party, LPAI that renamed as *Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progrès (RPP)*. Gould’s government welcomed and granted Djiboutian citizenship to the heavy influx of Somali immigrants at the end of Ethio-Somali war. Over all French’s colonial rule in Djibouti has played a hasty game in ethnic lines that fueled the rivalry between the Afar and Somali people rather than contributing for the resolution of the conflict. French’s intervention on the eve of independence of the territory brought “the demise of ‘Afar-power’¹²⁶ and the long lasting era of Somali domination began” as concluded by Kassim and Searing (1980:218).

¹²⁵ As written in (Schraeder 1991) “Ethnic politics also play a role in elections governing membership in the National Assembly. Under a power-sharing agreement worked out prior to independence and maintained by President Gouled, the sixty-five-seat National Assembly is divided along ethnic lines. Whereas Issas and others of Somali origin (Gadaboursi and Isaaks) are guaranteed a plurality of thirty-three seats, the Afars are apportioned the slightly smaller number of thirty seats. Finally, the Arab portion of the population is guaranteed two seats. A major complaint of Afar opposition candidates concerning this arrangement is that the single slate of candidates presented to the public is chosen and approved by the Issa-dominated RPP and, therefore, ensures Afar candidates who potentially are more beholden to President Gouled than to their own people.”

¹²⁶ Kassim and James Searing (1980:219) elaborated what they mean by the era of ‘Afar Power’ in such a way that “Even though the Afar were ‘in power’ from 1963 to 1976 they began their period of ‘dominance’ when they were the most socially underdeveloped community in the colony. [...] The period of ‘Afar power’, as it has sometimes been dubbed, actually represents the alliance of the French with the most socially underdeveloped community in the colony. The French aim was to perpetuate colonial rule; the Afar leaders hoped to use their political dominance to promote the social advancement of their community and to slow the influx of Somali immigrants to the capital city.”

5.3.2 Handling the Aftermath of the Civil War during the Reign of Gouled

The custodian of Issa's domination since independence, Hassen Gouled Aptidon concluded the civil war with the help of the French and neighboring states in the Horn region. Indeed, few Afar political personalities among the opposition have made a deal with him that led an end for the much feared threat for the Issa/Somali's power since their reign after independence. As cited by Mohamed K. (1996:517) "on 6 April 1992 FRUD has submitted its proposal for a peaceful solution to the political crisis in the Republic of Djibouti. The FRUD set out the following proposals: A ceasefire followed by negotiations; creation of a transitional government for a two-year term charged with the tasks of restoring ethnic balance in the administration, the army and the police, drawing up new electoral registers, and drafting a national constitution which guarantees civil liberties." In fact, the Somali dominated government of Gouled never geared up to bring lasting solution for the age-old conflict instead he had chosen to follow a tricky way and in some cases he used force which indicates that Gouled did not acknowledge the call for peace from earnestly. As argued by Schraeder (1993:216) "the combination of military pressure from the FRUD, political pressure from the civilian opposition, and diplomatic pressure from France led the Gouled regime to undertake a process of political reform designed to seek an accommodation with the Afar opposition. [...] the Gouled regime the very next day released from detention Dr. Abatte, the former spokesperson of the FRUD, and partially lifted an economic blockade of the north, as witnessed by the re-establishment of Sea transport connecting Djibouti City with Obock and Tadjoura."

Gouled's naked swindle did not stop there; rather on 4 September 1992 referendum was held to decide the proposed Djibouti's first constitution. As asserted by Schraeder (Ibid: 216) "96 percent of those taking part in the referendum (roughly 75 percent of all registered voters) voted in favor of adopting the new constitution." These actions seemed a step forward taken by Gouled's government for resolving the conflict in a just and civilized manner. However, the government could not persist on its promises and hence hopes shortly turned to despair. Though, Gouled has accepted to establish multi party democracy in the draft constitution, he has limited the number of political parties only to

four in addition to other bottlenecks.¹²⁷ In the election held on 18 December 1992, as affirmed by Schraeder (1993:216) Gouled has claimed that “the ruling RPP party achieved a stunning victory by winning all sixty-five legislative seats with approximately 72 per cent of the vote. This process of reform was significantly marred, however, due to the refusal of the Gouled regime to do no more than what critics perceived as the cosmetic ‘patching up’ of a ‘dictatorial and tribal-based regime.’” Gouled continued his ethnic biased dangerous policy and in the 1993s presidential election he claimed victory and he once more triumphed over four other ‘candidates’ and commenced his third term in office. As Woodward (2003:113) criticized the stand of Gouled, “following his success with political ‘reform’, Gouled then turned to deal militarily with the FRUD which had boycotted the elections.”

Gouled’s path to resolve the conflict with Afar opposition seemed a hybrid of peace-on-paper and arm-in-practice approach. Indeed, Gouled has achieved to divide the Afar oppositions and later he signed a peace agreement with one faction of FRUD. Critic showed over the faction of FRUD that has reached an agreement with the Issa/Somali dominated regime. For example, Prunier (1994) wrote in (Mohamed K. 1996: 519) “after thousands of Afar youths lost their lives in the FRUD-led struggle, the leadership of FRUD started to split over. In December 1994 some factions of FRUD leadership led by Ougoreh Kifle, Ali Gele, Mohammed Ali Jemari (Ali Mohammed Dawed) and others entered into negotiations and called a cease-fire. December 26 a peace agreement is signed at Ab’a, Tağura region and the dissident faction accepted the constitution, the laws, and the current arrangements in the Republic of Djibouti.¹²⁸ The other factions led by Ahmed Dini continued its armed struggle nevertheless.”¹²⁹

¹²⁷ As cited in (Schraeder 1993:218), “The demands placed upon party organizers included a deposit of two million Djiboutian Francs, and a list of thirty founding members; including eighteen from Djiboutian City and three from each of the country’s districts.”

¹²⁸ Prior to accepting the deal offered by the Djibouti government, according to the UNHCR (2004) report, “the FRUD had undertaken restructuring in its leadership. Accordingly, on 22 February, 1994, Ougoreh Kifle Ahmed, the former chief of staff of FRUD, appointed a new executive council. The restructuring of FRUD’s leadership included the removal of President Ahmed Dini and his second vice president Abbatte Ebo Adou. Ali Mohamed Daoud later became president, and Ahmed remained secretary general. After the reshuffling, FRUD accepted the strategy of negotiating with the government.” Accordingly, majority of FRUD fighters disarmed in March 1995. As per the power sharing agreement with the government, two of the FRUD leaders gained ministerial posts. Ali Mohamed Daoud and Ougoreh Kifle Ahmed became

Gouled's government used the dissident FRUD faction as indication of achievement in his endeavor to end the ethnic line rivalry in the Republic. In view of that, on the December 19, 1997 Election, it has been declared that the alliance between the ruling RPP and FRUD won all 65 seats in which the government-recognized section of the Afar-led FRUD have secured 23 seats. Nonetheless, when it came to real power sharing, the President who used to claim exercising democratic election as a solution for the countries internal political turmoil had indicated the distant his regime kept away from genuine resolution efforts. In the April, 1999 presidential contest in which both candidates belonged to Issa/Somali, the president's nephew Guelleh claimed victory.¹³⁰ As claimed by Woodward (2003: 114) nevertheless, "the democratic reforms appear to have been little more than the addition of a fig leaf of respectability, and the discontents, especially the ethnic resistance from the Afars, have been repressed rather than accommodated and the experience of the Afars in particular may lead to a long-term polarization of relations between the two major ethnic elements that could threaten the survival of the only state in the Horn whose boundaries have not been seriously challenged in the past three decades." Though Gouled was able to win the heart of few Afar politicians, crimes committed during his regime yet have an impact for hindrance of reconciliation between the two ethnicities. For example, in February 8, 2007 a mass grave was discovered in a place around 55 kms from Tağura. The discovered bodies were of seven civilian Afars massacred by the Djibouti army on January 1, 1994. In general, the conflict resolution mechanism Gouled applied during his regime has more to do for fuelling the hostility rather than mitigate it.

Minister of Health and Social Affairs and Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources respectively. Soeters (2005:25) asked as "are two cabinet positions, to forgo the struggle of over twenty years?"

¹²⁹ Sep 30, 1994 FRUD (Ahmed Dini faction) announced its recommitment to armed struggle to overthrow the government of President Aptidon. It also denounced the FRUD faction headed by Ali Mohamed Daoud and Ougoureh Kifle Ahmed for engaging in peace negotiations with the government.

¹³⁰ Ismail Omar Guelleh, candidate of the governing coalition RPP claimed victory against his rival candidate Moussa Ahmed Idriss backed by the opposition parties.

5.3.3 Guelleh's Way of 'Silencing' Inter-Ethnic Rivalry

As articulated by Makinda (1992:35) “theoretically, Djibouti is the most vulnerable of the four countries in the Horn.” He reasoned out his argument by stating as “it is politically susceptible to internal ethnic tensions.” In previous sections of this chapter its discussed thoroughly how the colonial power’s resolution efforts entirely focused on French’s interest rather than sustainable compromise and reconciliation among major ethnic factors of the territory, finally leading the Republic to a civil war nearly a decade and half years after independence. Gouled overcome the challenge in his era by repressing the Afars’ grievance encircled by his own stooges. Later on, he transferred the power to his nephew, Gulleh (IOG) who enlarged the circle of the stooge instead of striving to bring a lasting solution to the Republic’s internal political unrest.

In similar fashion to his predecessor, IOG took an initiative to negotiate with the FRUD faction led by Ahmed Dini. Accordingly, a year later after he took power and negotiations began between the government and the armed wing of FRUD, and on 7 February 2000, a seven-point agreement for reform and civil concord, including a cease-fire agreement, was signed in Paris.¹³¹ In late March, opposition leader Ahmed Dini returned after nine years in exile. Sub-commissions were set up for facilitating the disarmament, compensation, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-fighters as well as to follow the decentralization procedure and strengthening the democratic process. A ministerial post was set up to facilitate the promise for devolution of power. However, realized the decentralization of government power to regions is yet unaccomplished task for the last decade since the signing of the agreement in 1999. Afars seem bored of the so-called elections both for the assembly and presidential. As concluded by Abdurahman, S. (2007: 49) “the elections are scheduled for 2003, National Assembly, and 2005 for the presidency. Nothing much is expected to change in the meantime.” The actions of the president to the contrary eroded people’s trust on democratic institutions like that of election because the result of all these drama has already been known by the public at

¹³¹ On 12 May 2000 the Government and the armed wing of FRUD signed peace accord in Paris in which Abdallah Abdillhi Miguir, the Interior Minister, represented the government of Djibouti.

large. For instance, Marchal (2005:282) anticipated the outcome of elections in Djibouti as:

Elections in Djibouti have been without much surprise since independence. The same patterns always hold true. State media are used in the boldest way to support the incumbent president, while all civil servants and military are required to show the utmost fidelity to him. The opposition parties that existed since 1992 faced all sorts of legal problems, and electoral divisions are orchestrated in order to minimize their constituency. The greater the distance from the capital city, the greater the electoral participation and support for the president.

As guessed by all, in the 2003 Parliamentary election Guelleh's 'Union pour la Majorite Presidentielle' (UPM) [Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progress' (RPP), the main component of the UPM], coalition winning all 65 seats. In accordance to the election rule, the party or coalition that win majority vote in each district automatically wins all of that district's seats. Hence, oppositions had already anticipated the result so that they boycotted the election. According to them, 'change through the ballot box was almost impossible in Djibouti.'¹³² Indeed, Djibouti has a Constitution, however, as Rupesinghe (1992:21) stated "can provide only de jure recognition of minorities, not de facto recognition." Though the unwritten political power sharing formula of the Republic secured the presidency post for an Issa and a Prime Ministerial position for an Afar with cabinet posts roughly divided, Afars majorly regarded their politicians in the cabinet as 'Yes-men of Guelleh' who to the least could not spare civilian Afars from the 30 November 2005 massacre at Arhiba or from the vast military raid against the Afars of Tağura and Obock.¹³³

¹³² The main opposition coalition, the 'Union pour l'Alternance D'emocratique' (UAD), called on all its members to boycott the April election. Another opposition group, a splinter group of the 'Front pour la Restauration de l'Unite et de la Democratie' (FRUD), released a statement on 18 March supporting UAD's decision.

¹³³ Ali Youssouf (2008) expressed the suppression against the Afars by stating as "On 31 July 2008, the police (gendarmerie police and presidential guard), entered the city of Arhiba (a ward where popular majority are Afars) shot tear gas grenades. They have destroyed and burned houses of fortune, housing the poorest people in the capital. [this aggression] results: 30 people injured including 3 children, 40 youths were arrested and are detained at the brigade north of the Gendarmerie and Nagad (5 km from the capital), a hundred houses destroyed. In the meantime, Arhiba is subject to a war of attrition, subject to punitive expeditions almost every six months. Arhiba, which was hit badly by the high cost of living, mass unemployment (80% of the active population), by diseases (holds the dubious privilege of having the highest rate of HIV patients in the country), did not need this new crack down." As can be read from the FRUD (2006) press release "There was also a vast military raid conducted over Tadjoura and Obock on 13 May 2006 led by an Issa Colonel Abdo Abdi Dembil."

Alike his uncle, Guelleh's intervention to resolve the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali is using the 'carrot and stick' approach. However, the stick strike all who opposes his ideas and the carrot is reserved only to those chosen to be his stooges. Marchal (2005:282) explained the cabinet reshuffle in Guelleh's government by stating as "Dileita Mohammed Dileita was reassigned as prime minister on 21 May and a cabinet reshuffle took place the day after: it actually resembled a game of musical chairs, since most ministers exchanged their portfolios and three stayed in the same positions. The number of the Issa in the government increased with the accession of Gulleh to the presidency." As indicated in the Table 1 bellow among the 21 incumbent ministers only 7 are Afars. Except the Ministry of Agriculture, others Ministries held by the Afars have insignificant role in the government structure of Djibouti. Even the Minister of Defense and Foreign Affairs are nominal. They have no authority at all. For instance, in the Ministry of defense, the real authority is in the hands of General Zakaria Cheik Ibrahim, the second person in the army but has strong clan as well as personal connection with the president and better known as the 'guardian of the régime'. As per the Afar informants 'the actual Afar ministers in the cabinet are entirely beholden to Guelleh than to their constituencies.' Some criticized them to the extent that 'they are even frustrated for being an Afar.' All Afars except one in Guelleh's cabinet married to non-Afar. Having a Somali spouse seems the unwritten requirement to be chosen in the Issa/Somali dominated government's cabinet. As a matter of fact, since the early days of independence, marriage with an ethnic Somali seemed to be criterion for selection. As confirmed by a Somali writer, Said Y. (1978:37) "Kamil married a Somali woman, has political integrity, and is regarded as a suitable person to bring about ethnic reconciliation."¹³⁴ In respect to distribution of power in the administration of regions in the Republic, among six governorship positions only two left for the Afars and Issa/Somali Governors hold the remaining four. (See table 2) Furthermore, from the listed twenty-two Ambassadorial and Counsel General Position in table 4, only five positions are held by the Afars. (See table 4)

¹³⁴ Kadra's Afar husband was Abdallah Mohamed Kamil, the former president of the Council of Government of the Transition. She has two children for him, a girl and a boy. The girl is married with the Minister of Transport Ali Hassan Bahdon.

Table 1. Ministers and Ethnic Composition in Djibouti

| Number | Name | Ethnic group | Remarks |
|--------|--|------------------|--|
| 1 | Dileita Mohamed Dileita (Prime Minister) | Afar | Married to an Issa woman |
| 2 | Mohamed Barkat Abdillahi (justice, Muslim Affairs and family) | Somali/Gadabursi | |
| 3 | Abdi Ibrahim Absieh (Minister of Education) | Somali/Issa | |
| 4 | Nimo Boulhan Houssein (Ministry of Social Affairs) | Somali/Issa | |
| 5 | Hamoud Abdi Sultan Muslim Affairs and Property | Somali /Issa | |
| 6 | Moussa Ahmed Hassan (Minister of Job, Insertion and Professional training) | Afar | Married to an Issa woman, sister or from the family of the minister n°19 |
| 7 | Hasna Barkat Daoud Minister of Youth, Sports, and Tourism | Afar | Married to an Issa man. Among the sports teams she has organized one is named Gelle Batal, after the President's great grandfather who was one of the Issa elders who signed the treaty with the French at Ambado in 1885. |
| 8 | Abdallah Abdillahi miguil (sante) Minister of Health | Somali/Issa | |
| 9 | Elmi Obsieh Bouh (environment and urbanization) | Somali/Issa | |
| 10 | Ali Farah Assowe (Economy Planning and finance) | Somali/Issa | |
| 11 | Mahmoud Ali Youssouf (Minister of Foreign Affairs and of International | Afar | Married to an Arab woman |

| | | | |
|----|---|----------------------|---|
| | Collaboration | | |
| 12 | Yacin Elmi Bouh (Minister of the Internal and Decentralization) | Somali/Issa | |
| 13 | Ogoureh Kiffleh Ahmed(defence) | Afar | Married to an Arab woman |
| 14 | Ali Hassan Bahdon Minister of the Equipment and Transport | Somali/Issa | Married to the daughter of the first lady from her first marriage with Abdella Mohammed Khamil |
| 15 | Moussa Bouh Odowa Minister of Energy and Natural resources | Somali/Issa | |
| 16 | Abdoulkadir Mohamed Kamil(Minister of Agriculture, Animal husbandry and the Sea) | Afar | Married to an Issa woman, cousin of the President |
| 17 | Rifki Abdoukader Bamakhrama (Minister of Trade and of Industry) | Arab | |
| 18 | Ali Abdi Farah (post, communication, culture) | Somali/ Isaak | |
| 19 | Osman Ahmed Moussa (Minister for presidential Affairs &promotion of investment) | Somali/Issa | The most influential person in the Government as he is the cousin of the first Lady (An Iron Lady of the Republic) |
| 20 | Ahmed Ali Sillay Minister Delegate for International Cooperation. | Afar | The only Afar member of the Cabinet who has an Afar wife |
| 21 | Mohamed Ahmed Awaleh State Minister for the Prime ministerial affairs | Somali/ Gadabursi | |

Source: Own sources from interviews

Table 2. Regional Governors in Djibouti and Ethnic Composition

| Name of the Region | Name of the Governor | Ethnic group | Remarks |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--|
| Arta | Hassan Darrar Houffaneh | Somali/Issa | This is the newly created region |
| Ali-Sabieh | Ibrahim Soubaneh Reyale | Somali/Issa | Since the independence, this position has not been held by an Afar |
| Djibouti | Ahmed Samireh Walieh | Somali/Issa | Since the independence, this position has not been held by an Afar |
| Dikhil | Moussa Djama Gedi | Somali/Issa | Since the independence, this position has not been held by an Afar. This post importance is in relation with the Issa westward expansion in Ethiopia. The actual Governor who holds this position since 1991 is the son of one of the known Issa warrior from Ethiopia. Though Dikhil town is becoming dominated by issa mostly immigrants from Ethiopia in rural areas still Afar dominated |
| Obock | Omar Faradda | Afar | |
| Tadjourah | Abdourazak Daoud | Afar | |

Source: Own sources from interviews

As in most African countries, the key guardians of Guelleh's government are the army and intelligence unit, which is overwhelmingly controlled by the Issa/Somalis. The number of Afars in the National Army and Security Forces are insignificant. As shown in the table 3 national army officers' index, nearly 78 percent of the share is controlled by Somalis while the rest 16 and 6 percent are left for the Afars and Arabs respectively. Even though the data in table 3 is for the years 2000's, nothing much has been changed for the last decade rather as cited in journal of Ugut-Toosi.(2009d) Issa's proportion reached to eighty percent out of which half of (Issas) are of Ethiopian nationals. Furthermore, chiefs of the four Zonal commands (Dikhil, Ali-Sabieh, Tağura and Obock) out of five are from Issa tribal group. There is one Zonal command (Arta) under the responsibility of an Afar, the smallest and the newest created almost entirely Issa populated zone of five Zonal commands. As listed in table 6 almost all key government

posts including protocol of the President, judiciary and management of the central bank are held by Issa/Somalis.

Table 3. Situation of the National Army in June 27, 2000

| Grade /ethnic group | Somali (Issa) | Afar | Arabe | Total |
|-----------------------|---------------|------|-------|-------|
| General | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Colonel | 6 | 2 | 0 | 8 |
| Lieutenant-colonel | 7 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| Commandant | 17 | 4 | 1 | 22 |
| Capitaine | 25 | 5 | 2 | 32 |
| Lieutenant | 34 | 7 | 2 | 43 |
| Sous-lieutenant | 24 | 7 | 1 | 32 |
| Aspirant | 9 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| Elève-officier | 11 | 0 | 3 | 14 |
| Total by ethnic group | 134 | 27 | 11 | 172 |
| % by ethnic group | 77.9 | 15.7 | 6.4 | 100 |

Source: Réalité (organ of ARD), February 11, 2004.

Table 4. Army Chiefs in Djibouti and Ethnic Composition

| Number | Name | Post | Ethnic Group |
|--------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | General Fethie ¹³⁵ | Chief of The Army | Arab |
| 2 | Col. Daher Adan Agrar | Chief of the Air Force | Somali/Issa |
| 3 | Col. Aden Sheir | Chief of the Naval Force | Somali/Issa |
| 4 | Col. Mohammed Djama Doualeh | Chief of the Republican Guard (RG) | Somali/Issa |
| 5 | Col. Abdi Bogoreh Hassen | Chief of Gendarmerie Force | Somali/Issa |
| 6 | Col. Abdullahi Abdi | Chief of Police Force | Somali/Issa |
| 7 | Col. Osman Doubad Sougouleh | Chief of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) | Somali/Issa |
| 8 | L/t.Col Ladieh Awaleh Boulaleh | Chief d'état major particulier | Somali/Issa |
| 9 | Hassen Said Khaireh ¹³⁶ | Chief of Doc. and Security (SDS) | Somali/Issa |

Source: Own sources from interviews

¹³⁵ Djibouti's army and security forces fall under the direct control of the president as commander-in-chief. The person who has the real power is General Zakariah Ibrahim (Issa/Mamassan), chief of Defence Staff and armoured company. His second, General Ali Hassan Kamil is an Afar reached the rank of general recently in 2008 and he has no authority but nominal.

¹³⁶ The three top responsible are from Somali ethnic group. Hassen Said Khaireh and Aboubaker Ahmed Moussa are from Issa tribal group. The chief, Hassen Said, is cousin of the President; while the second, Aboubaker Ahmed, is the brother of the Minister of the Presidency Affairs (the minister of number 19). The third is from Somalia and recently naturalized. The few Afar working in the Intelligence service are subalterns employees.

Table 5. Ambassadors and Counsel Generals with Ethnic Composition

| Number | Name | Country | Ethnic group | Remarks |
|--------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---|
| 1 | Rachad Farah | France | Arab | |
| 2 | Mohamed Moussa Chehem | Belgium | Afar | |
| 3 | Roble Olhaye | USA /UN | Somali/Issa | |
| 4 | Ismail Goulal Boudine | Ethiopia | Somali/Issa | |
| 5 | Aden Houssein | Somalia | Somali/Gadabursi | |
| 6 | Ahmed Issa | Eritrea | Somali/Issak | |
| 7 | Ayad Mosed Yahya | Cuba | Arab | |
| 8 | Mohamed Ali Moumin | Sudan | Afar | |
| 9 | Moussa Mohamed Ahmed | Egypt / Arab League | Afar | |
| 10 | Mahamade Ali Mahamade | Qatar | Afar | |
| 11 | Dia-Eddine Said Bamakhrama Saoud | Arabia Kingdom | Arab | Cousin of the minister n°16 |
| 12 | Youssef Omar Doualeh | India | Somali/Issa | |
| 13 | Moussa Bouh Odowa | China | Somali/Issa | Until the formation the new government. |
| 14 | Sahal Ismail Nour | Yemen | Somali/Issa | |
| 15 | Ahmed Arita Ali | Japan | Afar | Married to an Issa woman, sister of the minister n°18 |
| 16 | Idriss Ahmed Chirwa | United Arabs Emirates | Somali/Issa | |
| 17 | Roblé Olhayé | United | Somali/Issa | |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--|
| | | States of America | | |
| 18 | Ziad Doualeh | United Nations – Genève | Somali/Issa | |
| CONSUL GENERAL | | | | |
| 19 | Mohamed Djama | Dire Dawa | Somali/Issa | |
| 20 | Mohamed Majyambere | Uganda | From Uganda origin | |
| 21 | Mohamed Aden Waiss | Djeddah | Somali/Gadabursi | |
| 22 | Osman Moussa Darrar | Dubai | Somali/Issa | |

Source: Own sources from interviews

Table 6. Name of Senior Government Officials in Djibouti and Ethnic Composition

| Number | Name | Position | Ethnic Group |
|--------|------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| 1 | Aden Cheikh | Consular Diplomatic | Somali |
| 2 | Fahmy A. Al-hag | Consular of Investments | Arab |
| 3 | Naguib Ali Taher | Consular Communication and Public Relation | Somali |
| 4 | Djama Miguil Wais | Consular of Finance | Somali |
| 5 | Ismail Houssein Tani | Director of Cabinet | Somali |
| 6 | Ali Guelleh | Chief of Cabinet | Afar |
| 7 | Djama Elmi Darar | Director of Protocol | Somali |
| 8 | Mohamed Hassan Abdillah | Secretary General of the Government | Somali |
| 9 | Abdoulkader Doualeh Waiss | Mediator | Somali |
| 10 | Judge khadija Abeba Moukrea | President of the Supreme Court | Somali |
| 11 | Judge Mohamed Warsama | Consular of constitution for the president | Somali |
| 12 | Judge Djama Souleiman Ali | Prosecutor General | Somali |
| 13 | Idriss Arnaoud Ali | President National Assembly | Somali |
| 14 | Jamma Mohammed Haid ¹³⁷ | Governor central bank of Djibouti | Somali/Issak |

Source: Own sources from interviews

¹³⁷ First Lady, Kadra Mahamoud Hamid's brother.

