EMERGING ISSUES IN INTER-ETHNIC RECONCILIATION (PEACE-BUILDING) IN THE LOWER OMO BASIN, ETHIOPIA

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Abstract

This study explores the emerging issues in conflict management such as the essence of women and youth participation, the quest for descent representation and methodological shift from a conventional top-down to a more participatory. These developments are considered as positive but entangled with economic return and larger scales of political and development agendas. The This study used ethnographic approach. Thus, the recent initiative to integrate "pastoral culture" and ensure local peoples participation in peace-building processes aimed the unprecedented changes of the Lower Omo Basin is just a beginning and has not yet induced a desired level of peace and stability. The conceptual and practical ambiguities in the process have instead generated new lines of social tension and spread mistrust between various groups.

Key Words: Participation, Inter-ethnic, Peace-building, Lower Omo Basin

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1. Introduction

In earlier times, inter-ethnic conflicts and problems that transcend ethnic boundaries used to be solved in self-initiated reconciliation gatherings which were most often planned and organized by community spokespersons of corresponding sections. Such kind of reconciliation meetings were joint ventures that were held mostly in the homestead of ritual leaders. This self-initiated customary approach was gradually replaced by an increasing involvement of state and non-state actors as organizers and participants in peace-building processes. In the conflict-ridden parts of northeast Africa where states were entangled with series of internal conflict (Scott-Villiers et al.,2011), and Barnes (2002) show that the role of civil societies became so popular particularly since the first decade of the twenty-first century. This has led to a new approach which came to be known as the "civil peace-building". EPARDA and AEPDA constitute the non-governmental organizations which played a significant role mediating the conflict between Daasanech and their neighbors (Glowacki and Gönc 2013). Forming a trans-border agreement with Riam-Riam Turkana, these organizations played a significant role in conflict resolution between pastoralists on the Ethiopian side and the Turkana and Gabra on the Northern Kenyan border. The growing prominence of non-state actors in conflict management in the Lower Omo basin and other parts of the country could itself be seen as a positive development. But it gradually fell short of trust by the Ethiopian government who accused them of interfering in the political process in the country. A year before the 2010 national election, the government has adopted a proclamation that limited the role of these organizations. The Charities and Societies proclamation of August 2009 has brought a profound change in the composition, structure, and areas of operation of these organizations. Thus, majority were closed and forced to revise their organizational structure and fields of operation. In this way, the declaration of Charities and Societies has severely reduced the role of non-state actors in local reconciliation efforts inEthiopia

Since the proclamation of Charities and Societies many of the civil society organizations across the nation, the peace-building process was taken over by state institutions. For this reason, the process has taken a new characteristic which is meant to focus on 'national benefit and agenda' rather than the interests of the affected people. The peace events organized at various levels are designed to secure these goals. They seem to meet the conventional criteria of a successful approach to conflict mediation and peace-building models that are known in earlier works.

However, many of these approaches failed to bring about improvements in the general status of peace and security. One of the reasons is that the government failed to properly consider the question of the cultural and social legitimacy of the local people. It rather focused much on image consumption for its political agenda. This has been similar to what White (1996: 8) has observed in Zambia. As she explains the government-initiated peace events of participating so many women in various levels of administration was simply to demonstrate that "the departments are doing something and have a popular base" than bringing about a real change in the community. Nationally, the Ministry of Federal Affairs that emerged after the declarationof Charities and Societies took control of conflict management practices. The Ministry has adopted what was called a Conflict Prevention and Resolution Strategy of 2010 which was considered a national guideline and later adopted by every regional state. The strategy had three basic pillars: (1) developing a culture of peace that promotes tolerance and non-violent communication, (2) establishing a strong early warning and early response system and (3) addressing conflict at an early stage, identifying and dealing with root causes as well as providing mechanisms of support for victims of conflict(Glowacki and Görc 2013: 25–26).

