



**The Nexus between Commercialisation of Agricultural Land and
Ethnic Conflict in Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz Regional
States of Ethiopia**

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List of Acronyms

AEUP	All Ethiopian Unity party
ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
BG	Benishangul-Gumuz
BGRS	Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GPLM/F	Gambella People Liberation Movement/Front
GPS	Global Positioning System
GRS	Gambella Regional State
LG	Land Grab
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
TPLF	Tigray People Liberation Front
UN-Habitat	The United Nations Human Settlement Program

Abstract

Ethnic conflict has been reinforced in Gambella and BG regions following the land grabbing process, because of ethnicity's two edge role; first ethnicity provides the source of solidarity for organized action by articulating the impacts of the land grabbing. Secondly, ethnicity has been used as instrument of elites for rent seeking from the ongoing land grabbing process. In both cases, ethnically motivated interests lead to ethnic based conflicts.

Such instrumental stature has been strengthened by two interrelated factors: first the existing problematic state formation and structure associated with Ethiopia which is giving a space for manipulation. Secondly, the process of commercialization of agricultural land is creating new phenomenon such as competition over employment and power, migration , eviction, corruption, land renting, illegal settlement etc. such factors have been behind the overt and covert form of ethnic conflict between different ethnic groups.

However, it worth noting that there have not been violent outright ethnic conflict other than the Mejenger zone conflict in Gambella region. Most ethnic based conflicts are rather small, subtle and less organized.

Relevance to Development Studies

Commercialization of agriculture has been regarded as part of the Ethiopian government call for poverty alleviation and food security strategy, thereby guarantying economic growth. Taking ethnic conflict as a particular lenses, this paper has shade light on how “development Program” would end up being a source of insecurity and threat to the very society which they are supposed to uplift. Not knowing the pastoralist and shifting cultivation life style of the indigenous community, the commercialization project has only aggravated the existing antagonistic relation between diverse ethnic groups. Hence, my paper will unravel, the call for deeper examination of development policies and programs to examine competing interests.

Keywords

Land grab, Ethnic conflict, commercial agriculture, ethnic groups, indigenous peoples, Highlanders, state

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background

The incident of frequent drought and resultant hunger has been part of Ethiopian history. Beside, immediate humanitarian assistance the international community has been shy to take any long lasting measures aimed at ameliorating the problem from its root. It is such occurrences of despair and poverty puts pressure on the current government to pursue policies primarily aimed at achieving economic growth through the involvement the large majority of farmers. Hence as part of such development strategy; Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) come in to existence. ADLI, launched in 1996 by the ruling regime predicated on the commercialization of small scale farms through modern system of production, creating trade channels, diversification of production. The promotion of large scale agriculture and agricultural input provision of fertilizers for small scale farmers is exclusive domain of ruling party affiliates (Abbink 2011:515).

The government has envisioned ADLI to be a pro poor growth strategy to uplift the predominantly subsistence farmers who will eventually supplement the inputs for the industrial sector (Teshome 2006:14). The policy was important because over half of the country's GDP and 86% the total labour force is coming from the agricultural sector. The strategy envisages increasing investment in the agricultural sector will spur the productivity of small scale farmers (Alemu et al 2002:20). However, ADLI has been criticized on the many grounds, the most sound one is about the ability of impoverished farmers who cannot even feed themselves, let alone producing for industrial consumptions because of environmental degradation, unskilled farmers etc. (Teshome 2006:15)

Notwithstanding its long goal of emphasis on small scale farmers, recently the government has started to lease huge acres of land mainly for foreign investors in the hope that such measures will have a spillover effect on the country's development process (Lavers 2012:106). According to Lavers (2012:105) though many literature ignores the motivation of developing countries, land grab is the results of two interrelated factors. The first one is the global food crisis which has affected some countries more than others and lead to, what Abbink (2011:514) has described as, 'scramble' for Africa.

The second reason Lavers (2012:105) outlined is the aspiration of developing countries to pursue large scale agriculture as a way-out of poverty through foreign exchange earnings,

employment opportunity as well as food security. Similarly, the aspiration of Ethiopian government combined with foreign interests, has facilitated the land acquisition process.

Studies showed that land grab is causing multiple problems. According to Borras and Franco (2010:8) land grabbing have a sever repercussion for poor countries in Sub-Sahara Africa which are considered as having plenty of ‘unused’ land. In fact it is susceptible for corruption, violent conflict, perpetuating food insecurity, undermining land rights, damage to the environment etc. The Ethiopian case in Gambella and Benishangul –Gumuz is not different. Gambella and Benishangul Gumuz stands at the forefront of land investment centers as both regions relatively characterized by sparse population. To such an end, the government has planned to lease 42% and 14% of the total surface area of Gambella and Benishangul- Gumuz regions respectively (Lavers 2012:110).

Following government dramatic measures of leasing in the two regions there have incidents of conflicts between the local community and the government as well as between different ethnic groups in regions where large scale land acquisition has occurred. This research attempts to answer how large scale land grabbing is fueling conflicts in Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz regional states.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In Ethiopia ever since the government embarked on the leasing of land for foreign investors it has caused displacement and exclusion of the local community in different parts of the country but especially in Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz region. As Moreda (2015:518) succinctly point out in Ethiopian the land grabbing process does not take in to account the complex web of relationship between indigenous communities and the associated land. The process has ignited an existing long standing territorial claims that has been reflected through social relationships.

Resistance against land grab intersects three forms of contestation (Borras and Franco (2013:1730). Similarly, in Ethiopian BG regions case Moreda (2015:525-534) identified these three contestation as; first reaction against investors which takes the mode of sabotaging the property of corporations for example, by setting fire on the harvest. The second is against migrant workers who are viewed as ‘outsiders’ or ‘highlanders’ takes the employment opportunity of land acquisition. And the last resistance is against the government measure whose policy has displace and alienate them from their own land. In a different context, Feyssa (2009:642-647) identified four different levels of conflicts in Gambella region which are; inter-

ethnic conflict, intra-ethnic conflict, indigenous against migrants, the state against the local community, and the last one is cross border conflicts.

The scholarship in taking agrarian perspective in general and land grab issue in particular has not yet well developed in terms of linking ethnic conflict with land acquisition process. However, there are few studies on such areas, one of which is, Vellema et al (2011:300) in researching the agrarian roots of the Mindano regions of Philippines conflict, discovered that violence conflict is the representation of threat resulted from the process of economic and social transformation, which was different from the common perception of religious conflict in the area.

In analyzing conflicts of such nature, it is important to combine the historical exploitation, the religious discrimination/integration as well as contemporary economic dynamics with in the specific community. Only the combination of all such multidimensional angles gives the clear picture of the context (Vellema et al 2011:300).

Ethnic conflicts has been part of the history of Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz regional sates. Many studies (Feyessa 2009, 2004, Adegehe 2009) gave emphasis on the historical, cultural and political roots of the ethnic conflict in the two regions. Land grabbing process which affects the way different ethnic groups interact and behave towards each other, as well as determine their livelihood structure has likely to contribute for fueling the existing conflict, however, beside mentioning and addressing of it as part of local resistance by few researchers such as Moreda (2015), and Rahmato (2011), there has not been a deep investigation on the link between land grab and ethnic conflict. Hence, in this paper I have tried to cover such gaps.

1.3. Research Question

General Research Question

How is the commercialization of Agricultural land fueling inter-ethnic conflict in Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz region?

Specific Research Questions

- How is land grabbing affecting inter-ethnic relations/conflict between the indigenous communities versus Non-indigenous?
- What is the role of land grab in the ongoing conflict between and among the indigenous ethnic communities in Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz regions?

1.4. Research Objectives

General Objective

To investigate the relationship between land grab and ethnic conflict in Gambella and Benishangul – Gumuz regional state.

Specific objectives

- ✓ To identify the ways in which land grabbing is affecting the conflict between ‘indigenous’ and ‘settler’ ethnic groups.
- ✓ To investigate the role of Land grabbing in shaping inter-ethnic conflict between the ‘indigenous’ ethnic groups in Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz region.
- ✓ To suggest possible recommendations on the relationship between conflict and land grab in the two regions.

Chapter Two: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1. Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict

2.1.1. Ethnicity and Ethnic conflict

Though ethnicity refers to a relationship between groups whose members identify themselves as distinct, they can also be ranked hierarchically into different classes. Social classes are always about ranking while ethnicity is not always necessarily about ranking. Ethnicity in a particular can be a major determinant factor for social classes, however, the two concepts are not similar (Eriksen 1996:30-31). For example according to Ethiopian constitution Article 39(5), ethnicity has been equated with the word nations and nationality under which reads as;

a group of people who have or share large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory

In many occasions ethnicity is associated with conflict and political struggle though there is no necessary connection between the two, though, those ethnic conflict cases are few isolated examples and has more to do with something else than ethnicity (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:3). The main source of ethnic conflict is economic reason which is the result of transformation and inequality that takes ethnic dimension. Besides the struggle over scarce resources further widen cultural differences and gives rise for ethnic conflict (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:3).

To better understand ethnic conflict, it is essential to go through the three approaches of ethnicity and ethnic conflict. Primordialism, the first approach, followed a naturalistic approach to ethnicity. It is based on membership to common culture such as language, religion, territory, norms etc. (Baeova 1998:35). Primordialists explain ethnic conflict as a non-rational behavior intended to defend one's identity (ibid 36). However, such views are baseless in the sense that modern society witnessed overlapping identity as a result of frequent migration, intermarriage and colonialism (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:8).

For primordialists the inherent incompatibility between diverse groups is what causes for conflict (Stein 2011:22). Conflict is the result of centuries old hatred between different groups of peoples. However, conflict rooted in primordial differences (Crawford 1998:10-11). However, this approach is problematic in two senses; first unable to make distinction between

cultural and political identity, because cultural differences (such as religion, language, tradition) doesn't by themselves lead to conflict. The second weakness is, the approach ignores the role state institutions in triggering and controlling conflict (ibid 11-12).

The second approach which is in line with Marxist attitude is instrumentalist view. The development of Marxism in culturally homogenous Western Europe has made it less responsive to ethnicity or subjected it class interest (Tellis et al 2000:22). Ethnicity is neither inherent nor intrinsically important, rather the value of ethnicity emanates from the fact that it masks political and economic interests. In an ethnic conflict leaders conceal their interests for resource extraction (Varshney 2007:282). Ethnicity is not actual cause of any conflict though it may appear to be (Tellis et al 2000:21).

The instrumentalisation of ethnicity can be seen from two angles: first as an instrument of struggle and resistance through mass mobilization in such cases Baeova (1998:33) argued that instrumentalist advocate that individuals' attachment to their ethnic group is based on rational calculations to achieve political or economic goal. Individuals' rational choice drives their membership in to ethnic group so as to meet the desired wealth, status and power through their influence (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:9). A slightly similar view is that, Ethnic conflicts are the results of class antagonism, because at the conflict may seem religious or ethnic the roots in resource and wealth distribution (Tellis et al 2000: 23).

The second instrumentalisation is by elites to enrich themselves. In this line of argument, Stein (2011:23) maintain that, it is the elite in instrumentalism uses identity as agent based approach to manipulate the mass. Ethnicity is a cultural, social and political resources that serves different interests and statuses within the group. One manifestation is the use of elites to manipulate the mass through ethnic symbols to achieve their objectives specially when there is resource competition (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:8). This instrumentalist stand further reinforced is the Greed and Grievance approach that intended to explain civil wars.

According to greed and grievance theory, conflicts is essentially the manifestation of elite struggle over resource rent which is buried under the grievance of the society. The role ethnicity or religion in conflict is minimal, it is rather poverty and corrupt system that causes conflict (Murshed 2010-63-64).

In greed and grievance approach, the greed part deals with the intention of rebel leaders and the economic return intended to be acquired by the group from a particular civil war (Murshed 2010:65). Civil wars are understood as the results of greedy behavior of leaders. Violence is

regarded as a means of stealing the resources of others, because, in conflict there is no contractual agreement (Ibid 66-67).

Grievance on the other hand is the justice seeking claims of individuals for political recognition and representation (Murshed 2010:66). The grievance aspect is mainly about maintaining group formation and identity preservation. The factor for the propensity of ethnic conflict can be summed up in to three interrelated themes: relative deprivation, polarization and horizontal inequality. Relative deprivation is about the divergence between what the people want to have and what they actually have. When one group believes that they have been deprived vis-à-vis other and such claims articulated and orchestrated for mobilization and collective action, it results in civil war (Murshed 2010:77). Dependence on Primary commodities provides incentives for corruption and bad governance, in that way triggers grievance. Likewise, poverty further fuels such problems (Collier and Hoeffler 2004: 588).

Taking insights from the two approaches, constructivism is the last approach that considers social actors' identity created through their role in the society and how they interact with others actors. Therefore, it is this situational that shapes groups interests and expectations and thereby determine the course of their action (Stein 2011:24). Ethnicity is a construction of modern era (Varshney 2007:285).

2.2. The Fusion of Class, Ethnic conflict, and Land Grab? Analytical Framework

Contrary to mainstream view of assisting economic growth, global land grab is mediated in favor of concentrating wealth on the rich class while discriminating against the poor peasants. Such rich class includes corporations, state elites and bureaucrats as well as capitalist classes (Rahmato 2011:3-4). Ruth Hall (cited in Rahmato 2011:4), labels this process, as the process of 'South Africanisation' in which land is concentrated on the hands of settlers type huge commercial farms along with poor peasant farmers.

The whole notion of recent commercialization of agricultural land is based on western utilitarian conception (Makunike 2009:87). The voluntary essence of "willing buyer and willing seller" principle as promoted by the World Bank is embedded and influenced by the neo-liberalist policy measures (market based input and output, export oriented production, agri-business etc.) that as critics point out tend to aggravate violence and conflict against the rural poor than bring about stability and peace (Borras and Ross 2007:3).

The claim of indigenous peoples and poor peasants over land is usually against the interest of the dominant class and the state, which eventually characterize most of their relation to be based on conflict and violence, because the former as active agent resists policies that aimed at capital accumulation at their expense (Borras and Ross 2007:1). In the same vein, Borras and Franco (2011:1) argued that, Land has and will be among the major source conflict because of three reasons, first its importance as for the production of food and non-food primary products, second as an arena of resource extraction including minerals and water, and lastly it a territory that cannot be putted with a price tag to be commercialized because it signifies the very existence of the community.

Nevertheless, Conflict practitioners tended to ignore the essence of class analysis as well as peasant conflicts from their discourse and inclined towards more fashionable concepts like ethnic conflict (Cramer and Richards 2011:278). For Cramer progress or development as He uses interchangeably is industrialization, and can be achieved through capitalist transformation. However, experiences from different point of views revealed that massive projects in agricultural sector even if produce foreign exchange and employment can't be regard as development or progress so long as it is happening at the expense of displacing local peasants and destroying the bio-diversity (Thomson 2011:327). More importantly, Thomson (2011:327) deduced that claiming capitalist development as a violent process, should not be understood as violent conflict is part of capitalist development. In the same way, Cramer (cited in Thomson 2011:326) warned that such standpoints should not be used to romanticize, legitimize and encourage violence. Therefore, He distanced himself from pushing conflict as a necessary part of capitalist transformation in fact the idea of approaching conflicts as positive and negative by itself is dangerous.

Since land is the main instrument in African political atmosphere, it is imperative that ownership, management, usage, and development practices of land supported by identity and citizenship have the power to trigger emotions and violence. Conflicts in Africa are mainly related to the failure to address the above emotional touches (Anseeuw and Alden 2010:1). Many of the conflict has roots related to either directly with land or resources exits on lands which owners consider their means of livelihood and identity (Ibid: 4).

Tensions over land are related with identity and citizenship questions which eventually distributed along class, gender and ethnicity, hence the issue of land governance is linked with security (Richards and Chauveau 2007:12). According Mamdani (cited in Egwu 1998:44) 'all peasant uprising in Africa since colonial era have inspired either by ethnicity or religion'. After

independence ethnicity is still part of the African political power organization and fragmenting resistance. Land as the bedrock of ‘the so-called traditional society’ implies instrument of livelihood and natural resource. The associated symbolic relevance of land makes it important for political stability (Anseeuw and Alden 2010:2).

In Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) conflict, for example, the issue of political representation is highly linked with “ethnic territories”. the claim to land is a reflection on power, autonomy and of course survival because in many occasion those communities without representation has made land claims to substantiate their quest for representation that has brought them in direct conflict with neighboring ‘landed’ communities (Huggins 2010:5).

The change in access and control over land, labor and financial capital as a result of demography, or land scarcity caused by foreign investment, will led to violent conflict. Such process further fueled by immigration that causes shifting the labor market (Cramer and Richards 2011:280). The increase in competition is not source of conflict, it is only when the confrontation is supported by diverse demographic pressures (Anseeuw and Alden 2010:4). In such case diversity denotes identity (such as ethnicity, religion etc.).

Beside biased power relation, poverty, and poor socio-economic rights, the force of globalization is also exacerbating the pressure and competition over land in Africa. Because Africa’s integration with the global economy has brought about additional interest to land (i.e. land grab) (Anseeuw and Alden 2010:5). The process of primitive accumulation undertaken by land appropriation that has deprived of peoples means of livelihood is one of the provocation for violence (Cramer and Richards 2011:289). Agrarian crisis is stems from the extensification of livelihood and intensification of smallholder agriculture as a response to globalization (Huggins 2010:6). Agrarian conflicts are based on land questions like tax, rent, and titles, and Labour (Cramer and Richards 2011:280).

However, such conflict becomes sever because land in conflict is a “sustaining factor” as those who are benefiting from the status quo give little attention for change in the ownership of land while others as an ultimate resource fights to maintain control over land (Huggins 2010:5). Mainly in sub-Sahara Africa the underlining cause of conflicts are related with scarcity and differentiation. Scarcity because of resource shortage, poverty or environmental reason, while differentiation emanates from identity/ethnic differences that causes polarization (Cramer 1999:12). The ethnic antagonism exacerbate agrarian crisis as it becomes hurdles for cooperation and alternative livelihood strategy (Huggins 2010:7).

When we look land based ethnic conflict in agrarian context, we find Huggins' (2010:34) assertions, that land disputes and tension involves ethnic citizens/indigenous against immigrants. such conflict usual vitalized through the discourse of 'ethnic citizenship' and 'outsider' view which renders the loose notions of indigenous vs migrant status as a way of legitimizing land ownership and consequently political representation (Ibid:5).

The indigenous and outsider discourse which is created through massive movements of peoples which brings together the confrontation of different cultures, values and norms (Anseeuw and Alden 2010:5). Ethnic citizenship is not as easy as civic citizenship, in most part of Africa including DRC land ownerships are based on ethnic membership which makes for 'outsiders' difficult to acquire land (Huggins 2010:15). In DRC North Kivu a combination of land, identity and migration has played fair share to cause an agrarian crisis which has been sustained through greed and grievance discourse in which resource plundering corrupt politicians orchestrate small scale farmers conflict against large scale farms so that they will benefit from the process (Ibid:35).

Most recent wars even those embedded in the notion of 'greed' such as in Sierra Leone, the War on drug in Latin America etc. turns out to be ingrained in agrarian roots manifested as rural social crisis (Cramer and Richards 2011:279). Land to cause conflict first it has to be articulated through economic and political domination and alienation to cause grievance among the ethnic groups (Huggins 2010:34). Paige (Cited in Cramer and Richards 2011:284-285) maintain that, Angolan conflict in the 1960s was triggered by conditions and grievances associated with coffee plantation by foreigners unlike the dominant belief (associating it with nationalism – which was the immediate but not the root cause).

To sum up, taking the experience of different countries, Cramer and Richards (2011:289) argued that 'development' induce policies causes eviction because of commercialization that challenges the lives of small scale farmers which ultimately will result in conflict. Similarly, Foreign investment and land grab among other things, will provoke conflict as it affect access and control over all land, which causes displacement, exclusion pastoralists, and finally affects power relations (Cramer and Richards 2011:294). Following the expansion of foreign funded large commercial farms which are regarded as development projects, the small holders farmers has encroached in to other ethnic groups' land which has fueled the existing conflictual relation (Huggins 2010:30). Similarly, Egwu (1998:87) find out that ethnic conflict in rural Nigeria, correlates with large scale land acquisition for agribusiness. Such ethnic claims over space or

territory which is impacted by migration and settlement that affected not only land ownership but also state formation (ibid: 81).

When ethnicity becomes part of the mainstream approach to control over land and other resources, armed groups /militias within the ethnic group benefit enormously as they are regarded as the ultimate provider of security to the ethnic community and the territory. Such measures of security go to the extent of targeting civilians of other ethnic groups (Huggins 2010:31). Such ethnic antagonism is further played out by large farm owners who hire armed groups to guard their farms. In some occasions aided by local officials attacks against large land owners have instigated inter-ethnic conflict (Huggins 2010:34).

Class interests articulated both at national and local level, in rural areas individuals representing the ruling class are at the same time ethnic intermediaries. In such areas these representatives develop patron-client relations. Therefore, ethnicity provides a favorable framework for class interests because in rural areas class interests are best pursued through ethnic solidarity (Egwu 1998:44).

Compared to class, people prefer to align themselves with ethnic based mobilization despite the possible risk of injury, death or incarceration (Varshney 2007:283). For Marxists ethnic interests are simply concealed class interests which is a sort of false consciousness. However, it doesn't mean that ethnicity is unreal rather it implies that ethnicity is a weapon for class struggle (Egwu 1998:42; Tellis et al 2000:21). However, the interests promoted in the name of ethnicity are rather the interests of the dominant class in the group who uses ethnicity as a weapon to promote their interests yet members of the ethnic groups perceive such interests as their own. It is in such a way that class and ethnicity overlap (Egwu 1998:43). Therefore, the approach of ethnic conflict (specifically instrumentalism) makes sense when we look at it along class lines (specifically the political elites trying to gain benefits), organizing force for mobilization (for the mass of poor indigenous farmers trying to resist the growing land grab). It is against this backdrop that I have analyzed my data.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Background

In an attempt to answer my research questions, I have used qualitative research techniques. The use of qualitative research techniques is of great significance for my study because it gave me the space to go through my research deeply from the communities points of view. Rather than pushing predetermined theoretical and conceptual alternatives through quantitative study, I have solely relied on qualitative techniques. Since the research is about finding connection between LG and ethnic conflict, the qualitative approach suited my study because the approach enables me (as pointed out by Gerson and Horowitz 2002:199) to explore the dynamics of the problem through which develop my own new concepts based on the research finding.

In exploring the nexus, I have deeply explored the triangular (state – land grab –society) relation as my framework. In fact, the paper organized in such away viewing the impact of LG on ethnic conflict. To find out, I have situated land grab in state history, program or policy, and investors and elite matrimony vis-à-vis diverse ethnic groups resides in the study area.

3.1. Data collection tools

Two data sources: primary and secondary: -

A. Primary Data collection methods

I) In-depth Interview

In-depth interview helps to nuance the unknown and unearth the unexpected. Hence, to accomplish such goals it is always advisable to prepare a user friendly interview guideline (see appendix 1) that is designed based on theoretical construction. More importantly since in-depth interview is conducted in one to one basis between researcher and respondents, it provides the opportunity of flexibility and change for the researcher. Such open ended nature empowers the researcher to adjust and even necessary to change its paradigm (Gerson and Horowitz 2002: 205-211). Furthermore, In-depth interview is a data collection technique based on open ended questions aimed at grasping detailed information from respondents on the area of the research topic. It gives the research to view the description of the research topic from individual participants' point of view (Kalof et al, 2008:120). Therefore, I have conduct unstructured /in-depth interview with the following personnel.

- 1) Local people 34 (15 in Gambella and 19 in BG Regions)

- 2) Key informants: - I have interviewed three Researchers with ample experience in the two regions Land grabbing process.

II) FGD

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is an interview aimed at acquiring information from respondents in a group setup. Since the information gathered through FGD are developed through instantaneous reaction from group discussion participants, it valuable for rigorous research process. FGD is vital to understand people's opinion about a particular topic in a group setting (Kalof 2008:130-131). To such an end, as part of my data collection tool, I have conducted four FGD (two in each regional state composed of different peoples). Its purpose was mainly to supplement and triangulate the data gathered through other data collection techniques as well as to see the trends of opinions in group environment.

iii) Administrative Decisions, policies, laws and government documents: are another main sources of data that I have used in analyzing the data from different sources especially in BG region well documented land distribution and laws and directives have been quite helpful.

A. Secondary Data Sources

Published and unpublished works, prior research, articles, newspaper, TV and Radio programs, Documentaries, and books have been employed as important data source.

3.2. Sampling Techniques

I have employed purposive sampling techniques i.e., I have selected my respondents based on their experience and proximity with the research topic and area.

3.3. Data Analysis

After translation the data from different languages in two in Amharic, then English, I have followed a thematic data analysis technique i.e. organizing the data based my specific objective and the study area. Finally without losing the thematic organization, I have tried to analyze it along various literatures.

3.4. Ethical consideration

Mostly sensitive issue are delicate matters which ranges from personal feelings to national security issues. Researching on contentious issue is a challenge for both the researcher and the researched. In such matters (Harrison 2006:62) recommends researchers to be sensitive on the difference in cultural context as well as to follow the four ethical guideline to be observed in development research which are; informed consent, privacy, exploitation, harm. Since the topic

is too sensitive I have approached respondents accordingly with their full consent. In addition, when the topic is sensitive for participants' informed consent through promises of anonymity is essential. (Brydon 2006:26). Hence, throughout the research process I have kept the identity of my respondents confidential. More importantly the researchers are expected to be honest and accountable while they approach the researched (ibid 31). Concerning the 'do no harm' issue mentioned above, I have refrained from going to areas with active conflict (such as Mejenjer) zone and attempting any form of interview because directly conducting interview with majenger zone residents specially with the indigenous (owing to my colour as "highlander/red" and the active nature of the conflict) my involvement might create suspicion and other dangerous provocations, so I have decided to interview other indigenous people who were there in the time of the conflict and the highlanders community views – triangulated through government and media reports.

3.5. Scope and Limitation of the study

First and foremost limitation of this study is a time constraint as a researcher I have only stayed not more than ten days in each regional states. Considering the vastness and diversity of the region, I could be able to find more lingering linkage between LG and conflict in the region, if I could have stayed for longer time. Second constraint is related with research ethics as elaborated above hinders me from accessing some informants. Third limitation might be financial, personally travelling thousands of kilometers and find suitable accommodations was a challenge which I had readily taken, however, payment for translators of all different ethnic groups was a challenge that cannot be addressed through an independent researcher.

With regard to the scope of the study, owing to the size and the time constraint in the two regions, I have made a technical decision of covering only those zones with diverse ethnic groups and vast area of commercial agriculture, hence, in Benishangul-Gumuz –I have solely emphasized on Metekel Zone. However, in Gambella my emphasis was on the Anuak Zone and to some extent to the Majenger zone.

Chapter Four: Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict and Commercialization of Agricultural Land in Ethiopia: A Case Study

4.1. Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict in Gambella and BG

4.1.1. Ethiopian Federalism

According to article 46(2) of the FDRE constitution, the regional states has been demarcated based on ‘settlement pattern, language, identity and consent of the people’. Article 47 has identified lists of regions as -1) The state of Tigray, 2) The state of Afar, 3) the state of Amhara, 4) The state of Oromia, 5) The state of Somalia, 6) The state of Benishangul-Gumuz, 7) The State of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, 8) The state of Gambella People, 9) The state of the Harari people. Out of these regions the first five regions are predominantly settled by on one major ethnic group as the name itself indicate for example, Tigray state settled by Tigrie ethnic groups, Afar state by Afar ethnic groups and so on and so forth. However, the remaining four regions have been settled by more than one ethnic group which demands a different sets of institutions and power sharing arrangement which sometimes causes many ethnic conflicts. The federalism project according the current government is hoped to lance the pain of the past ethnic oppression under the military and imperial regime (Vaughan 2003:37).

4.1.2. Background of Gambella Region

Established by the federal constitution, the Gambella state, designated for five indigenous ethnic groups of; Anywaa/Anuak, Nuer, Mejenger, Komo, Opo.¹ Anuak are peasants who depends on farming sorghum, the Nuer are predominantly pastoralists and practice small cultivations (Young 1999:324). In addition to the indigenous community the region is settled by highlander community mainly Oromo and Amhara ethnic groups (Young 1999:323). According to the 2010 census the total population of Gambella region is 307,096 out of which 77,925 lives in urban areas while the rural population constitute 229,171 (CSA 2010:7). The table below illustrates the ethnic distribution Gambella region. Similarly, the power distribution and sharing among these ethnic groups have been indicated under appendix 5.2.

¹ The preamble of the 2003 Gambella regional state constitutions

No.	Ethnic Groups	Total Population
Indigenous Ethnic Groups		
1	Anywaa	64,986
2	Mejenger	12,280
3	Nuer	143,286
4	Upo	990
5	Komo	224
Non-Indigenous/Highlander Ethnic Groups*		
1	Amhara	25,862
2	Guragie	1,895
3	Kefficho	15,490
4	Kembata	4,410
5	Hadiya	1,230
6	Oromo	14,833
7	Shekecho	6,976
8	Sidama	1,502
9	Tigrie	4,052
10	Welaita	1,705

**in the region there are more than 86 different non-indigenous/highlanders ethnic groups (including foreigners) however, this table only include those ethnic groups whose population is greater than 1000 people.(Source: CSA 2010)*

Table 1, Major ethnic groups in Gambella region

4.1.3. Background of Benishangul-Gumuz Region

The 1995 Benishangul-Gumuz regional state constitution recognizes that, the region is settled by Bertha, Gumuz, Shinasha, Mao and Komo and other ethnic groups.

According the Ethiopian Statistics Agency information in BG the total population is 784,345 out of which 105, 926 lives in Urban areas while 678, 419 resides in rural areas practicing predominantly shifting cultivation, and other forms of farming (CSA 2010: 9-10).

No.		Total Population
Indigenous Ethnic Groups		
1	Bertha	199,303
2	Gumuz	163,781
3	Mao	15,384
4	Komo	7,773
5	Shinasha	60,587
Non-Indigenous/Highlanders*		
1	Agew-Awi	33,061
2	Amhara	170,132
3	Oromo	106,275
4	Fedashe	2,656
5	Hadiya	2,154
6	Kambata	2,161
7	Guragie	1,511
8	Tigre	5,562

**There were 86 non-ingenious ethnic group (including Sudanese, Eritrean and Djibouti) but I have only selected those ethnic groups whose population exceeds 1000 people (source CSA 2010)*

Table 2, Ethnic distribution in Benishangul-Gumuz region

4.1.4. Approaches to Ethnicity and Ethnic in the Two Regions

Looking the power distribution (see appendix 5) vis-à-vis the population composition of the two regions provides a glimpse of the approach that the regional states are following. For example, though one of my respondent is born and raised in Benishangul-Gumuz Region speaking more than two of the indigenous language as his own, he has not been given with equal rights to own land, rather, He still is renting land from the indigenous community which is the reflection of primordialist perception of ethnicity. To concur, another highlander respondent has revealed that, He was born and raised in Gambella region with the same school facility and condition, yet, the governments has denied him affirmative measures unlike indigenous kids because he was regarded as different by primordial identity markers such as colour.

Along with the primordial element, it is common to see some notions which are constructed through social interaction and has been used in place of ethnicity though it has nothing to do

with it. It quite common to find common categorization of all 'light' skin peoples as 'red' or 'highlander'. Not surprisingly, the highlander community has attributed derogatory names like 'slave' and 'Shanqilla' or more commonly call the indigenous peoples as 'black' in one category. Construction of new identity has been facilitated by the fact that, both Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz regions are settled by indigenous Nilotic ethnic groups who are 'black' and regarded as 'Shanqilla' under the highlander pejorative. Because of their skin colour they have been sources of slavery for ancient Ethiopian kingdoms (Young 1999:322). In Ethiopian case 'ethnicity' may be seen as a political construct to fit in a particular power struggle through re-interpretation of cultural and historical phenomenon's (Tronvoll 2000:23). However, anyone, who is not darker skin and originally from someplace else is regarded as "highlander" which is a construct of politics and geography.

The main focus of this paper is on the instrumentalist view of ethnicity, though the above two supplement my argument on how the indigenous – highlanders discourse helped such instrumental conception of ethnicity. In this study, I have found out that ethnicity has been instrumentalised in two ways; first as a sources of solidarity for resistance against LG, while the second one is as a political instrument for political elites to pursue their own goals as has been shown in 'greed and grievance' approach.

Ethnicity will be insignificant if it has not been used in political mobilization – which aid the romanticisation of struggle against repression and oppression by the majority or the state (Tellis et al 1997:7). In struggling for power and dominance ethnicity provides a major leverage for mobilisation as well establishing "in group" to differentiate with "others" so as to scrutinize and mobilize members for such goals (Tellis et al 1997: 9). In the two region ethnicity has been virtually the sole tool for political engagement with the state or other ethnic group. According to Tellis et al (1997 : 12) the five factors important to understand the role of ethnicity in political mobilization are; incipient changes in the balance of power, galvanizing (or "tipping") events, leadership, resources and organization, and foreign assistance. Similarly, following the surge of land acquisition in Benishangul-Gumuz region, Gumuz elites have established a new political party other than the one (which is multiethnic composed all other ethnic group in the region). The tipping events for the political change was the ongoing land grabbing process which the Gumuz elites have sought to be putted in the spotlight of their political program. Because according to Tellis et al (1997: 12), the tipping events are factors that reinforce the groups' sense of insular identity in a way galvanize their political action. This events remind

the group's constant alienation and discrimination and gives justification to actions because it is viewed as a threat to the existence the group.

Following the developmentalism assault on rural livelihood, there has been proliferation social movements along lines which were once regarded as residual socio-political phenomenon. For example, the value of 'ethnicity vs. citizenship, rurality vs. urbanity' (McMichael 1999:648). In similar fashion, in post 1991 ethnic based federal Ethiopia, peoples are using their ethnic attachment more than ever as a sources of resistance.

Under chapter five, I will explore how the interplay between the three approaches is working under the growing process of commercialization in the agricultural land in the study areas.

4.2. Commercialisation of Agricultural Land in Gambella and BG Regions

1. Rationales

Following the 2008 food price rise, the number hungry people rise to 1 billion globally, which has necessitated the world bank's program of supporting agri-business as a strategy to feed the world (Oakland 2014:5). Such ambitious programs of course has adverse impacts on smallholder farmers who has been regarded by the Bank as; 'farmers by default not by choice because they are farmers because they don't have any other alternatives'. It has pursued a policy of agricultural export model based on free international trade (ibid 9).

In Ethiopia it is not the government alone encouraging investment but also international development agents like the world bank and FAO promotes land investment as a "win-win" situations because it provides fertile land for the investor, and for host state employment, agricultural production increase, foreign exchange etc.(Oakland 2013:6). Mainly in Gambella and BG the Ethiopian government is pursuing the old 'sedentarisation' program as a way of 'modernisaing' the 'backward' way of life in the low land regions(Lavers 2013:11).

2. Scope & where

In Ethiopia most of commercial agriculture investment is undertaken in sparsely populated lowland region of BG, Gambella and South Omo of SNNP. Though numerically the domestic investors are too much, in terms of size the foreigners are the predominant one (See appendix 3).

3. The process

The commercialization land in the lowland region will spur insecurity as these regions hosted large segment of the anti-state struggle in the country (Toniweis 2012). Hence, it is imperative to realize that large scale commercial agriculture cannot be free from conflict (Ibid).

Following state's intervention in the lowland area, the existing structure of the community in the lowland regions provides little incentive for resistance which of course can be related with the numerical smallness of most ethnic groups (see tables 1&2), though even some are numerically significant and there is availability of fire arms, their impact on the central government will be negligible (Lavers 2013:16). According to Oakland (2013:10) in order to clear space for investors the indigenous peoples have been forcefully villagised which is affecting their livelihood and distinct identity as they leave their vital resource.

4.3. Ethnic Conflict and Commercial Agriculture Nexus: A case Study

A case to shed light on the link between land grab and Ethnic conflict from Gambella Region, Mejenger Zone. Before, I start elaboration of the infamous incidents, the following table will illustrate the population composition of the Mejenger Zone (i.e. one of the three zones in Gambella).

No.	Ethnic Groups	Size	urban	rural
1	Amhara	15,973	3,928	12,045
2	Kefficho	14,910	773	14,137
3	Mejenger	9,985	290	9,695
4	Nuer	1,158	15	1,143
5	Oromo	5,238	1,269	3,969
6	Shekecho	6,912	191	6,721
7	Tigrie	1,745	126	1,619

**in the region there are many ethnic groups but this table only includes those whose number exceeds 1000 people.*

NB - the table prepared by the researcher based on data collected from CSA (2010, 39-40)

Table 3: The population composition of the Mejenger Zone

The Mejenger ethnic conflict happened in Mejenger Zone, Goedere Woreda, Meti Town (especially Yeri Kebelle) which starts on 10 September (on Ethiopian new years' eve), of

2014.² According to Tesfahun Alemneh (public relation officer of AEUP (opposition party), in Mejenger zone; the Amharas, Southern peoples and Mejenger have been living together. However, following the ethnic conflict which first initiated by the indigenous peoples' calls for evicting all highlanders from their area, has dynamically changed the political landscape. The conflict has resulted, serious injury, amputation and sadly the death for more than 540 peoples.³ The attack is directly attributed to the increasing land acquisition process in the area mainly by domestic (Government affiliate individuals) and foreign investors.⁴ *This is the most productive area and this area has been given to retired TPLF/EPRDF officials, when the Mejengers claim this is their land, officials told them, it is the Amharas/settlers who are in your land evict them from your land.*⁵

The growing of foreign and domestic large scale farms have made the life of the Mejenger people unbearable because every time the state lease their land and forest, the Mejenger people retreat to the jungle and start a new life. But now since almost all the land have been occupied and what is left is the nearby Oromia region to which they can't go.⁶ Oakland (2011:39) predicts that, the growing large scale farms and the consequent flow of migrant workers in Mejenger zone is threatening the livelihood of the indigenous people. The process started when labourers buying land from the Mejenger people which is further pushing the Mejengers in to the periphery as more highlanders and their family came in to the region.

According to a Gambella official⁷, it is naïve to assume that these group of people who used to live together for almost half a century will go to conflict because of illegal settlement issue. The state knew the problem but it doesn't say it so because it is absolutely its fault. As has been elaborated, the greed of the political elites has been orchestrated to look like ethnic grievance. Similarly, one highlander confess that, *we have been living with these people for a while, we have mingled and raised kids, we share the agony and fiesta together and now after all this, from nowhere these incident happened the real issue is the invasion of the land from this zone mainly for TPLF/EPRDF officials who are making the conditions to look like ethnic conflict.* To worsen the problem, the Mejenger zone is the only suitable place for cash crop production (coffee), which makes peoples within the ruling regime to be interested in the land⁸.

² VOA(20/10/2014, 23:28) interview

³ VOA(20/10/2014, 23:28) interview

⁴ Interview with mejenger zone agriculture officer(20 August 2015)

⁵ VOA(20/10/2014, 23:28) interview

⁶ Interview with Mejenger zone agriculture official(20 August 2015)

⁷ Interview Gambella environmental officer and Mejejer zone agriculture officer(10 August 2015)

⁸ VOA(20/10/2014, 23:28) and my interview with agricultural officer

According to Collins and Watson (2014), the hunter gatherer indigenous Mejenger people threatened because of the suitable nature of the environment for coffee growing investors. The investment besides taking the huge chunk of land is also facilitating the migration of many highlander community from other parts of the country which is causing acute ethnic tension in the area. Such situation has escalated in to ethnic conflict which results in the deaths of both Mejengers and highlanders as well as the displacement of more than 3000 Mejengers in to surrounding forests (ibid).

Fortunately, there was signs about the coming of the bloodshed because, two elder Mejenger by collaborating with their Woreda leader have wrote an appeal letter to the then president Girma Woldegiorgis in 2011 (see appendix 6.1) that the land lease agreement to the Indian company called Vendata will threaten their livelihood and destroy their sacred forest. Because of his environmentalist stature the president has immediately written a letter to the Ministry of Agriculture to stop the commercialization of land in that area (see appendix 6.2). However, according to Ojulu (2013) because of unknown reason the regional government has order sacking the Woreda official who has helped the two Mejenger elderly people who has brought the idea of writing letter to the president and, ordered the pursuing of the commercialization process.

Had the government had taken measures at this stage, the bloodshed would have been averted. It was not only Mejenger elders but major think tanks like Oakland (2011:39) has predicted the potential problem of large scale agriculture in Mejenger Zone. If the government is going to keep pushing the commercial agriculture by disregarding the complex web of relationship embedding it, the Mejenger zone, will be the first but not the last. Even after all this loss the government has officially claim that the cause of the ethnic conflict in the Mejenger zone is illegal settlement of highlanders in to the region, yet, simple observation on the population size of the zone, will prove it wrong. In fact one informant noted that; *all the land that we highlanders own cannot be compared with the size of land recently given for ex-government official in Mejenger Zone.*

Unless the main underlying resource based conflict is resolved any attempt at peacebuilding without address such imminent question may provide absorption of conflicts not resolving them ones and for all which eventually will spark resource oriented fault lines and conflict (Borras and Franco 2011: 1). In similar fashion, the government characterize the incident as ‘ethnic conflict’ without touching the main causes of the conflict which traces back to its stubborn nature to take a proactive role while the local community were begging.

When an ethnic group claims and challenges against the state, it is quit straight forward and discernibly challenging the state power. However, this scheme becomes complex when it involves multiple mobilized ethnic groups that makes the competition quit intricate, because of multiple competing claims (Tellis et al 1997:16). Ethnic conflict following LG in the Ethiopian is a very good case scenario for this case in which the state rather than becoming a target by a single ethnic group (the involvement of more than one ethnic group) provides it the space to become more of an arbiter between competing interests. The fight among victims (various ethnic groups) elevated the state at a superior moral positioning in which it become the least target and more importantly a reconciler between these interests. However, this problem would have been averted if the ethnic motives were combined/mixed with class based struggles. Tronvoll (2000:23) concluded that;

'Ethnic rights in the Constitution, may also have another side. The establishment of an ethnic federation with strong collective political rights might not quell ethnic mobilization against the political centre as intended. Instead, new arenas of confrontation and ethnic hegemony are created. Within the multi-ethnic zone and states, locally dominating groups may oppress smaller groups to achieve local or regional ethno-political hegemony

The next chapters is a reflection such competition among diverse and conflicting interests. However, it should be noted that I have made an attempt to nuance on the role of ethnicity as mode of resistance against state.

Chapter Five : “Indigenous” vs. “Non-Indigenous” Ethnic Conflict vis-à-vis Commercialisation of Agricultural Land

Background

This chapter is an in-depth investigation of the small scale and sporadic forms of ethnic conflict observed between ‘highlanders’/non-indigenous peoples and indigenous peoples after the commercialization of agricultural land. According to Borrás and Franco (2013:1725) one of the reasons why the amount of land deals don’t match with local resistance is because many of the resistances were too small to see and report as well as, they are less organized. Therefore, it is worth noting that, other than the outright Mejenjer conflict, the rest ethnic based resistances are very localised, small, and subtle. Yet, in this part of the paper I tried to put the patterns, motivations and factors that connects large scale commercial farm with ethnic conflict. Two different categories of factors have been identified as contributing for ethnic based violence following the commercialization of agricultural land in BG and Gambella region. The first factors are related with the nature of the Ethiopian state structure while the others are new phenomenon’s emerge following commercialization of Agricultural land.

5.1. Structural Factors Peculiar to the Ethiopian State that fuels Ethnic conflict

5.1.1. Identity at Different Stages of the Investment Process as Perceived by the Indigenous Peoples

From the onset the ‘highlander – indigenous’ discursive engagement embedded within the history of Ethiopian state which is dominated by ‘highlander’/‘red’ population while the indigenous in Gambella and BG regarded as ‘black’ are totally absent. The first/immediate form of conflict of interest is from the inception before even the land allocated. The directives are coming from the federal government. The federal government 100 percent staffed by highlanders’, is the one making ultimate decisions about land allocation and investment. Beside officials, the investors are also either foreign or highlanders. This marks first point of covert form conflict of interest.

Highlanders in their FGD concur that, *Our own indigenous friends who used to eat and drink with us – both in time of sorrow and happiness as a family started to put points about we should stop complaining as we have not been allowed to own land because our kin (highlanders) are the one taking all the land by evicting them from their own land.* Highlanders have been regarded as part of the system of appropriation which can be explained in their historical

relation with the state and marginalization of the indigenous under the rule of highlanders. Hence, the sense of viewing land grab as the continuation of the old process of alienation and denigration with a new name. The déjà vu of eviction and dispossession from their land still lingers from the past⁹.

As a periphery in the past, the ruling regimes unable to keep effective control over these regions, hence, the land grab process and its twin villagisation program are seen as the states aspiration to maintain control over the marginal people and control the proliferation of dissidents. Oakland institute (2011:20) revealed that, land grab is part of the government strategy of weakening rebellion movements in the peripheries and perpetuating the dependence of the indigenous community through food insecurity. In the same vein, Rahmato (2011:4) maintain that, the process of land grab is intertwined with the twin goal of centralizing power in the hands of the state. Since, the state has taken the leading role in taking and leasing the so called ‘marginal’ lands in the name of development and modernization. Such dominance and expanded role of the state is happening at the expense of the local poor.

According highlanders FGD in BG, the dissatisfaction towards them becomes sever when the land to be commercialized will affect the indigenous community immensely. when the federal government delimit and identify ‘barrel’ lands to collect it under the ‘federal land bank’ it solely uses GPS which in many cases is distorted – because living localities, villages, religious sites, schools etc. has been unjustly taken away by investors that creates discontent and in many cases conflict among. Depending on the colour and identity of investors sometimes the enmity extends to any other similar people¹⁰.

The second phase of the consequent taking of the land by the investors be local or international investor, it’s very likely that its employee will be predominantly highlanders because of absence sufficiently trained people and the cultural barrier in the two regions that hinders indigenous people to work in the field as laborers (paid job) in which the local have two claims against non-indigenous worker that explains the frequent conflicts between migrant workers and the indigenous community¹¹.

First Highlanders (migrant workers) are taking the meager job created by Commercial agriculture. Such outsourcing of labourers facilitated by the availability of ample cheap labour

⁹ FGD with Highlanders(31July 2015)

¹⁰ Land administration officer BG(27July 2015)

¹¹ Key Informant in Gambella region(8August 2015)

in the highland part of the country that has lowered the price of labour in the two regions – hence it benefits the investors while antagonizing the two group of peoples.¹²

Secondly, as pointed out by (Moreda 2015:529) refusal to work for commercial farms is part of their resistance, i.e. depriving of investors labour force to run their company, but the highlanders are filling that vacuum and making such efforts meaningless. For the indigenous community, the highlanders who are considered from the onset part and parcel of the process of LG, are legitimizing their deprivation and eviction.

The last but not least offense at this stage is the derogatory and dehumanizing impact of both highlanders and investors attitude towards the indigenous community specially characterizing the indigenous community as ‘lazy’ and ‘barbaric’. This nostalgic stereotype¹³ has alienated the indigenous people from access to job¹⁴. It is common to hear such characterization among most highlanders in their day to day interactions.

5.1.2. ‘Citizenship’ of the Ethiopian State

The main challenge of the highlanders’ vis-à-vis their interaction with the indigenous is that, they are highly regarded and portrayed with the national state (Feyesa 2004:7). Sad to say, the state was hostile towards pastoralists and shifting cultivators. The assumption of close ally between highlanders and the state further reinforced by the fact that the colour of almost all federal state officials is “red” the word used to describe the non-indigenous/non-black - highlanders. This has created political anomaly in which the highlanders has been removed from the regional governments power sharing arrangement yet they have at least discursively attached with the higher power which is the federal government (Feyessa 2004:7).

After the Anuak Massacre (see appendix 4.1) in 2003 by the highlanders, there have growing killings against highlanders. According to Meckelburg (n.d :15) following that event, there have been attacks on police station killed about 50 police officers and another Bus attacks in 2006 in which highlanders selected and executed by a group of Anuak militants, the group responsible for the attacks (GPLM/F) confess that its goal was harming the central government.

The Ethiopian state’s colour is considered as ‘red’ that means whatever the state is doing implicates the nearby highlander even if he/she has no any linkage with the state. Therefore, frequent attacks against highlanders working in different projects and commercial farms clearly

¹² Key informant interview (2july 2015)

¹³ Some of the derogatory name callings include Baria, Shankla, Tikur, literally translates to mean slave, black.

¹⁴ FGD with highlanders and interview with officials (31July 2015)

are the implication of this colour politics – manifested in the form of resistance against the state (Feyesa 2009:646). One migrant worker confess the insecurity and fear of travelling alone in the Jungles in BG regions because in the past some highlanders have been killed while travelling alone. A case in Gambella about the attack on Saudi-star farm workers must be seen with in the context of political-economic relation rather than a random occurrence of ethnic hatred. Targeting highlanders has been used as a way of attracting the governments’ attention and one way of harming the government.¹⁵

5.1.3. Land and Identity two Faces of a Coin in Gambella and BG Regions

Ethiopian ethnic federalism is based on ethnic identity and takes in to account the settlement pattern of the population. the rights of the ethnic group is associated with the land they are living on, taking away the land means violating their rights even if the government has fulfilled the necessary international standards such as compensation, consultation and other principles.

The local peoples are kin to the highlanders (who are living in their regions) analogy. These highlanders haven’t had all the rights that these people have because, they are living outside of their ‘territory’, if the government keep giving away their land to others they will have worst fate than these highlanders¹⁶.

The trend of doling out indigenous peoples out of their land for the sake of investment will in the long term threaten the food security, environment and of course will become foci for conflict (Abbink 2011:513). The paradox is the essence of ‘national territory’ which the ethnic group considers its national territory being given away for investors has endangered the cultural identity and the social fabric of the community (ibid). Similarly, Borrás and Franco (2011:5-6) revealed that in main stream development discourse, attributing land as a private property that can be exchanged has failed to recognize the growing importance land not as a property but as territory for different ethnic groups to protect their distinctiveness. A closer look at of the preamble and Article 39 of the FDRE constitution, it is easy to spot the right to self-determination of ethnic groups and the exercise of their self-government in the territory that they have settled in. The governments’ commercialization program is hence in violation of such ‘territorial’ notion of the land other than means of production.

Land for these people is not just a simple property to be sold and bought rather it determine their identity, livelihood, interaction and their existence Hence, when you take a piece of land

¹⁵ Interview with key informants(12August 2015)

¹⁶ FGD with indigenous people in BG(31July 2015)

*it is like giving a piece of the community*¹⁷. Furthermore, in Gambella, this process further fueled by the fact that the Anuak's identity is constructed along possession of most of the regions arable land vis-à-vis their rival Nuers whom they considered migrants. The schizophrenia of Anuak political elites about the potential of losing 'the only bargaining tool' they have in the region to remain relevant in the power struggle. The claim of Anuak over Gambella region is justified based on being the early settler (see Feyessa 2004, 2009) to the region which is dignified through covering vast landmass in the region (i.e. the Anuak Zone covers the most of the regions fertile land) which is currently under threat from commercialization forces. Hence, the land becomes a life and death questions for elites because without which they will face the undesirable fate of accepting their minoriteness against their rival Nuers as well as the "outsider" highlanders¹⁸.

In fact, the government's fast track in giving away large tracts of land overnight has created of a feeling of "selling out" by the government among the indigenous community which considers land as 'core element of national or ethnic group identification and the source of people's livelihood, identity and pride' (Abbink 2011:515). Hence, killings and attacks against Saudi-star and other farm workers and settlers in Anuak and Mejenger zone are the reflection such lingering fears and resistance.

To sum up, the instrumentalisation ethnicity to resist against the taking away of 'the territory' has been captured by Borrás and Franco (2011:1), when they warned that, an ethnic blind land policy will very likely be co-opted by dominant class or groups in the society. The Mejenger case has proved true of the above ethnic blind pursuance of the government policy and the role allegedly played by investors, officials in adding fuel to the existing hostile relation between Mejenegers and highlanders which leads to the loss of hundreds of lives.

5.1.4. Achieving an Old Quest of Eradicating Highlanders from these Regions

Though the 'indigenous' community were welcoming in the first appearance of re-settlers from drought affected areas during the Derg regime. Such peaceful co-existence has not last long because the highland/settlers way of life was contradictory to the natural and social environment of the region.¹⁹ To worsen the problem, highlanders coming from relatively 'developed' part of the country, treats the indigenous as 'barbaric'. However, beside such antagonistic relation the two groups have been able to coexist peacefully, until political elites

¹⁷ Interview with Key Informant(12August 2015)

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Interview with key informant(2July 2015)

started to wreck-havoc about being swallowed by outsiders, losing of identity and more importantly losing their land. Such sorts of relationship has been at the center of the both BG and Gambella politics.²⁰

In Abobo woreda, the dreadful side of the land grabbing process can be observed if seen closely how the settlers who came from other parts of the country by the Derg regime during the ‘great Ethiopian famine’ season. Those people are now sandwiched between Akon (an indigenous Anuak investor), Agribusiness and Saudi-star. To worsen the problem while the indigenous community being in control of power gives them the capacity to bargain and get ‘replacement land’ and some ‘compensation’ which is totally absent for these re-settlers.²¹ Similarly in BG region, the small number of settlers brought to the region by the Derg regime are the poorest not only in the region but also in Ethiopia because they own less land than the country’s average land.²²

Since re-settlers are rarely represented in the regions’ politics (see appendix 5), they cannot make their voices heard. Hence it becomes an ethnic machinery through which local elites discriminate and exclude those which they don’t like.²³ These ethnic entrepreneurs are using the land investment as a tool for structural discrimination and dehumanization of these people to leave the region which of course is happening right now because many people are now leaving the area because of such problems²⁴. The elites plan of eliminating highlanders from the region is not a new phenomenon rather it was part of the politics which land grab is fueling, for example according to Meckelburg (n.d. 15) former officials (who has been replaced by highlanders because of civil service reform and the need for trained man power) turned Bandit groups put the goal of eliminating of highlanders from the region through ambushes and violent attacks as a precondition for freedom of Gambella people. Instrumental role of ethnicity has been reinforced by the civil service reform which remove indigenous Anuak officials from government whom use ethnicity as a tool. However, the outcome of ongoing attacks against highlanders was the 2003 infamous Anuak Massacre (see appendix 4.1).

²⁰ Interview with key informant(12August 2015)

²¹ Ibid

²² Interview with land administration officer in BG(28July 2015)

²³ Interview with key informant(12August 2015)

²⁴ Ibid

5.1.5. Instrumentalising Ethnicity as a way of resistance against LG and Colour politics

LG has increased the influx of migrant workers and the subsequent change in small Woredas (towns) is causing security threat. According to Mandura Woreda, peace and security officer;

The problem of insecurity in our woreda is seasonal for example at this time (summer) – the number of conflicts will be higher because of the increasing number of migrant workers in to commercial farms from the nearby regions – whereas- the same problem happens in the harvesting season where organized people tries stealing from commercial farms and if those people are indigenous people, it will spark ethnic conflict. What we do is trying to keep the conflict as local and personal as possible not to let it turn into ethnic violence.

Furthermore, disagreements over share of cropping after harvest is caused by two reasons; when the indigenous claims more than their prior agreement after harvest and when the highlander/red/ people violate their agreement after collecting their harvest go to their home region without paying the agreed up on share to the local farmer. This sorts of disagreements by their nature are individual based but immediately take ethnic forms.²⁵

On December 2014, two Gumuz thieves break in to ‘Belay Farm’ to steal a sack sesame harvest, the guard (who was non-indigenous) has shot killed them. Immediately the issue diverted in to ethnic antagonism because the indigenous people didn’t take it as a burglary case rather an attempt to dehumanize and exterminate their ethnic group so as to take their land by others. Though the guard has killed the two indigenous peoples red-handed, as the indigenous community opt for violence against commercial farms and Highlanders, local officials has sought alternatives to appease the elderlies. One of the indigenous refer the situation as *how could shooting two youngsters justified, the highest they could have stolen from the farm could not exceed 20 to 30 kilograms of sesame which is nothing compared to what we have provided or lost because of these people(the very land on which they farm this sesame).*

Land issues are too sensitive because a slight turbulence on the statuesque proved disastrous as the indigenous Gumuz community displayed their grievance in many occasion. *If they get any movement they wouldn’t retreat from displaying their discontent towards the system. That is why we always have to make sure not to create conducive atmosphere for their grievance.*²⁶ Oakland Institute (2014:9) in studying how commercial farm engineers ethnic conflict in South Omo area, has revealed that ethnic conflict has been created and re-created through economic forces of land grabbing.

²⁵ Mandura woreda security officer interview(30July 2015)

²⁶ Ibid

To sum up, it is easy to conclude that, virtually everything turns in to ethnicity, even things that has been intended for altruistic reason backfires. The following interview with Mandura Woreda security and peace officer confirms;

Some days ago an investor while deriving to his farm a local Gumuz girl asked him for a ride. He gave her with other highlanders. However, in their way, the car has faced an accident which costs the girls' life, then the indigenous people came with their guns and machetes and have indiscriminately attacked and killed every 'red' person they found on the spot including the investor under the pretext that the investor first take our land and now our women's life

For local official, besides losing the most lucrative resource (to collect rent) at the hand of federal government, they are also losing their important resource that determine their existence as an autonomous political force in the country.²⁷ Such ailment provides a political space for disgruntled government officials to act as saviors. For example, former police officers turned banditries rationalize their act as against highlanders as resistance (Feyesa 2009:646). In Gambella and BG, recent killings and attacks against highlanders in the name of resisting land grab is anew mode of salvaging the old ways of life.²⁸ According US Departement of State Report (2013:32) after 8000 Amharas evicted through force BG regional state, the president of the region has dismissed those who were responsible from their post.

However, beyond the greed and grievance type of ethnic instrumentalism, there are clear signs of using ethnicity as a political tool for mobilization and unifying force to resist land grab. For example one investor explains that; *the Woreda, the Kebele, Zone and the region doesn't solve your problem when needed in time of problem, they are always in a meeting. The federal government came and visit our problem four times but they couldn't solve our problem. Because notwithstanding the law these local officials owns land plus sympathies for their fellow ethnic members. The Gumuz officials even if they found a Gumuz deviating from the law they don't consider them guilty rather they cover up to them.*²⁹ The investor concurred that, *one of my guard has fired a gun on someone trespassing at night at my farm – the local officials and indigenous ethnic group perceive it, that 'we' are trying to kill and destroy them which leads to a serious of bloody conflicts without life loose but a series of injuries sustained by my workers.*

Furthermore, one indigenous official in BG, point out that it is not the indigenous people hatred towards investors that will create havoc rather it is the derogatory and dehumanizing view of

²⁷ Interview with informant(14August 2015)

²⁸ Interview with key informant(12August 2015)

²⁹ FGD with Highlanders(31July 2015)

investors toward the indigenous community with potential of sparking conflict. The feeling of investors towards indigenous should not reflect the age old stereotype of viewing the local people as backward and lazy which most educated section of the indigenous community finds offensive. Another in Gambella region concurs that, *No development can be undertaken without recognizing and respecting the owner (indigenous community) who provide the necessary resource.*

5.2. New Factors Following Commercialization of Agricultural Land in BG and Gambella Region Fueling Ethnic Conflict

5.2.1. Greed of Political Elites: Ethnic Conflict as a Camouflage for Corruption

*The name ethnic conflict in Gambella is misleading, what you see is few disgruntled individuals with personal interest orchestrate everything to pursue their own individual interest.*³⁰

Similarly BG concerning the recent displacement and attacks against highlanders, the Metekel zone security and peace office head confirmed that it was all done by few individuals who promotes hate and conflict to enrich themselves by acquiring what is now owned by highlanders. One of the investors has a slightly different understanding of the conflict and entanglement along ethnic lines to whom it is a strategy to rip rents from them through acting as arbiters and ultimate determinant of the land commercialization process. If someone failed to comply with greasing, along somewhere in the bureaucracy, these elites can easily divert and mobilize the people against any project. Therefore, investors immediately after arriving to the region they have to pay bribe and greasing to facilitate the peaceful acquisition of land. In the 2014 corruption perception index, Ethiopia scores among the lowest (33), which puts it at 110 out of 175 countries (Transparency International 2014). The weak governance apparatus in the low land regions attributed to corruption and security problems (Mosley 2012:13). According to MacInnes (2012:8) land grab is susceptible to corruption in different ways on of which is through elite capture where lands belong to ethnic minorities can be transferred in fraudulent ways. In similar fashion, in Gambella and BG, LG has created a rent seeking contract which makes the existing highlanders owning land in the two regions an easy target.

Out of the ruling government, oppositions (in the indigenous side) in many occasion have used land grab as a flowery concept to attract international attention to their causes. Beside their gloomy past in instigating conflicts and hatred most oppositions are now labeled ‘Heroes’ because of their stand against LG.³¹ In BG such resistance goes to the extent of victimizing

³⁰ An expert in the environmental office Nuer(20August 2015)

³¹ Interview with land use and administration officers in Gambella and BG regions(August 2015)

highlanders as direct (employment) and indirect (market for most business owned by highlanders) beneficiaries of investment projects undertaken.

Such vicious cycle of victimization has also been used by many highlanders' based political parties as well (such as AEUP, Ethiopian Raie party, Blue Party etc.). Through LG rhetoric they have demonstrated their 'commitment' to the rights of highlanders and mobilize the highlanders' community against the state. Hence, the measures against local official suspected of instigating violence has been imprisoned. the last case in BG region following the eviction of Amharas and the subsequent campaign by social media and the aforementioned political parties, has compelled the government to take sever measures against local officials that further makes the indigenous elite powerless and alienated, and solidified the existing biases about the intimate connection between the state and highlanders community.

The Gumuz are the poorest of all in the region and the country as well. One Gumuz teacher who works in different rural areas revealed that, *how embarrassing it is to see the very people who own the region are wondering around the different tons carrying fire woods through its sell to support their livelihood*. Aside from the communal ownership rhetoric, land in questions are utilized by few elites who are benefiting by manipulating the ethnic cleavage. Highlanders in their FGD in BG noted that *officials never hesitate to give away thousands of hectares of land for investors but they will consider it a crime when they see poor highlanders' own/rent land*. Similarly FGD with the Gumuz revealed that *We rent our land for the highlanders through which we send our children to school and earn our livelihood but officials are earning their big monthly salary, come and tell us about the problem of renting our land and how these highlanders are manipulating us*.

One common phenomenon in the two regions which is giving impetus for ethnic conflict is the growing number of highlanders who came to the region and settle there when they find barrel land. The problem is in BG since the Gumuz are shifting cultivators one day when they came back to the area where they left long ago they find new settlers which in many occasion has been a problem in some Woredas in Metekel zone.³² In such circumstance the commercial agriculture has played a two edge role –first it facilitated the influx of migrants (highlanders) in to the region as daily workers, on the other hand it creates a new wave of relationship among the indigenous and non-indigenous group of people in which the indigenous has now realized the importance of land, rather than leaving it abandoned during shifting cultivation seasons,

³² Interview with peace and security officer in Metekel Zone(28July 2015)

they started to rent it out for labourers who came to work in the newly established commercial farms because the price is quite attractive compared to the money they would have made by working on the farms of investors(both for the indigenous and highlanders). More importantly, the indigenous believe that even if they don't rent the land to highlanders, they will plough it anyway or taken by one of the state sponsored investors (See appendix 4.4).

The sharecropping- indigenous relation, context provides a vivid picture about class alignment that triumph ethnic identity at the growing threat of commercial agriculture that is enforced through state apparatus. Knowing the new matrimony between share croppers and the indigenous ethnic groups and its dangerous consequence, the local elites have tried to entangle the context so as to disrupt the smooth relation between the two groups. There are mainly two reason for the governments fear of such relationship, first it gives the necessary ingredient (capital and labour) for poor indigenous Ethnic group to plough large hectares of land per household by renting out for highlanders which traditionally was unthinkable.

The second is more of a political matter, the government is extensively working to make sure that everyone considers land as the property of the state and the maximum size a household can have is 10 hectares (he national average landholding is 1.02 hectare) (Nega et al 2001), yet these sharecroppers in a way are legitimizing the claims of the indigenous community over the regions' land by renting huge land from them not from the government (as investors do). Hence, the local elites intentionally has orchestrated ethnic attacks in which many highlander sharecroppers died in the wild (see appendix 4.4).

Dissatisfied Gumuz elites have established their own independent political party other than the one which is currently operating in the region and assumed to be controlled by the numerically populous Bertha and the intellectual force Shinasha ethnic groups. However, the new Gumuz based party failed to win any seat. The major reason for the failure was their calling for the Gumuz to rise against highlanders and anyone who evicts them from their land which has sparked disappointment among highlanders who are effective voters in the region than the shifting cultivators (Gumuz), consequently they loss. According to official on BG region official, their idea of promoting violence was not because of their concern for the community but to claim their fair share of the rent emanates from the land. In fact, after losing the election, these people blamed the highlanders – knowing the numerical significance and consequent influence on the vote outcome, they have associated their failure with the conspiracy that highlanders are doing to evict the Gumuz from their land in the name of investment. An elderly Gumuz express his concern that, the claim to violence by elites might attract the attention of youngster whom have been discriminated from the job opportunity in the farms and might take the violence path as an alternative.

Similarly in Gambella, the position of land administration in the region highly rotated job office between individuals because ever since the expansion of large scale commercial farms, it is the most rewarding position that everyone aspires to hold on.³³ One key informant concur that, so long as land grab continues to be in the spot light of the two regions politics, there is nothing that elites will hesitate to do to safeguard their interest in the scramble for rent collection.

While they recommend ethnic sensitive land policy, Borrás and Franco (2011:6) warned the potential danger of ethnic conscious land policy because when the indigenous local people claims such ownership – it is always the chiefs who played key role on such properties who mostly are brokers between the investors and the indigenous community to facilitate acquisition of land. In the same vein Tellis et al (1997:90) concur that it is always individuals who have been threatened with loss of privilege and power are on the forefront of ethnic mobilization because of little fear of risk and willing to face anything that adds greater input to the effectiveness of group mobilization

³³ FGD in Gambella(9August 2015)

5.2.2. The state and Investors Malfunction

In my interview with an old Gumuz man, he explained that;

Does the government lie? Does a father lie to its children? That is what has happened –the government tell us to resettle so that they will provide us with the necessary facilities such health, education, other agricultural inputs. Obviously, trusting the government, we left our area and went to the new resettlement villages where we find none of the promised facilities. We wait and wait for long when we loss hope we go back to our land but it is has been taken.

Another known issue for locality is the matrimony between local officials and investors. There is always competition among land use and administration office workers to go to the field with investors for investigation, demarcation or approval or any other reason because the investors pays them 1200 birr allowance per day which is almost equivalent to what the government pays them as a monthly salary.³⁴ The federal government has frequently imprison and prosecute many officials involved either in inciting conflict which has rooted in economic desires to accumulate wealth from the ongoing land grabbing process or other political motives. However, it is always the federal government that lowers the morality in governing commercialization of land in the two regions by directly promoting few ethnic groups as investors and tolerating the malpractices of these investors.³⁵

BG ex-land official blames that the problem is emanates from the federal but they blame the local strata official. Hence, the chain of causation is evident of the prevalence of corrupt relationship from federal to local level. This malpractices gave a green light for local officials perpetuate the same system at Woreda and Kebele level.

Concerning the impermissible manner of investors, some of the problems conducted by investors notwithstanding their agreement are; renting out their land for land renting peasants, failure to start farming after clearing and selling the forest wood as charcoal, using the money for import export in Addis Ababa than in the region where they used the land to access bank loan, unintegrated agricultural scheme that exclude the local community. The rent and abuse by an Indian company

³⁴ Interview with land administration officers and local farmers in Gambella(7August 2015)

³⁵ Interview with key informant (2July 2015)

that has taken 50,000 ha land has been allegedly involved in renting, selling as well as timber production (against its license).³⁶

Such incidence beside their negative impact have also disastrous moral outcomes- this has given a leverage and justification to swarm investment lands by the local people. Similarly, Ojulu (2013) has discovered the conduct of many investors in Gambella region in forest wood destruction to produce charcoal.

It is not the commercialization of agriculture per se that is causing havoc – it is rather the failure of commercial agriculture. Investors after taking the land unable to reciprocate the anticipated benefits. To date no commercial farm has ever been fully functional in Gambella and BG regions. For example, Karatori’s impact has been felt by the community because it took a large piece of land, destroyed the ecosystem and has affected the natural course of life around it, yet the community haven’t seen its fruit.³⁷ *If you go to North, West or south or any direction from Gambella town you will see a lots of investment lands cleared and built a fake Gojo Bet (Huts), water tanker and a broken tractor kept there for symbols.*³⁸

Unless these farms become functional and started to hire people and create spillover effect on other economic endeavors, it will continue to be a bone of contention between and among the indigenous people vis-à-vis investors, highlanders and the government. Similarly, in BG, investment officer indicated that most of the so called investors doesn’t deserve to be investors as they don’t have the capacity and willingness to develop the land that has been given to them, because of this, currently the region is confiscating the land from these people and terminating their contract (see appendix 3.2.1). Investment land is a short cut for personal enrichment and improvement of one’s life, has not yet become an opportunity for societal development.

The grievance against such malfunction expressed in so many ways, for example, according to one investor, the Gumuz has created curtail of “we” and “them”. To such an end, last year (2014) they have made “Kella” (check points) by themselves without the knowledge of any government officials, and attacked any non-Gumuz individual passing by. In fact they have broken the legs and arms of one highlander working on nearby commercial farm and wounded the rest more in the

³⁶ BG land administration officer(22August 2015)

³⁸ Interview with Gambella resident(6August 2015)

name of protecting land from the thieves.³⁹ Such acts perpetuate the vicious cycle of bias towards indigenous community because investors are less interested to hire them because they feel that the indigenous envy whenever they see someone else is developing the land.⁴⁰

5.2.3. The Creation of New Sorts of Relations

Commercial agriculture has brought different ethnic groups who has not been together in the same place and time and of course for different goals. Such new forms of relationship between these groups in many occasions has feed the ethnic conflict in the study areas. The following four categories of events summarize what happened following commercial agriculture.

a) Cultural Shock

Sometimes on the far commercial farms both (indigenous and non-indigenous) feels alien because of distance from home, yet, usually disagreement arise (usually because of drinking Water shortage, food and other basic facilities) and easily turn in to ethnic based skirmish but nothing serious happen . specially about food culture, both FGD with Gumuz and highlanders, admitted the value judgment that highlanders puts on the indigenous community who hunt and eat different animals from the forest which highlanders consider food taboo/heresy. This is Part of the cultural violence that happens because of the cultural shock that ethnocentric highlanders experience in their encounter with the locals. One time in farmland in Guba a group of highlanders and indigenous have fought which causes many injuries with no death, the cause was the disagreement between two individuals, one highlander has drunk a water fetched by a Gumuz worker, the Gumuz has upset and has sparks physical violence which eventually take ethnic course when other workers take their fellow's sides.⁴¹

In similar vein (Ojulu 2013:246-247) claimed a peculiar case to Gambella , since most farm workers are highlanders, indigenous people don't want to work in a conditions that makes them minority in relation to highlanders, as small disagreements might turn in to ethnic violence that exposes them for revenge by highlanders. Because in one occasion an indigenous worker in one of the commercial farms have been beaten to death by his highlander colleagues. One security

³⁹ Interview with investor(1August 2015)

⁴⁰ Land administration office respondent in BG region(27July 2015)

⁴¹ Interview with Gumuz worker(26July 2015)

officer speculates that, such feeling of neglect and alienation might have contributed to the ongoing unorganized attacks against highlanders working on commercial farms.

b) Security

Furthermore, LG has caused the feeling of insecurity among the indigenous community because of the influx of migrants who are literally making them minority in their own locality which is one of the reason for tightening the existing ethnic antagonism.⁴² Investors prefers to bring trained and cheap work force from other parts of the country so as to internalize the cost. Sad to say, the origins for the current crisis at Goedere, its immediate and root cause is partially came from the issue of migrant workers. Though the opposition parties and highlanders don't share this view, government officials outline that; the people who has been brought to collect coffee in the big commercial farms started to form settlement all over the jungle which has sparks conflict as the local community can't find any more space in the area to maintain their old life style.

The most insecure Woreda's in BG region are those heavily affected by large commercial farm investments. Those areas, because influx of both indigenous and non-indigenous migrant workers coupled with the sabotage by the indigenous against investors and non-indegenious ethnic groups, have become the hotspot of conflict.⁴³

c) Competition over employment

The competition over job is not only about the job is stratified in two different strata and ranks. According to Ojulu (2013:236-244), there are three ranks of jobs created through large scale farms, out of which in the first rank jobs, compared to highlanders, indigenous peoples are totally absent, and their number is only significantly higher in the third low paid daily labourer jobs. Influx of migrant workers have the potential of affecting political autonomy and the exercise cultural rights in such regions. To worsen the problem, some migrant workers remain there settling and ploughing the 'barrel' land. In many occasion, such phenomena's have gave an excuse for the eviction and violence against 'legally settled' (those who has been brought by the previous regime in the 1980s under the resettlement scheme) peoples. For example, in 2013 at the apex of LG, more than 8000 Amhara ethnic groups have been evicted from BG region and then returned.

⁴² Metekel Zone security officer(28July 2015)

⁴³ Mandura woreda security officer(30July 2015)

d) Two Programs in the Two Regions: Two Problems

Recently the Gambella region has sought a program that favors indigenous investors in commercial agriculture. This scheme aimed at lessening all requirements for indigenous investors. Knowing, the indigenous ethnic groups' weak capacity to fulfill the minimum requirements, Highlanders have established a business group and nominally included a single indigenous person so as to rip the benefit.⁴⁴ Which according to informant is "a colonial form of abuse". Because highlanders will grab the benefits only meant for business organizations owned by indigenous groups. Such dangerous moves have created the feeling of alienation and disregard among the indigenous people, unless addressed soon, it will be a source of another violent conflict.⁴⁵

Similarly, in BG directive 018/06 has introduced to raise the level of participation of the indigenous people's as investors. However, the lessening of all the requirements, only will benefit the Shinashas (who are also indigenous) but has already been privileged in accessing education, power or better treatment.⁴⁶ Therefore, measures aimed at ameliorating ethnic antagonism are further solidified ethnic tension and alienations with the potential of sparking violent conflict.

⁴⁴ Gambella region land administration officer(11August 2015)

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Gumuz informants(1August 2015)

Chapter Six: Indigenous to indigenous conflict and Difference and Commonality between the Two Regions

6.1. Indigenous to Indigenous Conflict

6.1.1. Gambella Region

The main ethnic conflict in Gambella region is related with the Anuak and Nuer ethnic group. Anuak are Nilotic people their main economic activity is crop production with supplementary fishery and hunting (Sewnet 2002:2). Anuak claims exclusive monopoly over the region by using the logic of 'first settler' (indiginism), the vast land size currently they are settling in, and their political role in the fight against the military regime (Feyessa 2004:9). The main causes of the conflict between Anuak and Nuer is related to, claim to natural resources. The livelihood strategy of the two ethnic groups further contribute to the problem. Anuak being cultivators and Nuer pastoralists, has its own impact while the cattle of Nuers encroach in to the farms of Anuak – or even with their territory, has been causes of conflict (Sewnet 2002:3).

The power politics among the two ingenious groups goes to the extent of citizenship. The Anuak claims that most Nuers in the region are migrants from South Sudan, such conspiracy strengthened by the fact that in the 1980s many Nuers claim to be refuges of South Sudan because of the rewarding nature being a refuge in Ethiopia than a citizen. Hence, such oscillation of Nuers between citizenship and migration has made them vulnerable to exclusion (Feyessa 2004:11). The main causes of ethnic conflict between the two ethnic groups can generally be categorized in to four interrelated elements: competition over scarce resources such as grazing land and water, claim to majority and, there by determining which language to be thought in school, and the Anuak anxiety over being dominated by migrant pastoralists from the neighboring state (Sewnet 2002:6).

The advent of discrimination has necessitated the Nuer to pursue different strategies to challenge the Anuak discourse by establishing a new political party GPDUP (Gambela People Democratic Unity Party) other than the one that has been created under the auspices of the federal government. Using the 1994 census which puts their population at 40% while the Anuak stands 27%, to push their demand from 'foreigner' in to 'ethnic majority'. In such a way the census result has further aggravated the ethnic antagonism (Feyessa 2004:13). The census not only anger the Nuer who discover themselves as majority in the region but also, the Anuak who resented the outcome as it

favors the Nuer who has been counted as Ethiopians while most of them are recent comers from Sudan to Gambella. Consequently, the Nuer promotes demographic issue as a strategy for power while the Anuak cling to the issue of land (i.e. covering large area of the region's arable land as their claim to power). This two antagonism positions characterize the conflict between these two groups (Feyessa 2004:13). Though both groups are Nilotic origin and share a common practice of migration, the Nuer migration from Sudan has resulted in to the assimilation and memory loss of many Anuak and other ethnic groups. The political atmosphere has been further worsened by the fear that Nuers will take over the region by using their huge population as a leverage to pursue the assimilation project against the Anuak (Feyesa 2004).

To worsen the problem, the current land acquisition process is under taken in Anuak Zone whom are already frustrated by being swallowed by the new comer Neurs and now the highlanders which is alarming their schizophrenia.⁴⁷ According to Farm Land Grab, the expansion of the Saudi star farm alone from 10,000 to 300,000 ha will immensely touch the Akobo areas where many Nuers will be forced to displace to the neighboring Anywaa zone which is a guarantee for initiating the existing ethnic conflict between the two groups (Sisay 2010). Similarly a key informants concur that so long as LG causes movement of people from one 'territory' to another, it a guarantee for conflict because such movements have been determinant of survival as the history of the region conveys.

The 'Gambella Nilotes United Movement/Army (GNUM/A), claimed that the government is using Saudi Star's farm as a military barracks to train Nuers so that they will control the rest of the indigenous community. Furthermore, the movement indicates that because of the need to lease Anuak's land, the Nuer armed groups has frequent involved in ambush killings against the Anuak community of Gaari of Gog district. The movement associated the Nuers historical expansionist nature in to the lands of other indigenous ethnic groups' land, as a tool to enhance a sense animosity between and among indigenous ethnic groups. In its press release, the movement mentioned the killings of more than 14 Anuak ethnic members, mass killings against Opo, by armed Nuer ethnic groups, as a token for controlling the regional power and facilitating the land acquisition process. In my study none of the respondents either confirm or reject the allegation, they rather fear to

⁴⁷ Interview with agricultural office worker(8August 2015)

discuss such matters with outsiders, yet, it easy feel the sense of fear and mistrust encompass land grab and ethnic conflict.

There is a growing feeling of mistrust among the indigenous community which is affecting their resistance against LG. Elites blaming each other rather than coming up with a unified goal can be attributed to the greed and grievance interplay in the region. For instance, one Anuak informant indicated that, 'since currently, it is the Nuers who are leading the region (See appendix 5.2), there is no way for us to check the stealing of our land.' the disproportionate nature of the commercialization of agriculture in the Anuak Zone than their rival Nuer Zone and the recent power control under the Nuer further providing a political reason for Anuak elites. According to key informant, the old sense of enmity between the two ethnic groups has now get a new fueling factor which supports claim of eviction and discrimination because of the land grabbing process. Yet such claims are limited to political elites. In fact, the claim that, Nuers are evicting Anuak from their land by collaborating with the federal government is baseless because most of the land leasing process has been undertaken while the Anuak's were in control of the region's presidency. Hence, the issue promoted by GNUM/A and other Anuak elites is a simple attempt either for political mobilization of the Anuak people against LG or, a simple instrumentalisation of ethnicity to benefit the greed of elites who were the major player from the onset of commercialization of agricultural land. The reason behind why almost all investment is undertaken in Anuak Zone, is not because Nuers have better bargaining position with the federal government (as Anuak elites believe), it is rather most of the region fertile land exists in Anuak Zone which is a mere coincidence not a political maneuver.

Notwithstanding my prior conclusion that the non-functionality of commercial farms with full capacity is causing ethnic conflict, one of my key informant deduce that, *the reason we haven't yet had the violent ethnic conflict among indigenous groups is because the big farms like Karatori has been compromised and other are not fully functional, it makes the impact minimal*⁴⁸. While highlanders noted that, the likelihood of conflict among the indigenous community has been reduced because of the finding of the common enemy i.e. growing number of highlanders since the down of land grab in the region.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Interview with Key Informant(14August 2015)

⁴⁹ Interview with Gambella Resident Highlander(10August 2015)

6.1.2. Benishangul-Gumuz Region

In BG region conflict among indigenous people revolves around the Gumuz against the rest because the commercial agriculture is being undertaken in areas considered the Gumuz who feel that they have not been properly represented in the regions' politics (see appendix 5.1) compared to their population as well as land cover size. Such latent feeling have manifested in the May 2015 Ethiopian election, in which, the Gumuz political elites has made clear their dissatisfaction by establishing an independent political party solely stuffed by Gumuz unlike the now ruling party which they share with four other indigenous ethnic groups.

In their campaign they have promoted the idea that, the Gumuz land is being taken by others (investors) under the brokering of indigenous ethnic groups mainly the Shinasha's. Beside their numerical inferiority the Shinashas are more visible in political land scape, that is why, they have been considered as surrogates of the federal government in the land acquisition process. In many ways, the Gumuz have shown their dissatisfaction, in their indiscriminate attack against 'red' peoples which also includes the Shinasha.

6.2. Community and Difference between the Two Regions

6.2.1. Difference

The phenomenon of "Mofer-zemet"⁵⁰ farmer who initially has come in to direct contact with the local community, is not just a simple coincidence in Benishangul-Gumuz but the result of long standing geographic, cultural as well as economic interaction with neighboring region. First people don't settle rather rent land from the local Gumuz people left the region after harvest. However, as I elaborated in the previous chapter both government officials and investors are against them while the indigenous people are fond of them. Such phenomenon is quite common in BG region not in Gambella, the reason attributed to the fact BG region neighbored by the land scarce and labour abundant Amhara region.

Both share croppers and migrant workers are not just simple migrant workers rather different ethnic groups. Therefore, a simple agrarian approach about the interaction of these actors will be naïve because the state being at the center of brokering also entangles the notion of difference and similarity of identity on the simple work/class relation. Even without the involvement of the state,

⁵⁰ Sharecroppers or land renting peasants seasonally migrate from land scarce Amhara region to the neighboring BG region

the politics colour and language aided with culture and way of life already will create a gap on their interaction which can be used to stir the question around identity politics. What we see in the two regions highly ethicized ‘division of labour’ where some ethnic groups own money and capital, others land. Hence, it is this interaction that is yielding current trends of violence and cooperation between and among these ethnic groups.

6.2.2. Similarities

Both regions are settled by indigenous Nilotic groups with darker skin colour while there are multitude of highlander settlers from other regions. In both regions – the indigenous practice predominantly different livelihood strategy⁵¹ that demands huge acres of land. Both regions are the target of commercial farm as they are sparsely populated. And importantly, the two regions have been historically marginalized and the scare is still apparent.

BG VS Gambella

BG	Gambella
Four Types of Highlanders (urban, labourer, settler, and land renting)	Three types of highlanders (urban, labourer, and Settler)
Ethnic relations and conflict among indigenous is very unlikely – specially between Bertha and Gumuz	Conflict among the indegenious people is likely – Anyway vs Nuer
Outright ethnic conflict is more rare	Frequent ethnic conflicts
The economic activity is highly ethnic based – gumuz rent out land to highlander Amharas	The economic activity is less ethnic based – no system of land renting rather land owning highlanders specially Mejenger Zone
Comparing to Gambella, the extent of investment is limited – so is the extent of federal involvement	Large amount and number of investment – the same true about federal government presence

Table 4: similarity and difference between Gambell and BG regions

⁵¹ Shifting cultivation, hunting and gathering, cattle rearing, pastoralism small scale farming

Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Recommendation

7.1. Conclusion

Ethnic conflict in Gambella and BG regions played an instrumental role to respond to one or more of government policies and programs that affects them inadvertently. Instrumentalising ethnic identity is undertaken in two different ways first by the majority mass as a way of organized resistance against land acquisition by investors and encroachment by other ethnic groups. In such cases whenever, the indigenous community displayed their grievance by attacking and killing of investors and migrant workers who came from other regions. Some local officials similarly displayed their discontent by refusing collaboration with investors and other ethnic group coming to their region as a new workforce.

However, this should not undermine, the greed of elites who has been playing their identity to evict other ethnic groups and orchestrate conflicts. This second form of instrumentalism is the use of identity by elites to achieve their own goal (political goal specially power claim, economic goal - gaining benefit from the ongoing process of land lease and claiming the property of highlanders, rent collection from investors). The greed of elites has been concealed through the grievance of the mass whom has really been affected by LG.

The recent trends of ethnic conflict especially among migrant -non-migrant ethnic groups more attributed to the process of land grab because the intensity and distribution of conflict are in line with the area of land acquisition. And more importantly, the immediate causes of most of the covert and overt form of ethnic conflict associated with illegal settlement, taking away of job, taking away of land, renting of land, all of which have been directly or indirectly initiated through LG. directly through the process of LG many migrant workers come to the region that has become part of the scramble to land and benefits emanates from Land. Indirectly, as land is taken away by investors indigenous community targets 'highlander' community as a way of showing their grievance against the state as well as claiming the land of the non-indigenous peoples.

At this stage, ethnic conflict among indigenous groups is very negligible, what is more visibly observed is the dissatisfaction of the indigenous people towards highlanders who are considered major player as investor and worker on commercial farms plus their imagined 'colour' association with the Ethiopian state.

Antagonistic ethnic relations has changed the dynamics of state - society - land grab relations. Because conflict between and among various ethnic groups have provided a breathing space for government and of course weaken the genuine resistance against LG. Resistances would have been more effective if it has been pursued in a more inclusive way than antagonizing various ethnic groups. Because the government has now de-centered from the struggle and become an arbiter among them as if the conflict is 'ethnic conflict, emanates from cultural incompatibility than material interests.

Land is very sensitive resource in countries like Ethiopia. The indigenous people's existence as a distinct group of people is now being threatened. The process of LG is a breach of the constitution as well as the motive of the federal state structure which provides diverse ethnic groups to exercise their cultural and language rights in their specified territory. Whether the land is barrel or not, it will have significant impact in initiating ethnic conflict, because what really matters is control over these land as a way of preserving their distinct existence.

Therefore, it is the combination of state policy, the material (such as land) and, non-material (perception about themselves and others) interaction among the ethnic groups, is provoking ethnic conflict.

7.2. Recommendations

Land policy a multi-ethnic society like Ethiopia should reflect the actual reality on the ground. While devising development programs aimed at land leasing, land should not be treated solely as an economic instrument rather a territory of different ethnic group. According UN-Habitat (2012:14) land related conflicts are very likely to relapse with the range of the first five years of the previous conflict, hence it must be addressed at all stages. Hence, policies must be pursued to prevent the Mejeenger type of conflict from relapsing.

Beside sensitive measures, diversity and elite manipulation should receive attention and handled delicately. Some of such measures can be narrowing the space for manipulation by making the land leasing process transparent. Because, speculation and rumors are always behind attacks and conflicts in the two region that empowers local elites as ultimate decision makes.

Hand in hand, the state must endorse a means of forcing investors to abide by the agreement and to remain fully functional so as to fulfill their promises.

Respecting the local peoples' culture especially by domestic workers and investors as well as to some extent by foreign investors. The dehumanization and discrimination legacy will still be a constant reminder in the indigenous - highlanders engagement. Therefore, steps must be taken to prove that, the present is not the extension of the past as most local elites strongly believe.

To avert growing migration in to the low land region alternative means livelihood must be pursued in the labor rich yet land scarce regions of the country.

Political elites on the forefront of genuine ethnic mobilization against LG must pursue an ethnic approach informed of class dynamics, because economically unexamined resistance strategy has proven failure as only poor indigenous fighting poor outsiders, while the structure created through the collaboration of local elites, investors and the state left intact.

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Appendixes

1. In-depth Interview Guide

1.1. Key Informants

2. To what extent do you think the life of indigenous community and land is attached
3. What do you think are the impacts of land grab in the study area
4. Do you think there are losers and winners in the process? If yes who are they? If no, why not?
5. Do you think the social relation and way of life has been affected by the land grab? How?
6. Do you think land grab has an impact on the ongoing ethnic conflict? How?
7. What happened to the region's ethnic conflict in the past couple of years? What causes the change?
8. Do you think, commercial agriculture have shifted the relation between the indigenous and non-indigenous ethnic groups? Why? Why not?
9. What land grab related factor do you think is contributing to the existing ethnic conflict in the region? How?
10. What do you think are the role of the state, NGOs, opposition parties and independent movements in the ongoing process of land grab and conflict linkage?
11. In your view, do you think the land has fuelled ethnic conflict? Why? Why not?
12. Who do you think actors in the ongoing land grab process? How they are pursuing their objective?
13. What do you recommend should be done to alleviate LG related challenges
14. As you are part of the community, you may know sufficiently about what forms of resistance the peasants are using?

1.2. In-depth-Interview with Resident

2. What are the impacts of land grab in your life and your community? How you perceive it?
3. Do you think land grab has affected your means of livelihood? How you cope with it?
4. What social impact of land grab your community has faced and how you handled it?
5. Have you experience or saw others experience ethnic antagonism because of land grab? How?
6. Which part of the commercialization process is causing ethnic conflict/antagonism in your village/or villages you knew?
7. Why do you think is land grab becomes an ethnic questions in your locality?
8. What was your relation with other ethnic groups look like? What have been changed in the past couple of years i.e. after the introduction of land grab?

2. List of respondents

2.1. BG participants

no	participant	ethnicity	area
1	Resident/born and lived there/land renting	amhara	gilgel
2	Security and peace head of the zone	shinasha	gilgel
3	Land administer	shinahsa	gilgel
4	Land administration expert	oroomo	gilgel
5	Land gadministration	oromo	gilgel
6	Teacher in the new village and other areas	gumuz	Gilgel
7	Teacher in the new village	gumuz	Gilgel
8	Mandura worda security and peace expert	agew	mandura
9	Mandura peace and security	gumu	mandura
10	Peasant farmer	gumu	mandu
11	peasant	gumuz	gilgel
12	peasant	gumu	gilgel
13	Young Peasants and students	gumuz	gilgel
14	Young peasant and students	gumuz	gilgel
15	Old gumu shimagele – traditional peace expert	gumuz	gilgel
16	Land renting peasant	amhara	mandura
17	laborer	amhara	mandura
18	Investor	Unidentified	gilgel
19	Land administration officer	mixed	Bahir dar

2.2. BG FGD participant

no	FGD participant	ethnicity	place	No of participant
1	Gumuz land renters and peasnts	Gu	gilgel	6
2	Workers, residents	Amh + Oro + agew	gilgel	7

2.3. Gambella Interview Participant

No.	participant	ethnicity	area
1	Land administration	Anuak	Gambella
2	Land administration expert	Mixed	Gambella
3	Land administer expert	Amhara	Gambella
4	peasant	Anuak	Abobo
5	Student with peasant family	Anuak	Abobo
6	Agricultural expert	Oromo	Mejenger
7	Land office (female)	Anuak	Gambella
8	Resident of goedere	Oromo	Gambella
9	Peasant of goede	Amhara	Gambella
10	student	Nuer	Gambella
11	Agriculture office	Nuer	Bahir dar
12	Student with peasant family	Anuak	Gambella
13	Teacher	Anuak	Bahir dar
14	Peasant	Anuak	Gambella
15	peasant	Nuer	Gambella (phone int.)

2.4. Gambella FGD participants

No	FGD	ethnicity	Number of participant
1	Land administrators	Mixed (highlanders and Anuak)	6
2	Highlanders	Amhara, Oromo and SNNP	8

2.5. Researcher key informants

No.	Specially area of interest	Place of interview
1	BG land grab	The Hague
2	Gambella and Oromia Land grab	Addis Ababa
3	Gambella region Land grab	Addis Ababa

3. The Scope of Land Acquisition in Ethiopia

3.1. Country wide

Table 2. Investment Land under Federal Land Bank

Regions	Land in Hectares
Amhara	420,000 (not yet confirmed)
Afar	409,678
BeniShangul	691,984
Gambella	829,199
Oromia	1,057,866
SNNP	180,625
Total	3,589,678

Source Rahmato 2011

3.2. BG region

3.2.1. Domestic investors

4. Table 3. Zones and woreda distribution in Benishangul-Gumuz regions domestic investors

No.	Woreda	Size	No. Of investors	Performance
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1	Kurmuk Assoa	36,300	5	
2	Sherkole /Assosa	22,500	13 + three investors with unkonwn size	
3	Menge /Assosa	24,000	11 + 3 without specific landsize	
4	Oda Bildiglu	16,000	27 + 1 unkonwnsize farm invs	18 of the invetstors has either recived warning or letter for terrmination of the contract
5	Assosa Woreda	7,484.58	13+5 with unkon size	6 of them have been either confiscated or warned of malpractices
6	Bambase /Assosa	21,041	38 + 1 investor	5 investors are contract is either terminated or being negotiated
7	Homosha/Assossa	6032	6 + 1 unknown size	1 investors contract has been terminated
8	Mao-Komo special woreda	33,940	39 investors	20 investors agreement has been either cancelled or in some form of warning
9	Kemashi/kemashi	741	2	
10	Yaso/Kemashi	13,762	22 + 2 investors unknown size	7 investors license has either been terminated or under consideration
11	Belojiganfoy/Kemashi	29,463	16 + 1 unknown size	3 have problems with farmers
12	Agalo Meti/Kemashi	25,89	6 + 1 with unknown size	2 have problem with peasant and other 2 are having problem with the state
13	Sirba Abay/Kemashi	1000	2	One will be relocated due to GERD
14	Bulen/Metekel	280	1	
15	Mandura/Metekel	2530	5	2 projects are very likely to be cancelled
16	Pawe/Metekel		10 + 1 with unknown size	5 because of sugar farm development + 1 other because of termination of contract will be cancelled
17	Dangura/Metekel	29,970	19	5 are either to be cancelled or under re-considerations
18	Guba/Metekel	63,078.53	104 + 4 unknown size	28 investors are have under investigation for failing to renew their agreement or terminate the contract
	Total			

This table is prepared based on the data I have collected from BG region land administration office data base (the size of the land has been taken the agreement not the actual size, unless the agreed upon size is unavailable)

3.2.2. Foreign Investors

3.3. Gambella

Table 4: the number and size of foreign land lease agreements in Gambella region

No	Name of company	Country	Size of land acquired	Woreda
1	BHO	India	27,000	Itang Woreda
2	Saudi-Star	Saudi-Arabia	10,000	
3	Ruchi	India	25,000	
4	Green Valley Agro. Plc	India	5000	Abobo
5	Hunan Dafengyuan Arg.Co.Ltd.	China	25,000	Dima
6	JVL Overseas PTE Ltd.	India	5000	Dima
7	Karuturi Agro Products PLC.	India	100,000	Itang
8	Saber Farms PLC	India	25,000	Dima
9	Sennati Agro Farm Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.	India	10,000	Dima
10	Toren Agro Industries PLC.	Turkey	6000	Goge
11	Verdanta Harvests PLC.	India	3,012	Godere

Tables of land lease agreement in Gambella region found from MOA (researchers own tabulation)

4. Elaboration of Some Events

4.1. Anyway Massacre

One of the darkest part of Gambella's history is the 2003 massacre against the Anywaa by highlanders. The immediate cause of the problem was the killing nine road construction and NGO highlander worker in inhuman manner by mutilating their body which was displayed to the public immediately sparked outrage among highlanders who has been witnessing the same but lesser magnitude of problems for a while has rose with machete and other weapons for revenge killing and started indiscriminately killing male Anwyaa which results the death of 67 according to government, 420 by the Anywaa groups. To worsen the problem the federal policy mainly staffed by the highlanders has sided with the red against the Anywaa which resulted in migration many Anywaa people (Feysa 2009:646)

4.2. Violence matrix

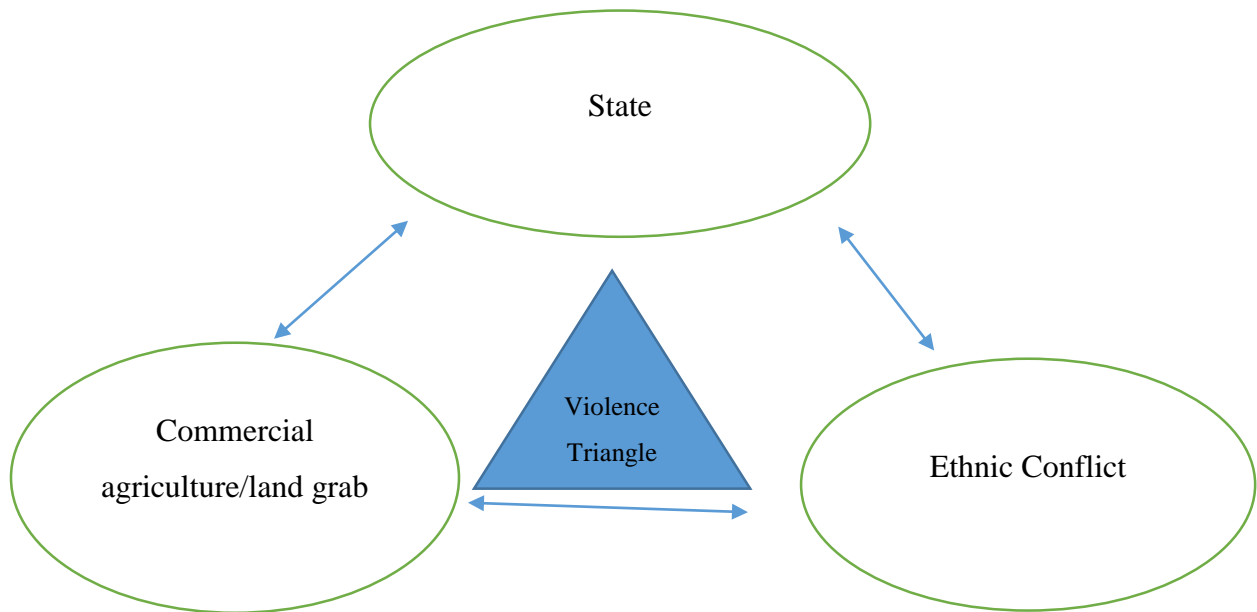
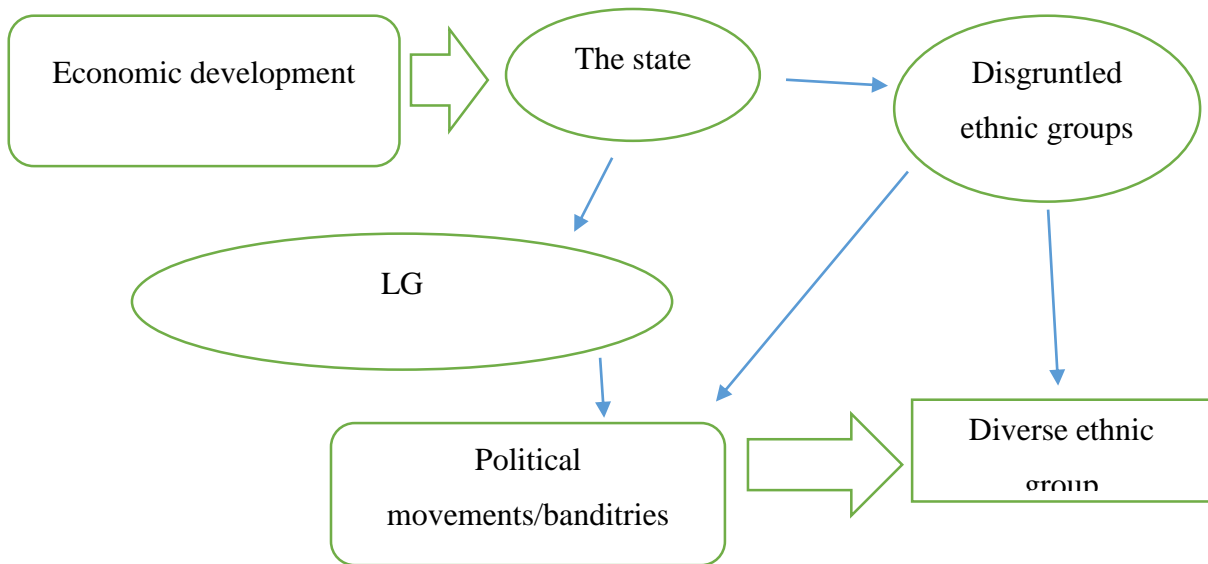
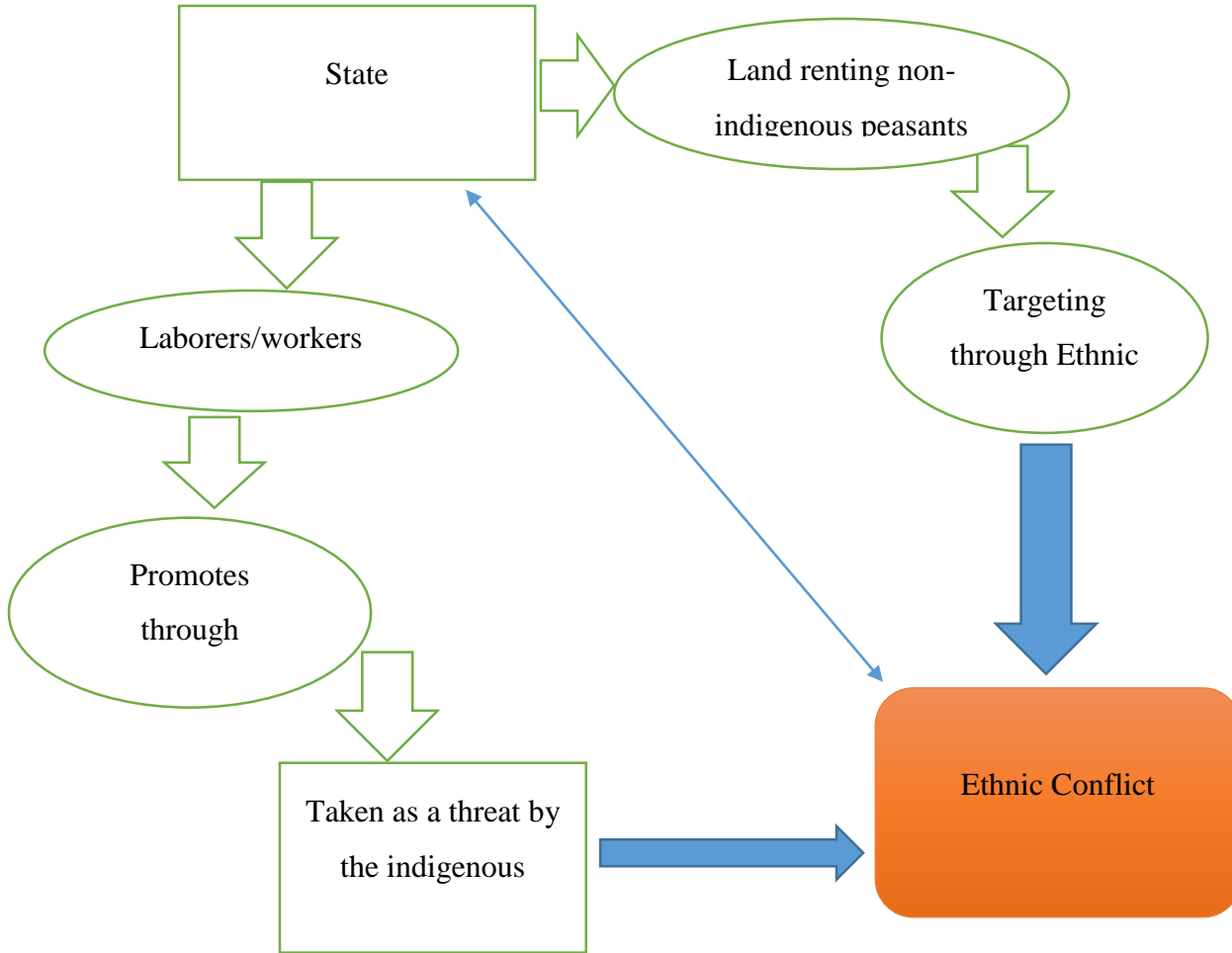


Figure 1, - the interplay between and among state, land grab and ethnic conflict



4.3. Ethnic Based Division of Labour

Figure 2 – illustration of the state’s developmental aspiration vis-à-vis feeding political groups with necessary inputs to sustain their existence



Diagrammatical illustration the linkage between highlanders, investors, the state and indigenous community

4.4. Types of Highlander in BG and Gambella

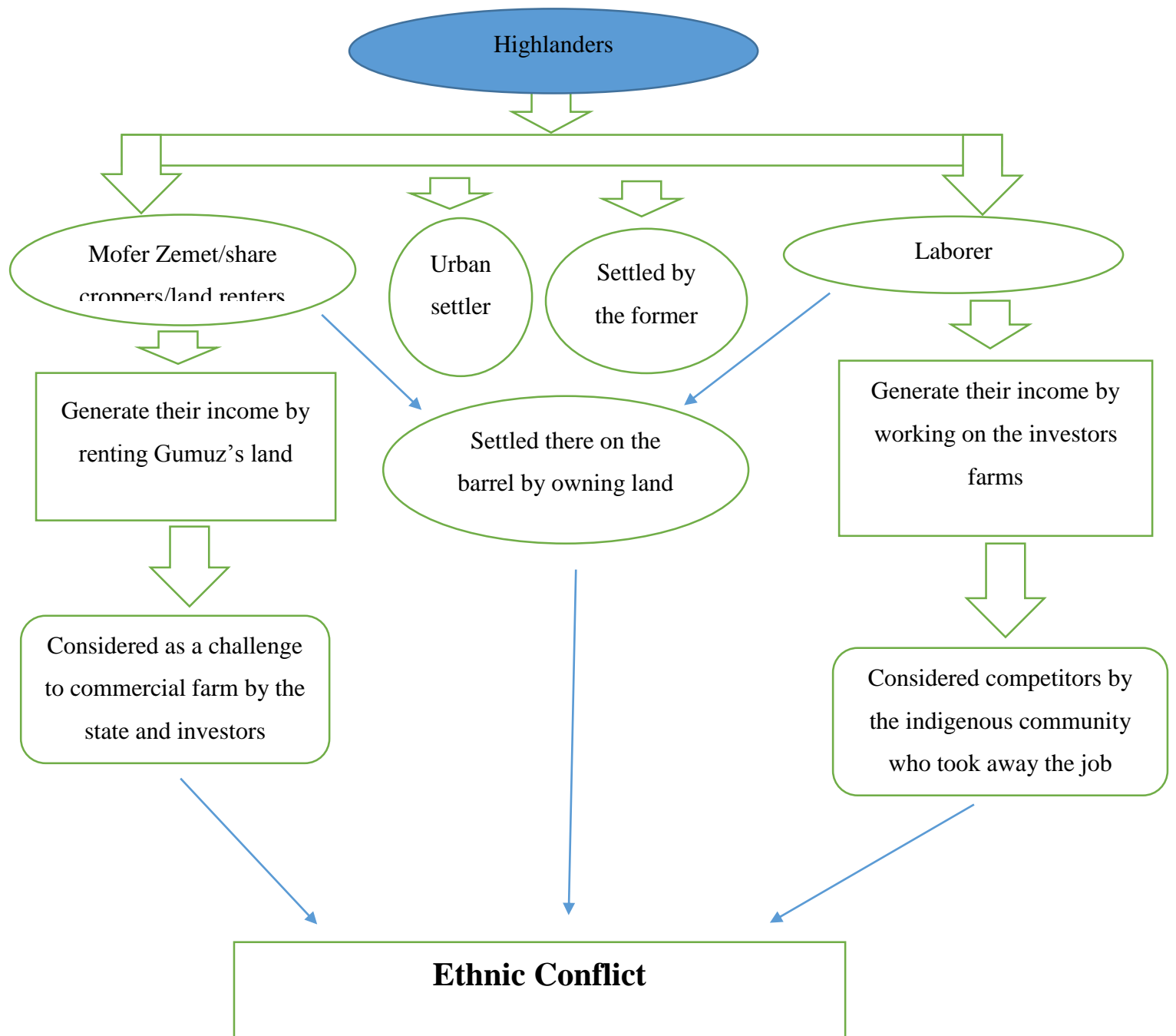


Figure 3, the chart shows the relation between different types of highlanders in BG and Gambella Region with the state and indigenous communities

5. Power Distribution in Gambella and Benishangul Gumuz Region

5.1. BG Regional State power Distribution among Various Ethnic Groups

No.	Position Regional Ministry	Occupier Ethnic Group	Remark Gam
1	President of the Region	Bertha	
2	Vice president of the region	Gumuz	
3	Speaker of the Regional parliament/state council	Shinasha	
4	Trade and Transport	Mao	
5	Head the party (BGDP)	Bertha	
6	Health Office	Shinasha	
7	Education	Shinasha	
8	Environmental Protection	Shinasha	
9	Revenue and Tax office	Komo	
10	Main Auditor	Shinasha	
11	Culture and Tourism	Gumuz	
12	Water and Mining (water n enery	Gumuz	
13	Investment Secretariate	Gumuz	
14	Justice Office	Bertha	
15	Administration and Security	Gumuz	
16	Food security.....	Bertha	
17	Finance and Economy	Gumuz	
18	City Development and Construction	Mao	
19	President of the Higher Court	Gumuz	
20	Anti-Corruption Commission	Shinasha	
21	Police Commission	Gumuz	
22	Militia Secretariate	Shinasha	

23	Communication Affairs	Mao	
24	Diaspora Affairs secretariate	Bertha	
25	Assosa city Mayor	Bertha?	
26	President of the University	Shinasha	
27	President of the Management Institute	Bertha	

Source personal Interview with BG officials, August 2015

5.2. Gambella Regional state Power Distribution among Different Ethnic Groups

No.	Position Regional Ministry	Occupier Ethnic Group	Remark Gam
1	President of the Region	Nuer	
2	Vice president of the region	Anuak	
3	Speaker of the Regional parliament/state council	Mejenger	
4	Trade and Transport	Nuer	
5	Head the party (BGDP)	Komo	
6	Health Office	Anuak	
7	Education	Mejenger	
8	Environmental Protection	Nuer	
9	Revenue and Tax office	Opo	
10	Main Auditor	Nuer	
11	Culture and Tourism	Nuer	
12	Water and Mining (water & enery	Nuer	
13	Investment Secretariat	Nuer	
14	Justice Office	Nuer	
15	Administration and Security	Anuak	
16	Food security.....	Nuer	
17	Finance and Economy	Anuak	

18	City Development and Construction	Nuer	
19	President of the Higher Court	Anuak	
20	Anti-Corruption Commission	Anuak	
21	Police Commission	Nuer	
22	Militia Secretariat	Nue?	
23	Communication Affairs	Nuer	
24	Diaspora Affairs secretariat	Anuak	
25	Gambella city Mayor	Anuak	
26	President of the University	Anuak	
27	President of the Management Institute	Komo	
28	Women and youth	Anuak	
29	Sort	Nuer	
30	Mining	Nuer	

Source: Personal Interview with Gambella Regional state Officials, August 2015

6. Letters

6.1. Letter to President Girmawolde-giorgis from Mejenger zone elders

የገቢያ ማህተም

Stationery

የገቢያ

*Gizaw
Dinamo*

ቁጥር 30/03/200
ቀን

ለክቡር አቶ ግርማ ወ/ጊዮርጊስ
የኢ.ፌ.ሪ ፕሬዝዳንት
አዲስ አበባ፣

ጋምቤላ ስ/ብ/ክ/መንግስት በጎደሬ ወረዳ ጉማሬ ቀበሌ 5000/ አምስት ሺህ / ሄ/ር የሻይ
ጫት የኢንቨስትመንት መሬት ማስረከባቸውን የሚገልፅ በደብዳቤ ቁጥር መ2/2476/78/6 በቀን
16/4/2002 በተጻፈ የክልሉ ፕሬዝዳንት አቶ አምድ ኡቦንግ ኡሎም ገልፀዋል ።
ዚህ መሠረት ማንም በኢንቨስትመንት ስም ጥብቅ ደናችንን እንዲህ አንፈልግም የሚሉት 1ኛ
አቶ ታምሩ አምባሎ የቀበሌው ሊ/ር

- 2ኛ አቶ አመያ ከሲቶ የቀበሌው ሽማግሌ
- 3ኛ አቶ ካሳሁን ከኪሎ የቀበሌው ነዋሪ

ሆነው በጽ/ቤትም በአካል በመገኘት በአመለካከት መሠረት ለአካባቢ ጥበቃ ባለስልጣን
ባስተላለፉት መመሪያ በመነሻነት በደብዳቤ ቁጥር 818-4/1124 በቀን 28/08/2002 ዓ.ም ከአካባ
ጥበቃ ባለስልጣን በተጻፈ ደብዳቤ መታገድ ይታወቃል ። ይህ በአንዲህ እንዳለ በአሁኑ ወቅት
ፓክት ኢትዮጵያ በሀገራችን ደን ክልል በአለበት አካባቢ በመንቀሳቀስ መጠን ሰፊ ሥራ
በመስራት በአካባቢው ላሉት ነዋሪዎች ትምህርት በመስጠት ከፍተኛ ጥበቃ እየተካሄደ ይገኛል።
በሌላ በኩል የዘላቂ መሬት አያያዝ ፕሮጀክት የተራቆቱት ዳኞችን ለመሸፈን የደን ችግሮችን
በማስተካከል ከፍተኛ እንቅስቃሴ እየተደረገ እያለ ከወረዳ እስከ ፌደራል ድረስ ያለው የተፈጥሮ
ደን ባለሙያዎች ያላመኑበት ምሪት በድጋሚ በቁጥር መ2/2031/716 በቀን 10/3/2003 ዓ.ም
በተጻፈ ደብዳቤ 3012/ሶስት ሺህ አስራሁለት ሄ/ር መሬት በሄክታር 111.00/ አንድ መቶ አስራ
አንድ ብር /ሂሳብ ጠቅላላ ብር 334332/ሶስት መቶ ሰላሳ አራት ሺህሶስት መቶ ሰላሳ ሁለት
ብር / ከፍለው መሬቱን እንዲረከቡ ስምምነት የተደረሰበት የመሬት ኪራይ ውል የአንድ ዓመት
የመሬት ኪራይ እንዲ ከፍሉ ይደረግ ሲሉ አቶ ኡሞድ ኡቦንግ ኡሎም ለጎደሬ ወረዳ መስተዳደር
ም/ቤት አስታውቋል። የጎደሬ ወረዳ መስተዳደር ም/ቤት እና የመገናኛ ግር ዞን መስተዳደር ምክር
ቤት በጋራ በመንቀሳቀስ ጉማሬ ቀበሌ ገበሬዎችን በማሳሳት መሬቱን በኢንቨስትመንት
ለማስረከብ ተዘጋጁ በማለት እንዲወስኑ አድርገው ከላይ የተጠቀሰው ገንዘብ ለጎደሬ ወረዳ
ገቢዎች ጽ/ቤት ገቢ እንዲሆን ተደርገዋል ይህ ደን በኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ በከፍተኛ ደረጃ
ከሚጠበቁት ደን ክልሎች አንዱና ዋናው መሆኑ ካለው መረጃ መረዳት ስለሚቻል ደን
ከመታረሱና ከመውደሙ በፊት ከትትልም እንዲደረግና እንዲታገድልን በአክብሮት
እንጠይቃለን።

«ከሠላም ታ ጋር»

ታምሩ አምባሎ
ጉማሬ ቀበሌ አስተዳደር

6.2 Letters from President Girma-woldegiorgis to MoA



የኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሪፐብሊክ
 የፕሬዚዳንት ጽሕፈት ቤት
 THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
 OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

ቀን 1/4/2003
 Date
 ቁጥር ፱/216/2003
 Ref No.

ለክብር አቶ ተፈራ ደርበው
 የግብርና ሚኒስትር
 አዲስ አበባ

በጋምቤላ ሕዝቦች ብሔራዊ ክልላዊ መንግሥት መገናኛ ሆስፒታል ዙፋን ሰጠ ወረዳ የጉማሪ ቀበሌ አስተዳዳሪ ሀዳር 30 ቀን 2003 ዓ.ም በጻፉት ደብዳቤ በፓክት ኢትዮጵያ እና በዘላቂ መሬት አያያዝ ፕሮጀክት ከፍተኛ ጥበቃና አንክብቤ እየተደረገለት ያለ 3012 ሄክታር የተፈጥሮ ደን መሬት ከወረዳ እስከ ፌዴራል ያሉ የተፈጥሮ ደን ባለሙያዎች ባላመነበት ቪርዳንታ ሃርቨስትስ (Verdanta Harvests PLC.) ለተባለ የህንድ ኩባንያ ለግብርና ኢንቨስትመንት እንዲሰጥ መወሰኑን በመቃወም ደኑ ከመውደሙና ከመታረሱ በፊት እንዲታገድ ጠይቀዋል።

ተደም ሲለም የመረጃው ነዋሪዎች ተመሳሳይ አቤቱታ አቅርበው ጉዳዩን ለፌዴራል አካባቢ ጥበቃ ባለሥልጣን በጽሑፍ አስታውቋል በወቅቱ ለግብርናና ገጠር ልማት ሚኒስቴር በቁጥር 818-4/1124 ሚያዝያ 28 ቀን 2002 ዓ.ም በተጻፈ ደብዳቤ ኢትዮጵያ በዓለም አቀፍ መድረኮች አፍሪካን ወክላ በሚትደራደርበት ወቅት እንዲሁም ከአርሻው ይልቅ ኮከርቦን ትሬዲንግ የምናገኘው ጥቅም የበለጠ ስለሆነ ደኑ የማይነበት ሁኔታ እንዲመቻች ማሳሰቡ ይታወሳል።

ስለሆነም በቅርብ ቀን በዚህ ጉዳይ ዙሪያ ተወያይተን የደረሰንበትን እያስታወስኩ ሀገራችን በአየር ንብረት ለውጥ ጉዳይ በዓለም አቀፍ መድረኮች በጠቅላይ ሚኒስትራችን አማካይነት አፍሪካን ወክላ በሚትደራደርበት ወቅት በምንም ምክንያት የደን መሬት ለአርሻ መሰጠት ስለሌለበት ደኑን ለማልማት በሚፈልጉ ሰዎች ወይም በሌላ ተሳትፎ እንዲለማ በክብርነትም በኩል ተገቢው እንዲፈጸም እጠይቃለሁ።

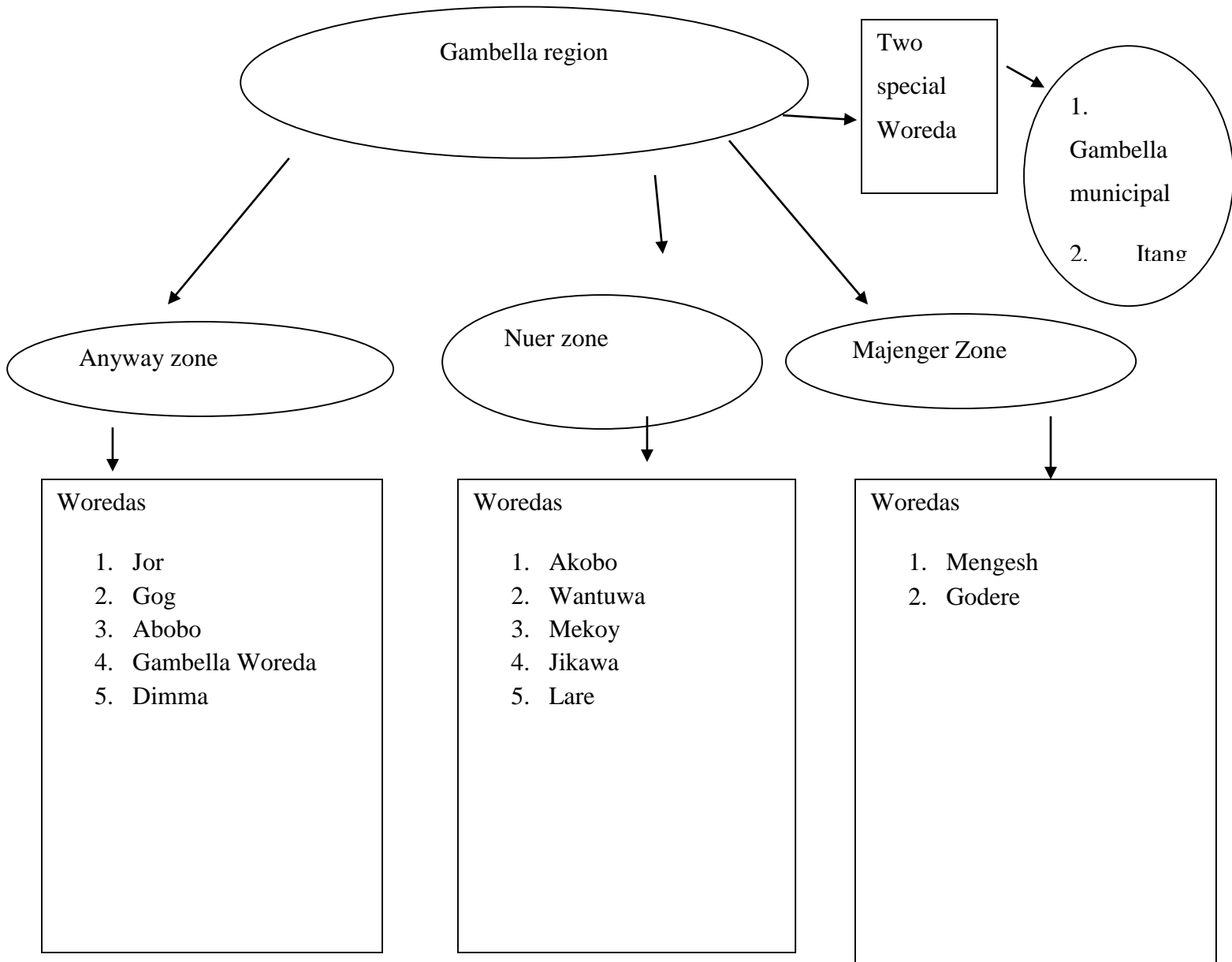
ግልባጭ
 ለአቶ ታምሩ አምበሎ
 ጉማራ ቀበሌ



ከሰላምታ ጋር
 ግርማ ወጪጊጥርጊስ
 የኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ
 ሪፐብሊክ ፕሬዚዳንት

7. Administrative Zones and Woredas in the Two region

7.1. Administrative divisions of Gambella Region



7.2. Administrative Division of BG Region