Generally, Guelleh's way of resolving the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict seems silencing the voices by nominal representation and Systematic Segregation of the Afar from the politico-economic life of the Republic. Despite dissatisfaction of the Afar with his rule, the president rather prioritized balancing the twelve Issa clans in their share within his cabinet. He granted a ministerial post in all sub-clans of Issa/Somalis. In a similar manner, the civil service is highly dominated by Somalis to the extent that there's no room for Afar Job seekers. As confirmed by Soeters (2005:25) "the civil service issue is a clear form of what is elsewhere referred to as 'ethnic nepotism', i.e. favoring the members of one's own groups, and this has unmistakably been proved to be a source of irritation and conflict."

In a decade old régime of Gulleh, neither the demobilization of excessive Issa soldiers¹³⁸ nor reintegration of ex-FRUD combatants underwent as planned. Despite extending the Ministry of Interior with a nominal department of decentralization, there is no decentralization initiative on the go. Similarly, despite the fact that the government allowed for the mushrooming of political parties, it does not serve for the democratic process in the country. There are political parties (as indicated in Table 7) of which the first five are close allies in the alliance 'Union de la Majorité Présidentielle' (UMP). Chaired by IOG while The four others parties forms the opposition alliance 'Union pour l'alternance démocratique' (UAD) coalition from parties of opposition Djiboutian which are legalized. Chaired by Ismail Guédi Hared. Furthermore there are other political parties not registered in the country. One is a 'cyber' party, UGUTA-TOOSA led by Ali Cubba (Ph.D) while armed-FRUD led by Mohammed Kadamy has some force on the ground particularly in the northern border of the country.

¹³⁸ As written in (Beurden 2006) "Until 1996 only 3,000 of more than 16,000 strong army were demobilised and targets for 1996, 1997 and 1998 were not reached. The government hoped that many demobilised Issa would return to south-western Ethiopia. The Ethio-Eritrean border conflict may further interrupt demobilisation efforts."

Table 7. Political Parties, Leaders and their Ethnic Lines in Djibouti

| Number | Name | Ethnic affiliation | The leader | Remarks |
|--------|--|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | Rassemblement populaire pour le progress (RPP) | Issa /Somali | Ismail Guelle | The formal single party |
| 2 | Parti social-démocrate (PSD) | Issa/ Somali | Moumin Bahdon | The formal single party general secretary |
| 3 | Parti national démocratique (PND) | Issa/ Somali | Aden Robleh Awaleh | |
| 4 | Front pour la restauration de l'unité et de la démocratie (FRUD) | Afar | Mohamed Ali Daoud | |
| 5 | Union des partisans de la Reforme (UPR) | Afar | Ibrahim Chehem Daoud | |
| 6 | Alliance des Républicains pour le développement(ARD) | Afar | Ahmed Youssouf Houmed | This party was founded by the late Ahmed Dini |
| 7 | Union pour la démocratie et la justice (UDJ) | Issa/ Somali | Ismail Guedi Hared | The formal long time director of the cabinet of Gouled |
| 8 | Mouvement du Renouveau démocratique (PRD) | Issa/ Somali | Daher Ahmed Farah | Living now in exile in Belgium |
| 9 | Parti Djiboutien pour le Développement (PDD) | Afar | Mohamed Daoud Chehem | Living abroad; uncle of the president of the (UPR). |

Source: Own source from Interviews

A Djibouti politician, who prefers to remain anonymous, described the situation of political parties in Djibouti as follows ‘the case of Djibouti must be considered as a different scenario from other countries. Despite the existing of many parties in papers, the real situation is the single party system yet. Some of the parties cited above have no address. It’s the similar case of the Afar parties like the FRUD, PPD and UPR. Others parties’ addresses are the property of their leaders. You heard the existence of the parties at the moment of the elections. Otherwise there’s no political life in the country.’ Even during election period, activities of the political parties are severely hampered due to

various harassments by the ruling party. For instance, on 22 January 2008, the UAD (coalition of opposition) called for a boycott of parliamentary elections scheduled on 08 February 2008 that resulted for intimidation of not only political party leaders but also human right activists and trade unionists. Many supporters, most of them young, were also arrested in the streets of Djibouti and, according to the LDDH, they would have been locked up at the camp known as Nagad. Leader of the Djibouti Party for Development (PDD), Mohamed Daoud Chehem stated (September 2007, via email interview by Colette Delso novel des addis) as “the opposition parties were right to boycott the elections. The 1992 Law on the communication allows private medias but not pragmatic yet as well as the ‘never again here’ warning worse than before.” FRUD also condemn the election and the declared that ‘they will continue to struggle till the Issa dominated government of Djibouti accepts rule of law and respect democratic rights.’

Gulleh’s way of ‘conflict resolution’, to the contrary, exasperates the conflict by deriving the opposition to search for alternative mainly through armed struggle. Hence armed organization like FRUD has declared that the mere path to escape from servitude is via armed struggle. The Indian Ocean Newsletter (N° 125424/01/2009) wrote that “Since last week a detachment of the Djibouti army has been combing through the regions near Margoita and Moussa Ali in the North of the country, in an attempt to surprise Afar rebels in the armed faction of the [FRUD].” FRUD Communique issued by its Foreign Relations Head, Hassan Mokbel from Brussels on 31 August 2009 read as:

On August 30/2009, elements of the National Army of Djibouti (AND) based in Gal Ela, in the Mablas, and reinforced by soldiers coming from camps at Tadjourah and Obock, attacked the fighters of FRUD at Sismo, also in Mablas region, (district of Tadjoura side). The fighting started at 8 am and continued till 2 pm while two helicopters of the government army attacked the FRUD positions. FRUD resisted the attack and killed 4 soldiers and wounded more than 20 of whom certain were evacuated by the helicopters. The soldiers were forced to pull back. FRUD suffered no casualties.

As cited by Abdurahman, S. (2007: 49), “President Guelleh, a long standing member of the Gouled government, and heir apparent, has since been tightening his grip on the country. Media freedom has been curtailed drastically, and there has been a sharp rise in detentions without trial of opposition members and dissidents.” Indeed, Guelleh’s approach of silencing the Afar’s opposition may not guarantee the occurrence of another round of bloody violence within the Republic as the discontents of the Afar against the

Issas grow steadily. Economic opportunities that the Republic started to enjoy (will be discussed in the next chapter) further intensified grievances between the Afar and Issa/Somali.

5.4 Role of Regional and International Organizations to Facilitate Peaceful Settlement of the Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict

Conflicts between the straddled ethnic groups have usually a spread over effect in which regional states may involve in one way or another. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict has invited a number of regional actors including colonial powers, independent states, insurgent groups, contrabandists, and even ‘terrorism’ factor. Since recently all positive interventions conducted to diffuse the Afar-Issa/Somali rivalry focused on a very local perspective that totally neglect the regional dimension of the conflict. Indeed, in Ethiopia apart from very few studies conducted with the collaboration of international organizations like Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, GTZ organized forum held in 2005 and a study conducted by MoFA in collaboration with the GTZ, there has been no record of involvement by any other international organizations. Recently, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and its Conflict Early Warning Unit (CEWARN) expanded their activities and has opened Dikhil Cluster in Djibouti. Indeed, USAID beef up CEWARN financial resource in order to support projects in conflict prevention and response among pastoral communities in the Horn of Africa.

In Djibouti OAU has made its first involvement on the eve of Djibouti’s independence in an attempt to mediate a negotiation between political parties. Thus, as cited in Said Y. (1978:36) “the subsequent OAU sponsored meetings were held at Accra at the end of March 1977. In addition though there was no effort made to prevent the threat; OAU had also involved itself in the 1994 peace deal between the Gulled government and dissident faction of FRUD.” Even though Jan 14, 1994 Traditional Afar leaders have asked the U.N. Security Council to intervene after alleged attacks on civilians by government troops. They said they received no reply to a similar request sent in September 1993 following attacks by government troops in which civilians were allegedly massacred, raped, arrested, and tortured. Later on as written by (Beurden 2000)

“To further aid the peace process, France, the European Union and the African Development Bank provided funding for the demobilization and social reintegration of 8,500 soldiers.”

5.5 Concluding Summary

Since the Imperial era, successive governments have attempted to resolve the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali but to no avail. Unlike any other inter ethnic and/or pastoral conflicts; heads of governments of the three régimes (Haile Selassie, Mengistu Hailemariam and Melse Zenawi) have directly been involved in this age-old conflict between Afar and Issa/Somali. The Emperor used administrative restructuring as a means to settle the conflict. Thus, new administrative divisions introduced in 1944 had incorporated the Afar and Issa/Somali people under the Harar Governorate General in Chercher Awraja, Kereyu, Adal and Issa Wereda with the capital of Afdem. Later on in 1955, Administrative division of Harar Governorate General restructured the area inhabited by the Afar and Issa/Somali in such a way that a new Wereda referred as Adal and Issa Wereda with a capital in Erer is created under the newly established Adal, Issa and Garaguracha Awraja. Eventually as the previous administrative restructuring had no fruit, the Imperial government decided to separate the two ethnic groups and hence in 1970 the Afar and Issa/Somalis divided in two different Awrajas, which had a clearly defined division of border areas. Afars incorporated in Chercher, Adal and Garaguracha Awraja with a capital in Asebe Teferi while Issa/Somalis included with Dire Dawa, Issa and Gurgura Awraja with a capital in Dire Dawa.

In addition, peace negotiations and dialogues were undertaken during the emperor era held at different towns from Harar to Addis Ababa. Coercive measures were also employed to calm down destabilized scenario and in order to pressurize groups to come down at the discussion table. However the dialogue and negotiation attempts in all the three regimes brought no significant hope in mitigating the conflict let alone offering lasting solution. Among all, the 1983 Derg’s decision for the implementation of a buffer zone, temporarily halted Issa/Somalis expansion. The current ethno-linguistic federal structure further escalated the conflict and new actors that range from ethnic

based political parties, insurgent groups to regional state governments are added. Accordingly, the federal government seems to be in a dilemma between the Afar regional state justification for historical right and Somali regional state proposal of referendum in the context of constitutional right. Moreover, according to the data analyzed, the federal government appears to emphasis on the security of the road rather than offering long lasting solution or at least mitigating the alarming rivalry of the two societies and intensification of the conflict both in frequency and magnitude.

Similarly, interventions by successive governments in Djibouti including the French colonial administration and the Mamassan block leaders of Gouled and Gulleh have brought no solution rather further exacerbate the conflict. French's cosmetic solution of balancing the ethnic lines solely for their own interest rather became the major factor for conflicts between the two people until present day. Gouled's legacy of greed and domination led the Republic to a civil war that resulted loss of many lives and deep-rooted ethnic rivalry and antagonism that persists until today. Gulleh on the other hand continue his predecessor's marginalization of the Afars through his few yes-men. He failed to implement the constitution and agreements made by him and opposition political groups which in turn could erode trust among conflicting parties for future potential resolution efforts.

Generally, even though the major escalating factor of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict is the regional political orders and as the conflicts between these two geographically straddling societies have a spillover effect in states of the Horn region, no single resolution attempt with regional perspective either by NGOs or sub regional organizations has been initiated. Nevertheless the conflict often continues to destroy lives of many and it is becoming sophisticated in tune with the changes in regional political orders and involvement of new actors. Indeed, to bring lasting solution addressing the historical causes of the conflict and analyzing regional political orders are definitely not enough. Rather aggravating factors should also be examined closely. Thus the upcoming chapter discusses conflict accelerating factors in both Ethiopia and Djibouti.

Chapter Six

6 Internal Politico-Economic Situations in the Host States: Aggravating Factors of the Afar- Issa/Somali Conflict

6.1 Introduction

Aside from major root causes of the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict such as, socio-demographic, cultural, politico-economical, ecological as well as regional political dynamics; internal features in the politico-economical sphere of the host states are also major catalysts that aggravate and prolong the conflict to more severe and complex level it reaches at present. Historically, successive military expeditions of the central government against the Afars for making them tributaries as well as retaliation for the Afars' support to Lij Iyassu during the power struggle between Iyassu and Hail Sellassie has influenced in tilting the balance between the Afars and Somalis. Ahmed H. (1997:147) stated that "Ras Kebede's [Mengesha d.1940] campaigns in 1931 were very desperate and he mobilized large numbers of Amhara and Oromo forces with which he pursued the bandits all the way to the Afar inhabited areas on the left bank of the Awash river.[...] But he was not very successful in the lowland part of the same river where he failed to suppress Afar revolts.[...] he [the Ras] and his Amhara-Oromo followers came back to their respective settlements in the highlands and that the Ras himself went back to his seat of Mwachera in the district of Gemza without success." Similarly, Lij Iyassu had also undertaken several expeditions into the Afar areas in which prominent Afars were killed. As affirmed by Ahmed H.(1997:139) "The young Prince left Addis in 1912 to make a punitive raid against the Afars as a response to the Jille Oromos' repetitive appeal he, marched to Efrata-Jille,[...] against the Afar whom he took by surprise, killing some of their prominent chiefs in the confrontation. [...] highly gratified [Jill-Oromos] offering to Lij Iyassu an enqeb (a large basket) full of Maria Theresa thalers." Afars were weakening not only with the military attacks and killings of their renowned leaders but the army of Lij Iyassu marched against the Afars used to confiscate all pastoral wealths as a bounty. For instance, as Marcus (1995:260) wrote an incident, "While at Zuqwala, Iyasu was informed of the massacre of 300 Karayya Galla by the Afar at the village of Sadimalka on the Awash river. By the time that here ached the scene, the

raiders had fled. There upon Iyasu decided on a general chastisement of the Afar, and en route to Ankober he devastated the land and killed many people, sparking off a general uprising among the population. Much booty was acquired and divided among the men when they reached Ankober.”

Surprisingly enough Afars have again paid a heavy price in their attempt to recuse Lij Iyassu from the shoan army marched against him. During the 1916 coup against Lij Iyassu, Afars joined his army and fought against Haile Sellasi’s group and at last hosted Lij Iyassu in the Afar deserts at the time when his Oromo, Amhara and Tigrean allies failed to do so.¹³⁹ Afars denied handing over Lij Iyassu despite successive demand from the centre that made the future retaliation from the central power inevitable. Moreover, successive governments’ attitudes towards pastoralism and thus economic development policies designed together with the general underdevelopment, rampant corruption and porous border are factors that accelerate and sustain the conflict. In this chapter these conflict accelerating factors particularly those arise from the internal political and economic features of the host states of Ethiopia and Djibouti is analyzed thoroughly.

6.2 Analysis of Conflict Accelerators and Actors within Ethiopia

The conflict accelerating factors as well as the actors involved in the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict are increasing alarmingly as the conflict getting intensified and sophisticated. The practice of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia is yet a matter of debate, arguing whether it’s a remedy or a curse for long existed ethnic discontents within the country. Leaving the ‘fruit enjoying’ or the ‘future threat’ aside, one can definitely observe mushrooming of inter ethnic conflicts all through the country. Again it could be

¹³⁹ As written in (Merse Hazen Wolde Kirkos 2007:117-9) “On 27 Sep 1916 he [Lij Iyassu] deposed by the group led by Haile Selassie while he was in Harar. He tried to mobilize a large force from the Fursi, Arbawayyu, Dugugguru and Jille Oromo through their traditional chiefs [...] all of whom had been closely associated with him in the years 1912-1916. They now abandoned him in the days of his great need. [...] The region of Yefat and Temmuga was no longer a safe place for Lij Iyassu. He left his town of Tenay [the now senbete named after his horse aba tena] and moved to his Rassa and Weyne-Hara allies who, however, could not keep him for much longer. He then went via Aliyyu Amba to Ankober where he was apparently received at first with due respect. But [not continual] and the only choice he had was to go to his most loyal subjects, the Afar.” Merse Hazen (ibid: 144) continues and stated “He [Lij Iyassu] stayed in Afarland for five years until chosed to move to Tigray, where his taken as custody by Ras Gugsa Araya in 11 Jan 1921. Haile Selassie’s Shoan army had confiscated Afars houses from Dire Dawa to Afdem.”

argued that at this initial stage of exercising ethnic federalism, identity based confrontations might be an expected phenomenon until the envisaged development is realized. However, the question is how could a country reached to its development goal while the ethnic rivalries become intensified and being a major obstacle for executing development endeavors. Thus in this case the conflict becomes the hindrance for the development, which is supposed to be the final remedy for conflicts. Therefore, critical analysis of conflicts and attempt potential resolution mechanisms is a vital task not just to resolve the bloodshed but also to create a leveling field for achieving development success that by turn mitigate identity based disputes across the country.

Nowadays, as a result of practicing ethno-linguistic federalism, identity becomes more politicized than before. Disputes are not only on the territory of traditional ancestral possession but also dispute erupts over administrative boundaries among regional states in the country. In particular case of the Afar and Issa/Somalis, the conflict also arose from other factors such as the growing proliferation of local elite's political interests and accessibility of illicit trade routes through the porous border along Djibouti and Somaliland. Furthermore, development programmes launched by successive regimes ended up with bringing negative result, which in turn put fuel on the existed conflicts. As pin pointed in (Yohannes et al. 2005:P.11) "conflicts now cause high numbers of human deaths, damage to assets, displacement and migration, poverty and greater dependency on food aid." The actors of the conflict in Ethiopia start to entertain regional states, ethnic elites, and ethnic based political parties, to contraband and terrorist group. In fact, it's crucial to review and analyze factors in detail in their relation to aggravating and prolonging the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict.

6.2.1 The Ethnic Federalism System and Its Influence on the Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict

The ethnic federalism system is claimed as a remedy for the existed historical distortion among different ethnic groups in terms of political, economic and social inequality. Hence, it's presumed as the best solution to long lasting ethnic discontents among ethnicities as well as against the center. Though this thesis itself is controversial, almost the last two decades old ethnic based federalism practice in Ethiopia have its influence on

intensifying the already existed traditional conflicts as well as aggravating new confrontations across the country. This section examines conflict between the Afar and their neighbors as well as the Somalis and their neighbors in Federal Republic of Ethiopia in order to examine how the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict has been aggravating due to the eruption of conflicts against their other neighbors. In addition, it could also have a chain impact in which the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict may also influence both pastoral groups to search for resource which by turn led them to another round of conflict with various neighbors. Moreover, it is vital to examine similarities as well as differences the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict has in relation to conflicts they are engaging with other neighbors. Accordingly, this section deals with reviewing the Afars relation with three of their neighbors, namely the Amhara, Oromo and Tigray and similarly the Somali's relation with their sole non-Somali and non-Afar neighbors, the Oromos, is being assessed.

6.2.1.1 Ethnoterritorial Conflict along Political Border of the Afar and Amhara Regional States

In the west, along the escarpment, the Afar, Amhara and Oromo agro-pastoralists live together in peace with traditional sporadic disputes arising from customary practice and/or over access to resources. The traditional conflict between Amhara and Afar can be traced back to the historical movement and settlement patterns of people. According to the local discourse within the Amhara as well as the Afar side, it's believed that due to successive pressure from the Oromo and Somalis, Afars in their turn moved to westward and occupied the Amhara homelands. Afars have an oral tradition that describes the incident happened on seventeenth century. According to the Afar elders in Dawe area, there was a heavy armed confrontation conducted at a place called Hado in which the Dawe leader, Ali Mussa Ahmed waged a war against the Amharas in Majete who looted cattle from the Afar and amongst them the most beloved cattle of Ali named as *Denenti* was also taken. After month-long fight, Ali was succeeded to get hold of Denenti back however the Amharas' reinforcement force marched from Debre Birhan and Debre Sina conducted a massive attack against the Afar's army that ended with the death of the leader of Afars of Dawe, Ali Mussa Ahmed, in the battle.

Apart from the early population mass movements, the infrequent conflict between the Amhara and Afar ethnic groups are sometimes aroused from cultural practices. Eshetu and Kifle (2002) affirmed that “there were sporadic conflicts of Afars and their neighbors (Amharas and Oromos) in both zone 4 and 5. The causes of the conflicts are not however over resources. They are rather on cultural practices (a person to get fame among his ethnic group if he kills a person that is from another ethnic group) as it was reported by the elders.” Resolution of such type of conflict is managed by the elders of both contesting groups. *Zewelde* is a traditional conflict resolution institution functional for areas bordering the Afar and Amhara people. Nonetheless, since ethno-regional administrative structure is introduced in Ethiopia, the frequency, magnitude and characteristics of the conflict between both communities seems escalating as a result of frequent armed disputes due to territorial claims. Nowadays, during shortage of pasture in their respective areas, trying to move into the neighboring grazing sites would automatically lead to deadliest fight. The massacre of thirty-two Afar women at Corebarata Kebele in their way back to home from the market of Gowata woreda in Amhara region, which is the first in their history, could evidently indicate the escalation of the conflict and erosion of traditional coexistence system as well as conflict resolution mechanisms. Afars claimed that the killing was a deliberate and supported by the Amhara region militia force because of the administrative boundary argument between the two regional states. For instance, the press release of a diaspora Afar association based in Germany, The Afar Forum (2002), stated as “ [we are] deeply shocked by the recent horrible massacre of thirty-eight innocent Afar women by the Amhara Regional State Militia. The massacre took place in Corebarata Kebele on the 8th November 2002. The women were on their way home after spending a day at the shopping market of Gowata woreda in Amhara region. It has been reported that these Afar women have been killed in a ghastly and uncivilized manner by slaughtering some of them with knives as if they were animals. Among the massacred women were young girls, elderly and pregnant women.”

The contesting areas among the Afar and Amhara are well defined. Under the current regional administration structure, the four out of ten zones of Amhara region bordering three out of five zonal administrations of the Afar region.(See table 8) Meanwhile, out of the Amhara five Weredas, two are part of Oromia zone within Amhara region, which

predominantly inhabited by Oromo people. According to the study report presented by the joint Amhara and Afar expertise group¹⁴⁰, the contesting areas are pieces of agricultural lands and residential areas. Some arguments are evolving as result of shortage to resources while some cases are becoming contesting factors due to claiming historical ownership of places. For instance, Hudade irrigation area claimed by Melka Kemise kebele in Amhara region and Aware and Aredo kebele in Telalak Wereda in Zone five of Afar region, Oromos (incorporate in Amhara region) need the land for agriculture and Afars argue on their historical right and demands the land for grazing.

Table 8. Bordering Zones and Weredas among Amhara and Afar Regions

| Zone in Amhara | Weredas in Amhara | Weredas in Afar | Zone in Afar | Bone of Contention |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Northern Shoa | Kewet | Chefra Wedea | Awsi Rasu | Dahoda agric. Area |
| Northern Wello | Kobo | Mille Wereda | Awsi Rasu | Grazing land |
| Southern Wello | Werebabo | Gulina, Awra, Ewaa Weredas | Fanti Rasu | Grazing land |
| Oromia Zone | Jille Timuga | Dawe Werda | Harri Rasu | Maremia bet agri area |
| Oromia Zone | Bati | Dawe wereda | Harri Rasu | Kassa and Hudade irrigation |

Source: Own sources from interviews

Overall, apart from being regarded as a hero within one's own society, competition to show ethnic supremacy, revenge for lost lives and properties, wealth accumulation and the post federalism elite's manipulation to expand an administrative territory of each region are major factors that aggravate the conflict between the two neighborhood people. Some cases may need the involvement of governments at any level in parallel to the traditional system. For example, in Oromia Zone, Bati Wereda of the Amhara side and the Zone one of Mille Wereda of the Afar region contested in one kebele that the Amharas called it Chachatu and Burka kebele while the Afars called it Jeldu and Burka

¹⁴⁰ From the Afar region Habib Mohammed Yayyo, Yassin Yayyo Mohammed and Omar Mohammed Yussuf are the contributors while from the Amhara region Eshete Tesfaye, Berhan Abebe and Kefle Esubalew are participated in the study undertaken on March 2003.

kebele and they both regional flags are flown and both Weredas have official stamp. The area was burnt twice between the years 1992 and 1993. Moreover, in accordance to the expertise group findings, within the eight years from 1995 to 2003, there is a police report of deaths as follows: 98 deaths in Kewot Wereda, 37 in Jille Timuga, 4 in Bati, 15 in Gullina, and 6 in Awra. Generally, the conflict between the Afar and Amhara ethnic groups are involving new actors in post federalism structure in Ethiopia that in turn sophisticate the conflict and enhance the severity and magnitude of damages incur.