In 2011, the Council of Nationalities of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State adapted the guideline and developed a regional version of the strategy to deal with the conflicts that happen across the region. This regional framework included among others the inclusion of women and youth in peace committees, adopting peace education, strengthening social organizations and integrating peace and development efforts. The council introduced an organizational structure that establishes and supports peace committees at various levels of administration down to the grassroots-level(ibid: 27). Hence, the committees are established all levels of administrations. In each of the administrative units, conflict-prone areas are identified and early warning and preventive measures are taken by the government. In conflict-prone pastoral villages, located most often along boundaries of two or more pastoral groups. The committee is a body constituted of five individuals of one is female and established in every conflict-prone administrative unit to serve as a conflict resolution task force. This is indication that the government has planned to achieve what is called "peace by committee." However, adopting this kind of strategies to mediate conflict is often criticized for the fact that in many ways it fails to yield positive results. A case in point is the action of a peace-building committee

of Abey military crisis in Sudan which didn't solve the matter. In the Lower Omo Basin too, the current strategy of including pastoralists in the government's peace-building committee could be interpreted as a simple move to emphasize more on issues of image and legitimacy than realistically addressing the root causes of the problems.

The overall transformations that occurred in the fields of inter-ethnicpeace-building are expressed in a number of unprecedented changes in the last eight years. These include an increasing quest for inclusiveness (for example, the inclusion of previously excluded groups like women and youth, appropriateness of the representation formula, methodological shift from a less participatory to a more participatory one), increasing entanglement of participation with economic returns and peace with the security and development agenda of a wider scale. Each of these five aspects will be discussed in this order in the paper. I now turn on to discussing the nature of inclusion of women and young people in the recent peace gatherings and its implication for the stability of theLower Omo basin.

2. Inclusion of Women and Young People

Like in many pastoral areas in Ethiopia, the role of women in public in the Lower Omo basin is very much limited due to the genderdivision of labor that often confines them to domestic spheres. Pastoral women often preoccupy themselves with domestic chores while the male exclusively engages themselves in herding. In the self-initiated reconciliation meetings, women collaborate with ritual leaders, smearing the handles of blessing sticks with butter, boil meat or fetch water. Besides, they prepare *shoforo* (which the elders drink and bless the crowd with) and sometimes cook forage for the guests. Finally, young girls are chosen to exchange fats to symbolize solidarity between the warring groups, for example, between the Daasanech and their neighbors. Since these models of peace gatherings are held in compounds of a ritual leader in their own territories, women never travel long distances on foot or at the back of cars, leaving behind their house, children, husband, and neighborhood. These roles had never created any panic to them in the past. However, the recent trend of participation, where women are included in village and district required to take part in peace events like reconciliation meetings.

As observed during field work such public events have already created hassles to the participants since they often trouble women's relationships with other members of their families and communities. When they wander in towns, leaving behind their children, house, and neighborhood, women lose their reputation women in the eyes of fellow villagers. Long days of gatherings in remote areas, which sometimes require them to travel on the backs of big lorries or ambulance cars, exposes them to health problems and alien traditions which is considered as 'disruptive' to indigenous custom. The following case of a Hamar 'woman' who is often depicted as a model for other women, clearly explains what it means for a woman to associate herself with state practices and to participate in externally organized peace events that were held outside her village. In her move to comply with the modernization agenda of the state, the woman has already sent two of her boys and a daughter to a school in Dimeka. She is also known among other women to encourage fellow people to send their children to school and serve in the newly established Protestant church in the village. Her husband replied to her interest violently and has beaten her several times as his fellow villagers complained and criticized him for letting her break their tradition. She was chased out of her house several times and forced to stay with her relatives in Dimeka. It appears true that the government's appreciation of her as a 'model woman', whom others should follow, is pushed her out of the social domain in her own society. It should be considered that the study has no favour on the specific women but it is to indicate the scenario to have general understanding.

