

Unraveling the Complex Dynamics: A Comprehensive Examination of the Underlying Causes of Conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study described the underlying causes of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. Five ethnic groups own the region by constitution, namely Gumuz, Benishangul, Shinasha, Mao, and Komo. Additionally, there are other ethnic groups living in the region, including Amhara, Oromo, Agew, Kenbata, Tegrian, and others. The study used descriptive and exploratory research types, and the target population was the region's population. The sample size was 400, for which systematic sampling techniques would be used. The study used both primary and secondary data sources. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research designs. The region was endowed with different natural resources, like gold, marble, coal, granite, and other minerals, as well as fertile land suitable for agriculture and pastoral purposes. Due to this endowment of natural resources, many ethnic groups migrate from other parts of the country and live in the region. Based on the findings of the study, the leading causes of conflicts in the region were misunderstanding of local communities, unfair distribution of natural resources, lack of accommodation for diversity, lack of infrastructure, weak government administration, and illegal participation of political parties, internal and external intervention actors.

Keywords: Causes of Conflicts, Conflicts Resolution Strategies

1. Introduction

In the lives of human beings, conflicts are a natural phenomenon that occurs from time to time. Natural events should be managed in pure human hearts to bring peace and stability, rather than the disputes of individuals changing into disputes of groups, which in turn change into disputes of communities, which in turn change into great conflicts and civil wars. Most of the time, conflicts have been caused by self-interest and the unmet needs of human nature. Lack of understanding and mistrust among individuals also leads to tension and anxiety; this pressure and nervousness lead to conflicts among individuals and communities.

According to the findings of **Simon**¹ The main factors that lead to conflict tend to be identity and values.

¹ Simon Meduekwuluonu. *Ethnic Conflicts in Nigeria. a Narrative Inquiry of Individuals Who Emigrated from Nigeria to*

Conflicts are caused by a variety of factors, including territorial, resource, economic, and political factors. Additionally, identity drivers, such as ethnicity, culture, tribe, race, or religion, can cause conflicts. In the Horn of Africa, a variety of conflicts exist between neighbouring countries because of economic, social, political, and historical factors. The majority of them were rooted in broader conflicts over territory, ethnicity, and religion. He further emphasized that resource-centered disputes were especially prominent in the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and River Nile. **Teferi**² indicated that various civil wars have taken place in Ethiopia, involving the Amharas and the Tigrians, the Oromo and Benishangul-Gumuz, and so on. Various Somali conflicts have been described as conflicts between the Maraheens and the Issas, or Darods and Ogadens, and so on; and the conflict in Djibouti has been described as between the Afars and the Issas."

Ethiopia is located in the Horn of Africa and has been associated with war and famine for generations. Various factors have threatened the Ethiopian state's very existence. There are many, including state formation, state image, separatism, irredentism, and proxy intervention by foreign powers. Several internal and external factors have contributed to the underdevelopment and conflict in the region, particularly in Ethiopia. The main cause of conflict and separatism in Ethiopia was internal division and ethnic conflict. Multiple ethnic groups, the plurality of religions and ethnicities, and heterogeneous societies, together with the absence of democratic culture and the absence of mature, strong institutions that can manage conflict and promote peace, have contributed to aggravating the existing conflicts. In the absence of governance, peace-building conditions are adversely affected(**Dengle**)³.

According to **Asgele Siyum**,⁴ because the ruling party and the powerful government at the centre have managed conflicts through their party channels, Ethiopia has been relatively stable for the past two decades. However, Ethiopia has experienced both rapid political liberalization and violent conflict in the last four years. Amhara Region's north-east, north-western, and western regions; many woredas in Benishangul-Gumuz Region; western, southern, and central Oromia; bordering areas between the Oromia and Somalia Regions; and eastern and northeastern parts of Oromia have been major hotspots in the country for the past four years. Additionally, the tensions between the federal government and the Tigray regional government were escalating into civil war.

At present, Ethiopia has 12 regional states and two city administrations. Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State (BGRS) is one of them. In this region, there are five races of regional owners who are constitutionally guaranteed, namely, Berta, Gumuz, Shinasha, Mao, and Komo. But in this region, there are other different races: Amhara, Oromo, Tigran, Agew, Kenbata, Wolietta, and other ethnic groups. The region has suitable agricultural and pastoral land, and there are also various mines in the region. Not only that, but the central government also built the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Abiy River in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, Metekel Zone, Guba woreda, and Bamizakebele, and funds for this project have been donated by all Ethiopian nationals inside and outside. Now their building was in the final phase.

