

## Ethnic Affiliated Media Challenges and Prospects on Community Security and Social Cohesion

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### Abstract

The security of community is currently under threat due to the disruption of traditional relationships and values, a situation brought about by ethnic-conflicts'. This study investigates impact of ethnic affiliated media's reportage of violence in the study area on community security. The research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing a constructivist research design. Purposive and snowball sampling was used, data was gathered through interviews, focus group discussions and media content analysis. Thematic data analysis was employed as the primary technique for data interpretation. Historical evidence suggests that the Oromo and Amhara communities in North Shoa have always maintained robust traditional social ties and values, living in a secured communal environment. However, since 2018, this communal harmony has been threatened. Elites, politicians, and journalists have constructed narratives of historical victims and assailants within these communities, propagated through ethnic-affiliated media, thereby challenging community security. These narratives have incited violence, leading to division and mistrust within the community. The cumulative impact of these challenges has led to deterioration in indigenous peace-building efforts and a failure in peace restoration. This study aims to highlight these issues and propose potential solutions to restore community harmony and security.

**Key Words:** Community, Community Security, Indigenous Peace-Building, Communal Harmony, ethnic Affiliated media, Ethnic Affiliated Media report.

### 1. Introduction

It is described as strong social ties are among the community peace build entities (Jenkins, 2020). On the other side one of the prevalent challenges confronting community security in today's global landscape is the issue of identity-based violence, which can be further specified as ethnic identity-based violence. This concern presents a significant obstacle to institutions responsible for public security (Elad, 2024). In nations like

Ethiopia, where the constitution bestows self-governing authority to the dominant ethnic group within a regional state (Ethiopian constitution Art. 39/3), the control of public safeguarding institutions is often under the command of the majority ethnic group in that specific regional state. It is also described that, the ethnic politics led the people who lived out of their officially declared ethnic regional state for centuries have been considered as the minority or settlers to that specific area since the 1995 Ethiopian constitution (Kefale, 2013). In line with such perception towards community have been living for centuries in specific area and the media affiliation to a single ethnic group impact to the community security needs further investigation.

The identified risk in ethnically-affiliated institutions: during ethnic discord is, these institutions may favor their own group, neglecting the protection needs of minority ethnicities. This bias, fueled by the "ethnicization" of institutions and ethnic "clientelism", contributes significantly to ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia, as different groups vie for representation (Jinadu, 2007). These situations can critically undermine community security, which the United Nations Development Programme defines as the preservation of traditional relationships and values against sectarian and ethnic conflict threats (Caballero-Anthony, 2015).

Ethnic identity-based violence in Ethiopia often stems from the varied social constructions of ethnic identities (Lake & Rothchild, 1998). These identities, differing among groups like the Amhara, can be based on behavior rather than lineage. For example, government or military officials are frequently seen as Amhara. Similarly, south-eastern lowland pastoralists may identify Christians or highlanders as part of this group (Clapham, 1988). The complexity of these identities, May exacerbation by ethnic media, contributes to violence and poses a challenge to community security. Further investigation is needed to understand this issue fully.

Some politicians and scholars use primordial elements, like lineage and language, to form unique ethnic identities. For example, Dirirsa (2013) suggested the term 'Oromo' refers to someone born from an Oromo father. In Ethiopia, the understanding of ethnic identity is often vague and varies within and outside the ethnic group, affecting self-perception and others' perception. This variation could complicate situations involving ethnic identity-based violence, as the perpetrators and victim's understanding of the victim's ethnic identity may not align.

According to Dirirsa (2013), individuals born to Oromo mothers, but identifying with another ethnicity, can complicate ethnic identity formation. This ambiguity may disrupt traditional community bonds, values, and trust, fostering a fear of ethnic violence. Zeyede, Jemaneh, and Adaye (2024) illustrated how Oromo Media Network journalists labeled all Amharic speakers as Amharas, obscuring violence and shifting blame. This broad ethnic labeling risks community relationships and values, as fear of victimization

escalates. Such situations can increase community insecurity. Furthermore, EAM's bias in reporting EIBV in North Shoa (Zeyede et al, 2024) requires further investigation, to understand the impact of antagonistic ethnic identity construction and EAM reporting of EIBV on community security.