The cultural division of labor based on gender remains an important principle which still guides how women should behave in public. However, this does not mean that the "pastoral culture" has totally ignored their interest and representation. Instead, it follows a different logic to include the interest of women. In patriarchal societies like Daasanech, the ideas and interest of women are thought to be implicitly communicated in public via their husbands. Male heads of households are thought responsible to address the interests and perspectives of their wives and children in public spheres. However, such a cultural model of representation of women has not only been put aside in the recent approach but less likely recognized. Youth are another group of people who had not been part of the peace processes in the past in the area. Exclusion of the youth from government-initiated public events in the past was mainly due to the interest of state authorities in senior people who, by virtue of seniority and socio-economic achievement, govern the people.

Their exclusion from the self-initiated peace events is largely due to the cultural logic that often puts a higher emphasis on seniority.

In the pastoral context, it is expected that one takes up a bigger social role only when he grows older and proves his relevance to the community, becoming successful in social and economic fields. Hence, the omission of youth from peace meetings in that context does not precisely mean the underestimation of their role in conflict mediation. It is rather a decent recognition of the cultural principle. This cultural logic remains the same but the state's view on it has been changed in the last several years. The new approach has now moved not only to recognize the contribution of young people but also their integration into the peace process. Hence, the youth (i.e. herdsmen) are given a platform to take part in peace gatherings. They now play their role as conflict mediators via their representative who takes part in peace gatherings and communicates the results to that gathering to those in the remote herding camps. To this end, state officials follow two approaches. In the first place, they select youths who represent them in peace gatherings that are held outside their herding camps. In the second place, government officials have established a joint-border youth committee that takes part in peace-building events in their grazing areas or other places that are closer to their regular camping sites. This kind of peace-building structure appears ad hoc due to the seasonal movement of herding groups. The aim of establishing this committee is primarily to broker the condition of peacefully sharing resources and avoiding direct confrontation in grazing areas.

However, such a committee is not self-sufficient but collaborates with a peace committee of older and diversified people which was governed almost all by the security department and district administrations. Unlike women, who often never complain their social location, there is always an observable degree of rivalry between younger and older generations. This competitive relationship between the younger and older generations over the socio-economic and cultural capital in every pastoral section is reflected in their interaction in the occasion of peace-building efforts. Almagor (1979) has already described this uneasy relationship between the two groups as 'confrontation of generations' in one of his seminal works in Daasanech. The source of such rivalry lies on the nature of the pastoral mode of production and survival that often provokes competition, the elders striving to maintain wealth that they have accumulated through time and

the youth for gaining it. Such kind of competitive relationship between older and younger generations is expected and reflected in many of the peace-building events. Baxter (1979), like Almagor (1979), has recognized the existence of such kind of rivalries during their fieldwork in the 1970s. But it is not clearly addressed whether the introduction of firearms into the pastoral areas have worsened their relations.

The works of Abbink (1998) had shown that inter-generational tensions have increased due to the advent of modern arms in the Lower Omo basin. Many other studies (Masuda 2009, Nna, Nekabari Johnson, Pabon, Baribene Gbara, and Nkoro, Friday 2012) have confirmed his argument. But authors like Sagawa (2010) call for a closer look and contextualization of such kind of assumptions. Sagawa has indicated that the proliferation of firearms across the lowlands of Ethiopia is not as disruptive as it appears in conventional thinking. He argues that the pastoral groups in the basin had instead wisely used modern weapons to defend themselves from the external threat in times when the state was not able to provide adequate security measures and infrastructure, and the conclude that pastoralists who live along border areas maintained the nation's territorial integrity for decades and now.

3. Methodological Claim

One of the reasons that necessitated the inclusion of previously marginalized ideas and groups in peace-building in the recent years in Lower Omo basin seems the organizers' desire for applying an innovative method which involves a shift from the conventional, top-down, externally designed and dominated, to a supposedly sound and legitimate approach. In this regard, it seems to result in appropriate representation and the maximum degree of contribution and return. Hence, the central theme in the methodological claim intends to achieve an increasing degree of inclusiveness of the peace process. It has two dimensions. One is an increasing integration of "pastoral culture" with modern methods, and the other is an increasing concern for the question of representation of the various pastoral groups in peace and development processes.