According to **Teferi**⁵State, the Berta-Gumuz conflict of January 2001 was the other violent inter-ethnic

United State and Thier Lived Experinces. no. December, 2021, pp. 4–6.

² Teferi, Lubo. "The Post 1991 'Inter-Ethnic' Conflicts in Ethiopia: An Investigation." *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2012, pp. 62–69, doi:10.5897/jlcr11.045.

³ Yonas Sertse Dengle. "Peace and Security Strategy of Ethiopia and Its Lessons to the Horn of Africa", no. November, 2013.

⁴ Asgele Siyum, Berihu. *Underlying Causes of Conflict in Ethiopia: Historical, Political, and Institutional?* 2022, pp. 4–5, <https://doi.org/10.33422/2nd.3sconf.2021.10.102>.

⁵ Teferi, Lubo. "The Post 1991 'Inter-Ethnic' Conflicts in Ethiopia: An Investigation." *Journal of Law and Conflict*

conflict that was handled through the involvement of the House of Federation when the Berta ethnic group expressed its dissatisfaction, alleging that the Gumuz ethnic group with a smaller population was made to get more administrative units and a greater number of representatives at the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. This conflictual problem is mainly due to variables similar to those of the Agnuak-Nuer conflict, which was based on the allocation of power and resources.

The region of Benishangul-Gumuz Regional state was endowed with natural resources suitable for agriculture and pastoral. Due to this, many people migrated from other parts of the country and chose to live there. The migration of people from other areas to this region creates tension in the regional and local communities. The main causes of conflicts in the region were lack of infrastructure, weak government administration, lack of accommodating diversity, illegal participation of political parties, the intervention of Amhara and Oromia regional states internally, and the intervention of Sudan and Egypt externally. Additionally, informal organized and formalized groups of militias in the region came from the sides of Gumuz ethnic groups and Berta ethnic groups. Those informal groups fight with government soldiers and local communities. This creates tension and disputes among the communities in the region. The conflicts in the region were solved through the participation of all members of the community in resolving them by addressing the causes of conflicts and putting solutions in place.

2. Literature Reviews

The violence in the Assosa zone was caused by a conflict between so-called highlanders of Amhara and Oromo origin and the indigenous Berta community living there. Several Gumuz and Berta officials were kidnapped in the West Wollega zone of neighbouring Oromia in June 2018. The Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) is believed to have carried out this act. Additionally, the Benishangul People's Liberation Army (BPLA), a mostly Berta armed group that emerged from a political party with the same name, also became involved in the conflict, targeting civilians and government forces along the Sudanese border in peripheral areas of the Assosa zone. **(Birhanu and Tana)⁶**

(Birhanu and Tana)⁷ The conflict in the Metekel zone was mainly between Gumuz militias and federal and regional government (security) forces due to the relative homogeneity of the population. Kamashi was the place where the Gumuz militia initially organized and operated—a reaction to the OLA's kidnapping of Gumuz and Berta officials. In April 2019, the conflict spread from Assosa town to Metekel Zone, resulting in more widespread conflict. Initially, Gumuz and Amhara communities fought tit-for-tat using tear gas, with Amhara Fano militias allegedly involved from outside Benishangul-Gumuz. Gumuz residents were massacred in Jawiworeda, Amhara region, in late April and then in Dangurworeda, Amhara region, in late June 2019 by forces from the Amhara region. The Gumuz militia massacred more than 200 people in the Metekel zone in December 2019, including children, pregnant women, and elders. Different ethnic groups—Shinasha, Oromo, Amhara, and others—were victims of the conflicts, even though Amhara propaganda claimed all the victims were Amhara.

(Teferi)⁸ The Berta-Gumuz conflict of January 2001 was another violent inter-ethnic conflict dealt with by the House of Federation when the Berta ethnic group expressed dissatisfaction, alleging that the Gumuz

Resolution, vol. 4, no. 4, 2012, pp. 62–69, doi:10.5897/jlcr11.045.

⁶ Birhanu, B.Y. Tsegaye, and Lake Tana. *Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State* : 2022, pp. 4.

⁷ Birhanu, B. Y. Tsegaye, and Lake Tana. *Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State* : 2022, pp. 2–3.

