

Gondoro as a Social Capital: Analysis of an Indigenous Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Practice of the Guji and Gedeo Peoples

Ashebir Tadesse^{*1} and Tadesse Jaleta²

¹ Department of Oromo language and Literature, Dilla University, Ethiopia.

² Department of Oromo Language, Literature and Folklore, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

*Corresponding author, Email: ashebirtadesse@yahoo.com

Received: 04th May 2023

Accepted: 10th September 2023

©2023 Dilla University. All Rights Reserved

DOI: 10.20372/ejed.v05i1.05

Abstract

The people ruled by the Gada system have a tradition of stopping conflict and establishing peace. The Guji and Gede'o people have a tradition of conflict resolution and peacemaking called Gondoro. This research paper aims to show that the Gondoro traditional method of conflict resolution is the social capital of the Guji and Gedeo people. To achieve this purpose, the qualitative descriptive research approach was applied. Through this approach, the Gondoro tradition was described in terms of how it was performed and the traditional practices and their contextual meanings it embodied. A purposive sampling technique was used to select key informants who were cultural group leaders from Guji and Gede'o. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis (archival analysis) were employed for data collection. The data were analyzed by dividing them into different topics to adequately answer the research questions. Based on the analysis of the qualitative data, Gondoro is performed to cleanse 'fratricide' that could happen between the Guji and Gedeo people or within the Guji or Gedeo people. It is done to cleanse the grief resulting from the 'fratricide' and restore peace among the communities. The article discusses that the Guji and Gede'o people have 'fraternal' relationship that has been reinforced through their shared legendary narratives and cultural practices. Accordingly, the article argues that the Gondoro tradition is the social capital of the Guji and Gede'o people. The article concludes that indigenous knowledge, such as the Gondoro tradition, can serve as a good experience for Ethiopian ethnic groups sharing the border to solve their security problems through their common tradition.

Keywords/Phrases: Conflict, Gedeo, Gondoro, Guji, Peace, Social Capital

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Studies show indigenous social practices embodying pools of social knowledge and resources that are deeply rooted in social relationships reinforce fraternity, solidarity, and peaceful co-existence within communities and among communities (Phillips & Pittman, 2009). According to social capital theorists such as Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988), and Putnam (1993), the accumulation of indigenous social knowledge is the values of a society that strengthen social relationships, ensure common prosperity, sus-

tain common ethics, and guarantee the coexistence of the members of the community. Brock-Utne (2001:9) notes, "The immediate objective of such conflict resolution is to mend the broken or damaged relationship, rectify wrongs, and restore justice". Evidence shows that societies have been adapting and using conflict resolution methods for centuries.

This article presents Gondoro as a social capital that serves as an indigenous mechanism to sustain harmonious social relationships between the Guji and Gedeo peoples. Gondoro is defined as an institutionally designed mechanism of conflict resolution by

Guji and Gedeo communities and neighboring ethnic groups (Solomon, 2009). Researchers such as Asebe (2007), Asnake (2004), and Solomon (2009) stated that conflicts that happened between Guji and Gedeo ethnic groups during 1995, 1998, and 2017/18 were resolved through Gondoro practices. It is customary to resolve conflicts between Guji and Gedeo through Gondoro practice. According to Asebe (2007), Asnake (2004), and Solomon (2009), Gondoro sustains social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between the Guji and Gedeo peoples. Researchers such as Asnake (2004), Asebe (2007), and Solomon (2009) show that in Ethiopia, customary practices have played an important role in stopping conflicts between individuals as well as among different ethnic groups to establish peace. For example, Asebe (2007) stated that the tradition of conflict resolution and peacemaking are deeply rooted in the cultures of different ethnic groups and play significant roles in maintaining social relations. Asnake (2004) emphasizes the same idea that society gives great importance to tradition as it contains the morals and cultural beliefs of the society. The traditions of conflict resolution and peacebuilding have played an important role in resolving conflicts between ethnic groups and establishing peace, as they are carried out by the customs and ethics of the society. Solomon (2009), Asebe (2007), and Gumi (2016) stated that the Gondoro practice has been exercised among the Guji and Gedeo peoples since ancient times.

This article opts to build on the existing studies by focusing on analyzing Gondoro as the social capital of the Guji and Gedeo peoples. It attempts to explain how Gondoro is performed as a shared and inter-ethnic practice, the actors and their roles, the place where it is performed, the practices and their context, the ethics, the values, and the beliefs that constitute Gondoro Performance.

1.2 Concept of Social Capital

In this article, the social capital theory has been used as a theoretical basis to analyze and describe the data. This theory observes indigenous knowledge of conflict resolution and peace-building as social capital.

Informed by the social capital theory, Fred-Mensah (2005), cited in Osei-hwedie & Rankopo (2012), de-

scribe traditional conflict resolution mechanisms as social capital. Similarly, Phillips & Pittman (2009) present social capital as a set of resources intrinsic to social relations and include trust, norms, community responsibility, reciprocal obligations, civic sense, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating collective action for achieving mutually beneficial ends. It is often correlated with confidence in social institutions, civic engagement, and overall community well-being and happiness. According to Field (2008), the central thesis of the theory of social capital can be summed up as that relationship matters. People connect through a series of networks, and they tend to share common values with other members of these networks. The members in a group provide safety and status credit for each other. It is these social ties that guarantee the existence and effective functioning of societies (Fred-Mensah, 2005).