3.1. Merging of Pastoral Culture with New Strategies

The desire for inclusiveness of the peace process brought about the relevance of pastoral tradition to the attention of government-initiated peace-building events. This has opened up an

era of what is called the "cultural turn", alternatively called the "local turn". It is considered a turn mainly because the state and non-state actors began to apply pastoral worldviews, practices, and norms in reconciliation meetings to an unprecedented degree. In this new era of government-initiated peace gatherings, the role of rituals in forming group solidarity is officially endorsed. Hence, many of the peace gatherings accompany ritual practices that symbolize reunification and solidarity between conflicting parties. These include jointly held traditional blessings, ritual slaughtering of animals, exchange of gifts, mutual visit and communal sharing of ritual meat. The rituals also involve condemnation of inter-ethnic violence, oaths to stop war, raid and agreeing to share resources that constitute some other procedures in the reconciliation meetings.

Other dimensions of the new approach include performance art and drama. This includes singing, dancing, theatrical performance and literary works that tend to symbolically promote by this study observed it as 'developmental peace' of the 'developmental state.' In such practices, songs and plays that curse or demonize warfare and raid and promote peaceful relations are presented and in the meantime, attendants are asked to apply these concepts in inter-ethnic and intra-tribal interactions. In some of the peace events, ritual leaders, pastoralists' spokespersons, and the youth employ techniques of 'naming and shaming wrong doers' through songs and plays so that people give up going to war and raid or backing up those who go for war and raid.Most of the songs in use today are composed by volunteer members of the Catholic Church of Omorate town. Some of these songs are also used for church services. The church does not only take a strong initiative introducing such songs but also finances a large number of peace events which are held across the Daasanech-Hamar-Nyangatom corridor of the Omo basin. The contents of these songs are largely influenced by biblical thought and hence they stand in complete contrast to the very idea of manhood in the pastoral context. In most cases, pastoralists are forced to sing and dance in a way that opposes their values, interest thought and practice. Hence, the new peace songs are less likely to influence the general rule of inter-group perceptions and relations, at least currently, which were established and have been communicated through songs and dances performed to function differently. In some of the peace events, the local bands, that are mostly ad hoc in nature, also present plays (music and dance) whose contents provoke pan-ethnic solidarity and discourage inter-ethnic livestock theft and homicides. The Security department at district level chooses the topic and organizes the band's performance in collaboration with the Culture and Tourism departments in that administrative unit. At the peace gathering in Kibish,

for example, during the field work, it was observed that a play of condemning conflict and livestock raiding and promoted peace and development. Aplay was explained in the languages of four pastoral groups (Daasanech, Nyangatom, Kara, and Kwegu). After debating in favor of their respective tool for about ten minutes, the person in favor of the weapon agreed to turn it into a spade so that he could speed up developmentinstead of homicide and raid.

The new methodological claim also includes multitudes of annually and occasionally celebrated peace events. Several ethnic groups are invited to these kinds of events that are intended to promote mutual benefit, cooperation, and inter-ethnic solidarity. Among these events are sports competitions, peace week celebrations, and peace festivals. Since such events are held in administrative centers, people in the remote rural areas are required to travel long distances and stay in hotel rooms or with relatives. Besides, there are large numbers of reconciliation meetings or training sessions which are carried out in various parts. The pastoralists have attended national and international peace events that sometimes took them to Addis Ababa, Awassa, Semera, Dire Dawa, Jigjiga, Moyale, and Lokiriama (Kenya). Hence, throughout the first decade of twenty-first-century EPARDA and Riam-Riam Turkana, the two local NGOs operating, respectively, in Lower Omo basin and Turkana forged an alliance that helped the local people make reconciliation meetings across the Lower Omo basin and in other parts of the region. In the new peace gatherings, the manner of presentation and content of the speeches of pastoralists has been changed. The participants are now adding political rhetoric and development narratives to train themselves to the new situation. Elders imitate the behaviors of the government officials, following after them, repeating their words and endorsing their decisions. Concepts like 'democracy', 'development' and 'peace' pepper their speech in ways that they do not appear in self-initiated meetings.

