

HAWASSA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY



MA THESIS

**WAR IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA (2020-2022): POST-WAR RECOVERY,
CHALLENGES AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE MECHANISM IN DESSIE
TOWN.**

BY:

HELEN GETACHEW

**ADVISOR: DAGNE SHIBRU (PHD), ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL
ANTHROPOLOGY**

**NOVEMBER, 2023
HAWASSA, ETHIOPIA**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF HAWASSA
UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ART IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**ADVISOR: DAGNE SHIBRU (PHD), ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL
ANTHROPOLOGY**

**NOVEMBER, 2023
HAWASSA, ETHIOPIA**

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Master of Art degree thesis entitled *War in Northern Ethiopia (2020-2022): Post-War Recovery, Challenges and Community Resilience Mechanism in Dessie town*. Is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and all sources of material used for this final thesis work have been duly acknowledged.

Declared by: Helen Getachew

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Place: Hawassa University

Data of submission: _____

ADVISOR APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that the thesis entitled *War in Northern Ethiopia (2020-2022): Post-War Recovery, Challenges and Community Resilience Mechanism in Dessie town*. submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master's with specialization in social anthropology, the Graduate Program of anthropology, and has been carried out by Helen Getachew under my/our supervision. Therefore I/we recommend that the student has fulfilled the requirements and hence hereby can submit the thesis to the department.

Name of Major Advisor

Signature

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to thank Almighty God and his mother, St. Mary, for blessing me and making everything I have done possible. I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Dagne Shibru, for his scholarly assistance in reading and revising this thesis. From the preparation of the proposal to the completion of the thesis, his corrections and critical remarks were extremely helpful and constructive. I would like to express my gratitude to all informants and discussants for their patience in recalling the difficult times during the war and on sharing their lived experiences. This study would not have been completed without their help and willingness.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my mom Meseret Bogale and all of my family members, especially Ashenafi Kebede, who has consistently provided me with encouragement, company, laughter, listening ears, and much more over the years and along the way, both in person and over the phone. In addition, I would like to thank many others who directly and indirectly contributed for the success of my work.

Lastly, but not least, I am also grateful to all my instructors and classmates for their genuine cooperation and the nice time we had together.

Helen Getachew

November, 2023

Hawassa, Ethiopia

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GLOSSARY OF LOCALLY USED TERMS

Diaspora: Ethiopian citizen living abroad.

Dua: An act of supplication, meaning asking or begging for something earnestly or humbly.

Equb: A traditional saving institution in which members have a chance to get money through rotation by using the lottery method.

Ye Habeshakemis: Ethiopian traditional dress, worn at formal events, made of *shemma* panels. The dress features expertly hand-woven cotton fabric, featuring *Tibeb* accents.

Idir: A traditional insurance system in which people use it to support each other during grief time.

Keble: Lower administrative structure below wored.

Lacomeliza: The old name of Dessie.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ATM:	Automated Teller Machine
CSA:	Central Statistical Agency
DFID:	Department for International Development
EPRDF:	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.
G.C:	Gregorian calendar
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
HIV:	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
IDPs:	Internally displaced persons
MDPD:	Miami-Dade Police Department
NGO:	Non-governmental organizations
OCHA:	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
TB:	Tuberculosis
TPLF:	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to assess the war in northern Ethiopia; the study specifically focuses on investigating the situation in Dessie town and also explores the post-war recovery, challenges faced and resilience mechanisms of the communities of Dessie. The war in North Ethiopia has had a devastating impact on the region, causing widespread damage to livelihoods, social fabric and infrastructure. In Dessie Town, one of the major urban centers in the region, communities are facing various challenges in their post-war recovery, including infrastructure damage, economic disruption, social displacement and Psychological trauma. This thesis has therefore, examined the impact of the war in North Ethiopia on Dessie Town, the challenges that communities are facing in their post-war recovery, and the community resilience mechanisms that they have developed to cope with these challenges. Methodologically, the study employed a qualitative approach and diversified data-gathering techniques such as observation, interviews, focus groups, informal conversation and case study. Thematic analysis is then used to describe, explain and discuss the data gathered from the field. By following the above procedures, the study revealed that, communities in Dessie Town have shown remarkable resilience. They have developed a number of community resilience mechanisms to help them cope with the post-war challenges, such as: Social support networks, mutual aid groups, and community-based organizations. Furthermore the finding shows that rebuilding infrastructure is one of the most significant community-based initiatives. Repairs to schools, bridges, and roads are included in the initiative. Access to sanitary facilities and clean water are also included. Another important community-based initiative is the provision of social services. This includes providing food, shelter, and healthcare to the people who need it most. The provision of social services helps to meet the immediate needs of the people of Dessie and to help them to rebuild their lives.

Keywords: War, Northern Ethiopia, Dessie, post-war recovery, community resilience

CHAPTER ONE

1. Background of the Study

Globally, 140 civil wars have been documented since the end of World War II; these battles have resulted in the deaths of around 20 million people and the displacement of nearly 67 million people (Doyle and Sambanis, 2003). During this period, small-scale conflicts involving people who can be distinguished from one another more easily by their language, religion, or location have proliferated. Usually, there are no leaders, treaties, beginnings, or endings to these wars. Their seeds are planted in the mucky ground of irredentism and cultural identity. In particular, 59 of the 64 wars that occurred between 1945 and 1988 were intra-state or civil wars, and during these conflicts, about 80% of the wars dead were killed by someone of their own nationality (Ibid).

Africa is the most conflict-ridden region of the world and the only region in which the number of armed conflicts is continuously increasing (Gilpin, 2018). What is even more striking is that the sufferers attributed to non-state violence are decreasing elsewhere while Africans are still suffering the problem associated with intra-state conflicts. It is this grand reason that made Africans on the move to the safest places, risk their life to cross borders, and die in the ocean while seeking to enter Europe and Asia. It is more apparent that the problem is ardent in eastern African countries like Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia (Gilpin, 2018).

Ethiopia has recently experienced a deadly war between a force commanded by the TPLF and what has been called a 'coalition force' led by the national defense force of Ethiopia. Between June and August 2021, the TPLF overran several northern Wollo towns and districts, including Korem, Alamata, Kobo, Weldiya, and Gashena. A number of urban homes and rural farmers who weren't politically active or involved were targeted by TPLF forces (Erkihun, 2022). Through the course of this war, TPLF forces have destroyed both private houses and public buildings like universities, hospitals, banking, and financial institutions. As a result of which, rural farmers and residents in Dessie town and the wider Wollo zone people suffered the catastrophe (ibid).

TPLF forces dug trenches and fired heavy weapons from civilian residential areas; placing civilians and civilian objects in serious danger of counter-attacks. Additionally, both warring

sides are reportedly engaged in indiscriminate shelling that was not directed at a specific military objective causing civilian deaths, injuries, and damage to civilian property. Similarly, shelling on residential areas in Dessie, Kobo, and Woldiya towns of North and South Wollo Zones caused the death of several civilians and displaced many due to fear (WHRC, 2022)

Government and public buildings were also used as military bases to cook, dine and sleep. According to a report from the Human Rights (2022), TPLF forces have used civilian administration offices and homes as places of convenience. Financial institutions including Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Abbay Bank, and the Amhara Credit and Savings Institution were targets of the attack (Erkihun, 2022). The finance sections, vaults, and documents of these institutions were smashed. The amount of cash stolen and the damage caused is still unknown. Medical equipment including delivery beds were all stolen or destroyed (HR Report, 2022).

Massive displacements of civilians have occurred in all areas affected by the conflict. According to the Ethiopian Human Right Commission report (2021) a significant number of residents of Dessie town have moved to peri-urban areas and some have even moved beyond Dessie. This internal displacement further caused a disruption of families, and societies in the region and even exterminated a long-lived tradition and social cohesion.

The war seems over for now but the far-reaching impacts of it may sustain for a few decades to come. A manifestation of this may be apparent in market places where crowds were observed back in the day and remained empty since TPLF's annexation of Wollo and its environs (WHRC, 2022). This research is, therefore, intended to uncover the post-war scenarios of Dessie town, one of the towns strongly hit by the war. In doing so, the research made its focuses on post-war recoveries, the challenges faced, and the resilience mechanisms employed by the community in the study area.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

According to studies undertaken globally and in Africa, Civil war has an impact on the community, the education sector, and the public service institutions (Human Rightswatch, 2020; Mackinnion, 2014). Studies by Heleta (2013) and Abebaw et al. (2022) indicate that conflicts and violence have a negative influence on people, institutions, states, regions, and even humanitarian efforts. Conflict-affected individuals have a variety of intersecting vulnerabilities and needs that have an impact on several facets of their existence.

The widespread effects of war and violent, protracted wars extend beyond individuals to include institutions, states, and geographic areas. A violent conflict's destruction of the judicial system makes it one of the institutions that must be rebuilt in order to pursue transitional justice through extra-legal means. Even states with strong social and economic infrastructures prior to the conflict will suffer complete loss as a result of damage, supply-chain issues, personnel dispersion, brain drain, late salary payments, and occasionally, international penalties. Internationally, regions are affected by protracted conflicts as well. The widespread movement of migrants and refugees is one indication of how war affects different places (Meryem et al. 2022). Additionally, while the majority of current post-war recovery efforts and procedures have been externally led, certain nations, like Somaliland, have tried organically driving post-war growth. In spite of this, the literature on post-war reconstruction and development is primarily published from a western perspective, which supports externally driven interventions and the imposition of pre-made western solutions in academic and policy-making circles around the world (Heleta, 2013).

As a recent event showed, Ethiopia is experiencing challenges because of the violent conflict between the Ethiopian Federal governments and the TPLF lead force. The war has got international media coverage but the war and its devastations have not got significant attentions among academia (Erkihun, 2022).

There are very few studies papers published after the outbreak of the war in the northern parts of Ethiopia. To mention some, Abebaw et al. (2022) examined the impact of the war on the public health within the war affected zones of Amhara regional state. Tofa et al. (2022) reviewed the patterns of domestic and international reporting and the role of disinformation, misinformation and media bias in the northern conflict which range since November 2020. UNFPA'S Ethiopia

(2022) assessed the preparedness and response plan for the northern Ethiopia crisis on preventing and responding to gender based violence and bridging protection.

Moreover, a report by OCHA (2021) has clarified the impact of the war on Ethiopia's Tigray area since it began in early November 2020. The study looked at the effects of the fighting on the civilian population, including rape, gender-based violence, looting, and the status of the local populace in the area of hostilities. Hailay et al. (2021) investigated the conflict between the federal government of Ethiopia and the TPLF and assessed the impacts of the war on the health system of Tigray region. Abbink (2021) also explored the political analysis of the development of the TPLF induced armed conflict in northern Ethiopia and considered the international responses in media and international policy circle. Furthermore, Erkihun (2022) examined the status of damages and implication of the wall texts, written by the invaders who camped in Wollo University.

All the above-mentioned studies focused mainly on the impacts of the war, on public health facilities, the role that the media played during the course of the war, gender-based violence, and physical damages that has happened due to the war. The above-mentioned studies overlooked the post-war reconstruction process, its multidimensional challenges, and the role of the community resilient mechanisms/social capitals in the process of reconstruction. Therefore, this study will fill the aforementioned gaps and discover new insights on the topic.

Accordingly, this study answers the following research questions: how has the war affected the social, economic, and political fabric of Dessie Town? What are the key challenges facing communities in Dessie town in their post-war recovery? What community resilience mechanisms have been used in Dessie Town to address the challenge of post-war recovery? And what lessons can be learned from the post-war recovery process of Dessie town that could be applied to other communities in conflict-affected areas?

1.3. Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to assess the war in northern Ethiopia (2020-2022) by giving special attention to the post-war recovery, its challenges, and the role of community resilience mechanisms in Dessie Town.

1.3.1. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- ✓ Examine the effect of the war on the social and economic fabrics of Dessie town.
- ✓ Identify the challenges during the post-war recovery.
- ✓ Explore community resilience mechanisms and lessons learnt in Dessie town.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study will have several benefits; first, as various literatures have indicated, there are only a few relative success stories of externally driven attempts to stabilize, reconstruct, and develop cities emerging from war. This is due to the fact that the programs and solutions are imposed from outside. As a result, this study aids in the investigation of alternative internally driven or locally born attempts to reconstruct the study area, by exploring cultural practices, social capital, and resilience mechanisms available to the Dessie community to ensure reconstruction. Second, it provides valuable insights into the challenges facing communities in Dessie Town in their post-war recovery

Third, the study will identify the effectiveness of community resilience mechanisms in Dessie town in addressing the challenges of post-war recovery. This information could be used to promote the replication of successful community resilience mechanisms in other conflict-affected areas. Fourth, the study will identify lessons learned from the post-war recovery process in Dessie town that could be applied to other communities in conflict-affected areas.

Overall, the study will be a valuable contribution to the field of peace and conflict studies and post-war recovery efforts. On top of these, the study will provide insights into the challenges facing communities in post-war recovery, identify effective community resilience mechanisms, and document the experiences of communities in post-war recovery.

1.5. Scope of the Study

I have set both the conceptual and geographical scope of the research. The geographical scope of the study focused in Dawedo, Robit and Borumedakebeles of Dessie town, Amhara regional

state, Ethiopia. Conceptually, the study investigates the post-war reconstruction process, its challenges, and the role played by different stakeholders in the process of reconstruction.

1.6. Research Limitations

In terms of qualitative research, the data collected from informants may be biased since it will have an impact on the study's conclusion; I have used a variety of data collection techniques and informants to address the issue. Another problem was that my study discussed certain delicate subjects, including war casualties, the healing process, government initiatives, the role of the media, and the interaction between the government and the locals. So, my informants assumed I was a spy, and some may have assumed me as I was working for the government as a spy. As a result, some individuals were not open to having their voices recorded. To overcome the problem, I was putting a focus on the confidentiality concerns and giving detail explanation about the intent of the research.

1.7 Field Experience

I arrived in Dessie town on a hot and dusty day on Feb 25, 2023. The town was recovering from the war, which had left a trail of destruction in its wake. Buildings were in ruins, and many people were displaced from their homes. I met with a group of community leaders to discuss the challenges they faced in rebuilding their homes. They told me that many people had lost their livelihoods during the war, and they were struggling to get their daily food. There was the lack of access to basic services. Many schools and hospitals had been destroyed during the war, and some were struggling to operate, despite the prevailing shortage of funding.

Despite these challenges, the community leaders were determined to rebuild their town. They told me that they were working together to create a more resilient community that would be better able to withstand future shocks. One of the ways they were doing this was by strengthening community ties. They were organizing community events and workshops, and they were working to build trust and cooperation between different groups in the community.

They were also working to improve access to basic services. They were lobbying the government for more funding for schools and hospitals, and they were also working to raise money from the community. I was inspired by the resilience of the people of Dessie town. They had faced

immense challenges, but they were determined to rebuild their lives and create a better future for their community. My field work activity was held from February 28 to May 20 in Dessie town, working with the community to document their experiences and collect data on the challenges they were facing. I also interviewed people from different walks of life, including survivors of the war, displaced people, and community leaders.

My field experience in Dessie town gave me a firsthand look at the challenges of post-war recovery. I learned about the importance of community resilience, and I saw how communities can come together to rebuild their lives after a disaster. I am grateful for the opportunity to have contact with the people of Dessie town, and I am confident that they will continue to build a more resilient community.

1.8. Organization of the paper

This study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter included the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, both general and specific, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the limitations of the study and field experience. Chapter two presents a review of different related works of literature, and both theoretical and empirical studies were included. Chapter three presents the description area and methodology employed in conducting the study. Analyses, findings, and discussion are present in chapters four and five. Chapter six presents conclusions and recommendations forwarded by the researcher depending on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

2.1. Introduction

This chapter is organized under three major themes and some other subthemes. The first theme tries to define about war, post-war reconstruction, resilience; community and social capital are described under this section. The second theme is all about empirical studies. The third section of this chapter presents the theoretical perspectives used to explain the study. This section reviews relevant material in order to learn about and comprehend prior experiences and theories in both local and global contexts based on the resources available.