Based on the social capital theory, Volker (2007) argues that social capital constitutes tiered of traditions reflected through shared performances in a certain place and time. From this perspective, the tradition of conflict resolution and peacemaking means that the community where it lives has the means of stopping conflict and making peace through tradition without the intervention of government structures or without the formal courts. Barfield (2004) argues that the tradition of conflict resolution and peacemaking is based on communities with similar cultures and values or communities that share traditions. It means that society evaluates whether practices in society are customary or unc customary based on its traditions. When immoral acts are committed, society imposes social sanctions on the perpetrator. To lift these social sanctions and return to society, the perpetrator flees to traditional community leaders.

In summary, social capital entails the accumulation of social knowledge that enables to live together in life, play roles for community members, maintain peace, maintain social relations, and perform common actions that bring common benefits, shared traditions, ethics, and morals. Since the issue of conflict resolution and peacemaking is not an individual but a group or community issue, having a tradition of conflict resolution and peacemaking to maintain social relations, unity, and community is

closely related to the concept of social knowledge accumulation. Therefore, in this study, it was necessary to analyze the implementation of conflict resolution and peacebuilding practices performed in Gondoro through the lens of the social capital theory.

The process of ending conflict and building peace is conducted by community actors who have a social role in the shared social capital. In support of this idea, Volker (2007) states that “the process to settle the conflict through indigenous means is led by traditional kings, chiefs, priests, sheiks’ healers, big men, elders (being a social elder, not a biological category)”. It means that ending the conflict is processed through the traditional forces in the community. Depending on the culture of the community, these traditional performers vary in different communities. Similarly, in Guji and Gedeo community, the actors and their roles in the performance of Gondoro are explained in depth in the discussion section.

1.3 Cultural and Social Background of the Guji and Gedeo People

The Guji Oromo are one of the Oromo groups living in southern Ethiopia, mainly in the districts called West and East Guji zones. Asmerom (1973) stated that Guji and Borana are the oldest lands and sources of Oromo culture in Oromo evidence and folklore. Asebe (2007), states that Guji, unlike other Oromo branches, is composed of three independent but not separate ethnic groups that help each other during warfare. They are Uruga, Mati, and Hoku. Hinnant (1977) argues that the spiritual world and the daily life of the Guji Oromo people derive from the Gada system. According to Asebe (2007), in Guji, community peace is maintained, and conflicts are resolved through community traditions rather than modern legal bodies.

At the local level, there is a community leader called Hayyuu Gosaa in every branch of Guji. The three moieties - Uruga, Mati, and Hoku - have their community leader, called Abba Gada, elected every eight years by Gumi Gada at the Gada Assembly. Each moiety has balbala (literally clan) led by Hayyuu Gosa, who were former Gada members who have transferred power and are now elected as advisors to the Abba Gada. The hayyuu gosaa, or community leaders are also responsible for mediating conflicts

in the community. The Guji people believe that God sent Qaalluu to the people ruled by Gada (Asebe, 2007). Gada has laws of peace and morality. They believe that when a person violates these laws and ethics, that person or group will be destroyed (Hinnant, 1977).

The Gedeo are one of the ethnic groups in Southern Ethiopia (Asebe, 2007; Solomon, 2009). Gedeo community is known for its renowned Agroforestry and delicious Yirga Caffee coffee. The Gede’o people have a traditional administration of the Gada System, which they also call the Balle system. The Gedeo has seven subclans, each of which has a cultural community leader called Hayecha. The Guji and Gedeo ethnic groups have their cultural community leaders called Hayyuu gosaa in Guji and Hayecha in Gedeo are similarly elected from all moieties at the Gada assembly. In Guji, the hayyuu and in Gedeo, the hayecha guide the community at the local level according to the Gada system. In their mythology, Guji and Gedeo are said to be brothers (Asebe, 2007; Solomon, 2009).

In general, the Guji Oromo and the Gede’o have brotherly relations and share culture and traditions. Both have traditional governance systems, have a common Qaalluu and share Gondoro traditions. (Asebe, 2007; Solomon, 2009).

2 Methodological Approach

This study is based on a qualitative approach with descriptive research design. Straus and Corbin (1998) state that the “qualitative method is a typical research approach which enables to come up with data that cannot be easily produced by statistical procedures or other means of quantification”. Creswell (2012; 274) stated the purpose of the qualitative descriptive method is to find a detailed explanation of the object of the research.

The researcher used qualitative descriptive research methods to gather evidence on the explanation of Gondoro as a social capital. The qualitative descriptive research was used to gather information about life experiences, human behavior, emotions and desires, social activities, and cultural events related to the topic under study (Straus & Corbin, 1998). In other words, this research followed a qualitative

descriptive research approach as it focused on analyzing the performance of Gondoro practice as a conflict resolution and peacebuilding device among the Guji Oromo and Gedeo. Data were collected from the key informants selected from the Guji and the Gedeo communities using a purposive sampling technique. Methods of data collection include key informants' interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis (Sandelowski, 2012). Using the purposive sampling strategy, the researcher selected and collected information from those who have an understanding and role in the Gondoro's performance.