⁸ Teferi, Lubo. “The Post 1991 ‘Inter-Ethnic’ Conflicts in Ethiopia: An Investigation.” *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2012, pp. 62–69, doi:10.5897/jlcr11.045.

ethnic group with fewer populations had more administrative units and more representation in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State as a result of the involvement of the House of Federation. This problem is mainly the result of the same variables as that of the Agnuak-Nuer conflict, which was based on the allocation of power and resources. **(Admassu)**⁹ The Gumuz occupy a spiral-shaped territory extending from the former Wollega province in the south to the northwestern parts of the former Gondar province ('Metema' and 'Qwara'). Even if their settlements are adjacent, it is possible to divide the 'Gumuz' territory into two: 'Metekel' in the Blue Nile valley of northwest Ethiopia and 'Dedessa' in the former 'Wollega' province. It somehow follows this division in the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State (BGRS) administrative division. Accordingly, the former 'MetekelAwraja', inhabited by the 'Gumuz', has been reorganized into the new 'Metekel zone', while the 'Gumuz' of the 'Dedessa' valley has been reorganized into the newly created 'Kamashi zone'.

(Jibat and Berisso)¹⁰ Kamashi zone officials and farmers, he said, organized youths and attacked Oromia wollega zones. According to local informants and higher officials from the Oromia Regional States, the input of local leaders, the police commissioner, and other militias was evident when they began shooting at and killing Oromo people in September 2020. Hundreds of homesteads were burned, and many lives were lost as a result of the acts. As a result, they helped sustain the conflict and encouraged youth to resist opposing groups. **(Birhanu and Tana)**¹¹ In 2018, members of the Gumuz community in Benishangul-Gumuz formed the Gumuz militia to combat the erosion of the federal system, particularly in favour of indigenous communities with political power in regional states, and to preserve its constitutional elements. In December 2021, Gumuz representatives met directly with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to discuss their concerns. According to them, the rights of indigenous groups in BGRS to self-administration have recently been threatened, mainly by Amhara ethno-nationalists. As Amhara nationalists claim the Metekel zone and the federal government equivocates on the Amhara occupation of West Tigray, the Gumuz militia and activists have mobilized the community's support. Due to this, the Gumuz have become more organized, trained, and armed over the last four years. Gumuz-inhabited rural kebeles in the Metekel zone were controlled by militias from December 2020 until July 2023.

(Ayenew)¹² Historically, socially, and politically, conflicts between Agew and Gumuz have built up over time. Each group's past and current positions resulted in contradictory feelings and sentiments regarding the current political system. It was unanimously agreed that "jealousy" is the root cause of conflict between indigenous and non-indigenous ethnic groups as a whole. Both formal and informal influxes of people from highland areas have characterized the history of Metekel. People have been migrating from drought-prone areas of northern Ethiopia to Metekel since the 1950s. During the 1980s, the Derg regime sponsored a large influx in which more people were expected to settle in Metekel Awraja than the total number of host communities. **(Admassu)**¹³ As a result of the migration of 'Amhara' peasants into 'Gumuz' areas, various modes of interaction have emerged. Firstly, the share cropping arrangement recognizes the

⁹ Admassu, Mulunesh Dessie. "Causes Of Ethnic Conflict In Ethiopia And Its Effect On Development: The Case of 'Amhara' And 'Gumuz' Communities." *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, vol. 8, no. 5, 2019, pp. 55–60.

¹⁰ Jibat, Keneni, and Taddes Berisso. *Ethnic Conflict between Oromo-Gumuz in Western Ethiopia Since 2008*. no. 6, 2023, pp. 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.9734/JESBS/2023/v36i61225>.

¹¹ Birhanu, B. Y. Tsegaye, and Lake Tana. *Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State* : 2022, pp. 4–6.

¹² Ayenew, Dagnachew. *Relative Deprivation : An Explanation to Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Metekel Zone , North Western Ethiopia , since 1991*. no. March, 2018, pp. 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJPDS2017.0315>.

¹³ Admassu, Mulunesh Dessie. "Causes Of Ethnic Conflict In Ethiopia And Its Effect On Development: The Case Of 'Amhara' And 'Gumuz' Communities." *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, vol. 8, no. 5, 2019, pp. 55–60.

'Gumuz' right to their land and is mutually beneficial. It reflects changes in relations between the two groups since 1991. Farmers in the degraded and crowded highlands are increasingly facing shortages of farmland as a result of the 'Gumuz', who have relatively abundant fertile land and little experience with ploughing agriculture.

(Jibat and Berisso)¹⁴ A great asset in Gumuz culture is the use and possession of weapons. To gain their daily food, Gumuz traditionally hunt wild animals with traditional arrows and bows. Many individuals, however, used these small arms for criminal purposes. Consequently, the community's development activities are hindered. **(Admassu)**¹⁵ 'Gumuz' officials are, however, concerned about the continuous migration of highland farmers. They are particularly concerned about the long-term political and demographic impacts of migration. As a result, the Benishangul-Gumuz officials are working to limit migrations of 'Amhara' peasants to their area. 'Gumuz' officials claim they did not receive assistance from the 'Amhara' region in sending back migrant farmers to their homeland. Highland-lowland migration is significant in the relationship between the two regions. Despite the land shortages in their home regions, 'Amhara' peasants are increasingly migrating to other regions.

