

Cross Border Conflict in Gambella Regional State (from 1991 to 2011): The Traditional Skills, Experiences and Indigenous Knowledge Used by Nuer, Anyuak and Murle Ethnic in Resolving Conflict

Gatluak Ruon Jal

Ethiopian Civil Service University, Department of Public Management, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Abstract: *Many Africans are experiencing ethnics-cross-border-conflicts which impose great social and economic costs. The objective of this article is to identify the impacts of the cross border conflicts in Gambella Regional State and its adjacent States in South Sudan. This study is more of qualitative research type. Both secondary and primary data were collected using questionnaire, interview, focus groups discussion and documents analysis. The study was conducted in Gambella region of Ethiopia and in Jonglei state of South Sudan. The respondents were from affected communities (elders, elites, religious people, women, and youth) of Nuer, Anyuak and Murle, governments' officials and non-governmental functionaries' workers. The sample size was 401. The focus group discussions participants were select systematically and the rest informants were taken purposively. The communities have traditional skills, experiences and indigenous knowledge those can help resolve this cross border conflict. The Nuer, the Anyuak and the Murle value the open dialogue as mean to resolve the conflict. The compensation which is actually paid as punishment is also valued by the communities. For the Nuer having a fearful person who is the principal actor (KuerKwac, Leopard Skin Chief) in conflict resolution among the Nuer as well as others can be used as an opportunity to incorporate in conflict resolution. The Nyie (king) in Anyuak community can be used to help resolve the communities' clashes. Though the Murle community has no strong hierarchical authority, the existence of falaan ci meeri (red chief) in Murle community can help resolve the conflict.*

Keywords: Conflict; traditional conflict resolution; community; ethnic; indigenous; traditional skills; traditional experiences

1. Introduction

For the sustainable development to take place, the indispensable pre-condition is existence of peace (Yohannes, Kassaye and Zerihun, 2005:9). Most pastoral societies in the world have been conflicting among themselves long time ago since then that, even potentially, spread to neighboring communities and to the government of the state (Bevan, 2007). Pastoral societies populate more than 21 countries on the African continent, these include: Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Ethiopia, Libya, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, Sudan (South and North), Central African Republic, and Uganda (ibid). The pastoral mobility usually doesn't respect the national boundaries and borders and this trigger armed cross-border conflict (UN-OCHA, 2008).

Most Africa countries are experiencing ethnics-cross-border-conflicts, which impose great social and economic costs. These conflicts are not caused by single issue but by many intermingling factors happening simultaneously such as resources scarcity, widespread poverty, weak government structure in rural areas, and limited participation in economic, political and cultural decision making (Salih, Dietz and Ahmed, 2001; Yohannes, Kassaye and Zerihun, 2005; Bekele, 2008; CARE Somalia, n.d.). The presence of modern weapons, violence related to the practices of heroism, livestock raiding, assault, rape, threats, the marginalization of local institutions, and the demand for

justice are the major factors triggering the cross border conflicts among ethnic groups (ibid). According to Powell (2010) the conflicts also arise from borders and boundaries established without taking into account the needs of pastoralism, weakening of customary conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, curtailing mobility, proliferation of small arms and children abduction. Often the conflicts are aggravated by politicization, lack of adequate or appropriate intervention by security forces, and climate impacts (ibid). As to Africa Report N^o154 (2009) factors exacerbating conflict cycles in Africa are inadequate justice mechanisms poor roads, local administration, food insecurity, inadequate access to water, land disputes, weak civil administration, and administrative boundaries.

Pastoral communities living along the borders of Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Kenya are losing their lives from amplified cross-border resource-based armed conflicts (UN-OCHA, 2008). The governments of Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda are blamed for turning a blind eye as thousands of their pastoral populations living along the borders die from increased cross-border resources and armed based conflicts (ibid).

The internal and cross-border ethnic conflicts resulted in deterioration of various forms of assets that constitute the capability of pastoral households like human death, cattle looting and forceful trespassing on others' territories for pastures and water access (Yohannes, Kassaye and Zerihun, 2005 and Bekele, 2008). The governments in Africa take different measures to resolve pastoralists' cross-border

conflicts. Some of the strategies adopted by the various states of the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) in attempting to address these pastoralists conflicts are: expansion of water schemes in the affected regions to reduce competition for water resources; formation of inter-clan commissions composed of respectable elders and Government representatives; expansion of social services infrastructure including education and health systems; introduction of alternative livelihoods; improvement of governance systems; and implementation of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) protocol on conflict resolution and management by all the member states and establishment of the conflict early warning system (African development bank group, 2010). Yet the local administration faces challenges to its successful delivery of services. And there is no consistency in application of strategies that address pastoralists' cross border conflicts (Muli, 2006).