2.1 Sources of Data

Data were collected from primary sources who are community leaders playing a role in the implementation of Gondoro traditions. In addition, the researcher used video and photographic evidence of Gondoro performance as a secondary source of evidence. The primary sources of evidence are the Guji Oromo community leaders called hayyuu gosaa and Gedeo hayecha, appointed at the Gada assembly. Additionally, previous studies on the same topic have been used as secondary sources.

2.2 Sampling Technique

In this study, the researcher has applied the purposive sampling technique. Because the sources of information in this research were from community members who played a role in implementing the Gondoro tradition among the Oromo and Gedeo people, the purposive identification technique was used. Patton (2015) suggests that with purposive identification techniques, the researcher selects the entity that he or she thinks has sufficient evidence.

Therefore, the purposive identification strategy was used to select the most informed members of the community group for qualitative research. Accordingly, the researcher selected the community leaders called hayyuu gosaa in Guji and hayecha in Gedeo, who play a role in implementing the Gondoro tradition by purposeful identification strategy. Based on the purposive sampling techniques, seven community leaders from Guji and four community leaders from Gedeo were selected and participated in interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher asked the community leaders open-ended interview

questions, noted their answers, and recorded their voices.

2.3 Methods of Data Collection

In-depth Interview: Creswell (2011) explained that qualitative in-depth interviews are used by the researcher to ask open-ended questions to more than one informant and record their answers. The researcher used in-depth interviews to ask community leaders from Guji and Gedeo open-ended questions to gather in-depth descriptions of how Gondoro traditions are performed to resolve inter-ethnic conflicts and restore peaceful relationships. The in-depth interview allowed the researcher to understand and write about the feelings of the community leaders on the subject being investigated. In this study, the researcher asked open-ended questions to the informants who played a role in the performance of Gondoro practice and recorded their answers, and analyzed their answers under sub-topics of this paper.

Focus Group Discussion: Focus group discussions (FGDs) are a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants to generate data (Kitzinger, 1995). FGDs explicitly use group interaction as part of the method. This means that instead of the researcher asking each person to respond to a question, in turn, people are encouraged to talk to one another: asking questions, exchanging narratives, and commenting on each other's experiences and points of view (Kitzinger, 1995). The researcher organized the focus group discussions of the community leaders from Guji and Gedeo to respond to the research questions by supporting each other. In FGDs, when the junior community leader responds to the topic, the senior community leaders build on and enrich discussions, which results in collaborative knowledge-making. The researcher brought together the community leaders through group discussion to help and remind each other to answer the questions on the issue of Gondoro traditional performance between Guji and Gedeo people.

Analysis of Recorded Documents: Secondary data from archived videos that were recorded previously were collected and analyzed. Therefore, as a second source of evidence, the researcher collected data from Gondoro performed records between the Guji Oromo people and the Gedeo people in 2017/18.

Therefore, in this study some audio-visual videos and photos were analyzed and described in line with the research questions.

2.4 Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected for the research should be analyzed to achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions. Accordingly, the researcher translated the data collected from the interviews and group discussions, as well as photographic and audio records of the 2017/18 Gondoro performance between Guji and Gedeo were analyzed under different sub-topics. In this study, mainly content analysis and thematic methods of data analysis were employed. The researcher used content analysis to interpret the recorded images and communication made during interviews and focus group discussions. The thematic method of data analysis also was employed to group the data obtained by interview and focus group discussion into themes to give sense to the content.

3 Results and Discussions

3.1 Interethnic Relationship between the Guji and Gedeo Peoples as Opportunity to Restore Peace

The key informants from Guji and Gedeo explained that the Guji and Gedeo peoples share an ancestor, which they ascertain through their common legendary narrative. Informants who participated in the focus group discussions and interviews confirmed that Guji and Gedeo are brothers. According to Abba Girja from the Guji community and Hayecha Jabo Kura from Gedeo, Guji, and Gede' on are the sons of Jiille. According to them, Jiille had three children. Daraso, Gujo, and Boro. Daraso is the father of Gedeo. Gujo is the father of Guji. Boro is the father of Borana. The Guji and Gedeo peoples share languages and predominantly use Afan Oromo and Gedeuffa languages. The Guji and Gedeo also have similar Gada grades with slight differences in the naming of the grades.

The Guji people are traditionally governed by the Gada system. Similarly, the Gedeo ethnic is governed by the Gada system, which they also call the Balle system. Both ethnicities have a common spiri-

tual father, Qallu, at the supreme level. There is an Abba Gada at the highest level in the structures of both communities. Next to the Abba Gada, there is the community leader at all moiety levels called Hayyuu Gosaa in Guji and Hayecha in the Gedeo. These community leaders are assigned and renamed at the Gada assembly among the existing ethnic moieties, as stated by the key informants (Abba Girja, Abba Hessa, Hayecha Hayilu Bayyane, and Jaboo Kura). In the context of Gedeo, the community leaders are selected from all the seven Gedeo ethnic groups at the Songo assembly and perform the covenant ceremony to become the community's leader (information from key informants Hayecha Hayilu Beyene, Hayecha Alamayo, Hayecha Jabo Kura).