3. 2. Question of Representation

An increasing awareness of the need for inclusiveness of peace agreements in theLower Omo basin is now expressed in two ways. One is through an increasing interest of governmental and non-governmental organizations recognizing the role of local people and culture in peace-building processes. The other is a growing partnership between pastoralists and the government the condition which has led to an increasing interest in pastoral culture and growing partnership

of the pastoralists and the state in the official discourse. This has led to what is alternatively called the 'cultural turn' or 'local turn' in the peace-building process. This has opened a window of opportunities for old and new clan leaders, women and youthto take part in peace events which are now legitimately organized by NGOs and GOs. But it could be noted that an increasing interest alone cannot be a guarantee for 'active participation' and 'proper representation' of pastoral ideas and practices to achieve the desired outcome.

Though it is believed that the role and participation of local people is vital, how a representation formula should look like. The questions "who should represent a group in peace events? Or how should a group's culture be represented in such events?" are the common questions that linger in the minds of those who organize peace events and participate in it. This was so evident in a number of interview sessions and peace events where I have attended and discussed the matter or gathered data through interviews. In a preparatory peace gathering initiated by groups of people from Addis Ababa and the Catholic Church of Omorate, the Hamar at Mirsha Kiluma, for example, ordered the organizers to leave the area, for they have not included the appropriate pastoral elders from Daasanech in the crew. Similarly, the Nyangatom representatives had furiously rejected the claims of the Shir elders to represent the Daasanech in an inter-ethnic gathering held at Turmi during fieldwork. The Nyangatom representatives underlined the list of names that should not be missed in the upcoming reconciliation gatherings in Kibish during fieldwork. The matter was crosschecked before the actual meeting took place at Kibish. After a heated debate in which the Nyangatom elders refused to accept the ritual leadership of the Shir elders, an Elele elder was selected to make the ritual slaughter.

The question of representation goes deeper than it is always thought and expected. It could be, for example, about seeking answers to questions like "who is really invited among the pastoral women, from the young people in the herding camps and from the older generation or from a pastoral group in general?" This is an important question because it helps us touch the bottom line of the concept and the resulting application in all kinds of peace-related events. Representation is not only about the ability to apply a formula or being part of that formula which draws certain persons alone but also the political will and financial capacity to afford the cost of selection and participation. Though the level of representation varies depending on the

size, culture, and target of the group required taking part in the peace process, the formula to pick up representatives in the present pattern is the consideration of peace committee members established at various levels. The peace committee often constitutes five people. At the grassroots level, it constitutes, for example, two villages administrators, an executive and 'a community spokesperson' and a woman representative. All of these people automatically qualify to represent the pastoralists at that constituency. For instance, in the peace events in which the district is invited, the district peace committee members (head of district security department, representatives of militia and police, elders and women) are selected to represent the district at Zonal, Regional or international peace events.

The size of participants may increase depending on the number of people required by the organizers. In a comprehensive peace event where a relatively large number of participants are expected, several peace committee members including delegates of the youth/herdsmen are included. This is the way how representation is officially conceived and applied. Nonetheless, the above notion of representation fixed by government officials is highly criticized. One of the critics goes that the representation principle considers people who pose little challenge, at least in theory, to the ideas of government officials or NGO workers. Hence, it only considers people who are perceived to be progressive and appear positive to government policies. Some of them constitute what is called 'model pastoralists' who have already internalized government policies and strategies on various topics such as conflict resolution, peace-building and development. It was found that these are people who rather represent (or wish to represent) the state among the pastoralists than the pastoralism in the state structure. In reality, these are people who rather serve the government in the program of transforming the pastoral way of life. Hence, the approach lacks popular trust as it gathers people who have already become part of the political structure but do not have the social authority. With the majority of people across horizontal or vertical chains of administration, the current peace process has created forces that operate through multilevel networks based on principles of reciprocity and used to maximize benefits between them and their clients. With the inclusion of these groups of people, the authorities maintain a local power base. The question of representation is addressed more or less in a similar pattern in peace events that are managed by NGOs. The critics that stroke governmental organizations tend to feature among NGOs more or less in a similar manner.