(Ayenew)¹⁶ Accordingly, new forms of conflict emerged between the two groups. Examples include boundary disputes and the forced eviction of Agew from "Gumuz territory". Lack of access to land, water, and other resources often exacerbates these resource competitions. Further animosity and violent outbursts are exacerbated by the lack of trust between the two groups. People from anywhere are coming to our region and becoming richer while we are living in a worse condition than our ancestors. Agew, however, is jealous of Gumuz's position. The other factors mentioned either cause or result in this feeling. These include immigration, land encroachment, land degradation, discrimination, exclusion, looting crops and properties, disagreements during harvest sharing, and disputes regarding land leasing arrangements. According to Gumuz ethnic groups, newcomers have systematically encroached on Gumuz land through cheating, forming fake social bonds, and forceful displacement. The Mandura district cabinet has informed us that "the Gumuz of Manjerri are left without land due to Agew and Amhara alienating them with a bottle of Areqe (local liquor). In addition to cheating corrupt Kebele officials, newcomers can also acquire land by cheating corrupt kebele officials. In some Kebeles, officials allow newcomers to settle by providing a false identity.

Methodology

The study aimed to identify the underlying causes of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. To do this, the researchers employed descriptive and exploratory types of research in the study. In the study, the researcher would use both primary and secondary data. Data that has not been processed or used before and is collected by a researcher is called primary data. Among the primary sources of data, questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interviews would be used during data collection. The term secondary data refers to separate data that has been processed and used in the past. The researcher uses government reports, books, journals, websites, and internal records. It is important to triangulate the accuracy and reliability of respondent data acquisition by using both primary and secondary data. The researcher divided

¹⁴ Jibat, Keneni, and Taddes Berisso. *Ethnic Conflict between Oromo-Gumuz in Western Ethiopia Since 2008*. no. 6, 2023, pp. 9–10, <https://doi.org/10.9734/JESBS/2023/v36i61225>.

¹⁵ Admassu, Mulunesh Dessie. "Causes Of Ethnic Conflict In Ethiopia And Its Effect On Development: The Case Of 'Amhara' And 'Gumuz' Communities." *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, vol. 8, no. 5, 2019, pp. 55–60.

¹⁶ Ayenew, Dagnachew. *Relative Deprivation : An Explanation to Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Metekel Zone , North Western Ethiopia , since 1991*. no. March, 2018, pp. 12–14, <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJPDS2017.0315>.

the region into four sections, namely the Assosa zone, the Metekel zone, the Kamashi zone, and the Mao Komo special woreda. The researcher selected 8 woredas among 23 woredas within the strata group. This was based on regional reports showing that there was a higher level of conflict and instability in those woredas than in other woredas (**2020 B/G/R/S Annual Report**). 400 samples were selected from the total population to represent the total population. The researcher uses both descriptive and exploratory research designs.