Ethnic identity construction in Ethiopia is intricate and potentially confusing. Article 46 (2) of the Ethiopian constitution states that regional states are based on language identity, settlement patterns, and public consent. However, Assefa (2017) highlights that Ethiopia's diverse ethnic identities coexist within specific territories, with dominant ethnic groups granted majority self-rule as described under Ethiopian constitution Art. 29 (3). The current governance system is deeply rooted in lineage and socially constructed ethnic identity. Jinadu (2007) warns that majority ethnic dominance may overlook the mixed ethnic reality of Ethiopia's population. Language identity thus plays a larger role in regional governance than settlement patterns or public consent. Zeyede, Jemaneh and Adaye (2024) pinpoint land ownership disputes as a cause of EIBV, challenging societal consensus on living by historical settlement patterns and threatening community bonds and values.

The constitution in one region prioritizes the dominant ethnic group, permitting self-governance and potential statehood, under specific conditions (Ethiopian Constitution Art. 39(3) & Art. 47(3)). Yet, it disregards minority populations living there for centuries and ignores Ethiopia's mixed settlement patterns. This governance system also promotes institutional ethnification (Jinadu, 2007), stimulating the rise of ethnically-aligned youth through various narratives. Hence, this study will explore the media's role, both government and private media, focusing on the spread of ethnic-based media and its effect on community security in the examined area.

## **2. Research Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Design**

This study used a qualitative research approach, to explore the issue under investigation based on participants' experiences and understanding of the phenomenon (Adom et al., 2016; Creswell, 2003, p.9). Kempf (2006) described, as "Reality is a human construction." Socially constructed and subjective reality leads to the critical evaluation of partial media violence reporting to escalate and promote conflict and violence.

The constructivist approach, as described by Guzzini (2000), posits that knowledge and social reality are socially constructed. This study examines the socially constructed knowledge of relationships, cultures, values, and challenges arising from new realities of ethnic identity-based violence within a community. Through the lens of constructivism, the researchers generate knowledge of community security challenges.

As a result, the researchers adopted the constructivist viewpoint to fully understand the problem through the lived experiences of communities and other stakeholders involved

in the problem. As part of this, researchers spent a long time, including nights with internally displaced persons (IDPs) to fully capture their feelings about the community insecurity. Adom (2016) verified that spending more time with participants helps researchers to understand the situation clearly.

## **2.2. Sampling Technique**

Purposive and snowball sampling and media content were utilized as data collection instrument. This research was done to evaluate the existed violence media reporting effect on community security. The research was selected elder community representatives purposefully to understand the historical and current community traditions of living and values.

## **2.3. Data Collection Tool**

The tools employed for data collection in this study encompassed interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and media content analysis. The use of interviews and FGDs was instrumental in gathering data from the community, allowing an in-depth understanding of their cultural relationships, living conditions, and the continuity of traditional values.

Three FGDs were conducted, one with religious leaders and two with community groups, each consisting of eight members. The impact of media violence reporting on human security was incorporated to underscore its contribution to community insecurities.

## **2.4. Data Analysis Technique**

The EAM provides insightful reports on the EIBV within the study area, elaborating on its repercussions on individual and political security. Furthermore, it scrutinizes the regional media journalist's perspective on the area's violence, offering a supplementary conceptual framework. The primary data collected on the field was subjected to a thematic analysis for an in-depth understanding.

Data, procured through various methodologies, was coded and organized into themes. Similar themes were consolidated using thematic analysis, a common practice in qualitative studies. In addition, content analysis is often employed to bolster the thematic data analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, 1278).

## **2.5. Theoretical frame work**

### **2.5.1. Peace and war Journalism model**

Gultung (2015) highlights journalism's crucial role in maintaining global peace. He distinguishes between peace and war journalism, each with unique conflict reporting

impacts. Peace journalism promotes peace by presenting all perspectives, aiming for conflict resolution. War journalism, on the other hand, may bias towards a single party's victory, potentially serving as propaganda.

Peace journalism avoids degrading language, remains impartial, and considers all parties. War journalism, however, often dwells on elite narratives, dividing issues into good and bad (Lee, & Maslog, 2005).

Researchers used the Galtung model to classify EAM reports as peace or war journalism, enabling a thorough evaluation of EAM's reporting stance on violence and its effect on community security.