4. Challenges

The study identifies two basic challenges that are popping up in the recent years. The first is about an increasing entanglement of participation with economic interests. The second is the securitization of development projects and narratives.

4.1. Economic Participation

The banning of civil societies' direct involvement in conflict resolution and human rights issues in recent past was resulted in a significant cut off funds that could have been available to support pastoral participation in peace-building. Witness explains that the government officials often talking about the insufficiency of funds and facilities to properly discharge their duties. Meanwhile, there is a growing demand for pastoral actors for cash and other forms of remunerations in return for participation in peace events. In times when cash was not widely known to the pastoralists in the past, this has largely been limited to government officials who were closely attached to state structure. But the desire for cash has now quickly engulfed the majority of pastoralists in theLower Omo basin. The pastoralists who had not have the chance to profit from peace events in the past are now striving to realize it using different strategies. In fact, participation in peace events is not directly related to economic returns. Thus, the most evident thing in the issue is not the actual growth of remunerations but also the growing expectation that peace events should always be as attractive as possible in terms of financial returns. Indeed, the financial rewards of peace events to the pastoral participants in the Lower Omo basin are not big enough but it has still the capacity to make people needier. An ever increasing value of cash and particularly the variation of payments per meetings have become the main forces that add value to the increasing demand for economic returns from peace events. The inconsistency of payments happens in a number of peace events during field observation. This has the potential to destruct the outcomes of peace meetings, for example, shifting the attention of participants from intrinsic involvement in the peace gatherings to polarized debates over securing material benefits. During the fieldwork upon the conclusion of the Kibish peace meeting, the Daasanech refused to climb into a lorry and return home unless they were paid. One after another, thedistrict officials struggled to persuade the crowd that they did not have any money for them. One of them argued: "you came here to make peace for yourself, which is better than any kind of cash. We received only a small amount of money from the government

[Intergovernmental Authority on Development, IGAD]. We used it only to cover fuel and food costs for participants of the meeting." Meanwhile, a young pastoralist joined others angrily murmuring to a friend standing next to him: "we know that they are going to receive a per-diem of eight days. We do not want to go to our families bare-handed. They have to give us a little money to buy at least tobacco and coffee nests for our wives." In spite the fact that they did not pay for their stay in Kangaton, the crowd was still furious returning home without any payment.

The majority of peace-building efforts in the pastoral areas focus on promotion and awareness creation. Hence, the organizers spend a significant portion of money on buying t-shirts, scarves, banners, caps and the like that bear publically visible messages which seem to promote cooperation and foster consonance. Given the difficulty of accessing the required materials and facilities in the vicinity, the administrative costs required to properly communicate these messages are often so high. Besides, it seems that the intended message appear to be improperly communicated, for the fact that many of these items bear slogans that are prepared in alien languages which the participants never understand. The age-mates and members of senior generation-sets gather in the homestead of a person returning from the peace event or meet him in the central *Naab* where he shares his experience. Such kind of gatherings become more interesting when they are accompanied by drinks and foods bought with per diems from these gatherings. My host is among people who repeatedly attend the peace events. He sometimes proudly speaks out about the chance that peace events have created to him such as meeting prominent politicians and NGO managers or visiting historical and cultural sites, parks and market centers that his fellow people could not realize. He sees these social networks that he was able to build up and the symbolic capital that he managed to secure as special returns. But he still insists that the social, economic and cultural capitals obtained from participation in peace events enjoy them better when it is accompanied by some amount of money per event in a regular manner. Hence, it goes as one of my informants explained me after a meeting: "It is good to meet or see these people but you never bring it home. We need money to buy what we need to bring to our home."