2.2. Conceptual clarification

2.2.1. War

The word ‘war’ is used to describe a range of coercive situations that are military and non-military, violent and non-violent, in nature. War is the continuation of a group’s; be it a tribal element, community, nation-state or super-state; policy using violence as the primary means of oppression. By defining war as the continuation of a group’s policy primarily through violence, war is both untangled from, and linked to, conflict and competition. War is conflict, yet not all conflict is termed war, with the spectrum extending from ‘no conflict’ situations, like humanitarian relief up to and including ‘total war’ between states. This reaffirms that conflict, at any level, is a competition of political and human will that can employ both violent and nonviolent means to persuade a diverse group of actors to achieve a political goal (Nick, 2020).

2.2.2. Post-War Reconstruction

The process of reconstructing the physical infrastructure, establishing a transparent and inclusive system of governance, reviving the economy, and mending strained social ties are all parts of post-war reconstruction. It covers both immediate humanitarian help and medium- to long-term development and reconstruction. Additionally, institutions of government that can guarantee the physical, social, and economic security of citizens must be rebuilt (Heleta, 2013).

Moreover Black (2001) conceptualizes post-war reconstruction as the process of rebuilding a country or region after a war. It involves restoring physical infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and buildings; providing humanitarian assistance to those in need; and rebuilding social and economic institutions. Post-war reconstruction is a complex and challenging process, but it is essential for countries that have experienced war to recover and rebuild.

According to Black (2001) the following are some of the key elements of post-war reconstruction:

1. Physical infrastructure: This includes rebuilding roads, bridges, buildings, and other physical structures that have been damaged or destroyed during the war.
2. Humanitarian assistance: This includes providing food, water, shelter, medical care, and other essential services to those who have been affected by the war.
3. Social and economic institutions: This includes rebuilding schools, hospitals, businesses, and other institutions that are essential for a functioning society.
4. Security: This includes ensuring that the country is secure from further violence and that there is a functioning police force and justice system.

In general, Post-war reconstruction is a long and difficult process, but it is essential for countries that have experienced war to recover and rebuild. By addressing the physical, humanitarian, social, economic, and security needs of the affected population, post-war reconstruction can help to create a foundation for peace and stability in the years to come.

2.2.3. Resilience

Resilience refers to both the process and the outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences. People face all kinds of adversity in life. There are personal crises, such as illness, loss of a loved one, abuse, bullying, job loss, and financial instability. There is the shared reality of tragic events in the news, such as terrorist attacks, mass shootings, natural disasters, a global pandemic, and war. People have to learn to cope with and work through very challenging life experiences (Hurley & Young, 2022).

Resilience is a common psychological term that seemingly everyone uses to describe what it takes to overcome stress but resilience isn't necessarily a state to strive for or something to work toward. Resiliency can be seen both positively and negatively. The degree to which a person may be resilient varies greatly depending on their unique circumstances and the challenges they face. Resilience does not exist in a vacuum. You cannot address resilience without factoring in social determinants like systemic racism, socioeconomic status, and of course, mental and physical health. Still, a growing body of evidence suggests that most people exhibit resilience after experiencing a traumatic event. Plus, there are ways to foster resilient behaviors that can help you adapt to and recover from stressful events (Gokbayrak and Rice, 2022).

2.2.3.1 Types of Resilience

Resilience represents an ability to handle life's setbacks and is an overall representation of adaptability. However, there are also different types of resilience, physical resilience, mental resilience, emotional resilience and social resilience and each of them can influence a person's ability to cope with various forms of stress (Cherry&Susman , 2022).

2.2.3.1.1. Physical Resilience

Physical resilience refers to how the body deals with change and recovers from physical demands, illnesses, and injuries. Research suggests that this type of resilience plays an important role in health. It affects how people age as well as how they respond and recover from physical stress and medical issues.

Physical resilience is something that people can improve to a certain extent by making healthy lifestyle choices. Getting enough sleep, eating a nutritious diet, and engaging in regular exercise are just a few ways to strengthen this type of resilience.

2.2.3.1.2. Mental Resilience

Mental resilience refers to a person's ability to adapt to change and uncertainty. People who possess this type of resilience are flexible and calm during times of crisis. They use mental strength to solve problems, move forward, and remain hopeful even when they are facing setbacks.

2.2.3.1.3. Emotional Resilience

Emotional resilience involves being able to regulate emotions during times of stress. Resilient people are aware of their emotional reactions and tend to be in touch with their inner life. Because of this, they are also able to calm their mind and manage their emotions when they are dealing with negative experiences. This type of resilience also helps people maintain a sense of optimism when times are tough. Because they are emotionally resilient, they understand that adversity and difficult emotions won't last forever.

2.2.3.1.4. Social Resilience

Social resilience, which may also be called community resilience, involves the ability of groups to recover from difficult situations. It involves people connecting with others and working together to solve problems that affect people both individually and collectively. Aspects of social resilience include coming together after disasters, supporting each other socially, becoming aware of the risks that the community faces, and building a sense of community. Such responses can be important during challenges such as natural disasters that affect communities or large groups of people.

2.2.4. Community

The definition of community as a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, when we say Social ties were described in terms of interpersonal relationships that formed the foundation for community and also community share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings Queen, et al. (2001).

Community can be considered as a theoretical concept and a philosophy, such as 'community spirit' or 'connected community'. Alternatively community may be considered as a practice of engaging and connecting with others for instance 'creating community' or 'building community'. No agreed definition exists of exactly what constitutes a community (Douglas, 2010).

A community can be defined as a set of meaningful social connections in any size group where members have something in common. A community is social. It is a web of some kind of relationships. A community operates within certain boundaries that are either implicitly or explicitly agreed upon by its members. Each community establishes traditions and patterns of behavior which may be implied or written as rules. Members of a community have something in common, such as a common location, interests, background or identity, situations or experiences.

Thus a community is a social institution, that is, a stable structure and agreed set of procedures and conventions that provides social order and meaning (Scott, 2001 p. 34 cited in Douglas2010).

2.2.5. Social Capital

Guiso et al., (2006) define social capital as a complex multidimensional concept encompassing list of cultural and social value systems. Recently, it has become a very popular and engaging concept among social scientists. A growing number of sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and economists have employed the concept to explain various economic and social outcomes. The fundamental notion of social capital is to incorporate socio-cultural factors to explain development outcomes. It has emerged as a prominent topic of discussion among academics, development specialists, and policymakers. The history of social capital traces a long way back to classical economists, such as Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, and sociologists, such as Max Weber, who provided the cultural explanation to economic phenomena (Guiso et al., 2006).

The term social capital refers to a positive product of human interaction. The positive outcome may be tangible or intangible and may include favors, useful information, innovative ideas, and future opportunities. Social capital is not held by an individual, but instead appears in the potential between social network connections between individuals (Kenton, 2019).

According to Svendsen and Svendsen (2005), social capital shares some characteristics with other types of capital and thus can be considered capital. Their argument is that, like physical, economic, or human capital, social capital can provide immediate benefits to individuals (in the form of information or assistance from friends). We can convert social capital into other forms of capital (get a better job). We can also cultivate social capital in the hope of future benefits, applying strategies modified by cultural codes. However, it is different from other forms of capital in the sense that it cannot be exclusively owned by single individual and it is prevalingly a non-excludable good. Social capital can benefit many actors at the same time (Schmid, 2002).

Quibria (2003) reviewed different definitions and comments concluding that social capital is an individual asset that comes from access to networks and social connections; whereas others view it as a shared asset is one that exists in a homogeneous collective entity, such as a community,

that has common interests and values. Some others have focused on trust and tolerance, while others have focused on the degree of civic and social engagements as the vehicle of such social capital. Others have raised concerns about culture and social norms.

Social capital is a productive resource with variable quantities (stocks and flows) and characteristics (trust, reciprocity, norms, social networks, and information channels). It is a resource that requires investment (Lin, 2001).

2.3. Empirical Studies

2.3.1. Post-War Recovery

A study made by Oviedo, et al. (2022) on the Coping and Resilience Strategies among Ukraine War Refugees. Shows a plurality of coping and resilience strategies maintaining communication with separated loved ones as well as experiencing accompaniment by helpers and hosts emerged as principal elements for coping and resilience. It was found that a prior development of interior life or practice of prayer served as psychological “capital” that increased their resilience.

Nwoha and Emelonye (2020) conducted research on the Role of women in post-conflict reconstruction. They evaluated various efforts and lessons learned from post-conflict reconstruction globally, across the African continent, and in Uganda more particularly and they investigated the role of different actors, including women in post-conflict reconstruction with a view to understanding the politics behind most post-conflict reconstruction actions.

Sakalasuriya et al. (2018) carried out a conceptual framework to analyze the consequences of post-conflict reconstruction intervention. In this study, a novel conceptual framework is proposed to analyze the consequences of a post-conflict reconstruction intervention, linking these consequences to context, intervention, and long-term outcomes. The framework can be used as a basis to develop a policy framework to assess the consequences of reconstruction in a post-conflict context.

Somasundaram and Sivayokan (2013) studied the Re-building community resilience in a post-war context, developing in sight and recommendation - a qualitative study in northern Sri Lanka. In their findings they indicated the widespread trauma at the individual, family, and collective levels, community-based programs to increase local awareness, knowledge and skills to deal

with common mental health and psychosocial issues; and training of community-level workers and others in basic mental health and psychosocial problem solving are recommended to rebuild family and community agency and resilience. The use of cultural practices and school-based programs would rekindle community processes.

Hoeffler et al. (2010) conducted a study on post-conflict recovery and peace-building. their finding also show that the effect of war on the country's risk rating. Unsurprisingly, during the war the risk ratings worsen but post-war the improvements in the ratings don't mirror the economic recovery. The ratings only show some improvement after two years of peace. Janvier D. Nkurunziza (2008) research on civil-war and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa and find out one of the priorities of post-conflict reconstruction must be to put in place the necessary institutional and physical infrastructure to rebuild the financial systems; limit capital flight and foster capital repatriation; and adopt policies that encourage the donor community to provide and sustain large amounts of aid, the main source of funding of the reconstruction process in the short to medium term following a civil war.

2.3.2 Ethiopian Case

Herut and Dube (2022) conducted research on post-conflict reconstruction of education in Gedeo and West Guji zone of southern Ethiopia. In this study they discussed on re-erupted between the Gedeo and Guji ethnic groups in southern Ethiopia in April 2018 and they looked at the effects of this conflict in education severely disrupted in the Gedeo and West Guji zones and also they indicate many schools were damaged or looted, and thus no longer provided safe learning environments, while others were repurposed as temporary shelters for internally displaced people. In their finding, they examine the reconstruction of education in the study area using primary data gathered from parents, teachers, administrators and humanitarian agencies through qualitative interviews. They found that post-conflict reconstruction of education is poor and based on short-term normalization rather than aiming for long-term sustainable safe learning environments for children and youth in the study areas.

A report made by Ashenafi, (2022) on conflict recovery plan to kick off in month. This project is designed to rehabilitate infrastructures damaged by war and conflicts and resume basic

services including health, education, electricity, sanitation, supporting gender-based violence survivors and others.

The projects will be implemented in Oromia, Amhara, Afar, BenishangulGumuz and Tigray regional states, and will be implemented for five years between 2022 and 2027. The project office is staffed with local as well as foreign experts.

2.4. Theoretical framework

There are various theories that have been developed to understand community resilience. Some of the most notable theories include: the resource-based theory of community resilience, which was developed by Kathleen Tierney and her colleagues in the early 2000s. This theory argues that communities with access to resources, such as financial capital, human capital, and natural resources, are better able to recover from shocks and stresses. The social capital theory was first developed by Pierre Bourdieu in the 1980s, and it has since been expanded upon by other sociologists, such as James Coleman and Robert Putnam. This theory posits that communities with strong social ties and networks are more resilient to shocks and stresses. The community psychology theory was developed by James Garbarino and colleagues in the 1980s. This theory focuses on the role of individual and community factors in promoting mental health and well-being. The political economy theory was developed by Michael Watts and colleagues in the 1980s. This theory examines the relationship between political and economic factors and social outcomes. The constructivist theory of resilience, which was developed by Ann Masten and colleagues in the 1990s, this theory, argues that resilience is not a fixed trait, but rather a dynamic process that is shaped by individual and environmental factors. These are just a few of the theories that have been developed to understand community resilience.

2.4.1. Social Capital theories

For developing a theory of community resilience a highly relevant theme is social capital. Like resilience social capital is a concept transferred from one discipline i.e. economics to other (Bourdieu, 1985; Norris et al., 2007). Also like resilience, a variety of definitions and criticisms of these definitions have appeared. The basic idea of social capital is that individuals invest access and use resources embedded in social network to gain returns. It can also be defined as the

aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of relationship.

Sociology has long used the idea of social capital, though not the phrase, to explain various facets of social life (Andriani, 2013). Due to Durkheim's emphasis on group life as a cure for anomie and Marx's distinction between a separate class in itself and an organized class for itself, the idea that involvement and participation in social life can have positive effects on both individuals and the community at large is one that has historical roots (Portes, 1998). However, the idea is now developed and realistically applicable for at least two reasons. First, it begins by concentrating on the advantages of sociability. Social relationships with its key features like cooperation, reciprocity and trust involved in these relationships can have a positive impact on societal wealth, for instance, by reducing transaction costs, facilitating collective actions and lowering opportunistic behaviors (Andrini, 2013). Two, it puts these positive consequences in the framework of a larger discussion of capital and emphasize how such nonmonetary forms can be sources of power and influence (Portes, 1998). This in part has led to a wider understanding and conceptualization of social capital.

According to Putnam (1993), social capital refers to aspects of societal organization like trust, norms, and networks that can increase society's efficiency by promoting coordinated activity. Social capital, according to Bourdieu (1986), is the total of the actual or potential resources connected to ownership of a long-lasting network of more or less formalized connections of mutual recognition and acquaintance. The rules, networks, and reciprocities that enable the members of a certain society or the members of certain collectively are generally referred to as social capital.

A community is made up of several social groups, including family, friends, colleagues, and so on. Close friends and relatives frequently have a close bond, and those in this circle are more likely to share or have similar information. By expanding his or her social network, an individual can gain more knowledge and cooperate with others. These expanded circles are crucial following an unexpected surprise, like a war. In the instance of the post-war era, the degree of effects the restructuring of rebuilding has on the research field can be analyzed in relation to the social circle.

From the above discussion, I found the social capital approach essential and used in this study to understand the effectiveness of community resilience mechanisms. It is well fit to discuss the research questions and specific objectives of my study. Moreover, the approach is helpful as a possible means to explain the role society plays in the process of post-war recovery.

2.4.2. Community Resilience Theory

There is no single person who developed resilience theory. It is a complex concept that has been studied by many different researchers over the years. Some of the most notable contributors to resilience theory include: Norman Garmezy: Garmezy was a clinical psychologist who conducted pioneering research on resilience in children at risk for developing mental health problems. He developed the concept of "stress-resistant children," which refers to children who are able to cope with adversity and thrive despite exposure to risk factors. Michael Rutter: Rutter is a British psychologist who has conducted extensive research on resilience in children and adults. He developed the "transactional model of resilience," which emphasizes the importance of the interaction between individual and environmental factors in shaping resilience. Ann Masten: Masten is an American developmental psychologist who has studied resilience in children and families. She developed the "cumulative risk and protective factor model," which identifies the factors that contribute to resilience and the factors that increase risk for maladaptation (Greene et al., 2004; Norris et al., 2007; Magis, 2010).

These are just a few of the many researchers who have contributed to resilience theory. Resilience is a complex concept that is still being studied and understood. However, the work of these researchers has helped to shed light on the factors that contribute to resilience and the ways in which resilience can be promoted.

Based on the stated objectives, I used community resilience theory as the framework for my thesis. This theory argues that communities can recover from adversity by building up their adaptive capacities. These capacities include social capital, economic resources, and a sense of community identity (Robertson et al., 2021). My thesis explore the post-war recovery activities in Dessie town, investigate the multi-dimensional challenges towards the reconstruction activities, and describe the community based resilience and social capitals mechanism in the study area. Accordingly, Community resilience theory can help to understand how these factors

have influenced the recovery of Dessie town from the war. Specifically, I employed community resilience theory to explore the following questions:

- ✓ How has social capital helped the people of Dessie town to recover from the war?
- ✓ What economic resources have been most important for the recovery of Dessie town?
- ✓ How has a sense of community identity helped the people of Dessie town to cope with the challenges of war and to rebuild their community? Additionally, I also used community resilience theory to identify the challenges that have hindered the recovery of Dessie town. For example, I used to explore the following questions:
 - ✓ What political and economic factors have made it difficult for Dessie town to recover from the war?
 - ✓ What psychological trauma has the war caused, and how has this affected the recovery of Dessie town?