### **3. Literature review**

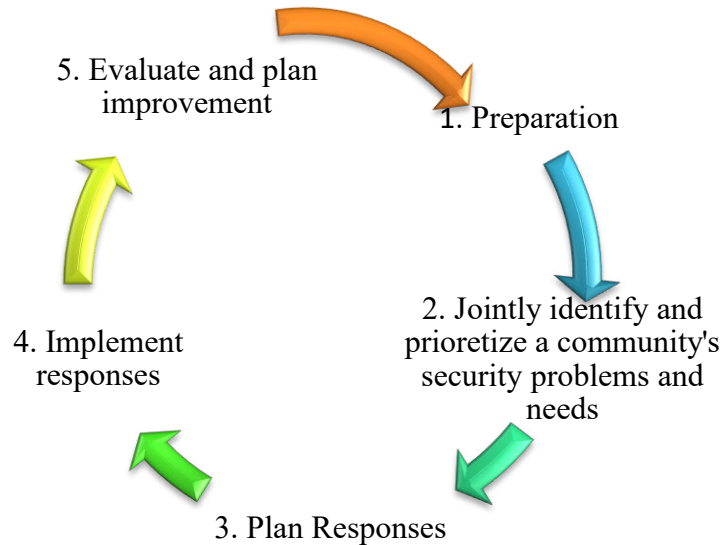
#### **3.1. Community Security**

Community security and a social construct of human relations (Adler & Barnett, 1998), inherently includes human security - the safeguarding of life and dignity (Andersen-Rodgers & Crawford, 2022). This protection extends to community security, preserving communities from the disruption of traditional relationships and values by sectarian and ethnic violence (UNDP, 1994, pp. 31–32). Human security also implies enhancing welfare (Farruku, 2016), with special protection extended to vulnerable members such as women, children, the elderly, and disabled individuals (Council of Europe, 2005).

Unaccountable security institutions, weak rule of law, identity fueled organized crime, corruption, and war economies can pose a threat on human security. The UNDP (2009) report identifies governance breakdown, limited youth opportunities, population migration, socio-economic disparities, and cultural complexities as violence triggers. Where violence persists, community security is endangered.

Poverty, hunger, and preventable disparities contribute to human insecurity and are often linked to societal perceptions and understanding of community culture and identity (Conteh-Morgan, 2005). Community security is influenced by factors such as discrimination, exclusion, violence from other groups, and state threats (Tsehay & Abay, 2024). It is also threatened by inter-ethnic, religious, and identity-based tensions (Caballero-Anthony\*, 2015). Other threats encompass state-sanctioned physical abuse, ethnic group conflicts, individual or gang violence, and violence against women, including rape, domestic abuse, and child mistreatment (UNDP, 2009, 13-14). Community security is recommended to adopt a community-based approach. This method encourages cooperation between the community, local leaders, and security bodies to address their insecurity sources (Saver World, 2016). The following image illustrates this approach to community security.

**Figure 1: Cooperative Community-Based Community Security**



**Source:** Adapted from Saver world Report in 2016

### 3.2. Community security contribution to social cohesion

The Community Security and Social Cohesion (CSSC) promote community freedom, addressing socio-economic factors for overall well-being. It coordinates societal actors to combat community insecurity and foster national harmony. CSSC enhances service delivery, reduces social exclusion, strengthens intergroup dynamics, and encourages equality (UNDP, 2009).

Violence damages social cohesion and peace, often causing lasting harm even after conflicts end. This not only instigates violence, but also results human insecurity. In unstable countries, social capital often binds specific groups, leading to further marginalization instead of unifying different groups (UNDP, 2009).

Community security, a concept rooted in shared identities and values within a community, strengthens in the absence of threats (Tsehay & Abay, 2024). It protects traditional values and prevents ethnically-driven violence (Gierszewski, 2017). In Ethiopia, ethnic based violence often arise from the politicization of cultural communities (Bayu, 2022), affirming that the erosion of traditional values can incite ethnic violence.

Social cohesion, built on trust, cooperation, between different identities, is vital in state-community and interpersonal relations (Holtug, 2017). Trust, extending beyond kinship circles, unifies diverse societal, economic, ethnic, and religious groups. It grows from strong, inclusive legal structures and reinforces societal bonds, promoting enduring peace (Samarin, 2024). Social cohesion encourages individuals to cooperate for the common good, both personally and communally. In a cohesive community, diverse identities coexist peacefully, without any group dominating others (Fiedler & Rohles, 2021).



Violence diminishes social harmony and trust among various ethnic groups in a community (Smith, 2023). This can lead to deteriorated social bonds, resulting in violence (Ballard, Hamann, Joseph, & Mkhize, 2019). Moreover, violence can stem from the erosion of social capital between communities, due to grievances emanated from structural, historical, or cultural systems.

### **3.3. Ethnic integrity, peaceful-coexistence and community security**

Collective-efficacy theory suggests that communities with shared values and resources can reach their goals through collaboration (Gallagher, 2012). Collier and Hoeffler (2006) also highlight the benefits of ethnic integration and peaceful coexistence for a state's economic growth and peace restoration. Similarly, social capital theory emphasizes the importance of social networks, trust, and solidarity as key tools for fostering community unity and enhancing security (Perkins, Hughey & Speer, 2002).