6.2.1.2 Ethnoterritorial Conflict along Political Border of the Afar and Oromia Regional States

The relationship among the Afars and neighboring Oromos has been characterised as peaceful co-existence with the usual sporadic violence over recourses particularly during shortage of pasture and water as well as results of usual cultural practices. In some cases, the central governments at Addis Abeba have utilized the traditional conflict as a system for counter balance the ethnic powers along the peripheries to weaken both the Afar and Oromo and assuring their incapability to march against the Amhara neighbors. Ahmed H. (1997:144-6) affirmed the hidden agenda as follows:

In view of the almost permanent state of confrontation that existed between the Afar and the Oromo, it was often said that the government used the Oromo to suppress Afar uprisings. This was exactly what the regional Governor Dejazmach Meshesha set out to do in 1925. He ordered his major chief of the Oromo, Fitawrari Dingo Umer, to march against the Afar rebles, with the assistance of two of the Dejjazmach's loyal Amhara commanders, men like Ato Mengudaw Welde and Ato Deggefe. [...] They simply ravaged the Afar villages and plundered their cattle with a vengeance. [There is some suspicion] that such Amhara-Oromo joint campaigns also had other hidden objectives, beyond the imposition of tributes for the government. Due to the frequent ecological crises in the Afar Depression in general, Afar nomads moved in large numbers with their huge herds of livestock into the Oromo inhabited lowlands of northeastern Shewa. This caused a critical chain of reaction with the Oromo, thus pushed by the Afar, pressing harden the Amhara agricultural settlements both in Qolla and Weyna dega districts. [Thus, its] believed that (joint force) striking hard on the Afar on such occasion and weakening them economically and militarily would avoid the recurrence of these repeated conflicts and reduce them considerably. [...] Nevertheless, very similar conflicts continued to recur in 1927, 1929 and 1931 with exactly similar actions taken on all sides. (Ahmed H.1997:144-6)

Indeed, the historical confrontation between the Afar and Oromo people traced its origin back to the movement of population in post sixteenth century. Alemmaya (2005:25) described role of culture in conflict with particular focus on the Kereyu Oromos. According to him “Brave Kereyu young men who killed many could decorate their hair by *dukki laba* and kids and women sing respectful songs for them while insulting the others who didn’t kill any. *Kundala* refers to a person who kills non-Oromo neighbors at the time of a cattle raid or during conflicts over watering points. A *Kundala* is a hero to his community. [...] This jeweler [the women in the villages put charms around his neck] transferred to sons to remind them they should do the same and wear it.” On the other hand, Oromo and Afar are also lived for long time with mutual respect and in peace. In a very recent history, Mohammed Bodaya known by the Afars as Amoyti (The Head) was called by the neighboring Oromos around Kemisy as *Muttii*, meaning the King. Even the Warka (a kind of tree resembling the sycamore) around which Mohammed Bodaya used to gather the villagers to discuss their social issues is still exists in Kemisy town.

However, that peaceful and mutual coexistence seems waning gradually. For example, in early 2007, the road that connects Fursi (Oromia Wereda) to Dawe (Afars Wereda) was entirely blocked after many people have been killed in fierce fighting conducted among the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups. Various NGOs operated in those areas phase out their projects due to lack of security. A traditional resolution mechanism seems dysfunctional in some aspects. According to a study conducted by joint expertise¹⁴¹ of both the Afar and Oromo regions, the current contested areas are all identified. Among the two bordering zones in Oromia side and one zone in Afar side, the conflicting areas are mainly grazing lands and water points along river basins.

¹⁴¹ Dawit Ayle, Omar Mohammed Yussuf, Yassin Yayyo Mohammed led by Habib Mohammed Yayyo undertook the research in March 2004

Table 9. Bordering Zones and Weredas among Afar and Oromia Regions

| Zone in Oromia | Weredas in Oromia | Weredas in Afar | Zone in Afar | Bone of Contention |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|--|
| Eastern Shoa | Fentale | Awash Fentali | Gabi Rasu | Awash park area, Harimi grazing area, water points along Awash and Kuri Rivers |
| Western Harerge | Mieso | Amibera | Gabi Rasu | Awash River, grazing areas along the Derba River, Terrinasa, Legedimtu, Halydek and Adelle grazing lands |

Source: Own sources from interviews

Apart from the traditional contentions over depleting scarce resources, some customary practices and utilized as a tool for aggravators, the post 1991 scene of the Afar-Oromo conflict involved other stakeholders ranges from regional government officials to insurgent groups. For example, according to the claim by Oromo elders being interviewed in Awash fentalle, ‘Oromo used to live in Sabure in Fentale Wereda. Later Afars pushed them to Fentale Mountain.’ During 1991, OPDO had opened branch office at Awash 7 Kilo claiming that ‘it’s historically an Oromo area in which Afars evacuated from Erer due to Issa/Somali’s massive raids area resettled in Awash.’ This administrative boundary claim led not only dysfunction of the traditional system but also involvement of other actors like the OLF. During an interview with Ahmed Alas, member of the Zonal council (Zone five of Afar region), he said:

The Oromo Liberation Front fighters infiltrated to our Wereda (Hadeli’ela)¹⁴² and burned down two Isuzu (private business vehicles) and two zonal administration vehicles. The two drivers of the Isuzu and their assistances were killed instantly. Surprisingly enough, the OLF Radio announced that Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) armed wing of the Oromo Liberation Front, (OLF) killed over 11 soldiers and destroyed three vehicles, in northwest Ethiopia.

¹⁴² Oromos claims the capital of the Afar Wereda, Hadeli’ela, as their ancestral homeland. In fact as in all ethnic groups, the current ‘territorial occupation is a result of continues migration of people’. For instance, the Afars of Dawe settled in the area after pushing the early settlers of Oromo and Baditho Afars. Similarly the Oromos chased the Afar out and settled along the Chercher-Harar plateau. As affirmed by Abir (1980:137-8), “The struggle between Ethiopia and Adal after Gran’s death and the chaos within Adal, however, afforded the Baraytuma group, whose attempts to penetrate Ethiopian defences were repeatedly frustrated, an opportunity to advance into Bali and the Chercher-Hara plateau. Concurrently, the Baraytuma Galla, especially the Ittu, Humbana and Karayu tribes, renewed their advance in the Chercher-Harar plateau, along the eastern escarpments and even into the Dankali desert.”

Overall, Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms seem getting weaker to function effectively in order to solve the problem between the Afar and Oromo, which indeed entertain intervention from various groups. It was just after concluding the high-level regional governments' conference at Senbetei in 2006 that the Afars killed fifteen Oromos as retaliation for the Oromos' attack at Hadeli'ela. Apart from the common causes of conflicts like historical population movements, resource competition, culture etc, another similarity with the case of conflict in the Somali side is that the involvement of OLF and claims a territory upto Awash for the future 'Greater Oromia.'

6.2.1.3 Ethnoterritorial Conflict along Political Border of the Afar and Tigray Regional State

As a matter of fact, there are enormous variations in terms of the politico-economical, socio-cultural as well as environmental features between the lowlander Afars who are predominantly herders, followers of the faith of Islam and peripheral society too far for the central power competition contrary to the highlanders, agrarian, predominately Orthodox Christians and historical crown competitors, the Abyssinian faction of Tigreans. The long existing relation among these societies is dominantly characterized by historical cooperatives¹⁴³ as well as aggressive competition over resources and socio-political hegemony. Elders from both communities traced back resentments against each other as centuries old Wajirät - Tältal raids and counter- raids.¹⁴⁴ Around 1758, soon after

¹⁴³ There are strong friendships [fiqur] among the two societies. There has been a long history of marriage relationships among the neighbouring Afars and Tigreans particularly with the highlanders in Kelete Awlaolo and Agame provinces. Shum Agame Weldu, the great grand father of Emperor Yohannes, is also claimed to have some Afar blood. One example to be cited here could be the marriage ties of emperor Yohannes with an Afar woman. In 1870s, Kalla Ab'ala was his host while he fled Təgərayə by fearing Emperor Tewodros. In those hard days for him, Herto leader Yakumi welcomed Yohannes and his company and offered them a house within his palace compound. Yakumi further facilitated for him trafficking arms via the Afar coasts like the Mersa Fatuma sea outlet. However, Yohannes claimed to have a prophecy of being crowned king of Abyssinia if he gets married with an Afar woman and hence in his way back to Tigray, he kidnapped Yakumi's sister, Dato Serai Ali, together with her baby boy. Yohannes Christianised Dato in Debre Haila church in Enderta. Her name converted to Tibebe Sellasie. She, however, died on birth of prince Araya in 1870. Prince Araya, Horse name Abba Debleq died on 10 [25] June 1888.

¹⁴⁴ Wajirät is a communal name for Tigreans [majority with Oromo origin] inhabiting the southern part of Tigray region that extends from Raya in the south to the fertile plains of Maichew in the north. Telatal as described in chapter three is a derogatory name given by Tigreans to their Afar lowland neighbours. The Wejerat's raids from their twenty villages of Wejerat collectively known as Isra-amba or Isra-adi were a common incident (Tarekegn 2005:47-53; Gebru 1991:91-107). Demer is a system used by Wajirät for collecting contributions to conduct raids. The Wajirät moved in very distant area up to Awsa and Dawe and

Sehul Micheal [born ca.1691, Adwa died on. 23 June 1777, Adwa (Abink 2007:962)] assured the whole Tigray came under his control, he ambitiously desired to be the master of the province and prepare himself for becoming a big competitor in the Gonder politics. Accordingly, he led several expeditions to the Afarland for collecting cattle, securing the amole salt production area as well as the trade caravan routes. The most fertile plain land of Kalla (45 km east of Mekele) was also a major bone of contention from then to the recent days of the 21st c. Afars uses this land as a grazing area while Tigrean wish to farm it. Accordingly, in early 1760s, Sehul Micheal sent a message to the Herto leader Mottola and ordered him to allow Tigrean farmers to use the Kalla plain. As Mottola rejected the order, Sehul invaded Herto. The day is still remembered by Afars as "*Sehul Mottola Yenbedi Ayro*" means "the day Sehul invaded Mottola" in which the bloodshed in Kalla resulted in heavy loss of life on both sides. Since then successive conflicts erupted among the two ethnic groups. The study conducted by the Afar region border Affairs office¹⁴⁵ clearly identified the present day contesting factors. Two zonal administrations both in Tigray and Afar regions share a common border. Tigray boarded with six weredas, twenty-one kebeles and about three hundred kms of the Afar region with a natural demarcation of chained mountainous territory stretched from Alitina to Raya. The bone of contention includes grazing lands, forests areas to produce charcoal and residential areas.

even to the asphalt road that connects Addis to Djibouti/Asseb. As cited in (Rennell 1948 :145) 'in the course of time and despite the fact that in February, 1942, the Assab-Dessie road was officially closed even to military traffic on account of lawlessness among the Wajirat and Danakil.' Traditionally Abo-gereb (father of the river) is a tool used to settle conflicts with the Afar and Tigreans.

¹⁴⁵ The Tigray region rejected to participate in the proposed joint study and hence the study on border crisis along Tigray and Afar region is conducted between 11/11/2007-25/12/07 by the Afar region border affairs office experts, Mohammed Awol and Mu'uz Giday.

Table 10. Bordering Zones and Weredas among Afar and Tigray Regions

| Zone in Tigray | Weredas in Tigray | Weredas in Afar | Zone in Afar | Bone of Contention |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---|
| Southern Zone | Hintalo-Wajirat | Ab'ala | Kilbati Rasu | Gelasso Grazing and Agricultural Land, Charcoal |
| Eastern & Southern Zone | Atsbi –Wenberta/ Hintalo-Wajirat | Berhale | Kilbati Rasu | Land around Tebi and Ararhen Mountains |
| Eastern Zone | Atsbi –Wenberta | Kuneba | Kilbati Rasu | Desea area |
| Eastern Zone | Irop | Dalol | Kilbati Rasu | Mineral area |
| Southern Zone | Endamekoni-Chercher | Megalle | Kilbati Rasu | Mountain areas |
| Southern Zone | Chercher-Bala | Yalo | Fanti Rasu | Agri land |

Source: Own sources from interviews

Similar to all other cases, the conflict erupted in post federalist Ethiopia seems beyond the reach of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms such as the Abo Gereb. The well equipped Tigrean fighters waged a massive attack against twenty kebeles in Afar region along the 300 kms border stretched from Alitina to Raya. Tigreans burned down mosques¹⁴⁶, even kids and pregnant women were not spared from the cruel attack. Any human and vehicle movement was blocked for about three months. Because of the collective punishment Afars were obliged to import food staffs from the coast via Bada. Generally, the conflict between the Afar and Tigray people is mainly characterized by the continuation of the traditional confrontation over ownership of land. It may include land for agriculture, land to get access to salt production and access routes to cross to Eritrea. In addition as indicated by Assefa (1995:13) “Attempts were made by Tigrean rulers to conquer the Afar and incorporate them into the highland socio-political system.” Unlike conflicts with other regions, Tigray region seemed to neglect the existence of conflict

¹⁴⁶ 150 yrs old Gera'ido mosque is burnt at this incident.

with Afar region. Hence, there is no official regional government intervention in claiming ownership.¹⁴⁷ It is left for the ‘public’¹⁴⁸ to solve.

6.2.1.4 Ethnoterritorial Conflict along Political Border of the Somali and Oromia Regional States

Somali regional state borders with Afar and Oromia regions as well as chartered city of Dire Dawa to the west. As cited in Ahmed (2005:16) “Migrations and interactions between the tribal groups of Oromos and Somalis over centuries have created a complex pattern of ethnic and linguistic groups dispersed along border areas of the two regions.” Ahmed (Ibid: 18) continued as “they share common boundaries (of over 1000 km) starting from the Moyalle Kenya border up to the ma’eso district.” Fekadu Adugna, in the profile of his PhD project at the Max Planck Institute stated that “despite their linguistic affinity and similar livelihood the Oromo and the Somali have, nevertheless, differences, which are socio-cultural in nature. The Somali are characterised by camel pastoralism, while the Oromo are characterised by cattle.” Both the Oromo and Somali groups used to have traditional confrontations over the ownership and access of grazing land and water points in addition to long lasting cultural practices.

Moreover, Abdulahi (2005:12) asserted as “in late 1950s, with the rise of Somali nationalism across the border, the Ethiopian Government became suspicious of Somali pastoralists.” He further described how the government of Ethiopia uses other ethnic groups like the Boran and Guji pastoralists to counter balance Digodi and other Somali pastoralists. Both groups accused each other for mobilizing the people with

¹⁴⁷ However, Desea area is incorporated within Tigray region during census. Moreover Tigray regional map included one of the contested areas commonly known as Negade Gita (road of the traders) that stretched between Kala and Erebtu Weredas of Afar region and passes to Mekoni of Tigray. Once Afar elders accuses their Tigrayan counterparts for pressurizing them to sign in advance to confirm the Negade Gita is Tigrean territory. And the elders gathered and talked to the Tigray region president commonly refer as Haleqa Tsegaye. When the Afar elders’ representatives told him about the Tigraean counterpart’s conditionality prior for starting any negotiations, he surprisingly asked the Afars ‘why not you sign on the paper for the sake of peace?’ The same president of Tigray once visited Kalla together with his counterpart of the Afar region, Ismail Ali Siro. After looking at the fertile plain land of Kalla, he asked Ismail ‘how on earth Wajirat travel long distance up to Hmera [Sudan border] while they have suitable plain land here in Kala?’

¹⁴⁸ The word public puts within quotation because the reality in the ground witnessed against it. For instance, during the Gelaeso war two brothers have died from both Afar and Tigreans and those from Tigrean side were the militia chief and wereda police chief of hintalo-wajirat (from interviewees who want to remain anonymous)

irredentism.¹⁴⁹ On the hand side, there were alliances among clans of each ethnic group. For example, Mesfen (2006:16) has confirmed that “historically, the Itu Oromo and the Hawiya Somali had common agreements and alliance. The presence of Hawiya in the area as a small group was protected and immuned by the Itus as a settler and close allies. After the adoption of new federalism based on ethno-regional states and the search for identity in the Hawiya side affect, the long lasting cooperation and alliance with Itu Oromo and forced them to see to the newly coined Somali regional state and shift their alliance to Issa side.”

Indeed, siding with ‘own’ identity group is an old scenario before federalism. The collaboration of Issa and Hawiya Somalis against their non-Somali neighbours is an old alliance arise more during the pan Somali movement. For example, according to a letter sent by Seyfe Sahelu, Secretary of Chercher, Adal and Garaguracha Awraja on 11/4/1970 Ref.no.1/443/31/4 addressed to Alfraid Shafi, Governor of Dire Dawa, Issa and Gurgura Awraja and Mayor of Dire Dawa reported that ‘since July 1969 Issa conducted an attack against Afar to the westward of Angelele, Bilina, Kurtumi. Then on November 1969, turn their front to the south to Meiso station and by using information from Hawiya Somalis attacked Ittu and Ala clans of Galla looted livestock and killed many.’ The Hawiya/Somalis who escaped from Oromo retaliation run to Awash town in Afar region and welcomed by the zonal administration despite their close alliance with the Issa/Somali.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Kona 2003:6 [T]he Degodia accuse the Oromo tribes for seeking to establish a separate ‘Greater Oromia Republic’ excised from Ethiopia and Kenya representing the pan-Oromo identity. [Similarly Somalis accuses Afars by saying Afars have the ambition to establish thier own country called Grater Afaria]

¹⁵⁰ As analyzed by Ahmed S. (2005:28) Conflict started when one Hawiya was killed by an Oromo clan member on 9th November 2004, ten kilometres from Bordede town. On the next day one Oromo state police member on duty at the customs checkpoint was killed by Somali clan members from Hawiya, when they tried to control the customs checkpoint by using force. This resulted in heavy revenge killings. A group of Oromo gunmen gathered and invaded Hawiya Somalis in Hardiim area. In the incident 8 Somalis and 5 Oromos were killed, with up to 100 houses burned in Hardiim, mostly belonging to Hawiya Somalis. Hawiya Somalis then fled into adjacent Afar areas. [Most of them settled in Awash 7 killo]

Figure 2. Hawiya / Somalis' settlement camp in Awash, Afar region



Source: Own source, photo taken on 21/02/2008

The conflict between the Oromo and Somali ethnic groups seemed to intensify during the heyday of Somali nationalism. There were several reports on Somalis' massive raids undertaken against the Oromos that in turn shows Somalis upper hand in access for modern weaponry. Abdulahi (2005:31) stated as "Issa pastoralists usually responded violently due to their dominance of power in the area. The increase in arms in the hands of the pastoralists was as a result of Ethiopia and Somali war." Abdulahi further quoted an Oromo elder response as 'we lost our farm land to Issa pastoralists by force and now they have changed it into grazing land. [...] They have more guns and we cannot protect ourselves from them. Only government forces push them back by military forces.'" Somalis successive attack against Oromo forced them to leave territory for the Somalis. Recently the conflicts were conducted around Ma'eso and Afdem area but soon after it reached to Assebot Monastery.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Letter written by Fit. Asfaw Haile Mariam, Governor of Chercher, Adal and Garaguracha Awraja on 1/6/1973 ref.no.1/660/23/215 addressed to the Awraja police chief stated that Issa attacked Ittu [Oromo] injured a boy around Assebot Monestry.

In addition, according to a letter written by Colonel Fesseha Gebre Micheal, Security Head in Ministry of Interior on 3/4/1971 Ref. no.2591/63 addressed to Shoa Governate General stated that Issa have crossed Awash Bridge and controlled the Kereyu land. As written by Ahmed (2005: 21) “ [during the Derg era the conflict between Oromo and Somali] stretching from the district of Ma’eso up to Asebot mountain along the major highway and railway line that crosses the district and their boundary areas span up to 50 km.” During the Somali nationalism the magnitude and frequency of the problem intensified¹⁵² and relations between the Oromo and Somali ethnic groups are further sophisticated in post-federal Ethiopia. As argued by Ahmed (Ibid: 9), “It has been over a decade since ethno-regional boundary dispute became persistent along the boundary between the state of Somalia and Oromo, since their formation in 1992.” The reason for sophistication of conflicts between ethnic groups after Ethiopia adopts the federal arrangement is mainly due to the intervention of several new actors in defining regional administrative territorial boundaries. A Somali scholar Samatar A. wrote an article that explained about rampant corruption scenario in the newly established regional state of Somali. Mean while he showed the intervention of Somali regional government in the Somali-Oromo border dispute since the inception of the region. According to Samatar A. (2004:8) "The three senior leaders and some members of parliament’s executive committee divided the six million Birr among themselves to spend in the following ways. The president and the secretary purchased vehicles with some of the money. The vice-president allocated some money for use in areas which the Somalis and Oromos were disputing.” Furthermore, political parties have also involved broadly tilting the balance towards each other.¹⁵³ As the consequence, the bloodshed erupted. According to

¹⁵² As written by Ahmed S. (2005:21-2) “[the Pan-Somali sentiments] increased the arming of the local conflict when Issa and Hawiya pastoralists supported the Somali forces and obtained arms. While relations between Hawiya and Ittu Oromos started to deteriorate, the rise of Somali nationalism has brought new relationships between the local clans along ethnic lines. While formerly they [Hawiya and Ittu Oromo] were living in a mixed way, Hawiya settlement shifted exclusively to Mullu and Bordede areas. Immediately after the Ethiopia and Somali war in 1978 when the Issa pastoralists displaced farming Oromos from the areas of Mandheera and Dadeta to Ma’eso and Asebot areas [...] cited an Oromo elder: Issa had got automatic weapon Kalashnikov AK47 from Somalia and farmers were not able to protect themselves except to run away and be displaced. It was the army that used to protect us from Issa pastoralists.

¹⁵³ As cited in (Mesfen 2006:18) “The establishment of the IGLF [according to Gascon et la (2005) IGLF is founded by Kutube sub clans of Gurgura/Somali who were believed to be descendants of Nole Oromo but

EHRCO's 71st Special Report issued on 30 December 2003, it's reported that "an ethnic conflict had flared up between Oromo and Somali tribes." According to the report "19 persons were killed 21 sustained injuries, a woman was gang raped, 387 houses were burnt down and 34 camels were looted. More than 6000 residents fled the town of Bordede to Meisso, Assebot, Horra, and Awash towns." Finally, both regions agreed to hold a referendum that taken place between 25/9/2004-10/10/2004 in which out of 456 kebeles with the exception of three kebeles in the Mai'so district and four kebeles in the Moyale district, the other areas are decided to be incorporated under Oromia regional administration. Despite some critics on the concept of referendum as a tool for resolution¹⁵⁴ of this conflict in addition to procedural irregularities reported,¹⁵⁵ the official dispute between the two regional governments seems reached to an end.

6.2.2 Ill- conceived Development Interventions

There is a misconception that Pastoral areas are vast land tracts left idle. For the majority outsiders, the need for an extensive area to enable pastoralists to move freely in accordance to the availability of resources in various seasons is yet less understandable concept. However, pastoralists develop their traditional production system and transhumance way of life in order to cope with the inhospitable physical environment and to be friendly to the Socio-economic and ecology of the area they inhabit. In Ethiopia, the successive central governments have a common perception that pastoral groups in the

once sold as slaves to the Issa clans and settled on the piedmont of Erer] by the Somali Issa changed the course of conflict in the area and since then the recurrent conflict had been between IGLF and OLF forces. Somali regional state [set up] Shinile zone its centre in Mai'so town. In parallel the Oromia [regional state established] Mai'so wereda embedded in the Western Harerge Zone, and the wereda administration headquartered itself in Mai'so town. [Consequently] violent conflict erupted in 2003 at Bordede town."

¹⁵⁴ For the Borana-Oromo the resolution for the ethno-territorial claim should have been based on the history and traditional ownership right rather than referendum. However, the national electoral board upheld the October 2004 referendum in about 420 kebeles in which around 80% of contested areas fall under Oromia region.

¹⁵⁵ As confirmed in (Mesfen 2006:10), "The local Somali and Oromia administrations generously distributed thousands of identity cards in less than one month time. Thus, people came for registration not only from other districts but also from Northern Kenya. The National Electoral Board have also confirmed that few 'foreign nationals' were imprisoned. [...] at the end, the number of the registered population outnumbered the total population size."

country occupied a vast land area with no economic use. They still narrate that ‘Pastoral areas cover 60% of Ethiopian land area’ for over half a century even after Eritrea has seceded with significant portion of pastoral areas. For those ‘outsiders’ from within a land where there is no evidence of agricultural and social structure like their own, would automatically categorized as terra nullius, land belonging to no one. As the land was never plough on which, Maize and Teff never grew or Orange and Coffee tree never planted, the agrarian hegemonic highlanders automatically branded it, as ‘no mans land’ and dash to plan a development policy which is entirely non-pastoral in nature. The focus seems only on the resources that indeed become the very enemy of the traditional owners. For instance the dry and hot area of northeast part of Ethiopian Rift Valley, an area regarded by the center as malarious, economically useless region and hence avoided for long period has become to be regarded as one of economic bases of the country due to the availability of a resource, mainly the Awash River.

The main perennial river Awash is a home of the Afar and Oromo pastoralists, and the only oasis in this desert.¹⁵⁶ Until about 1950s Ethiopian central government considered the Awash valley to be a desertious and economically useless region. However, during the Imperial regime, the central government has shifted its perception towards the Awash Valley and in the early 1960s; the Awash Valley Authority (AVA) was established in order to administer big irrigation schemes in Lower Awash valley, which later stretched along the valley in the Middle Awash. As both the capitalists and the pastoralists have common interest on the same pieces of land, the Afar and Oromo in the Awash valley became victims of ‘development’ schemes undertaken by the AVA. The ‘developers’ rather heavily ruined the socio-economic features of the society. Beside frequent disputes and hostility against the center and migrants, inter-ethnic conflicts among the neighboring pastoral communities were mushrooming. The socio-economic disaster facing the pastoral groups around Awash Valley further aggravate inter and intra ethnic conflicts. This section assesses development schemes along the Awash Valley

¹⁵⁶ Awash River is over 1200 km long and has 14 main tributaries. For centuries, the Awash River is the main source of pastoral livelihood. Oromo pastoral and agro pastoralists depend heavily on the upper valley while the Afars utilize resources from the Middle and Lower Valley of the Awash, refer by Afars as We’aytu.

during successive Ethiopian governments and examines the negative influence that impact on the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict.