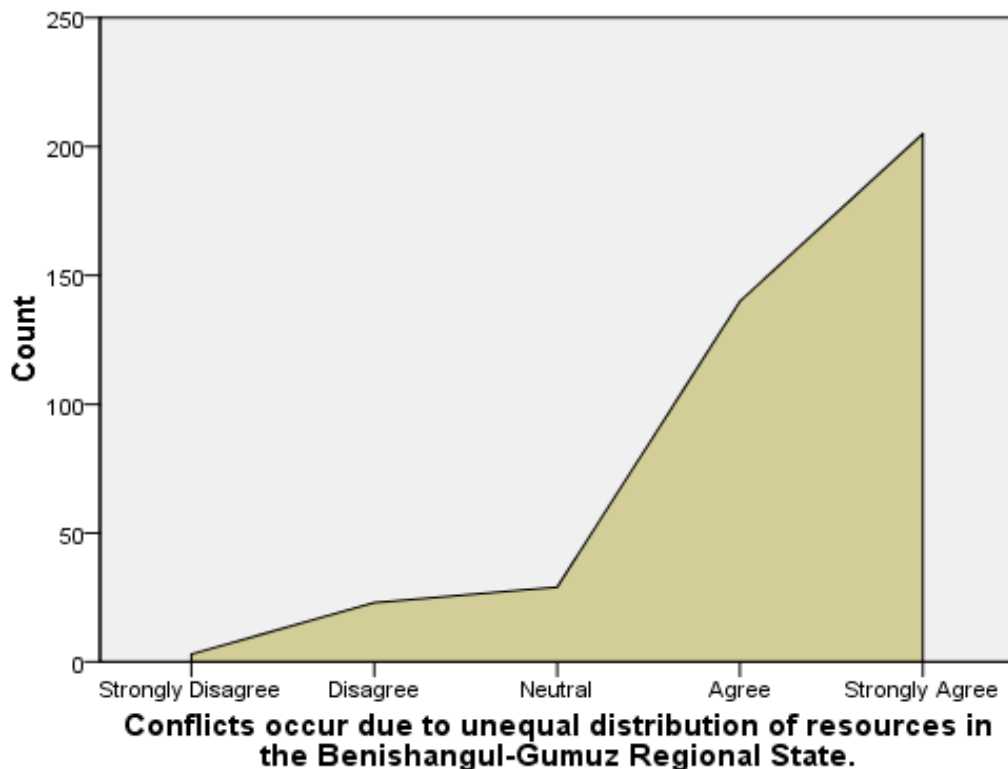
Objective and Scope of the Study

The objective of the study was to identify the underlying causes of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. This study was conducted regionally. The region of Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State was one of the twelve regional states in Ethiopia, with three administrative zones and one special woreda.

The finding of the Results

The main causes of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State about misunderstandings of ideas between different communities, weak administration of the government system, involvement of various illegal political parties, conflicts between individuals, unequal distribution of resources, partial or illegal provision of goods and services, lack of infrastructure, and internal and external interventions

Figures 1.



According to the above figure 1, one of the most common causes of conflict in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State was unequal resource distribution. An overwhelming majority of respondents strongly agree that an unequal distribution of resources contributes to conflicts in the region. According to the study, Benishangu-Gumuz has many natural resources, which cause conflicts in the area. The unequal distribution of resources has led to tensions between communities, which in turn has led to violence and displacement. To reduce the risk of conflict in the region, it is important to address the underlying issues

of the unequal distribution of resources. Providing equitable access to resources, such as land, water, and other resources, can help mitigate tensions and reduce the risk of conflict.

Fekeru Ayele stated that:-

“The treatment of community in any region by partial attrition co-exists of the community and leads in to tensions and strains, which means if conflicts arise, the affected community will take revenge on the disadvantageous of the previous. Benishangul-Gumuz's conflict arose from the treatment of citizens unequally by government structures and functions. The unfair treatment of communities in the region often leads individuals and groups to organize themselves and fight against other ethnic groups. These unfair treatment of communities adversely affect Indigenous and non-indigenous pepoles of the region. Displacement, death, and destruction have been caused by this conflict. As a result, violence has increased between different ethnic groups and mistrust has deepened.”

According to the above findings, mistreating citizens in any country/region will cause disagreements between communities and lead to conflicts in the long run. In Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, not only the non-indigenous community was treated unfairly, but also the indigenous community itself was mistreated. Consequently, some communities are not treated fairly and equally. As a result, the government avoids such unfair treatment among indigenous communities and non-indigenous groups. As a result, peace and security can be brought to the region through resolving conflicts in the region, allowing different ethnic groups to live harmoniously and respectfully for decades. **Dessalegn¹⁷ stated that,** as a result of South Sudan conflict, armed groups have attacked and killed civilians in their homes, churches, mosques, hospitals, and government buildings.

A major cause of regional conflict was the unequal distribution of resources among the communities of a region, according to the focused group discussion. Since this region is rich in natural resources, many individuals and groups migrate to this region in search of work and to live as residents. Indigenous people are causing tension and having a difficult time surviving. Furthermore, indigenous community life was not modernized, and there was a lack of experience and knowledge of how to extract their natural resources and use them through modern technology. Furthermore, the natural resources of the region have been used by other communities for long periods.