Collier and Hoeffler (2006) suggested that fragmented ethnic groups, defined by their ethnic identities, risk conflict, civil wars, and social injustice. Various researchers have pointed out that states structured around ethnic divisions often face competing claims, resulting in ethnic conflicts. These conflicts, as identified by these and other authors, can be categorized as violence based on ethnic identity, resource-based conflicts, border-based conflicts, politico-social representation conflicts, and Ethno-Nationalist provoked conflicts (Alao & Olonisakin, 1998; Saideman, 2001).

The impact of escalating ethnic conflict on Ethiopian civilians, especially since 2018, has been significant. This has led to increased inter-ethnic violence and deepened divisions within Southern Ethiopian communities. As a result, there were 15,000 IDPs from Moyale town, 142,000 from the Somali Region, 240,000 from the Benishangul Region, and 770,000 from the Southern region in 2018 (Costantinos, 2018). The North Shoa Zone's Oromo and Amhara populations, who have lived interdependently, faced challenges due to this rising ethnic antagonism.

Ethnic division is causing significant disruption to civilian life in the community, leading to a high number of internally displaced persons (Costantinos, 2018). The Global Peace Index (2017-2021) ranks Ethiopia as a state with high conflict prevalence and lacking in peace promotion. Skjerdal and Moges (2021) highlight a strong ethnic divide in Ethiopia, including within the media. This division fuels instability such as inter-ethnic conflicts, federal and regional wars, armed attacks on civilians, and identity-based violence, all of which stem from community disintegration and a breakdown of peaceful coexistence.

### **3.4.Data Analysis and Discussion**

#### **3.5.The Community Social Co-Existence and Peace Building to community security**

In North Shoa's history, the Oromo and Amhara communities have lived harmoniously, sharing both triumphs and tragedies. The livestock-oriented Oromos often offer cattle for

Amharas, visiting them during significant events, demonstrating their hospitality and fostering strong ties (Focus Group Discussion & interview, 2021). This relationship underscores the community's historical social cohesion was described as follow:

My family has had Oromo relatives since King Haileilassie's regime, and we have remained attached. During a violent period, I reached out to a family member. After ensuring each other's safety, we discussed the situation. He shared that outsiders had come to their area, forcing them to fight their Amhara brothers. They were threatened with loss of their masculinity if they refused to fight. Consequently, they were coerced into combat with their Amhara brothers.

This statement also contradicts with the interview data source that government official, who denied the presence of outsiders in the Oromo special zone as outlined by Zeyede, Jemaneh and Adaye (2024), a comprehensive investigation is needed to accurately identify the genuine actors of EIBV in North Shoa. Thus, the findings of this research confirm the involvement of external groups in regional violence.

The narrative also suggests occasional instances of cattle raiding and grazing land disputes between two ethnic groups, historically resolved through traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Additionally, there have been culturally driven killings of Amhara males by the Oromo, often related to marriage customs. The Oromo community would typically protect the perpetrator if the killing was marriage-related, but accountability was upheld, with the offender making reparations to the victim's family, ensuring peace. This approach was a critical part of the conflict resolution, addressing all forms of conflict between these communities (Interviews and Focus Group Discussions in Ataye & Oromo special zone, 2021).

Moreover, not only do these communities engage in socio-cultural activities, they also share common market and residential spaces. Interviews and focus group discussions revealed a free exchange of goods between the two communities, devoid of distrust or frustration. They even travel to the Oromo area at night, a practice reciprocated by the Oromo people.

The interviewee and focus group participants depicted the two communities as harmonious until the 2018 violence. They elaborated on their history of shared cultural holidays and inter-community marriages. An Oromo Muslim participant underlined this by sharing that his wife's grandparents, typically identified as Amhara, were Christians, showing the intersection of religious and ethnic identities.

### **3.6. Ethnic Identity-Based Violence Impact on Community Security**

The study confirms that both EIBV and EAM contribute to conflict, in conjunction with other factors. Previous research by (Zeyede, Jemaneh & Adaye, 2024) suggests that EIBV



effects and media reporting methods can intensify human insecurities. Earlier sections of this study revealed partial EIBV reporting by the EAM. These outlets were seen to amplify violence and provoke more conflicts by labeling specific communities with derogatory terms. This media bias has unfortunately damaged the historical, social bonds and values between the Oromo and Amhara communities, as expressed by the participants.