6.2.2.1 The Feudo-Imperial Economy: Rape of Pastoral lands

Various development schemes were under taken by the Imperial Regime aimed at national economic growth by ignoring traditional sustenance methods of pastoralists. The Awash River has always been regarded by pastoralist as the last place of resort to which they could come in times of acute crises and drought. In the contrary for the centre, it's a hot, an inhospitable and economically useless region of the country. As cited in (Gascon 2003:400) "the highlanders, for the first time, considered economical benefit of the Awash Valley. Apart from 'the nature of the land and the availability of water [...] they considered the flat Awash Valley traversed by the great river [as an] ideal site (for irrigation agriculture)." Furthermore, as asserted by (Teferah-Work and Harbeson 1978:252-3), "the availability of rail transport and its proximity to the future area of industrial concentration that extended along the railway line below Addis Ababa whetted the appetite of an imperial Ethiopian government that became interested in solidifying territorial claims to the area by hastening its economic development." Accordingly, numerous land proclamations were issued under the Imperial regime. All proclamations conceived, the pastoralists land, as 'no man's land', and hence considered as state land.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the Imperial family shared the ownership of lands along the Awash Valley as

¹⁵⁷ Ayalew (2001) has briefly investigated Laws and Proclamations that have implications on the pastoral land right. "The Proclamation Number 70 of November 1, 1944 Article 3 defined a 'land owner' as 'a person whose title to ownership of the land recognized by law'. This situation was formalised in the 1955 Constitution which stated: 'All property not held and possessed in the name of any person, natural or legal, including all land in escheat, and all abandoned properties, whether real or personal, as well as all products of the subsoil, all forests and all grazing lands, water resources, lakes and territorial waters, are State Domain' (Art. 30, Sub.Art. d). The Ethiopian Civil Code of 1960 stated: 'The possessor who has paid for fifteen consecutive years the taxes relating to the ownership of an immovable (property) shall become an owner of such property' (Art.1168). 'Immovable assets in Ethiopia which are vacant and without a master shall be the property of the state' (Art. 1194). Traditionally in Ethiopia rights over land were established through the land tax paid by the cultivators. However, pastoralists paid only an animal tax, [In 1950, the government imposed a tax on Zellan (nomads) at the rate of 0.50 birr per camel, 0.25 per cattle, horse, mule, donkey, 0.05 per goat and sheep] therefore they had no legal rights to land. Proclamation Number 1 of July 1944 granted a 'gasha' of land to each patriot who fought during the war against Italy, to nationals who spent the period of Italian occupation in exile, and to survivors of persons who fell in battle. Accordingly pastoral land was distributed in the manner described above."

if it's their personal fiefdom. The rape of the pastoral lands started in early 1950s by renting out their land to foreign companies without the consent of the pastoralists. As cited on Teferah-Work and Harbeson (1978:253), "conflict among pastoralists along the valley commenced in 1951, when the Gile Oromo pastoralists were evicted from the Wonji Plain in the Upper Awash Valley. The land, some 6,000 hectares, was acquired for a nominal rent by the Handels Verenigins Amsterdam (HVA), a Dutch firm with colonial experience in Indonesia, to set up a sugarcane plantation and processing factory." The Metahara (the home of the Karrayu Oromo pastoralists) and Wonji-Shoa sugar estates and the construction of the Koka Dam displaced thousands of pastoralists from their ancestral land without offering them any option for survival. Some groups evicted repeatedly from their settlements and squeezed due to simultaneous development schemes implemented in their homeland. For example, Bondestam (1974:430) affirmed the case of the Ittu Oromo as "when the Koka dam was constructed on the Awash River, a number of Ittu Galla villages were moved. Many of the same tribesmen were also driven away from their land with the growth of large sugar plantations in the Upper Valley." Ayalew (2001:189) further pointed out that "the [Metehara sugar] plantations cut them [Karrayu/Oromo] off from the Awash, leaving only one access through the southwestern tip of Awash National Park, and this was denied to them under Park regulations. Particularly after the 1960 hydroelectric power production on the Awash, HVA expanded its operation and other investments also launched up in the Upper Valley. Such as Nura Era, Abadi, Tibila, Merti Jeju some of which focused on fruits and vegetables production." Thenafter, the government established the Awash Valley Authority (AVA) in 1962 as cited in Bondestam (1974:430) "to administer and develop the natural resources of the region." The strong hand of AVA and other investors stretched to the middle Awash Valley very soon. Like the Aware Melka cotton farm and Melka Sadi banana plantation that as mentioned in (ibid) was first "developed by Italian refugees from Socialist Somalia."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ As Bondestam (1974:430) described "Irrigated cultivation had been introduced earlier in this region by an anti-fascist Italian group who were given land on the Erer River by Emperor Haile Selassie to produce vegetables and fruit for Dire Dawa. Later, a private irrigated farm was established on 1,200ha at Melka Werer to produce fruit and cotton." In addition, "the Nura Era Plantation (NEP) was established by Italian national, Signor Pascal Montanari, in May 1964." (Ibid: 202)

Shortly, the Lower Awash Valley was captured by the AVA's camera. As stated in (Teferah-Work / Harbeson 1978:253), "the Tendaho Plantation Share Company (TPSC) was formed in 1962 as a partnership of the Mitchell Cotts Company and the Ethiopian government to produce cotton in the Lower Valley." Apart from successive eviction of pastoralists in Amibara, Angelele, Bolhama and Maro Gala, the Imperial government carried on to execute schemes to tourism businesses too. As written in (Kassim 1985) "Responding to the lure of tourism, the government proceeded at the same time to designate vast tracts of land in the Awash Valley for national parks, game reserves and protected areas." The Awash National Park that established in 1969 incorporated about 75,000 hectares of Karrayu/Oromo and Afar pastoralists grazing lands. Similarly, the Yangudi Rassa National Park that encompasses 4730 square kilometers of Afar pastoral lands stretched from Mount Yangudi to the Rassa Plains. The Allegedhi Wildlife Reserve has also established with area coverage of 18,320ha that was a wet season pastureland. Without any significant compensation made for local pastoralists, as listed by Muderis (2000: 12), a total of 353,000ha of pasturelands are taken including West Awash Wildlife Reserve (17,810ha), Gewane Wildlife Reserve (24,390ha), Mille Serdo Wildlife Reserve (87,660), Gewane Controlled Hunting area (59,320) and West Awash controlled hunting area (91,360ha).

Overall, the pastoralists along the Awash Valley became victims of 'development' schemes which alienated them from their ancestral land, limited their mobility, decreasing of grazing land areas, spreading of livestock diseases as the result of agro-chemicals used in irrigation schemes, cutting of long aged plant species that have prevailing value for pastoral livelihood and degradation of lands led to a man-made famine that according to Bondestam (1974: 423) "the Afar-the predominant tribe in the Awash Valley-have been reduced by 25-30 percent." These development interventions have caused tragedy not only in terms economy and ecology but also have an impact on socio-cultural and political features of neighborhood pastoral societies. In fact, as written by Teferah-Work and Harbeson (1978:253) "while it was realized that the envisaged plantation economy would displaced many pastoralist inhabitants of the Valley, it was confidently assumed that most of them would take up paid employment in the plantations, or else move with their animals to other parts of the region. But neither the

settlement nor shifting the pastoral livelihood to out-grower farmers became successful. Rather small group of individuals took advantage.”

Box 10. AVA

The Awah Valley Authority (AVA) was established in 1962 in order to administer and develop the natural resources in the Awash Valley basins. Among its tasks, transformation of pastoral livelihood through designing various settlement schemes was reported as the major. However, almost all settlement schemes have been failed. As reviewed by Kloos (1982:32), “The idea was to provide irrigated land, training and services on the margins of commercial plantations for would-be Afar settlers who were known as ‘outreach growers.’ The first settlement was founded in 1966 with 19 settlers on 95ha in Dubti. The second was in Amibara and began with 56 settlers in 1967, later expanding to include 214 settlers on 535ha.” However, says Helmut Kloos “by 1973 only about 300 Afar families had been settled by AVA on 2.5 hectare cotton plots on the Amibara and Dubti settlement farms as compensation for loss of their land to the schemes.” Due to these facts, Bondestam (1974:497) concluded as “In effect, therefore, the AVA represented the presence of the Ethiopian government within the Afar sphere of influence rather than the vehicle for Afar political and social change within the empire.” Indeed, various facts regarding the ownership rights of the agricultural lands could clearly show how the land was regarded as a personal fiefdom by the royal family rather than a national wealth. For instance, as indicated in (Teferah-Work et al. 1978:435-8) “The Tendaho Plantations Share Company [one of the biggest farms in the Lower Valley] is an increasingly lucrative business, administered and managed by the British firm Michell Cotts which has 51 percent of the share capital: the Ethiopian Government has 38 per cent, Sultan Ali Mira 7 per cent, while various local and foreign private interests share the remaining 4 per cent. [...] cotton in the Awash Valley is now called “the white gold’. [...] An ultra-modern administration has been built up in the middle of the desert, with excellent facilities for the Europeans and the best-paid Ethiopians, including a bar and even a bingo-hall. The average daily salary for a foreigner is about Eth.\$80, whereas a store-keeper, educated up to the 12th grade get Eth.\$3, and a cotton-picker only Eth.\$1. The top class is composed of large-scale farmers, headed by Sultan Ali Mira, [possessing almost 20,000 hectares] with his relatives and close friends, including small elite of educated Afar. However, their counter-offensive implies not only the exploitation of labourers, but also the increasing eviction of pastoralists from the best grazing lands.” The case in the upper Awash Valley was similar. As cited in (Muderis 2000) “the share of the local pastoralists in an employment opportunity is minimal and in most cases only seasonal and temporary employment is available for them. For example, in Matahar [with] a total of 10,000 (4060 permanent and 5940 seasonal) employees only 1087 were locals and only 160 permanent the rest 927 seasonal. Similarly in Nura Hera Fruit and Vegetation out of 3990 employees (634 permanent) only 151 local and only 7 permanent.” As affirmed by Teferah-Work and his associates (1978:253), “The emperor’s daughter, Princess Tegegne-worq, asserted claims to a vast tract of prime pastoral land.” Moreover, (Ibid: 260) “TPSC also managed a plantation at Barga owned by the Crown Prince Asfa Wossen.” In addition its economic and environmental impacts, the pastoral social value have also been eroded. For example, Afars were resented for the demolition of burial place due to construction of roads. Besides, the influx of non Afar labourers from the highland was also regarded by Afars as demographic renegeering that would in the long run ended up with grabbing their ancestral land.

Moreover, these development schemes led to mushrooming of ethnic conflicts between neighborhood pastoral groups as a result of aggressive competition among themselves for controlling grazing land and water points in the remaining land. As the situation getting worse, fighting erupted between groups who were known for their peacefully coexistence. For example, the Karrayu who “have enjoyed peaceful relationships with Ittu and Issa Somali mainly as a result of their goal of solidarity against their common enemies, the Afar and Arsi Oromo”, as written in (Ayalew 2001:245), “had commenced to confront each other over scarce resources.” Ayalew further continued to describe the conflicting situation in the areas where land is alienated from pastoral groups as follows:

The Weima Afar were consistently pushed further and further away from their traditional habitant by the Issa Somali and kept moving into the Debine Afar territory. Other Afar groups too were evicted out of their settlements by the expanding Melka Sadi and Melka Worer concession farms, migrating under pressure into the area of the Debine Afar. Besides, the Awra Melka mechanised state farm at Sabure had expropriated a large part of grazing land from the Debine-controlled territory for the production of cotton, fruit, and vegetables. Squeezed from all sides into a much narrower and marginal area, the Debine Afar would have liked to shift further east to Alleideghii Plain, a realm of abundant pasture land in the Middle Awash. However, their migration was prohibited by the presence in that area of the Issa Somali, their age-old enemies (Ibid: 249).

As Issa/Somali pushed the Weima Afars to westward of Erer, they moved to areas inhabited by the Debine Afars, who themselves are squeezed by the national park, mechanized farms and conflict with Karrayu/Oromo. Hence, for the new arrival Weima/Afar conflict with the Dene /Afar and Karrayu/Oromo becomes everyday life. Ayalew (2001:251) further discussed that “from 1978 onwards [post Ethio-Somali war], the conflict over the Dinkuku pond and the surrounding pasture became a conflict between the Karrayu and the Weima Afar. Members of [Weima Afar] were dislocated from their original settlement in West Harrerge, from places called Afdem and Alleideghii Plain by the Issa Somali [therefore, they] finally settled down around the Awash town close to the Dinkuku Pond and this brought them into conflict with the Karrayu more than with the Debine Afar. Hostilities continued intermittently between the two sides for over a decade. A critical point was reached in 1990, when the Karrayu and their Ittu allies launched a major attack on the Weima killing a large unspecified number of their men.” Ittu/Oromo themselves migrated to Karayu land from their former areas

due to ‘limited access to resources and fierce resource use conflicts with Issa tribes.’¹⁵⁹ In general, development schemes undertaken during the Imperial era have intensified the conflict among the pastoralists group and particularly that of Afar and Issa/Somalia due to high rate of population pressure resulted from scarcity of grazing lands and water points.

6.2.2.2 The Command Economy of Derg: A Shift from Commercial Farms to State Farms

Following the 1974 regime change, the Derg government has announced the regime’s recognition of pastoral land system and declared protection for pastoralists land rights. Article 24 of chapter 5 stated:

As of the effective date of this proclamation, nomadic people shall have possessory rights over the lands they customarily use for grazing or other purpose related to agriculture.

However, in effect the Derg continued the path of its predecessor by expanding state farms with offering only unrealizable promises to pastoralists. In the Ten-year perspective plan 1984/5-1993/4 the Derg announced its priority in such a way that ‘the expansions of irrigated farming which would permit the realization of dependable and adequate domestic food supplies and enhance the country’s export capabilities’ (1983:20). Accordingly, Most of the commercial plantations in the Awash Valley soon transferred as state farms. In (Yasin 2004:55) its written that “As a matter of fact the name ‘commercial farms’ has shifted to ‘state farms’ and also the owners ‘feudal lords’ has replaced by the new lord, the state.” Furthermore, the task of AVA was delegated to Ministry of National Resources Development that in turn handed the responsibility of administrating state farms to Ministry of State Farms Development that was created in 1979. Middle Awash Agricultural Development Enterprise was also established in order to administer new cotton plantation expansions.¹⁶⁰ Thousands of pastoralists have

¹⁵⁹ This massive movement of Itu occurred since early 1950s. (Muderis 200:54)

¹⁶⁰ New plantations are established particularly in Middle Awash Valley like the Dofan Boloha state farm and huge expansion project was implemented in Amibara that displaced thousands of Afar pastoralists. .Inaddition horticultural enterprises gradually coverted to state owned cotton plantations.

displaced with no compensation or tangible projects that could transform pastoral livelihood. In fact settlement programmes designed during the Derg régime were yet again considered as a way of transforming Afar pastoralists to agriculturalists. The Derg has established a Public Settlement Authority (1977-80) a responsible body for settlement schemes. Later on PSA was replaced by a Settlement Department in the Ministry of Agriculture that again reformed as the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) in 1980. With the supervision of these successive facilitating institutions, settlement farms were established in both Middle and Lower Awash Valley. The major settlement areas were Amibara, Gewane, Mille, Logia, Dubti and Assaita. The central government was responsible in funding finances on a yearly budget for running the settlement farms. However, as Abdulhamid (1989) investigated the implementation of these settlement schemes, “the farms were loss making farms run with government subsidies as well as they faced difficulty in setting pastoralist people on crop farms.”

Moreover, the Derg has taken vast areas of wet season grazing lands around Awash Arba for establishment and expansion of military camps. In sum, pastoralists along the Awash basin have been deprived access to water and pasture by the state’s refusal to pragmatically recognize their land rights and hence, The non-pastoral development schemes in the Awash Valley displaced thousands of Afar pastoralists, resulting in crowding, overgrazing and destruction of the remaining pastures. The whole process has produced negative socio-cultural and politico-economical impacts on the pastoralist's livelihood. Pastoralists along the Awash Basin became victims of ‘progresses’. The so-called ‘development’ from above brought nothing but clear the path for mushrooming inter and intra ethnic resource use conflicts apart from daily skirmish between the pastoralists and the army. The consequent shrinking resource base of pastoralists has led to bloody conflicts between the Afar and Kereyu/Oromo pastoralists around the Awash Game Park, Afars facing clashes with Ittu/Oromo in the southwest and combating with Issa/Somali to the east and with guards of plantations and park along the basins.

Figure 3. Cattle crossing the Addis-Assab/Djibouti road to access Pasture



Source: Own source, photo taken on January 2004.

6.2.2.3 The Political Economy of ‘Revolutionary Democrats’: Dead End for Pastoral Survival

After overthrowing the Derg regime in 1991, the transitional government of Ethiopia designed an economic policy, which stated:

All land remains the property of the people of Ethiopia through the agency of the state. Areas with special problems require special attention and treatment.

Article 40 sub-articles 5 of FDRE states that Ethiopian Pastoralists have a right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as a right not to be displaced from their own lands.

Accordingly the central government has returned about 17,000 hectare of land to the Afar pastorals both in the middle and lower Awash Valley. However, as transformation of pastoralists to agrarian farmer needs a long term and well designed comprehensive development scheme, both the Afar pastorals as well as the regional government could not maintain the farms. Consequently, the ANRS re-allocated the land among different clan groups in the Afar. Thus each clan started to rent its plot of land to private cultivators through lease system either as sharecropping or with fixed-rental price.

Indeed, the arrangement is similar to free exploitation of the land by the so-called investors due to incapacity of clan leaders to deal with modern financial statements presented by the investors as well as neglect of the regional government to follow the case thoroughly. Neither the Afars' share in income and employment opportunities nor the regional government revenue from taxations was significant. Instead the land becomes degraded due to high toxic chemicals used by private cultivators as well as their refusal to practice fallowing and crop rotation to conserve the productivity of the land for some years.

Consequently, the pastoral society get used to develop a dependent attitude with the facade benefits and clan and sub clans commenced intensive competition among each other to expand their clan territory that in turn lead to mushrooming Intra clan disputes.¹⁶¹ Overstocking and eventual range degradation, disruption of the Afar's traditional social and resource utilization systems that evolved through centuries of adaptation to the ecosystem, mushrooming intra and inter ethnic conflicts, the frequently occurrences of drought and negative impacts on the health of the Afar and their livestock due to chemicals used in farm practice are the major effects of external interventions on the Afar land. Moreover, the expansion project of Awash Arba military camp further alienated pastoralists from the remaining wet season grazing lands. In addition the spread out of plants species *prosopis juliflora* or *calotropis procera* commonly known as Woyane

¹⁶¹ In Amibara woreda, there was conflict between Rekbak-Deremela and Abelk-Haysemale (sub-sub-clans of Waima tribe) on August 2002 death of 4 people and injuries of the same number from both clans over irrigated land returned in Melka-sedi. A conflict between Harkemela-Fedih'te (Debine tribe) and Rekbak-Deremela (Waima tribe) also ended up by the death of 24 people and injuries of hundreds from both clans. Here again expanding land territory was the cause of the conflict. Another incidence is also reported between Errer-Bura and Ablek-Mandita that resulted in the death of 8 people on July 2001. The cause of the conflict is reported to be discontent by Ablek-mandita over allocation of returned flood-fed field around Melka-sedi. Both clans competed to get the defacto ownership right of the land and immediately to lease-out the land to private cultivators. Moreover, conflict over access to the remaining uncultivated flood-fed plain around Bilen was reported between Sidiha-bura and Ablek-Haisomale. The attempt by Ablek-Haisomale clan to fully control Bilen and hence denying other clans who got their share from returned irrigated land was reported to be the cause for the conflict. Bilen was previously designed by the zonal administration as the common irrigated pasture while today Bilen is fully leased-out to one private cultivator. Conflict irrupted when the two clans competed to clear the forests on the land allocated traditionally as a common pasture and to lease-out more land to private cultivators. It ended up by the death of 3 people and injuries of the same number from both clans. On the other hand, in the Gewane woreda conflict between Mahisera and Meysera clans (both from Debine tribe) for a number of years due to competing land ownership title. There was also conflict among the Gendi and Tekail-kuribili clan over the returned Metaka state farm (Yasin 2004). The case of intra clan deadliy conflict especially in Gewane Wereda is yet very tense and alarming.

further invaded the grazing areas and chased away valuable species for the pastoral livelihood. Hence, *prosopis juliflora* that made the grazing land a 'green desert', intensified conflict among neighborhood pastoral groups as resource is getting scarce alarmingly.

The development policies in the past two regimes since 1950's remain the Afar pastoralists still relegating in the waiting room of development. Without being recovered from the twinge, the Afar people are now in the eve of facing another ill-conceived development policy from above. As argued by Ayalew (2001) "for the pastoralists the end is not yet in sight." Despite immeasurable socio-cultural, politico-economical and environmental loss incurred in the preceding development interventions, further expansion of commercial farms is being planned and implemented. As the EPRDF-led government yet holds thousands of hectares of the Derg period State farms, it also reinitiated the Derg regime's plan¹⁶² of Kessem-Tendaho Dam and Irrigation Development project since 2004 for sugarcane plantations on 85,000 ha of land. The irrigation scheme will, occupy much of the most productive grazing lands in Afambo, Ayssaita, Dubti, Mille, Awash Fentale and Dulecha Weredas. Elders in lower Awash Valley claimed that the federal government officials who came and talk with them about the project initially identified the plain land at Gerjile as the project site. Gerjile has a plain land stretched 40kms up to Serdo, 25km to Dubti and around 53 km up to Ayssaita. However, when the project touches the ground, it alienated Afar pastoralists from around 109,000 ha of dry and wet season grazing lands. 60,000ha of land along the Awash basin is allocated for Sugarcane cultivation,¹⁶³ 24,000 ha will be left for grazing, and the remaining 25,000ha is allotted to be distributed for investors and outgrowers. The total expense of the project will be 8.68 billion br, the Ethiopian Government budgeted 4.7

¹⁶² During the Derg era, the project feasibility study was done by US based Sir M. McDonald and Partners in the late 1980s, and the detailed design was completed by the state-owned Water Works Design and Controlling Enterprise. The enterprise also hired Russian consultants for the Tendaho project feasibility study work.

¹⁶³ According to the project plan, half of the 20,000 hectare irrigation land of Kesem will be controlled by Metahara Sugar Factory for input production of sugar and the balance will be distributed for local pastoralists to cultivate sugarcane.

billion birr from its own treasury and the remaining funds will come from EXIM's¹⁶⁴ hard currency. EXIM, an Indian government owned Bank has offered to loan 351 Million dollars to co-finance the Tendaho Sugar Development Project. The feasibility study of the project was also conducted by Indian firm, J.P.Mukherjee. It may happen by default, but extensive involvement of Indian firms in the current Kessem-Tendaho Dam and Irrigation Development project has historical connotation in which "Emperor Ba'eda Maryam (1468-1478) had also made contacts with India for commencing sugarcane cultivation in Abyssinia." (Pankhurst, R. 1974: 247)

In fact it would have been preferable if Ethiopian government has followed the Indian way in executing the project rather than the Sudan paths that seems to follow. The India sugarcane production sectors have involved more than 45,000 out growers while in Sudan, out five sugarcane plantations four is owned and administered by the state. As history repeats itself, the Kessem-Tendaho project is packed of promises that are not new for the pastoralists. The project promised to undertake voluntary settlements and transforming the Afar livelihood to sedentary life become out growers. However, as head of the coordinating office claimed, efforts done for preparing pastoralists to be an out grower is too insignificant. Rather government has paid in phases around 9000 br per square meter for clans claiming ownership.¹⁶⁵

Furthermore, the environmental impact assessment of this project explains predictable risks and dangers on the pastoral livelihood. On the first place, two giant dams which have capacity of holding 520,000,000 and 2.8 billion cubic meters of water with the capacity of cultivating up to 90,000 ha of land will be constructed in the Awash valley basin. (Already on construction in 2009) This figure by itself can plainly illustrate that pastoralists are going to be chased out of a large area of dry and wet season grazing lands not only for the 3rd time but also it will be the largest land size lost at once in history. The environmental impact assessment of the project further states that the dams will sharply reduce the seasonal floods downstream where pastoralists come from long distances during dry season to look for communal grazing land. In addition the

¹⁶⁴ The Export-Import Bank of India is an Indian government-owned financial institution for the public sector created by and Act of the Parliament of India: the Export-Import Bank of India Act 1981.

¹⁶⁵ Infact the money is paid to Afar pastorals as a subsisyy for the oppportunity lost in the first years of the sugar plantations project implemntation.

assessment report says ‘a canal of 70km length will be a favorite breeding site for mosquitoes’. Surprising enough, as the head of coordinating has claimed, employment vacancies are appeared in an English newsletter, Ethiopian Herald. Data shows that until October 2009 only 15 Afars are hired in the project. However, the project will accommodate around 80,000 household laborers for whom residential houses within 14 ha of land is under construction. According to the Afar elders, this migration would be future threat for the Afar pastoralists. As one elder analyzed the process, ‘the Imperial government raped our land, the Derg penetrated further by using extensive force and the revolutionary democrats are going to done the three regimes old project through a cold colony.’