Table 1

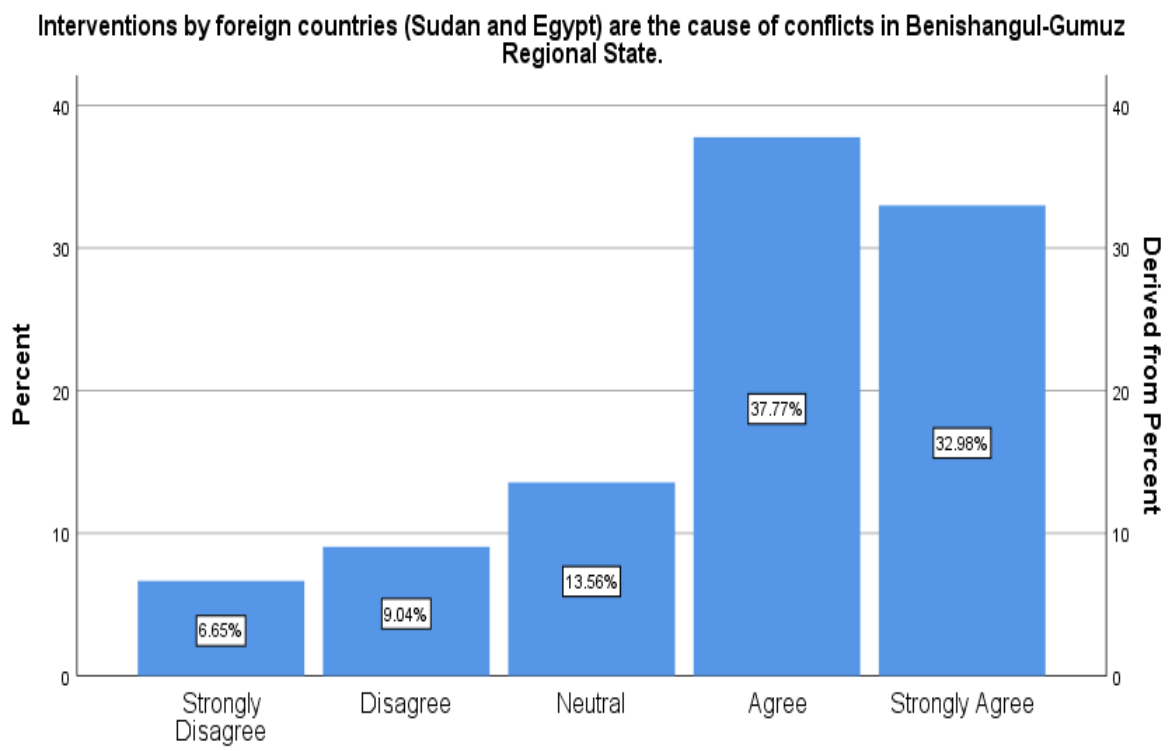
A lack of Ethnic Diversity Accommodation leads to Conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State.					
		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Disagree	37	9.8	9.8	11.7
	Neutral	41	10.9	10.9	22.6
	Agree	165	43.9	43.9	66.5
	Strongly Agree	126	33.5	33.5	100.0
	Total	376	100.0	100.0	

In above table 1, we find that 126 respondents (33.5%) and 165 respondents (43.9%), respectively, agree and strongly agree that ethnic diversity accommodation leads to conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. One of the causes of conflicts in the region, according to this report, was the lack of ethnic diversity

¹⁷ Dessalegn, Aziza Geleta. “The Cause and Consequence of Conflict in South Sudan.” *Inter. J. Polit. Sci. Develop*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2017, pp. 15–21, <https://doi.org/10.14662/IJPSD2016.063>.

accommodation at regional levels. To prevent conflicts between members of the community and bring peace and security between individuals and society, accommodating diversity was one strategy. The distribution of government goods and services must be provided to the community without discrimination based on ethnicity. Otherwise, unequal treatment of individuals based on their ethnic differences would bring conflict and war between the communities of the region. Consequently, government activities must be free from ethnic differences and accommodate all citizens of the region equally. This is done by addressing the interests of the community within one framework to avoid any mistreatment of the citizens of the region. This can be achieved by providing equal opportunities for all regardless of their ethnicity or background.

Figure 2



Interventions by foreign countries (Sudan and Egypt) are the cause of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State.

According to Figure 2, 37.77 per cent and 32.98 per cent agree and strongly agree, respectively, that foreign interference (from Sudan and Egypt) is a cause of conflicts in the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. This figure shows that foreign intervention, such as that of Sudan and Egypt, is one source of conflict in the region. As the interviews indicate, the Ethiopian government built the Grand Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile (Abay River), the longest river in Africa. Ethiopia and the Blue Nile have different historical scenarios regarding this river. Ethiopia began building the dam in 2011, which means that it took them a decade to construct the dam, and it is beginning to produce electricity.

According to Fekeru Dessalegn interviews,

“One cause of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz regional state was the intervention of both the Oromia and Amhara regional government, particularly the Amhara regional government. Intervention occurred at the individual, community, and governmental levels. Because this region had huge natural resources, the two regions created tensions through different systems. Likewise, Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State does not have road access to other parts of the country, unlike both regional states. To

reach Ethiopia's capital (Addis Ababa) and any part of the country, the Assosa zone, Kamashi zone and Mao special woreda pass through Oromia regional state. In the same way, the Metekel zone passes through Amhara regional state to reach Ethiopia's capital city (Addis Ababa) and any other part of the country. In this scenario, the indigenous community is mistreated during the journey. The indigenous community takes revenge on non-indigenous groups in the region. Consequently, this exacerbated conflicts in the region for a long time.”

Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State is located in the northwestern part of Ethiopia and is considered a relatively small area in terms of land mass and population. The region is bordered by the Amhara regional state in the north and northeast. It is also bordered by the Oromia region in the south and southeast and by the Republic of Sudan in the west. There are cultural, religious, and ethnic ties between this region and the neighbouring country of Sudan. Benishangul people have a deep understanding of the Sudanese community by their ethnicity, culture, religion, and other factors. Moreover, some time ago, there was no peace in Ethiopia, especially in the Benishangul-Gumuz region. So the population was moved to Sudan, and the same thing happened in Sudan. Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State now takes in a huge number of refugees, the majority of whom are from the Republic of Sudan and South Sudan.

Table 2

Conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State are caused by unequal treatment of the community.					
		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	44	11.7	11.7	13.3
	Neutral	22	5.9	5.9	19.1
	Agree	153	40.7	40.7	59.8
	Strongly agree	151	40.2	40.2	100.0
	Total	376	100.0	100.0	

According to the above data, 90.1% of respondents strongly agree and agree cumulatively that the cause of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State was unequal treatment of the community. The government's role is to provide goods and services to its citizens without discrimination. Based on these reports, the treatment of citizens was not fair for all, creating conflicts between the communities of the region. This conflict eventually led to violence in the region and an increase in social unrest. As a result, there was a need for better communication between communities and the government. This, in turn, was necessary to ensure a peaceful and equitable society.

Kebede stated that:-

”BenishangulGumuz Regional State did not treat non-indigenous communities as indigenous citizens. In some indigenous communities, government services and goods are delivered more quickly and efficiently compared to non-indigenous communities, thereby aggravating misunderstandings between communities. According to the grants of regional constitutions, most of the regional power was under the control of indigenous communities. The indigenous communities of Namily, Benishangul, Gumuz, Shinasha, Mao, and Komo owned the region. Those communities hold a more substantial influence over regional resources than non-indigenous groups, namely, Oromo, Amhara, Agew, Kenbata,

Tigray, and so on. It was suggested that citizens in the region should have the same rights and duties, rather than establishing divisions between communities.”

Table 3

In Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, weak government administrations are the cause of conflicts.					
		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	22	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Disagree	34	9.0	9.0	14.9
	Neutral	33	8.8	8.8	23.7
	Agree	137	36.4	36.4	60.1
	Strongly Agree	150	39.9	39.9	100.0
	Total	376	100.0	100.0	

A majority of conflicts are caused by weak government administration, as indicated by 150 (39.9%) and 137 (36.4%) respondents who strongly agreed and agreed, respectively. Various illegal groups can organize themselves because of weak government administration, as is evident from the reports of the focused group discussions. Additionally, it allows them to mislead the regional community. In collaboration with different terrorist groups, the informal groups trained different individuals and ruled the community according to their ideology. A weak government system also allows the implementation of illegal activities by internal and external groups. Members of the community in the region are injured or killed by highly trained forces, displacing them from their homes. This leads to further social and economic problems, including an increase in poverty and crime. Furthermore, it can lead to the collapse of the government, putting the lives and safety of the people in the region at risk. The reports of focus group discussions confirm that the government's role in conflicts was minimal at the beginning. This is because it didn't act to escalate conflicts. The government was unable to control and resolve the community conflicts during that time. After a while, the conflict was beyond the government's control.

As a result of the study, the main cause of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State was a weak government administration focused on achieving economic growth and development for regional communities. The region communities have had great questions about the development of the region for long periods, but the regional government administration was very weak and could not respond to the interests of the regional communities. The second cause of the regional conflicts was the unfair distribution of natural resources. The region of Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State was endowed with natural resources, and these natural resources attracted many people from other regions to live there in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. This creates tension in the local community of the region.

Shambel Wodisha said that:-

“At the beginning of the conflict, the government of Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State did not pay enough attention and did not take adequate measures. In the region, rebel groups control almost all areas and kill innocent people. The crisis was caused by weak government administration and poor leadership. In that case, the government should examine their government structures and resolve the conflicts of the region as soon as possible. The government should also take action to provide security for the region, as well as protect the rights of its people. They should also invest in infrastructure and

development activities to improve the living conditions of the people. Finally, they should create dialogue with the rebel groups to find a solution to the conflict.”