The research reveals how these communities' present situation significantly differs from their historical unity. Participants express a rising distrust in cultural peace-building mechanisms, feeling increasingly threatened. Social divisions have fostered an 'us versus them' mentality, deepening mistrust in government security and between the two ethnic groups. This mistrust also hampers service delivery, such as water energy workers avoiding service in Ataye 01 Kebele, an Oromo-dominated area. Both ethnic groups' research subjects confirm that Ataye Kebele 01 has recently struggled to receive water services due to workers' fear of attack. In rare cases, they receive maintenance service from the nearby Oromo nation's special zone, Senbete Kebele.

Clear social divides were evident during data collection. Research participants warned researchers about potential safety risks in areas with specific ethnic dominance, like Kebele 01, an area deserted by Amhara residents. After data collection in Ataye Kebele 01, locals expressed concerns about the researcher's lodging, asking, "Jerrii si bulchu? Mean" Do they provide you with a place to stay overnight? Their worry was due to a non availability of hotel service resulting from previous violence-induced destruction. Additionally, a lack of mutual trust led to some apprehension towards the researchers within these communities. The mutual trust they shared for centuries, including their willingness to visit each other's residences even during the night, has significantly deteriorated. Now, they developed sense of apprehension about their connection, even during the daytime. This situation is indicator of community insecurity as described by (UNDP, 1994, pp. 31-32), cultural relationship of community's destruction results in human insecurity.

Participants from the interviews and focus group discussions frequently outlined the subsequent character transformations due to conflict as follows:

These communities were characterized by their respect for the law. Historically, during disputes between these two groups, the intervention of a law officer uttering phrases such as በባንድራው ወይም በባንድራው አምላክ 'bebandraw or bebandraw amlac', translating to 'halt in the name of the flag', would effectively end the disagreement. The present circumstances, however, appear to diverge from this tradition, as these once respected and peace-inducing words no longer command the same attention or obedience and the youth negation to hear elders is complicating indigenous conflict resolution and peace restoration.

Currently, communities feel insecure due to concerns about their environmental safety, especially for those living outside their usual areas. This fear indicates a breakdown of their traditional communal living culture (Interview with Security personnel in Ataye, 2021).

In the present market, the community's fears have reduced their engagement compared to past times. Moreover, due to instances of unwarranted violence, there's a clear hesitation to travel across various areas during the day (FGD, 2021).

The narrative indicates that the Amhara community has lost faith in the local Oromo community due to their apparent dismissal of peace reconciliation efforts. Despite initiating peace-building three times since 2018, including a significant 2021 reconciliation using the Oromo's revered 'Torika' a peace-making tool, all attempts have been ignored, leading to further Oromo attacks on Amhara. Oromo elders also concerned that the younger generation is overlooking their cultural teachings and peace-building values. Thus, this losing trust each other can contribute to community insecurity.

In the Contrary of the above paragraph description, an Oromo victim expressed his mistrust towards the Amhara Militants as follows:

I harbor reservations towards the Amhara military factions due to their actions which led to the unfortunate killings of two innocent Oromos, effectively triggering two conflicts in 2021 within a mere month. My residence, which was under construction because of it was burned in conflict, is located in an Amhara dominant Kebele. Consequently, for my safety, I tend to relocate to an Oromo dominant Kebele (Kebele 01) by 11:30 local time or 5: 30 PM.

Participants from the Amhara interview and focus group discussion expressed suspicion concerning Oromo celebratory events. According to their reports, there was an instance when the Oromos were allegedly transporting arms and other war-supporting materials under the guise of a wedding ceremony. They explained that the arms were concealed in traditional food transporting containers, giving the impression they were simply bringing food to the wedding celebration. Additionally, the slaughtering of a camel, a common practice in wedding ceremonies, further substantiated their ruse. The participants noted that there was, in fact, no wedding, and the event was merely a facade for war preparations or potential attacks against the Amharas.

On the other side, the Oromo research participants described the above mentioned incident was a wedding ceremony. When married couple comes out to refreshment in Ataye town, some groups from the Amhara community comes out and argue with the wedding ceremony celebrating groups and wedding ceremony refreshment program was turned to ethnic conflict. Then in that evening one mosque 'Imam' (which means the

Islam religious leader) was killed on the asphalt road, in ethnic identity he was an Argoba but because of his Islam hood the next day, Oromo community was came to Ataye in a move and huge disaster was made. Since 2018, these two communities are losing trust each other because of the EIBV (Interview with police officer in Senbete and Ataye, 2021). Conversely, the Amhara research participant's claims as the Imam was killed by the Oromo themselves to make him as a reason to raise violence. The Imam's being non Oromo create a room to the suspect of the participants from Amhara community. But, from Oromo participant's side they believe as he was killed by Amharas. This scenario illustrates the division within the community, where suspicion is favored over the pursuit of truth. During this time of conflict, the reactions of the security forces mirror those of the community. According to some of the research participants, certain security forces have echoed this sentiment, indicating that the issue has not been thoroughly investigated and they don't know the killer of the Imam.