4.2. Securitization ofDevelopment Issues

The local opposition against state intervention has renewed in the Omo basin, particularly in the last ten years. While most of these oppositions go underground, some are openly expressed in the form of violent attacks against farm workers, immigrant businessmen, teachers, NGO members, drivers, and many others. The threat has been growing since the arrival of the large-scale irrigation and dam projects (upper basin) in recent years which are said to threaten pastoralists' access to land, water, and other related resources. There is news coming out most frequently about road blockage, killing of travelers, murdering of immigrant population and security personnel. Although such a resistance has not been new, the magnitude has increased to an unprecedented level since these projects, and it raised concerns about the security of the projects and stability of the entire region in the future. The security bureaus at Zonal and district levels are always in the alert to have control over the sudden outbreak of conflicts or attacks elsewhere in the basin. It appears that the state authorities are now preoccupied with maintaining the security of the basin, prioritizing prevention of the likelihood of conflicts rather than transforming it, at least in everyday narratives, following an early warning and preventive approach. Hence, the new approach pays much attention to the 'security' of the development projects in the areas, treating the social and economic security of the pastoral groups in the basin within the general framework of the regional security and national development. The reaction of the government is about how to stop it rather than finding a sustainable solution to the basin. This trend of envisioning local peace, social order and development in the national economic and security framework is shaped largely by extrinsic interests that often fail to make sense of local knowledge and realities. The place of extrinsic influence is also observable in the usage of certain concepts in the course of conflict management. In everyday official discourse, the Amharic term *tsetita* (security) is tremendously used instead of the local versions of*shimit*(peace). It is obvious that the meaning and application of *tsetita* in use now varies considerably from the customary understanding of peace and stability.

The official dictum "securing peace through securitization" is an approach which has already been criticized by Galtung and Fischer (2013: 132). These scholars argued that this notion of intending to attain peace is not realistic in the post-cold-war era where there are huge diversities of contexts that need careful consideration. In the present situation, the term security is

uncritically used to describe the peace and hence seems to conform to the theory of "securitization" of the Copenhagen school of security studies. 'Security' in the present sense is largely associated with creating a suitable and secure environment to attract investment; but it overlooks the security and stability of pastoral way of life, at least for the present time. It has now made the pastoralists subject of the economic interest of a very few people – political elites and businessmen. Therefore, there arises always the question, "whose security is it about?" which often ends up in the answer "their security", the security of the immigrant population and businessmen who are closely connected to the state structure and hence, can skillfully manipulate it. For those government officials who have attended training on conflict management skills and various kinds of national policies in the top-down framework, the place of local strategies to peace is always overlooked, which is mostly incompatible with the local perception and logic.

The notion of thinking to attain local peace in the broader framework of national politics and regional security tend to promote not only a reductionist but also a corrupted understanding of the sources, processes, and outcomes of the local peace processes. The authorities place the pastoralists as recipients of what they conceive a 'progressive and developmental peace' which is said to be achieved by the normative measures of the state. The notion of envisioning and conceiving peace in the framework of security is also evident in the nomenclature of the politico-administrative structure in charge, which is called the security department. The department administers both the militia and police force. The number of police has remained stable over the past two decades, but the composition and internal organization have been changing. This means that the force has been better organized, armed and of course largely politicized. The main police station and sub-units in remote rural areas process information about signs and actual incidents of conflict on daily basis and use this data for planning and action. On the whole process, the current pattern of conflict mediation focuses on prevention and early intervention. What is important in the report is that the number of killings and livestock raids should be low despite the actual number. The creation of sustainable peace becomes secondary. This means that reducing the number of homicides or raids is not equivalent to solving the problems that generate them.

The securitization agenda of the Ethiopian government in the Omo basin is also closely connected to and constitutes programs of "regional integration", another top-down move that shapes local peace process spearheaded by Intergovernmental Authority on Development

(IGAD). The Authority adopted a project called "Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanisms (CEWARM)" that collects and organizes conflict-related data and provides policy analysis in the places where the Daasanech, Nyangatom and their Kenyan neighbors live. The unit provides training and financial support to local peace initiatives that come from border area administrations and target the management of cross-border conflicts. In the Lower Omo Basin, the unit maps out the cross-border conflict between Daasanech and their Kenyan neighbors (Gabra and Turkana) and between Nyangatom and their neighbors like Turkana (Kenya) and Toposa (South Sudan). The project works also on some other pastoral groups along the borders of Kenya, Rwanda and South Sudan. In each of these pastoral areas, two local field monitors, who are responsible to their respective pastoral administrations, are assigned to make a monthly report to the respective unit of IGAD concerning the interaction between pastoralists.

The notion of regional integration is strongly related to regional peace and security which is thought to be seriously affected by cross-border conflicts. These categories of conflict are dealt with by joint border commissions, consisting of representatives of neighboring administrations and pastoralists. The introduction of this structure in recent years has totally overwhelmed self-initiated cross-border peace gatherings. Local pastoralists do not 'own' this new structure which furthermore introduces a highly isolated, politicized and securitized understanding of resources and boundaries. The institutional requirements for self-initiated intervention that are inherent in the new system often delay responses to cross-border conflicts which offend the local people. In short, the time has brought to the peoples ofLower Omo basin circumstances that they cannot easily deal with their present capacity. The focus and target of the Ethiopian government in the Omo basin is clearly seen in the adoption of what is called the Pastoralist Modality Agreement. This is the agreement, as stated in the document, made by the pastoralists and farmers of South Omo zone. The agreement is composed of two components (terms that deal with the general conditions of building peace and arms control each of which are composed of respectively 14 and 16 articles) which also constitute the objectives of adopting such kind of agreement. From the outset, the adoption of such an agreement seems to foster cooperation between the customary and state authorities in the course of law enforcement. But in reality, it intends to ensure state's control overpopulation and resources.

Conclusion

Drawing evidence from observation of the peace events, attended by Daasanech and their neighbors, this study discussed the emerging features and associated critics of 'externally-initiated' inter-ethnicpeace-building in the Lower Omo basin. The study concludes that the innovative features of peace-building of the last five years such as increasing demand for inclusion of women and youth, representation of various segments of the pastoral communities and recognition of participatory (bottom-up) approach are among the structural responses to the unprecedented changes in the Lower Omo Basin. It appears most often that the adoption of these responses is considered a success and a pertinent contribution to the peace-building process in the pastoral areas. However, it should be noted that the origin of these features and the need to adopt corresponding responses are both rooted in an increasing economic importance of the pastoral areas and related political reforms. The other emerging feature of peace-building in the Omo basin was the growing entanglement of peace with economic returns and the securitization and development agenda of the country. These aspects of peace-building pose challenge to the human condition at the local level. Hence, it is an indication that not all kinds of national or regional security or development agenda benefit the local people or fit into the local realities. In theory, the new features of peace-building focus on local people's ideas and practices in solving inter-ethnic conflicts (with a state playing a facilitator's role).

Finally, two things stand pertinent for consideration;the first is that it is useful to consider the role and place of regional and national politics in pastoral conflict and peace-building. Similarly, it is appropriate to consider the international situations that also play a significant role in the peace-building processes. The national political interests, policy measures and economic decisions which are reflected in a number of ways have an immense power to change the pastoral relations and hence shape stability of social and political relations across the Lower Omo basin. Second, it is useful to consider that the on-going changes in the fields of conflict management are largely inevitable and often ignite further changes that can also induce unexpected tensions which may need additional knowledge and institutional capacity to cope with them. However, this new knowledge and institutional capacities should give appropriate weight to the dynamics of conflict and peace-building efforts which are relevant not only to academia but also to practitioners.

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