Culturally, Guji and Gedeo share cultural practices, of which Gondoro is the key one. According to participants of the FGDs and in-depth interviews, Guji and Gedeo do not kill each other (fratricide is not acceptable and is considered a huge violation of norms) because they consider each brother. If a brother kills accidentally, performing Gondoro is the culture. According to informants from both communities, Guji does not kill Guji, and in the same way, Gedeo does not kill Gedeo or Guji. It is not customary for the Guji and Gedeo to fight and displace each other. Doing something uncultured separates one from the community. Gondoro is performed to cleanse the person who has committed the crime.

When the Gondoro is performed, the community returns to its former peaceful coexistence as a group. The researcher learned from interviews and group discussions that Gondoro is performed to cleanse the person who killed his brother and bring him back to a peaceful social life. Gondoro is the tradition of cleansing a person or group tainted by murder and returning them to society. Once the Gondoro is done, the fighting stops; peace will descend. It means that society returns to its former peaceful coexistence. This is happening in societies with shared culture and tradition (Barfield, 2004). Generally, as it was stated in the literature review, having shared culture and tradition helped the Guji and Gedeo peoples to stop conflict and establish peace.

3.2 Gondoro as an Interethnic Social Capital Between the Guji and the Gedeo

The relationship between the Guji and the Gedeo peoples has been based on profound values of brotherhood and considering each other ancestral kins. An informant from the Guji, namely Abba Girja, confirmed this reality, “In our culture, a brother does not kill and harm his brother. The Guji and the Gedeo people are brothers. They do not kill and harm each other. In case this happens between us, we cleanse it by performing Gondoro. These statements show that the Guji and the Gedeo believe that Gondoro is a common cultural value by which they remove an evil spirit that has caused homicide between brothers. They perform the Gondoro practice as a means to correct the disorder and avoid the evil spirit that is not acceptable in their cultures.

According to the information obtained from key informants in both ethnic groups, Gondoro serves as social capital to resolve conflicts and restore peace between Guji and Gedeo. In both cultures, Gondoro practice has been an indigenous performance of peace-building since ancient times and serves as a common asset through which they sustain their brotherhood and harmonious relationships. Therefore, it can be said that Gondoro is the social capital between Guji and Gedeo because Gondoro is related to what other cultural researchers described as social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Fred-Mensah, 2005; Field, 2008; Phillips & Pittman, 2009; Osei-hwedie and Rankopo, 2012).

3.3 Procedures in the Interethnic Gondoro Performance

Meetings of the Guji and Gedeo Abba Gada

The data obtained from the interview and focus group discussion from both Guji and Gedeo show that the Gondoro procedures for homicide and inter-ethnic conflict resolution differ in their performance and level of involvement. In case of homicide within the Guji or Gedeo communities, the Abba Gada is not involved in the process. But in the case of inter-ethnic conflict – conflict between the Gedeo and Guji peoples- the Abba Gada is the main actor in stopping conflict and establishing peace. For this matter, the Guji-Gedeo inter-ethnic conflict resolution process begins with the meeting of the Abba Gadas of the

two ethnic groups. Abba Gadas of the two ethnic groups meet and decide to reconcile.

An informant from the Gedeo (Hayecha Hayilu Beyene) asserted, “According to our culture, the two brothers do not clash with each other”. Abba Gada is the leader of the society and has the responsibility to secure peace in the society when an inter-ethnic conflict happens. The Guji Abba Gada and the Gedeo Abba Gada meet, and discuss why brothers have killed each other?” According to informants from both groups, the Abba Gadas negotiate for the end of conflict and restoration of peace. Therefore, the two Abba Gadas call the community leaders from all moieties, called hayyuu gosaa in Guji and Hayecha in Gedeo to come together and investigate the cause of conflict.

Hayyuu gosaa of the Guji and hayecha of the Gedeo meet at “Edera” in Gadab District. Informants from the Gedeo (Hayecha Jaboo Kuraa) explained that Gadab was named because, in the past, a terrible fire came burning all the lines and went out when it reached Gadab. So then, the place is cool. Gadab is the seat of the Qallu. Qallu is the spiritual father of the Guji and Gedeo people. In Gadab, the place called Edera is a sacred land where community leaders from both ethnic groups meet to investigate the cause of conflict. The community leaders together examine and identify the violations and abused truth, the falsehood, and the wrongdoings. They identify the root cause of the conflict. After sitting down together and learning the truth, they resolve the uncultured act. Generally, in inter-ethnic conflict resolution, its procedure starts with the meeting of the Abba Gadas of the two ethnic groups to decide to reconcile.