The concern expressed by members of these two ethnic groups serves as an indicator of the erosion of cultural relationships and mutual trust between these communities. This deterioration poses a potential threat to community security (UNDP, 1994, pp. 31–32). Some of research's participants argue their perception of the violence in the study area as follow:

The Oromo media and some of their elites are using “ጩኸቴን ቀጠሏኝ”, which means you took my cry, principle to divert violence against Amhara community. They shift their blame to the Amhara community, they attack us again they accuse us.

The research participants from this community present differing arguments, with disagreements regarding the identification of the killer of an individual responsible for a fatal incident. This event triggered significant unrest in the area, including disruptions to local security operations. Such conflicting perspectives and uncertainties can undermine community stability and contribute to broader insecurity.

The political leaders have played a key role in aggravating these two community's conflict (Interview with security force man in Senbete, 2021). Politicians take side to their own ethnic groups when they discuss on disagreements based on different claim or interests. The politician disagreement come out to the militant groups and the community somehow engage in the violent type of reaction (interview, 2021). Following the incident of violence, indigenous reconciliation efforts among these communities were initiated by politically motivated individuals, bypassing community-based discussions. This seemingly traditional peaceful conflict resolution has been disrupted by recurring violence, which has unfortunately eroded our faith in indigenous peacemaking mechanisms. These mechanisms have historically fostered secure relationships and strengthened inter-communal ties over centuries (Interview and FGD, 2021).

### **3.7. Media contribution to the community Insecurity**

In Zeyede, jemaneh and Adaye (2024) was meticulously delineated that the reporting and perceptions of journalists in relation to the study area and the EAM centered upon narratives of historical land ownership competency. Particularly, those narratives highlight the Amhara dominance against Oromo which consequently incited violence between these two communities. As expounded upon within the fourth chapter of this study, the EAM was implicated in labeling one community with derogatory terms such as 'Neftegnas', 'invader', 'killer', 'settler', and 'exterminator', they kill Oromo by utilizing their language and other means. Such pejorative labeling of an entire community could potentially jeopardize the overall security of said community.

EAM aims to encourage all Oromos to defend their interests by utilizing every available resource against any Amhara communities. Moreover, this message is disseminated to the wider Ethiopian populace, highlighting the perceived expansionist intentions of the Amhara, especially towards regions rich in resources (Zeyede, Jemaneh & Adaye, 2024)

In the alternate perspective, certain EAM concentrate solely on the violence inflicted upon their particular ethnic groups, while disregarding the violence perpetrated against other ethnic communities. Furthermore, in preceding chapters, it was articulated that EAM were actively involved in the deliberate exacerbation of conflicts. These media outlets were also portrayed as exhibiting bias towards the ethnic group to which they are associated. The journalists' perceptions about the violence in the region are also seems to be influenced by the ethnic affiliation of their respective media outlets and elites.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1. Community security in the history of the study area**

The historical inter-ethnic relations between these two communities demonstrate a noteworthy level of social harmony, trust, and tolerance for identity diversity. These substances are fundamental elements of social cohesion (Holtug, 2017). Trust within a socially cohesive community is paramount for fostering peace. Furthermore, communities that maintain social cohesion across diverse identities can coexist peacefully, without the dominance of one group over another (Fiedler & Rohles, 2021). When social cohesion and trust are upheld between communities, community security is inherently safeguarded. Consequently, the analysis indicates that these two ethnic groups have coexisted harmoniously, a key indicator of community security.

On the contrary, within this community, social cohesion, as defined by Fiedler and Rohles (2021), could aid researcher in exploring the narratives of Oromo scholars and elites regarding Amhara community dominance over the Oromo, as outlined in previous chapters of this study is invalid in the area. The ability to coexist socially and maintain trust among different communities is indicative of communities that refrain from exerting ethnic-based dominance (Fiedler & Rohles, 2021). Hence, the narrative and

counter-narrative that the Amhara community had dominated the Oromo and other Ethiopian people lacks substantiation, as evidenced by this study. It has been observed that these communities have coexisted in peace, harmony, and mutual trust within the area.