In Gambella Regional State (GRAS) of Ethiopia, since the downfall of the Derg regime during 1991, the permissible (acceptable or tolerable) peace has not prevailed (Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 2009:74). The major cause, as Dereje (2009) indicated, triggering the conflict is the cattle raiding, which is a deep-rooted tradition and now become pervasive and cruelty, with well-armed rustlers around Gambella and South Sudan border. To Borchgrevink and Sande (2009) the ethnics' conflicts on the Sudanese side increased the tension in Gambella region. The Gambella border with Sudan has not at all been effectively controlled, while cross-border communities and pasture-seeking nomads remain the central cause of the regional conflict (ibid). The border area of Gambella with South Sudan is characterized by weak governance on both sides and this increases the recurrence of a conflict (Hussein, Girma, and Schaafsma, 2006). The absence of effective border regulations also jeopardizes the border population and internal displacements caused by the border dynamics create serious tensions and often result in conflict (ibid). The children abduction is another major cause of the conflict in this border, particularly practiced by Murle ethnic group in South Sudan (Africa Report N°154, 2009). Moreover, the proliferation of arms and ammunitions has increased the intensity of the conflict (OCHA RO-CEA, 2008, Arnold and Alden, 2007).

There is a need for authorities to make effective solution to this cross border conflicts. Nevertheless, federal and regional authorities have hardly taken successful measure to protect victims or punish their attackers (NRC, 2009:74). The communities' leaders and the regional government's officials have complained to the Federal Government to help to end to the devastation the Lou-Nuer and the Murle are raiding on the Nuer and Anyuak communities, but the Federal Government has not responded to the plea (Dereje, 2009). The local administration faces challenges to successfully delivery services and there is no consistency in application of strategies that address conflict (Muli, 2006). Today the main problem is that legal reforms have essentially destroyed many of these successful traditional structures and processes, and failed to develop a workable alternate (AMIS, n.d.). Therefore, the problem to address in this article is to bring fore the traditional skills, experiences and indigenous knowledge used by the ethnic groups (Nuer, Anyuak and Murle) in resolving conflicts.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Conflict is defined as a symbol of person energy; indication of person urgency; the outcome of reasonable struggling for the same rights, goals, and resources (Augsburger, 1992). The traditional cultures see conflict as communal concern; the group has ownership of the conflict and context and resolution processes are culturally prescribed (Augsburger, 1992).

Theories of conflict resolution "**Interest-Based Relational (IBR) Approach**" stressed each person's differences have to be appreciated while making them avoid becoming too firm in their position (Foundation of Coalition, n.d.). Identifying the overriding conflict style employed by different groups is a starting point when using these approaches (ibid). For this approach, the appropriate technique is "**win-win**" mediation to look for the solution, somewhat, satisfies each warring parties (ibid.). Another theory, which is similar to **IBR** approach, is "**Conflict Transformation Theory.**" Theorists of conflict transformation explained that present-day conflicts need further than the restructuring of situations and the discovery of **win-win** solutions (Berghof, 2004). The conflict transformation is a course of dealing with and altering the discourses, interests, relationships, and the exact foundation of people that supports the persistence of brutal struggle (ibid). Using this theory in resolving the conflict, the warring parties, the people, and outsiders who have related person and material means all have harmonizing roles to exercise in the long-term method of peace building (ibid). The theory advocates a complete and extensive tactic, stressing support for groups within the warring parties rather than for the negotiation of outsiders (ibid).

The cross border conflict in Gambella Regional State can be solved if the methodologies use to solve the conflict is improved and good conflict handling practices are implemented. These two theories can fit to resolve this try of conflict in Gambella Regional State of Ethiopia. The approaches, which the governments follow previously, need to be changed. The previous negotiations and/or consultative meetings were done between governments without involvement of local people in fighting. The communities concerns, experiences and knowledge were not taken into account.

3. Challenges of Cross Border Conflicts Resolution in Africa

The marginalization of traditional practices of the conflict resolution experience and indigenous knowledge of elders by many of the modern institutions becomes as challenge to conflict resolution in Africa (Yohannes, Kassaye and Zerihun, 2005). Governmental institutions are not adapted to drawing on elders' skills; only active during the conflict and make less effort to prevent and resolve conflicts (ibid). District leaders have poor accountability to the community and lack experience (ibid).

Inadequate justice mechanisms, inadequate local administration, poor roads and weak civil administration are the challenges to conflict resolution (Africa Report N°154,

2009). The scarcity of the water is a principal triggering factor of conflict facing the pastoralist communities and providing them with water storage and alternative sources of water would reduce their need to move seasonally with cattle but this is not cheap and not easy to make (ibid). According to Haro, Doyo and McPeak (2003), Yohannes, Kassaye and Zerihun (2005) and Bekele (2008) the major challenges to conflict resolution are minimal transparency between the community and officials, slow follow-up and decision-making, lack of experience and knowledge on conflict resolution, no or little interest in learning from traditional practices of conflict resolution, government rules and regulations that are not in harmony with traditions, and biased attitudes of some officials towards their respective ethnic groups. Local mediators lack knowledge and experience on how to apply the informal and the formal approaches in an integrated manner (ibid). Moreover, government officials usually monopolize the mediation forum and elders are given little chance to express their views and their interests are overlooked (Bekele, 2008).

The cross-border nature of the conflicts and the diversity of actors involved in cattle rustling further complicate efforts to resolve disputes (Yohannes, Kassaye and Zerihun, 2005 and Bekele, 2008). Because of the benefits drawn from commercial livestock raiding and the use of sophisticated arms have meant that many non-pastoralists, regular army, police, local militia, local government administration and some unemployed people are now involved in conflicts in pastoral areas, particularly cattle rustling (ibid). This challenges peace initiatives and the peace process becomes more complex and difficult (ibid).

4. Methodology / Design

The research type for the study is Qualitative research. As to Hancock (2002) qualitative research deals with explanations of social phenomena and finds the answers to the questions like: how opinions and attitudes are formed; why people behave the way they do; how and why cultures have developed in the way they have; how people are affected by the events that go on around them; and the differences between social groups. Basing on the objectives, from the different types of qualitative researches explanatory method were used. Among the classes of explanatory research studies (case study and historical research methods); the case study method were used for this study. According to O'Sullivan, Rassel and Berner (2003) case study is the combination of many different sources of information which comprise interviews, documents, participant observation archival information, direct observation, and physical artifact. This research employed descriptive research, to report what has happened or what is happening (Kothari, 1996) around Gambella Regional State border.

The types of data are qualitative data. Both the primary and the secondary data were collected. The methods of data collection involved focus group discussion, interview and questionnaire to procure primary data directly from respondents. The secondary data were collected from the existing relevant published and unpublished documents including books, magazines, journals, newspapers, reports and electronic source.

The data were collected from the affected communities (elders, elites, religious people, women, and youth), government officials and development agencies relevant to the study. The sample size was 401. The questionnaires were filled by 53 respondents from Nuer, Anyuak and Murle ethnic groups. The respondents were governments' officials and non-governmental functionaries' workers. The 168 individuals from Nuer (Jikany-Nuer and Lou-Nuer), Anyuak and Murle were interviewed including 5 elders from the displaced community from Upper Nile State of South Sudan to Gambella Region of Ethiopia. Up to 18 focus group discussions which involving 180 individuals were done from Gog, Makuey and Akobo districts of Gambella, displaced Jikany-Nuer from Upper Nile to Gambella and Akobo district of Jonglei, one for youth and another for women focus group discussions were conducted. The purposive sampling and snowball method were used. The purposive sampling was used to take the zones and the districts with high frequency of cross border incursions and to ensure the inclusion of all ethnic groups affected by this type of conflict.

In order to get information from the groups, the respondents were stratified as governments' officials, non-governmental functionaries' workers, elites, elders, youth (both young men and women), women and religious people. The age of youth ranges from 15 to 35 depend on the context of groups under study. This is the group that is active in carry out incursion and raiding. The elites and elders were taken purposively and snowball method was used.

The data gathered, being primary and/or secondary, were analyzed and presented in explanation forms. The data were analyzed, described, discussed and qualified using explanatory means, comparisons, interpretation and logical arguments.

5. The Traditional Skills, Experiences and Indigenous Knowledge Used by Nuer, Anyuak and Murle Ethnic in Resolving Conflict

To resolve the ethnic groups' conflicts, understanding the cultures of the warring parts is of paramount important. The results emerged with very imported various ways of traditional conflict resolution the Nuer, the Anyuak and the Murle peoples use to solve the intra and inter conflicts. The objective was to identify the traditional (skills, experiences and indigenous knowledge) conflict resolution methods the Nuer, the Anyuak and the Murle communities use to solve both the intra and inter conflicts. The researcher interviewed elites, elders and church leaders and made different focus group discussions, with youth and women. The researcher also distributed questionnaire filled by governments' officials and non-governmental functionaries' workers including religious leaders. The questions asked to each ethnic group were all similar. This section has three sub-sections. The researcher discussed the traditional skills, experiences and indigenous knowledge of conflict resolution methods use by each ethnic groups under study separately.

5.1. The Traditional Skills, Experiences and Indigenous Knowledge Used by Nuer Tribe in Resolving Conflict (Intra and Inter Conflict)

The results obtained from interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaire were similar. The informants explained two different ways those the Nuer people use in solving the conflicts. The first way is the discussion between the two hostile groups mediate by close neutral party to the two groups. The respondents explained the Nuer use compensation paid in cattle for a death when two parties agree or are convinced to rebuild their peaceful relation again. The two parties discuss the problem and the amount of the compensation to be paid. The neutral party (ies) takes the final decision on which party is guilty and the amount of compensation to be paid for blood fault. The open dialogue is allowed for two groups. Finally, when the two parties reached consensus they slaughter the cow to cancel the blood fault. Chiefs, elderly people and religious leaders call the warring parties for dialogue and reconciliation and to pass compensation amount which is usually paid in kind, mostly in livestock. These groups will let the victimized group to have feeling of forgiveness. The results revealed dialogue is one way of solving the disputes in Nuer.

The findings from the previous studies showed the Nuer 'law' looks an ethical duty to resolve differences using conventional techniques. The Nuer law does not assume legal logic procedures (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). Wassara (2007) revealed in Nuer the most familiar conflict resolution mechanisms involve of customary mediation, restitution and compensation. The compensations are usually paid in cattle and the number of cattle to be paid varies from place to place in Nuer areas (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). In Nuer the chief with several elders resolve the conflict by persuading the warring parties to accept the redress and mediation requires the consent of parties to settle their dispute (Evans-Pritchard, 1940 and Wassara, 2007). As to Evans-Pritchard:

The chief is considered to be neutral and certain sanctity attaches to his person so that there is little likelihood of the deputation being injured. They go on talking, therefore, till everyone has had his say and a consensus has been reached. The five important elements in a settlement of this kind by direct negotiation through a chief seem to be (1) the desire of the disputants to settle their dispute, (2) the sanctity of the chief's person and his traditional role of mediator, (3) full and free discussion leading to a high measure of agreement between all present, (4) the feeling that a man can give way to the chief and elders without loss of dignity where he would not have given way to his opponent, and (5) recognition by the losing party of the justice of the other side's case (Evans-Pritchard, 1940).

From the findings, the second ways is chosen when the hostility is high and the two conflicting parties are not in a position to negotiate. As to respondents in the Nuer culture there is powerful person who they call *KuerMuon* (Land Master). The person uses the Leopard skin to perform his task. The person is believed to have spiritual power and the Nuer call him *Gok* in their language. The word *Gok* means prophet or diviner. The Nuer believe the person has spiritual power to perform many things, even to curse a disdain

person to death. Among those many activities the *Gok* perform one is conflict resolution, being intra and/or inter conflicts. The person (*Gok*) stops conflict by slaughtering ox to cancel the blood fault cursing who will start a gain the conflict to death or for their side to see more deaths and that stop the conflict. The respondents explained the *KuerMuon* (Land Master) does not work alone. He invites elders and elites to work with him. The two ways of the conflict resolution methods work for both intra and inter conflicts.

The respondents explained these traditional mechanisms are done by elderly people, chiefs (*Gaattuuti*) from villages (kebeles/bumas) and *Gook* (diviners). All these groups get cow to kill and make curse by saying if anyone or young person who will start these problem again would die like this cow. They can make convention by themselves and make curse. The respondents explained the joint committee is formed that include the two sides. The joint committee members selected from both sides is formed to kill the cow and swear to God that no one among the warring parties should restart it again at the present of other members of hostile groups.

To the maximum level, as respondents explained, before the cow is slaughter to prevent the escalation of the conflict, the forehead hairs of the cow are wiped off all. This signifying the curse that anyone one who will restart the conflict again will banish like the forehead hairs of this cow. That means he will not have child and property. He will live and die dejectedly. As to respondents this activity in Nuer is done by the *KuerKwac* (Leopard Skin Chief).

From previous finding, according to Evans-Pritchard (1940) when the conflicting rivalries are from different villages and/or groups dispute resolution is difficult. For that matter the leopard-skin chief method is applied to bring the warring parties together for discussion. He stated "The Nuer has a keen sense of personal dignity and rights. It is recognized that a man ought to obtain redress for certain wrongs." The Nuer community had the traditional system of authority to enforce decisions (Wassara, 2007). The principal actor in conflict resolution among the Nuer is the *KuerKwac* (Leopard Skin Chief). He is spiritual person and use "leopard skin" as to perform his spiritual works. As to Wassara, "Any offender who seeks refuge in the residences of the *KuerKwac* is spared by the offended" (Wassara, 2007). The blood-feuds are resolved through the leopard-skin chief as it cannot be settled without his intervention and the person has minor role in the settling other quarrels rather than homicide (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). The leopard-skin chief persuade using exhortations, pressurizing and threats the relatives of the deceased person to agree compensation and this is not taken as forceful command. Evans-Pritchard stated:

If people were to insist on refusing the mediation of a leopard-skin chief he would take a short-homed ox and, after invoking God, slay it and rub the hairs off its head so that the members of the lineage who rejected his mediation might perish in prosecuting their feud (Evans-Pritchard, 1940).

The findings revealed discussing the ways the conflict should be solved to persuade the hostile groups to redress their

dispute, not by commanding, is the way the Nuer community resolve their problem among themselves and with other ethnic groups.

5.2. The Traditional Skills, Experiences and Indigenous Knowledge Used by Anyuak Tribe in Resolving Conflict (Intra and Inter Conflict)

The Anyuak people, like the Nuer people, have two traditional ways of resolving intra and inter conflicts. The results of interviews, focus group discussions and survey questions revealed similar answers or explanation. The respondents explained there are two different ways the Anyuak ethnic group use in solving the conflict. The respondents explained the Anyuak community uses discussion, mediations and compensation to solve the conflict. The community's leaders and elders from warring parties discuss about the problem in order to end the conflict. Meetings are scheduled to reconcile the warring parties. One of the respondents from Anyuak stated:

Discussion is the only way to reconcile the communities in fighting. The people have to sit and discuss their problem. Anyuak community used to fight each other before, they solved that through discussions. The Anyuak also used to fight with Nuer community and the two communities now resolved their hostility through discussion as well.

The respondents explained the two opponents come together and make an oath for peace. The community uses compensation pay in livestock and/or materials. The amount to be paid is decided by traditional leaders, elders and religious leaders to resolve the conflict. The village (kebele/buma) leaders, elderly people and religious leaders call the warring parties for dialogue and reconciliation and to pass compensation amount which is usually paid in kind, like livestock and traditional materials. These people will let the victimized group to have feeling of forgiveness. The informants explained the discussions, dialogues, mediation and compensations are used to solve the conflict.

The respondents also explained when the conflict passed some steps and the communities' dialogue alone cannot solve the problem, the *Nyie* (king) steps in. The *Nyie* is in Anyuak language that means King. One respondent explained:

The powerful person in the Anyuak tradition is the *Nyie*. Among many activities the *Nyie* performs one is conflict resolution. The *Nyie* has power to stop the Anyuak community from war and to mobilize them to go for war as well. The Anyuak respect their *Nyie* and listen to him. The Anyuak community have one ruler in the community, The *Nyie*. All people from Anyuak community give their opinions to him to resolve the conflicting issues. The *Nyie* has power to decide the punishment, pay in cattle and materials, on disdain person.

The respondents explained the *Nyie* together with elders, religious leaders, village (kebele/buma) leaders and other people who are the members of that community come together to solve the problem. The king does peace dialogue, reconciliation and blood guilt compensation.

The previous findings revealed every Anyuak village is administrated by *Nyie* (king) or *Kway-Luak* (sub-chief) who iscountabletoadministrative and social matters of the community in the village. The Anyuak kingdom used to be a federation of villages headed by an independent *Nyie* with several *kway-luak* (sub-chiefs) who administrate smaller villages (Gordon, 2014).

The findings revealed the Anyuak value discussion to do mediations between hostile groups. The elders, chiefs or *Nyie* have power to enforce punishments and compensations to the persons found guilt.

5.3. The Traditional Skills, Experiences and Indigenous Knowledge Used by Murle Tribe in Resolving Conflict (Intra and Inter Conflict)

The researcher accessed the traditional skill, experiences and knowledge of conflict resolution the Murle ethnic group uses to solve the intra and inter conflicts. The researcher was not able to make focus group discussions with Murle members due to insecure situation in their area (Pibor) at the time of data collection in South Sudan, from August to October 2013. And the researcher believed the focus group discussions cannot generate good results if done by enumerators. The researcher used the opportunity of workshop arranged by GNO call AECOM/USAID International in Juba on August 25-26, 2013 to interview some participants from Murle. The participants were drawn from communities' elders, religious people, top politicians, government leaders and members of the parliament from Lou-Nuer and Murle communities to discuss how they can solve their conflict.

The results showed the Murle community, like Nuer and Anyuak, has two ways of resolving the disputes. The respondents explained the Murle people use discussion as mean to resolve conflict. The respondents explained the Murle community resolves the conflict using discussions and mediation. The Murle sultans or chiefs bring community for dialogue to discussion the problem and how it can be solved and levy the compensation. One respondent from Murle explained:

In Murle is a sultan who can solves the conflict by calling the community elders to discuss and find the solution for the conflict. The community member of the Murle only listen a sultan. A sultan when he like he can mobilize youth for war and when he like also he can stop them from going to war. It is a sultan who can bring peace and at the same time who can disturbs as well.

The respondents explained reconciliation, negotiation and compensation are the ways the Murle community uses to solve the conflicts.

The second way of resolving the conflict in Murle community is done by *alaan ci meeri* (red chief), the prophet. The respondents explained in Murle *alaan ci meeri* (red chief), the prophet, is called in to resolve the conflict when it is difficult to settle the issue by discussion only. The respondents explained the homicides issues are usually resolved by the *alaan ci meeri*, red chief. The Murle

community believes the person (the red chief) has spiritual power to give swearword to the disdain to death. This person work with elites, elders and other members in the community to solve the conflicts.

The previous studies showed among the Murle there is lack of hierarchical authority, even within age-sets or *buul* (Arensen, 2012). The Murle people have no hierarchy of leadership. The lack of hierarchy of leadership negatively affect administrative decisions when it comes to decisions those affect the whole ethnic group. The Arensen (2012) indicated "Since there is no head, there are no strong political leaders who have far reaching authority." Meanwhile, the Murle representatives, elders and leaders, who actually command no authority in their community, may be much pressurized to bring result on peace process (Rolandsen and Breidlid, 2012). So far, the Murle community has been weakly associated with one another, there is no longer-term approach that clarifying the really actors those have to be included in order to realize proper achievement (ibid). Arensen stated:

A homestead, *korok*, typically consists of two or three generations of a family, *tatok*. The oldest man in the family is the de facto head of the homestead and he makes all major decisions on behalf of his extended family. This is an extremely small unit, therefore to enhance the chances for physical survival; it may unite with other homesteads through a horizontal extension of social ties (Arensen, 2012).

Ones the members of homestead conflicted with their neighbors they simply move away and build different homestead (*korok*) in anew area and get friendly neighbors. Because the Murle community moves easily, it does not require complex conflict resolution methods to solve the conflicts between homesteads, they simply evade them (ibid).

Lewis (1972) emphasized even during 1930s the drum-ships (*kidongwa*) lost their cohesiveness and the associated chiefs lost their commanding. In Murle every drum-ship has an *alaan ci meeri* (the red chief) who have a spiritual power without the political power (Arensen, 2012). An *alaan* means priest or prophet. The Murle community believed he has direct contact with *Tammu*, God. He is named red chief because he wears the crimson bird feathers on his forehead. The red chief is feared because of his power to curse a person that can even result to death. Nevertheless, this person distances himself from involving in the various homesteads affairs decisions. Merely, the red chiefs rarely come jointly to make a comprehensive decision which has an effect on the entire Murle ethnic group (ibid).

The secondary findings explained the Murle ethnic group has no strong traditional conflict resolution methods which can be stated as mechanism to solve the conflict. There is no one person in which the power is embraced to him by the community. The different age-sets have their own administrative system which relates to raiding and fighting others communities. From the findings, their way of resolving conflict is to avoid it by changing the place. The secondary findings were supported by the results obtained from the Nuer and the Anyuak respondents. The Nuer and

the Anyuak respondents explained the Murle community has no control over their youth.

6. Conclusion

The communities have traditional skills, experiences and indigenous knowledge those can help resolve this cross border conflicts. The Nuer, the Anyuak and the Murle value the open dialogue as way to resolve the conflict. The compensation which is actually paid as punishment is also valued by the communities.

For the Nuer people the invitation of the close neutral party that the two parties trust to mediate has the possibly to reduce the odds. Though the Nuer "law" does not adopt the logic of legal or modern procedures, it potentially can solve the dispute more than legal conflict resolution as it looks a moral obligation to resolve differences by conventional techniques (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). For the Nuer, having a fearful person who is the principal actor (*Kuer Kwac*, Leopard Skin Chief) in conflict resolution among the Nuer as well as other communities can be used as an opportunity to incorporate in conflict resolution.

For the Anyuak having kingship system is the opportunity to resolve the disputes. The *Nyie* (king) can be used to help resolve the communities' clashes. Because the *Nyie* (king) does peace dialogue, reconciliation and blood guilt compensation.

The traditional conflict resolution methods for both Nuer and Anyuak related to the theory of "**Interest-Based Relational (IBR) Approach**" which uses the "win-win" mediation methods to look the solution that satisfies both warring parties (Foundation of Coalition, n.d.).

The Murle sultans or chiefs bring community for dialogue to discussion the problem and how it can be solved and levy the compensation. Though the Murle community has no strong hierarchical authority, the existence of *falaan ci meeri* (red chief) in Murle community can help resolve the conflict. The Murle community also uses conflict avoiding as mean to resolve the conflict. This conflict resolution method is related to Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode (Thomas and Kilmann, 2007).

References

- [1] Africa Report N^o154, 2009. *Jonglei's Tribal Conflicts: Countering Insecurity in South Sudan: Crisis Group Africa Program Report N^o154* [pdf] 23 December 2009. Available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/hornofafrica/sudan/Jongleis%20Tribal%20Conflicts%20Countering%20Insecurity%20in%20South%20Sudan.pdf> [Accessed 7 November 2011].
- [2] African Development Bank Group, 2010. *Regional Study on the Sustainable Livestock Development in the Greater Horn of Africa. VOLUME 1: MAIN SYNTHESIS REPORT*. [pdf] Nairobi: LOG Associates. Available at: www.afdb.org/~/Final_Synthesis_Report_AfDB_Regional_Livestock... [Accessed 26 December 2012].

- [28] Wassara Samson S. March 2007. *Traditional Mechanisms of Conflict Resolution in Southern Sudan*. Berghof Foundation for Peace Support Altensteinstr. Berlin, Germany.
- [29] Yohannes, Gebre Michael., Kassaye, Hadgu. And Zerihun, Ambaye., 2005. *Addressing pastoralist conflict in Ethiopia: The case of the Kuraz and Hamer sub-districts of South Omo zone*. [pdf] Africa Peace Forum, Ethiopian Pastoralist Research and Development Association, Interafrica Group, Saferworld, August 2005. Available at: <[www.saferworld.org.uk/.../...](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/.../)> [Accessed 26 November 2011].

Author Profile

Gatluak Ruon Jal is currently Ph.D. candidate in Ethiopian Civil Service University, Department of Public Management in Ethiopia. He received Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership (MA) at the Azusa Pacific University (California, USA) on September 1st, 2009. He has degree in Economics from Ethiopian Civil Service Collage (now University) in Ethiopia on August 18, 2004 and advanced diploma in Irrigation Engineering from Arba Minch Water Technology Institute (now University) in Ethiopia on July 17, 1999. GatluakRuonJal worked as Chairperson of Economic and Finance Standing Committee in Gambella Regional State Council from September 2010 to April 2011, Head of Educational Bureau of Gambella Regional State from March 2009 to September 2010, Deputy Head of Gambella Regional State Capacity Building Bureau from October 2005 to March 2009, Planning and Program Directorate of Gambella Regional State Capacity Building Bureau from October 2004 to October 2005 and expert of Irrigation Development at Zonal level from September 1999 to September 2001.

IJSR