Cleansing and Prayers

The groups’ leaders facilitate reconciliation by focusing on what God loves and what is human. They perform the ‘Falachu’ cleansing ritual to facilitate reconciliation. The hayyu gosa call a non-Guji and Gedeo person from the Wata community to slaughter cleansing sheep. Community leaders are representatives of all communities who contribute money and buy sheep. The Wata slaughters the sheep. It is believed that Wata slaughters the ‘falo’ cleansing sheep brought by Guji and purifies Gedeo and also

slaughters the one brought by Gedeo and purifies Guji.

According to informants from the Guji and the Gedeo, sheep are sacred. An informant from the Guji (Abba Galcha) says, "When a sheep suddenly enters a man's house, they anoint butter on its forehead and take it out." An informant from the Gedeo (Hayecha Hayilu) asserts, "The blood of a slaughtered sheep purifies all uncultured acts". Guji and Gedeo are brothers. Brothers do not kill each other, fight each other, or displace each other. When they kill each other, they say, "It cuts the blood." They believe that the blood cut means that the seeds of both

groups will be cut off and disappear. They believe that bad blood is passed to generations. There is a belief that they will not succeed. The reason is that Guji and Gedeo are societies ruled by the creator of God 'Waaqaa/ Magano'. They believe that God will destroy us if actions are committed by society without culture. Therefore, the conflict between the brothers is unculture and they slaughter a sheep to cleanse the evil (according to informants Abba Girja and Jabo Kura).

The picture presented below (Figure 1) show when a Wata man slaughter 'falo' the cleansing Sheep.



Figure 1. Community Leaders on performing Cleansing and Prayer

Community leaders of both ethnic groups come together, and perform cleansing 'Falachu' and prayers to the supernatural power. They slaughter an animal, but they do not eat its meat there. The first one they slaughtered together was to make the way and hold the appointment of Gondoro, to be cleansed by the blood of the lamb, according to informants from the two ethnic groups.

Participants in the FGDs asserted that the Guji and Gedeo people do not kill each other as they are broth-

ers. However, occasionally, when conflict occurs, they resolve it by performing the Gondor practice to correct what is not customary. They believe that if it is left uncorrected or left unrestored, it will be destroyed and will cause serious harm to both ethnicities. Therefore, it is customary to clean up this terrible accident with sheep blood, which is at the core of the Gondoro performance. The practices in Gondoro's performance symbolize the cultural meaning given by the community. This was also stated by Paul Adewale and Olutola (2016) and Kelemework

(2013). According to the Guji and Gedeo communities, when a brother kills a brother, the purification ritual is a must. There is also a cleansing ritual when the Guji Oromo people and the Gedeo people fight and kill or displace each other. Communities' leaders from Guji and Gedeo who participated in interviews and focus group discussions similarly stated that the wrongdoings, including killing each other will lead to passing the bad blood to generation. According to informants in interviews and group discussions, a purified sheep was slaughtered and washed with sheep blood to cleanse and prevent transmission of bad blood to the community.

Reconciliation

In resolving the conflict between the Guji and the Gedeo people, reconciliation takes place before the Gondoro performance. During their Gada period, the Abba Gada of the two ethnic groups had a traditional responsibility to ensure reconciliation. During their administration, conflict between brotherly peoples was not their culture, so they reconciled. So, they put together the community leaders. Guji sends the community leaders from all moieties of Guji named Kotoma and Darimu. Gedeo sends community leaders named Hayecha from the seven Gedeo groups. The Guji and Gedeo community leaders, named hayyuu gosaa in Guji and hayecha in Gedeo meet at the place called "Edera", which is found in the Gadab district, to discuss the problems and uncusomary practices. They investigate the causes of security problems together. This process is called 'Dubbii Qoruu' to mean investigation. The investigating tool that community leaders use is the community's rules and regulations declared at the Gada Assembly.

Informants from Guji (Abba Girja, Abba Galcha, Abba Aanole) stated that parents, the hayyuu gosaa (community leader), and the Yuba teach the com-

munity at different age grades about the rules and regulations of the Guji community. In the same way, the informants from Gedeo (hayecha Hayilu Beyene, Jabo Kura, and hayecha Alemayehu) explained Seeraa (rule of do and don't) in their society.

Issues of right and wrong in their community are declared at the Gada Assembly. According to Guji and Gedeo social structure there are ethnic group leaders at lower level. These cultural group leaders are elected to the Gada assembly. They also are considered as Aba Gada consultants. According to informants, these traditional group leaders have no other interest at all but to examine everything in the light of social justice, ethics, and laws addressed at the Gada assembly. They believe that the conflict between the brotherly ethnicities is an uncusomary act and therefore it is bad without reconciliation. Therefore, the community leaders of both ethnic groups examine everything together.

Informants such as Abba Anole, Hayilu Beyene, and Jabo Kura pointed out that the discussion of the communities' leaders from the Guji and the Gedeo ethnic groups center on expressions such as the following:

Why did we fight? What happened to us outside of our culture? Why did the brothers fight with each other? According to our culture, according to the rule of the Gada system, a brother does not fight with his brother. Brother shall not kill his brother. If there is a sudden fight with each other, Gondoro should be done in our culture to stop the war and bring peace..