Despite the forthcoming results, the initial stage of this project has already led the Afar and Issa/Somali to armed confrontation. As the coordinator announced, for the kebele of Gessiyo and Lea’as that moved from Mille Wereda, decision was reached to resettle the people at Gebto, 30 km from Adaytu. Gebto was selected due to its potential for urban development as well as accessibility of potential grazing and hence 2000 houses and rural road were to be constructed but Issa/Somali regular attack against the construction workers led for the impediment of the construction. In spite of all these controversies and threats, the federal government seems to expand development schemes further in the remaining lands along the Awash Valley.¹⁶⁶

6.2.3 The Invisible Hand of Illicit Trade and the Role of the Army

6.2.3.1 The Heavy Hand of Illicit Trade in the Afar-Issa/Somali Conflict

Due to their strategic settlements in the Horn region, Issa/Somalis have somehow commercial mentality. According to historical records Issa/Somalis have effectively utilized their comparative advantages in geographical position they held particularly

¹⁶⁶ Apart from the huge sugar cane plantation project in Tendaho Northeast of Afar region, the deputy Prime Minister Adissu Legesse has announced the central government development plans in his sojourn in Afar region in 2009. Accordingly, development of Teru Depression Northwest of AFAR by gravity and Alidegihe in Southeast of the region by gravity water will start soon. The Prime Minister himself confirmed the plan during his meeting with youth’s representative of all regions on 7 Feb 2009. He says ‘the focus is not only Awash River but also we plan to develop the underground water potential in Shinelle and also in hallideghe and our target is to avoid shortage of water and grass being a source of conflict.

during the heyday of Abban trade route in 19th century. If certain location loses its strategic importance through the course of time, Issa/Somalis have no custom to cross their hands and give up. Rather, they would move to the new business location and strived hard to have a foothold there. Accordingly, after the Abban trade is getting declined, they moved and control areas along the railway. (See Appendix I) As a result they pushed the Afars away and controlled Dikihil and other railway stations in Ethiopia. Eventually all the strategic location for trade routes became a Somali territory that facilitate the booming of illicit trade business all through the porous border of Somali occupied regions in the Horn. Lewis M. (2002:297-298) quoted a French Journalist Jerome Tubiana in February 2002, “we only pay the faction controlling the port of entry of our goods and then transport them by road as far as Kenya, in Ethiopia, and to Djibouti. We pass through the frontiers without too much difficulty because the frontier zones are occupied by Somalis.”

Soonafter, the railway business showed some decline particularly in post the second Ethio-Somali war and the land transportation through the Afarland to the port city of Assab begun to flourish. Here again Issa/Somali business strategists seemed to decide to set to gain foothold along the main road that connects Addis to the port of Assab and Djibouti. Gradually they achieved to establish new settlements along the road and even accomplished to set up a sophisticated illicit trade networks. The Issa/Somali even achieved to establish a group who control these contraband business activities known as *Akramot*, meaning ‘till our death’. Indeed, Akramot that operates with regular financial contribution and taxes from the illicit traders is actively involved not only in the illicit trade but also in identifying strategic locations and establishing new settlements. Thus these days Issa/Somalis are able to settle in hamlets along the Asphalt road within 10-20km distance from the banks of the Awash River. In some areas the move of the Issa/Somali seems to reach areas beyond Awash River. For instance the movement towards the western borders of Afar region that share borders with Oromia and Amhara regional states (distant from Awash River) has no sign of pastoral mobility in search of water. Rather it seems the Akramot strategist’s decision to get in touch with the market to the highland. As argued by Medhane (2004:23-23) “clearly, Issa herders want access to the Awash River. But, the objective goes beyond that. Curiously the new bones of

contention are not traditional resources, nor are they linked to pastoral livestock production. Pushed by a class of aggressive livestock traders, the Issa are reportedly projecting to have access to Kemise town, a very and dynamic and increasingly booming market between the Afar and the highlanders.”

Nowadays, Issa/Somalis have achieved to connect Gedamaytu and Undufo to As-ale and Ali-sabieh towns of Djibouti respectively. Moreover, there trucks owned by Akramot that carry illicit goods including arms are derived along a hidden road which connects the contrabandists’ hub, Gadamaytu to port of Berbera in the de facto state of Somaliland. Little (2001:194) affirmed that “approximately 50 to 60 percent of the small stock exported out of Berbera, Somaliland originates from Ethiopia.” In fact the illicit trade do not only aggravate conflicts over controlling access routes but also it may destroy the pastoral livelihood as most of youths, the engines of growth, are actively involved in illicit trade that could not be sustainable means of life instead spread out crimes, raids and counter raids and violent conflicts between neighboring ethnic groups.

In addition, the unseen cross border routes within a country could be a safe haven for some destabilizing forces. For instance, as a response for intelligence reports, the federal army of Ethiopia has campaigned against the contrabandists in Gedmaytu on 1st March 2008 and searched all houses in the hamlet while the Agazzi special commandos launched operation about 40 kms away from the main road in order to survey activities deep in the jungle. Illicit goods with an estimated value of over 40 million birr were seized. Additionally, security forces surrendered large number of weapons. About twenty-two Somali contrabandists sent to prison in the capital, Addis Abeba, while the organized contraband chain stretched from Dire Dawa to Djibouti is still under investigation. The channels commonly known as “Somali road” that connects Undufo to As’Ale in Djibouti and Gedmaytu to Hargeisa in Somaliland are already identified.

Though difficult to verify, Ethiopian intelligence agency has reportedly discovered the military training camp inside the jungle. Half year ago, gun was fired directly at the telecommunication microwave transmission tower around Gedmaitu and destroyed the mobile phone service within 250 kms along the main road that stretched from Awash Arba to Mille town. On the other hand, about seventeen radio communication receivers were held from the Somali “contrabandists” in Gedamaytu. Furthermore, Djiboutian and

Eritrean identity cards found during the search supports the claim that Eritrean-trained OLF, ONLF and other armed oppositions easily infiltrate across these porous border.

Overall, the hot illicit business along the area escalated the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict as the contrabandists manipulate the old rivalry and confrontation among the two societies in order to control business strategic areas by chasing Afars from their homeland. Moreover as their economic power strengthen through the illicit trade that in turn would lead to supremacy in military power. And the easy access for arms and related chain of interests would lead the situation towards never ending chains of conflicts. Cliffe (2005:240) argued as “the porous borders around the country have facilitated trade, often illicit, and weapons transfers as well as population movement of nomadic pastoralists, traders or combatants. These alarming increases in the proliferation of armaments have two faces sword. [The] first is because of its availability and easy access, [an] aggravating cause of conflict in the area [and] second, the market for smuggling rise due to growing instability of the Horn region. [That will lead] a well organized Mafia [to organize] in the heart of African horn. This by turn lead to ambition to control the access routes strengthens their expansion and presence in the area conflict.”

According to some informants, the free market price for one Kalashnikov in the Gedmaytu has risen to \$400 which is equivalent to around 5000 Ethiopian birr and hence to get one AK47, 2-3 camels or around six cattle or around 30 sheep and goats are to be sold. Hence that is also another factor for Issa/Somali uninterrupted campaign against their Afar and Oromo societies. Documented letter exchanges between various administrative bodies in Ethiopia proved this argument. A confidential letter sent by the 3rd Infantry Division on 1/10/1969 Ref no.2/42/20/163/1230 to Harar Governorate General stated that since August 1969 Issas have looted cattle, camels, sheep and goats which is equivalent to three fold of the amount they took in the previous year and they sold it in the Dire Dawa market and buy weapons from Djibouti and Somalia. Even recently one of the Somali region representatives for the JPC claimed that a vehicle with Somaliland plate carried contraband goods were robbed by Afars.¹⁶⁷ The person just gave emphasis on expressing the Afar’s attack against Issa/Somali but on the other hand he

¹⁶⁷ In the minutes of the 19/05/03 meeting that held in Awash Osman Kendi, Administrator of Zone 3 argued as [it was illigeal and robbed by ilegals] Then Meresa also supported Osman’s idea by saying ‘this is robbery so it has no conection with the conflict.’

unintentionally has informed about the spread out of contraband business in which a Somaliland plated vehicle traverses through the porous border till the heart of Ethiopia freely as stated by Markakis (2002) “without benefit of passports, visas or customs checks.”

Generally, through the strong leadership of the Akramot group, the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali along the main road is getting intensified. In fact, as there are some groups that backed the contrabandists for the sake of getting access to destabilize Ethiopia and the Horn region as a whole, there are also other actors who strongly assisted the illicit traders for the sake of personal economic advantages with no or little knowledge of its enduring effect.

6.2.3.2 The Role of the Army in Tilting the Balance

All these well organized contraband activities are not without the sight of the government. As seen in the photo below, the army officers are loyal customers for contraband shops in Gedmaytu. Indeed, in the Horn region where majority of the population lives in absolute poverty and the fluctuation of inflation rate have significantly distorted the purchasing power of the public, it's considerable that either the army members or other civil servants search for markets with least prices. However, when high level military officers involved themselves in the illicit trade, then the issue becomes more sophisticate and dodgy too. During the Derg time it's reportedly known that some army officials have been bamboozled with simple electronics commodities and gave coverage for illicit traders at the time of pre-1990s socialist Ethiopia. As Kona (2003:9) argued “the nature of states’ responses to pastoralist conflicts often gives rise to suspicious that the governmental authorities are tolerating these conflicts and maybe behind them.” Proving this logic, during the Derg era, military vehicles were seen in transporting Issa/Somali contrabandists for which Afar elders have claimed several times but to no avail.

Afars particularly between Awash and Gewane towns are yet claiming that in post-1991 (EPRDF era) Military interventions in relation to illicit trade activities are becoming intense. According to eyewitness who wishes to remain anonymous, military vehicles often transport illicit commodities. Moreover, some well know contrabandists spend

nights in military camps while they travel. If the information is credible, then one could conclude as the army is becoming major factor in backing one ethnic group (as the contrabandists are entirely Somalis in the area) and enemize the other. One Afar informant in Gewane area accuses the army members for their partiality. He further stated that 'when we try to follow a trail laid by some Issa/Somali criminals, there are times that army officers restricted us.' In fact, the army members may forbid the Afars to chase out the criminals in order to avoid further violence between the two societies. However, it also does not mean that the some army members are sinking in the contraband network. For example, the well-known case of one Captain in the Awash Arba military camp is worth mentioned here. He is among those army members who usually offer his automobile for transporting weapons, Issa/Somali fighters and injured ones during armed confrontations with Afars. Later he married to an Issa/Somali woman and according to the informants he becomes one of the 'ill-gotten riches' within the army. Herrie (2008: 44) stated that the Issa-Somalis publicly sell the smuggled goods in Gedmaytu town [...] the chain of this business in Ethiopia extends from the daily laborers to a few dishonest high-level government officials (regional, finance police members and their officials, federal and military officials) and that is why the government's effort to control these illegal activities is not successful.'

Figure 4. Army member showed up in Gedamaytu illicit trade market



Source: Own source photo taken on 03/01/2007

Another minor incident that might indicate the local discourse about the involvement of high level officials in the illicit trade network is that the Andido Wereda checking station is dissolved due to the order from the federal government. The reason given was for the safety of Somali authorities travel through the Afar region to the Issa/Somali settlements along the road. However, some critics argued that the reason was to allow easy flow of contraband commodities. Overall, as majority of security forces deployed along the road are serving their country and people in securing peace and stability of the area, some involved in the illicit trade network further trigger the conflict rather than playing a positive role.

Box 11. Gedmaytu

Gedmaytu is initially established as food aid storage and distribution centre during 1970s. Road construction camps were also set up there. Like any other truck-stop sites, the Derg dismantled Gedmaytu in 1974 and 1989. Similarly the Agazzi special commandos launched operation to crack down contrabandists' chain in Gedmaytu on 1st March 2008. However, Gedmaytu is today revived and even become one of the most known contraband centers within the country. Gedmaytu that is recognized as kebele under Amibera Wereda literally means foxes in Afar language that indicates presence of too many foxes in the past around this area. Nowadays, recently migrated Issa/Somalis are the predominant inhabitants of the town that renamed as Garabaciise by the Somalis to mean „shoulder of Issa“. In fact from the boundary demarcated during the Imperial era between the Afar and Issa/Somali people, Erer River, Somalis penetrated deep in to Afar areas over 137kms in the direction of Gedmaytu.(Erer-35 km-Aydora-27km- Asbuli-40km- Mulu Gelalu-35km-Gedmaytu) As claimed by the Somalis the migration is a ‚pure pastoralists movement in search of water and grass‘. However, its well known that there is no sustainable water points in the surroundings so the settlers are depend entirely on privately owned birkeds (cemented underground water tanks) filled with water used to be brought from Awash Arba (km away). Actually it seems the potential contraband trade routes that could attract „pastoralists “who settle permanently in a place where there is no water. Thus the Derg completely destroyed the Gedmaytu contraband center and decided a buffer-zone that obliged Issa/Somalis to stay 30km away before reaching to the east of the main Addis-Assab/Djibouti road. After the arrival of EPRDF in early 1990s, the Derg's buffer-zone decision is breached and any Somalis are allowed to set up their settlements within 6km distance away from the road. Later on as a response to the appeal of Issa/Somali elders to the Prime Minister, as told by informants, they are allowed to construct houses in Gedmaytu where there was no single house till mid 1990s. Afars who claimed to migrate all the way from coastal areas like Berbera, Zayla, Harar ,Dire Dawa, Erer, Afdem and surroundings seems to have no chance even to co-exist with thier late arrival neighbors in Gedmaytu. It is a recent history for Afars to remind the income they had been generated from Issa/Somali herders for using water of the Waruf River around Obno (Ethio-Djibouti border). Today Issa/Somali moved from Erer area pushed the Afars away and controlled localities like Gota, Bike, Biyu-keraba, Afdem, Mulu, Mulhuli, Mero, Meiso, surroundings of Asebot Mountain, Mefaydella, Kaho and reached to Gedmaytu. On top of that they are driving Afars in Andido with the objective seems to reach Bure Modaytu, Amibera and Awash Fentale areas bordering Amhara and Oromo highlands along the westward border. After witnessing all these historical trajectories Ugaas Hassen Hersi said „ Allah showed me both the good and bad days of Afar”as I was told.

6.3 Analysis of Conflict Accelerators and Actors in the Republic of Djibouti

6.3.1 Ethnoregional Bias in Development Endeavors

Indeed, Djibouti is one of the poorest countries in the sub-Saharan Africa in which the economy is primarily based on port service to the landlocked Ethiopia as well as lease income collect from the US and European military bases since 1998 and 2002 respectively. As reported by an investigative journalist Alain Lallemand (2007) “in an interview with ICIJ, the president [Guelleh] said that after splitting the revenue with the company that operates the port, his government gets 7 billion Djiboutian francs, a little more than \$40 million. ...the lease [of Camp Lemonier] had been costing the U.S. about \$30 million a year...the French pay about \$38 million a year to rent a military camp and training grounds; the Germans pay roughly \$10 million. The Spanish also have a base, but no figures are publicly available for the rent they pay.” The railway service to Ethiopia had also been among the major sources of income for Djibouti before it stopped since years.

Apart from military aid and rent for bases, Djibouti is heavily dependent upon financial aid from the United States and the French Development Agency, as well as the World Bank. However, the country is yet characterized by deprived basic social services and facilities. Enrolment rate and health conditions are very poor. Unemployment is extremely high and rising alarmingly. Economic development of the country is too minimal in which majority of its public live in extreme poverty and inequality. In addition to the over dependency of the economy in foreign financial support, rampant corruption together with high salaries for government employees leads the remaining scarce resources inadequate to meet basic socio-economic needs of the public. Generally, as declared by Alain Lallemand (ibid) “to think of Djibouti as a nation in the Western sense would be deeply misleading: Its institutions are at best weak and at worst nonfunctioning; its budget is a confusing, unreliable mess.”

On top of all these malaises, the Issa/Somali dominated government of Djibouti has been implementing very strong ethnic biased development activities between different regions of the Republic as well as ethnically segregated districts within the capital. Afar dominated northern part of the country, Obock and Tadjoura have very low socio-

economic status in related to the southern portion of an Issa/Somali dominated regions of Ali Sabieh, southern Dikhil and the newly established Arta. An overwhelmingly Somali inhabited district of Arta is formed by taking some portion from Dikhil and the capital Djibouti. The northern region is totally neglected from governmental and non-governmental development interventions as the state has declared the region as crisis zone. Rotberg (2005:12) confirmed the situation in such a way that “while Djibouti suffers the same cycle of drought and famine that hits the rest of the Horn of Africa, [...] the situation is even more dramatic for the people of the northern and south-western regions, who still don't have access to aid and services from NGOs, and are exposed to a slow destruction due to the policies of the regime.” USAID report (2004:18) further added in the above stated claim as “the Northwest Pastoral Zone (Afar inhabiting areas) is the poorest in the country. This is due to its isolation and its poor integration into the national economy.” The road network is poor and the provision of services limited. There are, for example, few functioning primary schools in the zone. Similarly the report (ibid: 22) claims that “the Central Pastoral Zone (is a large but relatively sparsely populated zone, mainly inhabited by Afar pastoralists along the coast or in the foothills and mountains of Tadjoura and Obock districts) is relatively isolated from Djibouti’s main urban markets. This limits the options for generating income within the zone. There is some selling of firewood along the main coast road, but most households depend either on remittance sent by family members living in Djibouti city, or on a pension received by a household member re-settled in the countryside upon retirement.”

The Southeast Pastoral Zone (includes the whole of Ali Sabieh district, the eastern half of Arta and southern Dikhil which are entirely Issa/Somali inhabiting areas) as affirmed in (ibid:27) “has relatively good road and rail access to Djibouti’s main urban centers and people in this zone depend primarily on the sale of rural produce to these urban markets.” In fact, the availability of the main road and railway that connects Djibouti to Ethiopia in the zone may definitely offer a comparative advantage for access to markets. However, the government has done no attempt at all to bridge the economic livelihood gap between Afar and Somali inhabited regions. No protection policy and quality improving programmes are designed for the local pastoralist to effectively compete against livestock imports from neighboring Ethiopia and Somaliland. Income

from salt, honey and tourism in the zone has declined due to mechanized exploitation of the Lake Assal by giant businessmen, persistent drought and portraying the areas as crisis zone respectively. While the Afar zones are deprived of any socio-economic facilities and lost the already existed means of income generation, Somali inhabited areas are increasingly expanding and diversifying means of livelihood. Apart from relatively high access to urban employment in the capital, the State invested massively in Somali inhabiting regions like Ali-Sabieh where mineral water plant, cement factory and manufacturing plant of marble are established.

Even the capital, Djibouti city has six arrondissements (administrative divisions in French) that are subdivisions of the city in which each arrondissement is sub-divided into several quartiers/districts segregated mainly along ethnic lines. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd arrondissements are the wealthiest locations in the city towards the north of Ambouli River incorporated within the older part of the city. While the rest commonly known as Balbala (the poorest area of the city) located in the southern part of the river that as clearly wrote in (ibid: 12) “developed in the 1980s and 1990s to accommodate an increasing city population and incomers from the rural areas. Settlement in most of Balbala has been relatively ad-hoc. Most people do not own the land they have settled on and essentially live in temporary housing constructed of a wood frame with corrugated iron walls and roofing.” Even though the 1st and 2nd arrondissements have better infrastructural facilities, Afar inhabited quartiers of Enguela and Arhiba in each arrondissements respectively are characterized by substandard temporary housing and slums with very poor access to basic services such as water, electricity, drainage system etc. Generally, regional as well as district level inequality within the Republic triggers the ethnic rivalry among the Afar and Issa-Somali people.

6.3.2 Rampant Corruptions and Turn of the Republic into a Personal Fiefdom

In Djibouti the state has degenerated into private fiefdom in which privileged Issa/Somalis particularly the Mamassan sub clans and some corrupted yes-sir politicians seems to hold the key of the country in their pocket. As a private institution, some groups of individuals are allowed to accumulate wealth at the expense of others which in turn

derive them to strengthen their power. Duale (2006) wrote as “Djibouti is run like a private gangland by Guelleh’s filthy-rich family and a host of cronies and debauched henchmen.”

Indeed the president’s family network seems large enough to control all sectors where they have cash cows in that tiny Republic. As Duale 2006 cited “Guelleh’s well-heeled and all-powerful son [Liban Omar Guelleh], notoriously known as Mr. Isuzu, has the sole license for car dealership in Djibouti.” The Indian Ocean Newsletter published on 14 November 2009 further identified Guelleh’s closest family network. Accordingly, “his brother, Youssouf Omar Guelleh known as Yuyé, is a top civil servant in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Djibouti. Another brother, Guirreh Omar Guelleh is at the head of Guirreh Business Group and of several other companies: Madalmetal, Djibouti Steel Co and Goubet Trading Services. Saleh Omar Guelleh, who works for Djibouti water authority ONED, is also involved in the ports business. Saad Omar Guelleh, a retired serviceman, is the head of the Djibouti port maintenance service and often plays a “clandestine” number two in this public body run by Dubai Port World. Meanwhile, one of IOG’s cousins, Djama Ali Guelleh, has been general manager of *Electricité de Djibouti (EDD)* for over twenty years; IOG also has a nephew, Bouh Idriss Omar Guelleh who runs Investment Bank of Africa in Djibouti.”

Apart from the small family circle, other Issa/Somali personalities reportedly have business contact with the nucleus of the Republic. The most known businessman in Djibouti until his recent trouble with the first lady is Abdirahman Borre from Issa/Odahgob sub-sub-clan. Duale (2006) described him as the “wealthiest individual in the Horn of Africa.” Until the recent dispute with the president’s circle in February 2009, Borre was regarded as manager of Guelleh’s holdings. Aside from the well-known comprehensive business of Borre (Import, telecommunication, construction, radio and TV stations and fruit plantations), Borre involved, some accuses him for involving in illegal businesses like printing of counterfeit Somali currency, allegedly involved in the lucrative business of dumping Europe’s industrial toxic waste in Somalia’s coastlines and in Afar inhabited coastal areas of Djibouti.

Moreover, Ali coubba, a historian and politician as well, gives his commentary in Ugut-Toosi newspaper (September 2009) in which he accuses the president’s group for

“selling of Djiboutian passport in the black market.”¹⁶⁸ The news posted on garowe.com on 30th of May, 2008, stated about contracting out of Djibouti’s salt industry in which seems to have the smell of corruption. ‘Mr. Nikhil Bhuta, the chief financial officer for the JB Group, an Indian mining company said he had set up mines across Africa but never had he experienced such generous terms of business, like the deal he struck with the Djiboutian government to split gold profits 80 percent for his company, 20 percent for the government. In Africa, you never even get 50 percent, he said.’ It’s worth mentioning that the governor of the National Bank of Djibouti is the president’s brother-in-law, Mr. Djama Mohamoud Haid. The Djiboutian first lady, Kadra Mohamoud Haid has also established her own family network in which the new actors, Isaq/Somalis are too approaching to the Republic’s nucleus. Apart from her brother Djama in which certain members of the government as written in (The Indian Ocean Newsletter, Nov 28 2009-12-05) claims 80% of the country’s finances to be held in the hands of Djama and his sister, Kadra’s second brother, Elmy is also director of civil aviation of Djibouti. The first lady’s two sons from her first marriage with Abdallah Mohamed Kamil, Nazli Abdallah is a diplomat in Paris while the daughter is married with the Minister of Transport (Ali Hassan Bahdon).

One of the most powerful personalities in Djiboutian government is the Minister for Presidential Affairs and promotion of investment, Osman Ahmed Moussa, cousin of first lady. Political marriage is the other means used to enlarge but confined the rampant corruption in the Republic. Among the Afar stooges, Minister of Agriculture, Abdoukadir Mohamed Kamil has married to the niece of the president. Another article posted in Somaliland Net on 30 September 2000 has indicated the corruption link between the Djiboutian political personalities with Siyad Barre’s government. According to the report a certain well-known woman called Sirad who was the half-sister of Barre’s General, Mohamed Hashi Gani, happened to be married to Issa man who had a good position in Djibouti ministry of education. And this lady, Sirad worked in Somali Commercial Bank that was called as Banque de Djibouti et du Moyen Orient

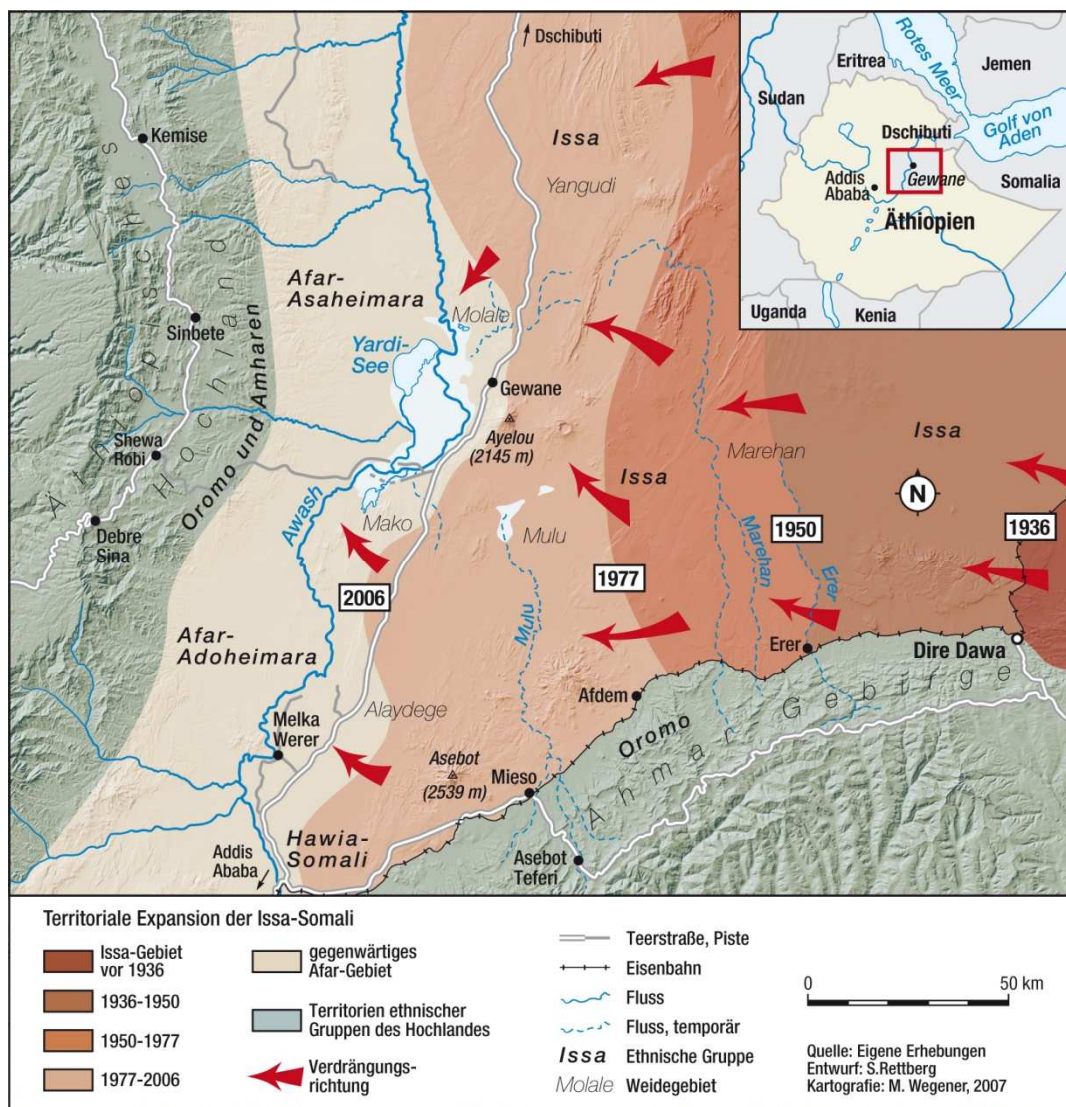
¹⁶⁸ The journal of Ugut-Toosi posted in September 2009 stated that on the black market, a passport would cost an average Djiboutian 300,000 FD. On several occasions, Somali smugglers and terrorists arrested in Europe and the Gulf countries were carrying passports of Djibouti. Spain, alarmed by the resurgence of this phenomenon has given the Republic of Djibouti on the Red List, as a country providers of travel to terrorist networks.