In General, even though one theory alone could not fully explain a society and how it functions, I believe that community resilience theory is a good fit for my study because it can help me to understand the factors that have influenced the recovery of Dessie town from the war. This theory can also help to identify the challenges that still need to be addressed in order for Dessie town to fully recover from the war.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

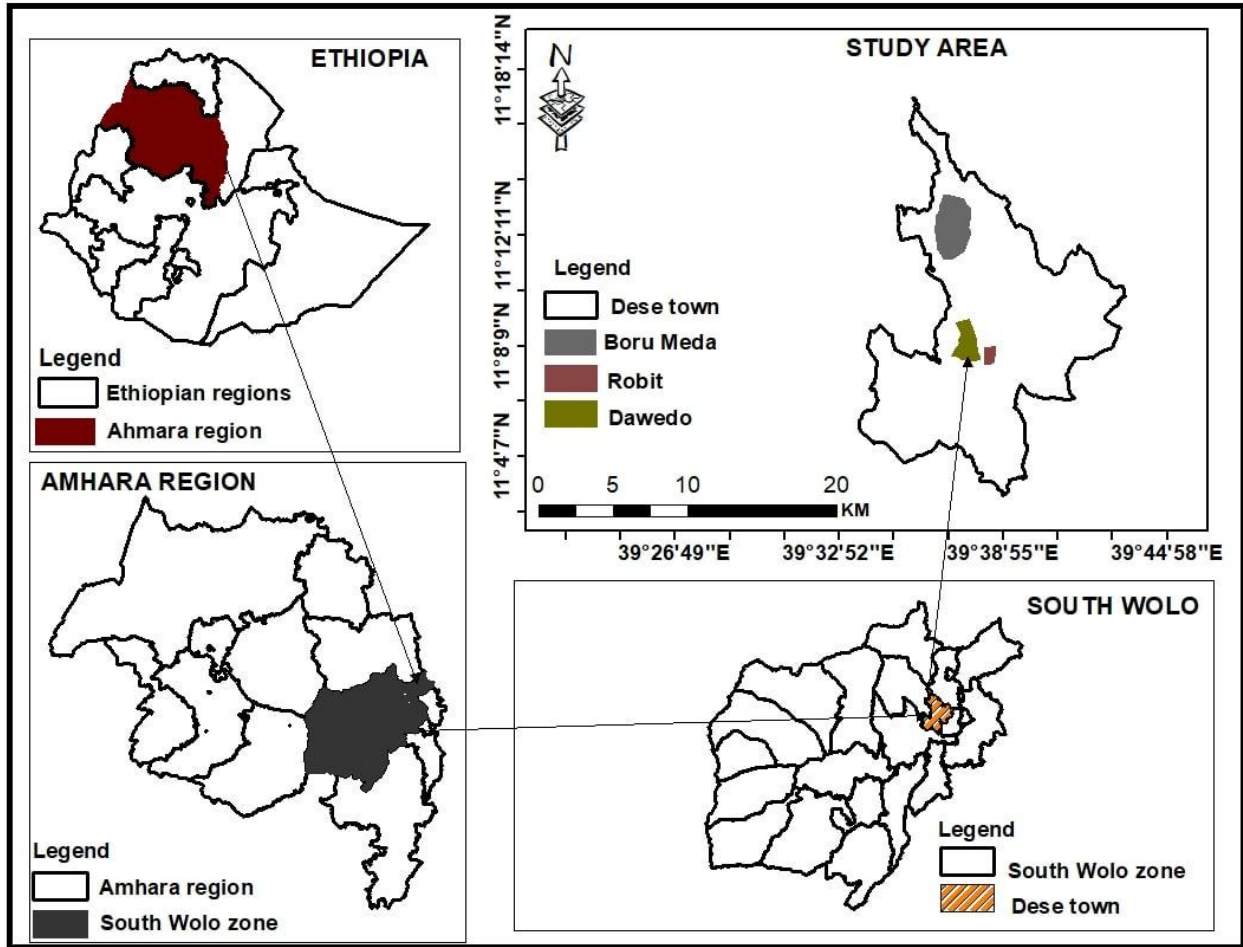
In this section description of the study area, the study design, the research approach, as well as the data gathering and analysis process are explained. The plan for implementing the data quality assurance strategy is also presented. The ethical principles that guide this investigation are presented at the end.

3.2. Description of the Study Area and Its people

Amhara National Regional State, with Bahir Dar as the regional capital, is one of the eleven regions in Ethiopia; located in the North western part of the country. Amhara region is divided into eleven administrative zones; each zone is also further divided into “Woredas” (Tourism commission, 2014). South Wollo Zone located in the central highland of Ethiopia is one of the eleven administrative zones of the region, it borders with North Wollo in the north, with East Gojjam in the West, with North Shewa in the south, and with Afar region and Oromia Zone in the east (ibid). My study area is Dessie town situated in South Wollo zone. Dessie was founded as a town in 1886 by Negus Michael (Balcha, 2021).

Dessie is one of the oldest cities in Ethiopia and the capital city of South Wollo Zone in the Amhara National Regional State. It is located on the Addis Ababa - Mekelle highway, at about 400 km north of Addis Ababa. It sits at a latitude and longitude of 11°8'N 39°38'E, with an elevation between 2,470 and 2,550 metres above sea level. Based on the 2007 national census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), Dessie had a total population of 151,174, of which 72,932 were men and 78,242 were women; 120,095 people or 79.44% were urban inhabitants living in the town of Dessie, while the rest of the population (31,079 people) were in the rural kebeles around Dessie (CSA, 2007).

Figure 1:Map of the study Area



Source:DessieTown Mayor’s Office (2023).

Dessie City's name, "Dese," is associated with three things, according to the historians who mentioned the great fathers. There was a woman named "Dese" who sold food in the area now called *Segno Gebeya*, and one of them said that it was named after her. The second one is associated with the Emperor Yohannes, when he came to the area and explored the area, was fascinated by its lushness and natural setting, so he said it was a place called "Des" and said "Dessie" in the sense of happiness. In the third Emperor Theodores also pitched his tent when he penetrated the area and settled in *Jeme* area. The tent they used at that time was called "Happiness". It is said that they named it "Dessie" for the joy of the area, matching the name of the tent. It is said that Dessie city was called *Lacommelza* before it was named Dessie (Dessie town administration office magazine, 2009).

The average elevation of the town ranges from 2400 to 2800 meter above sea level. The town is bounded and squeezed by a series of ranges and escarpments with rugged surfaces between the cliffs of Tossa and Azuwa, and Borkena River divides this basin in to two parts. Dessie falls within “Dega” agro climatic zone with an average monthly minimum and maximum temperature of 12.370c and 26.270c respectively. And it is ideal for human habitation. Kalu district and Kombolcha city administration are neighbors in the east; Albko and Dessie districts are neighbors in the south; Tosa Mount and Dessie district are neighbors in the west; and Kutaber and Tehuledere district are neighbors in the north (Dessie town administration office magazine, 2009).

Dessie is further divided into 5 sub-cities, Segno-Gebya, Hotie, Arada, Bomboweha, and Menafesha sub-cities and 18 Kebeles. The residents mainly follow Christianity and Islam, and Protestants, Catholics, and other religions are also present in the city. Religious tolerance and respect, hospitality, respect for elders and religious leaders, patriotism, and helping and caring for others are all good values. They live in the city with people from other parts of the country. The community has a unique history of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. This community consists of a large number of Muslims and Christians. There is a thick historical record that this community exhibits a harmonious and peaceful contact and an intense sense of belongingness. The Wollo community is far more than mixed. There is a strong blood tie as there is intermarriage among Muslims and Christians. There is also cultural diffusion, and a strong sense of togetherness that has been held for generations. Many significant cultural and historical contexts tie the Muslim-Christian Community to a great extent (ibid).

Dessie is a part of Wollo, thus having a similar style of culture, with the other near distance neighbors, in the city there are difference dwellers came from around zone and districts, they are exercise own culture without any influence. So Dessie having similar style of cultural clothing, music and dances, men’s traditional clothing is mostly similar to the rest of the Amhara region. Women’s traditional clothing include a *habeshakemis*, which is dress as well as a matching scarf, sometimes two, one tied around the waist and the other over the hair. Lastly, obviously the people of Dessie are very generous, wise and support each other and also communal. There is no

ethnic or religious competition or conflict in the city. The people have lived together, so they have intermingled and respected each other.

3.3. Research Paradigm

This section represents the specific perspective of the research methodology. It is a fundamental set of ideas that determines how I conducted the study. Accordingly, out of the four various worldviews, the social constructivist worldview is the one that was used in this study. I preferred this philosophical assumption because it enables me to understand and make sense of what the communities in my study areas really understand their situation (Creswell 2009:26). As a result, I make the assumption that reality is socially produced in the research setting and that there are other equally legitimate realities. I would consequently adopt a relativist ontology in which a single phenomenon may have several interpretations. The study's epistemological premise, on the other hand, is subjective, which means that social reality is interpreted. Contrary to positivist theory, it is assumed that I and the participant would jointly build knowledge.

3.4. Research approach and Design

There are various research methodologies available, and one can choose the best one to accomplish the study's goal. The aforementioned philosophical presumption and the goal of the research at hand determine which methodological approaches, (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodologies), should be used. Since the primary goal of this study is to examine the post-war reconstruction process, a qualitative approach is the best-fitting methodology. This is due to the tendency of qualitative research that examines facts beyond numbers, deep explanation, and interpretation it usually requires to make claims on issues. A qualitative approach involves becoming more closely connected to the phenomena under investigation. Through the process of triangulation, which combines the use of secondary data with the primary data observation, interviews, concentrated group discussions, casual chats, and life histories qualitative assessments can be applied.

A phenomenological research design was employed in the study. In order to grasp social reality, the aim of a phenomenological study is not to directly solve problems or generalize situations, but rather to better understand the lived experiences of specific populations. With this in mind,

using a phenomenological study design help to assess the lived experience, as well as the existing situations or trends of the Dessie people after the war. It also helps to look at the experience of the reconstruction process and the challenges by pointing out different cases. Also helps to look at the experiences that the community resilient mechanisms used in the reconstruction processes.

3.5. Sampling strategy

Among the different types of sampling, the non-probability sampling approach is used in the investigation. Non-probability sampling, sometimes referred to as non-random sampling, is a procedure in which it is impossible to determine the possibility that each component would be included in the samples. The researcher used their judgment in selecting the units for this sample (Abate, 2018). Specific techniques of non-probability sampling like purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques were used to determine informants for this research.

Therefore, I purposely choose participants based on the knowledge, experience, and close attachment that the person has with my research topic. The snowball sample method is employed to determine participants for In-depth interviews, focus groups, and case studies and for site selection; the purposive sampling method was applied.

So to collect the relevant information, I used purposive sampling techniques for site selection. There are 5 sub-cities and 18 kebeles in Dessie town; among these sub-cities, I have chosen Hote and Menafesha sub-city purposely, of which Dawdo Keble and Robit Keble from Hote sub-city and Borumeda Keble from Menafesha sub-city are selected purposely because those three kebeles were highly affected during the war, and their social capital is highly visible in the post-war reconstruction process.

3.6. Method of Data Collection

This study was carried out using qualitative research methodology, with various primary and secondary sources of data being collected, described, and analyzed for better presentation. The following sections describe data collection techniques.

1. PRIMARY SOURCES OF DATA

The primary data, on which the study relies, employed qualitative techniques of data collection such as observation, interview, informal discussion, FGD and case studies.

Observation

Observation is a fundamental and important method in qualitative inquiry, it is a systematic viewing of specific phenomena in their proper settings, as one of the different fieldwork techniques in ethnographic studies observation helps to look at the basic thinking behind undertaking the fieldwork as what is going in the natural setting where the study community lives, their interactions, situations of their livelihood in general and geographical environment.

Furthermore, the observation method helped me to watch and keep details records of each event and practices, which are carried out in the natural setting of the study area. The rationale behind the selection of observation as a tool for data collection is that the method enables me in constructing effective and reliable information while being there in the study area. Also, the decision to use observation as a data collection strategy was made because it allows me to gather accurate and trustworthy information while being in fieldwork. It offers me the chance to observe and track the routine activities of the society being studied, as well as to learn about their culture and engage with their indigenous knowledge. So that in this study I observed what the post-war recovery situation in Dessie town looks like, such as the scene of the town after the war is over, the damages registered and the attempts made to reconstruct the ruined health facilities, the university, and other schools.

In-Depth Interview

In-depth interviews are a crucial part of qualitative data collection. People with information who are trustworthy, introspective, and good storytellers in the community can be chosen as key informants (Barnard, 1994:166). Individual interviews offer a chance to learn how people directly reflect on the conduct, circumstances, identity events, and other things, whereas observation almost always provides information about the activity in action. In-depth interviews are therefore quite helpful in achieving the main objective of a qualitative study and providing an insider's perspective.

Accordingly, a total number of 22 informants have been interviewed. Of which 15 of them were selected from the local people based on their diverse experience of the northern Ethiopian war, their knowledge of the history and culture of the study area and their engagement in the reconstruction process of the town. Through purposive and snowball sampling informants including elders, women, the youth, the direct victims, and actors involved in the reconstruction process are incorporated as informants. The other 4 are selected from concerned bodies related with the war and from government offices and 3 are selected from the non-governmental organizations that work on the recovery from the war.

By drafting an interview guideline, in-depth and unstructured interview formats were used in this study to find out what are the multi-dimensional challenges towards the reconstruction activities and also to identify what are the community-based resilience mechanisms and the role of social capital towards reconstruction activities. All of the interviews were recorded on audio after getting the participants' consent. The interview takes 50 to 60 minutes. This technique is an effective tool for displaying greater information on people's opinions and attitudes toward their way of life and behavior.

Focused Group Discussion

The FGD approach involves inviting a group of individuals to meet up and have a discussion on a certain topic. The objective is to spark the discussion so that participants can dive deep into the topic (Vaughn, et.al, 1996 as cited in Hatch, 2002:132). It is one of the many methods for gathering data in which a variety of participants, regardless of age, gender, or role, take part. This approach provides a group consensus and is used to cross-check data coming from group dynamics.

Therefore, I conducted three FGD groups, each with eight people from the selected kebeles: the first was conducted discussions with community members who are youths; the second was conducted with community elders; and the third one was with war victims. This method enables the researcher to collect rich data in the form of conversations with various personalities within a specific time frame.

Informal Conversation

This method of data collection is important to get both direct and indirect information and issues related to the study by directing the informants in connection with the researched topic while they are doing their own activities like at markets, in the coffee ceremony and in the social gathering. The basic philosophy behind doing informal conversation was because making such informal interaction was mostly free of age, gender, and role and status boundary. Therefore, they talk freely, unhide facts about the community life situation or living style, it also gives the researcher to forward unlimited questions according to the situation of informal discussion.

Mostly the conversations are carried out informally while the people are doing their day to day activities, it may be during their leisure time, in coffee ceremony, in their daily task, at the market or through walking together with them and so on.

As far as topic of my research is politically sensitive, people usually hesitate to speak their mind and it is always difficult to ask structured question about the war that has totally changed the life of many people in my study area. Hence, informal conversation creates a good chance to compliment this problem and allow me to get all the necessary data. This method is also helped me to make rapport with different personalities.

Case study

Case studies capture a range of perspectives, as opposed to the single view of an individual giving the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the subject of the life history of those individuals. By using this method I narrate the story of 3 individuals from the selected study area. Who are good storytellers and volunteer to share their experience from the multi-dimensional challenges they face towards the re-constriction process. These informants were selected by using a purposive sampling technique.