Besides, the community leaders come together on the reconciliation day and slaughter an animal, usually a bull. The community leaders from the Guji invite those community leaders from the Gedeo.



Figure 2. Guji and Gedeo Community Leaders Slaughtering a Bull

They split the skin and gave it to each other. They eat the meat together, leaving the skin there.

3.4 Social Practices on the Day of Reconciliation

Eating liver together

They share and eat the liver of the slaughtered animal, and this practice symbolizes that they have cleansed the sin that happened between them and restored their brotherhood. This practice is key in the Gondoro performance as it signals the genuine avoidance of conflict and restoration of peace between the two communities or the groups in conflict. As participants in the in-depth interviews and FGDs revealed on the Day of reconciliation, Gedeo community leaders slaughtered one bull. The community leaders from the Guji also slaughter one bull. The Guji offers the Gedeo, and the Gedeo offers the Guji to eat the meat of the slaughtered bull. Then, they eat the liver together. It is to reveal that they are brothers and confirm that they have restored their peaceful relationship.

Skin Splitting Tradition

According to the informants, Guji splits the skin of the slaughtered bull and gives it to Gedeo. Gedeo

splits the skin of the slaughtered bull and gives it to Guji. Leaving the skin there means leaving an evil spirit in a place of reconciliation. They leave the skin there to show that they have removed the conflict through Gondoro practice.

Confirmation of Peace and Blessings

To ensure that everything is done according to the laws and ethics of the community, the community leaders ask each other, “Are traditional things done for this Gondoro?” Until the date of Gondoro, anyone who murdered someone individually is purified and presented to Gondoro through the community’s leaders of the two ethnic groups. All groups slaughter a bull to each other on reconciliation.

Members of both nations look forward to the day of Gondoro, cleansed and refreshed. In the Gondoro ritual, the Abba Gada Gedeo, and the Gedeo drink yogurt together from the same Qori, which is a cultural material that serves to store yogurt and milk. They taste the honey from a traditional item called ‘Qori’ together and sprinkle it on each other. They also sprinkle it on the participants of the ceremony. They blessed the people they led to taste like honey to each other.



Figure 3. The Guji and Gedeo Abba Gadas Sprinkling Honey-bear and giving blessings

At the end of the Gondoro ritual, the Abba Gadas of two ethnicities sprinkle the honey bear on each other and the participants. During the Gondoro ritual, the Qallu, the spiritual father of the Guji and Gedeo people, is available to bless the participants and all the people at the ritual place. It is believed by the community that the presence of Qallu is necessary to have lasting peace.

Drinking yogurt and Booka (honey) from one Pot

At a traditional Gondoro ritual, Guji Abba Gada and Gedeo Abba Gada drink together from a pot of yogurt and honey. Drinking yogurt together means giving up hatred for each other. It refers to the cooling of hatred. It signifies the descent of peace between the Guji and Gedeo communities. It shows the cooling of hatred between the two communities. It indicates that the two societies have moved from

the spirit of hatred to the spirit of reconciliation. It ensures that they return to their previous love and brotherhood (data from cultural group leaders during interviews and FGD).

Similarly, during the Gondoro performance in Guji and Gedeo, Guji and Gede'o Abba Gadas together taste the honey from the jar or 'Qori' and sprinkle it to each other and the participants. They also spray the community sitting on the Gondoro performance. According to the informants who participated in the group discussions and interviews, honey shows love and taste for each other. They do it to show that they taste to each other like honey. They do it to prove their forgiveness and reconciliation. The Abba Gadas (Gada leaders) bless their people and taste each other like honey.

3.5 Actors in Gondoro Performance

Qallu (spiritual father)

In the Gada system, the Qallu is the spiritual father. Qallu is regarded as the representative of God on earth among the Guji and Gedeo communities. In traditional administration, Abba Gada is blessed by the Qallu. Informants stated that the Qallu is recognized by the Guji and Gedeo peoples as the supreme structure in the system. No Abba Gada or his advisors will be legitimate unless they get the recognition and blessing of the Qallu leader (Hinnant: 1977: 198). On the day of the Gondoro ritual, the Qallu is present. It is believed that the reconciliation will be genuine and complete by the presence of the Qallu at the performance of the Gondoro performance. The presence of Qallu at Gondoro's performance will prevent everyone from seeking revenge after reconciliation because Qallu is the spirit father of both the Guji and Gedeo ethnic groups. This is because it is feared that Qallu will curse anyone who takes revenge and breaks reconciliation.

Abba Gada

The Abba Gada is the traditional ruler. The Abba Gada of Guji and Gedeo meet and decide to reconcile. They bring out the community leaders called hayyuu Gosaa together. According to informants from Guji, the Guji Abba Gada issues the communities' leaders called Darimu and Kotoma from the Guji moieties. According to Gedeo, there are com-

munity leaders called hayecha from "shone baxe" and "Sesa Baxe" of Gedeo Moieties.