There was a very poor system of conflict resolution by the regional government that no longer produced peace and security among the regional communities, and their decision to resolve the conflicts in the region was not based on scientific and systematic means or their action did not bring peace and stability to the region. The regional government needed to take action to restructure their conflict resolution system in order to ensure peace and stability in the region. They needed to implement measures such as providing conflict resolution training, creating conflict resolution committees, and establishing conflict resolution centers. The regional government also implemented measures such as increasing public awareness of conflict resolution, providing financial assistance to victims of conflicts, and establishing rewards for peaceful resolution of disputes. Additionally, the government implemented a monitoring system to track the progress of conflict resolution efforts. Despite all these efforts, the conflicts of the region were not resolved according to their plans.

Thirdly, the illegal participation of political parties was another cause of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. Different political parties organize themselves and share the powers of the government in the future, all leading the communities of the region. Those political parties are involved in the conflicts of the region through different mechanisms, such as providing military supplies and information to local militias as well as creating disagreements between the government and the general public. The other cause of conflict in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State was the intervention of Amhara and Oromia regional state informal militias (Fano from the side of Amhara Regional State and Shane from the side of Oromia Regional State). The base of those two informal groups was their regions. Those informal militias are participating in the conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State through different mechanisms. Furthermore, the intervention of Sudan and Egypt was one cause of conflicts in the region, according to the findings of the study.

Additionally, other causes of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State were a lack of accommodating diversity, a lack of infrastructure development, misunderstandings between local communities, and the partial provision of goods and services among the communities of the region. This has resulted in a lack of trust between local communities, leading to increased tensions and conflicts. These tensions have further resulted in a lack of access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. As a result, the region has been facing numerous challenges in terms of development and economic growth.

Conclusion

This study identifies the causes of conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. According to the study, conflicts are caused by misunderstanding, unfair distribution of natural resources, and discrimination based on colour, culture, language, religion, etc. Also illegal political party participation, weak government administration, and internal and external intervention by different actors in regional affairs. Along with resolving the conflicts in the region, respecting the ideas and beliefs of others through dialogue and discussion Furthermore, open communication and mutual respect are key elements in creating a peaceful and harmonious environment. This increases trust and understanding and helps the community function more efficiently. Conflict resolution is crucial to any successful team. Creating a culture of mutual respect and understanding leads to better collaboration, higher productivity, and success. Removes any internal and external inventions regarding the conflicts in the region. Strong administration systems

provide various services and goods to the community, as well as keep the community from war and conflict. Conflicts are natural phenomena in life. The government administration must handle conflicts and resolve them before they damage human life and property.

The conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State were damaging many human lives and property in the region for long periods, so the regional government solved the problems of regional conflicts through dialogue and discussion. In the absence of a timely resolution of conflicts, individuals and communities suffer economic losses. Due to this, the regional communities collaborated with the regional government to resolve the conflicts in the region in short periods. The government created different platforms of discussion and dialogue with local illegal militia groups that affect the lives of local communities and their property. The platform of dialogue has been very effective in creating awareness about the conflict and trying to solve it amicably. The local communities have been able to resolve most of their conflicts through this platform, and the government has been able to provide better security for its citizens. This has resulted in a decrease in violence and other forms of crime in the local communities. The platform of dialogue has also been instrumental in creating trust and understanding between the militias and local communities. This has allowed the government to create more effective strategies to address the conflict. The platform has enabled the government to access information that was previously inaccessible. This has helped the government identify the root causes of the conflict and develop more effective solutions. The platform has also allowed the government to engage more effectively with the local communities, leading to more collaborative and effective solutions. The platform has also been used to monitor and measure the impact of the solutions implemented. This has allowed the government to adjust and improve their strategies as needed.

The government of the region opened the doors for all stakeholders for discussion and dialogue about the causes of conflicts in the region and also consulted different members of the community about how to resolve the conflicts in the region in short periods. In other words, all members of the region were highly involved in the resolution of regional conflicts and collaborated with government bodies. In addition, the regional government solves the problems of local communities through hard work and satisfies the needs of local communities in their administration functions. This demonstrates the importance of regional governments in creating a stable, peaceful environment. It also highlights the importance of collaboration among all stakeholders in the region. Additionally, it emphasizes the need for governments to take proactive steps to address local needs. Furthermore, the government treats all members of regional communities transparently and answerably and also shares regional resources fairly and impartially with all members of regional communities. Regional governments must also prioritize the well-being of their citizens and ensure that their rights and interests are protected. They must also ensure that the region is stable and prosperous for all its members. Finally, regional governments must strive to create an inclusive, equitable, and fair society for all.