2. Secondary Sources of Data

Documents are any written or visual materials that describe a specific phenomenon. Although documents are created by people or organizations for purposes other than social research, the researcher can use them for cognitive goals (Corbetta, 2003). Additional important sources of knowledge include existing materials in a variety of formats, such as textual, visual, audio, and

video (Finnegan, 2006). Documentary sources are therefore crucial. These sources were used in this study as a supplement to the data that would also be acquired from government records, newspapers, periodicals, archival materials, unpublished and published research papers, article journals, and any other freely accessible resources.

3.7. Data Analysis

As far as anthropological research is concerned, since the main technique of data collection of this research like key informant interviews, informal discussions, focus group discussions, and case studies is concerned, thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. It is a flexible method that can be used to analyze a variety of data sources, including interviews, focus groups, text, and images (Caulfield, 2023). The reason I choose this method is that, it helps me to analyze a variety of data sources including interviews, focused group discussions, cases and images. It also allows me to identify patterns of meaning in the data.

Every recorded voice that I obtained from my informants was transcribed and then translated into English as part of the thematic analysis. Then I went over all of the translated data and coded it in a way that allows me to identify the primary themes of the research. I then used various quotes from informants to analyze theoretical difficulties in relation to empirical data, and I correlated literature with my findings. Moreover, interpretations of facts are made based on the world view of my informants.

3.8. Data Quality Assurance

To make specific research healthy and exact, we need to consider data quality assurance through the aspects of validity and reliability. Validity implies the trustworthiness, utility, and dependability that the evaluator and the different stakeholders place on it (Kothari, 2004). In this case, I should have to answer the data that I gathering relevant to my research question (will they help me to answer my research question or test my hypothesis)?

I have used a standardized interview guideline questions that was translated from the English version into Amharic. It was retrieved again to ensure its convenience. Besides the instruments, content-wise, the arrangement was checked. Also, I was going to ensure the validity of

qualitative data using distinctive technical means. However, I was promote its quality through formulating a good rapport, clarifying the objectives of the research to informants, approaching informants with friendliness, and getting trust and respecting the cultural values of the participants, which was some of the procedures to improve the trustworthiness of the information. Furthermore, data triangulation is often helpful for using several techniques for the same method so that one technique's weakness is offset by the other's strength. To address the credibility of the study data triangulations, references to articles from peer reviewed Scopus/WOS journals were used (Lincoln &Guba, 1985).

3.9. Ethical Consideration

The study has got approval letter from Hawassa university department of Anthropology. In the proposed study, the following ethical issues were taking into account in all stages of the research process. Before the collection of the data, the informants were asked permission and those who were not interested for the study were not forced to participate as informants. Also, the participant's confidentiality, privacy and anonymity were guarantee. Therefore, minimizing of harm, informed consent, and confidentiality were guaranteed throughout the entire data gathering procedure, analysis process, and distribution of the outcome. All participants were made aware of the topic's nature and the proposed use of the data, as well as its content, before to the data. Regarding confidentiality, informant's names was changed to anonymity and comment attribution was covered up. During the field work, I tried to be polite, treat people with respect and do not do or say anything that will harm them, as Good manners are good beginnings.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. WAR IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA

Introduction

The previous chapter gave an overview of issues like reviews of related literature, and methodological issues. This chapter provided analyses of the result and discussion to explore the war in northern Ethiopia and its impact in Dessie which constitute the heart of the study.

4.1. Context of the War

Abebe and Belaineh (2022) argue Ethiopia is dealing with a number of interconnected humanitarian challenges, such as conflict, climatic changes, COVID-19, desert locust infestation, and more. Nearly 30 million people are impacted by these interconnected problems, which pose a threat to protection, displacement, and food security. As of February 2022, it was projected that over 2.5 million people had been displaced as a result of the humanitarian catastrophe brought on by fighting in the northern Ethiopian provinces of Amhara, Afar, and Tigray which started in November 2020. 9.4 million People in the area needed humanitarian assistance as of May 2022. Assets both public and private have been destroyed, livelihoods that were already precarious have been harmed, and communities now desperately need assistance (Abebe and Belaineh, 2022b).

The recent war in Northern Ethiopia was arguably started once TPLF attacks on federal military installations in the Tigray in November 2020 and the military reaction of the Federal Government of Ethiopia (GoE). The Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) has mounted this response in coordination with Eritrean forces and, occasionally, local militias (Abbink, 2021). Civil society and the general public have occasionally supported armed government engagement in the conflict. In turn, the TPLF has accused federal government of accumulating too much power for itself and that it was engaging in an ethnic discrimination of Tigrians(Abeba, 2022). Late in June 2021, the fighting dramatically intensified; as a result, the GoE unilaterally proclaimed a ceasefire. When ENDF forces left Tigray, the TPLF took over most of the area, and the conflict spread to nearby districts in the Amhara (North Wollo, South Wollo, North Gondar, South Gondar, Tegegie, and Waghimera) and Afar (Zone 2 and Zone 4)

regions. In response, on November 2, 2021, the GoE issued a nationwide state of emergency (removed in late January 2022), under which NGOs and media outlets might have their licenses terminated if they were thought to be assisting "terrorist organizations" (Erkihun, 2022). As a result, humanitarian organizations restricted their access to the Tigray region during this period, severely escalating the humanitarian crisis. The ENDF retook control of the Afar and Amhara regions in the meantime (Abbink, 2021b).

As a key observer of the war, informants from the key informant interview believes, the war in the northern parts of Ethiopia is due to disagreement over the balance of power between the federal and Tigrian regional authorities. An elder informant said: "I think this conflict is a political rather than conflict between peoples". The TPLF wants to maintain a federal system that gives more power to the regions, while the federal government wants to create a more centralized state. These different visions for Ethiopia have led to a power struggle between the two sides, which have resulted in the conflict.

A secondary school teacher key Informant summed up the prominence period of TPLF as follows:

After ten years of opposing the military government that controls Ethiopia, the TPLF rose to prominence in 1991 when it took the helm of the coalition that formed the government. The TPLF dominated Ethiopian politics during its rule and supported an ethnic federalist structure that granted major legislative and executive responsibilities to nine regions that were mostly established in accordance with ethno-linguistic identities. (Interview with R8, Robit, March 12, 2023)

However, though there were some economic developments, the TPLF was criticized as exercising disproportionate power within the ruling coalition. The coalition i.e. the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) comprising of four regional ruling parties, each of which was given an equal voting share despite large demographic deference's benefiting the TPLF greatly (Abebe and Belaineh, 2022).

TPLF, the primary political party representing Tigray, has a history of dominating leadership coalition and politics of the national level despite Tigrians representing an ethnic minority. However, the Tigrians control of the national politics comes to an end in 2018, when prime

minister Abiy Ahmed Ali comes to power, who was heralded by international actors and Ethiopians alike as the country's new hope for peace and ethnic harmony (OCHA, 2022).

Within a year, ethnic relations in Ethiopia had once again begun to deteriorate on the political stage. Multiple delays of the national election and the declaration of an extension make the Tigrian officials unhappy. Then the Tigrian state council's choice to hold the local elections in defiance of the federal order inflamed tensions even further (Abbink 2022). Following the TPLF'S regional victory, the federal government accused the Tigrian troops of attacking a federal military camp to loot weapons. Then it became clear that the combative political rhetoric in fall 2020 had signified the first warning shots of what would become bloody civil war (Abebaw, 2022).

Moreover, the outbreak of the war in Tigray triggered a refugee and displacement crisis. In 2021 Ethiopia reported 5.1 million internally displaced people in twelve months, the most people internally displaced in any country in any single year. Millions more have fled to neighboring countries. Finally, the war spread to the nearby Amhara and Afar regions (ibid).

4.1.1. Dessie: A city on the brinks of war

Dessie is a city in northern Ethiopia, located in the Amhara Region. It is the capital of the Dessie Zone and has a population of over 300,000 people. Dessie is a major commercial and transportation hub and is home to universities and colleges. The city has a long history, dating back to the 16th century. It was an important trading center during the reign of the Ethiopian Emperor Tewodros II in the 19th century. In the early 20th century, Dessie was the capital of the Ethiopian Empire under Emperor Menelik II (Abbink, 2021b). In recent years, Dessie has been on the brink of war. In 2020, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) launched an offensive against the Ethiopian government, beginning the Tigray War. The TPLF quickly captured a number of towns in northern Ethiopia, including Dessie.

About the situation in Dessie before the outbreak of the war a resident said: "Dessie was a major economic hub for the region. It was home to a number of factories and businesses, and it was a major trading center. The city was relatively peaceful before the war, though there had been political tensions in the region."(Interview with R1, Borumeda, March 15, 2023)

The informant's description of Dessie before the war is important because it provides a context for understanding the impact of the war. The war has had a devastating impact on the city, and it is likely to take many years for it to recover.

On this regard, the elder (Key Informant from Dawedo Keble) claims that as they were not prepared for the war because of believing the government propaganda. The elder states the situation as follows:

Though there was fighting near the university in Dessie, all the banks and telecoms were operating normally, but on Saturday afternoon, the government army unexpectedly left the town. Because of the act, some have claimed that this war is a plot to weaken the Amhara people. During this time, a match and a candle were sold for 300 birr because nobody anticipated this to occur.(Interview with R12, Dawedo, April 11, 2023)

The informant is describing the events that took place in Dessie on Saturday afternoon. The informant said that there was fighting nears the university, but that the banks and telecoms were still operating normally. However, the government army unexpectedly left the town. This caused a lot of fear and uncertainty among the people of Dessie. The informant also says that a match and a candle were sold for 300 birr because nobody anticipated the government's withdrawal. This shows the level of panic and fear that was caused by the events of Saturday afternoon.

On the other hand, the information from FGD session one shows that, there were two emotions before the town fell under the control of the TPLF: dread and hope. There are a lot of manifestations of the dread; among these is the fact that there was no movement in the town; no one moved, and the people were in lockdown for nearly three days. The situation was quite worrying, and the information that the people learned about the battle was ominous as well, like the TPLF army's reputation as being ruthless, rapist, burning down homes, and robbing residents of their possessions. The noises of heavy weapons coming from the war ground make nearby townspeople fearful. Many people lost faith and fled to surrounding towns like Debresina and Debreberhan when the TPLF-led army approached Dessie. A week before the TPLF-led army took control of Dessie, many people departed the city. A teacher who lives in Robit kebele states as follows:

I made an effort to stock up on things like food, candles, solar batteries, and other things we could need. However, starting two days before the TPLF took control of Dessie; we became extremely anxious as a result of the artillery landing in neighborhoods. On Saturday, artillery fell in our neighborhood, and shortly after, government forces went out of Dessie, so I forced my kids to leave the city.(Case with R8, Robit, March 12, 2023)

The outbreak of the war in 2020 changed everything for Dessie. The city was quickly caught up in the conflict, and it suffered significant damage. The war also had a devastating impact on the city's economy and its people. Despite the challenges, the people of Dessie have shown great resilience. They have worked together to rebuild their city, and they are determined to move forward. Dessie is a city on the brink of war, but it is also a city of hope (Erkihun, 2022).

4.1.2. Dessie under TPLF occupation

Dessie was under the control of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) more than a month in 2021. During this time, the TPLF imposed a curfew, restricted movement in the city, and conducted house-to-house searches. They also detained people suspected of supporting the Ethiopian government, looted businesses and homes, blocked humanitarian aid from reaching the city, and committed human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, torture, and sexual violence. The situation in Dessie under TPLF occupation was chaotic and unsafe (Erkihun, 2022). The TPLF's policies and practices caused widespread suffering and displacement. The people of Dessie were living in fear and uncertainty (ibid, 2022).

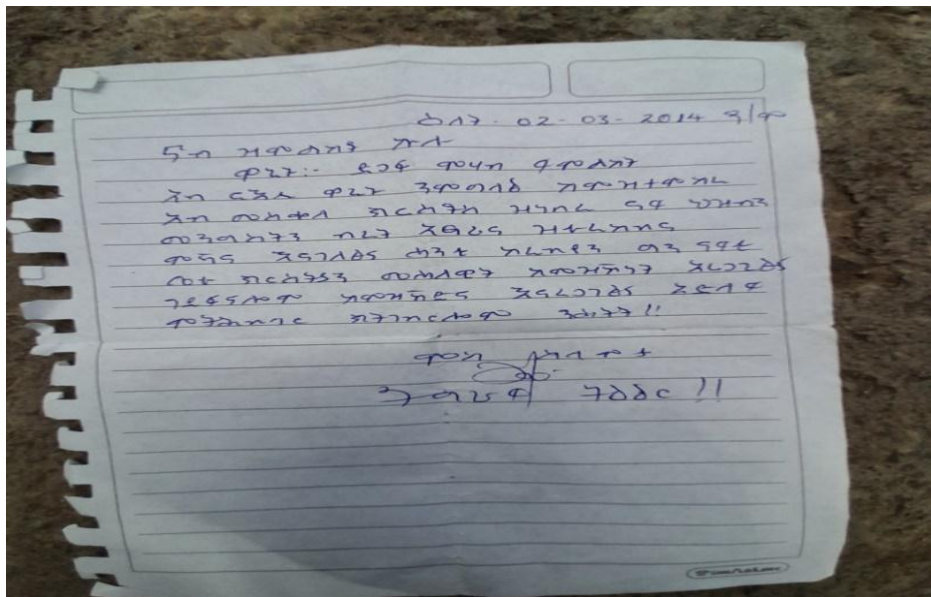
Sources from Borumeda, Dawedo, and Robit Kebeles gives divided argument on the situation of Dessie. Some of them state that when the TPLF-led army took over the town, the locals lost faith in the power of government when the army withdrew from Dessie. Because of this act, resident lost hope, feel depressed, and develop psychological disorders. Even, some have even been sexually assaulted.

Some of the FGD two participants on the other hand raise their view regards to the behavior of TPLF fighters, they said: “the TPLF fighters are not as such aggressive as we expect; rather they have a positive attitude and even cooperate with the locals to keep public order.” An informant told: "though the government pictured the TPLF's lead troops fighters as brutal and arrogant but

in practice they are humble, the informant said: even they offer us wheat and maize by broking the government store.” In addition on the acts and behavior of the TPLF troops the priest said:

On October 20, 2022, as I previously stated, Dessie came under the military forces of the TPLF. Contrary to what we hear about TPLF troops, they are friendly and encourage us once they have taken control of the town. What we hear and expect is different from what we see. Even they enter the church by taking off their shoes and joining us in celebrating religious holidays, just like any other person. They also donate a variety of items, including cash, to the church. For instance, our church, Meskelekirstos, is new and under renovation here in Dawedokebele. They donate to the church and raise money from their friends to help with the construction.(Interview with R3 (priest), Dawedo, March 10, 2023)

Figure 2: A letter Written by TPLF fighters to the priest



Source: Felid photo at Dawedo kebele, March 10, 2023

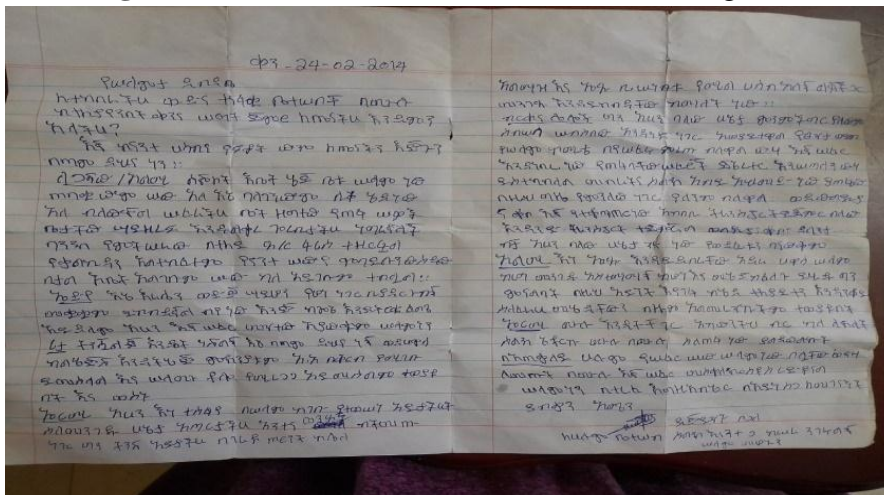
The content of the above letter was translated as follows by using translator. The letter was written on 02/03/2014 and its content is a letter of support. It says we are explaining that we have taken a government weapon and left one weapon that was used for security purposes at the Church of MeskeleKirstos with best regard and victory for Tigray.

On contrary, another Key Informant from Borumeda kebele recalled:

One of the most devastating consequences of the TPLF's occupation was the disruption of the city's economy. Businesses were forced to close, and many people lost their jobs. This led to a sharp increase in poverty and hunger. The TPLF also blocked the delivery of humanitarian aid, which made it difficult for people to get the food and medicine they needed. The occupation also had a devastating impact on the city's infrastructure. Roads and bridges were damaged or destroyed, and public buildings were looted or burned. This made it difficult for people to get around and access basic services.(Interview with R9, Borumeda, April 15, 2023)

In addition, the TPLF's occupation of Dessie also had a significant impact on the city's culture and society. The TPLF imposed a strict curfew and restricted movement in the city, which made it difficult for people to socialize and participate in cultural activities. The TPLF also conducted house-to-house searches and detained people suspected of supporting the Ethiopian government, which created a climate of fear and suspicion (Erkihun, 2022). Since there would be no amenities like electricity, water, banks, or communications throughout their stay, the people would not be able to communicate with anybody outside of Dessie. As a result, the people walked long distances, like all the way to Kombolcha, to get millstones and water on foot, which dates back to the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, or the Dark Ages. And they also used handwritten letters to communicate with their families outside the city.

Figure 3: A letter used for communication during the war.



Source: This study: field photo at Dawedo kebele, March, 2023.

4.1.3. Dessie: After Math of the War

Studies by Heleta (2013) and Abebaw et al., (2022) indicate that war or conflict, as well as other humanitarian disasters, have a severe impact on people, institutions, states, regions, and even humanitarian actions. People affected by conflicts have multiple and intersectional vulnerabilities and needs that affect different aspects of their lives. War, violence, and protracted conflict don't affect all people similarly and indiscriminately. Rather, some vulnerable segments of communities are more affected than others. Particularly, IDPs, poor households, minors, elders, and people with disabilities are some, but not all, of the vulnerable groups that are the most affected by disasters.

In the same vein, Dessie, a city in northern Ethiopia, has been through a lot in recent years. It was first caught up in the Tigray War in 2020, when it was occupied by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) for several months. The TPLF's occupation was a dark chapter in the city's history, and it left a lasting scar. In December 2021, the Ethiopian government recaptured Dessie from the TPLF. However, the damage had already been done. The city was in ruins, and its people were traumatized (Abebaw et al., 2022).

As I observed, the aftermath of war in Dessie has been challenging. The city's economy has been decimated, and many people have lost their jobs. The infrastructure has been severely damaged, and basic services are lacking. And the people of Dessie are still struggling to come to terms with the trauma of the conflict. According to Erkihun (2022) the following are some of the challenges that the people of Dessie are facing in the aftermath of war:

Economic hardship: The war has devastated the city's economy. Businesses have been forced to close, and many people have lost their jobs. This has led to a sharp increase in poverty and hunger.

Damaged infrastructure: The war has also caused extensive damage to the city's infrastructure. Roads, bridges, and buildings have been destroyed or damaged. This has made it difficult for people to get around and access basic services.

Trauma: The war has had a profound impact on the people of Dessie. Many people have been killed or injured, and others have witnessed horrific violence. This has caused widespread trauma, which is making it difficult for people to rebuild their lives.

I witnessed the TPLF's occupation of Dessie as a dark chapter in the city's history. The TPLF's policies and practices caused widespread suffering and destruction. The people of Dessie are still recovering from the trauma of the conflict, and it will take time for the city to rebuild.

4.2. Social, Economic and Political Effects of the Crisis (2020 - 2022)

The war in Dessie town has had a devastating impact on the social, economic and political fabric of the city. The conflict has caused widespread displacement, death, and destruction, and has left a deep scar on the city's psyche. One of the most immediate socio-cultural impacts of the war has been the displacement of thousands of people. According to a United Nations (2022) report, over 100,000 people have been displaced from Dessie since the conflict began in 2020. This displacement has led to a breakdown in traditional social networks and support systems, and has made it difficult for people to access basic services such as education and healthcare (Abebe and Belaineh, 2022b).

The war has also had a devastating impact on the city's economy. Businesses have been forced to close, and many people have lost their jobs. This has led to a sharp increase in poverty and hunger, and has made it difficult for people to make ends meet. The war has also had a profound impact on the city's culture and society. The conflict has created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, and has made it difficult for people to socialize and participate in cultural activities. The war has also led to an increase in crime and violence, which has further eroded the city's social fabric (Erkihun, 2022).

4.2.1. Social impacts

4.2.1.1. Displacement

IDPs in Ethiopia were predicted to number 4.51 million as of February 2022, with conflict being the primary cause of around 81% of IDPs. Additionally, in what the UN described as the worst outflow of refugees from Ethiopia in more than two decades, close to 50,000 people fled to

Sudan (Abebe and Belaineh, 2022b). The spillover from any conflict is mass displacement. Wars in the northern parts of the country have been displacing people for several decades (Abink, 2022). The current war between the federal government and the TPLF-led army also displaces a lot of people and leaves them in need of urgent support (ibid).

In July (2021) the Tigrian forces had moved in to neighboring Afar and Amhara regions, displacing hundreds of thousands of civilians, some multiple times and triggering widespread humanitarian needs (OCHA, 2022). In Dessie, tens of thousands of people were displaced too, towards the capital of the region, Bahir Dar, and to MekaneSelam in South Wollo. A displaced man in the study area states the condition of displacement as follows:

The TPLF force controlled Dessie on Saturday, October 20, 2022, at 4 o'clock, and the city was at mess. I left the city with my daughter to Mekaneselam when the army left the city. It was so hard; everything happened suddenly, and there was no transportation, so we were forced to travel on foot. Though it takes several days to reach a town called Mekaneselam, we start the journey because our concern is one that is escape from the war, but my daughter could not walk as fast as other travelers. After we traveled about 15 km far from Dessie she resisted walking anymore, but thanks to the Red Cross workers they gave us a ride and reach to the destination at 1 o'clock in the evening. When we reach there, the youths did not want to let us in because they were scared a TPLF force might enter with us together, and even though some of the people with me were born and raised there, the youth still refused to let us in. But after a lot of begging and struggle, they let us in, and we stayed at my neighbor's brother's house. (Case with R11, Dessie, March 11, 2023).

The informant and their daughter were forced to walk to Mekaneselam when the TPLF force seized control of Dessie on October 20, 2022. Even though their daughter was having trouble, they were saved by Red Cross personnel. They were initially denied admission by neighborhood youngsters, but they eventually succeeded and spent the night at a neighbor's brother's home. Although the informant's daughter could not walk as quickly as others, they use the trip as an essential means of escaping the war.

Figure 4: Displaced Mother at Dessie town



Source: Field photo in Dessie Town May, 2023.

4.2.1.2. Sexual and Gender Based Violence as a Weapon of War

Conflicts in most parts of the world primarily expose women and girls to rape and other forms of sexual violence. Studies by Tamrat et al. (2022) have shown that armed conflicts potentially lead to trauma in the population because of the rape they encounter. Even before the present crisis, Ethiopia had high rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including intimate partner violence (IPV) and female genital mutilation (FGM). Even prior to the present crisis, Ethiopia had high rates of SGBV, particularly Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The vulnerability of women, girls, people with disabilities, and even men and boys to the worst kinds of SGBV has, nevertheless, increased, as is typical during times of conflict and displacement. Reports show physical assault, rape (including gang rape), insertion of foreign objects into genitalia, and even reports of purposeful HIV transmission by the TPLF force (Abebe and Belaineh, 2022).

In this case, a divergent view is forwarded by informants in Dessie Town in regards to the case of rape and sexual assault. For example, a 30-year-old woman revealed that, in July 2021, when the TPLF exercised control over parts of the Amhara region, they committed widespread rape and other forms of sexual assault against ethnic Amhara women and girls in several villages in

Dessie. The conflict between the government force and the TPLF unduly targeted women through the use of rape and sexual violence as weapons of war. Reports are surfacing that corroborate the allegation of repeated sexual assault and rape of local women by the TPLF forces. Still other informants said that disturbing accounts have included claims of civilians being forced at gunpoint to rape members of their own families and women being forced to have sex with soldiers in exchange for basic necessities. However, the young female informant from Robitkebele said that “there was no registered case of rape”.

Moreover, Amnesty International's (2022) report indicates that there was rape and sexual assaults registered in Dessie Town. The report further indicates those raped women's and girls' suffered physical and mental trauma resulting in depression, anxiety, and other forms of emotion often worsened by the reactions of their husbands and families. Also, the interview with a doctor in Dessie referral hospital shows that most of the women were raped in their homes by the TPLF force, who forced them to provide food and cook them what they brought from somewhere.

At around ten in the morning, two young TPLF soldiers carrying firearms arrived at our home. I was there, along with my mother and seven-year-old brother. Both of them were dressed in uniform. Both of them speak Amharic fluently. "Our families were raped, and now it is our turn to rape you." I was raped by one of them in the courtyard. Currently, I am quite ill, very hopeless, and depressed. (Case with R7, Dawedo, Feb. 30, 2023)

My findings indicate that women and girls of all ages have been subjected to crimes, both in their homes and while trying to escape conflict.

4.2.1.3. Victimhood Group

Many informants assert that, because of the rumors that the people hear about the TPLF army as being rapists and killing young men; almost all of the young people, both male and female, left the town a week before it became under the control of the TPLF. Based on the information that the FGD group provided, many have been reported as a victim. Moreover, it is reported that children were the most impacted by the lack of assistance. All these people were impacted politically, socially, and economically. For instance, a 49 year old informant who works in the government office said: “a person who works in my office flee to a nearby town with his wife

and left his mother during the war. As a result of this action, he is now at odds with his mother, and the war has a negative impact on our relationship.”(Interview R10, Borumeda, May11, 2023)

According to Tamerat et al., (2022) victimhood is high among people who experienced a traumatic event in Dessie during the war. Being a female, having a previous history of mental illness, experiencing depressive symptoms, or witnessing a serious physical injury to a family member or friend are victims. The (key- informant from Robitkebele) also states about the most victimhood groups as follows:

I have heard that two females were raped by TPLF soldiers in our village. It has been extremely difficult for their parents. It has also been difficult for the elderly, who were unable to move or assist themselves. It was also difficult for children who had to be separated from their parents. Overall, I would say that everyone suffered equally; the young people too lost their lives while attempting to pass food and other necessities to the soldiers.(Interview with R4, Borumeda, Feb. 30, 2023).

The war in Dessie town has had a devastating impact on all the women and children, elders and the youth groups of people. They have suffered immensely, and they have been denied their basic human rights. It is important to remember these groups of people, and to work to ensure that they are protected and that they receive the assistance they need.

4.2.1.4. Psycho-Social Damages

One of the consequences of conflict is post-traumatic problems, which manifest in different forms. Posttraumatic stress disorder developed as a serious long-term consequence of traumatic experiences, even many years after trauma exposure. It is quite believed that, after all, military engagements, open killings of residents in town, rape, and looting, the communities might have experienced psycho-social damages.

Accordingly, the war has made people exposed to different kinds of trauma, and more prone to psychological disorders. Despite the highest number of people affected due to war and its negative impact and mental health, post-traumatic stress disorders among people are overlooked in Dessie. A 41 year old male high school teacher from Robit kebele states the effect of war as follows:

Although I don't have the complete statistics, I believe that the conflict is hurting everyone. For instance, elderly people who were unable to access their medications died; children whose psychological well-being was harmed by TPLF army staff members' comments such as "Are you the son of Milisha or a supporter of the prosperity party?"; young people who were killed or put in prison; and young women who were raped by TPLF army personnel. The young people are generally suffering greatly as a result of this war.(Interview with R8, Robit, March 12, 2023)

The above information shows that the conflict has a devastating impact on everyone in Dessie, Ethiopia, regardless of their age, gender, or political affiliation. The elderly are dying because they cannot access their medications. Children are being traumatized by the violence and the uncertainty of the situation. Young people are being killed, imprisoned, or raped. And all of these groups are suffering from the psychological and emotional toll of the war. The informant also points out that the young people are particularly suffering. They are the ones who are most likely to be recruited into the fighting, and they are also the ones who are most likely to be killed or injured. They are also the ones who are most likely to be traumatized by the violence and the displacement.

Another informant summarizes the effect of the war: "I experienced serious psychological trauma as a result of the conflict, which was extremely stressful due to the fact that I was separated from my family for more than a month, there was no network connection, we were unable to attend school for months, and we had no cash to purchase basic needs."(Interview with R7, Dawedo, Feb, 30 2023)

As it is explained by the above informant, people were struggling to maintain their family together and unable to fulfill basic necessities of their household members which this problem finally put them under severe pressure leading to stress and physiological problems.

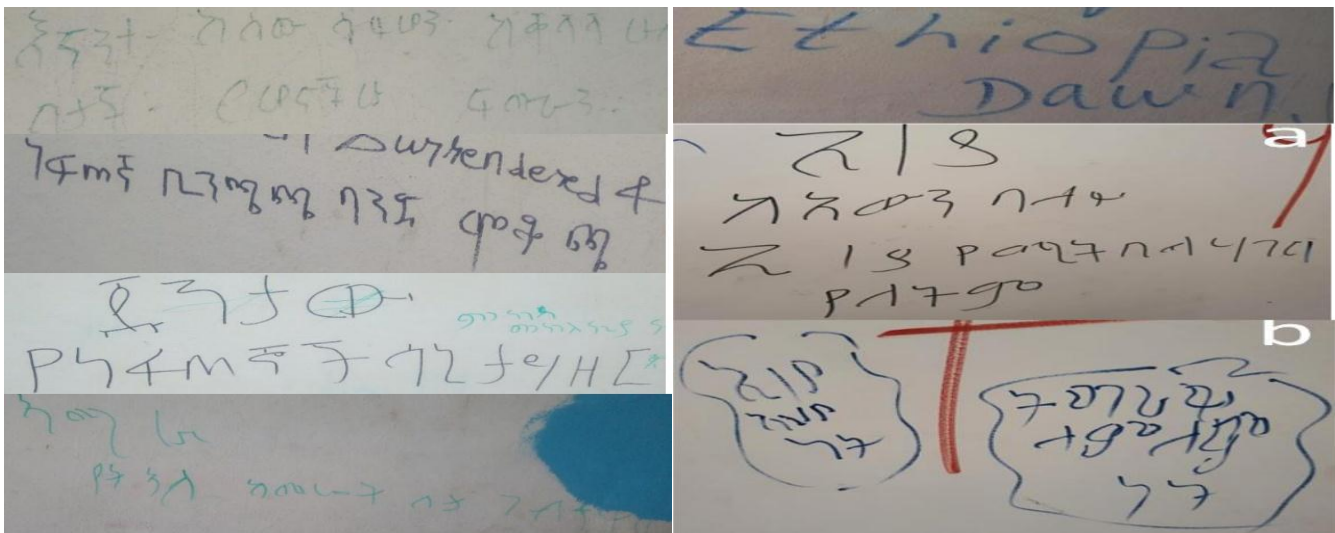
On the political level, people were mentally hurt since there were rumors circulating that people who remained in Dessie were partisans of the TPLF forces, which were non-sensational, creating a rift between the community and local authorities. On the other hand, sporadic gunshots and reckless shooting into the air put us in a traumatic stress situation that is still in our minds. Fear and frustration, total darkness, deserted streets, and families lost this entire sum up to make us

helpless. Furthermore, the source from FGD session shows that husband and wife committed divorce because they have different ethnic backgrounds, so the couple decided to divorce.

4.2.1.5. Hate Speeches Written on Walls

This section examines the nature and implication of wall texts written by TPLF forces on the buildings of Wollo University. Hate speech and graffiti have also been used as weapons of war in Dessie town during the northern war, targeting ethnic Amhara. These hate words have been written on walls, buildings, and other public spaces, and they have been used to dehumanize Amhara, to justify violence against them, and to create a climate of fear and intimidation. It has also been used to sow division and hatred between different ethnic groups in Ethiopia (Erkihun, 2022). While in the field; I also observed the wall text in the city that reflected hate words against Amhara. In my observation of Hote secondary school, I witnessed a lot of wall texts that appreciate Tigray people and dehumanize the ethnic Amhara. The following pictures shows hate words written in different class rooms at Wollo University.

Figure 5: Hate words to degrade the moral value of people of Amhara.



Source: Alemayehu Erkihun, (2022).

4.2.1.6. Impact on the health system

Why were health and education facilities damaged? The community became dependent on emergency medical assistance because, in less than six months of the war, the health facilities, including one specialized hospital, and health centers, were affected by the war (Abebaw et al., 2022). The TPLF-led invasion destroyed health system infrastructure specifically and completely, pillaging medical supplies and equipment and interrupting health services.

There were 74,980 home deliveries, 91 unsafe abortions, and 45,980 missed postpartum visits, 33 cases of maternal mortality, 137,698 family planning technique interruptions, and 1035 unplanned pregnancies as a result of the war in the Amhara regional state (ibid.). Additionally, it is quite problematic for chronic follow-up patients whose care and follow-up were disrupted for six months by the TPLF conflict in the affected area of the Amhara region. 8,915 individuals with diseases like TB, HIV, and leprosy had their monthly treatments and follow-up appointments delayed (ibid.).

A pharmacist who lives in Bourumeda kebele told: *Over the past ten years, Ethiopia has made considerable investments in its healthcare system, particularly through the construction of health posts, clinics, and trained people. The war has seriously destroyed this infrastructure in the Amhara region in general and in Dessie town particularly.* (Interview with R15, Borumeda, March 15, 2023)

In addition, FGD three participants also reveal that the region's health care system need time to recover from the loss of skilled medical personnel and the damaged infrastructure. More than 50% of the area's healthcare institutions were damaged or looted, and those facilities need to be recovered and rebuilt.

4.2.1.7. Human loss

Many informants asserted that the community suffered various types of damage, including loss of life. "The fight caused a lot of damage, including casualties, displacement, burning of homes and plantation fields, looting and burning of cattle, goats, and sheep, student dropout rates, and psychological anguish. Furthermore, an informant stated, "It is obvious that war causes significant loss of life. During the conflict, several innocent people were killed.

4.2.2. Economic impacts

4.2.2.1. Property Loss

Although the TPLF forces initially promised the locals that they wouldn't harm them when they took control of Dessie and the surrounding areas, they very quickly began to demand food from the locals, many of whom couldn't afford to share their meager food supplies with the invading fighters and loot residents, shops, and public property like medical clinic facilities. The latter, in particular, made the already terrible situation of the sick and injured, particularly those who had been attacked by TPLF combatants, even worse. However, the Amnesty International study reveals that numerous residences were burglarized in front of their owners. They also steal chickens and goats from the people. In some instances, they made the women cook the stolen animals for them under pressure.

For example, an informant (from Dawedo Keble) confirms the pain or loss he endured during the war as follows:

Without my consent, two of my buildings have been snatched by the government and used as residences for the government army for about a year and three months. I am the war's biggest victim because all of my accounts have been shut down, and my cheek has been burned too. But with the support of my family and friends, I am able to get through this trying time.(Interview with R1, Borumeda, March 15, 2023)

Informants argue that the cost of the damage is beyond their imagination, but the government has only allocated financial support nowhere near to complement their loss.

Additionally, TPLF soldiers utilized Wollo University as a cooking facility, a place of imprisonment, and a temporary storage location for stolen goods like beer, wine, and soft drinks. Beer, wine, and soft drinks were stolen from numerous supermarkets, hotels, and wholesale sales of Dessie and Kombolcha, as well as the BGI beer factory (Erkihun, 2022). The TPLF invaders used all of their might to plunder and demolish business centers that were providing services to the university community. They damaged ATMs and office equipment, among other things, and robbed and destroyed a commercial bank and an Abyssinian bank that were supported by skilled experts (ibid.).

There are various groups of professionals, according to the informants, including mechanics, bank tellers, engineers, and medical professionals. They were given a task by their superiors to steal carefully from hospitals, banks, schools, businesses, and cars. Erkihun (2022) also report various professional groups, including mechanics, bank tellers, engineers, and medical professionals, were assigned by their chiefs to steal from various institutions in Dessie town.

4.2.2.2. Destructions of Infrastructures

As far as universal declarations are concerned, public services and historical heritages of nations must not be targeted during wartime. Contrary to this understanding, schools, universities, and health institutions were under attack by TPLF forces, and some of these institutions moreover, are totally destroyed. For instance, my observation of Wollo University, Hotie General Secondary School, Dessie Referral Hospital, Dessie municipality office, and Borumeda Hospital led me to the conclusion that public institutions in the study area are severely damaged.

Figure 6: Partial view of Dessie municipality



Source: Field photo, Dawdo (2023).

Figure 7: Damaged view of Wollo University, Main campus



Source:Field photo, Dessie (2023).

Informants revealed that drunken armed men and little boys occupied the streets of the town, bullying innocent civilians. Schools and health centers in Dessie were looted, vandalized, and destroyed, which gives them a bad memory. For instance, Hotie General Secondary School was severely damaged, facilities stolen; science laboratory burned, which was a source of stress by itself. The health center of the town and the hospital's big supply warehouses were looted and vandalized in daylight.

4.2.2.2.1 Pillages and Status of Damage

During my stay in the field, I witnessed different casualties in the town, such as pillages of laboratories, schools, hospitals, and offices. Potvin (2016) states that the harsh conditions of people are not limited to merely wartime, but they extend over time after the war ends. Security and respect for people's dignity remain essential needs, either continuously or episodically, throughout protracted conflict and after, depending on changing patterns of conflict, threat, and risk. During war, civilians are exposed to direct physical threats of death, injury, rape, sexual violence, exploitation, and slavery; forced displacement; family separation; unlawful detention; summary execution; unlawful conscription; and forced labor (UNISDR, 2016).

As Bennett (2016) rightly states, due to the perils of conflicts or war, people can be extremely vulnerable, either suddenly or slowly, as their homes, livelihoods, and basic services are destroyed over time or overnight. Conflict and war destroy homes, medical facilities, schools, vital infrastructure, businesses, markets, farms, and critical communication links such as roads, bridges, supply chains, and telecommunications. One of the in-depth interview informants confirms that as a result of looting, pillage, and extortion, and not just once but repeatedly, as a result of long conflicts, the loss of education is a significant impact of protracted conflicts that has a devastating effect on future life chances. This is true for Amhara Regional State in general and Dessie Town in particular. After sporadic fighting against Amhara forces, TPLF slowly took control of several parts of the city, starting with Wollo University. The situation in Dessie City remains fragile and fluid, with humanitarian operations heavily constrained due to security and bureaucratic impediments. As the finding shows, the following are the major consequences of the war:

FGD participant three expresses their concern regarding the damage, as they are heartbroken and in total grief due to the unexpected victory of the TPLF force, the locals were in fear and panic because of the occupied force's retaliatory action. People flee, closing their businesses, jobs and thought their lifeline could be lost during that period due to theft and looting. The elder (key informant from Robit Keble) linked the immediate disgraceful acts of the Tigreans as follows: "TPLF soldiers stopped us on the streets and searched for phones and cash, but got nothing other than my watch; they took it and let me go."

As I observed, the town is currently crowded with beggars and displaced people from other areas. Erkihun (2022), states that some of the town buildings are entirely damaged, while others are partially damaged during an armed conflict. Surprisingly, the university building, roof, doors, windows, office equipment, class room, and class room resources are entirely or partially damaged by heavy guns.

4.2.3. Political impacts

The war in northern Ethiopia has had a significant impact on Dessie Town, a major urban center in the region. The war has caused widespread damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, and social

fabric, and its impact is also extended to the political landscape of the town. Here under, attempts are made to elaborate the political impacts of the war.

4.2.3.1. Exacerbating inter-ethnic tensions

One of the most significant political impacts of the war has been the rise of ethnic tensions. The war has been fought largely along ethnic lines, with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) representing the Tigrayan ethnic group and the Ethiopian government representing the Amhara ethnic group. This has led to increased tensions between the two ethnic groups in Dessie Town, and it has also made it more difficult for the town to recover from the war (Abebe and Belaineh, 2022b).

According to my informants, the tension between the two ethnic groups was exacerbated by a rumor that blames ethnic Tigres living in Dessie town for allegedly supporting TPLF fighters. Here, a 41 year old teacher informant (Robit kebele) elaborated further that

No one expected them to be enemies. We were sharing what we all had during the war. We passed all the ebbs and flows together; we are associated in marriage; we raised our kids together; we mourned the passing of our relatives together; and so, it is totally beyond our expectation that these people will turn their faces and kill us. But, yeah, it is true. The moment TPLF controlled the Dessie, they were totally changed; they used to show houses of what they thought was an enemy. That is so sad!(Interview with R8, Robit, March 12, 2023)

The accusation against some Tigrisians in Dessie town has created discomfort among the Amharas both in Dessie and elsewhere in the region. Once TPLF was toppled from Dessie some expected that there was an intention to avenge the Tigres. Despite the intention, however, no attack is directed against the Tigres. The social relation, trust, market interaction, and support between the two ethnic groups are reportedly gone.

Another political impact of the war has been the weakening of local institutions. The war has led to the displacement of many people from Dessie Town, and it has also damaged many of the town's institutions. This has made it difficult for the town to govern itself, and it has also made it more difficult for the town to provide essential services to its residents (Abbink, 2022). The war

has also had a negative impact on the economy of Dessie Town. The war has led to the closure of many businesses, and it has also made it difficult for people to find work. This has led to increased poverty and unemployment in the town, and it has also made it more difficult for people to rebuild their lives after the war.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. POST WAR-RECOVERY, CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE MECHANISMS

In their attempt to redress the damages posed by war and protracted conflicts and to reconstruct communal life, states and societies look for resources from two sources: 1) humanitarian aid and 2) community resilience mechanisms and capitals. Humanitarian assistance thus becomes essential to address civilians' personal, social, health, and economic losses and to mitigate people's ever-deepening vulnerability as a result of the immediate and cumulative impact of war and protracted conflict (Donini & Maxwell, 2014). System-wide and comprehensive responses depend on the repair and reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, access to clean water, health services, and education; food security and livelihoods; the rule of law; community cohesion; and other broader security conditions (Healy & Tiller, 2014).

5.1. Post-War Recovery

Post-war recovery is the process of rebuilding a society after a war. It involves restoring infrastructure, providing basic needs, and addressing the underlying causes of the war. The process can be long and difficult, but it is essential for building a more peaceful and prosperous future. There are many challenges to post-war recovery. These include poverty, lack of access to basic services, social fragmentation, and the risk of renewed conflict. However, there are also many factors that can contribute to a successful recovery. These include the resilience of the community, the support of the government and international organizations, and the involvement of civil society organizations (Ozerdem, 2008).

According to Endale (2021) the process of post-war recovery in Dessie town can be divided into three phases:

1. The immediate aftermath of the war: This phase was characterized by chaos and uncertainty. Many people were displaced from their homes, and there was a lack of food, water, and shelter.

2. The early recovery phase: This phase began in 2021, and it was focused on providing basic needs and restoring infrastructure. The government and international organizations provided assistance to help people rebuild their homes and businesses.
3. The long-term recovery phase: This phase is still ongoing, and it is focused on addressing the underlying causes of the war and building a more resilient community.

In addition, an elder key informant from Robit kebele states:

I'm a resident of Dessie town, and I've seen firsthand the challenges of post-war recovery. The war was a devastating experience for our community and it left us with a lot of damage to repair. But even in the midst of all the destruction, I've been inspired by the resilience of our people. We've come together to rebuild our homes and businesses, and we're committed to creating a more peaceful and prosperous future for our town.(Interview with R6, Robit, May 14, 2023)

From the above statement can be seen as a message of hope and resilience. The speaker is saying that the people of Dessie are not giving up, even in the face of great adversity. They are determined to rebuild their community and create a better future for themselves and their children.

Another Key informant in Bourumeda kebele summed up the post war recovery:

Of course, there are still a lot of challenges ahead. Poverty is still a major issue, and we need to do more to provide basic services to our people. But I'm confident that we can overcome these challenges if we work together. I'm proud to be a part of the Dessie community, and I know that we'll emerge from this stronger than ever before.(Interview with R14, Borumeda, April 15, 2023)

The speaker acknowledges that there are still many challenges ahead for the community of Dessie. Poverty is still a major issue, and there is a need to do more to provide basic services to the people. However, the speaker is confident that these challenges can be overcome if the community works together. The speaker is proud to be a part of the Dessie community and knows that they will emerge from this stronger than ever before.

5.1.1. Social, Economic and Political Post-War Recovery

5.1.1.1. Post-War Social Recovery

Dessie town, a major commercial and industrial center in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, has been through a lot in recent years. In 2020, the town was the site of heavy fighting between government forces and rebel forces. The fighting caused widespread destruction and displacement. In the years since the war, the people of Dessie town have been working to rebuild their lives. However, they face a number of challenges, including poverty, lack of access to basic services, and social fragmentation (Nur, 2022).

The post-war social recovery in Dessie town is a complex challenge. There are many factors that need to be addressed, including displacement, health, sexual and gender-based violence, hate words, and the rebuilding of the social fabric of the community. It is important to provide people with the support they need to rebuild their lives. This will help to create a more peaceful and prosperous future for Dessie town (Endale, 2021).

Regarding social reconstruction, the informant from Borumeda Keble states, "I have friends and neighbors from Tigrian backgrounds, and nothing happened or changed; still, we are friends. Nothing has happened between us because, in my opinion, the political elites, not the general populace, are to blame for this war. It is not a problem with the populace, nor does it have anything to do with religion or ethnicity".

A pharmacist from Borumeda kebele recommends:

I think that the most important thing is to invest in human capital and strengthen local institutions. We need to provide education and training for people, and we need to rebuild our healthcare system. We also need to strengthen our local government institutions so that they can provide essential services to the people. I believe that if we focus on these areas, we can build a better future for Dessie.(Interview with R15, Borumeda, March 15, 2023)

Abebe and Belaineh (2022) suggested, social reconstruction should focus on healing the wounds of war and building a more cohesive society. This includes addressing issues such as

displacement, trauma, and discrimination. It is also important to promote reconciliation and build trust between different groups in society.

5.1.1.2. Post-War Economic Recovery

Economic reconstruction is essential to rebuilding the physical infrastructure of a country, such as roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals. It is also important to restore economic activity and create jobs. This can be done by providing financial assistance to businesses, investing in education and training, and promoting trade.

The findings of this paper show that the one-month and fifteen-day war destroyed the major infrastructure of the town, such as roads, schools, a university, and a hospital. However, now that the war is over, there is an attempt to reconstruct the destroyed infrastructure with the help of local organizations, the Diaspora, and the people. Most informants agreed that the government is weak and reckless in its response to restoring the damage. They stated they couldn't observe any effort in giving support on the government side for the damage, but for their broadcast consumption, government officials reported false information and talked as they settled the dispute, as they gave support for the victims, but it was not true. "Both government and non-government organizations do nothing in terms of post-conflict help; they simply registered what we lost, and at the return, they didn't give anything to us. What I'm telling you is that government representatives play on our suffering and behave like actors in a movie."(FGD, Borumeda, March, 2023)

On the other hand, some sources show that, though it was not sufficient, there was an attempt made by both government and non-government organizations to restore the damage in the conflict area. A 41 year old secondary school teacher claims:

Governmental and non-governmental organizations both made an effort to help those affected by the destruction; however, their efforts fell short given the number of displaced people and the damage. It is only consumed on a daily basis. If you stroll through Borumeda Keble, where the TPLF-led army enters, you can see burned-out homes as well as homes without roofs, making it difficult for residents to get back to their homes. Therefore, it is preferable to pinpoint people's actual problems and offer lasting solutions.(Interview with R8, Robit, March 12, 2023)

The informant calls to action for both government and non-governmental organizations. By saying it is important for these organizations to work together to provide the necessary assistance to those who have been affected by the conflict.

5.1.1.3. Post-War Political Recovery

Politically, beyond establishing a cessation of hostilities between the Ethiopian force and the TPLF forces, the November 2022 peace agreement also includes measures intended to reintroduce normality in the war zones (OCHA, 2022).

In the aftermath of the war, the community of Dessie is facing a number of challenges in its efforts to recover. One of the most pressing challenges is the need to rebuild the political system. The war has led to a decline in trust in the government, and there is a growing division between supporters of the government and supporters of the opposition. In order to build sustainable peace, it is essential to create a political system that is inclusive and that respects the rights of all citizens. Traditional institutions can play an important role in the post-war political recovery of Dessie town. As informants state, these institutions, such as elders' councils and religious leaders, have a long history of mediating conflict and building consensus. They help to bridge the divide between different groups and to promote reconciliation.

5.2. Actors in the Reconstruction Process

The reconstruction of Dessie Town is a complex process that requires the involvement of a wide range of actors. These actors include the Ethiopian government, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the local community (Endale, 2021).

5.2.1. Internal Actors

Informants from both Borumeda and Dawudo Keble pointed out that post-war recovery and normalization activities by the government are still at the low end of what is expected. Most informants agreed that it was extremely difficult to control the problems without the elders' assistance. The elders have taken part and are assisting the government in resolving the problems. Elders in the community and religious figures play an important role in speaking the truth.

For instance, a number of gangs also plunder the government and private property in addition to the TPLF-led army. Elders and religious leaders play a significant role in recovering people's property and government property like computers, chairs, and tables from such gangs. By giving those in need priority, they also make it easier for NGOs to do their work.

A 65 year old Muslim religious father states about the role internal actors played in the reconstruction process as follows:

The religious fathers wanted peace as much as the people did, and as someone who is close to the church, I can say with certainty that the fathers never wanted the two groups of people to be at odds. They were educating the populace and admonishing them to avoid starting wars even before the conflict began, and they continued to do so after the conflict was over. (Interview with R6, Robit, May 14, 2023).

A secondary school teacher said: “The combined efforts of internal actors helped to rebuild Dessie town and restore it to its former glory. The reconstruction process was not easy, but it was ultimately successful thanks to the hard work and dedication of the local people.”(Interview with R8, Robit, March 12, 2023)

Community organizations played a vital role in the reconstruction process. They mobilized local residents to participate in the rebuilding effort and raised funds to support the reconstruction projects. They also provided social services to displaced persons and other vulnerable groups. According to informants, individuals also contributed to the reconstruction effort in many ways. They donated money, time, and labor to the rebuilding projects. They also volunteered their skills and expertise to help with the reconstruction effort.

5.2.2. External Actors

Most international donors and organizations did not attempt to work on medium- to long-term reconstruction and development in the town. Though these external actors promised to provide a donor for the reconstruction and development program, they failed to deliver on their promise or contribute a small amount.

Even if it may not have been enough, informants believe external actors made a contribution to the community, particularly the nongovernmental organizations that provided food and supplies to those in needs because some individuals were unable to work for a while and others even lost

their jobs. This occurred because many individuals were completely unprepared and did not believe Dessie would be contained. The FGD two participant states:

Personally, I don't even think the government cares about maintaining peace in the nation since they don't want to address the people's economic concerns. However, the people made as much of a contribution as they could because they valued peace above all else. My wife informed me that she received donations twice, and I've heard that other NGOs sent donations and did their best to assist the community. (Discussion with FGD2, Borumeda, March 21, 2023).

According to the informants view, NGOs, such as Save the Children and Oxfam, played a vital role in the reconstruction process. They provided direct assistance to displaced persons and other vulnerable groups. They also worked to rebuild schools, hospitals, and other essential infrastructure.

5.3. Challenges Facing in the Recovery Process

The source from the selected site shows, there are different challenges they face in their recovery. Among these is the fact that there is not a fair distribution of aid; all the aid is given to the economically affluent in order to restore their hotels, while the poor continue to suffer. Even some say that when the TPLF was in charge, life was better than it is now. While the politician's risk on behalf of the underprivileged comes with backing, it does not actually result in the reintegration of the underprivileged. Since we have nowhere else to go, we are here.

Some others claim the biggest obstacle to the reconstruction process is that the populace does not fully trust government action. Some still worry that because the army has left the borders, they might once again come under TPLF control, which is why some investors leave the town and invest elsewhere. Additionally, due to the lack of a printer, paper, photocopier, chair, and tables at the office, as mentioned above, the public servants are unable to provide their customers with a complete range of services. For instance, they currently use a single printer across three industries. Let me add a case related to the challenges an individual faces in his recovery process:

On the other hand, the other challenge is related to the TPLF force act. Though the TPLF lead forces try to lower the morale of public servants, including the Wollo University community, by turning their offices into toilets, as shown in the following picture, and demonstrating their

supremacy through words written on the walls of the buildings, the public servants began their work immediately after Dessie was freed from the invaders. An informant states the moral obligation of the public servant to give services to their customers as follows:

I personally like the rehabilitation process. For instance, when we return to the town, the TPLF-led force has turned our offices into toilets in an effort to lower our morale and demonstrate their supremacy. Even the office's furniture was destroyed by them. Therefore, the first thing we do is talk about starting our service right away, which will raise our spirits. Therefore, we collectively tidied up our office and removed several tables and chairs. We started providing services for our customers as a result of accomplishing this and the backing we received from the regional government. Reconstruction has several difficulties, such as the lack of chairs, tables, rooms, printers, and photocopiers in our situation. Nevertheless, we are able to function by sharing the resources we do have, such as rooms, photocopiers, printers, and so on. (Interview with R5, Dawedo, May 10, 2023)

Poverty, unemployment, and the government's inability to provide basic services to the population could undermine the town's reconstruction process. Though there is an effort to reconstruct the town by the private sector, the Diaspora, local organizations, and the people themselves, it is hard for the town to sustain stability, security, and peace without equitable economic development, employment opportunity, basic services, and livelihood improvement. Moreover, the government structure and institutions are weak and lack the capacity and funds to deliver basic services to the people. All in all, the above-mentioned problems are the major challenges that are observed in the reconstruction process of the town.

To sum up, based on the information from FGD three participants the following are some of the key challenges facing communities in Dessie town during the post-war recovery:

1. Physical destruction: The war in Ethiopia caused widespread physical destruction in Dessie. Many homes, businesses, and schools were destroyed or damaged. This has left many people homeless and without access to basic necessities.
2. Economic hardship: The war also had a significant impact on the economy of Dessie. Many businesses were forced to close, and unemployment is high. This has made it difficult for people to meet their basic needs.

3. Health problems: The war also led to an increase in health problems in Dessie. Many people were injured or displaced, and there is a shortage of medical supplies and services.
4. Psychological trauma: The war also had a significant psychological impact on the people of Dessie. Many people have experienced violence, loss, and displacement. This has led to high levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Figure 8: Feces excreted by the TPLF at corridor of the University building



Source: Alemayehu Erkihun, (2022).

5.4. Communities, institutions and Resilience Mechanism

In addition to the humanitarian aid received from NGOs or foreign governments to rebuild the damages resulting from war, there is emerging evidence that affected communities themselves could also have the socio-cultural resources, capitals, and capacities to effectively adapt to or cope with the adversaries caused by the conflict and to recover communal life. Accordingly, a growing body of literature suggests that community means of resilience and capital are other forms of resources states and societies have at their disposal to use as part of their post-conflict reconstruction efforts (Bonanno, 2004).

Reconstruction also demands the mobilization of diverse capacities and resources to take practical measures to reduce threats reduce vulnerabilities in relation to these threats enhance capacities to overcome threats, and thereby effectively reduce overall risk. For this end, effective humanitarian leadership and multi-sectorial efforts are critical to ensuring that the right mix of

resources, capacities, and mandates are mobilized and coordinated to address the complex and multi-faceted risks people face in humanitarian crises (DFID, 2010).

Furthermore, another area of post-conflict recovery engagement is the imperative to reorganize the legal system and ensure the rule of law. One objective of post-conflict recovery programs is to ensure transitional justice. The practical implementation of such programs is instrumental in rebuilding the damaged capacity of legal institutions and the justice system. However, the findings of the study show that the effort made by the Federal Government of Ethiopia and other non-governmental organizations to reconstruct the town of Dessie is limited. A 41 year old male informant states the efforts of the government and non-governmental organizations in the reconstruction process as follows:

As you are aware, the cost of the destruction is estimated to be over 280 billion birr, but the government has only allocated less than 500 million for the reconstruction process. Even if this amount is not reached, we are still unable to see any action from the federal government's side. Regarding NGOS, they play a relatively small part in the reconstruction and have a very limited impact. Even I am unable to observe the health insurance provided by these NGOS. (Interview with R8, Robit, March 12, 2023)

According to the sources, during the war, the residents of Dessie relied significantly on their social networks for support. They assisted one another with food, shelter, and child care. They also offered each other emotional support. Spirituality and religion were vital in assisting the inhabitants of Dessie in coping with the war. They prayed for strength and direction. They found relief in their religious beliefs as well.

5.4.1. The role of local institutions

Indeed, in many families and communities in Ethiopia, the function of religion may be more important than that of formal organizations or laws. At the individual, local, and national levels, religious leaders can serve as peacemakers. Religious leaders, as previously indicated, may also be able to help survivors of SGBV by providing counseling, bolstering community support, and denouncing stigmatizing behavior and the commission of crimes.

Support and humanitarian aid for impacted people may also be facilitated locally through other institutions and traditional connections that are shared by numerous ethnic groups. These consist of: Idir - conventional nonprofit organizations, whose members contribute money each month for use in times of need. There are Idirs in a lot of the conflict-affected areas, although some might have more financial resources than others to support reaction and recovery operations. Equb - organizations started by small groups of people to offer members significant revolving funding to better their lives and living circumstances. Similar avenues exist via which responders can interact with communities to offer help and support (Abebe and Belaineh, 2022).

Local NGOs have several advantages over international NGOs in the context of post-war recovery. First, they have a better understanding of the local context and culture. This allows them to design and implement programs that are more likely to be successful. Second, they have stronger relationships with local communities. This makes it easier for them to mobilize support for their work. Third, they are often more cost-effective than international NGOs (Cheyins, 2014). Moreover, these local NGOs can play a role in post-war recovery in a number of ways. They can provide humanitarian assistance, such as food, shelter, and medical care. They can also help to rebuild infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, and roads. In addition, they can promote economic development and social cohesion.

As I observed, one of the most important roles that local NGOs have played is in providing humanitarian assistance. They have distributed food, shelter, and medical care to those who were displaced by the conflict. They have also helped to rebuild schools and hospitals, and to provide clean water and sanitation. In addition to providing humanitarian assistance, local NGOs have also worked to promote economic development and social cohesion. They have helped to create jobs, to provide training, and to support small businesses. They have also worked to bring together people from different ethnic groups and to promote peace building. In general, the work of local NGOs has been essential to the post-war recovery of Dessie town. They have helped to rebuild lives and to create a more just and peaceful society.

A 30 year old female NGO worker from Borumeda kebele said:

I have faith in Dessie's future. People in this place are tough. They are committed to reestablishing their community and building a brighter future for their family. However, it will require some time and work. To aid with Dessie's recovery, we require the international community's ongoing assistance.(Interview with R9, Borumeda, April 15, 2023)

In addition, FGD three participants state some specific examples of the work that local NGOs have done in Dessie town as follows: The Dessie Women's Association has provided food, shelter, and medical care to displaced women and children. The Rehabilitation and Development Association have helped to rebuild schools and hospitals. Furthermore, the Dessie Peace and Development Association have worked to promote peace building and reconciliation.

5.4.2. The Role of Social Network

Households with stronger social ties and family ties to these traditional sources of power were better able to secure land, get food from neighbors and family, work in collective groups, access credit through savings associations, and find paid employment opportunities as conflict broke out and post-colonial state structures fell (Maxwell, 2017). Households with a small social network, on the other hand, had more trouble finding land and jobs and were forced to engage in riskier security-related activities, such as harvesting natural resources on their own rather than in groups.

In addition to having better access to resources, households and individuals with stronger social ties were able to employ more successful defense mechanisms, with the most typical ones being group movement and keeping close contact with other community members when relocating outside of settled villages (ibid).

Social networks play a significant role in enabling households and individuals to acquire assets for their livelihood and apply more efficient livelihood techniques (ibid).

5.4.3. Reconciliation Programs

Reconciliation is the broader post-war reconstruction process; it is a process that includes the search for truth, justice, forgiveness, and healing and is rooted in the idea that societies are

capable of moving from a divided past to a shared future. It involves acknowledging past wrongs and grievances in the hope of moving towards attitudinal change that will eventually pave the way for developing a shared vision of the future in which people can live harmoniously without returning to conflict (Hamber and Grainne 2004).

Reinstalling the rule of law and ensuring transitional justice are two of the critical aims of post-conflict reconstruction programs and efforts. Such efforts and programs to be effective require empirical data on the systemic, institutional, and practical bottlenecks and challenges to rebuilding the justice system and ensuring transitional justice to inform them.

Sources from NGO worker shows that, number of reconciliation programs have been implemented to assist the people of Dessie in healing from the war. These programs have emphasized the development of trust, understanding, and cooperation among many groups of people. According to the source the "Community Dialogues" program is one of the most prominent reconciliation programs in Dessie. This program brings together people from various groups to talk about their wartime experiences. The dialogues are conducted by qualified mediators, who assist participants in listening to and understanding each other's points of view.

One of the NGO workers in Dessie said:

A group of women who had been displaced from their homes during the war met to engage in a Community Dialogue. The women discussed their wartime memories as well as their hopes and anxieties for the future. The discussions assisted the women in developing trust and understanding with one another. They also made the women feel less alone and more positive about their future.(Interview with R13, Dawedo, March 11, 2023)

Also, the sources of the study show that to reinstall the rule of law, ensure justice, and reconstruct the town, different community-based mechanisms are used in Dessie Town. Among these is purifying evil through ritual in a collective way.

5.4.4. Acceptance of uncertainty and change

Resilience thinking is closely associated with the ability of systems to deal with uncertainty and change (Folke 2006). Underscoring this characteristic of resilience, Norris et al. (2008:130) note that 'stability,' or the failure to change, could be a way of determining the lack of resilience.

The resilience of systems, for example, depends upon one component of the system being able to change or adapt in response to changes in other components, and thus the system would fail to function if that component remained stable (ibid., 130). The finding shows that the community passes such wartime by using their different social ties; one of the informants states as follows:

Without a doubt, the people of Wollo are recognized for helping one another and sharing what we have. We are also widely known for asking about one's health even if we have nothing to offer. As a result, as human beings, we help one another in both material and non-material ways, such as through information. In this time of war, humans learn a great deal of things.(Interview with R5, Dawedo, May 10, 2023).

To add to the other informant's speech, he said that *to be honest, I have no words to describe how amazing the Dessie population as a whole is*. By cutting back on their everyday requirements, each and every person actively participates in the rehabilitation of the community. NGOS, seniors, young people, religious leaders, *Edir*, and *Iqub* are the primary actors.

Another type of resilience mechanism is kinship ties. When people face destruction or war, they will seek refuge with their families. People leave their compound because of the war. In my study area, most of my informants told me they go to their family members to flee the war, and they stay with them until the war ends or the TPLF army leaves the compound. When they return home, their families send them money and materials that they require for their homes because they have been separated from their workplace for a long time, their home may be harsh due to the war, and so on. As a result of this, kinship ties are beneficial. To support the above idea, one of my informants stated as follows:

We were so lucky because we did not end up in shelters like other people. We had families there, and that made a lot of things easier for us. They even sent us a rented car halfway down the road, so this was a great opportunity for us. When we arrived there, the local people were so nice, and they took good care of us. This moment also made us more religious and closer to God. This whole situation made me realize that we people have to support each other no matter what because we all need help at some point in our lives.(Interview with R10, Borumeda, May 11, 2023).

5.4.5. Community Involvement and local knowledge

In addition to the humanitarian aid received from NGOs or foreign governments to rebuild the damages resulting from war, there is emerging evidence that affected communities themselves

could also have the socio-cultural resources, capitals, and capacities to effectively adapt to or cope with the adversities caused by the conflict and to recover communal life. Accordingly, a growing body of literature suggests that community means of resilience and capital are other forms of resources states and societies have at their disposal to use as part of their post-conflict reconstruction efforts (Bonanno, 2004).

The sources from the interview and FGD show that, in collectivistic societies like Ethiopia, where there is a gap between the needs of the affected community and the responses and actions of the government during or after a war or disaster, community engagement and strong social networks are instrumental in identifying priorities and solutions that are more likely to be appropriate, lasting, and supported by the affected community. Religious beliefs and family and social support, networks, and relationships have been shown to be protective factors against the effects of trauma and important in their recovery. Equally, community coping and resilience help individuals and families deal with and recover from the destructive effects of war.

5.5. Lessons from Post-War Recovery of Dessie Town

The post-war recovery of Dessie town has been a long and challenging one. The city was severely affected by the recent war in Ethiopia, and many communities are still struggling to recover. However, there have been a number of lessons learned that can be applied to other post-war recovery efforts.

5.5.1. Social Cohesion

According to Mandi et al., (2023) social cohesion is the glue that holds a society together. It is the sense of shared identity, values, and goals that binds people together and makes them willing to work together for the common good. Social cohesion is important for a number of reasons. It can help to reduce crime and violence, promote economic growth, and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Accordingly, as Key Informant from the three kebeles (Dawedo, Borumeda and Robit) revealed one of the most important lessons learned from post-war recovery of Dessie town is the importance of social cohesion. The people of Dessie are known for their strong social cohesion,

and this has been essential for their recovery. When people are able to come together and support each other, they are better able to overcome the challenges of post-war recovery.

5.5.2. Customary Coping Mechanisms

Another important lesson learned is the importance of traditional coping mechanisms. The people of Dessie have a long history of coping with adversity, and they have developed traditional coping mechanisms that help them to deal with difficult times. These coping mechanisms, such as community-based support and traditional healing practices, have been essential for helping people to cope with the psychological trauma of war.

A Key Informant, secondary school teacher from Robit kebele told:

One of the most important traditional coping mechanisms in Dessie is spirituality. Many people in the town turn to their faith for strength and comfort during times of hardship. They may pray, attend religious services, or participate in other spiritual practices. Spirituality can provide a sense of peace and hope, and it can help people to find meaning in their suffering. Another important traditional coping mechanism in Dessie is community. People in the town are very supportive of each other, and they often come together to help those who are struggling. They may offer practical assistance, such as food or financial help, or they may simply provide emotional support. Community can provide a sense of belonging and connection, and it can help people to feel less alone during difficult times. (Interview with R8, Robit, March 12, 2023).

5.5.3. Community-Based Organizations

The third important lesson learned is the importance of community-based organizations. There are a number of community-based organizations in Dessie that work to promote resilience. These organizations provide a variety of services, including social support, economic development, and conflict resolution. They have played a vital role in helping communities to rebuild and recover from war.

Another Key-Informant, NGO worker from Dawedo kebele summarized the importance of CBOs:

I'm a resident of Dessie town, and I've seen the importance of community-based organizations (CBOs) in helping people to cope with stress and trauma. These organizations are run by and for the community, and they offer a variety of services that can help people to improve their lives. (Interview with R13, Dawedo, March 11, 2023)

5.5.4. Local Leadership

The fourth important lesson learned is the importance of local leadership. There is strong local leadership in Dessie, and this leadership is committed to rebuilding the city and helping the people to recover. Local leaders have been essential for coordinating recovery efforts and for building community resilience.

A Key Informant, a culture and tourism professional working in Dessie town summed up the important lesson learned from the local leadership:

In the years since the conflict, local leaders in Dessie have played a vital role in rebuilding the community. They have worked to provide food, shelter, and healthcare to those who were displaced by the conflict. They have also worked to rebuild schools and businesses, and to promote economic development by cooperating with the community. Local leaders have also been instrumental in promoting peace and reconciliation in the community. They have worked to bring different groups together and to foster understanding and tolerance. I am confident that they will continue to lead the community to a brighter future. (Interview with R2, Robit, April 12, 2023).

The post-war recovery of Dessie Town has been a long and challenging process, but there have been many lessons learned along the way. These lessons can be applied to other communities that are recovering from conflict or other disasters. One of the most important lessons is the importance of community-based organizations. These organizations can provide vital services that help people to cope with stress and trauma, and they can play a role in improving the lives of everyone in the community. Another important lesson is the importance of local leadership. Local leaders are the people who know the community best, and they are the ones who can build

trust and cooperation among different groups. They are also the ones who can advocate for the needs of the community and ensure that it is represented in decision-making.

Finally, it is important to remember that recovery is not a linear process. There will be setbacks and challenges along the way, but it is important to keep moving forward. With hard work and determination, communities can recover from conflict and build a better future.

CHAPTER -SIX

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Conclusion

The TPLF troops launched an open invasion of the Amhara and Afar regions in June 2021 after rejecting the unilateral ceasefire proposal made by the federal government. During the assault, the TPLF forces looted the government and private property of thousands of unarmed citizens, forcing them to flee their communities.

The war had a devastating impact on Dessie town. The social, economic, and political fabric of the town was torn apart, and many people were displaced from their homes. In the years since the war, the community has been working hard to rebuild. However, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed. One of the biggest challenges facing Dessie town is poverty. Many people lost their jobs or businesses during the war, and they are struggling to make ends meet. Another challenge is lack of access to basic services. Many schools and hospitals were damaged or destroyed during the war, and they have not yet been rebuilt. To address these challenges, community resilience theory can be used to understand these challenges and opportunities. By building on the strengths of the community and addressing the challenges, it is possible to facilitate a successful post-war recovery in North Ethiopia.

Despite these challenges, the community in Dessie town has shown great resilience. They have come together to help each other, and they have worked to rebuild their lives. There are a number of community resilience mechanisms that have been used in Dessie town. These include: Community-based organizations: have provided vital services to the community, such as food, shelter, and healthcare. They have also helped to rebuild infrastructure and businesses. Local leadership: have played a key role in rebuilding the community. They have worked to bring people together and to promote peace and reconciliation. Traditional coping mechanisms: have helped people to deal with the stress and trauma of war. These mechanisms include spirituality, community support, and traditional healing practices.

The post-war recovery process in Dessie town has been long and challenging, but there have been many positive developments. The community has shown great resilience, and they are working hard to build a better future. The lessons learned from the post-war recovery process in Dessie town can be applied to other communities in conflict-affected areas.

The post-war recovery of Dessie Town is an ongoing process, but there have been many positive developments. The community has shown great resilience, and with continued hard work and dedication, Dessie Town can build a brighter future.

6.2 Recommendations

Efforts to bring peace should be thoughtful and inclusive, taking into account the opinions of marginalized groups and making use of local peace-building strategies that are already in existence. This necessitates a power mapping exercise as well as an evaluation of the community's opinion leaders and vulnerable social groups in order to guarantee that everyone may participate and be heard (Abebe and Belaineh, 2022).

In order to sustainably support the post-conflict rebuilding of services, infrastructure, and institutions, it is also crucial to finance and support local capabilities. This can increase a community's ability to withstand the conflicts and related crises' potential long-term impacts. At the *woreda* level, capacity enhancement efforts can concentrate on the current local civil servant workforce to support improvements in both standard working practices (such as, for example, capacity for rapid resource deployment) and inclusive engagement with people and communities. At the *kebele* level, efforts should concentrate on bolstering both official and unofficial community organizations, such as neighborhood-based organizations that can promote regional solutions.

Based on the general and specific objectives of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

-The war has had a devastating impact on Dessie town, and it will take many years for the community to recover. Thus, it is important to focus more on the most vulnerable members of the community such as women, children, and the elderly are often the most affected by war. It is also important to build on the strengths of the community. Dessie town has a rich history and

culture, and these strengths can be used to rebuild the community. In addition, it is important to be patient and persistent because the recovery process may take long period and difficult, but it is important to keep working towards a better future for Dessie town.

-As seen in the mediation process, external-actors can assist in the negotiating process through mediation, but they shouldn't push solutions or completely draft agreements and impose them on the local parties. Instead, they should provide room for local reconciliation methods. The local populace should actively involve in the recovery program to ensure both capacity building and their complete ownership of the suggested measures. To this effect, the federal government and other concerned organizations must collaborate with local players to rebuild the fundamental social, political, and economic structures.

-In order to improve the challenges facing the communities in Dessie providing humanitarian assistance, rendering psychological support, promoting social cohesion supporting traditional coping mechanisms, and community based organizations would be of paramount importance.

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APPENDICES
Hawassa University

College of social Sciences and Humanities

Anthropology Department

Appendix 1 List of key and in-depth interview informants

Code	Sex	Age	Occupation	Place of interview	Date of interview
R1	F	45	Merchant	Bourumeda <i>kebele</i>	March 15, 2023
R2	M	39	Government employee	Robit <i>kebele</i>	April 12 , 2023
R3	M	51	Priest	Dawedo <i>kebeles</i>	March10 , 2023
R4	F	32	House wife	Bourumeda <i>kebele</i>	Feburary30 , 2023
R5	M	40	Government employee	Dawudo <i>kebeles</i>	May10 , 2023
R6	M	65	Sheikh	Robit <i>kebeles</i>	May14 , 2023
R7	F	20	Student	Dawudo <i>kebeles</i>	Feburary30 , 2023
R8	M	41	Teacher	Robit <i>kebeles</i>	March12 , 2023
R9	F	30	NGO work	Bourumeda <i>kebele</i>	April 15, 2023
R10	M	49	Government employee	Bourumeda <i>kebele</i>	May11 , 2023
R11	F	42	House wife	Dawedo <i>kebeles</i>	March11 , 2023
R12	M	28	Government employe	Dawedo <i>kebeles</i>	April11 , 2023
R13	M	38	NGO worker	Dawedo <i>kebeles</i>	March11 , 2023
R14	F	38	NGO worker	Bourumeda <i>kebele</i>	April17 , 2023
R15	M	36	Pharmacist	Bourumeda <i>kebele</i>	March15 , 2023

List of FGD

No	Code	Sex	Age	Occupation	Place of Discussion	Date of Discussion
Group-A						
1	G1D1	M	50		Borumeda <i>keble</i>	March,2023
2	G1D2	M	53		Borumeda <i>keble</i>	March,2023
3	G1D3	M	48		Borumeda <i>keble</i>	March,2023
4	G1D4	M	50		Borumeda <i>keble</i>	March,2023
5	G1D5	M	42		Borumeda <i>keble</i>	March,2023
6	G1D6	M	65		Borumeda <i>keble</i>	March,2023
7	G1D7	M	46		Borumeda <i>keble</i>	March,2023
8	G1D8	M	55		Borumeda <i>keble</i>	March,2023
Group-2						
1	G2D1	F	35		Dawdo <i>keble</i>	March,2023
2	G2D2	F	41		Dawdo <i>keble</i>	March,2023
3	G2D3	F	37		Dawdo <i>keble</i>	March,2023
4	G2D4	F	47		Dawdo <i>keble</i>	March,2023
5	G2D5	F	40		Dawdo <i>keble</i>	March,2023
6	G2D6	F	45		Dawdo <i>keble</i>	March,2023
7	G2D7	F	45		Dawdo <i>keble</i>	March,2023
8	G2D8	F	47		Dawdo <i>keble</i>	March,2023
Group-3						
1	G3D1	M	24		Robit <i>keble</i>	April,2023
2	G3D2	M	26		Robit <i>keble</i>	April,2023
3	G3D3	M	21		Robit <i>keble</i>	April,2023

4	G3D4	M	19		Robit keble	April,2023
5	G3D5	M	22		Robit keble	April,2023
6	G3D6	M	24		Robit keble	April,2023
7	G3D7	M	26		Robit keble	April,2023
8	G3D8	M	24		Robit keble	April,2023

APENDEX-B

Checklist questions for a research on: *WAR IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA (2020-2022): POST-WAR RECOVERY, CHALLENGES AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE MECHANISM: THE CASE OF DESSIE TOWN.*

By: Helen Getachew

Anthropology department Hawassa University

February, 2023GC

Introduction

Dear informants thank you in advance for your time and cooperation in discussing with me the research topic entitled " *WAR IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA (2020-2022): POST-WAR RECOVERY, CHALLENGES AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE MECHANISM IN DESSIE TOWN.*" First of all, what I want to inform you is that the information I gather here through different data collection instruments will be used only for this research; it has no other vested interest. After getting your consent, I have some questions on post-war recovery and its challenges. The discussion will last no more than an hour, with questions centered on post-war recovery activities, challenges you faced, resilience mechanisms, and social capital and social actors and if I get your willing I will take your audio record and some pictures for the quality of this research . In this study, what I promise you is to confidentially treat the responses you give during interviews. As the quality of this research depends heavily on your honest and genuine answers, I request that you considerately participate during interviews and discussions. Feel free! You can even withdraw at any time during the discussion if you feel something not comforting you.

You can ask me any question that is not clear to you. I will give you a moment to decide whether you want to be a part of this study.

Thank you!

CONSENT FORM

I have read and it had been explained to me by the researcher (Helen Getachew) the information sheet concerning the study entitled: *WAR IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA (2020-2022): POST-WAR RECOVERY, CHALLENGES AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE MECHANISM IN DESSIE TOWN*. in which I have been asked to participate. I understand what is being proposed and what will be required of me if I take part in this study. I have been informed about what the data collected in this investigation will be used for, to whom it may be disclosed, and how long it will be retained. Besides, I understand that my personal involvement and my particular data from this trial will remain strictly confidential. Only researchers involved in the investigation will have access. I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason, and that this will be without detriment to any care or services I may be receiving or may receive in the future. I agree to the arrangements described in the information sheet so far as they relate to my participation and hereby fully and freely give my consent to participate in the study, which has been fully explained to me. I have received a copy of this consent form and the accompanying information sheet.

Participant's signature: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: ____ _ _____

Observation check list

- ✓ The physical damage caused by the war (buildings, roads, and schools, etc).
- ✓ The current situation of Dessie town after the war (economic stability, environmental stability etc).
- ✓ Social interaction after the war (with Tigray natives and local community).
- ✓ Texts written on the walls by the invader group.

Background information

- ✓ Name_____Age_____Sex_____
- ✓ Marital Status_____
- ✓ Occupation_____Kebele_____Town_____
- ✓ Date of interview_____ Place of interview_____

FGD

- ✓ What did the situation seem like when TPLF took Dessie (what was the emotion of the people, their fear, and other emotions)?
- ✓ The nature of preparation like food staff, cash birr....
- ✓ What was your social interaction like during the TPLF occupation? (On bad days)
- ✓ What were the scars that this war left for you (like psychological trauma)?
- ✓ What are the challenges that you faced in the recovery process (like economical, social and political)?
- ✓ What do you feel about the roles of social actors play in the rehabilitation process (like village elders, religious people, and others)?
- ✓ What was the role of the government's and non-governmental organizations' response to restoring the losses and damages that the war caused?
- ✓ Do you think social capital helpful in recovery processes?
- ✓ Is there any resilience mechanism that you used to recover from the war? (Culturally, religious, social bonding, internal and external supports etc).
- ✓ What do you recommend to resist such multi-dimensional loss and challenges after the war?

In-depth interview

- ✓ What seems to be the situation after the TPLF took control of Dessie Town? (The fear, tension, their preparation etc.)
- ✓ What was the state of society's interaction during the TPLF's occupation of Dessie Town? (Social bonding, support, economic activities, social activities, etc).
- ✓ What kinds of pain/loss did you endure during the war? (like material and human losses)

- ✓ Who is most affected by this war? (Women, children, adolescents, or elders).
- ✓ How does Dessie's situation seem after the war? (Economic stability, political stability, environmental stability, etc).
- ✓ What are the multi-dimensional challenges that you face in the reconstruction process? (like social ,economic and political challenges)
- ✓ What role do social actors play in post-war re-habitation activities in post-war societal reconstruction? (Elders, leading figures in the society, religious people, etc.)
- ✓ What is your opinion about the responses by government and non-government organizations to restore the damages?
- ✓ How do you use social capital in the recovery processes?
- ✓ Do you know any resilience mechanism that you use to recover from the war? (Religious, cultural, social, getting support internally and externally etc).
- ✓ What was your relation with individuals/persons originally from Tigrayregion who live in the town after the war?
- ✓ What lesson do you take from this war?
- ✓ What is your suggestion/any idea/ you might have with regards to preventing the multi-dimensional challenges after the war?