The Abba Gadas of both ethnicities hold their members and ask each other about the conflict conditions. The authority belongs to the Abba Gada, but the speaker is a community leader called Hayyuu gosaa. The Abba Gada let the community leaders investigate the root cause of the conflict. They investigate the causes of the conflict between the two ethnics and agree to reconcile. On the date of the Gondoro ritual, the Abba Gada of both ethnics open the meeting by saying reconciles 'Araara' (informant abba Hessa, Abba Girja, Hayecha Alemayehu, Hayecha Jabo Kura).

The Community leaders (Hayyuu Gosaa)

The Guji community is a structural community structured by the Gada system. Guji has three major branches: Uraga, Mati, and Hoko (Asebe, 2007; Tadesse, 2004). These three major branches have different sub-branches called gosee in the lower level. All sub-branches have their community leader called Hayyuu gosaa. According to the informants (abba Girja, abba Galcha, and abba Anole), it is not customary for community leaders from the same sub-branch to examine the issues of the two parties alone. The issue or issue of reconciliation is examined inclusively by the community leaders of Darimu and Kotoma. This is to ensure the participation of all moieties through the representation of their leaders.

In the same way, the Gedeo people have seven groups, and all seven groups have their cultural community leader called hayecha. The Gedeo people have the Shone Baxe and Sesa Baxe moieties. It means seven Gedeo cultural leaders who represented their moiety in the Gondoro reconciliation. The hayyuu gosaa means community leaders are a delegation selected by the Abba Gada from all moieties at the new Gada assembly, and their role is confirmed at the assembly.

The cultural community leaders are well-educated in the laws and ethics of the community and the community values their knowledge. They play the role of peacemaking in the community. At the assembly, they are given the name of the assembly. The Abba Gada presents the community leaders at the assembly

and approves them. The Cultural community leaders are the messengers of the Abba Gada. Generally, the Darimu and Kotoma of Guji communities' leaders and Hayechas of Gedeo cultural communities' leaders have an enforcement role in cleansing. They also have the role of restoring justice and investigating what was happening out of their culture. They reconcile on behalf of their moiety, and they convey their reconciliation to the people. They perform traditional events on reconciliation. They slaughter ox and eat liver together to show their brotherhoods.

Wata

Wata is non-Guji and Gedeo community. According to data obtained during interviews and FGD, the Guji and Gede'o community leaders explained that the Wata community lives in the Guji and Gedeo people but does not belong to the Guji and Gedeo groups. The Wata is not present in the social structure of Guji and Gede'o but plays a role in the performance of Gondoro. Wata has the role of slaughtering the cleansing sheep. He washes the murderer with the blood of a lamb. Wata shaves the murderer's hair. The wata cleanses the murderer and prepares for the Gondoro ritual. Before Gondoro rituals, all curses should be cleansed and ready for new life. A wata takes the meat of a lamb slaughtered for the cleansing called falo, and takes the weapons or clothes worn by the perpetrator of the murder. The role of the wata is to cleanse the murderer by washing the murderer with the blood of a lamb. In the Gondoro ritual process, calling wata to slaughter a sheep to cleanse the sinner with blood is considered as cleansing of sins by the community. In the Gondoro performance process, this step is the initial step for reconciliation.

Gondoro as a Symbol of lasting Peace

According to interviews and discussions with a group of Guji and Gede'o cultural leaders, there is no fighting again after Gondoro. According to the community's view, when conflict returns after Gondoro, it is said that "the bad blood will pass to society present and future." It is believed that when blood is passed, it is not pleasant; it is crushed, it is wounded, and the generation is lost. Therefore, Gondoro is not done for the deceased but for the existing community to prevent evil blood from being passed

on from generation to generation. It is done to make a good future. It is also a cleansing as a society.

After the Gondoro is done, the displaced people return to their homes. Neighbors build houses with neighbors. Guji builds Gedeo's house, and Gedeo builds Guji's house. They embrace each other. They give a daughter to each other to be linked by marriage. There is no fear or hatred at all. Performing a Gondoro is a strategy of renewal by cleansing whatever has been done without custom. It is a cleansing strategy. This strategy has been developed by the community in the past. It is part of the community's social capital. It means that both the individual and the community are cleansed by the performance in Gondoro to get rid of the problems they were in. The Guji and Gedeo communities claim to be brothers in their testimony. According to the traditions of both communities, brothers do not kill or displace each other; it is uncultured. Whether the homicide or displacement, it is customary to investigate the problem and bring it back to peace. This means that it is part of the social capital of both communities.

4 Conclusion

Gondoro is practiced as a common tradition of peace-building and avoiding hostility. Barfield (2004) expresses such tradition as glue that sustains the solidarity and peaceful coexistence between different communities. The Gondoro serves as a social capital between the Guji and the Gede'o peoples, who consider each other brothers. According to Ajanaw (2018), such tradition plays an important role in conflict resolution and peace because it contains values and expectations shared by the two communities. Such shared tradition plays an important role in resolving conflicts and establishing peace.