The theory of collective efficacy posits that communities with shared values and resources, when working collaboratively, can achieve peace restoration (Gallagher, 2012). Similarly, social capital theory suggests that the social networks, trust, and solidarity within a community contribute to enhancing their unity and advancing community security (Perkins, Hughey, Speer, 2002). Historically, the communities thrive in harmony, and their socio-cultural structure was well-established and secure. Communities exhibiting such socio-cultural harmony are often recognized as having a safe and protected community security. Looking at the historical context, the security of the Oromo and Amhara communities was upheld through a shared belief in indigenous peace restoration systems.

The findings of this study reveal that historically, these communities possessed traditional mechanisms for peace building in response to violence, thereby validating the principle of peace restoration. These communities also demonstrated solidarity by sharing common resources. They practiced trust, shared joy and sorrow, common market areas, and other elements, all of which are indicative of their strong social network. Therefore, the historical practices of these communities align with the principles of collective efficacy and social capital theories, affirming that their history was characterized by community security practices.

#### **4.2. Community Security in North Shoa Since 2018**

Community security and social cohesion is indicated as it boosts service delivery, minimizing social exclusion, strengthening intergroup relationships, and promotes equality (UNDP, 2009; Jenkins, 2020). The historical sense of community security appears to be declining under the present conditions. The existing state of affairs in the area under study starkly contrasts with the descriptions of community security provided by UNDP (2009) and Jenkins (2020), which highlight the importance of robust community ties. In this area the community intergroup relation is becoming weak particularly since 2018. The weak inter-communal relation lead the service delivery to be exclusive to particular community because of the EIBV created fear of being attacked for civil servants. In this situation it can be described as the CSSC of these communities in the study area is challenged. Jinadu (2007) identified the ethnicization of institutions and ethnic clientelism as primary contributors to the conflict in Ethiopia. This aligns with the observation that EIBV is undermining community security, a stability that has been maintained for centuries through mutually agreed indigenous peace restoration mechanisms. However, the participants in this research indicated that both statutory and

indigenous peace restoration methods have lacked effectiveness in the region since the 2018 escalation of EIBV.

This information shows as the community is in deep suspect and frustration each other. Such type of losing trust between the communities is a big challenge on the community security. As the ethnic based division in the area is observed, their justification for the reason of the conflict shows as they are losing trust each other. They are observing things from the perspective of attack against them. As Collier and Hoeffler (2006) referred such disintegration among community based on their ethnic identity seems exposed Oromo and Amhara to the danger of conflict, violence and social injustice. Even they are unjust as a community to confirm who is a killer of one individual, a death that was a cause for extensive violence against community. Such indicators are reasons for community insecurity. Threats to community security encompass state-sanctioned physical torment and warfare, ethnic discord incited by groups or individuals, and various forms of violence perpetrated by individuals or gangs, including gender-based violence such as sexual assault, domestic abuse, and child maltreatment (UNDP, 2009, 13-14). Predominantly, the area under study is plagued by ethnic tensions, which give rise to the aforementioned forms of violence within the community. It can be inferred from the prevailing conditions that the area is marred by a lack of community security.

In such type of mistrust it is justified that a community based solution to the conflict is best way to community security restoration (Saver world, 2016). Community-based community security supports the community's joint identification and prioritizing the community's security problems and needs. In the contrary the community security problems in the study area were discussed by political bodies under intention of the politicians being biased to their ethnic groups. In this violence scenario these two communities' community-based indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms also weaken. As the data was showing the community is losing trust on the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms because of the violence relapsing after politically mobilized traditional peace making process. Therefore, the security of the community in this area is facing a challenge that requires impartial political engagement and the fortification of indigenous peace-making efforts. Most importantly, government support to uphold the decisions made through the indigenous peace-building process is crucial for ensuring the security of the area's community.

#### **4.3. Media Role in the Community Insecurity**

As elucidated in the analytical section, the portrayal of media negatives identified as the Amhara community being oppressive and dominant over the Oromo and other Ethiopian communities is unsubstantiated from a communal perspective. These communities have historically demonstrated harmony, coexistence, and strong social ties. Their mutual trust was also robust. Inter-communal marriage and other shared activities were common in



the study area. According to communal accounts, there was no division based on ethnic identity, as these communities shared common residential areas, markets, and farming lands.

Nevertheless, the portrayal and contextualization of the current EIBV by the media greatly diverged from the communal history of coexistence. The Oromo community members currently harbor more suspicions towards the regional military factions and politicians than they do towards the Amhara community. Research participants from the Amhara community also more attribute the violence they've experienced more to the influences of politicians and external militants such as OLA, TPLF, the Federal government, among others, than to the Oromo communities. These communities' frustrations and loosing trust are new phenomenon in the history of these communities in the area. State-sanctioned torture, ethnic conflicts, and violence targeted at individuals or groups are recognized as significant threats to community security (UNDP, 2009). Therefore, communities that perceive a risk of attack or violence from political figures, government military factions, or organized militant groups are indicative of community insecurity within the study area.

The discourses propagated by elites, ethnic-affiliated media, and journalists regarding the historical animosity between these communities appear to lack substantive evidence (Zeyede, Jemaneh & Yonas, 2024). These communities, in fact, demonstrate a much stronger historical social cohesion and harmony than discord. The negative portrayal of historical hostility between these communities, as narrated by the ethnic-affiliated media (Zeyede, Jemaneh & Yonas, 2024), is not corroborated by historical records of community life.

Contrarily, the narratives by elites and politicians about negative inter-community relationships (Zeyede, Jemaneh & Yonas, 2024) seem to have a significant impact on the younger generation. As per the elders of these communities, the younger generation seems to have deviated from the indigenous principles of peacemaking and respect for community social values. The youth's perception of individual disagreements as EIBV or religious identity-based violence (RIBV) is leading to a surge in EIBV incidents against other communities and so forth. These circumstances serve as evidence of the narrative, built by the ethnically affiliated elite, journalists, and politicians, which portrays historical political system violence as specific communal violence against other community is deriving hazard (Zeyede, Jemaneh & Adaye, 2024). This narrative contributes significantly to the insecurity felt within the community. As outlined in the preceding chapters of this study, media outlets with ethnic affiliations have a crucial role in disseminating this contentious narrative to the community. It's noteworthy that community members' media preferences align with their ethnically affiliated outlets, further reinforcing the significant contribution of these media to the perceived insecurity within these communities.

In conclusion, the unfounded narrative and counter-narrative of historical realities pertaining to these communities, propagated by the elites, politicians, and journalists through Ethnic Affiliation Media (EAM), have significantly contributed to community insecurity in the area of study. These narratives have fostered Ethnic Identity-Based Disintegration (EIBD), a key factor leading to conflicts, civil wars, and social injustice (Collier & Hoeffler, 2006).

The EAM is a byproduct of a state structure based on ethnic identity, which is identified as a cause of Ethnic Identity-Based Violence (EIBV) (Alao & Olonisakin, 1998; Saideman, 2001). The state structure, which encourages EAM reporting, is a significant source of community insecurity among the Oromo and Amhara communities in North Shoa.

## 5. Conclusion

Community security refers to the safeguarding and fortification of a community's cultural relationships and values. Conversely, the deterioration of social cohesion and depletion of social capital, which are integral to the community's cultural relationships and values, can lead to community insecurity (Saver World, 2016).

Historically, the Oromo and Amhara communities have thrived within a framework of robust social cohesion, underpinned by deeply ingrained social capital values. They boast a rich heritage of effective mutual indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, with phrases such as "in the name of the flag" used to deescalate tensions among different community groups. This sense of mutual trust extended to the establishment of cultural kinship between families over the course of many generations. Their conflict resolution methods proved instrumental in resolving issues involving traditional killings as well as disputes over resources.

In times of celebration and mourning, these communities stood together, sharing common market spaces and demonstrating mutual respect for each other's cultures and values. The descriptions from various data sources indicate that these communities historically enjoyed a secure environment, with community security being a paramount priority.

In the modern Ethiopian state structure, which is centered on ethnic identity, various groups including elites, politicians, and journalists often portray a historical narrative of the Amhara community dominating the Oromo, and of the Oromo community's security being historically violated through the use of the EAM. However, based on data gathered from community members, these narratives are unfounded. The misuse of EAM as a tool to propagate these baseless narrations about the historical coexistence of these communities in the region is contributing to the current state of insecurity within these communities.

Members of the community have reported a significant decline in the historical trust that existed between them for centuries, as well as depreciation in the value of indigenous conflict resolutions. The trust in native peace restoration efforts has also deteriorated. The prevalent indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms have proven ineffective in restoring peace and security, primarily due to the assailant's disregard for these values. Consequently, it can be inferred that the modern EAM report, which leans more towards a war journalism model rather than a peace journalism model, is adversely affecting the security of the community in the area.

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