(BDMO), which according to the report was established for funneling large sums of money to Djibouti to collapse the anti-Barre movement in Somaliland. The writer accuses Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, Zakariya Sheikh Ibrahim (the strongman of the army these days); Idriss Omar Guelleh (the now deceased brother of the current president) took bribes and loans from this bank which they never paid back. Furthermore, the incumbent President Guelleh, a former head of the security services, is also blamed to involve his hand in the death of Judge Bernard Borrel who had been advising Djibouti's Ministry of Justice. Just before his death, on the request of the Djiboutian Minister of Justice of the time, Bernard Borrel was investigating different allegations in which, according to some roomers, he had uncovered evidence of President Guelleh's involvement in trafficking of weapons and fissile material for use in the production of uranium. Shortly, in October 1995 Bernard Borrel's body was found soaked in gasoline and half burnt at Ghoubet el kharab, about 100 km from the capital Djibouti near the District of Tadjoura. An inquiry into the death by the Djibouti government ruled that the judge had committed suicide but there were speculations that the judge might have been assassinated. Hence, Mr Borrel's widow, Elisabeth Borrel, claimed that President Guelleh ordered her husband's death. However, Guelleh has rejected the allegation and refused to cooperate in the investigation. Consequently, in January 2005, a French judge issued arrest warrants against Djibouti officials including the country's Security Chief, Hassan Saeed and State Prosecutor, Djama Souleiman accusing them of interfering with witnesses in the ongoing investigation into the death. Djibouti rejects the accusation and played down the call of its high authorities by the French court. Shortly after Sarkozy's election he received Madam Borrel at the Elysée, which had provoked strong reactions in Djibouti. The Djiboutian government ordered the closure of the French state-owned Radio, Radio France Internationale, due to its special program dedicated on the Borrel case. Soon French investigating judge, Sophie Clement, summoned the Djiboutian President for questioning over the Borrel case. However, the Djiboutian government insisted that France had no legal mandate to summon its officials covered by diplomatic immunity. They sent petition to ICJ against France for non-compliance with agreements on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed by the two countries in 1976 and 1986. As Guelleh said 'I had already been summoned twice. This is unacceptable. We also expect

the International Court of Justice to cancel the international arrest warrant against the state prosecutor and the head of the national security of Djibouti.’ Generally, Djibouti’s high level corruption obviously hinders the fragile economy of the Republic. Djibouti scored 3.0 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2008. (The scale runs from 0 (high corruption) to 10 (no corruption). Djibouti was ranked 102nd among the 180 countries in the world. Added these top level corruption in the Republic’s poor economy and partisan wealth distribution system, automatically aggravate the ethnic rivalry long existed in the Republic.

6.4 Analytical Framework for the Afar-Somali Conflict

Map 4. The Border in Motion



Source: (Rettberg 2006)

6.5 Concluding Summary

Traditional economic resource competitions, cultural values, and socio-political hegemony were considered as major factors that intensified conflicts among neighboring pastoral and non-pastoral (lowlander vs highlander) in the Horn region in general. In the particular case of Ethiopia, ethno territoriality has becoming the major centrifugal force that drives ethnic groups to involve in bloody conflicts. Those who have power usually raid against its neighbour that has lesser power with the ambition of securing more territory. Accordingly, Afars and Somali were confronting and pushing against each other since the earliest population movements. Then expansion of Oromo had also influenced the relation of the Afar and Somali as huge portion of land in northeast Africa is occupied by the Oromos. The cross-border alliances among Somalis in the peak of pan-Somali nationalism movemnets escalated the tension evolving ethno-territorialtiy and so on. Apart from major political dynamics in the region, the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict has other accelerating factors that trigger the conflict at different occasions in time. In Ethiopia, the new federalism structure having given a safe path for mushrooming of inter-ethnic conflicts. Hence, aside from the conflict with Issa/Somali, Afars are in conflict with all its neighbours of Amhara, Tigray and Oromo. These conflicts may lead them to confront with the Issa /Somali and/or vice versa. Similarly, Somalis have border disputes with the Oromo which is declared as 'settled' by referendum. The other aggravating factor of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict is ill-conceived development policies undertaken along the Awash Valley that destructs pastoral livelihood that led to conflicts among neighborhood pastoral and agro pastoral groups.

The only and last resort of pastoralists, Awash Valley basin is raped by the Imperial government and yet abused with no or little concern for the survival of pastoralists which led all pastoral groups in the area to aggressively compete over the scarce resources remain. These large scale development schemes initiated from above continued to alienate pastoralists from their land since the Imperial era to the Derg and yet at the reign of EPRDF with a very similar packages of unrealized promises. The mere difference in these schemes is its transformation from private and joint venture commercial cotton farms during Haile Selassie to large scale state farms under the Derg and more expanded

sugar cane plantation during the incumbent government of EPRDF. Consequently, the alarming depletion of pastoral resources due to natural cause in addition to restricted mobility of pastoralists as their land is grabbed by the state result bloody armed confrontation between not only the Afar and Issa/Somali but among all pastoral groups dwell along the Awash Valley.

Moreover, the illicit trade expanded along the Addis–Djibouti Asphalt road in which Issa/Somalis already gained foothold as a result of successful military campaigns against the Afars further fuelling the very intense conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali. Nowadays these contrabandists are able to establish a chain stretched from Middle East to the hinterland land of Ethiopia organized by an association called Akramot. This association is responsible not only in financing the illicit trade chain but also holding up strategic decision regarding future raids and new settlements. In fact this illicit trade is attracting some military personnel who neglect their oath to stand steadily for the interest of the country and/or the public and put their hand in this trade that has national threat both in economic and security terms. Likewise in Djibouti there are aggravating factors for the already hostile relation between the two major ethnic groups of the country. Biased development efforts not only among regions in the republic but also in ethnic lines divided districts in the capital city in which Afar dominated regions and districts in the capital are far from enjoying basic infrastructural facilities and services. Furthermore, rampant corruption spread by few Issa/Mamassan ‘strong men’ who control the republic as their private fiefdom in turn trigger resentment among the Afar and Issa/Somali as well as the majority marginalized, unemployed and hopeless youths from the Afar ethnicity are becoming a huge resources not only to avenge their Somali counterparts but also to be potential candidates for other destabilizing factors infiltrate into the region.

Chapter Seven

7 Conclusion, Policy Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

7.1 Research Questions and Findings

The major question addressed in this study was why the trans-border ethnic conflict between Afar and Issa/Somali has escalated in tune with regional political dynamics while various unilateral resolution interventions have been taken within the host states. This broad question entails not only an in-depth analysis of major regional political orders in the Horn region since the colonial era but also the historical background of the conflict is explored from the time when both ethnic groups co-existed at Zayla in today's Somaliland. Detailed observations on the failure of all unilateral settlement attempts persuaded by both host states of the Federalist Ethiopia and Republic of Djibouti, further entails an investigation of whether other catalysts have an influence on the intensification and prolonging of this conflict.

The major findings with regard to these core questions are discussed from chapter three up to chapter six. Politico-economic and socio-cultural features of the Afar and Issa/Somali people together with brief historical background on the genesis of the conflict are sketched in Chapter Three. Chapter Four answers the main question on how changes in regional political order have affected and escalated the conflict. In Chapter Five, it is argued that all unilateral conflict resolution attempts persuaded by successive governments in Ethiopia and Djibouti have been failing. Chapter Six assesses other major catalysts that have triggered the conflict and have contributed to the failed resolution efforts in both host states.

7.2 General Conclusions

As stated in the second chapter of this study, in spite of depending entirely on a comprehensive theory on conflict knowledge in which several factors could be overlooked; this study shared the concept of Kurt Singer (1949) who argued as “true knowledge is of particular.” Accordingly, the study explored in chronological order the

various regional political orders that have been intensifying and escalating the long existing traditional conflict among the Afar and Somali people in the African Horn. Rather than the Darwin's biological view point of human aggression, the characteristics of conflict between the Afar and Somali seem very close to Anthony Smith's view of social conflict as a clash of interests between societies. The findings of the study further indicated that the power-politics school of thought in which actors scramble for the maximization of their vested interests is an apparent feature of non-pastoral urban conflicts between the two major ethnic groups in the Republic of Djibouti.

The Afar and Somali societies share similar politico-economic and socio-cultural values. Thus it seems there is no reason for the two parties to confront each other over values as claimed by Functionalities. Moreover, the age of this long-lasting conflict disproves the Situationists view of specific conditions that generates incompatible goals leading to confrontation. Rather, justifications given by communication interactionist theorists that claim interdependency as the main factor for generating conflict while both parties compete over achieving incompatible goals seem to comprise the case of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. Because both groups have a number of common interests ranging from water points and pasture to access routes for trade. As a matter of fact conflict is natural and even can happen within a person's mind. Thus, these two ethnic groups are classified into categories of 'us' and 'them' that lead to centuries-old bloody conflicts. As a result, vast areas particularly in Ba'adu and Dikhil districts in Ethiopia and Djibouti respectively have become the most conflict ridden areas in which simple pastoral livelihood is becoming very harsh. Apart from massive human sufferings, these conflicts further derail people's energies. In addition, overall development in these regions is being hampered by the general insecurity in the area. Therefore, a direct focus on tackling root causes and interrelated factors contributing to the escalation of these conflicts is vital. The complex and difficult issues revolving around the long lasting Afar-Issa/Somali conflict can no longer be pushed to the side unless they are addressed swiftly.

The First Chapter provides the general introduction of the study while the Second Chapter explored various conceptual and theoretical frameworks of ethnicity, ethnic group identity, conflict, ethnic conflict and resolutions.

Chapter Three is devoted to address two main factors. The first is a brief introduction to the geographic area that inhabits by the Afar and Issa/Somali people both in Ethiopia and Djibouti as well as reviewing the socio-economic and political structure of the people. The study has also found that the concept of identity among the two confronting societies is neither voluntary rational choice of an individual to belong him/herself in any group or political entrepreneurs manipulation as claimed by Instrumentalist nor 'biologically given' as argued by Primordialists. Rather, looking at the myths and oral traditions claiming Issa as the third son of Hadel Mahis (believed to be the ancestor of many Afar tribes) as well as the inter-genealogical relationship between the Debne, Weima, Harala, Welwelu and Dahimela tribes of Afars and the Urweyne, Horone, Harala, Walaldon, Wardik, Darood and other Somali tribal factions together with centuries old population movements [north-south and /or vice versa] along the area could strengthen the Constructivist view of social constructions of being an Afar or Somali as a 'products of [long time] human actions and choices for common ancestry, in spite of its origins being mostly fictions.'

The second main issue discussed in this chapter is the genesis of the conflict. Accordingly, the study found out that the earliest south-northward mobility of both Cushitic groups could definitely lead to mass displacement of one ethnic group pushed by the other. Moreover, the 14th century strife and wars between peripheral Muslim sultanates and Abyssinian Christians likely intensified territorial disputes among the Afar and Somali people. Cultural factors like heroism and wealth accumulation for reputation are some elements that influence the emotional antagonism between the two pastoral societies. Scarce economic resources like water, pasture and forests are also major factors listed in the genesis of the conflict. Furthermore, aggressive competition for territorial expansion in order to control access routes since the 19th century Abban trade to 21st century illicit trade activities have been major causes of conflict. Nowadays, the well organized contrabandists such as Akramot that has a complex chain even within the Ethiopian army are able to have their own unofficial road networks that link harbors in the Djibouti and Somaliland to Ethiopian hinterlands through which illicit commodities, small arms, people and looted livestock are easily smuggled.

Eventually the conflict has altered its historic and traditional aspect and escalated into modern trans-border inter-ethnic conflict. Initially Issa/Somalis had justified their westward movement towards the Afar's territory in Ethiopia as pastoralist's mobility in search of water and pasture. Then they have started to claim that the owner of land is none but only the government. Soon after central government clearly designated Afar's and Issa/Somali's territory, Somalis have commenced to claim that all land belongs to God. Thus all his creatures are entitled to use it with no restriction. The conflicting areas have also changed through time stretching from Zayla in today's Somaliland to Erer near Dire Dawa and sooner from the Djibouti-Dire Dawa railway areas to hamlets established along the main Addis-Assab/Djibouti asphalt road within the Afar region. Currently the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali in Ethiopia is being conducted across the Awash River targeting to gain access routes for markets in the western escarpment of the Amhara and Oromia regions. Similarly the conflict area in Djibouti stretched from Zayla to northward of the Republic. All in all this bloody conflict resulted in massive human loss both in Ethiopia and Djibouti in which one lady quoted by Major Negash Halefom during a JPCs meeting held at Awash 7 Killo in 23/3/1999 stated that Afar and Issa/Somali who have died because of the war are much greater than those who die from natural causes.

In Chapter Four, ranges of regional political orders since the colonial period up until the present are analyzed thoroughly in connection with the alarming escalation of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. Major findings discussed in this chapter confirmed the argument made by Suhrke and Noble (1977:3) in which "ethnic conflicts have peculiar characteristics that place them in the area where domestic and international politics interact." The three main reasons for foreign interventions in to local ethnic conflicts listed by Esman (2004) were all proved to exist in this case study. The Somalis' irredentism, role of the Diaspora of both ethnic groups and strategic intervention of Horn states like that of Eritrea with the conception of real politick (not by ethnic solidarity) are indeed major escalating factors of the conflict. Accordingly, the study confirms occasions where both the Afar and Somali youths are utilized by others as a 'Trojan horse serving the interests of outside powers' as suggested by Ryan (1995:32) 'Furthermore, trans-boundary assistance of kin states with no claim of irredenta (at least for the time being)

and foreign policy formulation of individual states affects the traditional ethnic conflict between the Afar and Somali.

As both the Afar and Issa/Somali people are divided societies which straddle along the Horn region, the conflict in Ethiopia has spill-over effects in to Djibouti and vice versa. Moreover, the sub-regional political orders since the arrival of colonial powers in the Horn region affected the magnitude and intensity of the conflict by further fueling grievances. The French in Djibouti brought ethnicity as an integral part of the political equation to the colony. Since their arrival, French colonial policy of divide and rule has intensified the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali to the level it has reached today. Misnaming of the colonial territory, continual shift of alliance with one ethnic group by painting the other as an enemy, ethno-regional manipulations during the two referendums, these are some historical incidents through which they introduced politicized ethnicity in Djibouti by focusing only on the interest of the colonial masters. Likewise, Italian colonial power used the Somali factor as a tool for the invasion of Ethiopia from the south. Italians recruited Somali soldiers and beefed up their military and economic strength while weakening the Afars' (who sided with Ethiopian patriots) both military and economy wise. Italian colonial power had retaliated the Afars to the extent that air strikes carried out over Afar dominated areas stretched from Erer to Ba'adu that later helped Issa/Somalis to easily control these territories by chasing the weakened Afars away till they reached the asphalt road. Italians further helped to spread the doctrine of greater Somalia that actually worsened the rivalry among the two ethnic groups to irreversible positions in which the irredentism sentiment has grown terrifyingly to the extent that pan-Somalism emotions have destabilized the security of the Horn.

The birth of new states in the region further boosted actors involved in the escalation of the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict. The creation of the Somalia republic in the 1960s further enhanced irredentism sentiment all over Somali inhabited areas from Djibouti to Kenya. Through the irredentists' network, Issa/Somalis have got comprehensive assistance from Mogadishu that played a major role in tilting the politico-economic and military balance between the Afar and Somali. The government in Mogadishu was able to organize an army brigade entirely composed of Issas. Similarly the creation of Somalia sent flames of pan-Somalism and has played a big role in the political life of Djibouti since the eve of

independence. Djibouti's independence by itself exacerbates the conflict between the two major ethnic inhabitants of the republic. As agreed by the French and the government in Mogadishu in mid 1970s, the politico-economic engine of the republic is yet dominated by Somalis in which Afars are under extensive politico-economic and socio-cultural domination over the last three decades. The secession of Eritrea has also affected the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict, whereby the essence of Eritrea's influence on the conflict varies at different times. Since its birth Eritrea supported Somalis domination over the Afar of Djibouti because the Tigriña dominated régime in Asmara has a common denominator with the Somalis of Djibouti which is marginalization of the Afar factor. Since the recent Dumeria crisis in 2008, Asmara is hosting an Afar rebel group against the regimes in Ethiopia and Djibouti. The paradox is that Eritrea has provided similar military assistance to Somalis including the Issa factions targeted to destabilize the ex-ally TPLF of Ethiopia. And these Eritrean trained Afar and Issa/Somali insurgents sometimes clash against each other in siding with their kin during fights within Ethiopian territory.

The downfall of General Barre's and Colonel Mengistu's régimes in Mogadishu and Addis Ababa has considerably influenced the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali both in Ethiopia and Djibouti. Further division of Afars into the newly born state of Eritrea has negatively affected the Afar's power balance. Moreover, the TPLF led guerilla fighters who took power in Addis had (and as speculated by many Afar elites still have) a colonial type ambitious plan of controlling all resource bases in the Afar region. Hence, Issa/Somalis uninterrupted move and incorporation of Afar territories could be regarded by the TPLF as a work half-done by a recent immigrant group that won't be an obstacle for extensive resource exploitations in the future. Accordingly, as TPLF led rebellions control the power in the early 1990s, the buffer zone delimited by the Derg breached and Issa/Somalis are allowed to establish settlements at strategic locations along the Addis-Assab/Djibouti asphalt road. On the one hand, Afars have effectively utilized the political chaos in the Horn region to gain access for armaments from the runaway Ethiopian army when the Derg government collapsed. And thus Afars had conducted a massive military attack against the Issa government of Djibouti in which the Afar rebellion-FRUD had controlled three fourth of the republic's territory. In fact, the failure

of Somalia, the back bone of Issa/Somalis, could be seen as a major advantage for the Afars while the downfall of the Derg and the coming to power of the TPLF and EPLF guerilla fighters benefited more to Somalis in which the Issa factions survived and retain the power in Djibouti and become muscle builder of the Issa/Somalis in Ethiopia. Since then the Issa/Somali dominated government of Djibouti took the responsibility of realizing an Essay dream that replaced the Greater Somali dream after the collapse of the dreamers in Mogadishu.

In Chapter seven, the impacts of inter-state disputes in the Horn region towards the intensification of the conflict are also being investigated in detail. For instance, during the first and second Ethio-Somalia wars, there were bloody armed confrontations undertaken among the Afar and Issa/Somali people who sided with the Ethiopian and Somali army respectively. Thus as the Somali army drove Ethiopian forces back and penetrated deep in to Ethiopian territories, the Issa/Somalis had wiped out the Afars all the way from Erer, Afdem, Mulu and other settlements in the Harar-Chercher plateau. Even after the end of the Ethio-Somalia war that ensured Ethiopian victory with the support of Russian, Cuban and south Yemeni forces, the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali has been enduring for the last three decades. Initially many Issa fighters and civilians went to exile in Djibouti. Later on the Derg negotiated with Issa clan chiefs and gave them pardon and responsibility to watch on the security of the railway without forcing them to retreat to the territory they had before the war. Overall, the first and second Ethio-Somalia wars were major regional political orders that awakened both the imperial and the Derg régimes to analyze the long lasting Afar-Issa/Somali conflict in a new political perspective beyond the old thinking of traditional pastoral conflict.

The second major inter-state dispute that has an effect on the Afar–Issa/Conflict is the 1998 Ethio-Eritrea border war that disproved the Ethiopian Prime Minister’s misperception of confusing port service as a hotel or tourism service. The end of the honeymoon between the two Tigrigna rulers of Ethiopia and Eritrea, TPLF and EPLF respectively has made Ethiopia a country of over 80 million people dependent on the tiny republic of Djibouti for access to the Red Sea. This change in the political order of the region has left Afars vulnerable to Issa/Somali’s attack as the Djiboutian government is entirely controlled by the Mamassan faction of an Issa/Somali. Indeed, in the post-Derg

era Ethiopia has already lost its traditional role of equilibrating the power balance within the Djibouti republic by backing the Afars against the major actor in Mogadishu. However, since the Ethio-Eritrea war erupted, Djibouti began to influence Ethiopian government on the case of Issa/Somali dwellers in Ethiopia. Djibouti's influence might also have an impact on Ethiopian government incapability to give a just and lasting solution for the conflict of Afars and Somalis within its own territory.

The third inter-state conflict that casts its shadow over the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict is the Eritro-Djibouti border dispute. Even tough to see an Afar dominated government in Djibouti is yet a nightmare to the incumbent Tigrigna dominated Eritrean régime that has suppressed the right of Afar inhabitants in Eritrea - provoking the Somali dominated government in Djibouti, is the main reason for Eritrea to closely associate and support the Afar rebellions against the Issa/Somali government of Djibouti. Despite the fact that Eritrean naval forces assisted the Djiboutian government to squash FRUD army operating in the two countries border area in early 1990s, currently Eritrea's southern borderlands have become a safe haven for FRUD combatants. Consequently, the rivalry between Afars and Issa/Somalis in Djibouti deepens and grows to the level of the 1990s civil war.

As declared by Soeters (2005:4) "in the current globalizing world nothing remains internal." Apart from changes in the regional political orders within the Horn states, the new world order, terrorism, has an influence on the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict as well, particularly in Djibouti. The anti-terrorism alliance in eastern Africa is a potential factor for tilting the political, economic and military power balance between the two main ethnic groups that make up Djibouti. Apart from offering economic assistance to the Issa/Somali dominated government, the American led Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) is building Issa/Somali's military muscle. Alike any other undemocratic country, all opposition groups who struggle for justice, equality and democracy are being portrayed as terrorists. Accordingly, as the opposition groups in Djibouti are mainly constituted from one ethnic group, oppression of the Afar has become more severe since government's military and financial power was boosted after Djibouti signed the counter-terrorism alliance with the United States. This heavy handed response to the public further fuels the discontent and escalates the conflict between the two ethnic groups.

Chapter Five discusses conflict resolution efforts undertaken by successive governments in Ethiopia and Djibouti. The study found out that all major means for resolving conflicts suggested by Rothchild (1997:99-108) as coercive, non-coercive and mixed incentive strategies have been claimed to be tried by governments of Ethiopia and Djibouti but to no avail. The long run stereotyping of one group against the other led each group to accumulate collective memories that in turn inculcate conceptions of 'ancient hatred' and 'security dilemma' in which each group developed mistrust and fear. Interviewees from both groups accused the other for having a 'hidden plan to exterminate them'. Therefore, findings of the study, reached to conclude that the Afar and Somali conflict both in Ethiopia and Djibouti evolve around 'the winner-takes-it-all' competitive approaches which are usually regarded as a 'zero-sum game'.

Due to the spill-over characteristics of this conflict, the study affirmed arguments raised by scholars like Hansen (1987:4 quoted in Ryan 1995:23), who suggested "it would be futile [...] to attempt to work out lasting mechanisms for conflict resolution without taking external factors into consideration." This case study has found out that unilateral resolution attempts to solve this age-old conflict among the Afar and Issa/Somali has proved to fail since the colonial era up until present. In Djibouti, the French colonial powers offered interest oriented cosmetic solutions that rather engulfed the antagonism between the two major ethnic groups in the colony. As discussed in the second chapter of this study, literatures categorized different approaches to handle ethnic conflicts within a state while one group hegemonically control the engine of the state. The three models to deal with ethnic conflicts which are suggested by Ryan (1995:23) as 'consociational, control and shared homeland model' and by Esman (2004:172) as 'integrative, domination and power-sharing systems' were assessed in relation with the case in Djibouti where the Somalis entirely control the politico-economic life of the Republic. And according to the findings of this study, the Issa/Somali dominated government seems to have chosen the 'control' or 'domination' approaches as a response for the age-old conflict between the two major constituents of the Republic. Since the independence of the republic, a Mamassan block of an Issa/Somali sub clan entirely dominated central apparatus of the republic and thus seems to have no or little interest to negotiate and compromise with the Afars for bringing a lasting solution for the political

crisis of the republic. Gouled had chosen to use muscle for settling the ethnic unrest while resolution 'attempts' of Gulleh disproved the theory of recognizing "economic growth as conflict decelerators since it increases the size of the pie that can be shared." (Wolff 2003:227) Gulleh rather prefers systematic silencing of people's quest through corrupting nominal representatives who are allowed at least to smell the national pie. Indeed, the income of Djibouti during the incumbent Gulleh era boosted a short time afterwards the Ethio-Eritrea war and 9/11 in which the money basket of the Republic start to be filled not only from the French but also from port service to Ethiopia and, lease income of counter- terrorism and anti piracy camps for the US, German, French, Spain, and recently Japan. However, this positive opportunities in Djibouti goes to the contrary and affirmed Samarasinghe et al (1999:6) claim as "Economic growth may well destabilize, established structures and institutions and generate intense competition; breakdown traditional cultural norms and relationships destabilize society and create conditions for conflict."

On the other hand, since the imperial régime, the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict in Ethiopia has demanded personal involvement of heads of states but to no avail. It seems successive regimes in Ethiopia misunderstood the root causes of the conflict and failed to correlate changes in regional political orders with an alarming intensification and escalation of the conflict. There is no justification given by the government that could answer why numbers of non-pastoral actors have been meddling in the so-called pastoral conflict as claimed by successive governments of Ethiopia.

The Imperial government had chosen to restructure administrative units in order to demarcate the territorial boundary between the two pastoral groups. However, due to weak enforcement mechanisms, the boundaries between the two pastoral societies have shifted westward crossing deep into the Afarlands as Issa/Somalis' new geographic settlements were taken as a legal spot instead of pushing the intruders back to the status quo ante position. The unfruitful peace negotiations and equipping of one ethnic group with old armaments against the other could not be regarded as conflict resolution efforts. They rather seem to be an Abyssinian system of checks and balances against the old allies of the Adal sultanate.

There was no peace negotiation undertaken during the Derg era. At that time, all sorts of conflicts were believed to be rooted in the class struggle and thus inter-ethnic disputes like that of the Afar and Issa/Somali were considered to be an act of anti-revolutionary forces. But later in 1977/8 after the Siad Barre army had reached the outskirts of Dire Dawa with a massive support of Somalis in Ethiopia including the Issa factions, the Derg had left aside its blanket socialist ideology of class struggle and at least were able to witness elements of irredentism influencing the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. Thus the Derg has abolished the truck-stop hamlet of Gedmaytu and restricted Issa/Somali movement to a 30km buffer zone that in fact pause the Issa's century old uninterrupted movement until the coming of EPRDF into power.

After the EPRDF ousted the Derg in 1991, hybrids of the colonial-type interest-oriented superficial solutions, imperial-type fruitless peace processes and systems of checks and balances as well as abolishment of new truck-stop settlements were employed. During the Ethio-Eritrea border war, the federal government officials have had busy days in initiating and organizing series of joint peace committee meetings, conferences, music fanfares and football matches between the Afar and Issa/Somali people. As John W. Burton (1993) suggests "if disputes cannot be arbitrated or mediated, then they must be adjudicated." In the same token, the central government has also promised to urgently demarcate the border between the two regional states swiftly after concluding the war with Eritrea. However, after Ethiopia declared victory over Eritrea, the issue of Afar and Issa/Somali conflict seems to have been archived back on the shelf. As seen in some official reports, the federal government claims to be in a dilemma to decide between the 'constitutional' and 'historical' rights of the people. Afar's demands for the intervention of the central government to pressurize and push back Somalis who has been trespassing their ancestral territory is considered as a quest for historical right. On the other hand, Issa/Somali's claim for free movement and settlement of people within the national territory of the country is categorized as a constitutional right of the public. The suggestion of the Federal Affairs to the Prime Minister entitled as 'the third way' in which the overall essence gives the impression that the federal government offers due consideration for the security of the main road rather than of the people. Thus this study showed the failure of the EPRDF government (until present) to qualify the status of

“neutral mediator-government” as argued by Esman (2004:97) in which the government should have been “often pose[d] as benevolent referee between contending ethnic communities, intervening where necessary to settle incipient conflicts and to maintain harmony.” Though difficult to conclude the status of EPRDF yet, as argued by Mwaûra and Schmeidl (2002:48) “the state may often play a partisan role, [...] which makes sustainable resolution more difficult” In any case EPRDF could not be saved like its predecessors from the accusations made on the extent and manner of state involvement in this conflict.

Generally, EPRDF’s response to this age-old conflict is yet ineffective, ad hoc in nature and lacks political will of the ruling party. Hence, Issa/Somalis usually react against governments half-hearted decisions through destabilizing the security of the main road that links the capital with the sea port. Afars on the other hand feel that the government delays its final decision deliberately due to its hidden and political loaded ambitions. Tadesse and Yonas (2007:12) criticized the delayed responses by the government by stating as “theories of conflict resolution suggest that if a conflict is not addressed at the early stage, it tends to evolve through stages toward the intractable stage when it is too late to seek a solution. In the same vein, a delayed response or the failure to address grievances, as in the Afar-Issa conflict, might lead to a vicious circle of violence.” Indeed, high level regional government officials are frighteningly getting desperate as their pleas have fallen on deaf ears. For instance, during the APDA conference held in Ayssaita on 05/02/2007, the Vice President of Afar region, Mahammad Tahiro, replied for the ‘what next?’ type of questions raised by the participants as ‘when the war with Eritrea ended, we again requested the Federal Government to settle the issue by making a border between Afar and Issa. There is no point in taking this talk further but we know we got no solution and to go to war with another region in the Federal Republic is not possible by law.’ This fact on the other hand isolates the regional government from its constituents as many claim that ‘Afars are prisoners in their ‘Regional State’, which lacks a mandate to secure a peaceful existence of its nation.’(AHRO: 2008)

Chapter Six is mainly about major aggravating factors that further contribute to the sophistication of this conflict. Apart from root causes and conflict-escalating factors in

relation to changes in regional political orders, there are other accelerating factors that have been tilting the power balance among the two ethnic groups for the last decades. For instance, successive military expeditions by the central government of Ethiopia sent toward the Afar areas further weaken them to resist Issa/Somali attacks. The Imperial government conducted retaliatory attacks against the Afar for their support to Lij Iyassu as well as in order to collect tributes. In addition, the construction of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway completed by the French in 1919 has enabled the Issa/Somalis to control areas where they were once employed as “transporters, workers and guards, who later settled in the lowland region crossed by the railway and is now the Shinelle zone, the Ise home in the Somali regional state” (Markakis 2002:447). Similarly, Issa/Somalis who were employed by the German construction company that built the main asphalt road connecting the Ethiopian hinterland to the harbor city of Assab; have settled in the construction camps along the road. Gradually Issa/Somalis are able to establish settlements in Gedmayatu, Adaytu and Unduffo located along the main asphalt road.

In addition to the natural adverse climatic condition that usually causes drought and famine in this desertious lowlands inhabited by the Afar and Somali people, ill-conceived development policies and implementations in pastoral lowlands have thereby further aggravated armed confrontations between neighbouring pastoralists and that of the Afar and Issa-Somali. The Evolutionary Theory of Land Rights (ETLR) is evidently confirmed by the findings of the study discussed in this chapter. An increasing reduction of grazing land and other pastoral resources are seen as the major accelerators for the conflict as neighbouring pastoral groups take a strategic move to claim more lands (like the Somalis claim as land is God’s property) while others claim to protect customary access (like the Afars claim of historic homeland). As discussed in this study, large-scale irrigation and settlement programmes, game parks and military expansion projects along the Awash Valley are yet causing disputes among pastoral societies inhabiting the area. Initially the Imperial regime has alienated the pastoral societies from the Awash Valley basins for the establishment of huge commercial cotton plantations in which the royal families have formed a joint venture with European companies. The Derg came with new ownership plate in which the royal joint venture has been shifted to a new owner known as the state. Thus the Derg has further taken pastoral lands for the expansion of state farms, game

parks and military camps. The land grabbing trend has continued apace under the EPRDF régime in a more extensive manner in which government has alienated the Afar pastoral society from over 100,000 ha of river basin lands for export-oriented sugar cane production. The Awash military camp expansions further alienate the pastorals from their traditional grazing areas and in turn aggravate conflicts not only between the Afar and Issa but also intra-ethnic conflicts mushrooming alarmingly. Even though the Issa/Somali's territory towards east of Erer is not as attractive as the west, agricultural development were also undertaken along the Erer and Hurso river basin that brought no socio-economic benefit to the pastoralists but rather enhanced the conflict in scale and frequency.

As stated by Mbaku / Pita (2001:129) the linkage between government policies, actions and pronouncements on ethnic relations deserves greater scrutiny. While ethnic relations are influenced by a myriad of factors such as demography, history, the economy and competition over resources, government policies do exert a great impact on how ethnic groups view themselves and in how they relate to each other. Accordingly, the adoption of ethno-linguistic federalism that is considered as a suitable remedy for problems of nationalities in Ethiopia, on the other hand, has aggravated new confrontations resulting from intra-state territorial claims. The ethno-territoriality concept that developed in Ethiopia since the 1991 introduction of ethnic federalism has altered the nature and magnitude of the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali. Today the conflict between the two pastoral groups seems transformed to the level of violent boundary dispute among the Afar and Somali national regional states to the extent that regional governments' treasury are becoming the main source of finance and logistic for armed confrontations. From the pastoralists at the grass root level up to high level regional government institutions as well as armed fronts, they are all currently engaging themselves in territorial expansion based on tracing historical myths as far back as centuries till they reach on 'facts' suitable for their claims. The role of the elite groups, including the Diaspora community, is becoming threat full as they contribute money and assist their kin fighters down in the desert. Moreover, the act of distorting historical facts and influencing clan leaders, youths, politicians etc is weakening traditional institutions

as well as eroding possibilities to restore peaceful co-existence among the two neighboring communities.

The nexus between illicit trade and the conflict is also becoming very complex. In particular, Issa-Somali settlements along the main road that connects Addis to harbours in northeastern part of the country are major hubs for illicit trade. It is not only the country's economic well-being that would be disrupted but use of illicit trade to fund ethnic based armed groups could also bring an impact on the wider stability and security challenges in the region. Furthermore, involvement of corrupt military and intelligence officials in this illicit commodity trade plays a huge role in distorting the information flow channel up to the centre that in turn affects the internal political line that connects federal regions to the centre.

In Djibouti, high level spread of corruption and control of the state apparatus by a narrow family network has turned the Republic into a personal fiefdom. The group division has reached the level of Mamassan/Issa/Somali that is the sub-sub-clan of successive presidents since independence. Apart from some Isaq/Somali (the first lady's clan) politicians, very few Afars who are widely seen by the public as stooges of the Issa power at the palace, are acting in the political show of Gulleh. Boldly biased development activities that favors Issa/Somali dominated regions of Arta and Ali Sabieh as well as neglect of Afar inhabited districts in the capital from any infrastructural developments lead to nowhere but simply reiterate the early 1990s civil war scenario.

All in all, the no war no peace situation of Djibouti is not an indication for existence of structural stability in the Republic. Rather, the systematic segregation policy using demographic games, nominal representations, control of the state apparatus, considering the Republic as a private fiefdom of the Mamassan block, meddling with the affair of Issa/Somalis inhabiting in Ethiopia is further aggravating already existing ethnic animosities. The current huge gaps in income distribution, education and employment opportunities, widening disparity in the level of poverty among Issa/Somali and Afar inhabiting regions and districts within the capital indicates the presence of a time bomb ready to explode at any time in the coming future. Similarly, successive Ethiopian regimes' mechanisms for treating the symptoms instead of root causes further exacerbate the contention. In some occasions, the central government used the conflict as a checks

and balances instrument for ethnic groups against each other. The incumbent government's view or idea they would like to sell regarding this regionally sophisticated conflict as merely pastoral confrontation that could easily be solved through development seems another distortion of facts. Development is both a means and an end for social, political and economic ills but to execute development programmes, there should be peace and stability. Moreover, as all states in the region are too interlinked and host divided societies across their porous border, policy of one state in isolation is merely unrewarding. In the same token, the anti-terrorism alliance that comprises both Djibouti and Ethiopia seems to neglect the internal political suppression, inequality, grievances and all other marginalizing systems that eventually weaken these states and could become havens for terrorists. If host states, international communities and sub-regional organizations keep on underplaying such bloodsheds as a mere nomads competition over grass and water, then this conflict between two pastoral societies would speed up its transformation into a veritable ethnic conflict that would demand the life of thousands of people from both groups. It would also be an obstacle for realizing sustainable socio-economic development as well as stability in the region. Furthermore, it could easily become an instrument by various groups in the Horn of Africa as a fuel for the new global challenge- terrorism.

7.3 Policy Recommendations for the Main Actors

Key actors involved in this conflict could have gained some understanding on the genesis of the conflict as well as the current and potential escalating factors in relation with successive dynamics on the political orders in the region. Furthermore, the systematic analysis of the linkage between politico-economic policies and implementations within individual host states and intensification of the conflict could enable stakeholders to be aware of major triggering factors of the conflict. And hence these understandings together with some policy recommendations offered in this sub-topic would well-equip the main actors to play their positive role. The major actors, both governments of Ethiopia and Djibouti, should develop regional peace and security policy frameworks that could mitigate the conflict. And eventually devise ways and means for transforming

conflict into sustainable cooperation among the two ethnic groups straddling across four states in the Horn region that could be a bridge to peace, stability and unity. Therefore, from the evidence we see that this conflict has several facets and needs a comprehensive peace strategy and concrete strategies to break the conflict trap. Regional and cooperative basis resolution plans should be designed to rebuild trust among various stakeholders as well as ensuring sustainable collective security. Positive intervention is therefore required from different levels of governments of host states, elites of both communities in the Diaspora, US-led Counter terrorism allies, international communities and sub-regional organizations in order to address the long lasting conflict in a just and sustainable way.

7.3.1 The Federal Government of Ethiopia

- The federal government should bring to a halt unintentional or deliberate downplaying of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict as merely pastoral competition for grass and water. The government shall scrutinize and differentiate traditional pastoral disputes with the current bloody confrontations involving a number of non-pastoral actors in the region.
- The federal government should demarcate the physical border between the Afar and Somali regional states. The demarcation should not be considered as erection of either the Berlin or Israeli wall. Rather demarcation of official boundary of all regional states in Ethiopia is vital to ward off a potential bone of contention between ethno-linguistically divided regions. Moreover, as both communities are predominantly pastoralists, a buffer zone is also important in order to mitigate the risk of pastoral confrontation that might erupt over grazing areas or water points.
- The federal government shall revise the pros and cons of the two-decade-old ethno linguistic federalism practice. It shall encourage an in-depth study on a third way approach for the federalism system in which it could give a response to socio-economic and political ills of the past through genuine power sharing while maintaining the already existing peaceful co-existence among ethnic groups as well as guarantee integrity of the state in a wider sense.

- The federal government should maintain its decision on restricting further Issa/Somali settlements along the main asphalt road that connects Addis to the port cities of Assab and/or Djibouti. To compromise the paradox between constitutional and historical rights, it seems necessary to convince Afars to drop their claim over territories stretched up to Erer in accordance to the 'land-for-peace' formula. Likewise, the federal government should pressurize Somalis to drop their attitude of claiming all lands up to Awash River. The already established three truck-stop hamlets of Gedmaytu, Undufo and Adaytu, should better be incorporated within the Afar regional administration in which the above listed three hamlets would be restructured as administrative kebeles of Amibara, Gewane and Mille Weredas respectively where Somalis could exercise their constitutional rights in a manner that these kebeles would not be used as springboards for a further Issa/Somalis incursion deep into the Afarlands.
- The federal government should design a mechanism to combat the illicit trade in small arms and commodities that affect the political economy of the country as well as stability of the region. The government should not neglect consequences of free movement of well organized contraband chains like Akramot within its territory. Rather it should react swiftly against any illegal networks at any time unlike the old practice of taking action when intelligence reports indicate the infiltration of insurgent groups through these channels. The central government should further monitor the contraband route along the porous borders and take into account links between the illicit trade and the army in the area.
- The federal government should strictly bring criminals to court. For those outlaws who traverse the border mainly towards Djibouti, agreement should be reached with the government of Djibouti that would create an obligation to hand-over suspected criminals.
- The federal government shall take appropriate diplomatic measures against Djiboutian military personnel's intervention in the so-called pastoral conflicts within Ethiopian territories. The government shall not barter the interest of its citizens with the Djibouti port service. Indeed, some factors are beyond immediate remedies. However, the government should design a national strategy in which the country could guarantee a regaining of its own outlet to the Sea.

- The federal government shall initiate and design pastoral development projects ensuring sufficient consultation with local communities. The development endeavours should be community-driven and human-centered rather than based on export-oriented ‘outsiders’ view from the office. The massive land grabbing and demographic reengineering in pastoral areas should be reversed. Instead, the federal government shall support regions to design land tenure policy that could address economic causes for the escalation of inter/intra-ethnic disputes.

7.3.2 The Afar and Somali Regional Governments

- Both regional governments shall avoid the ‘us’ and ‘them’ syndrome and make use of the federalism rather than being victim of its drawbacks. The regional states should investigate the cause of their failure for reaching a sustainable conflict resolution and shall jointly work for its success by avoiding any third part meddling at the expense of their constituencies. Responsible bodies of the regional governments at any level should cooperate in bringing criminals to justice.
- Both regional governments shall rise the status of traditional leadership through encouraging genuine clan leaders’ involvement in conflict settlement efforts instead of the on-going practice of exploiting their value within the community to the conflictive interest of some individuals within the administration that later would destroy the morale fabric of such tribal based society. Regional governments have to give due attention to improve the political and social status of women, including their traditional role in conflict resolution.
- Both regional governments should focus on development projects along their common borders. Joint development plans should be initiated regarding the enhancement of access to grazing and marketing areas and water resource. Moreover, means for economic diversification and technological developments that could raise productivity levels should be studied and implemented by merging with traditional rangeland management system as well as customary nature conservation system.

7.3.3 The Government of Djibouti

- The government of Djibouti shall strive to build an accommodative state rather than the ongoing formation of a Somali nation. The government should abide by the peace treaty signed with the factions of the FRUD in 1994 and 2001 that would guarantee equal opportunities and fair distribution of resources among the people. Among the terms, the government shall carry out administrative restructuring in such a way that some form of decentralization that could become a ground for a power-sharing arrangement between the Afar and Issa/Somali has to be implemented. In addition to constitutional and other legislative safeguards for the consociational settlement, other terms of the peace treaty such as demobilization and equal opportunity in the army and intelligence services should be implemented genuinely (unlike the previous practice) in such a way that the process do have no impact over the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict in Ethiopia.
- The government of Djibouti should stop portraying the major portion of the Republic, Afar dominated north, as a crises zone and paralyzing the area from any socio-economic development activities. Instead the government shall prepare an affirmative action plan for balancing the socio-economic status of the two major ethnic groups that constitute the Republic both in regional level as well as ethnic based segregated districts in Djiboutiville in order to trim down the national malaise.
- The government of Djibouti should correct its failure in post-conflict management and perform equal opportunity acts in the civil service as well as in the national political sphere. The de-facto rule of picking those who got married with non-Afars would enable the government to be accompanied by nominal representatives of yes-men whose umbilical cord that connects with the public has been cut off. Hence the government shall appreciate differences and try to accommodate rather than being suppressive.
- The government of Djibouti should strictly take measures against the rampant corruption that spread alarmingly throughout the Republic. An effective and independent anti-corruption body should be established urgently to alter the dangerous attitude of ruling the country as a family fiefdom.
- The government of Djibouti shall cautiously evaluate the possible drawbacks of unofficial interventions in the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali pastoralists in

Ethiopia. To have a policy of strict non-interference is a necessary pre-condition to bring the parties to a negotiation table as well as for the progress of Djibouti's internal politics. The social relationships of kith and kin across the border like the constructive role played by Djiboutian Issas during the selection and crowning ceremony of the new Ugaas has to be encouraged while the government's negative interventions in recruiting Issa youths in Ethiopia to offer military trainings as well as, financial and logistic support during armed conflicts within Ethiopian territory must be stopped immediately. Assistances (if any) either to the Issa sub-clan or to the Somali region in general (as they amazingly did in 1995 national and regional election in Ethiopia) shall be transferred through a formal government channel. The government of Djibouti should totally stop to act as a patron for its external kin and instrumentalize the conflict for its own territorial expansion to achieve an Essay dream.

- In order to achieve a lasting solution, Djibouti should never be a safe haven to outlaws. Thus, the government of Djibouti has to control unofficial routes that connects region of Ali Sabieh and Dikhil in Djibouti with that of contraband hamlets of Gedamitu, Adaytu and Unduffo in Ethiopia. In the border regions of Ali Sabieh and Dikhil, government shall design diversified development plans that could mitigate resource competitions among pastoralists. In addition, the government should bring an end to the continues influx of Somalis through these border regions as well as to playing number games in creating new Issa/Somali dominated regions within the Republic.
- Traditional conflict resolution approach shall also be recognized and promoted in order to maintain historical relationships as well as expanding potential alternatives for settlement of conflicts.

7.3.4 The Afar and Issa/Somali Elites

- The Afar and Issa/Somali elites particularly those in the Diaspora shall create a network to share ideas and reach to a general consensus on the genesis of the conflict, identify various aggravating factors as well as investigate potential settlement efforts. Instead of disseminating distorted information and contribute financial assistance to the fighters at the front, elites from both communities should make use of their comparative advantages in order to positively influence clan leaders, youths, political parties,

insurgent groups and even regional governments to help them devise ways and means for transforming the age-old conflict into a sustainable cooperation.

7.3.5 US-led Counterterrorism allies (CJTF-HOA)

- The counterterrorism allies like CJTF-HOA shall understand that warm relationships with the palace are insufficient tools to combat terrorism and hence they should give due attention to the internal political setup of the ally state that helps to investigate the level of democracy and economic equity of the public. They should make certain that the help to bolster allies' counterterrorism capacity would not destroy struggles for freedom and democracy. The allies must pressurize dictatorial and suppressive good friends at the palaces and assess their endeavour to combat corruption, expand democracy, improve living conditions for marginalized ethnic groups and share state resources more equitably.
- The CJTF-HOA shall evaluate its socio-economic and military assistance to governments of allied' states in order to tackle ethno-regional biased development and alarmingly rising of social inequality in all spheres like education, military, civil service employment etc.
- The counter-terrorism allies should also focus on the enforcement of the Hague verdict and settlement of the Ethio-Eritrea as well as Eritro-Djibouti border dispute that otherwise would continue the inter-ethnic rivalry between the Afar and Issa/Somali people as states manipulate ethnic groups for the sake of their proxy games.

7.3.6 The Sub/Regional Organization-AU/IGAD

- AU/IGAD shall strongly continue its advocacy to member states to give due attention for conflicts among geographically straddling ethnicities to have regional perspective rather than isolated fruitless efforts.
- AU/IGAD shall also undertake in-depth study and analysis on the inter-linkages and spill-over effects of Afar and Issa/Somali conflicts in Ethiopia and Djibouti as well as influences on regional political orders on the escalation of the conflict.
- IGAD shall follow member states' action to control small arms and light weapons and to improve safety and security of porous borders.

- AU/IGAD shall strongly denounce proxy games that manipulate the traditional confrontation between the two pastoral groups and conclude an agreement among all member states that prohibit the use of military bases in neighboring countries.
- IGAD shall strengthen the conflict early warning and response system of CEWARN that exclusively covers pastoral cross-border conflicts.

7.3.7 International Communities (NGOs and Donor States)

- International communities shall lobby to free the democracy under arrest in the Horn region, uphold rule of law, and assess governments' political and economic policies in relation to integrity of the states as well as equitable share of resources. NGOs and donor states shall initiate socio-economic impact assessments and follow implementations of giant projects like the Kessem-Tendaho Dam and Irrigation Development Project that affect the entire pastoral economy and in turn exacerbate ethnic conflicts.
- International communities shall support conflict-sensitive, bottom-up development projects that focus on economic diversification, improve pastoral productivity in a way that avoids mistrust between communities by fuelling perceptions of unfair advantage to some groups.

7.4 Suggestions for Future Research

This study identified a number of variables important to understand the anatomy of conflicts between ethnic groups that straddle the boundary with neighbouring countries. This work differs from existing approaches in studying local ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia in such a way that it simultaneously analysed local conflicts in two different states (i.e., Djibouti and Ethiopia) in relation to major regional political order dynamics. However, there are issues highlighted in the thesis as sub-topics but need to be further addressed in detail. Hence, this study hopes to contribute for more understanding of this particular conflict between the Afar and Somali as well as for further investigations on theoretical and empirical issues in perspectives from diverse disciplines. Therefore, research could be directed towards some of the points listed below.

1. In-depth studies on the categorization of identity between the Afar and Issa/Somali would contribute for the theoretical debates regarding the understanding of ethnicity. An exhaustive review of genealogical myths, cultural and linguistic factors would be an important contribution for empirical evidences on the concept of identity.
2. Apart from the conflict between the Afar and Somali, inter-ethnic conflicts between their neighbours would allow a more detailed analysis on similarities and differences of ethnic conflicts within the country. An extended study that comprises various phases of these conflicts would also enable to examine the nexus between implementation of federalism and preservation of peace as well as escalation of conflicts.
3. Comparative case studies on the interventions of ethnic based political parties, armed insurgent groups, and illicit traders criminal chains in ethnic conflicts would allow exploring their role on sowing hatred and intensifying existing conflicts in the Horn region. Furthermore, looking at various interventions of the Diaspora elites of both ethnic groups in ethnic conflicts back home would enable to study the role of Diaspora politics in local ethnic based conflicts.
4. An exploration of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that had survived in the past between the Afar and Issa/Somali would enable to draw lessons for designing hybrid resolution systems for the conflict at the present. Moreover, role of women in both mitigation and intensification of conflicts shall also be addressed in detailed approach.
5. Analysing environmental and economic costs of this long-lasting conflict in terms of opportunities lost, disruptions in the pastoral economy, and human losses would also give a comprehensive understanding for multifaceted consequences of inter-ethnic conflicts. Moreover, a further investigation on traditional knowledge of the Afar and Issa/Somali to ecosystem management would broaden understandings on apolitical causes of the conflict.
6. A comparative study in regional dynamics of trans-boundary inter-ethnic conflicts (like those in Kenya and Sudan border) would extend the knowledge on proxy wars in the region, cross boundary alliance with kin states, spill-over effect of

conflicts among divided societies and in general it would enable to explore the connection between local conflicts with foreign relations among states.

7. Assessing conflict resolution attempts undertaken by individual states (Djibouti and Ethiopia) in comparison with empirical experiences from other African as well as Asian and Latin American countries would enable to broaden knowledge on how conflicts which have regional dynamics feature could be mitigated. In addition, comparing the post-civil war scenario in Djibouti with other countries successful post-conflict management would give a crucial lesson in the conflict field.
8. A critical analysis of an indirect influence of world powers on the escalation of this conflict shall also be investigated thoroughly. Their relation with the government of Djibouti in the name of counter-terrorism and anti-piracy mission shall be addressed in order to understand the impact of global actors in local conflicts.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Stations through which the Railway Passes

| No. | Town | Distance (in km) |
|-----|-------------|------------------|
| 1. | Addis Ababa | 0 |
| 2. | Kalliti | 15 |
| 3. | Akaki | 22 |
| 4. | Doukam | 41 |
| 5. | Debre-Zeit | 52 |
| 6. | Modjo | 76 |
| 7. | Nazareth | 103 |
| 8. | Welenchiti | 127 |
| 9. | Melka-Djilo | 166 |
| 10. | Metehara | 205 |
| 11. | Awash | 236 |
| 12. | Arba | 266 |
| 13. | Khora | 288 |
| 14. | Assabot | 309 |
| 15. | Mehesso | 322 |
| 16. | Moullou | 334 |
| 17. | Afdem | 362 |
| 18. | Bicket | 389 |
| 19. | Gotha | 408 |
| 20. | Errer | 414 |
| 21. | Ourso | 446 |
| 22. | Dire-Dawa | 472 |
| 23. | Shinille | 484 |
| 24. | Harrawa | 518 |
| 25. | Mello | 525 |
| 26. | Adigalla | 581 |
| 27. | Lassarat | 620 |
| 28. | Aisha | 636 |
| 29. | Dewelle | 673 |
| 30. | Ali-Sabiet | 693 |
| 31. | Dasbiou | 711 |
| 32. | Holl-Holl | 730 |
| 33. | Chebele | 748 |
| 34. | Djibouti | 781 |

Appendix II: List of Interviews

| Name | Post | Place & Date |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Abdella Deresa | Dahimela tribe leader | 14/10/ 2006 (Mekelle) |
| 2. Abdulkadier Ali | Voice of Woyanne | 17/10/2006 (Mekelle) |
| 3. Abdurahman Migile | Oruweini Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |
| 4. Absye Baol | Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |
| 5. Adawa Hassan Ali | Historian, Univ of Djibouti | 29/08/2008 (Djibouti) |
| 6. Aden Are'i | Hole Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |
| 7. Addisu G/egziabher | MoFA | 17/12/2007 (Addis Abeba) |
| 8. Ahmed Alasa | Pastoralist unit Sect. (ANRS) | 18/03/2007 (Kemise) |
| 9. Ali Are'i | Werdik Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |
| 10. Ali Coubba | Historian & Author, Paris | 19/12/2007 (e-mail Inter.) |
| 11. Ali Mohammed | Illiyee Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |
| 12. Ali Slutey | Dawe wereda Vice Admin. | 18/03/2007 (Kemise) |
| 13. Alimirah Hanfare | Sultan of Awsa | 20/08/2006 (Addis Abeba) |
| 14. Aramis Houmed | Historian | 25/07/2008 (Addis Abeba) |
| 15. Awad D. Mohammed | Adviser Mins. Youth & Sport | 28/08/2008 (Djibouti) |
| 16. Awol Utika | NTPCO Head | 25/10/2007 (Aysaita) |
| 17. Aysha Mohammed | Former TADO member | 16/10/2006 (Mekelle) |
| 18. Billi Derar | Hurroni Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |
| 19. Bodaya M. Said | Informant about Dawe Sult. | 10/03/2007 (Addis Abeba) |
| 20. Dubed Mussa | Illiyee Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |
| 21. Getu Tekle (Colonel) | Former Awraja Police Chief | 02/03/2008 (Nazareth) |
| 22. Gesiásie Shurdon | Hurroni Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |
| 23. Habib Alimirah | Vice president of Afar | 23/11/2006 (Aysaita) |
| 24. Habib M. Yayo Afar | Education Bureau Head | 05/11/2006 (Addis Abeba) |
| 25. Hassen Hawash | Hole Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |
| 26. Ibad Ibrahim (Haji) | Dawe (Afar) elder | 18/03/2007 (Kemise) |
| 27. Ibrahim Ali | Haile Wereda Admin. | 25/10/2007 (Aysaita) |
| 28. Ibrahim Humed (Major) | Admin. of Prisons in ANRS | 03/11/2007 (Samara) |
| 29. Ibrahim Ielta | Herto (Afar) leader | 17/10/2006 (Mekelle) |
| 30. Ibrahim S. Mohammed | Weima (Afar) elder | 21/02/2008 (Awash) |
| 31. Idris Kheyar | Former ANLF leadership | 16/10/2006 (Kuneba) |
| 32. Idris Mohammed | APDO | 05/10/2006 (Addis Abeba) |
| 33. Jemal A. Redo | ALSEC Bureau head | 22/11/ 2006 (Samara) |
| 34. Mebrate W/tensaie | IGAD/CEWARN | 08/10/2007 (Addis Abeba) |
| 35. Meresa Reda | MoFA | 12/11/2006 (Addis Abeba) |
| 36. Mohamed Abubeker | Aysaita wereda Admin. | 16/08/2007 (Samara) |
| 37. Mohammed A. Hassen | Werdik Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |
| 38. Mohammed Ali Hamid | Vice President of ANRS | 02/11/2006 (Addis Abeba) |
| 39. Mohammed Awol | Afar Border Affairs Office | 05/11/2007 (Samara) |
| 40. Mohammed Hassan | Mille wereda Administrator | 25/10/2007 (Aysaita) |
| 41. Mohammed Hassen | Werdik Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 (Melka Jebdu) |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 42. Mohammad Ib. Debele | PCDP coordinator | 16/10/2006 | (Kuneba) |
| 43. Mohammed Kadamay | FRUD Leader | 02/12/2009 | (Paris) |
| 44. Mohammed Lale | Former Secretary of ANRS | 31/10/2007 | (Aysaita) |
| 45. Mohammed Murha | Dawe (Afar) elder | 18/03/2007 | (Kemise) |
| 46. Mohammed Omar Ali | Hawiya Somali Elder | 23/02/2008 | (Awash) |
| 47. Mohammed Omer Nure | Dawe (Afar) elder | 18/03/2007 | (Kemise) |
| 48. Mohammed Tahiro | Vice president of Afar | 17/11/2006 | (Samara) |
| 49. Mohamud Hassen | Somali elder | 15/06/2008 | (Melka Jebdu) |
| 50. Negash Khasay | Afar-Tigrean elder | 26/08/2006 | (Addis Abeba) |
| 51. Omar Ali Kehire | Asebe Teferi Admin. | 27/02/2008 | (Addis Ababa) |
| 52. Omar Buhe | Weledon Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 | (Melka Jebdu) |
| 53. Omar Hakais Abdella | Radi Fana Journalist | 10/03/2007 | (Addis Abeba) |
| 54. Omar Kheri | Weledon Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 | (Melka Jebdu) |
| 55. Omar M. Bodaya | Dawe (Afar) elder | 18/03/2007 | (Kemise) |
| 56. Omar M. Yussuf | Judge, Afar Supreme Court | 11/11/2007 | (Samara) |
| 57. Osman Ali | Somali elder | 15/06/2008 | (Melka Jebdu) |
| 58. Osman Anisa | For. Vice President of Afar | 17/11/2007 | (Aysaita) |
| 59. Osman Hussien | Somali elder | 15/06/2008 | (Melka Jebdu) |
| 60. Osman Mohammed | Herto (Afar) elder | 14/10/2006 | (Ab'ala) |
| 61. Raymond Kitevu | IGAD/CEWARN | 19/12/2007 | (Addis Abeba) |
| 62. Salih Ali Houdele | Chairman of ANRDF | 22/11/2006 | (Semera) |
| 63. Salah Zakaria | SHSI, Director | 30/08/2008 | (Djibouti) |
| 64. Tahir Bu'ul | Mamassan Issa/Somali elder | 15/06/2008 | (Melka Jebdu) |
| 65. Werkit Khasay | Afar-Tigrean elder | 16/10/2006 | (Mekelle) |

Appendix III: List of Areas Visited during the Field Research (2006-2010)

1. Awash
2. Gedamaytu
3. Gewane
4. Ambuli
5. Unduffo
6. Adaytu
7. Mille
8. Samara
9. Dubti
10. Aysaita
11. Afambo
12. Bordede
13. Dire Dawa
14. Melka Jebdu
15. Shinele
16. Shewa Robit
17. Kemisie
18. Telalak
19. Dawe
20. Mekelle
21. Ab'ala
22. Erebti
23. Berhale
24. Kuneba
25. Dallol
26. Dikhil
27. Djibuitiville
28. Tajura
29. Obock

Appendix IV: List of Interview Guides

IG 1. Former Administrators, Police Officials, elders and residents around Dire Dawa, Erer, Hurso and Boredede towns

1. Where were borders between Afar and Issa/Somali people as you remember?
2. What were causes and trends of conflicts among Afar and Issa/Somali in your time and in specific places as you witnessed?
3. Any police records regarding its involvement in Afar and Issa/Somali conflict. Any records about types of arms used by each groups during armed confrontations?
4. Number of casualties from each group as well as police (human and livestock)
5. Where did the looted livestock taken and sold? Where did the outlaws escaped?
6. What were the various peace deals and border agreements reached among the two actors as you remember and which group was blamed for breaching them and why do you think the deal are broken frequently?
7. Explain what you heard about the position of the two confronting parties during the arrival of Italian colonial powers and successive Ethio-Somali wars?
8. Explain about what you witnessed or heard about the trend of the conflict between the Afar and Issa/Somali during the Italian occupation and the Hanolato movement of 1963/4 and Ogaden war of 1977/8.
9. How do you evaluate the response of the Imperial and the Derg government towards Ethiopian Somalis in post the 1st and the 2nd Ethio- Somali war?
10. How do you assess the power balance between the two groups? And if you believe that it tilted through time against one party what reasons as you believe created these imbalances?
11. Did you observe the uninterrupted motion of the border between the two confronting parties?
12. What are socio-economic impacts of the conflict you witnessed on various areas?
13. Did you see or hear any foreign involvements in these conflicts?
14. What was your observation on the effectiveness of traditional resolution mechanisms in these conflicts? And your recommendations for solving this long lasting conflict.

IG 2. Officials in ANRS and Boarder Affairs Office

1. Your view on the historical causes and trends of the conflict. Do you share the federal government labeling of the conflict as a mere competition for grass and water?
2. Why do you think that Afars lost vast territories?
3. Your view regarding Issa/Soamli settlements along the main road?
4. Why peace agreements between the two groups are breached repeatedly?
5. Your opinion on the trans-boundary alliance among Somalis (Somalia, Djibouti and SNRS) towards this conflict.

6. What about Afar's alliance (Ugugumo and the regional government involvement)?
7. Assess the three regimes intervention and outcomes towards the conflict.
8. Do you think the current ethno-linguistic federalism practicing in Ethiopia contribute for the escalation or descalation of the conflict?
9. Is there any linkage between other inter-ethnic conflicts between the Afars and its neighbours like Amhara, Oromo and Tigray with that of the Issa/Somali? What are the similarities and divergence of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict in relation to the others?
10. Your opinion on scarcity of resources due to natural and manmade reasons and its link to the aggravation of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict? What do you think about the impact of private agricultural investments, huge commercial cultivations by the state, wildlife reserves and military parks expansions, illicit trade etc...towards the conflict?
11. Your view concerning socio-economic opportunity costs in the conflict prone areas as well as in regional level.
12. How do you justify the logic for economic boosting of Issa/Somali dominated new settlements (truck-stop hamlets) along the main road while Afar towns like Gewane have declined?
13. Can the regional government guarantee to bring to halt a birth of new towns along the road?
14. How can one confirm the involvement of foreign forces in the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict within Ethiopian territories?
15. What is your opinion about the road access that connects Issa/Somali settlements within the Afar region to border towns in Djibouti and Somaliland? What about accusation of the military chain with contrabandists?
16. Any room left for the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms? Any hope for sustainable settlement of the conflict?
17. How much do you believe the Afar could give to take agreeable solution back?

IG 3. Afar Zonal Administrations, Police Stations and elders in bordering SNRS (Awsi Rasu, Gabi Rasu and Hari Rasu)

1. Where were historical boundaries between you and neighbouring Issa/Somalis? In which areas do you witness the earliest fighting?
2. Any genealogical link between some Afar and Issa clans?
3. Severe conflicts and casualties you remember in your area.
4. Why you couldn't handover outlaws before the law? Where did the fighters (injured or wanted) run off and looted livestock taken?
5. Did the police exhibit Djibouti military ID cards during fights within Ethiopia?
6. Can one confirm about roads that connects bordering towns in Djibouti and Somaliland with that of new truck-stop hamlets?
7. Do you yet believe that these new Issa/Somali settlements are kebeles of your respective weredas and zones?

8. What reasons could you guess about the failure of the Imperial and Derg regime in mitigating this conflict? And any differences in the approach of the incumbent government?
9. Do you believe foreign forces meddling in this conflict? And what's your view on Issa/Somali territorial expansion?
10. Are there conflicts when there is enough water and pasture in the areas?
11. Any hope for the future?

IG. 4 Officials in SNRS and Shinle Zonal Administration bordering the ANRS

1. Your perception regards historical causes and trends of the conflict with Afars?
2. Where were your boundaries in the time you remember? Do you remember severe conflicts and casualties in your area?
3. Any relation with Ethiopian federalism and the conflict escalation or desacaltion?
4. Relation or variances of this conflict with that of conflicts against other neighbor, Oromo.
5. What is your idea on Issa/Somali new settlements along the main road? Is it true that Shinele administration has stamp and develop institutional administrative structure for those truck-stop hamlets? Why Issa/Somali pastoralists chose to settle along the main road where there is no water and pasture?
6. How do you defend the accusation of your uninterrupted movement with that of Greater Somalia expansionists dream?
7. How do you argue accusations concerning foreign powers involvement in this conflict? Why the Issa/Somali pastoralists are blamed for flying neighbouring countries flags?
8. Any initiative to block the illicit trade chains? View on illegal road connections to bordering towns and links with contrabandists associations and some officers within the army?
9. Why you couldn't handover outlaws before the law? Where did the fighters (injured or wanted) run off and looted livestock taken?
10. Why all peace negotiations have failed? What about the post-1991 endeavors? Hope for traditional way for resolution?
11. What are the alternatives to give lasting solution to this conflict?

IG.5 Issa/Somali Settlers in Gedamaytu, Adaytu, Undufo and Ambuli

1. When did you establish these settlements? Were there any resistances from the Afar or central government?
2. What are your justifications for settling in these hamlets? Do you get enough water and pasture here? Are there no water sources in areas you left behind?
3. Where were you born? Where do you remember your forefathers bordering with Afars?
4. Any genealogical link with some Afar clans?
5. What is the administrative status of your villages? What's your opinion on how to settle the destiny of these hamlets? Can you guarantee for a halt of your move or will continue? If yes till where?

6. Why you choose to fly the five-pointed Somali flag and sometimes flag of Djibouti? Any Assistance you receive from kith and kin abroad Djibouti and Somaliland border?
7. Conflict with Afars and Number of casualties. Where they sell looted livestock and where fugitives run off?
8. Were there any traditional mechanisms used to settle conflicts among the two societies? How do you think the conflict could be solved?

IG.6 Issa/Somali tribal Chiefs and Elites in Ethiopia

1. Historical boundaries with Afars.
2. How do you describe Issa/Somalis mass movements in the north east of Africa? Where were your ancestral homelands as claimed by oral traditions?
3. How was the relation of Issa/Somali with Italian colonial power and the Somali invading forces in the first and second Ethio-Somalia wars?
4. Impact of Ethiopian federalism practice for ethno territoriality and similarity and deviation between conflict with Afar and other neighbours.
5. D you believe that there are blood relations with some Afar clans. And what about cultural similarities you witnessed with Afar?
6. List some water point available in Shinele zones.
7. Your perception towards illicit trade and its chain.
8. Do you think there are some outsiders' involvements in this conflict? Any spillover effect of these conflicts in Ethiopia and Djibouti?
9. Your evaluation regarding various peace agreements during the Imperial, Derg and EPRDF Regime. Why agreements have been breached so far?
10. Any opportunity to revive the role of traditional leaders in efforts of resolving the conflict?
11. What do you believe about the role that could be played by elites particularly in the Diaspora in identifying problems and being part of the solution?

IG. 7 Afar Elders and Officials in Djibouti

1. Historical geographic settlements in the Horn area as well as in Djibouti? The meaning of Djibouti in Afar language.
2. How and when the Afars left lands in Zeila and its surrounding?
3. How the Afars deal with the arrival of French colonial powers? Where were the Afars and Issa/Somalis settlements during the first years of colonial's arrival?
4. How was Afars and Issa/Somalis relation with the French? Why and how Issa/Somalis dominate the politico-economic life of the Republic?
5. What are the root causes of conflicts between the two societies in Djibouti city and rural parts of Dikhil?
6. Your view on the Djibouti government intervention towards the Afar – Issa/Somalsi conflict in Ethiopia. (Elders registered in payroll, Djibouti ID card Holders, military training, medical facility, and unofficial road connections for contrabandists, settlement of retired soldiers in new hamlets within Ethiopia, safe haven for outlaws...)

7. What's your perception towards FRUD? Why do you think FRUD lost during the 1991 civil war in Djibouti?
8. What's your perception about the impact of the current Eritrio-Djibouti Doumera crisis on the Afar and Issa/Somali rivalry? What about Djibouti's high income from the port service and its base for anti-terrorism missions?
9. Your view on 'Greater Somalia' and/or 'Essay dream' and the conflict both in Ethiopia and Djibouti. Any spillover effect?
10. How do you think the problem between the two societies in Djibouti could be solved?

IG 8. Issa/Somali Elders and Elites in Djibouti

1. Describe about Issa/Somalis history and clan divisions. Where was your ancestral homeland according to oral traditions? Where the Afars were neighbours to you?
2. Historical geographic settlements in the Horn area as well as in Djibouti? The meaning of Djibouti in Somali language?
3. How Issa/Somali chiefs first contacted French colonials? How was the relation with the French?
4. How do you think about migration of Somalis like Issac and Gedabursi to Djibouti? History of demographic feature in Djibouti?
5. View about gradual Issa/Somali domination within the Republic.
6. The root causes of rivalry with Afar in pre and post independence of Djibouti? View about FRUD
7. View about Issa/Somali in Ethiopia and Somaliland
8. View about Issa/Somali territorial expansion in Ethiopia. Any spillover effect.
9. Involvement in the Issa/Somali–Afar conflict in Ethiopia (Elders registered in payroll, Djibouti ID card Holders, military training, medical facility, and unofficial road connections for contrabandists, settlement of retired soldiers in new hamlets within Ethiopia, safe haven for outlaws...)
10. View on Greater Somalia and relation with Mogadishu before independence of Djibouti.
11. What about the relation of Djibouti with TFG of Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland?
12. How do you evaluate the pre and post independence power sharing in the Republic between the Afar and Issa/Somali?
13. Why the French named the territory French Somaliland, French territory of Afar and Issa, then Djibouti? And your perception of Issa/Somalis?
14. What's your perception about the impact of the current Eritrio-Djibouti Doumera crisis on the Afar and Issa/Somali rivalry? What about Djibouti's high income from the port service and its base for anti-terrorism missions?
15. How do you think the problem between the two societies in Djibouti could be solved?

IG 9. FRUD and Ex-Ugugumo members

1. What's the objective of your organization? How do you evaluate your activities since establishment?
2. Who are the major regional actors in the Afar-Issa/Somali conflict?
3. Why the FRUD lost in 1991-4 civil war? Any achievements since then?
4. How do your organization assess the impact of colony, emergence of new states, inter-state conflicts, anti-terrorism, corruption and economic deprivation, biased institutional structure etc...affects the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict?
5. Any inter linkage with the Afar and Issa/Somali conflicts in Ethiopia and Djibouti?
6. Why conflict settlements efforts have failed so far?
7. Ugugumos view on the Afar Issa/Somali conflict both in Ethiopia and Djibouti and its interventions.
8. Do you still believe that there is no door open for peaceful resolution? How does your organization believe on potential alternatives for bringing lasting solution?

IG 10. Officials in Ethiopian Ministry of Federal Affairs

1. Pre-Italian occupation administrative structure of Afar and Issa/Somali inhabited areas. And trends of administrative restructuring.
2. Peace agreements and boundary demarcations between the two societies during the Imperial and Derg era?
3. Your view on previous governments' resolution attempts and lesson learned from the past like history of breaching of peace agreements.
4. Trends of the conflict, causalities and its impact on stability and development endeavors.
5. Magnitude of Issa/Somalis territorial expansion since EPRDF took power?
6. The current governments approach for settling the conflict and its achievements?
7. Impacts of large agricultural developments and various expansion projects that alienate the pastoralists from wet and dry season pasture lands.
8. Any linkage between the early stage of federalism and mushrooming ethnic conflicts? Similarity and differences of this conflict from other pastoral conflicts.
9. Your perspective on alliance between kith and kin straddles along number of states in the Horn region. The case of Involvement from Djiboutian government as claimed by the Afars and Afar rebellion involvements as claimed by the Issa/Somalis.
10. The case of contraband and military chief's connection. Illegal road connections along the porous borders and future potential threats for stability of the region.
11. The case of Italian occupation, 'Greater Somalia', birth of states, port service dependency ,anti-terrorism alliance, Eritrea's meddling and other regional political orders towards the escalation of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict.
12. Current administrative status and future destiny of the the hamlets (Gedamaytu, Adaytu, Undufo and Ambuli) along the road (flags, institutions, stamps)

13. Your assessment on destructive role of elites, federal and regional level government officials from both societies.
14. Why the federal government fail to demarcate boundary and create a conducive environment for confronting parties (considering both co-existence and limitation for territorial expansion)

IG.11 Officials in IGAD /CEWARN

1. View on the inter-ethnic conflicts among ethnicities straddle along borders and empirical observations regarding spill-over effects.
2. What are major activities concerning the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict both in Ethiopia and Djibouti? What do you think are major causes and triggering factors?
3. Why unilateral conflict resolution efforts by individual states have been failed so far?
4. How to handle the disadvantages of porous borders while maintaining free movement and communication of divided societies?
5. How to correlate regional interstate rivalry and using of local conflicts as proxy?
6. What are potential recommendations for mitigating inter-ethnic conflicts between groups straddle in different states in the region? (Particularly in the case of the Afar and Issa/Somali conflict)

Curriculum Vitae

Yasin Mohammed Yasin was born in Assab on 25th of July 1978. Holds BA in Accounting from Ethiopian Civil Service College in 1999 and MA in Regional and Local Development Studies at Addis Ababa University in 2004, worked with International Human Rights organization (Target) as Programme Coordinator. Since April 2007 to April 2010, he joined the University of Hamburg, Department of Political Science where he finalized his PhD dissertation. He has participated and presented research papers at a number of national and international conferences in the field of conflict studies and political issues in the Horn of Africa region. Some of Yasin's researches and publications are listed below.

Research and Publications

- Border Dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti. Field Report to IGAD/GTZ Project. Djibouti, October 2008.
- Political History of the Afar in Ethiopia and Eritrea. "In Afrika Spectrum, GIGA Hamburg Germany, 2008.
- Ethiopian Federal Army Intervention against Somali Settlers within the Afar Region. Lesnouvelles d'Addis, No.61. Paris. July-March 2008.
- A Text on Mille, Biography of Sultan Mohammed Yayyo "In: Siegbert Uhlig, ed., Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, Vol. III, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008.
- The Hostages Drama in the Danakil Depression. In: Lesnouvelles d'Addis <http://www.lesnouvelles.org>. March 2007.
- The Regional Dynamics of the Afar and Issa-Somali Conflict in the Horn of Africa. "In: Kinfe Abraham-Wolbert Smidt (eds.): Discussing Conflict, Proceedings of the Conference "Ethiopia and German Contributions to Conflict Management and Resolution", Addis Ababa 11-12 November 2005, Münster: Lit-Verlag 2006.