Goondoro has been functioning as a social capital of sustaining peace and brotherhood, and this implies the power of indigenous knowledge and practices in building peace and sustaining stability at the grassroots. Accordingly, Gondoro is the social capital of the Guji Oromo and the Gedeo people. In support of this view, Fred-Mensah (2005) posited that the tradition of conflict cessation and peacebuilding is part of the societal knowledge repository. According to informants who participated in the focus group discussions and interviews, the bodies playing a role

in Gondoro implementation have cultural responsibilities. The community respects them very much. The community believes and implements what they say. According to the evidence provided by the informants in the group discussions and interviews, the community accepts what these bodies say. They believe that anyone who does not do what they say will perish. The community also perceives as immoral any person or group who refuses to respect these cultural enforcers. Society will isolate anyone who violates social morality.

In general, the findings of this study show that Gondoro's performance is implemented as a social capital through which the Guji and Gedeo peoples resolve conflicts, restore peace, and sustain their brotherly relationship. The Gondoro performance is part of the accumulation of social capital of the Guji and Gedeo peoples and is in line with the social capital of African tradition. They believe that Gondoro cleanses and renews what has been done that is not customary. The practice of Gondoro between Guji and Gedeo can be taken as an example of the effectiveness of using shared traditions of conflict resolution and peacebuilding to resolve conflicts between border regions in Ethiopia. In addition, the new generation needs to understand the social capital we have in our culture and learn to solve security problems through cultural processes.

Acknowledgments

First of all, we thank God for helping us to do the research in good health. We are grateful to Dilla University Research and disseminations Office for covering the cost of this study. We thank the community leaders of the Guji and Gedeo participated in the research interviews and FGD answering our questions in the discussion. We are especially grateful to Yuba Aba Girja and Hayecha Hailu Beyene from the community leaders for sharing their cultural knowledge with us. We thank Mr. Tsegaye Tadese from Gedeo Zone Culture and Tourism Bureau for providing us with additional research evidences from the archive. We are grateful to the editors for their valuable comments from beginning to end that helped improve our manuscripts. We would like to thank Mr. Bedane Tune and Mr. Belay Bire for introducing and connecting us with the community leaders by moving with us as we collected data. Finally, we

declare that it is the responsibility of the authors for the errors seen in this article.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declares that there is no conflict of interest.

References

- Ajanaw Alemie. (2018). Roles of Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms for Maintaining Social Solidarity and Strengthening Communities in Alefa District, North West of Ethiopia: Gondar University. *Journal of Indigenous Social Development*, Vol.7, Issue 2, pp, 1-21.
- Asebe Regassa. (2007). Ethnicity and Inter-ethnic Relations: The Ethiopian Experiment and the Case of the Guji and Gedeo' (M. Phil Thesis), Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tromsø, Tromsø.
- Asnake Kefale. (2004). 'Federalism: Some Trends of Ethnic Conflicts and their Management in Ethiopia.' Ina. G. Nhema, editor. *The Quest for Peace in Africa: Transformations, Democracy and Public Policy*. Utrecht: International Books.
- Bello, P. and Olutola, A. (2016). Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Africa: Lessons Drawn for Nigeria: Tshwane University of Technology.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In John G. Richardson (ed): *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York; Greenwood Press.
- Brock-Utne, B. (2001). Indigenous conflict resolution in Africa. A draft presented to the week end seminar on indigenous solutions to conflicts, Institute for Educational Research, University of Oslo, Norway.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches* (2nd ed.). London: Sage publications.
- Field, J. (2008). *Social capital* (2nd ed). London: Routledge.

- Fred-Mensah, Benk. (2005). "Nugormesese: An indigenous basis of social capital in a West African Community". 1K Notes, No. 86, November. World Bank.
- Hinnant, J. C. (1972). Guji of Ethiopia. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, Inc.
- Hinnant, J.C. (1977). The Gadaa System of the Guji of Southern Ethiopia: University of Chicago Press
- Kelemework Terefe. (2013). Conflict and alternative dispute resolution among the Afar pastoralists of Ethiopia. *African Journal of History and Culture*, 3(3), 38-47.
- Kwaku Osei-Hwedie and Morena J. Rankopo. (2012). Indigenous Conflict Resolution in Africa: the case of Ghana and Botswana. IPSHU English Research Report Series, 29, 33-51. University of Botswana.
- Patton, M.Q. (1915). How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation. Newberry Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Phillips, R., & Pittman, R.H. (2009). An introduction to community development. New York: Routledge.
- Putnam, R, D (1993). Bowling alone: America's declining socila capital. *Journal of Demokiracy*, Vol. 6, 1, 64-78.
- Sandelowski, M. (2012). Writing usable Qualitative Health Research Findings. *Qualitative Health Research*, 22, 1404-1413.
- Solomon Hailu. (2009). A History of the Gedeo, 1941-2000' (MA Thesis), Department of History and Heritage Management: School of Graduate Studies: Addis Ababa University.
- Strauss and Corbin, J.M. (1998). Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded theory: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Tadesse Jaleta. (2004). A contextual study of Guji-Oromoproverbs: Function in Focus. (MA Thesis), Department of Foreign language and Literature, School of Graduates, Addis Ababa University.
- Volker, B. (2007). Potential and Limits of Traditional Approaches in Peacebuilding. Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies.